Support for a Model New England Town.

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1905
Layout for a Model New England Town.

The assumptions for the problem of laying out a model New England town are as follows: In one of the many sleepy, decayed villages of middle New England, a large manufacturing company has recognized suitable conditions of land and water-power for the location of its plant and employees. The problem which confronts the directors — to make the old town serve new purposes — is not altogether new. In some respects it was solved in the building of the town of Pullman, U.S. and in the village of Port Sunlight, England.
The corporation in question must purchase lands, increase the facility of the town to accommodate two or three thousand new inhabitants, and locate the factories to the best advantage. As far-sighted, broad-minded capitalists they will seek to do it all in accordance not only with economic principles but with those other of beauty and symmetry whose application chiefly concerns the architect. This subject for a thesis offered itself as being eminently practical broad in its scope (dealing as it does with all kinds of buildings) and complete in its character because its ensemble re-
quires consideration of both grounds and structure.

Having selected the town, it becomes necessary to examine its characteristics in detail and to determine the nature and extent of the improvements. At the eastern end—near the river and close to a double track railroad—lie the lands selected for the factories. Immediately adjacent is a group of broad fields that will accommodate the several hundred tiny cottages to be built for the mill hands. Here, too, will be located the business portion of the little town—with its shops, its bank and trolley exchange. All the turmoil and bustle are to have place together.
About one and one-half miles to the west, at a point geographically central, stands what the inhabitants of the old town term "the village"—a cluster of old houses, a white-painted, one-room school house, and the typical general store and post-office. Because of its convenient location, the excellent contour of the ground, which rises symmetrically into a low-hill, the interesting flavor given by its one or two fine old Colonial houses, this section recommends itself as an ideal centre for the remodeled town. From the old residents the company purchased a generous tract of land measuring about 5/8 by 3/4 miles. To the south...
of this area at the foot of the hill runs the railroad to be spanned
in the future by the bridges of the principal avenues; to the
west, and north, lie the rural districts which, in the plan of
improvements, are not materially to alter their original form and
character. Made up as they are
of farms, varying in size from
fifty to two hundred acres,
they support an independent
and substantial, though not
wealthy class of citizens. In
these districts lie the two
or three large estates of the
principal factory officials
which give the town a
graceful touch of luxury
and beauty.
It is upon the centre, however, that the manufacturing company should and does plan to lavish its greatest care and munificence. Of the factories and shops are to be the centre of activity - the heart of the little town, this section with its public buildings and dignified residences should be the head. It should express the truest and best character of the community. Here on the low-terraced hill are to stand the town-hall, library and district court, all in scale to suit the 6000 or 8000 inhabitants and all, since they balance one another in the same design, to harmonize in architecture. Old traditions, the nucleus of interesting
houses, and the simple habits of the people all point to the unpretentious New England "colonial" as the most fitting style. To the front of the town hall's broad terrace will run east and west two wide, elm-bordered avenues separated by a sort of park and promenade. At either end of these open ways—about ¾ miles in length—will stand the two principal churches of the community, convenient and prominent, yet apart from the more civil and utilitarian intercourse. At the rear of the town-hall group, facing a back street, are to be the town stables and two large carriage sheds for the convenience of the farmers when they drive in for town-meeting.
On the southern side of the promenade centering on the axis of the hall, the common extends down the sloping ground toward the railroad. Still on the same axis, but quite at the adjoining the railroad track, the station will stand, not only convenient for the passengers, but excellent to afford the visitor a good "first impression" of the town. Two large school houses with playground, tennis court and gymnasium are to flank the municipal group. An old-time village, and a combined armory and club-house will look upon either side of the common. Facing a minor square in the common itself are to be built the small post office and a
speculation. The remaining portion of this section is to be cut up into streets blocks by streets and avenues all carefully surveyed to give generous house lots in keeping with the rural character of the design. Here are to live the secondary offices and the higher grade employees of the factories; people who have business downtown or men who work in the more distant city and many of the old townspeople who have sold their lands to the corporation. Every effort is to be made to vary, harmonize and combine all these buildings so that, when the newly planted trees shall have grown, they will form a picturesque and symmetrical whole.
In remodeling this old town to fit new conditions the aim of the designer has been through and to respect existing customs and to suggest in the design the simplicity of the New England character. The results sought have been adequate accommodations for work, education and habitation in the temperate but broad and aesthetic way which may be looked for in a model town.

Drawings
Plan
Elevation [scale 150 ft. per in.]