stead Garden Suburb perhaps vindicate Unwin in his presumptions. Remembering her childhood in the early years of the suburb, Miss R. Murphy mentioned how Asmuns Hill was ‘lined with almond trees’ and recalled ‘turning out of Hampstead Way on a sunny day and seeing all the trees in blossom with the sun shining on them.’ She added that ‘Hogarth’s Hill was full of peach trees which were a deeper pink and came after the almond blossom. Willefield Way was full of crab apples which we ate... and the other part of Willefield Way [was planted with] red maple trees.’ Miss M Grainger of Hampstead Way in a separate interview also mentioned the almond trees in blossom on Asmuns Hill. (Murphy, Grainger)

46 Peter Howarth, ‘The Simplicity of WH Davies,’ English Literature in Transition 1880-1920, 46 (2003), 165. This conflation occurs in other literature on tramping too. Holbrook Jackson described tramping or vagabondage as the ‘habit of occasional escape from the upholstery of civilised life’ (Jackson, All Manner of Folk, 60) and Leslie Stephen wrote of the sense of ‘escaping on ticket-of-leave from the prison-house of respectability’ (Stephen, “In Praise of Walking,” 19).

47 Solnit Wanderlust, 168. Tramping’s relationship with capitalism’s processes of creative destructions are more complicated than craft as its practitioners claimed an ambiguous and sometimes ambivalent kinship with the hordes of itinerant workers created by these processes. The contorted nature of this relationship is most evident in Arthur Rickett’s The Vagabond in Literature when he writes of the ‘restlessness’ and ‘nervous instability’ of the vagabond: One of the legacies of the industrial revolution had been the neurotic strain which it has bequeathed to our countrymen... It has never been summed up better than by Ruskin, when, in one of his scorrning flashes, he declared that our objects in life were: whatever we have, to get more; and wherever we are, to go some-

where else’ (Rickett, The Vagabond, 9/10). 48 Raymond Unwin. ‘Raymond Unwin’s Diary for the Year 1887’, May 19, Raymond Unwin Collection, Box 1.6, John Rylands Archives, Manchester. Much of this thinking can be traced back to Carpenter’s influence on Unwin. As Jackson explained Carpenter elaborated for a generation the germinal idea of life... surging onwards (and) developing form’ (Jackson, All Manner of Folk, 127). 49 Jackson, All Manner of Folk, 54.

50 Ibidem, 60. Jackson used the term ‘vagabondage’ which was interchangeable with ‘tramping’. Such claims for tramping are consistent throughout The Tramp, with Harry Roberts for instance claiming that it is ‘only the tramp who is able to realise the meaning of Maeterlinck’s statement that we all live in the sublime’ (Harry Roberts, “The Art of Vagabondage,” 26). While the literature on tramping continuously presents the practice as a means of connecting with the world, whether or not it was a solitary and insular activity was a matter of debate. George M Trevorlyn made a distinction between walking and tramping, with the latter promoted as the more communitarian activity (Trevolyn, “Walking,” 60-2). Positioning everything seen by even a solitary walker within ‘the great mystery’ tramping was generally seen as enabling a sense of connection to all humanity. This could be established even when those encountered along the route ‘appeared at odds with Nature’ (Philpotts, for instance found a place for a ‘belligerent’ and armed range-cleaner in the general ‘progress and falling out of things’ (Philpotts, “A Dartmoor Day,” 502).

51 Raymond Unwin, Regional Planning with Special Reference to the Greater London Regional Plan, a paper read before the Royal Institute of British Architects on Monday 6 January, 1930, Raymond Unwin Collection, Box 1.4, John Rylands Archives, Manchester.

3.4 ‘Bread & Butter and Architecture’: Accommodating the Everyday

SESSION CHAIRS:
RICARDO AGAPEZ
The Bartlett School of Architecture
NELSON MOTA
TU Delft, Netherlands

This session takes its title and theme from a 1942 article by English architectual historian John Summerson, who called on practicing architects to face ‘the real-life adventures which are looming ahead’ instead of trying ‘to fly level with the poet-innovator Le Corbusier’. To render architecture ‘effective in English life’, Summerson argued, would be the role of qualified teams of ‘salaried architects’ working for local and central authorities or commercial undertakings. Their ‘departmental architecture’ would be responsible for lifting the average quality of everyday building practice for the benefit of all, while providing a profession constantly seeking to secure its place in society with ‘those three essential things for any born architect – bread, butter, and the opportunity to build’. Coincidently, the following year saw the publication of Ayn Rand’s novel The Fountainhead, whose architect protagonist epitomised the ‘prime mover’, the individualistic creative hero who singlehandedly conquered his place in history. Seemingly following Rand’s drive, the canon of western contemporary architecture has overlooked Summerson’s everyday ‘salaried’ architecture, however dominant it may have turned out to be in our built environment, praising instead the solo designer and his groundbreaking work. It seems to have been in ‘departmental architecture’ that the social role of the architect – both in terms of social hierarchies and contribution to social betterment – was primarily tested and consolidated in the aftermath of World War I. Yet the work of county, city and ministerial architects, and heads of department in welfare commissions, guilds and cooperatives is seldom discussed as such. The specific character of this work as the product of institutional ini-
tatives and agents, as the outcome of negotiation between individual and collective agendas, remains little explored, even when celebrating the few public designed projects that are part of the canon.

What is, then, the specificity of this ‘Bread & Butter’ architecture? What is its place in architectural history studies, and how should we approach it? What does it tell us about the dissemination and hampering of architectural trends, or the architectural culture within institutions and agencies? Is it relevant in today’s context of swift downplaying of institutional agency in the spatial accommodation of everyday needs? Are we prepared to bypass the still prevalent notion of the architect-artist, the prime mover, and look at the circumstances of those who played their part in inconspicuous offices and unexciting departments? We welcome papers that address these and other questions prompted by the theme, focusing on the period after World War I, when many public initiatives were put in place, until the late 1960s, when established hierarchies were challenged and the architect’s place in society again changed.

3.4.1 Humdrum Tasks of the Salaried-Men: Edwin Williams, a LCC Architect at War

NICK BEECH
Oxford Brookes University, UK

Abstract

Working at the London County Council Architect’s Department through the 1930s to 1950s, known (if at all) as a member of the design team for the Royal Festival Hall, Edwin Williams is usually presented as a regressive figure, his design work marked by his beaux-arts training. With no evidence of any significant contribution to formal or spatial developments of architecture in the post-war period – in drawings, plans or diagrams – Williams’s story is firmly confined to the hidden ‘back-room’ of architectural history. Using archival evidence and histories of the construction industry, this paper sets out Williams’s role in the organisation of rescue and recovery services in London during the Second World War. The paper argues that, through his development of training schools and curricula for Rescue Service personnel, Williams played a key role in the formation of a skilled, mechanised, modern demolition industry. Operating complex emergency projects under extreme conditions, the same contractors and building operatives trained in Williams’s programme were later responsible for the clearance of bomb damaged sites and slums. Rather than a history of coincidence – whereby designs by ‘new empiricists’ fortuitously arrive at the same time and to the same party as a radically modernised construction industry, a centrally planned economy, and a London full of holes to fill – this paper suggests that certain developments in modern architecture can be considered as contingent upon practices of the demolition industry. Discussing the various techniques and technologies Williams integrated into his training programme this paper contributes to a wider discussion on how the history of modern architecture might be rethought. By concentrating on the ‘organisation’ and ‘progress’ of production that architects engaged with during the Second World War and after, new configurations of continuity and change emerge in which the ‘humdrum tasks’ of ‘salaried-men’ appear crucial.

Keywords

London County Council, Second World War, British modernism, demolition, industry, architectural epistemology