But they have fallen out again, and are beginning to spread over the surrounding ground. And the logic of transportation seems to say yes. The logic of airport scenario says but the passengers straight to the plane on the tarmac, and space the buildings, and the logic of freight handling—logically capable to compete with Europe's Rotterdam, that is—sages acres of land standing with nothing on it that can't be moved out of the way.

This logic is already beginning to make a transtural kind of sense, visually. Where buildings—roofed volumes with side enclosures—persist, they seem to grow outward in lightweight shells unmastered in massive masonry or cultural pretensions. In a periscope where coursed abutments and ribbed ammunition sheet are not cheap substrates but the very stuff of building, a brick looks as pernicious as restitted monotony does elsewhere the passenger forns at Tilbury, with its coats of arms and barred vaults, would look repugnant anywhere, and attain a positively nightmare quality there. And these steel shells, stiff tents almost, can be perfectly adequately designed by engineers without any interference from architects, and usually are.

Architects, at the moment, probably don't mind too much about this, because it doesn’t impinge on their chosen scene, the city. No, that's not true—thanks to an unforseeable series of crucial directives from various higher echelons, the good-handling aesthetic of horizontal spread and aluminum cladding gets very good showing, within a few minutes of the British Museum and V & A’s Park. After the freeze on office building in central London, Bantam station was deprived of santry architect-designed superstructures, and the upper deck of the surviving ramp of the station is just a huge precast-deck shed, single-story and covering most of the extent of the station below. It's very good, too, especially the long, aluminum-clad side elevation on to Cardington Street.

Curiously enough, credit or blaste for this intention of the good-handling aesthetic into central London lies partly with architects. Some of the design decisions affecting its shape and arrangement can be traced back to Theo Crosby's Eton design intent at Taylor-Woodrow's, and are all that remain of their original grandiose project. But then, that was a rather remarkable setup, since it was where the Architectural Visionaries met one another for the first time.

And the Architectural visionaries, as I have indicated here before, is something that many thinking members of the profession do wish to know about. Personally, I doubt if even an Architect could do the real Tilbury staff with any enthusiasm.

The only architect who might, in fact, is Cedric Price, who applied container technology, near enough, to university teaching in his Thinkbelt project (New Society, 2 June 1966). For this he has been recently attacked, not by the lonely, dead-dodging professional architect, but by one of the profession's most esteemed younger intellectuals, George Baird, architect of the suit of 'value' rather than human service, as architects. According to Baird, the Thinkbelt's avoidance of sham monumentality (for which 'structuralism' is the current hip synonym) will lead to practically every fashionable evil in its book, from contemporaneity to superficiality (though the passage in which he made these attacks have avoided any well-aimed shot, more or less obvious ridicule—in the version of his article that appears in the present publication).

The working profession will find ways of bypassing such intellectual dead-ends; it has to, or it would go out of business—architects will eventually compose themselves into a frame where they can design a few nice one-use buildings for almost building-free sites, and the architectural magazines will find ways of making the photographs suitably handsome, and will bring out special issues on 'The Architecture of Megagardens', or some such.

But by then, of course, havecraft will have played even the common people. America, obfus, if multi-functional pipelines haven't made homecraft obsolete, and architects (to make a sartorial J. M. Richards-type joke) will have missed the boat again.

A Home
is not a House

Illustrated by
Francois
Dallegrat

When your house contains such a complex of piping, flues, ducts, wire, lights, outlets, ovens, sinks, refrains, dispensers, habit-vaults, conduits, freeways, bottlenecks, etc., that the hardware could stand up by itself without any assistance from the house, why have a house to hold it up? When the cost of all this tackle is half of the total outlay (or more, as it often is), what good is it, except concealing your mechanical pudenda from the ears of folks on the sidewalk? Once or twice, recently there have been buildings where the public was genuinely confused about what was up. The inhuman structure—many visitors to Philadelphia take quite a time to work out that the floors of Louis Kahn's laboratory towers are not supported by the flanking brick duct boxes, when they have wound down, they are inclined to wonder if it was worth all the trouble of giving them an independent supporting structure.

No doubt about it, a great deal of the attention captured by those labs derives from Kahn's attempt to put the drama of mechanical services on show—and if, in the end, it fails to do that convincingly, the psychological importance of the gesture remains, at least in the eyes of his fellow architects. Services are a topic on which architectural practice has alternated capriciously between the braced and the case—there was the grand old Lett-Läger period, when every ceiling was a mess of gaily painted entrelacs, as in the council chambers of the UN building, and there have been fits of pendency when even the most innocent anatomical details have been hurriedly voided with a suspended ceiling.

Basically, there are two reasons for all this blowing hot and cold (if you will excuse the air conditioning industry's old-working pun). The first is that the avoidable services are no more than the proverbial backwater in the proverbial ocean of the architect's domain. The second reason is that the mechanical invention is a fact, and architects—especially American architects—sense that it is a cultural threat to their position in the world. American architects are certainly right to feel this, because of their professional speciality, the art of creating monumental spaces, has never been more securely established on this continent. It remains a transplant from an older culture and architects in America are constantly backing back to that culture. The generation of Stanford White and Louis Sullivan were prone to behave like emigrants from France, Frank Lloyd Wright was up to take cover behind sentimental Teutonisms like Liber Aestior, the big boys of the Thirties and Forties came from Aschen and Berlin anyhow, the paterfamilias of the Fifties and Sixties are men of international culture like Charles Eames and Philip Johnson, and so too, in many ways, see the comingons of today, like Merton Goldsmith.

Left to their own devices, Americans do not monumentalize or make architecture. From the Cape Cod cottage, through the balloon frame to the perfection of permanently plated aluminum siding with embossed wood-graining, they have tended to build a brick chimney and lean a collection of hacks against it.

When Geoff Collinson wrote 'In The Weather-Conditioned House' that a house is nothing but a hollernest—a shell is all a house or any structure in which human beings live and work, really is. And most shells in nature are extraordinarily inefficient barriers to cold and heat... he was expressing an extremely American view, backed by a long-established tradition.

And since that tradition agrees with him that the American hollow shell is such an inefficient local barrier, Americans have always been prepared to pump more heat, light and other bits to other peoples. America, obfus, if multi-functional pipelines haven't made homecraft obsolete, and architects (to make a sartorial J. M. Richards-type joke) will have missed the boat again.
partitions that Europeans need to keep space architectural and within bounds, and long before Wright began blundering through the walls that subdivided polite architecture into living room, games room, card room, gun room, etc., humbler Americans had been slipping into a way of life adapted to informally planned interiors that were, effectively, large single spaces.

Now, large single volumes wrapped in sunny shells have to be lighted and heated in a manner quite different and more generous than the Cubistic interiors of the European tradition around which the concept of domestic architecture first crystallized. Right from the start, from the Franklin stove and the kerosene lamp, the American interior has had to be better serviced if it was to support a civilized culture, and this is one of the reasons that the U.S. has been the founding ground of mechanical services in buildings — so if services are to be felt anywhere as a threat to architecture, it should be in America.

The plumber is the quartermaster of American culture, wrote Adolf Loos, father of all European platitudes about the superiority of U.S. plumbing. He knew what he was talking about; his brief visit to the States in the Nineties convinced him that the outstanding virtues of the American way of life were its informality (no need to wear a top hat to call on local officials); its cleanliness — which was bound to be noticed by a Viennese as highly developed a set of Freudian compulsions as he had. That obsession with clean (which can become one of the higher absurdities of America's breath-taking Kleenex culture) was another psychological motive that drove the nation toward mechanical services. The early justification for air-conditioning was not just that people had to breathe; Karl Meier ("Reflections on Heating and Ventilating," 1904) wrote lashingly of: "... excessive amounts of water vapour, sickly odours from respiratory organs, unclean teeth, perspiration, unsteady clothing, the presence of microbes due to various conditions, stuffy air from dusty carpets and draperies... cause greater discomfort and greater ill health."

(Have a wash, and come back for the next paragraph.)

Most pioneer air-conditioning men seem to have been nose-obsessed in this way: best friends could just about force themselves to tell America of her national R.O.— and then, compulsive salesmen to a man, promptly prescribed their own patent improved panacea for ventilating the hell out of her. Somewhere among these clustering concepts — cleanliness, the lightweight shell, the mechanical services, the informality and indifference to monumental architectural values, the passion for the outdoors — there always seemed to me to lurk some elusive master concept that would never quite come into focus. It finally became clear and legible to me in June 1944, in the most highly appropriate and symptomatic circumstances.

I was standing up to my chest-hair in water, making home movies (I get that NASA kick from taking expensive hardware into hostile environments) at the campus beach at Southern Illinois. This beach combines the outdoor and the shrewd in a highly American manner — normally it is the old swimmin' hole of Huckleberry Finn tradition, but it is properly policed by sophomores lighthearted sitting on Eames chairs on poles in the water; and it's chlorinated too. From where I stood, I could see not only immensely elaborate family barbecues and picnics in progress on the sterilized sand, but also, through and above the trees, the bunkery interfaces of one of Backamer Fuller's experimental domes. And it hit me then, that if dirty old Noses could be kept under the proper degree of control (see in, streptococci taken out) by other means, the United States would be happy to dispense with architecture and buildings altogether.

Bucky Fuller, of course, is very big on this proposition; his famous pseudo-rhetorical question, 'Madam, do you know what your house weighs?' articulates a subversive suspicion of the monumental. This suspicion is ineluctably shared by the untold thousands of Americans who have already shed the dead weight of domestic architecture and live in mobile homes which, though they may never actually be moved, still deliver rather better performance as shelter than do ground-anchored structures costing at least three times as much and weighing ten times more. If someone could devise a package that would effectively
disconnect the mobile home from the dangling wires of the town electricity supply, the bottled gas containers insecurely perched on a packing case and the semi-impervious sanitary arrangements that stem from being connected to the main sewer—then we should really see some changes. It may not be so far away either, defence cutbacks may mean absences of spin-off spinning in some new directions quite soon, and that kind of miniaturization-talent applied to a genuinely self-contained and regenerative standard-of-living package that could be towed behind a trailer home or clipped to it, could produce a sort of U-boat unit that might be sucked up or dropped off at depots across the face of the nation. Even might well become the first in U-Valley, even if they have to go on being a trying second in car hire.

Out of this might come a domestic revolution beside which modern architecture would look like Kiddiekin, because you might be able to dispense with the trailer home as well. A standard-of-living package (the phrase and the concept are both Rocky Fuller’s) that really worked might, like so many sophisticated inventions, return Man nearer to a natural state in spite of his complex culture (much as the suppression of the Morse telegraph by the Bell Telephone restored his power of speech nationwide). Man started with two basic ways of controlling environment: one by avoiding the issue and hiding under a rock, tree, tent or roof (limited ultimately to architecture as we know it) and the other by actually interfering with the local meteorology, usually by means of a campfire, which, in a more polished form, might lead to the kind of situation now under discussion. Unlike the living space trapped with our forebears under a rock or roof, the space around a campfire has many unique qualities which architecture cannot hope to equal, above all, its freedom and variability.
done wild things to solid-state technology, producing even tiny refrigerating transistors. They don’t as yet ship up any great quantity of heat, but what are you going to do in this glade anyhow, put a whole steer in deep-freeze? Now do you have to manhandle it—it could ride on a cushion of air (its own air-conditioning output, for instance) like a hovercraft or domestic vacuum cleaner.

All this will eat up quite a lot of power, transistors notwithstanding. But one should remember that few Americans are ever far from a source of 100 and 400-horsepower—the automobile. Beefed-up car batteries and a self-sensing cable drum could probably get this package breathing warm bourbon fumes or Eden long before microwave power transmission or miniaturized atomic power plants come in. The car is already one of the strange arms in America’s environmental weaponry, and an essential component in one non-architectural anti-building that is already familiar to most of the nation—the drive-in movie house. Only, the deed away is a manifest misnomer—just a flat piece of ground where the operating company provides visual images and piped sound, and the rest of the situation comes on wheels. You bring your own seat, heat and shelter as part of the car. You also bring Coke, cookies, Kleenex, Chesterfield, spare clothes, shoes, the Pill and God—what else they don’t provide at Radio City.

The car, in short, is already doing quite a lot of the standard-of-living package’s job—the smoochy couple dancing to the music of the radio in their parked convertible have created a balloon in the wilderness (dance floor by courtesy of the Highway Dept. of course) and all this is paradisal till it starts to rain.

Even then, you’re not licked—it takes very little air pressure to inflate a transparent Mylar air dome, the conditioned-air output of your mobile package might be able to do it, with or without a little boosting, and the dome itself, inflated into a parachute bag might be part of the package. From within your thirty-foot hemisphere of warm dry Lebensraum you could have spectacular ringside views of the weather at work through the glade, the forest fire coming over the hill or Constance Chatterley running swiftly to you know who through the downslope. But—surely, this is not a home, you can’t bring up a family in a polyethylene bag? This can never replace the time-honored ranch-style tri-level standing proudly in a landscape of five defeated shrubs, flanked on one side by a ranch-style tri-level with six shrubs and on the other by a ranch-style tri-level with four small boys and a private dust bowl. If the countless Americans who are successfully raising nice children in trailers will excuse me for a moment, I have a few suggestions to make to the even more countless Americans who are so insecure that they hide inside fake monuments of Permatone and instant refinishing. There are, admittedly, very sound day-to-day advantages to having warm basements on a firm floor underfoot, rather than pine needles and poison ivy. America’s pioneer house builders recognized this by commonly building their brick chimneys on a brick floor slab. A transparent air dome could be anchored to such a slab just as easily as could a balloon frame, and the standard-of-living package could hover buoyantly in a sort of glorified barbecue pit in the middle of the slab. But an air dome is not the sort of thing that the kids, or a distracted pumpkin-eater could run in and out of when the fit took them—believe me, fighting your way out of an air dome is worse than trying to get out of a collapsed rain-coated tent if you make the wrong first move.

But the relationship of the screech-voiced to the floor slab could be re-arranged to get over this difficulty: all the standard-of-living (or most of it) could be re-deployed on the upper side of the sheltering membrane floating above the floor, radiant heat, light and what-not downstairs and leaving the whole perimeter wide-open for random egress—and equally social ingress, too, I guess. That crazy modern-movement dream of the interpenetration of indoors and outdoors could become real at last by abolishing the door. Technically, of course, it would be just about possible to make the power-membrane literally float, hovercraft style. Anyone who has had to stand in the ground-effect of a helicopter will know that this solution has little to recommend it apart from the instant disposal of waste paper. The noise, power consumption and physical dis-
SILVER: Blow the earth's air-pollutants away from the earth's surface by using ventilation systems similar to those used in high-rise buildings. This will help to reduce the amount of pollution in the air, thereby improving air quality.

FAIRLEY: The dream of making a house in the wilderness into a work of art has been realized. The use of glass in the construction of the house allows for a seamless integration of indoor and outdoor spaces, creating a truly unique living environment.

PAUL: The desire to make a house in the wilderness into a work of art and the dream of living in a house in the wilderness have been realized.

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The structures of these houses are designed to blend with the natural environment, using materials and colors that complement the landscape. The use of glass in the construction of the house allows for a seamless integration of indoor and outdoor spaces, creating a truly unique living environment.
When Philip Johnson says that the place is not a controlled environment, however, it is not these aspects of undisciplined glazing he has in mind, but that 'when it gets cold I have to move toward the fire, and when it gets too hot I just move away'. In fact, he is simply exploiting the campfire phenomenon (he is also pretending that the floor-heating does not make the whole area habitable, which it does) and in any case, what does he mean by a controlled environment? It is not the same thing as a uniform environment, it is simply an environment suited to what you are going to do next, and whether you build a stone monument, move away from the fire or turn on the air conditioning, it is the same basic human gesture you are making.

Only the monument is such a ponderous solution that it astounds me that Americans are still prepared to employ it, except out of some profound sense of insecurity, a persistent inability to rid themselves of those habits of mind they left Europe to escape. In the open-fronted society, with its social and personal mobility, its interchangeability of components and personnel, its pagentry and almost universal expendability, the persistence of architecture-environmental-space must appear as evidence of the sentimentality of the tough.

BAIRD: Banham claims that he advocates 'an environment capable of generating new values symbiotically with its inhabitants', yet there is a great discrepancy between that commitment and the examples he discusses in those articles. Whether one sits with Banham or with Pawley (see his comment on Banham over the Wampumag incident) it seems to me quite impossible to think of the relation of the slip to its inhabitants as symbiotic.

In the case of the house that is not a house, the discrepancy is greater still. How, on Banham's criteria, does he describe it as symbiotic when there exist 'countless Americans' (his ex-convicts) who are too insecure to want to live in it? For that matter, why does he even propose it as symbiotic to Americans, when they assume him by their profound insecurity, their persistent inability to rid themselves of those habits of mind they left Europe to escape? When he is no longer quite so extravagant, Banham should look again at that 'insecurity', for until he comes to terms with it, he will fail to grasp the full implications of environmental symbiosis.

BANHAM: I reply to Baird and Pawley thus: food particles do not linger in the intestines of every mouthful of teeth, because some people don't eat that kind of food, or have different eating habits, or never eat teeth, or have had them fixed. In other words, the human race is variable; there are the untrustingly insecure, who need the personal structural props Baird and Pawley advocate; and there are others of us who don't. Neither Baird nor Pawley seems psychologically secure enough to admit this human variability, both claim to be in possession of 'the real point' or of 'the full implications of environmental symbiosis', but there will be no chance of the kind of environmental symbiosis that interests people of my psychological type and cultural background if the world is cluttered with Baird's values cast in impermanent concrete or Pawley's old broken furniture. Our values, being piped through the media, can be switched off if they prove private or publicly delectable, but how do you switch off a mouth-simple wasteland? This is not a defining point (like Baird trying to pretend I had offended the Wampumag in an example of symbiosis) because the over-permanence of our built environment could become as much a form of pollution as the over-permanence of polythene and other non-degradable rubbish. Or the overpermanence of exclusive value-systems; what I find admirable about advanced technology is the number of embittered 'meanings and identities' this is thrown. Responses to that threat are very clearly what admirers are up against and which architectural theorists are stuck with.