HUGO HÄRING
&
THE SEARCH FOR A RESPONSIVE ARCHITECTURE

Peter Blundell Jones

Hugo Häring has been a marginal figure in most histories of modernism, perhaps because he had to be treated as an anomaly if he was not to break the mould. Häring has left us relatively few built works — three large housing schemes in Berlin, two grand houses and half a dozen humbler ones, a farm, a factory, and possibly a hospital in South America. Yet he designed a great deal more — the list of his works runs to some 150 items[1] — and the variety and originality of his output is impressive. A full examination of the work in all its tortuous evolution suggests, not Pevsner's view of a modernism that arrived fully fledged out of ignorance and darkness, but rather a period of unprecedented exploration, a modernism always in process of becoming. Typically, one of Häring's essays is entitled 'Die welt is noch nicht ganz fertig' ('The World Is Not Yet Quite Ready').[2]

The early work has remained in convenient obscurity. What I have managed to unearth confirms an impression that — as with the work of other modernists such as Le Corbusier, Scharoun, Aalto, Asplund, and Mies — Häring did not begin with a *tabula rasa*. Whatever may have happened in the early twenties, and however much of a break with the past it might have seemed, all these architects were well grounded in tradition. Born in the 1880s, they were in their late thirties by the time their revolution broke, and they did not just unlearn twenty years of experience. This perhaps explains the greater quality of pioneering work of the twenties, compared to that of the post-war generation.

Häring was one of the most prolific writers among the modernists. His theoretical tracts are dense, abstract, and often hard to render in English.[3] Although there are passages which seem astonishingly prophetic, much of the historical theory belongs to the curious mythological world of the German twenties. One sees the architect struggling to understand things that he had already done or knew intuitively. Seen in this way, rather than as pure theory or history, the writings gain in richness, and I shall therefore discuss them in the course of interpreting the work.

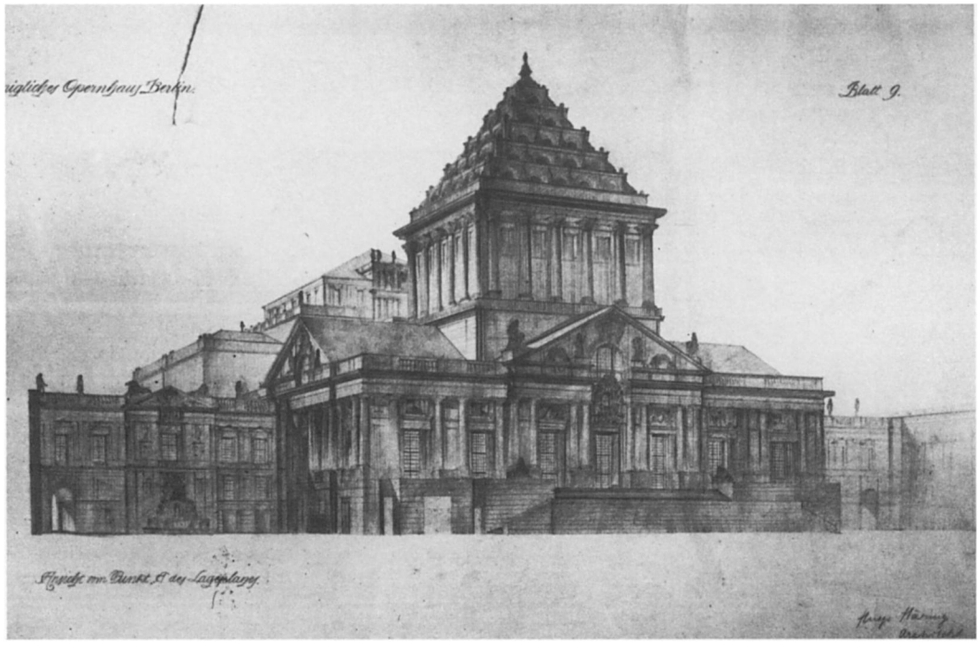
Hugo Häring was born in Biberach, a small town south of Stuttgart, in 1882 (one year before Gropius and three before Le Corbusier). His father was a cabinet maker, which may help explain an empathy for timber and carpentry techniques evident in the later work (in notable contrast with Mies, whose father was a mason, and who was more drawn to materials such as stone, iron and glass).

Häring studied architecture in Stuttgart under Theodor Fischer.[4] The teacher not only of Häring, but also of Erich Mendelsohn, J. J. P. Oud, Bruno Taut, Ernst May, Otto Bartning and Paul Bonatz, Fischer has been described by Winfried Nerdinger as a kind of opposite pole to Peter Behrens. While Behrens promoted classicist, universalist ideas, Fischer preached a doctrine of the specific response to site and local circumstances, which owed more to south German vernacular tradition, and to the movement, often called National Romanticism, which grew from the English Arts and Crafts. Fischer's works, usually classified as *Jugendstil*, tend to be asymmetrical and aggregational in their planning, local in their construction and use of materials, and intensely contextual. Though Fischer was something of a pioneer in concrete construction, he never produced a building that was decisively modern.

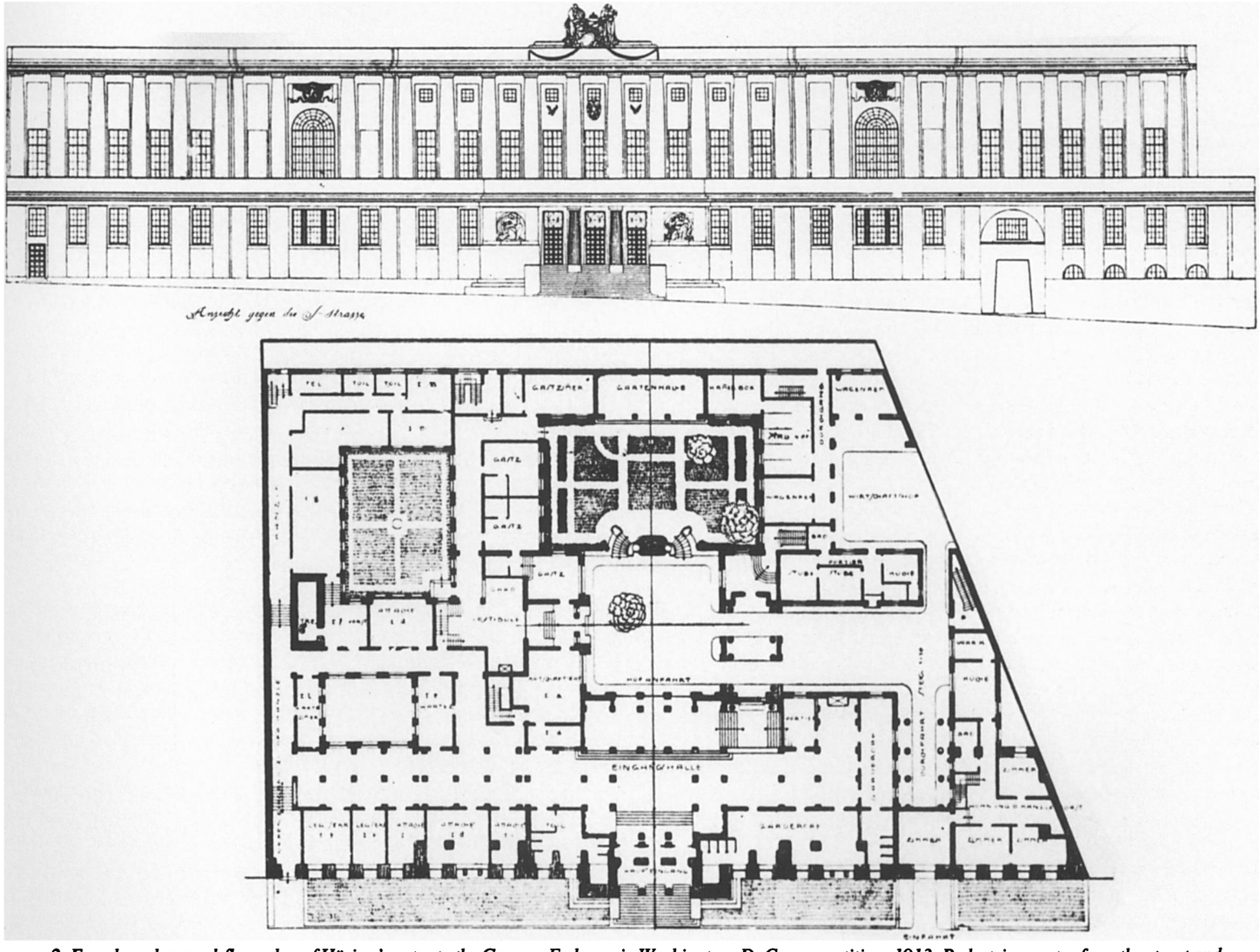
After his training Häring worked briefly in Ulm, and then in Hamburg until the first world war. Only a handful of designs from this period survive, mainly in contemporary publications. They show a young architect caught up in the tendencies of his time, producing competition entries good enough for publication but perhaps too unconventional to win. Their strength, not surprisingly in view of the later work, seems to lie in conception and planning rather than style and appearance. A typical example is Häring's entry, with Gustav Blohm, for the Royal Opera House, Berlin, of 1912 (Fig. 1). The style is neo-baroque, and the planning obviously derived from Charles Garnier's Paris Opéra.

Very much in the neo-classical mode is Häring's entry to a competition for the German embassy in Washington, D. C., of 1913 (Fig. 2), with its grand, columned façade and an elaborate progression of ceremonial rooms. Interestingly, it was the only one of the published entries to suggest building right out to the site boundaries, carving a series of courts and gardens out of the solid fabric — an inversion of figure and ground. The shadow of Behrens fell on most of the entries to this competition, for, not only had he just completed his grandiose neo-classical St Petersburg embassy, but he was also one of the judges. These two examples, by no means Häring's only excursions into classicism, are perhaps significant for two themes which run through the later work: the theme of movement and progression through space, and the theme of axiality.

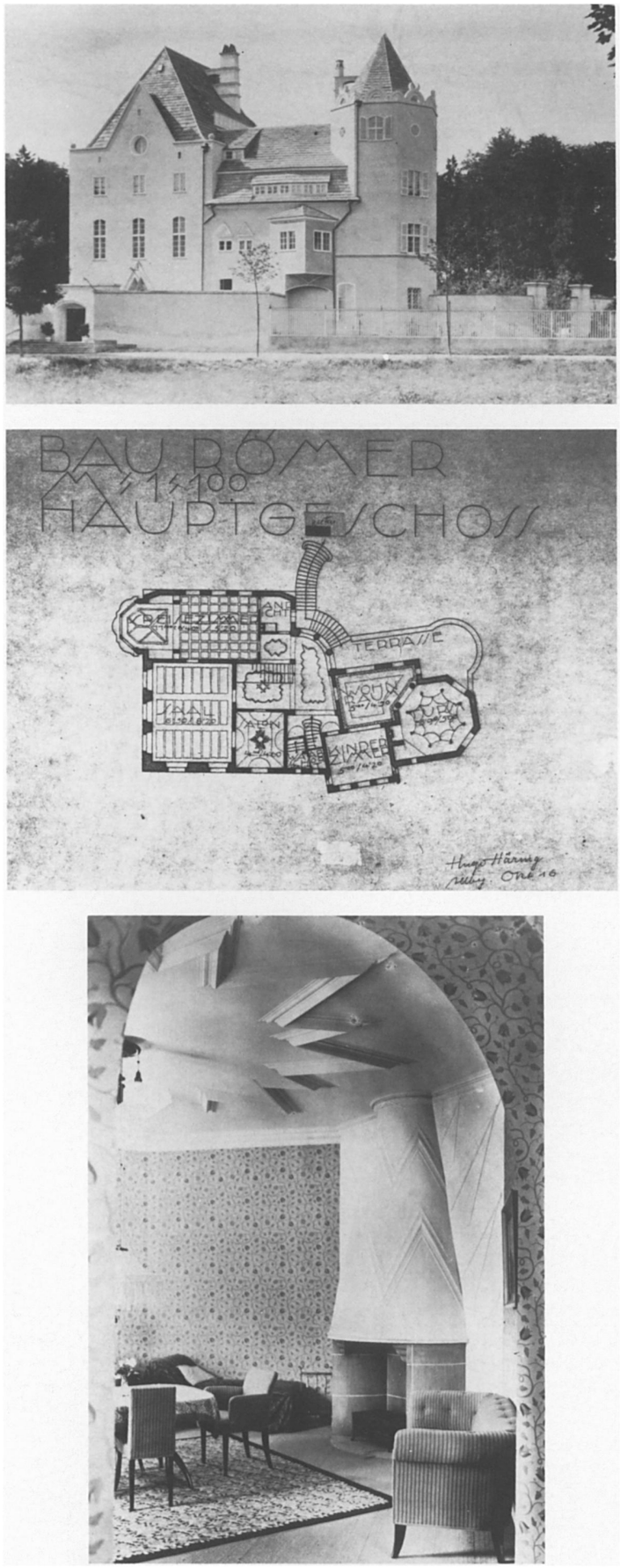
During the first world war, Häring was called up for military service, but after a short period in the ranks he was reserved for the rebuilding programme in East Prussia. He was based at Allenberg, where he was responsible for some housing, of which no record remains, and he also won a commission for a substantial country house which was completed (the existence of which I have been unable to ascertain, as the site is now in a restricted zone). In 1916 he also started designing a large house in Neu-Ulm (Fig. 3). The client asked for a house 'as big and impractical as an old castle', on a site along part of the discarded city



1. Entry by Häring and Blohm for the Berlin Royal Opera House competition of 1912.



2. Façade and ground-floor plan of Häring's entry to the German Embassy in Washington, D. C., competition, 1913. Pedestrians enter from the street and carriages drive around into the central court. The public offices are along the ground-floor front, while the grand stair to right of the entry axis leads to the ceremonial rooms. On the minor axis is the entry to the ambassador's residence, its apartments deployed around the left-hand court.



3. External view, first-floor plan and tower room of Römer house at Neu-Ulm, 1916-20. The house included decorations and furniture by Häring, and still stands, though somewhat altered.

fortifications. Häring built on and around an old blockhouse, adding a medieval-looking tower to one side, and exploiting the asymmetry thus produced. Perhaps most remarkable, in view of the later work, is the free, irregular staircase which winds its way through the vaulted entrance hall, dramatically defying the primary geometry of the space. Photographs reveal a building of considerable sophistication in the tradition of *gesamtkunstwerk*, for Häring designed not only the doors, panelling and ceiling plasterwork, but also the light fittings, wallpaper, furniture and sculpture.

In 1918 Häring married the actress Emilia Unda, an outstanding interpreter of Wedekind and Strindberg, but also a film star now remembered for her role as the cruel headmistress in *Mädchen in uniform*. In 1921 they moved to Berlin, where Häring became a member of the Novembergruppe. He had difficulty finding a work place, so Mies van der Rohe invited him to share an office, which became a kind of architectural club for modernists. Out of discussions there, the 'Ring' was founded, mainly with the aim of creating a concerted opposition to the planning policies of Ludwig Hoffmann, then Berlin city architect, a prolific though somewhat uninspired neo-classicist whom they eventually ousted. He was replaced by Ring member Martin Wagner, who was responsible for most of Berlin's famous modern housing schemes of the late twenties, such as Siemensstadt and Onkel Toms Hütte, both of which included buildings by Häring. At first the Ring included — besides Mies and Häring — Poelzig, Mendelsohn, Hilbersheimer, the Taut brothers, Bartning, and the critic Walter Curt Behrendt; later others joined from further afield, including Hans Scharoun, then living in Breslau, who was to become a close friend of Häring and in some ways a disciple.

Häring was elected secretary and spokesman for the Ring. More articulate than Mies, and more widely read, he enjoyed intellectual debate and started to write regularly, sometimes on behalf of the Ring, sometimes in a purely theoretical vein. Two influential critics, Ring member Behrendt and Adolf Behne, published his works as examples of frontier modernism in their books.

I shall return later to Häring's work of the early twenties. His first executed project in the modernist vein was the farm at Garkau of 1924-5 (Fig. 14), his best known work. In the following year he designed a sausage factory at Neustadt, demolished in the seventies. There followed, in quick succession, terraced houses at Onkel Toms Hütte, the completion of an urban block in Wedding, and blocks of flats at Siemensstadt (Fig. 4). In the latter, especially, Häring's vigorously expressed construction in warm brick tones stands out against the white render used by Scharoun, Gropius, and others.[5] Mies invited Häring to participate in the Weissenhof exhibition of 1927, and was allotted the large site later developed by Behrens, but pressure of work caused him to withdraw.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, Häring had on his drawing board a large low-rise housing scheme in Berlin; three technical colleges in Cöpenick, won in competition against Gropius and Bartning; and a group of houses at the proposed Kochenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, which was to have been a second Weissenhof (Fig. 5). All this came suddenly to an end. For the Nazis modernism was a degenerate and Bolshevist tendency, and they promoted instead a mixture of stripped classicism in the cities and pseudo-vernacular for houses. Häring lost his large commissions, and the Kochenhofsiedlung was taken over by Paul Schmitthenner and other Nazi architects.

Häring thus found himself out of work, and all that he produced in 1934 were some uncomfortable essays extending his earlier theories about the evolution of architecture.[6] As early as 1926 he had attacked the racist theories of Schulze-Naumburg, a leading Nazi theorist, criticizing his unscholarly interpretation of tradition.[7] Like many of his con-

temporaries Häring was a strong believer in cultural specificity, but without being chauvinistic. Essential to his theory, for example, was a distinction between Nordic and Latin cultural territories and characteristics. None the less, it is difficult to read such things today without feeling uneasy, for Hitler has made every kind of nationalist or regionalist notion suspect.

After 1935 Häring's publications ceased; either he could no longer find a sympathetic editor, or he decided to remain silent. He was having difficulty making ends meet, and it must have come as some relief when he was offered the headship of the celebrated Reimann art school.[8] The Nazis had forced Reimann, a Jew, to leave, but they hesitated to install one of their own puppets or to close the school, because it was full of foreign students, mainly from Scandinavia, who were a valuable source of foreign currency. This peculiar situation left the school a degree of ideological freedom unprecedentcd in Nazi Germany, and Häring was able to re-employ modernist painters such as Oscar Schlemmer and Oscar Moll, who came from, respectively, the closed-down Bauhaus and Breslau Academy.

As the international situation worsened and the foreign intake was lost, Häring struggled against considerable financial and political odds to keep the school going. Finally, in 1943, the building was bombed and attempts to restart the school elsewhere failed. Häring returned to a garret in his native Biberach to immerse himself in theoretical questions and to prepare his book, never completed, about the nature of form, or rather *gestalt*, which means a great deal more.[9] Despite the chaos of the outside world, this was a fertile time for him.

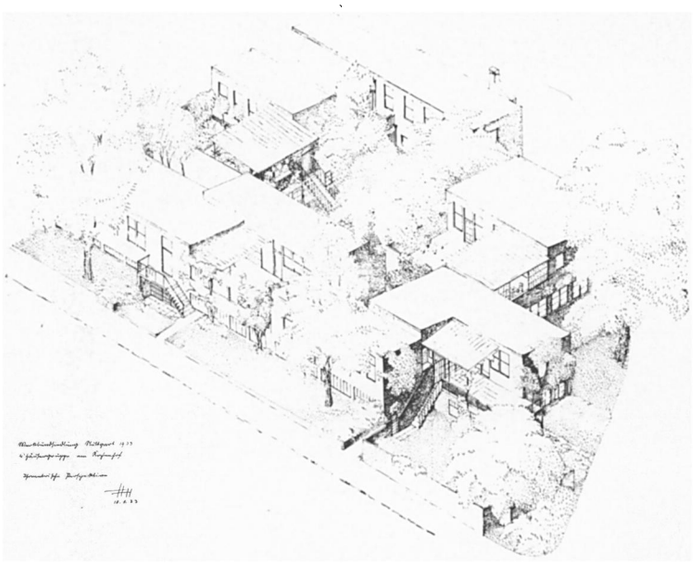
During the Third Reich, Häring built three houses, all with pitched roofs and relatively conventional exteriors, but of considerable interest none the less (Fig. 6).[10] The two houses for the Schmitz family in Biberach (Fig. 7) were his only completed post-war work, though he produced a wealth of designs, some taken even to working-drawing stage, before he was incapacitated by the arteriosclerosis which killed him in 1958, aged 76. In the post-war years he also published several essays and gave some influential lectures. He advised Hans Scharoun on major projects such as the Mannheim theatre competition entry, a forerunner of the Philharmonie, and it is perhaps through his long association with Scharoun that his influence is most strongly felt.

For Behne, Häring was an examplary functionalist, yet he always appears in books on Expressionism: how does this contradiction arise? For Nikolaus Pevsner, the polarity between these two was fundamental.[11] Correct modernism, as ideally represented by Gropius, was scientific, objective, anonymous, styleless, while Expressionism was a degenerate, wilful, irrational tendency which threatened to engulf the new enlightenment in medieval darkness. It is tempting to suppose that behind this conception lies a fear, very understandable in an *émigré*, of the dark side of the German soul.

On one side of Pevsner's oversimplified picture lies the white architecture of the International Style, supposedly functional in its planning and rational in its technology. Yet many of its buildings were inconvenient to use and constructed with difficulty, by hand, to produce a machine image.[12] Far from meekly following the dictates of use, many of the new buildings were composed according to an aesthetic which had its origin in abstract painting, particularly Purism.[13] This abstract formalist influence was not necessarily compatible with the pursuit of functionalist ideas; in fact, both Häring and Hannes Meyer saw the two as contradictory.

The apparent consistency of work in the Weissenhofsiedlung of 1927 is deceptive. The only solidarity consisted in the rejection of applied ornament and traditional fenestration, and beneath their planar surfaces the individual works were very different, and based on divergent concepts. Le Corbusier, for example, demonstrated his five points; Mies attempted a universal block with maximal flexibility of partitioning;

4. Housing at Siemensstadt, Berlin, notable for its colourful expressed construction in contrast with the smooth white render found elsewhere in the development. Häring's slab blocks run north-south perpendicular to the street, with gardens between.



5. Unrealized design for a group of timber-framed houses at the intended Kochenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart, 1933. In contrast to the works at the nearby Weissenhof, which it was meant to supplement, Häring renounced the attempt to create any kind of heroic formal image, in favour of the expression of domestic variety, with courts and terraces taking a strong role.

6. Von Prittwitz house, Starnbergersee, near Munich, 1937, garden front overlooking the lake. A house of some subtlety, which reflects local vernacular tradition without indulging in pastiche.

7. Schmitz house, Biberach, 1950, one of a pair which were Häring's last executed works. The space between the concrete legs was originally left open, allowing a more dynamic connection with the garden.

Oud updated the traditional cross-wall terraced house; Gropius experimented with grid-planning; and Scharoun exploited his corner site to produce a highly differentiated series of living-spaces.

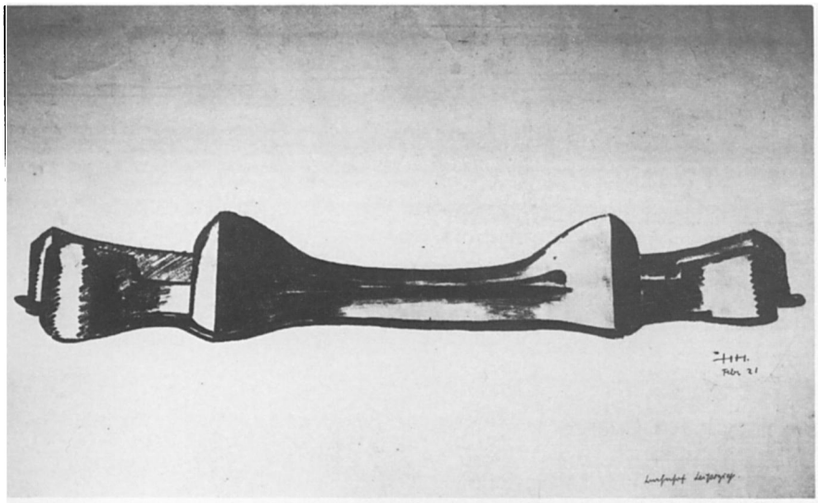
The term Expressionism is equally troublesome. Pevsner used it indiscriminately, referring not only to Taut, Mendelsohn and Poelzig, but to Gaudi, Niemeyer, and even late Le Corbusier. Used less loosely to describe German tendencies between about 1910 and 1925, it is still problematic, and much easier to identify in painting or film-making (the film *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* perhaps exemplifies it best). Although there are undeniable traces of the same sensibility in the architecture of the period, this is only part of the story. When looking at the works of Poelzig or Taut around 1920, for example, one cannot discount what they were doing ten years earlier — the Arts and Crafts influence, the Garden City.

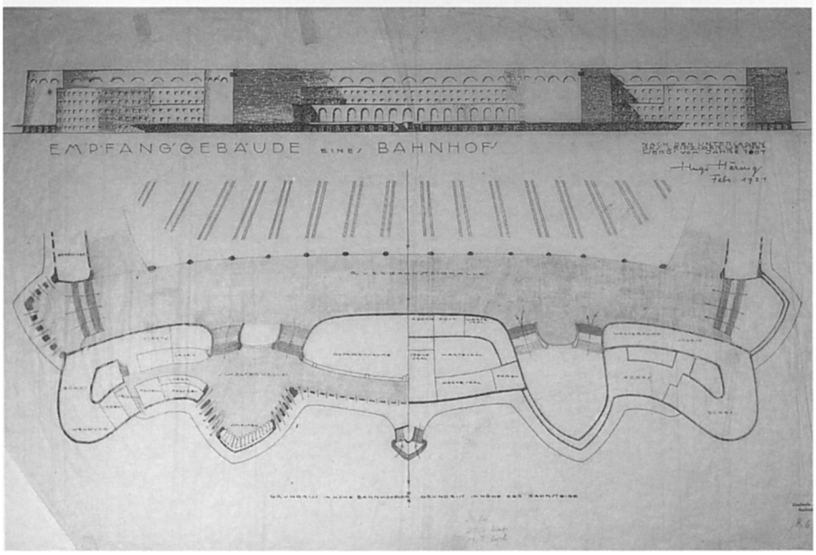
In the early seventies Julius Posener pointed out, in his 'Critique of the Criticism of Functionalism',[14] that Häring was perhaps its most serious theoretical proponent. To my knowledge the only architect to go further was Hannes Meyer, whose famous tract 'Bauen', given at the Bauhaus in 1928, suggests design based entirely on a process of objective measurement and analysis.[15] It is important to understand the difference between Häring's functionalism and that of Meyer, for Meyer's quantitative functionalism — the attempt to reduce design to mathematical formulae — lay at the root of modernism's post-war impoverishment. Such positivism prompted the conversion, during the sixties, of departments of architecture into departments of environmental design, and when I was a student at the Architectural Association in the late sixties it was still being taught under the title 'systematic design'. Häring did not follow this path, for he soon realized its limitations. Thus, although he could write in 1924 that 'a window has three functions: lighting, ventilation and view', going on, as Meyer might have done, to define how these three might be met,[16] he later criticized such attitudes and gradually came to see through the *leistungsform* — 'the form required by performance' — to the questions which lay behind it.[17] He also sought to define more and more clearly a conflict between form and content, which he felt was deeply rooted in the history of architecture.

Early in 1921 Häring reworked an old competition design for a railway station (Fig. 8), attempting to allow the plan to be generated by the flow of passengers — platforms are tapered as the traffic reduces, corners are turned smoothly and fluidly. As he noted on one of the sketches, he wanted to 'solve the plan like a town plan with paths, roads, squares'. He was also experimenting with irregular house plans whose rooms depend on circulation flow, and on defining space with particular arrangements of furniture.

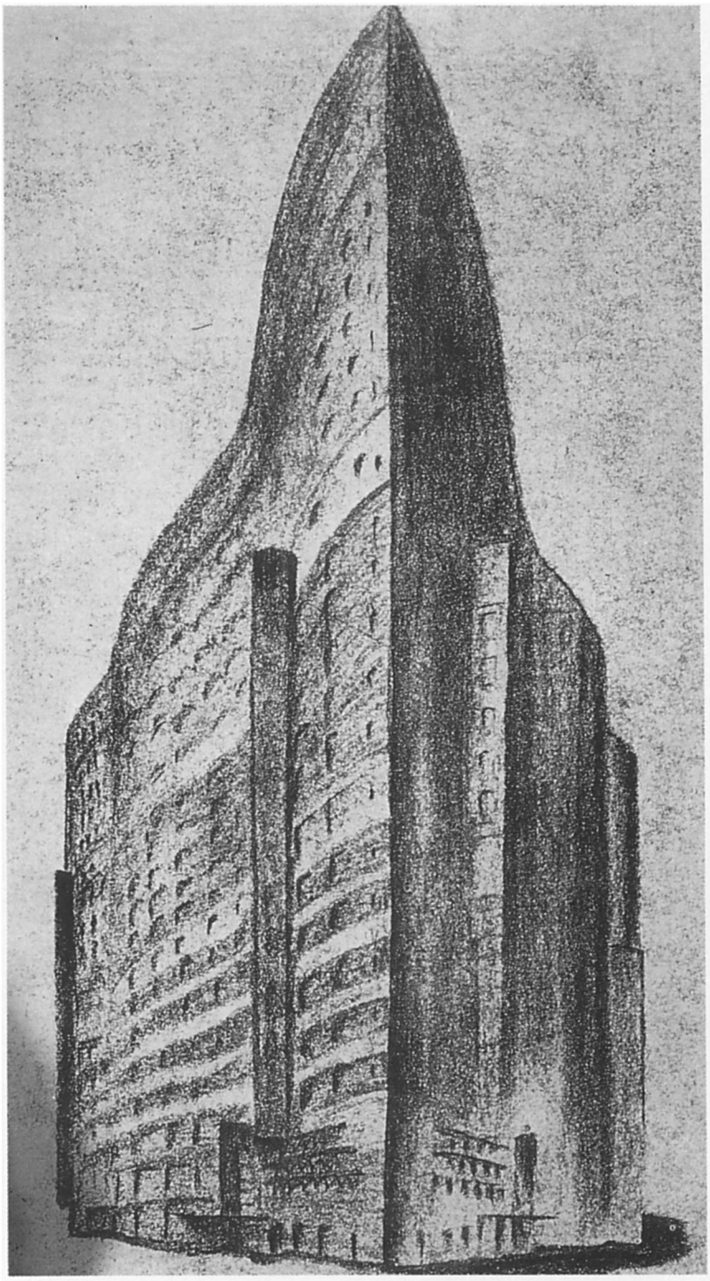
In the next year a competition was held for the first multi-storey office block in Berlin, at Friedrichstrasse station. Häring's entry (Fig. 9), boldly entitled '*funktionale form*', is curvilinear, with great attention to fluidity of circulation and tapered passages. He takes advantage of the triangular centre of the site to contain the fan-shaped cinema, a mutual reinforcement of forms which also strengthens the implied axis. The massive, solid-looking outer wall is in complete contrast with Mies's famous entry, also pointed, but all of glass.

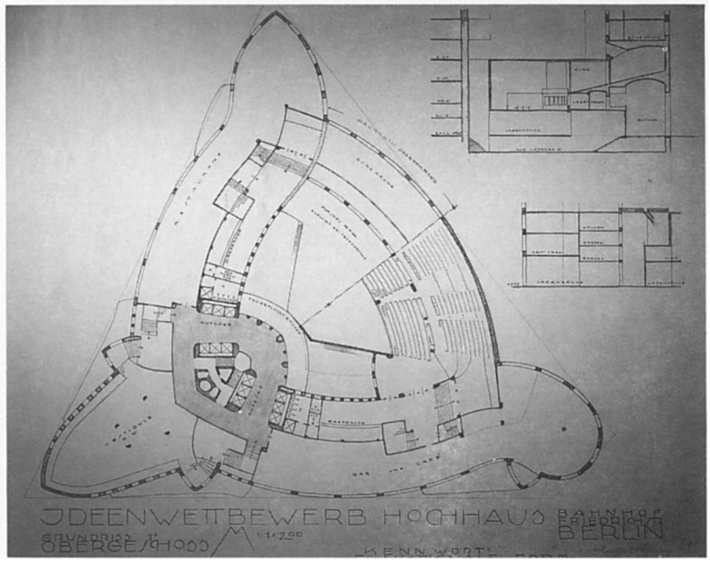
The drawings for the Friedrichstrasse project may seem a bit crude, even naive, but, if so, it is the technique that deceives, for in the same period Häring produced a large and sophisticated project in the traditional mould (Fig. 10). The prize-winning scheme in a competition for a hospital in Rio de Janeiro, it has a pitched roof, axial courtyard plan, and columns with bases and capitals. Only the tapered wards expanding towards their entrance side seem directly to reflect his functionalist interests, though the central path through the complex, with its two colonnades and elongated fountain court, does suggest his continuing concern with route and progression. The symmetrical disposition



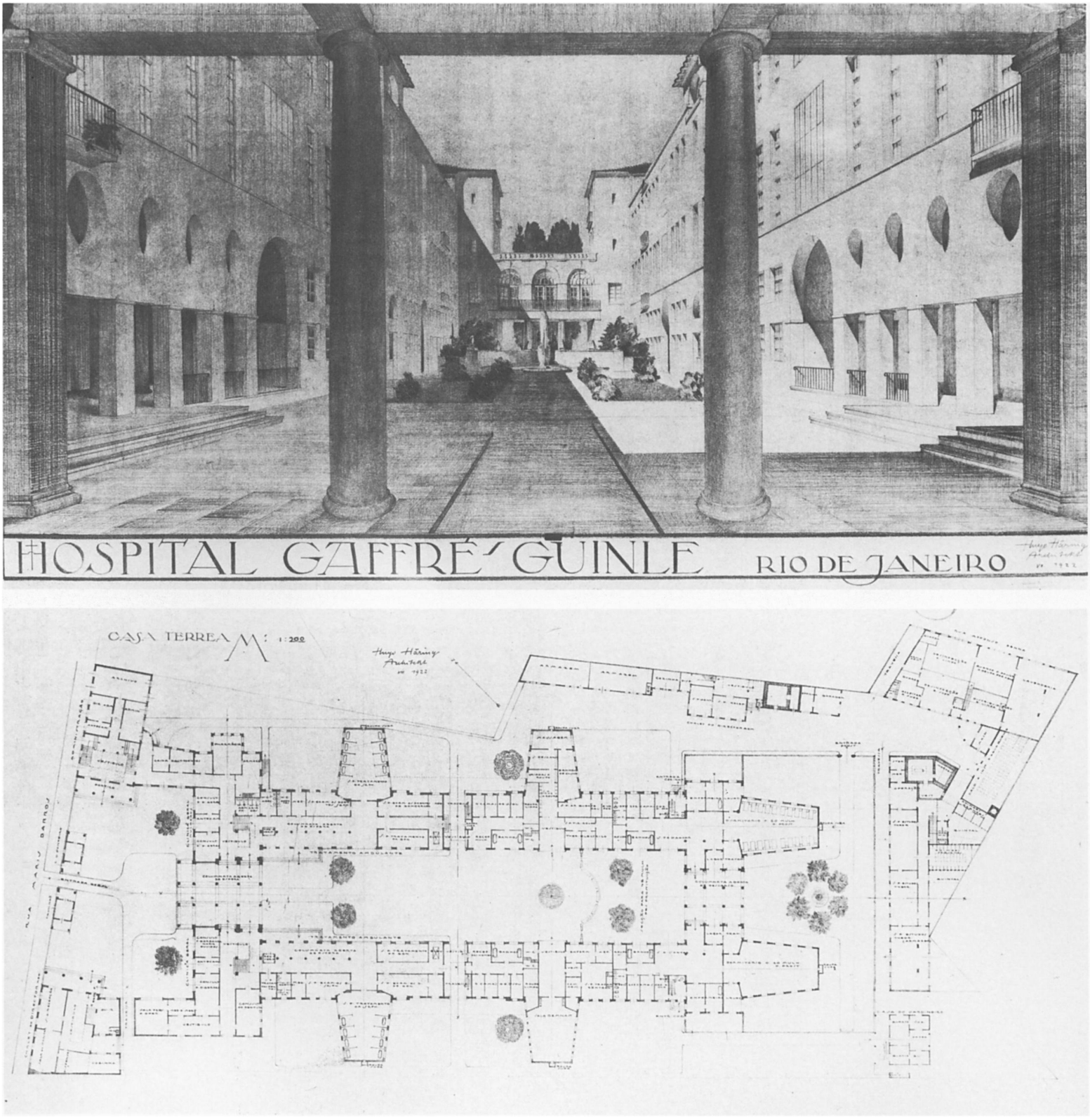


8. Design for a railway station, 1921, a theoretical reworking of an earlier competition project according to ideas about movement flow.

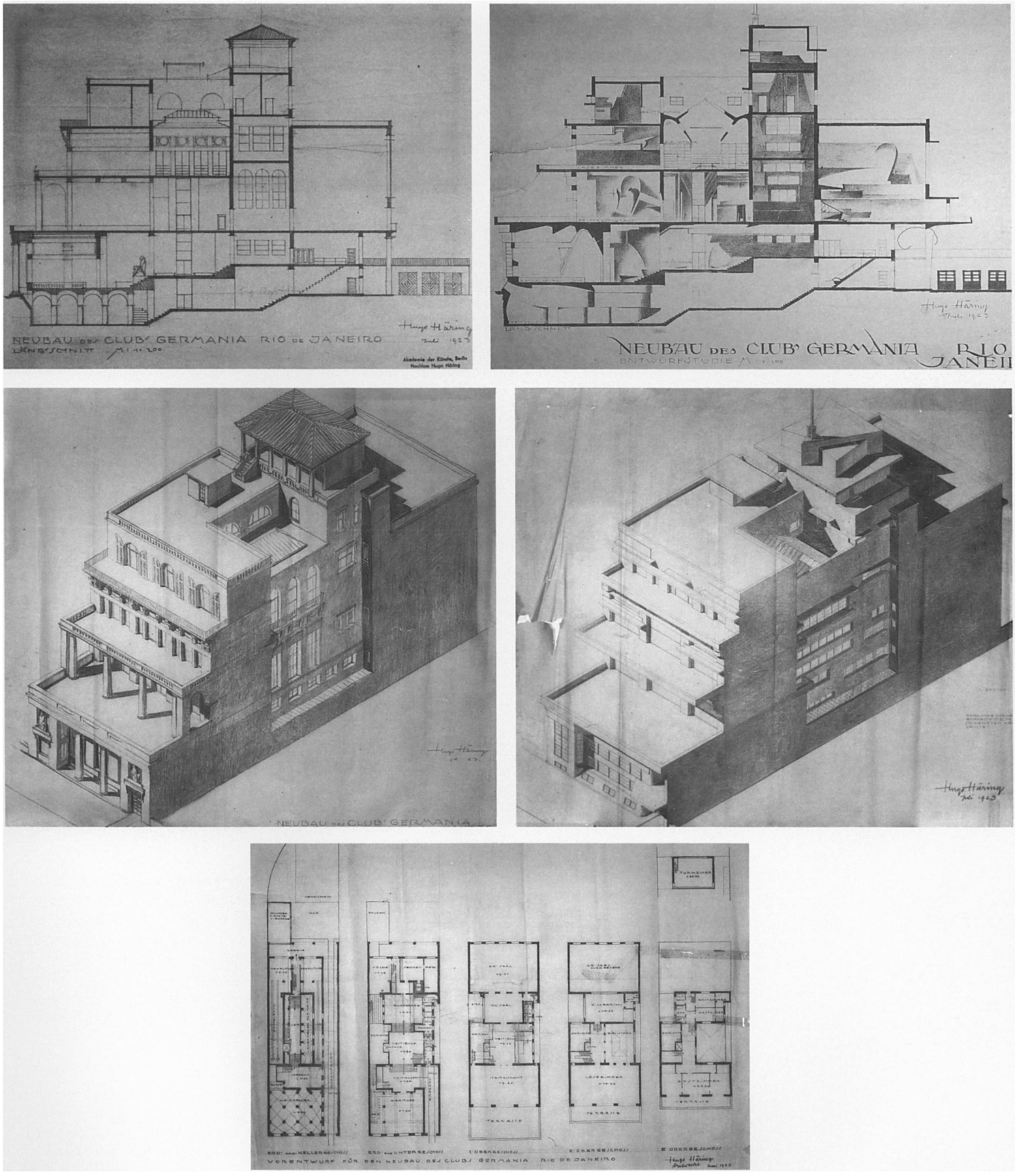




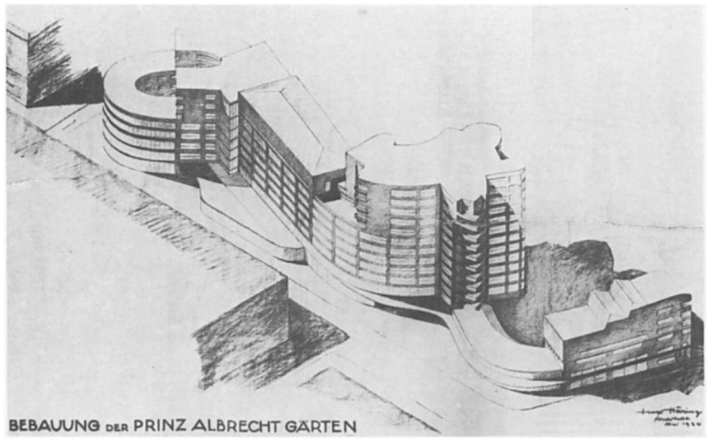
9. Perspective sketch and plan of Häring's competition entry for the first tall office-block in Berlin, proposed for Friedrichstrasse, 1922.



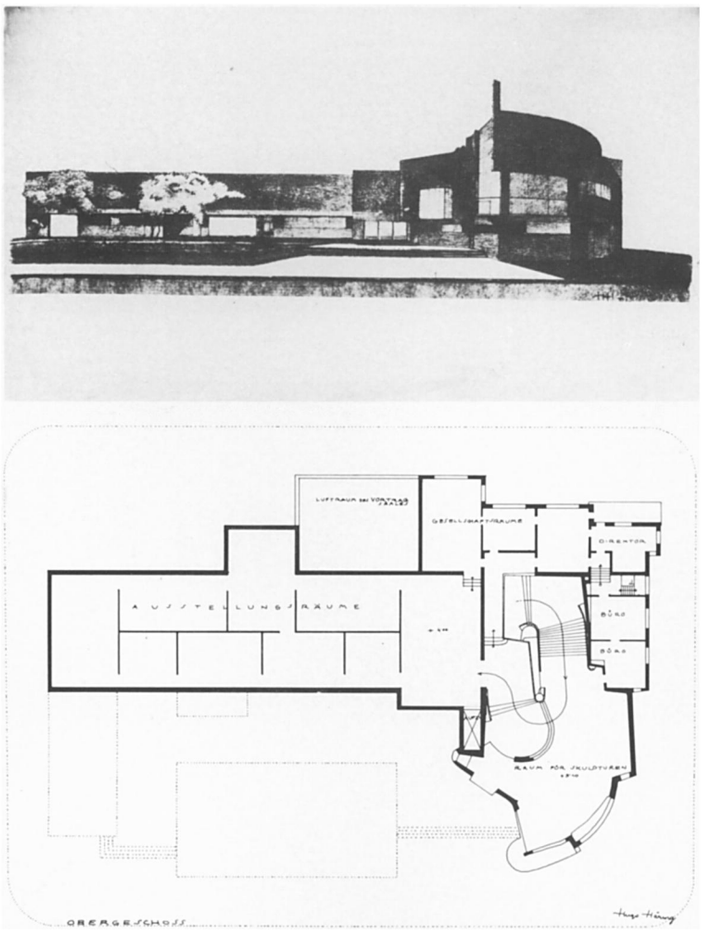
10. Perspective of central court and plan of competition-winning design for a hospital in Rio de Janiero, 1922. According to Häring, it was built.



11. Neo-classical and modernist version of a design for the German Club in Rio, 1923. Only one set of plans survives, which largely applies to both, though basement vaulting suggests it was drawn with the classical version in mind. The plans run from left to right in ascending order, starting with the basement.



12. Project for a building at the Prince Albrecht Gardens, Berlin, 1924



13. Perspective and first-floor plan retraced from the original of competition project for the Berlin Secession, 1926. On the ground floor (not illustrated), entry through either of two wind-lobbies leads to a hall with cloakroom facilities, a lecture room and publications office occupying the space to the rear. The first landing of the great sweeping stair becomes the café, and the second the sculpture gallery, leading on to a series of toplit exhibition spaces.

divides the sexes, and there are a series of entrances for different groups along the central route.[18]

Häring had two brothers who emigrated to Brazil, which presumably explains the connection, and he produced a design in the next year, 1923, for the German Club in Rio (Fig. 11), which is of especial interest. This project exists in two versions — one neo-classical, the other modern — which were executed almost simultaneously. Perhaps Häring was hedging his bets with the client, but he was also attempting to strip away the conventions of style, experimenting with new kinds of windows and rooflights, moulding ceilings around artificial lights, and layering wall surfaces in a painterly way. The transformation is astonishing, but perhaps equally interesting is what is carried from one project to the other. The site was presumably urban, and blind at the sides, apart from lightwells that could be formed by recessions, so that contact with the outside depended on exploitation of the ends, using stepped terraces and the necessary sunshade devices. A series of major rooms linked by ceremonial stairs create an elaborate spatial progression which only a detailed study of the plans reveals. This knitting-together of spatial relationships in both hospital and club links the traditionalist Häring with the modernist, as it persists in all his buildings, regardless of the vocabulary of form and construction that he used. This is the tacit continuity which denies the notion of a *tabula rasa* and shows that, at this stage of modernism at least, a rich inheritance was not yet lost.

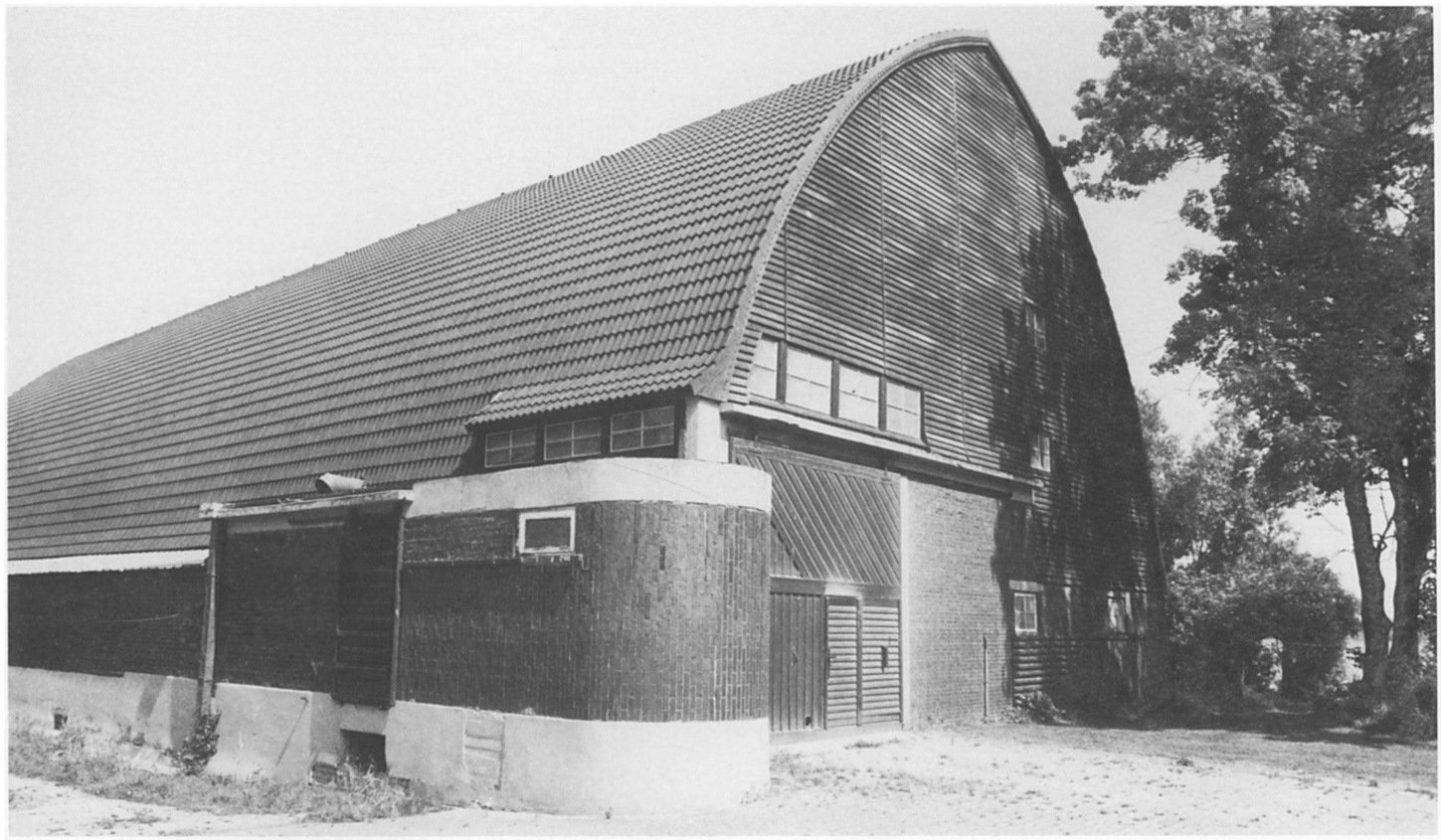
By the following year, with Häring's project for a building at the Prinz Albrecht Garten, Berlin (Fig. 12), the curvilinear experiments are beginning to look rather more convincing, at least in three dimensions. The disposition of the parts exploits the odd-shaped site, to create a pair of linked rectangular spaces behind; shops follow the street line except where pulled back for the two main corner entrances; and the head of the main building, which is also the highest part, articulates a group of important offices and conference rooms. This solid head contrasts with an empty tail in the form of an oval lightwell. The rectangular building on the right-hand end is an exhibition hall with large areas of glazing. The orientation is not given in the published plans, and the originals have been lost.

The plan of a competition design of 1926 for a new gallery for the Berliner Secession (Fig. 13) shows an unprecedented sophistication which anticipates the kind of free planning characteristic of the foyers of public buildings by Scharoun and Aalto in the fifties. The innovative element is the great sweeping stair which takes over one end of the building, absorbing the refreshments room on its first landing, then becoming the sculpture gallery on its second, leading finally to a cool series of exhibition galleries at first-floor level.

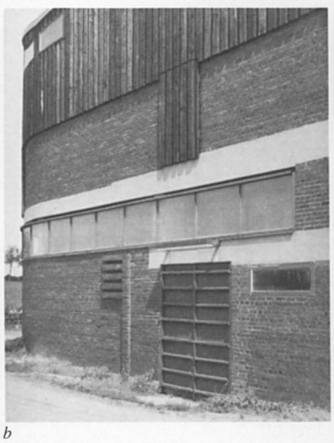
Garkau farm of 1924–5 (Fig. 14) probably achieved the fame it did because it was Häring's first modernist building, and one of the most tectonically conscious buildings of the period. Häring saw this building as a proving-ground for his ideas, and wrote an article on why he considered it an exemplary piece of functionalism.[19]

Garkau lies on the Pönitzersee a few miles north of Lübeck. The client was a progressive farmer committed to the latest methods, and certainly as concerned with performance as with appearance. In their early years the buildings were visited by farmers as well as architects, and the present owner confirms that they functioned well until the economics of the EEC forced him out of milk and into pigs.

Häring planned a whole farm, but only the barn, cowshed and vehicle sheds were constructed, the buildings being loosely grouped around the farmyard. The barn is mainly of interest for its lamella roof, a form of construction using a number of short interlocking timbers following the line of thrust, which produces a Gothic arch shape. This was a technique known for a century or so in Germany, but revived in the early twenties, perhaps by Otto Bartning, who used it before Häring. Its main



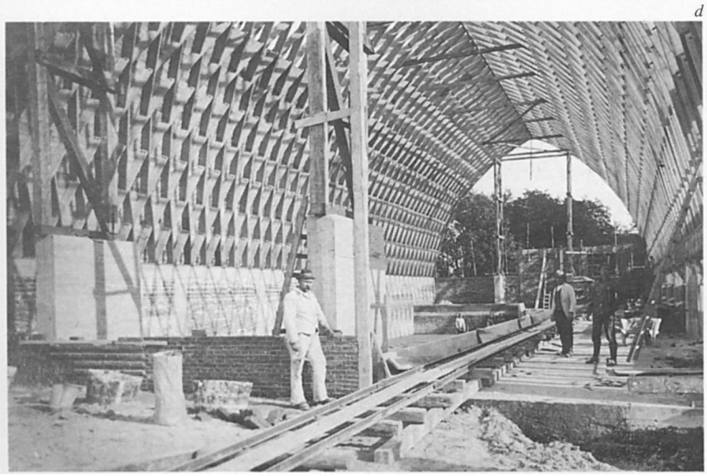
a

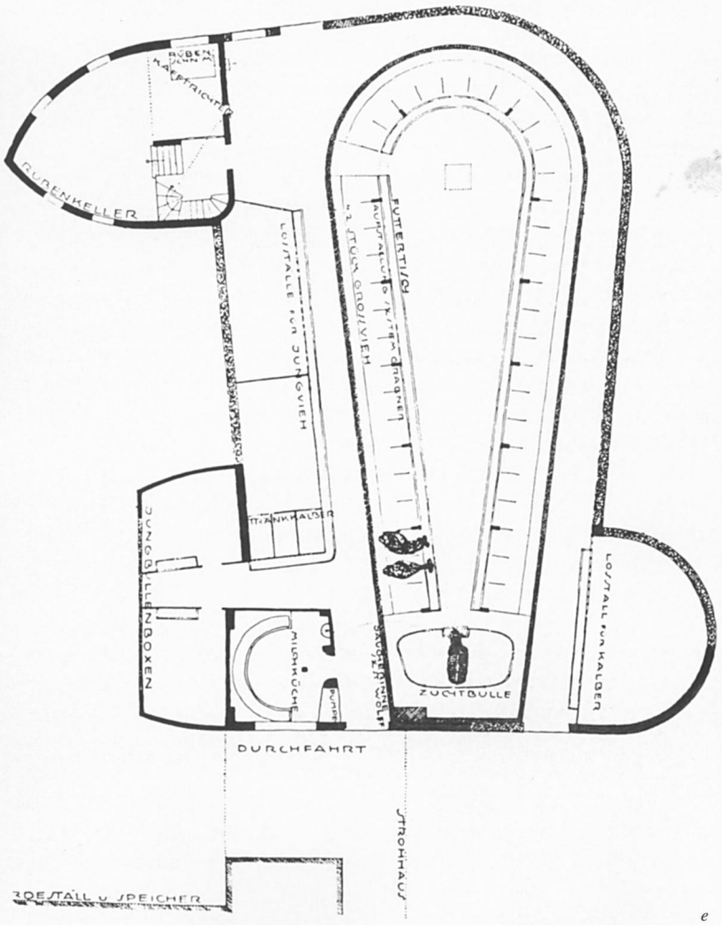


b

c

d





e

14. Farm buildings at Garkau, near Lübeck, 1924/25: a) barn; b) cowshed, round end, with hayloft above; c) barn end detail; d) barn under construction, showing lamella roof; e) plan (the dark line behind the cowstalls is not a wall, but the slurry-drain in the floor).

advantage as the roof of a barn is that the need for cross struts and ties is almost eliminated, leaving unobstructed space for storage. It is typical of Häring at this time that he used the most form-determining structure he knew — the most direct reflection of purpose.

The cowshed is far more complex. An implied longitudinal axis centres the main body of the building, to which various ancillary parts are added. The key to the organization is the section, with cows stabled on opposite sides of a feed-distribution floor supplied, by means of a hatch, from the hayloft above. The sloping ceiling produces convection currents to guide the cows' warm expired breath to ventilators above the perimeter band of windows, while, in the loft above, the floor slopes helpfully towards the hatchway. The inverted roof of the hayloft follows the same pattern, and leads to a single rainwater outlet. All this is made clear enough in Häring's essay, but he is less clear about the reasons for the pear-shaped plan. Obviously the section could be extruded to produce a linear building, which would be much easier to construct than the tapered version. Why, then, the pear? I would suggest three reasons, in ascending order of importance. First, the feed floor tapers in sympathy with the reducing quantity of fodder distributed, for the hatch is placed at the centre of the round end. Second, the round end allows for a smooth route around as the cows enter and leave, for the main doors are at the pointed end. Third, and most important, there has to be a place for the bull: his, of course, is the large pen at the pointed end.

Häring confirmed the importance of this in an interview he gave in the fifties. He explained the genesis of the plan as follows:[20]

> First I asked my farmer client what is the natural feeding pattern for cows, and he told me they gather around their food in a circle. But with a circle of 42 cows, too much space is lost in the middle, so an oval is more efficient. Then a place has to be made for the bull, hence the pear shape.

In his earlier essay of 1925, however, there is no explanation of the position of the bull. Perhaps the expression of his relationship with the cows seemed of rather dubious value next to the more strictly pragmatic considerations — but it is obviously the essential idea.

The contrast between a linear plan — such as would be obtained simply by extruding the section — and the pear-shaped one is crucial to an understanding of Häring's intentions. The linear version would be a system, infinitely extensible and without ends, whereas the pear-shaped one has two contrasting ends which work in different ways, and is complete within itself. This gives it a *gestalt*, 'a being-like character', as Häring put it in his later theoretical writings. It is not a system, but a way of grouping forty-two cows and a bull. Change the number of cows, admitted Häring, and another arrangement might be appropriate. We shall see that he kept his word on this.

The major axis centres the section, the main structure, and the arrangement of cows and bull. The hierarchically subordinate elements around the edge are semi-independent, each with its own *raison d'être*. The pointed projection at the southwest corner is the root cellar with silo above, the latter having a monopitch tower through which it is filled by an aperture in the vertical side, and a pyramidal base to bring the silage down to one delivery chute close to the entry to the feed floor. Within the main space, side stalls are given to the heifers, and the projection to the southeast houses bullocks in a separate room. The semicircular room by the entrance is the milk preparation room, with a cooling trough for churns around its edge, and the semicircular annexe on the north is for calves. It is without corners, claims Häring, because calves tend to trap one another in corners. The whole arrangement was designed to be compact and easy to run, requiring minimal labour, and it worked.

Gut Garkau was Häring's first opportunity to build for several years, so that, not only did he have to develop the design more thoroughly, he also had to commit himself in terms of construction, which consists essentially of a concrete frame with columns, the elements tapering with reduced load. The external wall is brickwork below and timber boarding for the upper parts of the hayloft above, the latter originally left untreated to go a silver-grey colour. The concrete frame is frequently expressed externally, and there are numerous projecting brick details, providing rubbing strips to fend off unloading carts, vertical stops for sliding doors, and so on. Wherever there was reason to change the brick bond — such as in the tightly rounded wall at the corner of the barn which goes into soldier course — the textural effect is exploited. Just as Häring dramatized the expression of the content of the building beyond its practical value, so he also exploited the visual effects of construction. A clear example is the large sliding door on the barn end, where the diagonal brace performs a necessary role but is further dramatized, in a way that is not strictly necessary, by running the boarding either side of it in different directions.

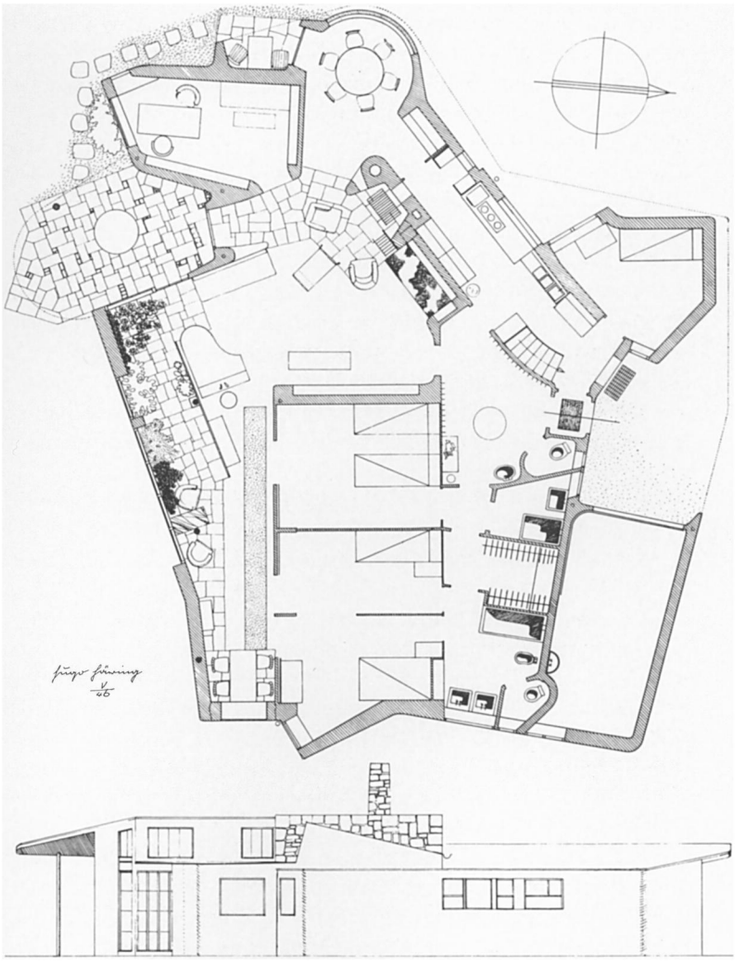
After describing his cowshed in strictly practical terms, Häring concludes: 'The form or arrangement of this building was won (or discovered) through pursuing the goal of correspondence to the demands of performance fulfilment in the most straightforward and simple way.'[21] He goes on to say that there is no room in such a scheme for folk-art, earthy traditions of Saxon gables with horses heads on the top, but that the buildings none the less belong more to the place and landscape than older buildings nearby because of their *innerer zugehörigkeit* ('inner belongingness').

In his best known essay, 'Wege zur form',[22] dating from the same year, 1925, Häring speaks of forms being allowed to grow from within rather than being imposed from without, of the task finding its own expression. The essay ends: 'We should not try to express our own individuality, but rather the individuality of things: their expression should be identical with their being.' In other words, the architect is the medium through which the task expresses itself. Louis Kahn evidently had the same intuition when he spoke of the 'existence will' of a building, while Aalto too spoke of allowing the materials to express themselves.

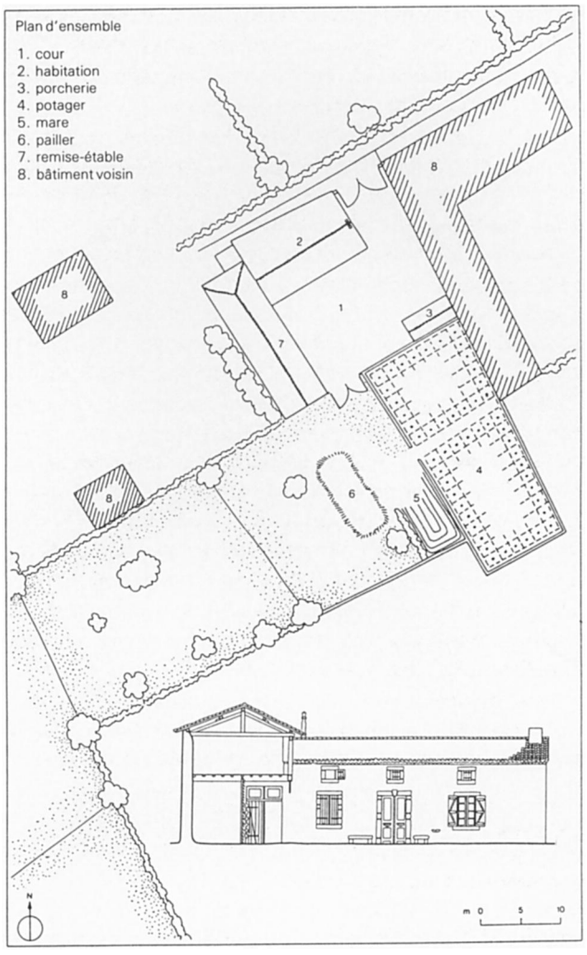
All these architects made frequent use of the organic analogy, seeing the unity of form and being in plants and animals as an ideal. Häring used the word *organ-haft* ('organ-like') and later spoke of *wesenhafter gestalt* ('being-like form'). His position is one of extreme specificity: every situation has its particular elements giving it its unique character, its *wesenhafte gestalt*.

Mies van der Rohe, reminiscing about his time with Häring in the twenties, reported that arguments raged between them about the value of flexibility. Häring tried to design a tight corner for everything, while he, Mies, believed in providing a neutral space which could be used in a variety of ways.[23] Underlying this argument, however, was a much deeper issue: the source of form, and relation of form to content. Looking at house projects which both produced in the late forties it becomes very clear. Mies retreats to an elegant minimalism with his fifty-foot-square house, celebrating the purity of a universal type. The house stands temple-like in the landscape, detached from the ground, framing available views, but not allowing any other kind of interaction. The same kind of glass wall faces north as south. Within, furnishings are reduced to a minimum, and ritualistically placed. There is no room for the usual clutter of life and, if added, it would painfully disrupt the tranquil harmony so judiciously obtained.

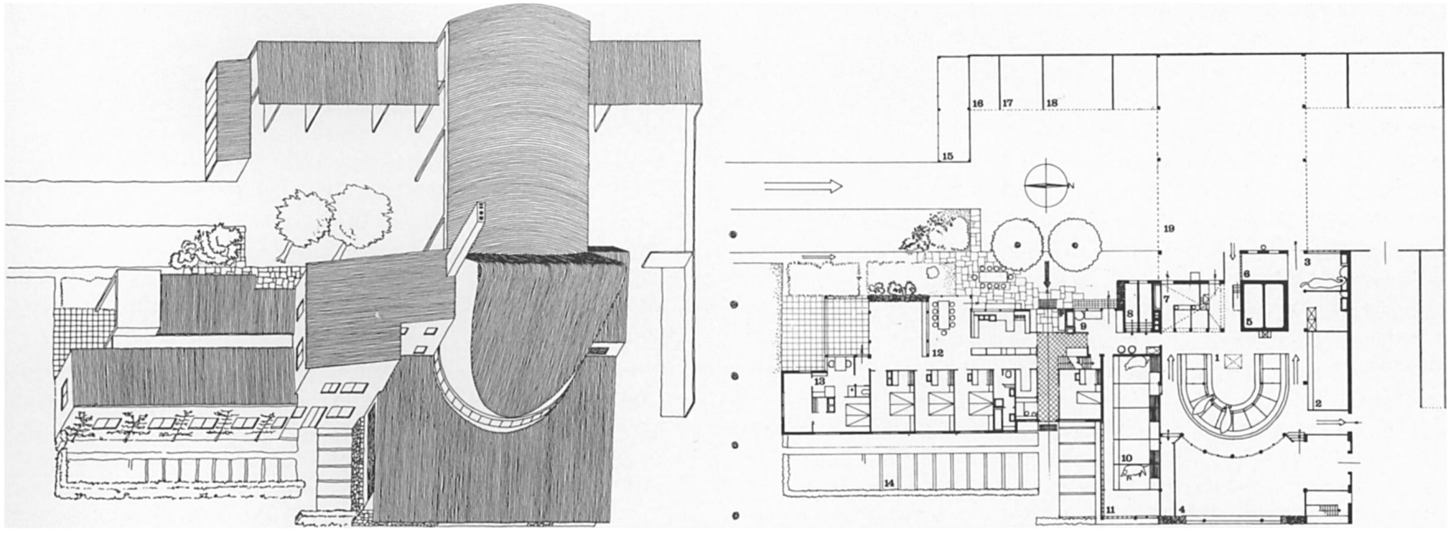
Häring, on the other hand, produces a plan in which the parts dominate the whole, relationships and orientations are all important, and furnishings appear in astonishing detail (Fig. 15). He does not bother to draw all the elevations because appearance is not his primary concern. His interest lies rather in the way of life implied by the organization, a projected experience which is not just visual but spatial, tactile, active, familiar. For Mies the house could exist almost independently, thus the signs of life, lest they threaten the purity of the form, are reduced to a



15. Plan and elevation of theoretical project for a house, 1946.



17. Site plan and main elevation of French farmhouse in the Toulouse region, drawings taken from L'Architecture rurale française.



16. Design for farm buildings, 1943. Projection constructed by the author on the basis of the original drawings, and plan retraced from a pencil original. 1) cowshed; 2) cows; 3) horses; 4) straw barn; 5) silo; 6) foals; 7) milking parlour; 8) potato silo; 9) laundry; 10) pigsty; 11) piglets; 12) farmhouse; 13) old people's flat; 14) vegetable garden; 15) henhouse; 16) workshop; 17) garage; 18) machine sheds; 19) covered area.

minimum. For Häring the reverse is the case: the content is the life-blood of the design process, and without it there is no house.

These were both notional projects, and they pinpoint each architect at his extreme. The contrast articulates the divide between those more concerned with pursuit of the specific, like Häring, Scharoun, and Aalto, and those who tended more towards the universal, like Mies, Gropius, and Hilbersheimer. This distinction might yet provide a fertile starting-point for a reformulation of the Modern Movement.

Throughout Häring's writings, geometry is presented as an impediment to the task requiring to express itself. This was neither a cry for anarchy or free form, nor a denial of geometry in every sense. It was a reaction, rather, against the kind of academic classicism which Häring had met in his education, where the geometric *parti* dominates the programme, and relentless axes demand otherwise superfluous ceremonial terminations. He was objecting to precisely that divorce of form from content which originated with the positivism of the Enlightenment and is most clearly expressed in the empty typologies of Durand. But Häring also argued that the meaning of geometry in architecture had changed fundamentally, that it no longer carried the rational mystique it had for the Greeks or the symbolic power it had for the medieval masons. Geometry, claimed Häring, had become only a tool, and had no hidden magic.[24] This he saw as a gain, since it would free us to give more expression to the requirements of life.

He frequently challenged Le Corbusier, especially at the CIAM conference of 1928, for he felt that the functionalist ideas of the 'new building' had been betrayed for the sake of a new formalism. He understood only too well the aesthetic intentions of Purism, which later found expression in the Modulor, but disagreed on their relevance. The golden mean simply produces a richness of geometric associations, he claimed, but that in itself is not enough — giving someone a good fiddle does not enable them to produce a good tune.[25]

In his own work, Häring nearly always followed a geometric framework of some kind, often for tectonic reasons; but the geometry tends to be subservient rather than dominant. It is the relationship of particular places within the overall organization which is important, tempered only by the demands of construction.

In this regard it is revealing to look at a recently rediscovered late work, which develops the ideas of Garkau in a more subtle though slightly less dramatic way. During the war Häring designed a much more elaborate farm complex, probably for relations of the friends he was living with, but nothing came of it. I discovered a series of beautiful but faint pencil drawings in the archives, which had remained unpublished perhaps because unreproducible. These I traced off in ink, and I also constructed an axonometric to reveal the three-dimensional implications of Häring's plans and elevations (Fig. 16).[26]

In this design, the main generating principles of Garkau were retained, particularly in the cowhouse section with hayloft above. The sloping floor between the two allows, as at Garkau, easy distribution of the hay, and helps to produce a convection pattern which takes the warm breath of the cows away to ventilators above the band of windows on the perimeter. Being a smaller farm with a milking herd of only twelve cows and no bull, the pear-shaped plan is replaced by a horseshoe shape, which still reflects the tendency of cows to gather around their food. Food is thus the focal point, with calves and heifers again in side stalls like spectators to the main action. Pigs are set to one side in rectangular stalls, while horses are close to the back yard where they will be harnessed.

As at Garkau, principal routes for the cattle in to and out of the cowshed are direct and fluid, but in this case they also generate a pair of implied axes which locate the sheltered area beyond, bridging the yard. The enfolding of external space is more positive than at Garkau, and all elements are connected within one complex. The relation between the farmer and his animals is clearly expressed by the way their dwellings are related: linked but placed in balanced contrast. The two halves are held in tension by a cross passage which both connects and separates them, the axis of which collides with that of the main drive to centre the front yard (marked on the plan by the north point). If the major east-west axis is thus defined, it is itself crossed within the complex by two north-south axes with contrasting roles.

The first, just inside the entrance from the yard, might be called the working passage, for it connects the dining room of the dwelling at one end, with the cowhouse at the other, taking in on its way all those elements which are functionally transitional between farm and house: kitchen, laundry, animal-feed preparation, potato cellar and dairy, in that order. This passage also helps to define a zone of storage silos lying between yard and cowhouse, where delivered fodder is placed before being distributed to the animals, whose location is thus functionally transitional in the west-east direction.

The other north-south axis is entirely domestic, being the main communications link in the house. It runs from the old people's flat at the south end, to the staircase, dividing the living rooms facing west into the farmyard from the quieter east-facing bedrooms.

This strong axial network defines the major connections, but is entirely subservient to the interpretation of the programme, which makes it a very different kind of axiality from that of the Beaux-Arts, which had its own relentless logic and its own implied hierarchy to which the programme could only be subservient. This demonstrates what Häring understood by the contrast between the organic and the geometric, and his use of axes and orthogonal layouts was in no sense contradictory to his beliefs.

In his pursuit of an architecture specific to a way of life, Häring claimed to be pursuing the unselfconscious tradition of everyday building rather than architecture with a capital A, a term which he reserved for products of the Latin tradition. It might be revealing, therefore, to compare Häring's farm designs with traditional farmsteads.

Some of the more socially penetrating studies of indigenous architecture reveal rich networks of spatial relationships closely reflecting the social life and activities contained. A convenient example is a humble farmstead in southwest France (Fig. 17), documented in the series *L'Architecture rurale française*.[27] This is a small farmstead near Toulouse, which lies near the centre of a village, one of a number of L-shaped arrangements most of which face southeast. The primary space is a farmyard contained by its own and neighbouring buildings. This yard is open at two opposite corners, connected by a lane to the village on the north, and with its own meadows to the south: thus it is transitional between the public realm and the smallholding which it controls. The part of the yard bounded by its own buildings is almost square, implying that the entrance route running beside the house defines a secondary space. This treatment also assures that the public entrance to the yard takes precedence over that from the meadows, the gates of the former also being larger. The two wings which embrace the yard are given over respectively to house and barn. Although the barn, constructed in timber, is higher, the more prestigious stone-built house dominates. This is mainly because it has a formal façade with an implied central axis running through its main door and bisecting the yard — the barn suggests no corresponding cross-axis. Although the imbalance between living-room and bedroom pushes the façade off centre, the fenestration is kept symmetrical to reinforce the presence of the front door, and paired benches are placed at its sides. All this is in marked contrast to the treatment of the back of the house — and it is very much the back — where lowly storage rooms take up residual space; and the wall departs from the orthogonal system of the yard to follow a site boundary, producing an irregular roof with slanting eaves.

Entering the house one finds the *salle commune* — focus of domestic life and hospitality — on the right-hand side, the dominant side. Its fire-

place is in the end wall, over which are hung pictures and crucifix, marking this as the most special place. From here everything seems to be disposed around the yard hierarchically, running anticlockwise in descending order of importance. To the left of the house entrance is the secondary room, the *chambre*, and in the corner between house and barn the horses and cattle are stabled, while beyond comes storage of equipment. Both upper storeys are stores for grain and produce. The ordering of the meadow side is also of interest. The route out of the yard terminates in the pond, running between the strawstack and the central path of the vegetable garden, a remarkably axial arrangement.

Looking at such an ensemble, one cannot but imagine a way of life. In many ways such buildings were born of utility, and yet utility is not the whole story, for vital hierarchical relationships are expressed beyond the utilitarian. On the other hand, the farmstead does not really symbolize the life that goes on inside it either, for it is not read as symbol; rather, it embodies that life.

In order to make sense of life, we have to structure it in time and space, give it the rhythm of daily, weekly or yearly rituals.[28] Our divisions of space are bound to reflect the relationships between persons and between them and their tasks. In traditional building the ordering came about unconsciously, and indeed most of the time we take it for granted. We do not think about what a bedroom is, for example, until we encounter the Japanese habit of rolling out their bedding on the floor of any room. This is perhaps rather obvious, yet it has not been properly understood in relation to Functionalism, because of the rigid distinctions we tend to draw between the utilitarian and the ceremonial, between use and meaning. Yet every building, by its very organization, implies a way of life, and, if architecture is to be more than merely cosmetic, it has to face this issue. At Garkau the bull's hierarchical position on the axis reflects his importance as the genetic centre of the herd and the most valuable animal. To have put him in an identical stall alongside the cows would have allowed him to be looked after equally well, but it would also have denied the significance of his role in the life of the farm.

I would like to acknowledge the generous co-operation of the Berlin Arts Academy, who gave me access to their archive of the surviving drawings, many unpublished, and also the help and advice of Margot Aschenbrenner.

Notes

1. The standard work list, almost comprehensive, was prepared when the material left by Häring was catalogued. It was printed in J. Joedicke and L. Lauterbach, *Hugo Häring: Schriften, Entwürfe, Bauten* (Stuttgart, 1964), pp. 156-68.
2. Ibid. p. 62. Häring always used lower-case letters, in conscious rebellion against the historically recent habit of capitalizing all German nouns. He objected particularly to the idea that *Gott* (God) and *Stein* (stone) might be made to seem equivalent. In his later writings *Gott* and *Logos* appear in all capital letters, against a background of all lower case.
3. I have tried: see my translation of 'Problems of Art and Structure in Building', 1931, in *9H* 7 (1985).
4. There is hardly anything in English on Fischer, and the German book by Pfister is rare. For a brief account, see: Winfried Nerdinger, 'Theodor Fischer', in *Architectural Review*, November 1986, pp. 61-5. Nerdinger, of the Technische Universität, Munich, is preparing a major exhibition of Fischer, and published a short article on him in the *Architectural Review* of November 1986.
5. I should perhaps add that behind this tectonic expression was some real constructional innovation. Häring and his assistant Karl Böttcher made bold use of reinforced brickwork, a variation on the tradition of the *Prüsswand*.
6. See: 'Probleme der stilbildung', in: Joedicke and Lauterbach, op.cit., pp. 35-43.
7. See: 'Die tradition, Schulze-Naumburg, und wir', ibid. p. 19.
8. For a general account of the Reimann-Schule, see: *Kunstschule-Reform 1900-33* (Bauhaus-Archiv, Berlin, 1984), pp. 246-90.
9. *Gestalt* can mean the form or shape of something, the role assumed by an actor, or the recognized figure of visual perception (hence gestalt psychology). The verb *gestalten* means to arrange or fashion something, to give it form or structure. This implication of the inner nature of things makes the term more resonant than our use of it. The title of the book was to have been *die ausbildung des geistes zur arbeit an der gestalt* (*The Education of the Spirit Towards Work on Gestalt*). The collected notes were assembled and edited by Margot Aschenbrenner and published by the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, as *Fragmente*.
10. For a detailed study of the von Prittwitz house of 1937, see: *Architectural Review*, June 1985, pp. 40-43.
11. See, typically: *Pioneers of Modern Design* (1960), p. 217.
12. This paradox is keenly observed by Lucien Kroll in his book *Composants*.
13. See the essay 'Purism' by Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, translated and reprinted in: L. Herbert, editor, *Modern Artists on Art* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1965).
14. In: *Lotus* 11.
15. Reprinted in: U. Conrads, editor, *Programmes and Manifestoes of 20th Century Architecture* (London, 1970).
16. See 'Probleme des bauens', reprinted in: Joedicke and Lauterbach, op.cit., pp. 14-15.
17. This is already emerging in early essays such as 'Wege zur form', but finds more sophisticated expression later, for example in 'Arbeit am grundriss', both in Joedicke and Lauterbach, op.cit.
18. In a work list assembled in the fifties, Häring wrote that this project was carried out, but my enquiries in Brazil have not yet brought anything to light.
19. 'Funktionelles Bauen: gut garkau/das viehhaus', first published in *Die Form*, October 1925, and also reprinted in Joedicke and Lauterbach, op.cit., p. 17.
20. See: *Bauwelt*, special issue on Häring, 4 July 1960, p. 771.
21. 'Die gestalt dieses baues ist also gewonnen worden, indem das ziel gesetzt wurde, welche den ansprüchen an die leistungserfüllungen des bauwerkes am einfachsten und unmittlebarsten entsprach.' See: 'Funktionelles bauen: Gut Garkau das viehhaus', reprinted in: Joedicke and Lauterbach, op.cit. p. 17.
22. Ibid. pp. 13-14 (my translation in *AAQ*, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 21).
23. Verbal interview, released as a gramophone record by *Bauwelt*.
24. A crucial Häring essay on geometry is 'Kunst und strukturprobleme des bauens', 1931, reprinted in: Joedicke and Lauterbach, op.cit., pp. 25-9; my translation published in: *9H* 7 (1985).
25. I am quoting from Häring's 'Proportionen', 1934, reprinted in: Joedicke and Lauterbach, op.cit., pp. 32-5.
26. The full set of retraced drawings — two plans, two sections, and four elevations — was reprinted in *Architectural Review*, June 1985, pp. 44-5.
27. C. Rivals, *L'Architecture rurale française – Midi toulousaine et pyrénéen* (Berger-Levrault, 1979), pp. 148-51.
28. I use the word ritual very much in the sense intended by the anthropologist Mary Douglas in *Purity and Danger* (London, 1966), that is, for almost any kind of human activity which is ordered and repetitive, rather than reserved for ceremonial occasions. Douglas explains, in 'Deciphering a Meal' (in: *Implicit Meanings* (London, 1975)), that even a snack can be a kind of ritual, because it contrasts with the grand feast. This rejection of the commonly assumed distinction between the mundane and the celebratory is essential to the case I am trying to make.