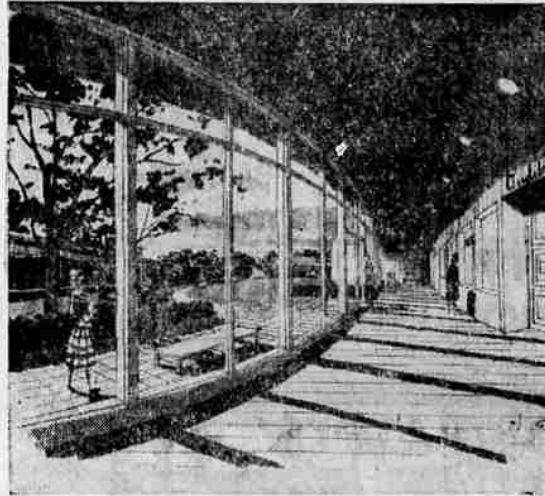




SPREAD-OUT LOOK of newer school buildings is shown by this dormitory at Michigan State College. The very horizontal lines are carried out by the window placement, the stonework and the flat roof. Rooms are lighter than in up-and-down buildings.



CAMPUS PLAN OF THIS Illinois school provides outside doors for each classroom so that dismissal and play periods don't cause congestion in halls. Building for Crow Island elementary school looks much like small homes, giving a warm atmosphere.



VIEW FROM THE LOBBY of the Senior High School Auditorium of the Great Neck, New York, school shows how the architects, LaPierre, Litchfield and Partners, envision the more domestic character of the building. Lots of space for recessing assembly.

Designed To House Nation's Pupils For Many Tomorrows

Most schools that are being built today look as if some giant child had flattened the little red version of yore and smeared it out across the countryside. And with good reason.

Newly-built schools are banjo-shaped, wandering, round, sectional, scattered like a deck of cards—in fact, anything but an up-and-down building with first escapes.

To many of those taxpayers who got a perfectly good education in a one-room by the river or a glittering WPA building or a converted home, this turn in school design is an uncomfortable development.

To some of these residents, the modern schools look like industrial reflections of the ranch-house school of design. Many raise the question of whether these schools, with their glass bricks, their odd angles and their loping ground plans, aren't going to look as outdated as a gingerbread house in 50 years.

What a leading firm in school architecture has to say about the schools they design may do a lot to explain this turn in school architecture.

First of all, according to Ben John Small of the firm of LaPierre, Litchfield and Partners in New York, modern school design is not a whim like the Cape Cod or Queen Anne home fads.

School design starts with the educational program it's going to house, according to Mr. Small. "A plan for a school that reflects the educational program will be an honest plan and will develop its own attractiveness."

Mr. Small explains that schools are technically designed to last 50 years, though they may be used for much longer or shorter periods.

But it follows from this that if the philosophy of education continues to evolve in the next 50 years as it has in the last, it would be as foolish to try to carry out the program in 50 years in one of today's schools as it would be to try to run an assembly line in the top of a handkerchief.

This firm, which has been working on school designs for 15 years, works closely with educational experts. To prevent obsolescence, they work far ahead in terms of educational thinking.

The problems to be solved in designing today's school are as many as the moves in a game of chess. Laws must be fulfilled—but without strapping the budget. School children yet unborn must

be anticipated—but without building too large for today's school population.

The development of the community in 10 or 20 years must be accounted for—but without putting the school in the middle of a swamp. Safety must be insured in all cases. Colors and materials must be satisfying and appropriate.

To answer these problems in each separate community takes a different building. The same building would no more fit two different communities than the same street pattern would.

Mr. Small points out the two characteristics that occur in most schools being built to house today's various versions of contemporary education.

The first, Mr. Small says, is the domestic, rather than institutional, character of the buildings. This not only eases the transition from home to school but produces an atmosphere conducive to learning.

The second pretty common characteristic of the schools is that they spread out rather than going up and down. There are many practical reasons for this.

"Schools only go up and down when there is no space," Mr. Small explains. "They spread out because."

"1. It is more economical to maintain a horizontal building."

"2. In case of fire a one- or two-level building can be evacuated in 25 seconds."

"3. The traffic patterns for changing classes can be more easily managed when there are no stairs."

In addition to their domestic and horizontal characteristics, according to Mr. Small, schools today are more decentralized.

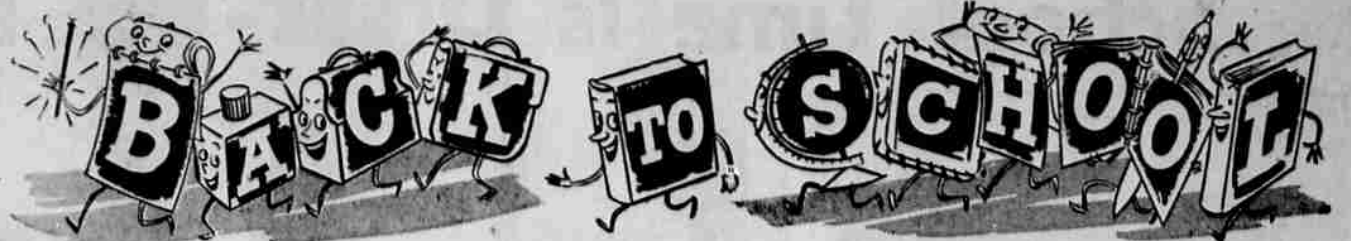
To illustrate his point, Mr. Small indicated the sketches for his current project, the Great Neck (New York) Junior and Senior High Schools.

This school looks like two wandering puddles of water, both dumping into a central round building, the cafeteria. The serpentine nature of the two branches was dictated by the rolling land, Mr. Small indicated, but the separate-ness provides for the two schools on one plot of land, both utilizing the same kitchen.

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