Home Sweet Home of Future Inexpensive and Efficient

By Louise Bargelt

WHAT lies ahead of us in the home-building field? What types of houses are we going to build? Looking at tomorrow, fortified by the experiences of today and yesterday, what sorts of dwelling places shall we erect to meet the needs of modern living? To meet every essential requirement as economically as possible?

Every one of us, in visualizing his home of the future, thinks in terms of dollars and cents, for who is it that does not desire the nicest looking and the most efficient home that his money will buy? The family with modest means is just as interested in having an efficient home as the family less restricted in expenditures in building.

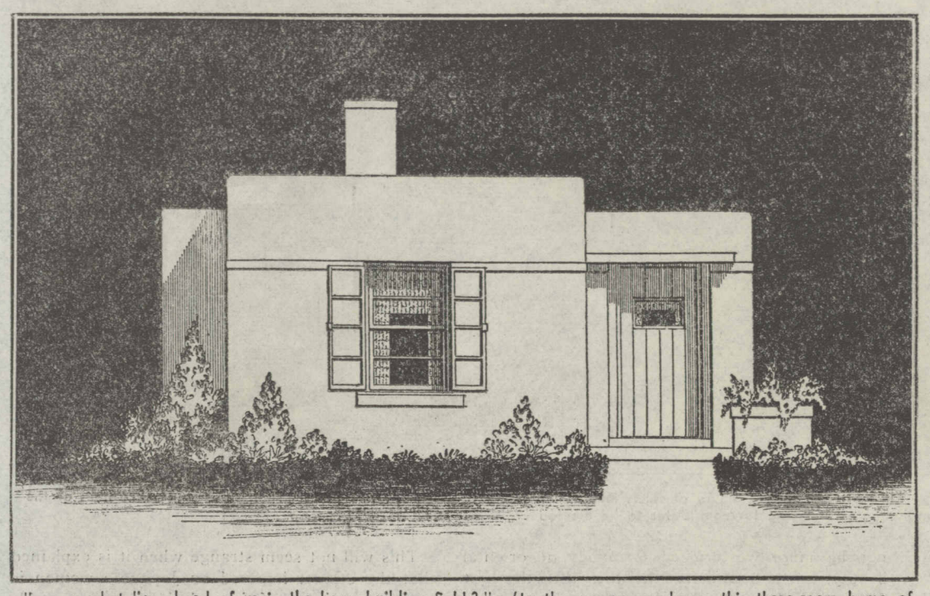
Economy and efficiency, therefore, are the main factors of consideration in planning the home. Wheels of the building trades and industries are turning in that direction only. Attention and energy are being focused on the problem of low-priced home construction; on small homes which can be built for from $2,500 to $4,500 and which the family with an income of from $1,200 to $2,500 a year can build and maintain.

Since 1929 inventors, architects, engineers, manufacturers, and chemists throughout the United States have been experimenting with the inexpensive home. Modern, sturdy, fireproof or fire-resistive dwellings which will be within the reach of the millions who want them.

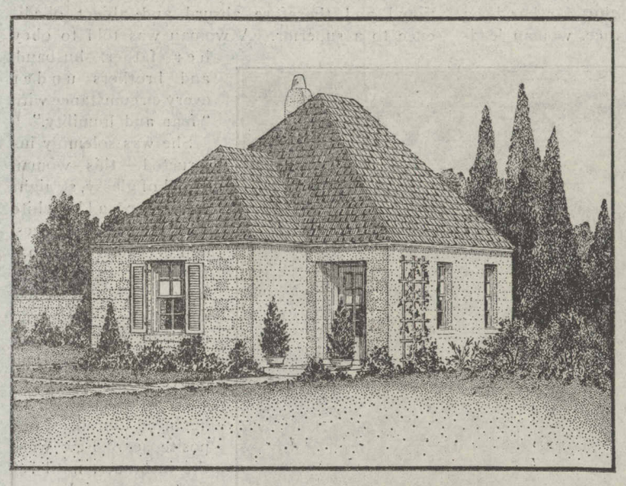
Forward-looking men have developed new materials and new methods of construction, as well as improved and discovered fresh and better uses for many combinations of our old and established materials, such as brick, wood, stone, concrete, and steel.

In this era of unprecedented experimentation in the home-building field the question often is asked, "How far are we going?" Will the many new and radical ideas in home design, comfort standard, structural rapidity, and stability work a real revolution in this age-old building industry, or will we witness a slower evolution within the industry itself, a gradual change from within rather than a drastic upheaval from without?

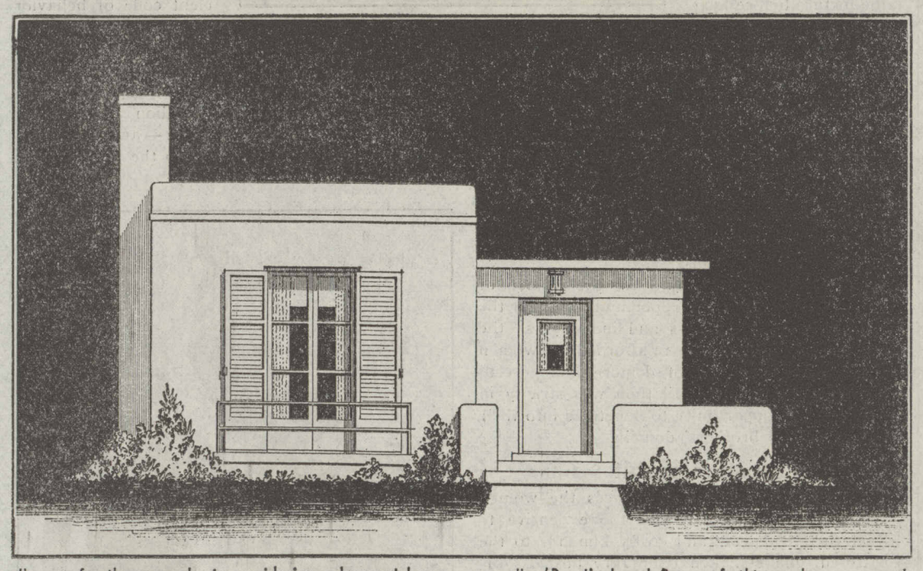
Model homes have gone up in the last two years in different parts of the country, or perhaps we should more accurately term them experimental homes. Back of these homes was the effort to demonstrate just what the building industry could do for $3,000 and $4,000.



"... what lies ahead of us in the home-building field?" (In the manner moderne, this three-room home of concrete is fireproof. Its basement contains heater and laundry. Cost, $2,500 to $3,000.)

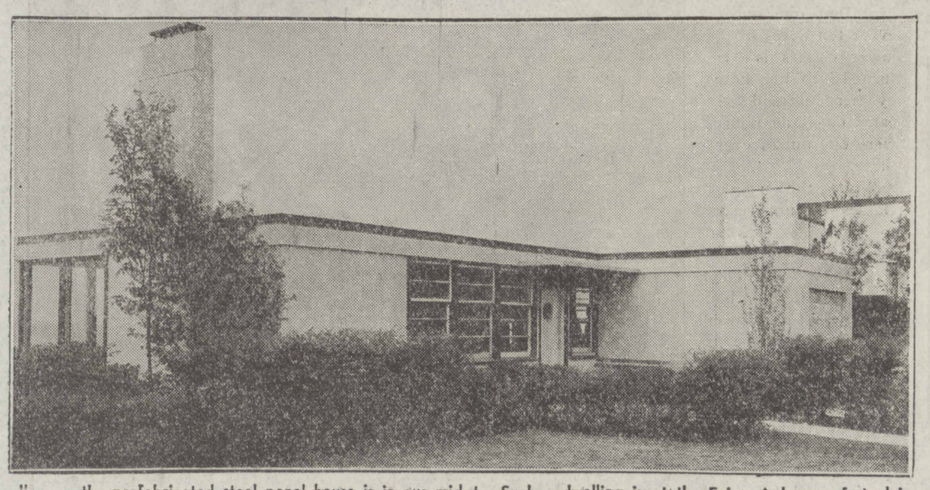


"... low-cost fireproof homes of concrete have been developed in the last few years." (A three-room home; $2,500 to $3,000.)



"... for the man who is considering a low-cost home ..." (Practical and fireproof, this modern-mannered five-room home of concrete can be well built within a price range of $3,500 to $4,000.)

"... walls of concrete ..." (A conservative, sturdy little five-room home; cost, $3,500 to $4,000.)



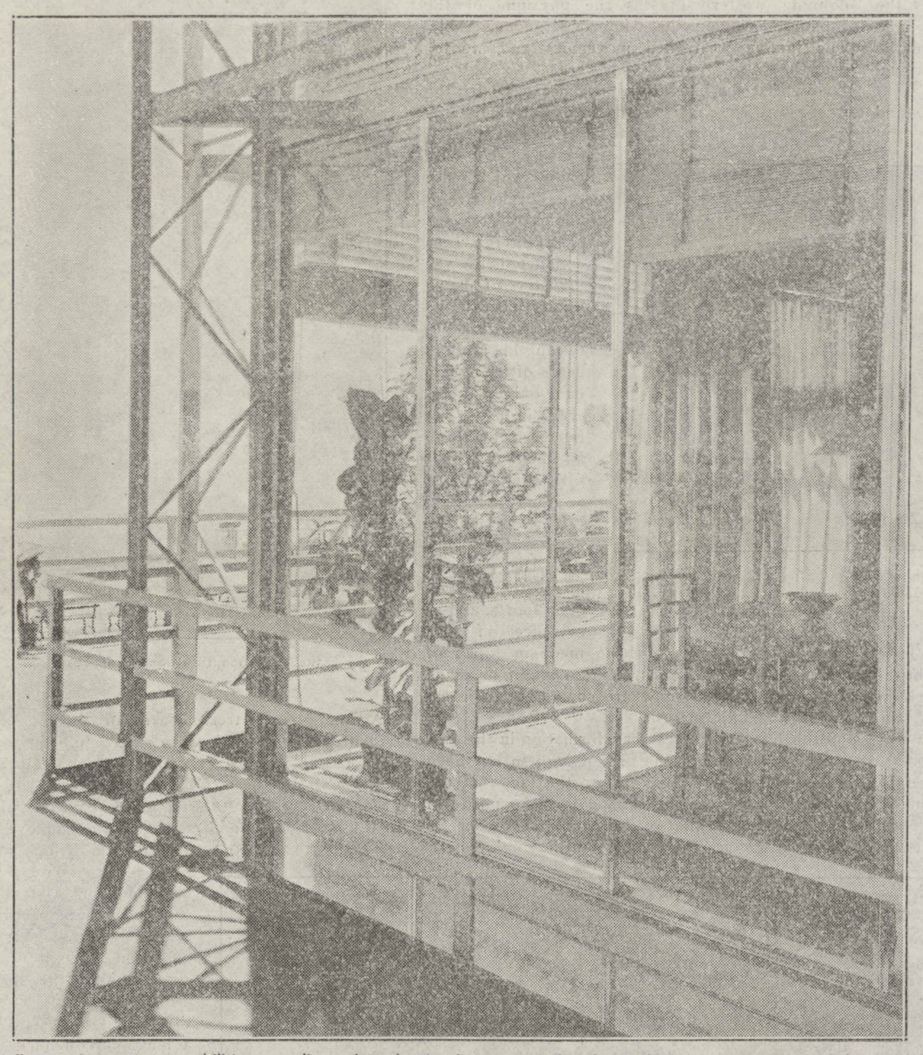
"... the prefabricated steel panel house is in our midst. Such a dwelling is at the Fair. A house of steel is not nearly so radical as it seems. Successful methods of prefabricating steel into panels result not only in strong, serviceable walls, but in the swiftness of construction as well."

Economy in Building

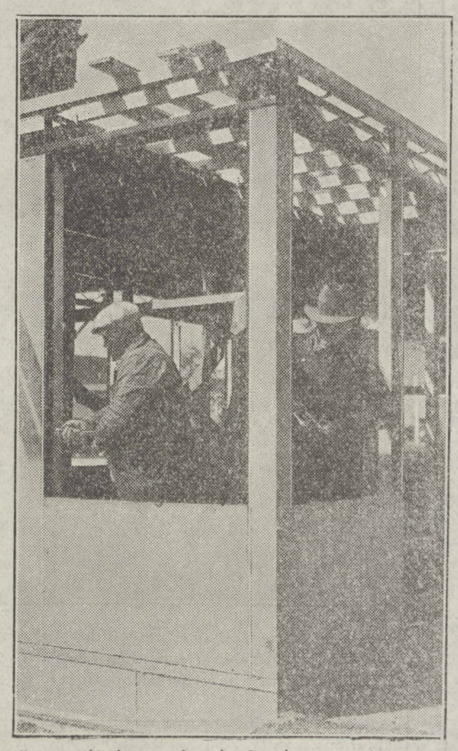
We see these small homes built of traditional and new building materials, or of combinations of the new and the old. We see the prefabricated house of steel, of glass and steel, the home of concrete, brick, and lumber. And we see it sturdier, better built than before, and erected with the ideas of economy, low maintenance cost, and stability predominant.

For the man who is considering a low-cost house, concrete will play an important part. Attractive low-cost fireproof homes of concrete have been developed in the last two years. These little homes, from three to five rooms, range in price from $2,500 to $4,000. Their walls are of concrete, in precast units or placed in forms. Their floors are of concrete slabs. Their roofs are of concrete tile or cement asbestos shingle. Every effort has been made to render them attractive. They can be had in the more conservative types, with sloping roofs, or with flat roofs, in the manner moderne.

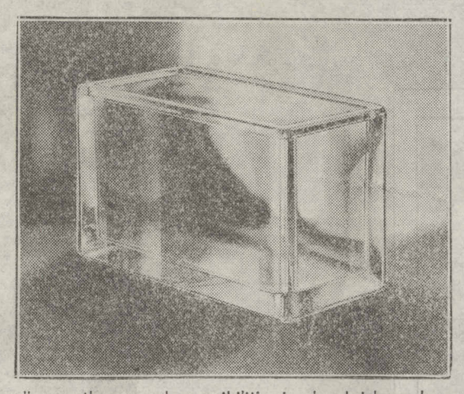
Interesting possibilities are glimpsed in the development of the glass-and-steel house. One such home is seen at the World's Fair this year. It has been estimated that if this home were built in mass production under the prefabricated design, with a production unit of 10,000, it could be constructed for $3,500 or less. Built in lots of 50,000, the cost would be below $2,900.



"... interesting possibilities are glimpsed in the development of the glass-and-steel house. One such home is seen at the World's Fair this year." (Three types of glass are used for its walls.)



"... this house, after the foundation was built, was completed in some 200 man hours."



"... there may be possibilities in glass brick or glass building blocks for future homes ..."

There are several very advanced ideas incorporated in this house of glass. One is the separation of the walls and floors. Because they are separate, they can be altered. (Modernization may not be at all a complicated process in the years to come!) If an owner wishes to change his interior layout he won't have to tear down a wall; he just moves it. Floors also can be altered as one likes without interfering with the walls.

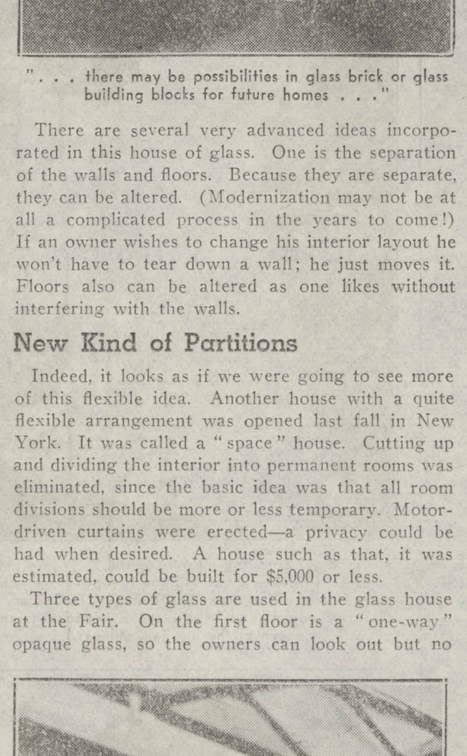
New Kind of Partitions

Indeed, it looks as if we were going to see more of this flexible idea. Another house with a quite flexible arrangement was opened last fall in New York. It was called a "space" house. Cutting up and dividing the interior into permanent rooms was eliminated, since the basic idea was that all room divisions should be more or less temporary. Motor-driven curtains were erected—a privacy could be had when desired. A house such as that, it was estimated, could be built for $5,000 or less.

Three types of glass are used in the glass house at the Fair. On the first floor is a "one-way" opaque glass, so the owners can look out but no one can look in. An infra-red ray resisting and ultra-violet ray inducing glass is employed on the second or living room floor. The third floor is encased in heavy plate glass without any provision for obstructing or converting the sun's rays.

It is claimed there may be possibilities in glass brick or glass building blocks for moderately priced homes when factory preparation of the glass block walls can reduce the cost. It is possible to paint these same blocks and obtain quite a new architectural effect, for the colored cement paint on the glass brick, in contact with the mortar, reflects light and gives the effect of tinted, softly shaded glass.

The prefabricated steel panel house is in our midst. Such a dwelling is at the Fair. No doubt quantity production will bring costs of a little home such as that still lower. While not all steel houses are prefabricated, the fact that a house is so constructed does not mean that it must perforce bear any resemblance to another house of the same construction. The panels are standardized, but there is opportunity for infinite variety of plan, and additional rooms easily may be added later.



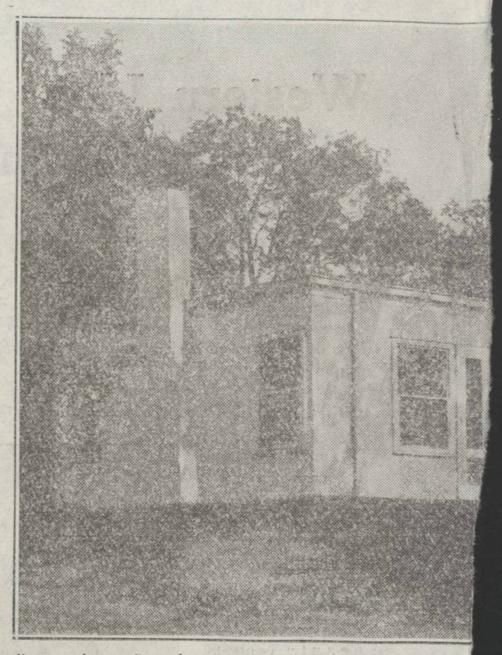
"... between the inner and outer walls heavy mineral insulation in bats is applied, effectively blanketing the entire house—floors, ceilings, walls."

Prestol Steel House Built

A house largely built of steel is not nearly so radical as it seems. We shall grow used to it in time. Successful methods of prefabricating steel into panels result not only in strong and serviceable wall construction but in swiftness of construction as well. This house at the Fair, after the foundation was built, was completed—exclusive of furnishings and equipment—in 200 man hours. This means that five men working on a forty-hour schedule could finish the house proper in a week.

Thorough insulation in the steel house is provided as well as in any other type of home. Between the inner and outer walls heavy mineral insulation in bats is applied, effectively blanketing the entire house, floors and ceilings as well as side walls, a protective shield against undue changes in temperature.

Brick manufacturers are developing homes of brick in the low cost as well as the medium and the



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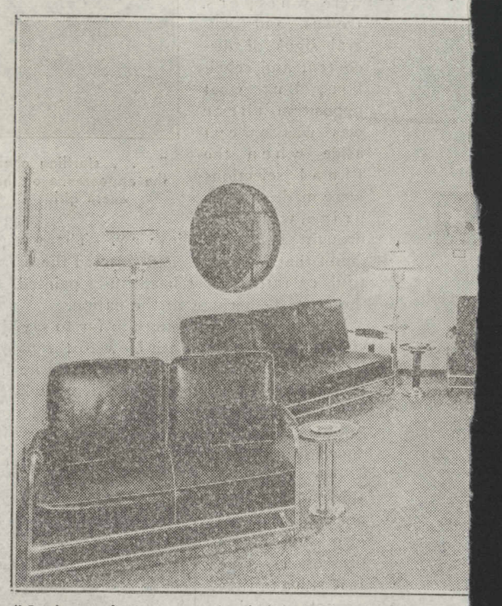

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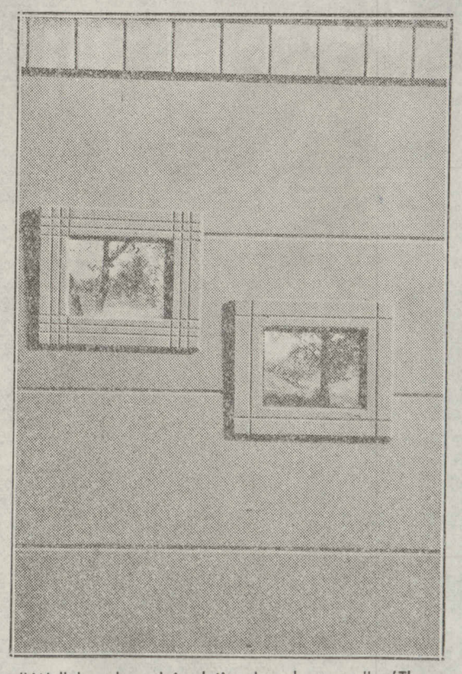

" Wall boards and insulating boards ..." (These will play an important part in tomorrow's homes.)