

# What Pre-Fabricated Building Means

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"The houses look small, and aren't the rooms lower ceilinged than is at present allowed in housing specifications?"

"That is so, but look how handy this plan is! It allows for everything. There is plenty of built-in furniture, cupboards in the kitchen, a linen press, a tray rack in the dining alcove, a coat cupboard and, look, there is a pram garage in the back hall, just off the back door."

"I like the outside appearance of these houses better," said the elderly woman, moving on to the plans that won the second prize. "A street of these with all the variations which he gives would look really nice."

## Houses Like Eggs

Under one set of plans was a curious exhibit that looked not unlike the round apple money-box which we once treasured—only the split for the pennies was too wide. Then we saw that the spheres were not separated, but that four spheres clustered round a central sphere.

"Looks as though a hen laid Siamese quints," said the mother-in-law. "What on earth is it?"

"Here are the plans. The houses aren't built exactly. They are made from pulped wood into a sort of plastic. Here is a piece of it. The advantage is that the whole tree can be pulped down and then shaped into spheres. The centre is the living room with doors leading out, and the other egg-shaped rooms that lead out are three bedrooms and a bathroom. The kitchen is cut out of a central room. All the rooms are round—no corners to sweep out."

"I saw something like it at the pictures once," said a young man. "The houses we saw there were made by inflating balloons and then spraying concrete on to them."

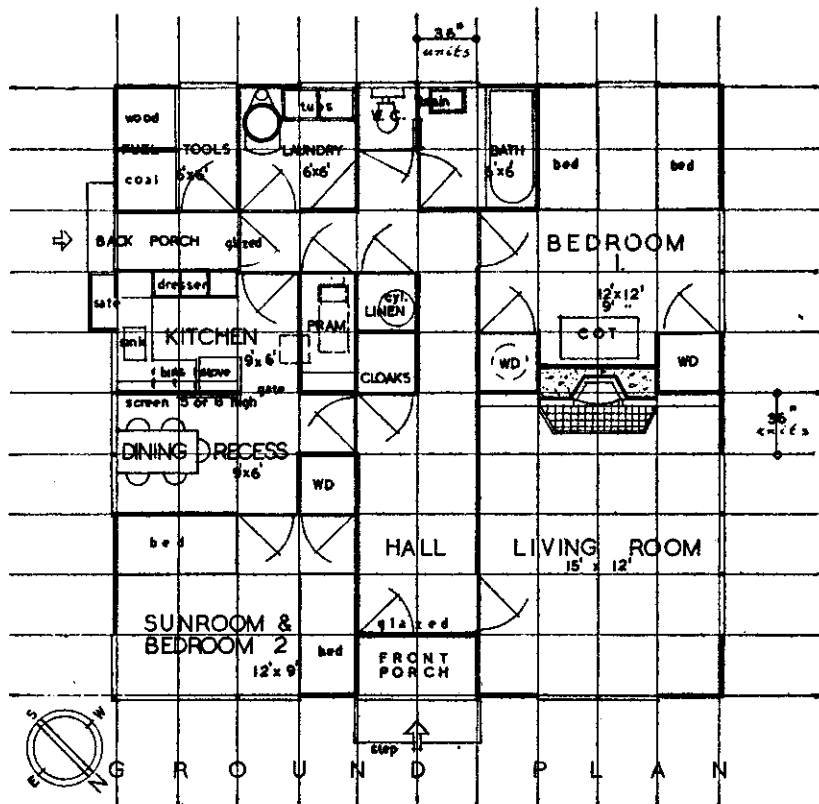
The female section of onlookers was more doubtful. Even the advantage of a house guaranteed earthquake-proof hardly compensated for the disadvantage of emerging from a clutch of eggs every morning. All the same, some admitted that new ideas were quite good things to try on other people.

FURTHER down the hall we looked at other types of things that could be pre-fabricated. There were pre-cast units of construction, and plans for joinery, sashes and frame doors, and other details of carpentry and plumbing. There were also drawings for pre-fabricated furniture. No more frenzied searches for any house, any fittings, any furniture. The future house-hunter may order his house and furniture on Monday, buy his section on Tuesday, have his house assembled on Wednesday, plumbing and guttering on Thursday, furniture assembled on Friday, and wife and family installed on Saturday. That's moving for you!

We had by this time wandered back to our starting point. A new cluster of people had again gathered.

"I don't like the house standing all by itself on the section," said one. "Now what about pre-fabricated gardens, too?"

"I guess there's no pleasing some women," said our guide dryly, as he left the hall. "They'll be wanting pre-fabricated children next."



The ground plan of the prize-winning house, designed by R. T. Walker and Paul Pascoe, A.R.I.B.A., of Christchurch

## WE STOOK TO CONQUER

WHEN Grandpop warned me that I'd learn many strange things in the Army, I snorted patronisingly and poured his beer down the sink. There seemed no need for gloomy prophecies at a time when the National Slogan was "Silly Old Hitler, 'Rah, 'rah 'rah!' or words to that effect. . . . Hmm—Grandpa, why didn't you make me listen to those words of grim foreboding!

Now the Army goes harvesting; the War Effort and all that!

Harvesting! Sheaves! Stooks! Tin mills! Headers! Oh lor', what a smack in the eye for us city slickers to learn that there's such a lot been going on in the country we knew nothing about! Parasites we were, toilers for the common good we are!

Those first few stooks! "How the Young Private will Stook This Season . . ." Well, maybe not! Our first attempts at creating neat and dapper stooks nearly broke the Backbone of the Country; he was often heard to mutter strange things when a stook unaccountably collapsed with a faint sigh; at times as our—apparently rather frequent—smokes lengthened to rather more than the official 10 minutes, his eyes were seen to bulge slightly, the strong hand gripped fiercely at the trusty briar . . .

BUT we're coming on now! That air of bored proficiency as we sling those sheaves around, the nonchalant



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kick of the foot at the base of the adroitly planted sheaf, the brisk and business-like pat of the finished stook; aha! You can't keep the army down!

Well, that's what we thought.

But, at a dance one night, a dance well attended by us Toughened Old Harvesters, a farmer made a brief speech to those present, addressing his remarks to those timid farmers in the hall who had so far

neglected to take advantage of the army's presence in the district. A gracious soul, he commenced a spirited defence of us martial sheaf-tossers by informing the gathered farming gentry that, really, we weren't as bad as a lot of people thought. True, we were very inexperienced, and very slow as compared with proper harvesters, and probably they'd have a helluva time showing us how to do the job anyway, but we were at least triers by crickey, and besides, there was no other way of getting the work done. . . .

We crawled furtively from the hall, a desolate brooding band, and were discovered some time later pleading with our O.C. to be sent back to camp for Infantry Training.

But it's a healthy life. Sunshine, fresh air, cosy tents, and a bed on Mother Nature's bosom; what more could one ask!

Rising from bed the other morning I combed my hair and an earwig fell to the ground.