

sounds and smells of industry. Prospective householders may therefore rest assured that there is no chance of their finding themselves living cheek by jowl with a glue-factory or a gas works.

Turning now from the general layout of these housing blocks to the houses themselves, it must be stated at the outset that these homes bear none of the sheep-like similarity of some of the large-scale housing schemes of the past. The Housing Department architects have drawn up a large number of variations in design from relatively few basic types. To quote an example—there are at least forty widely differing house designs evolved from only three basic plan types. These are not all the variation possible, but it will easily be seen that ample scope has been assured for individuality of design among the houses of any one block. You may look along a street lined with newly erected houses without seeing any two that are strikingly similar. When the houses have been occupied for some time and the occupiers have cultivated their gardens to their own taste, the dissimilarity is even more marked.

Most of the homes are completely detached, though here and there, to make more economical use of the land, they may be of the twin or triple unit type. They have two, three, or four bedrooms, and rents vary from approximately 25s. a week for a two-bedroom house to about 32s. a week for a four-bedroom one. The larger homes have separate dining-rooms, but the smaller houses, as a rule, have a dining recess off the kitchen, for those who are reluctant to have meals in the living-room.

Houses are sited to ensure that the rooms most often occupied will have as much sunlight as possible. And so although the front door of a house may face the street, the real front may be on the side away from the street. This arrangement has been used in several houses on the higher ground of the Waddington block. It gives the main rooms sunlight for most of the day and a fine view across the Hutt Valley.

The interior walls of houses are not left as white or cream plaster, but are almost invariably papered. It has been found that the plain white walls can be so

easily marked that it is not worth while to leave them in this state. Although it is plainly not possible for tenants to choose their own wallpapers before moving into a house, very careful consideration has been given to the choice of suitable papers. A wide range of colour is used—most are pale shades which reflect the light well—and in no houses are the old dark and heavy designs to be found.

Kitchens are painted in an enamel finish, so that walls and cupboard doors can be easily washed down. Electric cookers are standard equipment, and very ample cupboard space is provided. The kitchens are free from superfluous obstructions, and it should be very simple to keep them clean and tidy. An electric hot-water service is also part of the standard equipment, a linen cupboard being built round the boiler. Bathrooms are compactly designed and are equipped with up-to-date accessories. All baths are built-in, and the bathrooms are enamelled throughout.

Most of the houses are built of timber with weather-boards or brick veneer exterior walls.

But to-day's shortages of men and material are forcing new methods and materials to be tried out. In an attempt to speed up housing construction, extensive experiments have been made with prefabrication. In the Nae Nae block several hundred houses have been built by this method and have proved very satisfactory. However, shortages of material have prevented the full and most efficient development of prefabrication.

Because of the timber shortage, experiments are being made by the Housing Department in the use of various types of concrete construction. It is a shortage of timber in the first case, but an overall shortage of material and fittings that is the principal worry of the Department to-day. Labour also is scarce, but it is hoped that the return of many men from overseas may help to improve this.

To end this article, here are answers to some of the questions sometimes asked about State houses:—

1. *Does the State actually build the houses?*