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The Owner-Built Home - Chapter 8 Volume III - Form and Function - Light and Color

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Light and Color

(continued from last month)

The first step in developing a design procedure for light and color is to determine the value of average outdoor illumination for the specific section of the country one lives in. The average annual number of clear days gives some indication of this. The percentage of light falling on a surface which is not absorbed, but reflected, should be graded between the light source and the dark surrounding surfaces for walls, ceilings, and floor in rooms receiving varying amounts of light. In order to grade the brightness for a ceiling light, the ceiling should be given a "reflection factor" of 80%. A reflection factor of 25% is acceptable on end walls in a room with ample daylight. In a deep, poorly lighted room, on the other hand, the wall opposite the window should have a reflection factor of 70%. The window-wall itself, as well as frames and mullions, produces less glare when the reflection factor is high—80% or more. Floors should have a reflection factor of 25%.

Dark blue and black have low reflection factors; yellow and white are high. The amount of light reflected from various color surfaces is as follows: white 80%-90%; pale pastel (yellow, rose) 80%; pale pastel (beige, lilac) 70%; cool colors (blue, green pastels) 70%-75%; full yellow hue (mustard) 35%; medium brown 25%; blue and green 20%-30%; black 10%.

Colors of short wave length (green, blue, violet) create an impression of being cool; colors of long wave length (yellow, orange, red) appear warm. Warm colors are sharply focused and have apparent qualities of lightness, activeness, and advancing movement; cool colors are less sharply focused and seem to be heavy, passive, and receding. An obvious but seldom practiced rule is to use warm colors in rooms that are exposed to the north, or that receive little sunlight. Cool colors are best used in rooms of a southern exposure. Soft, cool colors should be used in cloudy regions, and strong, warm colors in sunny regions. Light rooms should be decorated in strong, colorful contrasts. Stronger, brighter colors can be used in large rooms, whereas low color contrasts and weak, light patterns are best used to make small rooms appear larger.

The story is told of a manufacturer who redecorated his lunch room walls from peach to light blue. Soon the employees began to complain that it was chilly inside the lunch room. The actual temperature had not changed, being thermostatically controlled. When the walls were repainted peach, and orange slip-covers were placed on the chairs, the complaints ceased.

The sustained thought needed for a balanced light and color design is conveniently circumvented today by an increasing number of builders who use the "natural" approach: wood ceilings are stained or lacquered; prefinished plywood wall panels are chosen on the merits of wood grain; even imitation wood or cork floor tile is chosen to match the "natural" wood tones used everywhere else. This so-called "natural" approach was given weight by Frank Lloyd Wright, whose building interiors had a drab sameness throughout. Wright, who called those who employed paint and trim, "inferior desecrators," clearly overdid his principle of "naturalness of material."

Compare this timid decorative approach to that of a dynamic designer who understands his light and color principles and uses them to achieve definite results. For example, we have a designer telling about his use of light and color in the principal's office at the Waterdloof Primary School, South Africa:

The character needed for a principal's office is fairly complex. The first impressions of children entering the school are formed here. This demands a friendly, colourful atmosphere. The office is also used for receiving inspectors, teachers, and parents and should therefore be fairly dignified, in keeping with the status of the principal. Office work will require a fairly subdued and quiet atmosphere which is not distracting. Because the room faces into a little court, it may feel rather warm in summer; so a feeling of coolness is desirable. Fairly cool colours are indicated also by the fact that very often only irate parents come to see the principal, and they need to be calmed down.

The bright, stimulating colours that children like can be used at a low level, out of the line of vision of the adults. It was decided to use red floor tiles in spite of the fact that red aggravates bad temper. An angry person generally does not look down, whereas a despondent person might.

Psychologists say that 85% of our impressions come through our eyes. Light and color correctly used will create just about any impression desired. In a house we should strive for a variety and sequence of impressions, from excitation to sedation, from room

(continued on page 4)

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School of Living Calendar
at
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ORGANIC oranges, grapefruit, hickory nuts, black walnuts and other shelled and unshelled nuts, etc. Write for prices to Wolfe's Organic Acres, Box 465-A, Winter Haven, Fla. 33881 w(12-64)2

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THE GREEN REVOLUTION — 3 March, 1965

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Homesteads and Homesteaders

WANT CONTACT with homesteaders in my area. I'm single, 34 years old, working in Forestry Dept., and greatly interested in the green revolution. Victor LeBrecque, Box 56, Guilford, Conn. b(2-65)2

FOR SALE—Homestead: house, bearing orchard, vineyard. Box 71, Lucerne, Calif. (2-65)3

WRITE Friedman, 1135 University, New York City 10452, if interested in cooperative living and/or community. f(3-65)3

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Miscellaneous

FRIENDLY GREETINGS FROM Verbatim Service Co.—all lettershop and secretarial work. Complete typing and mimeo service. No job too small or too large. 150 Nassau St., New York City 10038 v(7-64)tf

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ANY A.R.E. Steiner, Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, etc., students? A work and study group is being formed in Sheffield, Mass. If interested, write, A. Lepanto, RFD 1, Sheffield, Mass. l(3-65)3

12-Year-Old Could Enter University

Sandra Louise Sanborn, who had never been in school before June, 1964 when she took a battery of tests, has the capacity for getting A's and B's in beginning college work, according to university officials in Boulder, Colo.

Green Revolution readers will recall the items in our April and May issues ("Second Semester Report") in which her father, Robert Sanborn, described the home education of Sandra and a neighbor girl on their Redwing, Colo., homestead. They moved there in 1956 from Ohio, when Sandra was four years old. At that early age her father was teaching her trigonometry and the Greek alphabet.

The Sanborns wanted to experiment with education in a "family type" set-up where they could work closely with the children, taking advantage of the

many natural teaching situations which came up. Sandra spent no more than an hour or two a day in formal school work.

In June, 1964 the Sanborns moved to Boulder, where Mrs. Sanborn, a former teacher, is a secretary in the Dept. of Slavic Languages, Univ. of Colorado. In the summer Sandra took college Math 101 and 102 for no credit. The instructor said that she did very well and knew what she was doing. Consideration was given to letting Sandra continue in university courses, but it was decided to enroll her in the ninth grade of a Boulder girls' school, two grades ahead of normal for her age.

Reports and photos of Sandra, at this time, show her to be a healthy, robust youngster. Her only comment on all this activity is, "It's all very interesting."

A Catalog For Homesteaders

Enclosed is a catalog (from Agricultural and Industrial Machineries, Box 8, Ibaraki, Osaka-Fu, Japan) that may interest **Green Revolution** readers. It mostly illustrates (for sale) machines designed for hand operation or low power for processing coconut, rice and wheat, peanuts, bamboo, etc. We bought a grain huller and winnower and are pleased with them. We use the huller for sunflower seeds. Besides it has a lot of information, such as how to make soy sauce and bean curds.

The huller is large and heavy (100 lbs.), waist high, 5-6 ft. long and 2-3 ft. across. The gearing is fantastic. With two men pushing and pulling the handles (not a hard job), the last little cog-wheel is turning at over 3000 rpm! This throws the grain against a rubber cushion which cracks the hulls. The mixture (hulls, grains and unhulled seeds) falls into a bag or bin. The hopper holds about a bushel—a lever regulates how much goes through at once—and it does an unbelievable number of bushels per hour (more than we'll ever have).

We think it works very well. Some grains, like buckwheat, shatter with the impact, but we should be able to regulate this by how hard we work the handles and how much grain we let go through at once. With sunflower seeds we are more careful.

The winnower is smaller and more compact—2½ x 3½ feet. It is much lighter, made mostly of wood. It is just a hopper with a set of paddles below that work as a fan when the handle is turned. The handle is decorated with Japanese characters (we thought it might be a prayer wheel, but the company says it says "excellent separation is guaranteed"). The hulls blow out one end; the grain falls through two chutes below. It does a good job of removing the chaff, but

doesn't really sort out the hulled from the unhulled grain.

Anyone good at mechanics could easily rig up his own winnower. Especially if he has electricity (using a fan or a vacuum cleaner backwards). The Indians just used a windy day. As they poured the grain from basket to basket the chaff blew away. Any method, apparently, will lose some grain, and will require more than one winnowing. Let the chickens scratch through the refuse, and then use the hulls for mulch.

The winnower was \$55 to Vancouver; the huller \$158.—Eric & Jimmi Freedman, Farquier, B. C., Canada.

General Hints For Gardening

Avoid hybrid varieties and keep some seed of each variety you wish to continue, each year. Organically grown seed is better at germinating and improves with each generation.

Grow as many plants from seed as you can. They are more reliable and may be thinned instead of transplanted (which is a shock to most plants).

Get plenty of variety and make early, mid-season and late plantings of corn, potatoes, peas, salad greens, etc.

Plant corn in square or rectangular blocks rather than in one or two long rows. Square planting helps pollination.

Put asparagus, rhubarb and other perennials away from the center of the garden where you won't have to walk over or around them too much.

While staking tomatoes and other vine plants will increase yields, heavy mulching will do equally well, with a lot less effort and less risk of sun scald.

Try a few new vegetables each year. For instance, why not try

S. E. Arizona Land Available

We have just returned to California from our annual trip to our Arizona place. Our own spot of land in the foothills now has a plentifully producing well and electricity, and we camped there in luxury. At need we could live there now, with of course a garden to develop.

Readers of **The Green Revolution** may be interested in the information below about the land there; several have written about it but I haven't had specific data until now.

The main attraction of that region is something you can't put on paper; you have to visit the place for a time. But there's something in the air, the sweep of landscape, the mountains and space, that gets you—leaves you unsatisfied with other places afterward. So a number of people have found it.

Land is available in Arizona (Portal-Paradise area, Chiricahua Mts. region) that is suitable for homesteading or group living. Some land is in the foothills; most is in the adjacent San Simon Valley.

Foothill Land. Available in small parcels from a fraction of an acre to somewhat more than an acre, composed of groups of lots averaging 100 x 25 ft., at \$75 per lot. Mostly gradually sloping; some level, bordering Turkey Creek. Soil is good.... ground water is plentiful. Rainfall 18-20 inches per year, growing season about 180-200 days, elevation about 5500 ft. Present cover is mainly pinyon and juniper trees and grass; sycamores, walnuts and other vegetation along the creek. Climate mild, dry, sunny. Irrigation required.

Valley Land. Available in parcels from 40 to 170 acres; 320 acres available on lease from State with eventual ownership possible. Prices \$100-125 per acre; lease land at \$30 per acre for the lease rights, nominal annual lease figure, and eventual purchase at prevailing prices.

Jerusalem Artichoke. It is a variety of sunflower with edible roots.

Helps for Speedy, Good Compost

1. Get as much variety of materials in the compost heap as you can. Mix lush green things with equal amounts of drier matter.

2. Grind, shred, or chop your materials with a power lawnmower, shredder, an old chopping mill, or by hand. This speeds the breakdown to a surprising degree.

3. Try for an approximate balance of one-fifth animal matter (manure, etc.) to four-fifths vegetable matter. Moisture well, but do not soak, while building pile.

4. Turn heap every two or three days, or whenever the heating process does not develop. Check temperature with a thermometer that can be thrust well into the pile. It should go beyond 150° F. in the first few days and then slowly drop to a little above air temperature. Then, after 10 to 14 days, when it holds steady at about 95 to 100°, it is ready to use.

—Land Fellowship
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

IT PAYS TO MAKE OUR VOICES HEARD

Residents and farmers in the Pine Plains area of New York protested in such numbers that the state canceled its plan to spray 2500 acres.

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Soil extraordinarily rich; copious ground water at 200-300 feet. Deep wells (about 2000 ft.) yield 3000-4000 gallons per minute and the valley water table appears to be rising. Some parcels have wells with windmills and tanks. Rainfall 13 per year; summers hot, winters mild; growing season 220-240 days; elevation about 4000. Land is all level. Present cover is mesquite, creosote bush, grass, shrub.

General. Both locations have dry bracing climate, little population, spectacular vistas. Plant pests and diseases are minimal. There is some remaining Federal land for possession under the Homestead Act; i.e., one may acquire it by living on it, developing, and demonstrating successful homesteading, for a nominal amount.—Ralph Hamilton, Box 772, Placerville, Calif.

Why Fear Disease?

We can see why Nature has no arrangements like the burning of infected material, poison sprays, insecticides, sera, or vaccines for checking disease. Why should she fight her own arrangement? Why should she burn diseased material or institute quarantine arrangements?

The diseased plant or animal continues in free and close contact with its fellows who are always exposed to full infection. The infection spreads only to what is already unfit. If it could spread to the fit, all life would soon cease. The parasites would overrun their victims like a forest fire. But life does nothing of the sort, it continues richly and abundantly. This is the one proof we need to tell us that disease cannot attack the healthy organism. Why, therefore, should we fear it?—Sir Albert Howard, in **An Agricultural Testament**

Something From Nothing, cont'd

lizer. It takes two fillings for a 100 pound sack. Then he sits down again and I drive on again covering about half the 22 acres in one day. It is great fun. We never tire of the game of making-do.

Wire Carrier

Farrar's barbed-wire releaser for building fences is another photogenic tool. You can see that it is just a box with a spool above it in which the wire unrolls, the whole fitting into a wheelbarrow.



FARRAR BURN and barbed wire releaser. Handling barbed wire is a "nasty" undertaking, and anything that will reduce hand snags from the vicious barbs is a boon to the do-it-yourselfer.

The hammer, etc., also ride in the box. Between posts Farrar pulls it along so easily it ought to be called a restler, not a worker.

A one-horse plow, cultivator, mowing machine, or disk harrow can be worked with the truck, plus two people. Whatever tool or machine that could be worked

pick-up way we have no idea, never having farmed (if you can call this farming) at all before. [Note: The Burns have passed their three score and ten years, but don't look or act it, do you think?—Editor]

For the first year we bought our rock fertilizer, hence the "home patent" spreader. But now with seven cattle, each dropping a bushel of manure a day, plus chickens, plus truckloads of peanut hulls from a factory 35 miles away, plus compost of all waste, including human, we have heavier, less convenient, fertilizer and must spread and dig it by hand—at least until Farrar invents something to make that easier. This hasn't been licked yet.

But each year we increase the planted area so as to buy less food for us, chickens, cattle, and it's about time for another trip to the community scrap dump. It can't be long until Farrar will come lugging home some outlandish thing which will turn itself into a comical but also neat and handy machine to do exactly what we want to do at no expense and almost no work—except for the truck which hasn't complained yet, even with so much as a worn-out tire.

It's handy to be married to a genius. If it isn't money in our pockets, it isn't much money, if any, out of them.

Milk and, cont'd

In the first place—we are forced to work hard. I am naturally lazy, and I won't work unless I am forced. This way of life forces me. I have to get up early and milk the cow and feed the animals. I have to work long hours in the sun, or the wind and the rain—to plough and to sow and to reap and to mow. Crops have to be drilled at the right time—be looked after—be harvested and the land prepared for crops again. I have to cut down trees, split posts, put up fences, mend buildings. No one else will if I don't.

Why is this good, you might ask, in a world in which so many people live quite easily without doing any real work at all? Unless filling in forms or minding a machine can be called work. Well, it's good because it makes you feel good. It makes you eat well o'days and sleep well o'nights and dream good dreams, and at fifty I am as young as I was at twenty—I can do anything I could then and do most things better. Isn't that reason enough?

Scientific man has set himself to take the hard work out of everything. Has he ever stopped to consider whether doing this really makes for a better kind of life—a better kind of man? A body that doesn't sweat hard with hard labor at least once a day and sometimes for a few days on end soon gets flabby, and the mind inside it gets flabby too.

(to be continued)

The Owner-Built Home, cont'd

to room. Color should be *optically balanced*. For instance, a small entry hall with walls of yellow brick leading to a predominantly blue living room, will emphasize the cool spaciousness of the living room. An excitable impression can be created by a sequence of bright illumination and warm colors, followed by a *sudden* exposure to cool colors and dim illumination. Finally, a restoration of bright illumination will create the desired effect.

Where an impression of sedation is sought, one should decorate one space with cool colors and low illumination. A final, gradual restoration to the first condition will give the impression of sedation. A *dramatic* interior effect can be achieved by using a maximum of color contrast with abrupt transitions of value and hue. On the other hand, a *static* interior effect is created by using a maximum degree of symmetry and parallelism, repetition and continuity.

The degree to which color creates a stimulating or depressing environment is little appreciated by the average home decorator. Red, for instance, has been found to increase a person's hormonal and sexual activity, as well as restlessness and nervous tension. Time is overestimated in red surroundings, and weights seem heavier. Blue, on the other hand, has opposite qualities: it tends to lower blood pressure and pulse rate. It is a restful and sedate color. In blue surroundings time is underestimated and weights are judged as being lighter. Green tends to reduce nervousness and muscular tension. It is the best color choice for sedentary tasks, concentration and meditation. Yellow produces a favorable effect on human metabolism; it is sharply focused by the eye and cheerful in appearance. Chrome yellow has been found excellent for shell-shock victims.

This brief discussion of color brings to mind the wide variety of conditions that contribute to the actual choice of a room. A room color can be chosen on the basis of the hair color of the person using it: a blonde looks best against a background of blue or violet-blue, while a brunette looks best amid warm, light colors. A person having brown hair looks best in green surroundings, and a redhead looks best in a room having cool green-blue hues. A white or grey-haired person looks best against any brilliantly colored background.

Color choice can also be made on psychological grounds. An extroverted person, for instance, prefers high degrees of illumination, amid warm and luminous room surroundings (yellow, peach, pink). An introverted person requires softer, cooler surroundings amid a lower brightness level. Grey, blue, and green are best suited to this personality type.

Another good basis for color choice has to do with a room's function and form. It is interesting to note that the psychological effect of every color is represented in a tangible two-dimension form. Red impresses one as a square form; yellow, as a triangular form; orange, as a rectangular form; green, as a hexagonal shape; blue, as a circle; and purple, as an ellipse. The shape of a room or building can thus be expressed in color, depending upon whether the room is angular, squarish, curvilinear.

(to be continued)

