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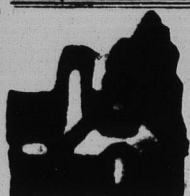
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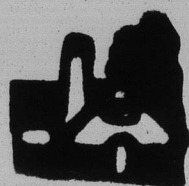
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REAL ESTATE and BUILDING NEWS

Home Modernizing — Real Estate Transfers



LOW COST HOMES

By James J. Gathercoal, Wilmette
Architect

Why not mass production of homes? An architect may be prejudiced against a proposal that would slaughter his kind to about one-tenth of one per cent of those in the profession. However, it is our daily problem to deal with matters totally without prejudice, and it is reasonable that this mass production proposal can be so dealt with. An architect looks at the problem of building a home from a different point than most everyone else, and for this reason I am at variance with the realtor's viewpoint expressed in the Real Estate section of this news magazine October 27 and this is occasion for the exposure of how it looks from where I sit.

Primarily, it is true that a home is a parcel to be bought and sold and should be made as easy to peddle as possible, but this portion of its makeup should be only its smallest virtue. In this same category a home should be attractive to the owner, to his neighbor, and to as large a percentage of potential buyers as possible. A home should be a credit to a neighborhood; it should deteriorate the value of the several existing homes.

Threat of Mass Production

Right here, let us look at the threat that mass production houses really has: The reason millions have been spent in this direction by nearly every eligible large manufacturer in our country, is because they believe the prefabricated house will "take." The houses produced so far, to my knowledge, can be successful only when mass purchase is assured. This can be assured only when such changes as general decentralization comes in. If only a few here and there are to be built, these prefabricated houses will cost more than the custom built houses. It follows that the prefabricated house that sells for \$5,000 will shortly be shamed by one at \$4,000

New Residence in Wilmette Records

Two building permits, one for a new residence and the other for a residence alteration job were issued in Wilmette during the past week.

M. A. Miller is building the residence at 1949 Chestnut street. It is two stories, of brick veneer construction and comprises eight rooms.

George E. Wolff, of Oak Park, is the architect and William T. Blades, of Wilmette, the contractor.

R. H. Garrett took out the residence alteration permit for improvements at 1420 Forest avenue, costing \$600.

and this in turn by one at \$3,000, and in time one will observe that big business has enslaved the masses to a greater extent and that a \$2,500 house will actually cost what our present \$10,000 house is costing us. How much does it cost to own a car, which we so wisely are being advised to use a model of economic principle? You believe you can keep your old car, but if you look at facts you will find it is most economical to get a new one. Most of the houses on the North Shore are more than ten years old and are still working fine.

Let us assume that the big manufacturer can one day produce this Utopian house of, say, \$2,500 and they are shooting at \$5,000 how will this solve the problem? What is a home? To the manufacturer it is a piece of merchandise that will make money for him; to the realtor, a commodity to sell for a profit; to the home owner, it is his place to sleep, eat and enjoy life generally for the least amount of expense and worry. But it is more to an owner. A home is a symbol of his character. A home is a symbol of his character. A home is an expression of his cultural background. A home is the environment in which his children learn life and formulate their most solid foundation for the life they are to live. A home is an expression of the profits of his labor. A home is security, and to all the outside world the owner enjoys the feeling of responsibility that is properly forthcoming. A home is an owner's castle. To an architect a home is a means of making a living, but a lot more architecture is the structural expression that symbolizes the character of a people, the living methods, culture and political conditions at the time of fabrication. History is positive about this since the beginning of time, and it is part of an architect's curricula to so thoroughly understand the principle of this fact that he can observe prevailing conditions and design to fit. It is not an owner's task to study how and why the Greeks, Romans, or even the Pilgrims arrived at the architecture they lived with, but it is his privilege to know that by the same token the architectural expression found on the North Shore will not be characterless, stiff, cold, economical boxes that do not have the appeal of the apartment he once graduated from.

Home to Fit Family

It may be interesting to know that an architect is able, after studying the life of the prospective owners, to design a home that will so perfectly fit the family that no other house could more perfectly please them. Whether the conscious or

Building Shows Increases Over October of 1937

Building activities in the four north shore villages of Wilmette, Kenilworth, Winnetka, and Glencoe during October, exceeded those of September by only \$45, but showed an increase of nine in the number of permits issued.

This year's October total valuation of \$178,370, however, was an increase of \$30,810 over that of October last year, while the total permits of last month exceeded those of October a year ago by only four.

Wilmette in Lead

Wilmette again lead all other villages with 20 permits for improvements amounting to \$92,750. Winnetka was second with 10 permits and \$33,225; Kenilworth, four permits and \$39,200, and Glencoe, two permits and \$13,195.

Wilmette also lead in the number of new residences, of which it had eight, costing \$87,100. Kenilworth had two, costing \$38,000; Winnetka two, \$17,000, and Glencoe one, \$12,800.

The other permits were for residence alteration jobs, private garages, including one gasoline filling station.

sub-conscious mind controls the reaction, it is true that a purchased home is not possible to be as happy-an environment as one designed about the character and activity of its owner. When communism is accepted to the place of total loss of will or personal identity, these prefabricated tin boxes or concrete mausoleums will be commonly accepted. An architect can today design a chicken coop with more home appeal, and for comparable money, than we have yet seen in the way of prefabrication.

An architect sees in homes materials that have favorable significance to its owner. A basic principle of architecture is that all things must be functionally correct. This means that whether or not the layman stops to analyze the condition, it will leave favorable effect upon his mind. An example is a large opening without visible means of support. The layman sees collapse in a sense even though he does not stop to see the collapse take place. We have all looked at steel from our natural observation as a conduction of cold and heat. One does not have to stop and think through a coat of paint or remember the car tracks in mid-summer, or metal sash in a home in winter to conclude that better material might well be used for our homes. One knows wood is a durable sound proper material and one responds to such design that expresses the warm comfortable and compassionate friendliness that a home stands for because the principle of functional expression is meant for the home owner to be employed and understood by the architect.

No greater satisfaction can be experienced in a man's life than to build a home that employs expression of what he has lived for, and a perfect environment for what he hopes to be. The joy of this venture with the thought of its provision for his children's growth is of great consequence. Reaction to beauty and individual character is still alive, and the love of a real home shall surely never die.

The desire for character homes is in greater evidence than ever before, and will be expressed in a preponderance of our new homes on the North Shore. Homes of a custom built type may be fabricated inexpensively, and when a \$2,500, \$25,000 or \$250,000 house is needed an architect is a man's best friend.

An architect cannot accept a price, for knowing that a man expects to build a home, from a realtor, builder, or any other profit-taking organization; he is on the owner's side and has no motive save to see that the problems of building a home are all answered fairly and completely in the most pleasant and harmonious manner possible, for a set fee. As an owner's purchasing agent, an architect can produce a home more economically, more satisfactorily, and in every way to the best interest of the owner and the community.