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***From Essence to Appearance: parallels of working method between Alvar Aalto and Hugo Häring, based on a lecture at the Aalto Research Symposium, Rovaniemi, February 2015***

Aalto's own house in Munkkiniemi, unlike his Villa Mairea, is no great icon: rather it is modest, almost self-effacing (fig 1,2). The plan too seems at first unexciting, being almost completely orthogonal and lacking the obvious irregularities that distinguish the later work. There is just one skewed wall between office and garage, which I interpret as a response on one side to the incoming movement of the car, on the other to the turn towards the studio (fig 3). The steps and bookcase going through to the studio also show this concern with movement, but very subtly. Despite its realisation amid the burgeoning modern movement and its actual hybrid construction, the house makes no grand statements about pilotis or transparency and the use of glass – though that possibility was seriously considered, as revealed in a preliminary version (fig 4). The suburban site was relatively small, but was probably all that the Aaltos could afford.<sup>i</sup> It was neither on the coast nor in a distinguished neighbourhood, but was nonetheless a virgin plot with mature pines. If there was not much money there was at least time, and its design and detailing involving much study by both Aaltos.<sup>ii</sup> Alvar spent the rest of his life there, not moving after Aino's death or in acknowledgement of his new life with Elissa. Perhaps continuity with embedded habits and memories was too important. The relationship with Elissa and new ideas about domesticity could at least find some expression in the weekend house at Muuratsalo.

If the house seemed at first unexciting, when given the chance to explore it in person and to study the drawings in detail,<sup>iii</sup> I found it rich and subtle, and recognised qualities already familiar from other architects I had studied, such as Gunnar Asplund, Hans Scharoun and Hugo Häring. These qualities are more to do with spaces and relationships than with form and appearance, and with the meanings of materials and textures in terms of use and tangibility rather than just for tickling the retina. In Villa Mairea and later houses Aalto produced exteriors that are undoubtedly more visually arresting, but this may have diverted attention from the quality of internal spaces. This contrast between the face and the liveable interior has nowadays become more extreme, for dominance of brand and image has resulted in external form and style tending to displace that interest in spaces and relationships that characterised the early modernist period. I shall illuminate this claim by comparing Aalto's house with some built and unbuilt house projects by Hugo Häring, whose design philosophy explicitly demanded working from the inside out, an intended discovery of essence rather than the imposition of an image.<sup>iv</sup>

**Working from the inside out**

The general intentions of Häring's house-planning are perhaps best illustrated by his house designs from the late 1940s, which were dominated by the rituals of an imagined domesticity (fig 5). Rooms as empty cells are gone, replaced by an open plan with particular places to do particular things, made partitionable as necessary. Unlike most of his other such projects which exist only as floor plans, this one also includes a section. Note how the figure and the tree receive almost more attention than the fabric of the house itself,

stressing the atmosphere and relation with life. There were seldom ever elevation drawings: for Häring these were secondary, for the plan and the spatial relationships embodied were the priority. As he explained in the essay 'Work on the ground plan' of 1952:

*'...it is a matter of laying out the house from the inside outwards, starting with the life-processes of dwelling, and proceeding according to this principle. The exterior is no longer determined in advance... it does not dictate its form. One throws walls around processes of dwelling, one does not force the dwelling-processes into rectangles. Working this way, walls are hardly likely to end up at right angles, nor is one likely to end up with a rectangular building. Also the walls will not always end up straight.'*<sup>v</sup>

The reading requires furniture to show uses and relationships, for without it such plans become almost meaningless. In that shown, living and dining areas are spread vertically through the middle, centred on a hearth with a built-in sofa opposite. The kitchen is at the bottom next to the entrance with the dining area across the way, and to left of the kitchen is the maid's room separately articulated, with a kitchen garden outside which perhaps she also tends. Two bedrooms lie to left and one to right, divisible by sliding screens, and they include study tables, storage shelves, and all the necessities of everyday life, so that almost no part of the containing wall is without some serving function. Floor textures identify different kinds of territory, from the finely gridded tiles in the entry passage to cobbles next to the entrance and crazy paving towards the top in the garden, an opposition of culture and nature. Crazy paving comes inside to ground the hearth, where rough stone appears in the section too. This is clearly a heterotopia in the sense applied to Aalto by Demetri Porphyrios,<sup>vi</sup> that is a creation of contrasting territories, though without the negative otherness usually associated with Foucault's usage of that term. Häring also intended an essential relationship with the outside world, shown by the different kinds of transition between inside and out. Again in 'Work on the ground plan' he says:

*'A natural order will assert itself, with the tendency for each part to find its appropriate relation with the sun, so that the house opens towards the south and swings around from east to west, while it turns its back to the north. It behaves like a plant presenting its organs to the sun.'*<sup>vii</sup>

The plan (still fig 5) is drawn north to bottom, the street side, while south and garden are to top. We can be sure of this because from the mid 1930s onward Häring's practice was to place all beds north-headed, for which he claimed health benefits, but more importantly also response to the *mittagslinie* – the midday line – and the rotation of the earth.<sup>viii</sup> After some initial scepticism about this I have been convinced by the almost universal concern for orientation found in vernacular architecture. Values and preferred directions differ, but it is important to know where you are in the world.<sup>ix</sup> In the section, which is taken vertically through the plan looking right, the roof rises towards the south. Main bedrooms on the left get east light, study rooms on the right west light. Middle top facing south is a semi-enclosed and roofed external space. To right of it is the winter garden, which appears in the left side of the

section as a multi-paned window, dedicated to the afternoon sun. Even the maid's room gains south light thanks to its eastward projection.

### **Anatomy of Aalto's house**

Similar concerns can be found in Aalto's house, even if at first it seems more conventional. The published floor plans again include furniture (fig 3), which defines the functions of rooms and determines the deployment of space. The dining room is perfectly sized for its extendable table, for example, set between a large low window to the garden and the servery from the kitchen. The living room is centred on sofa, table and chairs grouped around the fireplace and there is a defined place for the piano beyond, the arrangement retained until today. Typically modernist is the open-planning of the main rooms, so that just by drawing back a curtain and opening a sliding screen, a reception room emerges enjoying the full length of the house with the studio added on (fig 6). This allowed for gathering of guests, while in daily life it offered varied views and a pleasurable promenade. The three steps between house to studio are a crucial piece of spatial punctuation, used in the same way as in the houses of Häring and Scharoun. Notice also how the very lightness of construction in the south side of the plan – columns rather than load-bearing wall – expresses openness and transparency despite the limited openings. The 1930s saw the establishment of fully equipped internal bathrooms and fitted kitchens following fresh attention to ergonomics, hygiene, and optimal use of space,<sup>x</sup> so it is hardly surprising to find the Aaltos building a wall unit between kitchen and dining room with drawers and cupboards opening both ways, or reusing the hydrodynamic basins designed for Paimio (fig 7,8). Other built-in cupboards share slices of plan, alternating between one side and the other, and ground floor lavatories disappear into thicknesses of wall. Planning is tightly specific, with a wide range of window types to adjust light and view according to size and use of rooms. The south-facing windows are made as generous as possible for contact with the garden, while bedrooms have more modest east-facing windows with higher cills, and the studio's large high west-facing window brings strong daylight for drawing, effectively north light. A typically modernist move was the devolution of ventilation to separate side panels, allowing the big double-glazed viewing windows to remain fixed.<sup>xi</sup> Häring had published a text differentiating functions between lighting, ventilation and view as early as 1923.<sup>xii</sup> To alleviate darkness in the upper floor behind the fireplace and in the bathroom, Aalto added small circular roof lights on the principle of Viipuri (fig 9).

### **Comparison with Häring's Haus E**

In general terms Aalto's plan is remarkably similar to an almost contemporary unbuilt project by Häring, Haus E dated 1935 (fig 10).<sup>xiii</sup> Contact between the two architects at this stage would have been unlikely, though Aalto scholars have suggested that they already knew each other, and were even 'good friends'.<sup>xiv</sup> Both had been present at the second and third CIAM conferences of 1929 and 30, and both were intimate with the Austrian delegate Josef Frank, whose wife was Swedish. Aalto was certainly befriended by Gropius, whom he visited in Berlin in both 1930 and 1931, and they presumably visited the newly completed Siemensstadt at which Gropius had built. So Aalto probably at least saw the blocks there by Häring, which in contrast to the

painted render of his colleagues had expressed concrete frames and highly textured brick facades.<sup>xv</sup> Whatever the case, similarity between Aalto's house and Haus E suggests at least parallel thinking.<sup>xvi</sup> Like Aalto's house, Haus E is a freestanding building with two parallel tracts of rooms, one north-facing for service and circulation, the other south-facing for living rooms. The service tract with kitchen, bathroom and scullery is tightly planned around sanitary equipment, and there is a lobby with coat hooks. The kitchen links to the dining room, again with built-in cupboards in the thickness of the wall, but not double-opening. Much of the internal wall area is occupied by built-in cupboards or bookshelves when not by windows or fireplaces. Bedrooms face east as with Aalto, but Häring's beds are also headed north as earlier explained. Both houses are entered from the north and address a garden to south, a protected enclave attained only after passage through the house. Both living-rooms are open-plan, dining space being divisible by a curtain, and the same group of furniture in each acknowledges a hearth as social centre. Aalto's house goes further in this respect, having no less than four hearths - five if one includes the boiler. There are open fireplaces in the living room, the studio, the upper hall, and an external one at the back of the roof terrace. Each has a focal role, the upper hall fireplace, for example, serving as the centre of the bedroom cluster, a fire around which children gather for bedtime stories. The four open hearths occur in a line across the centre of the house, located in the spine wall that divides the open-plan living rooms from service wing. Comparing again with Häring's Haus E, both show much creation of inside to outside spaces on the south side, and when it was published in the *Architectural Review* in 1938, the whole set of photographs of Aalto's house was of exterior terraces, both the main courtyard-like space and the roof terrace. We have heard Häring's claims about relation to the sun. In Haus E there are indoor plants within a *Blumenfenster*,<sup>xvii</sup> and terraces outside are part-sheltered, part open. Stairs descend to a lower terrace in the south-west and thence to the garden.<sup>xviii</sup> Häring drew an alternative plan version departing from the orthogonal (fig), which further articulates the heterotopia, opening the dining area more to west and the back bedroom more to south east, as well as making the hearth more central. It gives the spaces quite a different feel.<sup>xix</sup>

### **Other contemporary voices on the plan**

Aalto and Häring's interest in the plan is not unusual for the period, though it was not always so well developed. Another architect who proclaimed this interest was Bruno Taut, writing about his own house in Berlin of 1926-7:

*'Dwelling is not just the grouping and furnishing of rooms, but the house as a whole body along with all its inner functions and outward connections, thus linked to its environment, garden and landscape... Opinion is divided between those who continue to believe in architectural beauty for its own sake, and those who believe, at least in relation to functional tasks of which the house is one, that every preconceived 'artistic idea' must be rejected. They foresee a building culture that will arise instead purely from finding the decisive solution to the particular task, through direct presentation of the elements that constitute the body of a dwelling house, by allowing its inner functions to arrive at a good solution by themselves, without any external imposition. An*

*advantage of this stance is that initial doubts can gradually be dispelled through better understanding of the organism, giving way instead to a great appreciation, whereas a 'beautiful architecture' brings the danger that increasing familiarity will expose an increasing contradiction between beautiful façade and inner processes. This danger is increased by our tendency to find beautiful what is bound up with custom, and thus with the past, and is therefore unrelated to the latest developments in builderly and architectonic form. A return to history, even to Biedermeier, is for us such volatile artifice, that it precludes any serious relationship'.<sup>xx</sup>*

Similar statements occur in the writings of two Berlin critics who supported what was then known as *neues Bauen* 'the new building', Adolf Behne and Walter Curt Behrendt. In *Von der Sachlichkeit* of 1927, Behne included a whole section on 'vom Grundriss – on the ground plan'.

*'The ground plan is no task for personal or in the old sense artistic performance, not an opportunity for form fantasy, but a compulsion to work with reality and think things through, to which a much richer fantasy belongs. Architecture is most richly concentrated in the creation of the ground plan, where the architect is led most decisively beyond the limits of personal work to the development of the created object. Each ground plan requires its own type of solution, for when it is developed in full seriousness, it is part of the task of the ground plan to order our life on the ground, on this earth'.<sup>xxi</sup>*

### **Exploiting the levels of the ground**

We have so far looked just at plans, but section is equally important as part of the same strategic thinking, especially when related to negotiation of ground levels. Aalto's site might at first seem only to offer modest changes in level, but these were used to great effect. Sometimes the house meets the ground at a horizontal plane, particularly the living rooms opening to their terrace, including the whole east side and north-east corner as far as the containing wall of outhouses (fig). But along the north wall between entrance and garage, and along the west side and around the south-west corner, the house wall meets a dropping contour (fig). Aalto does not let his whitewashed brickwork disappear into the dirty soil, but creates a grey base of concrete, rising to a horizontal line that steps at chosen points. This kind of visual treatment, which might be called a modernist rustication, appears repeatedly in his later work, often with a change from stone cladding to brickwork. Preserved drawings of his own house include a site-plan with contours showing the house's diagonal placing on the slope with the upper north-east corner embedded in a flat plane, the lower one dropping into the ground (fig). The levels must have been carefully managed, because roots of mature pines had to be left where they were, and granite boulders which break the ground to south-east presumably also remained untouched.<sup>xxii</sup> Such consciousness of the ground plane is typical of Aalto and of his mentor Gunnar Asplund,<sup>xxiii</sup> and led later to the deliberate articulation of contours in irregular steps, as famously displayed at Säynätsalo town hall. The contour drawing also reveals that the terrace in front of the living room is flat, divided off from the rest of the garden by a rough stone retaining wall which deepens towards the studio corner. An alternative site plan (fig) published in Fleig's monograph of 1963, and possibly

redrawn for that purpose, idealises the site boundary by making it precisely square. It places the house with living room and terrace as a square within the square (I have added some regulating lines).<sup>xxiv</sup> This is not because it was conceived that way, for as you can see, upper and lower boundaries were readjusted, and the reason for the squareness laterally was a legally enforced building line six metres from the boundary. But the retaining wall for the central terrace must have been set out with this cloister-like intention, and the idealised siteplan version stresses the concentricity.<sup>xxv</sup> It is conceptually interesting because the central square, echoing the atrium or courtyard which so interested Aalto,<sup>xxvi</sup> is shared between inside and out. The broken corner of the outer square is also accentuated: no longer included in the house's protected plateau, it allows the sweep of the street to swerve down into the garage, creating the need for steps up to the front door. The lowered garage also drives some internal planning, for though the main studio lies over sauna and cellar, the library at the north end sits over the garage, high enough to permit a tiny stair up to the roof terrace. The interaction of levels, especially steps up from living room to studio, adds essential spatial punctuation. We have seen how the terrace, as outdoor room enclosed by the L, was in the conceptual scheme the other half of the living room. Aalto also left the ground floor bay at the east end open as a sheltered dining room extension for outside meals. This spot must have been more attractive when the adjacent site was undeveloped, and before it was encroached by a maid's room.<sup>xxvii</sup> Further sense of enclosure was provided by cantilevering out the framed upper floor, adding protective cover from the street door around the east end to the garden side. This outward step was delineated on the ground with a planting bed (fig).

### **The Woythaler House**

We began with an unrealised Häring house design from the late 1940s, post-Aalto, and will end with a built house of 1926-7, nearly ten years pre-Aalto, which shows striking parallels. I think it contradicts the general Corbusier-based assumption that a cube-like modernism preceded a 'rediscovery' of materials and texture. Häring's feeling for texture and pattern pervades his work, already present by 1924 at the proto-brutalist Garkau Farm. The importance of the Woythaler house for his *oeuvre* is twofold: first it is the only substantial house he was able to build during the boom years of the Weimar Republic,<sup>xxviii</sup> second it was contemporaneous with the Weissenhofsiedlung, in which he was at first included but dropped out, so it could be regarded as a parallel sample. The site lay in the south-west Berlin suburb of Lankwitz close to Lichterfelde station, and the client was Max Woythaler, managing director of Knorr Bremse, a firm that made brakes for trains. He was Jewish and presumably lost his job in the Nazi persecution, probably fleeing to London.<sup>xxix</sup> The house was damaged in the war, then in the 1950s became further degraded as a shelter for the homeless. With nobody to protect it, it was demolished in the 1960s and replaced by a block of flats. It has been overlooked by architectural historians perhaps for being dully orthogonal rather than obviously 'organic', but there was also a lack of information. The Häring Archive possesses only photographs and elevations, and for decades the only plans known were redrawings of ground and first floors – no cellar or attic – in Joedicke and Lauterbach's book of 1965.<sup>xxx</sup> Based on building permit

versions, they offered little information, unhelpful about site and design intentions. As plans are essential to understanding Häring's work, I have returned to originals preserved by Häring's assistant Karl Böttcher, now available on line from the archives of the Technical University of Berlin.<sup>xxxii</sup> From these drawings and what could be deduced from photos I have added more detail, furnishing the rooms to restore a sense of how the building was used and experienced.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Lacking in Joedicke's plans was not only the site information, but more crucially the orientation. The leafy suburban street was lined with a regular series of villas and it stood on the north side, with sun from the street side and the garden in shade. The whole row followed a building line five metres back from the pavement, still visible on the satellite image (fig), and there were also lateral building limits as with Aalto's house, but of five metres as opposed to the six in Helsinki. The orientation of the street was not pure east-west but swung eastward, so the intended garden path leading to an existing grove of trees was almost exactly south-north. The irregular paving shown is traced line for line off the drawing, as are the tree trunks, evidently the result of a precise survey. Like Aalto, Häring had to keep to given levels, and to work around a group of birches very close to the house.

Häring's driving idea was to exploit the south west corner as a paved sun terrace with pergola, first floor balcony, and a private sunbathing terrace behind the parapet on the roof. This diagonal emphasis, combined with the need to avoid the trees, produced a cascading series of corners on the north side, which Sandy Wilson used to call 'echelon' and is often found later in the work of Aalto.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The entrance is to the east, with the drive leading past to a lower set garage at the back, and the kitchen projects to meet the building line at the skewed east site boundary. Attic floor and first floor also project to produce a canopy for the entrance, letting the roof-like slate cladding descend over it. On the west side it is the projecting dining room that meets the building line, while enfolding the terrace. The main living rooms at ground floor south and west are open-plan with folding partitions, the dining table enjoying a generous garden view to north through the biggest window, while also connected axially with the living room. The dining room's western bay seems to have been conceived as a wintergarden, as it has a large multi-pane window in elevation (fig). Further concern with plants is shown by the flower boxes of the south wall and the presence of a substantial plant cellar in the basement for overwintering specimens susceptible to frost. Ground floor south east was the owner's study, set next to the front door for business meetings. Two maids, identifiable from their separate bed rooms in the attic, worked the kitchen, while the anteroom to the guest bedroom on the first floor marked 'cleaning and sewing' was evidently their workroom. The ground floor servery linked kitchen and dining room, but also gave access to the cellar, so the maids could access store rooms, laundry and boiler, and the service areas of the house could be kept separate.

Häring was always interested in bodily movement,<sup>xxxiv</sup> and the steps rising to the east door curl around to welcome you (fig). As you enter, you find yourself on the main axis of the house, which runs straight through the dining room to double doors to the terrace. The initial steps of the main stair were extended and rounded off to make it more inviting, producing a fluid and economical stair that swings in a clockwise direction, and in sympathy with this movement the plastered corners of the room were shown as rounded off



at both levels. The one photograph we have of the entrance (fig) shows windows and doors of contrasting character following the Gothic Revival precedent of articulating the interior rather than the formality of the exterior. From left to right beyond the front door is a high barred protective window for the cloakroom, a small corner one to let the maids in the kitchen see who is coming, a tall one for light, a high-set one over the larder, and finally the kitchen door with its handrails. The bedroom above has a full height glazed door with balustrade, inwardly openable to admit morning sun.

Häring shares Aalto's concern with levels. The four elevations (fig) show bottom left the low level of the garden behind, top right the slight rise to the front door then a drop towards the garage. Bottom right we see the terrace raised as a flat plateau just a couple of steps below the living room. Most important is the street front, with the main floor raised about 1.5 metres above road level for privacy, and a protective wall running through to screen the terrace, tied through on the right to separate entry gates for pedestrians and vehicles. All versions of this elevation show a tall parapet wall with four evenly spaced first floor windows: a traditional statement of front, yet the composition as a whole is asymmetrical, for living room windows slide rightwards and cellar ones leftwards. I constructed an axonometric (fig) – a drawing type familiar to Häring – which helps emphasise the wall on which everything sits, a dramatisation of the building line set well within the site boundary. The drawing also stresses the corner terrace, which while evidently a response to the southern orientation, also represented a compositional move away from the axial frontal villa towards the diagonal, a tendency earlier demonstrated by Erich Mendelsohn's Sternefeld house. Häring had been hedging his bets over asymmetry the previous year with his contrasting versions of the Berliner Secession Gallery, one symmetrical with a central stair obeying classical precedent, the other shifting circulation to the end and making a sculpture gallery of the stair landing.

The only other drawing preserved in the Häring Archive is an alternative street elevation (fig). It is undated, but its style gives no reason to assume a later reworking: indeed corrections on the building permit version suggest that its more radical pergola may have been submitted and rejected, making it therefore earlier. The drawing is revealing in many ways. First, it prioritises front and face to the street, there being no similar drawings of the other elevations. Second, it is a personal study in the hand of the architect, revealing how texture might contribute to the modelling of the façade. Third, in comparison with the submitted and built version, it shows a sense of exploration and conceptual freedom developing from the already determined plan towards technical detail. Some of the indicated material is brickwork, and Häring had spent many years as a young architect in Hamburg, a city famous for its brick buildings.<sup>xxxv</sup> This may account for some of the brick-consciousness that Häring showed at Garkau Farm in 1924, where he took every opportunity to play with brick patterning (fig). There changes of bond reflect varying thicknesses, soldier courses turn a tight corner to reduce width of joints, projecting horizontal courses serve to fend off passing carts, projecting vertical stops to accommodate a sliding door – but there are also brick patterns justifiable only in the spirit of play, like the way projecting door-stop courses on the barn terminate in diagonal steps met by soldier course. Häring's technical assistant Karl Böttcher, who entered his employment with

the Woythaler House, claimed that Häring was less interested in construction for its own sake than for the way it contributed to his idea of 'gestalt'.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

As with Garkau, several Woythaler details reveal visual meaning rather than a concern with buildability. Straightforward in the built elevation is a brick base on which the whole house rests, a kind of rustication in relation to the rendered wall above, and there seems also to be a great concrete lintel carrying the brick wall over the three basement windows then extended to the left. In the alternative elevation though, this putative lintel reaches the living room windows and also steps up towards the east corner.<sup>xxxvii</sup> More surprisingly, at the junction of house and terrace is a stepping interaction of five different material surfaces apparently all in the same plane, since elsewhere – for example the window boxes and overhanging storey – shadows are drawn. This treatment would have intensified the visual tension between house and terrace. Häring wanted to raise the terrace wall to internal eye-level for the sake of privacy, and he sought to make more of the pergola as a framed construction by showing its layers, but both seem to have been denied by fussy planning officers.<sup>xxxviii</sup> The suggestion of combining the ground floor windows and recessing them behind their window box would have produced a richer layering of the façade, but the suggested change of material at first floor cill level seems to add little. In the attic a continuous row of windows underlines its frame construction and possible use as a sun room, but the dark ends must be brick, including on the right the bulk of the chimney. The slate cladding finally adopted as a kind of mansard, although typical of Häring in its visible texture and edge detail, was probably a sop to the planners. Some idiosyncratic details survived into the built version, particularly in relation to the turning of corners. At both parapet ends for example, a single course of brickwork projected beyond the render, perhaps indicating that the inner face was of exposed brick (fig). Similarly the brick base was prevented from turning the corner at the east end, instead stepping down one brick-length short of it. Such details deny the autonomy of the flat façade in favour of the building's three-dimensionality.

Although he could plan relatively freely, whenever he had a real chance to build, Häring brought tangibility and texture to the fore. Aalto possessed the same kind of textural sensibility which began to emerge strongly in the late 1930s. Among the drawings for his own house are numerous alternative facade versions trying out different constructions, layerings, roof forms, and windows, though obeying more or less the same plan. With both architects, despite the priority given to the plan, what a house looked like certainly did matter, and no elevation grew automatically out of a plan. Furthermore Aalto, like Häring, could be cavalier with tectonic logic when it suited him, as for example with his heavy first floor fireplace added at a late design stage without structural rationale, supported presumably on hidden steel. Both architects refined the façade as the means by which the house declared itself to the world, so it deserved much attention and careful exploration of how it could enhance the house's growing identity. We can conclude that if a house design was driven initially by habitability and a sense of place, as claimed in the first half of this paper, it also came together finally as a unity of object, image, and space. It is this sense of integrity that in the age of the brand and image we so sorely miss.

### **Detritus**

but which other parts are render or concrete we cannot tell. We know from Garkau farm, Siemensstadt housing, and other unbuilt projects that Häring was passionately interested in finding some expression in the materials, if without slavish pursuit of tectonic logic. He

Most remarkable perhaps in the alternative facade is the great ambiguity of wall surface, whose pencil shading suggests a great variety of textures within the same plane.

Should be obvious by now façade is back in, Aalto also worried over it, but in relation to achieved plan and organisation

Shadows and window box, lintel, set back windows, but corners!

. With the Woythaler façade lintels, brick base like rustication, roof-like cladding

– front, attention, importance, open-mindedness, texture and colour, shadows – modelling of the façade. On to tectonic discussion, brickwork, coursing, and emphasis of corners.

windows

Add more here about the textures, roof treatment etc.

As a young architect Häring had worked in Hamburg, a brick city dominated by the brick-built work of Fritz Schumacher, and brought to an expressive climax in Fritz Höger's Chilehaus, completed 1922.

Intersecting and overlapping brickwork at the terrace end. Häring clearly wanted to block the view below standing eye-level and to build an elaborate pergola frame above. The various layers of darker and lighter brick or render slide over each other, apparently in the same plane since there are no shadows there, although shadows are added for the window box and the overhanging top floor. The big window box was made, complete with a shallower supporting corbel, and the front wall was built in a mixture of exposed brick courses and render in the same plane, something not easy to achieve because the rendered brickwork must be set back a centimetre or two. At the south-east corner the main brick courses stop about one brick length short of the corner to allow the render to make the turn, but a single vertical line of brick breaks through the east wall at the end of the parapet, possibly because the back of the wall is in exposed brick: the same thing happens at the other end. In the version built, the terrace wall west of the living room is set much lower, but there are planting boxes on the top of the wall and that beyond the end of the pergola steps down, eliminating three courses of brick. The photographs do not reveal the intended cellar windows, which were perhaps at the last moment omitted, in which case the large horizontal member on the façade perhaps originally intended as their lintel is finally no such thing.

Setting the living room windows back in a shared bay enhances the effect of the long window box. The first floor shutters of the submitted elevations seem to have been banished in favour of roller shutters.

The contrast between the drawings shows that working from the inside out does not mean ceasing to care what it looks like, and clearly Häring, like Aalto and Asplund, tended to explore a range of possibilities. It does increase the subtlety of the façade to inset the living room windows, perhaps with a deeper window box for flowers. The slate-clad and timber framed attic floor succeeded in replacing the lost roof just like Aalto's timber clad upper floor, but the lower drawing shows brick ends and a continuous run of windows. Perhaps he intended to incorporate the proposed recreation room that ended up in the basement. The lower drawing also shows a will to explore textural effects, necessarily carried through with contrasting materials, again in a manner comparable with Aalto.

Häring had made his breakthrough at Garkau farm of 1924-5 shown top right, contrasting brickwork, concrete frame, and timber cladding and playing with brick bonding, and he does it again with the Woythaler House in several idiosyncratic details. The starting point is certainly the character of different finishes and the logic of construction, but it soon goes much further, and Häring's technical expert Karl Böttcher emphasised that I look at it as a commentary on construction rather than a pursuit of technique for its own sake.

According to the advocates of rational modernism, both Häring and Aalto were often been dismissed as 'irrational' and following a purely 'personal' path, but I find it neither so incomprehensible nor so subjective. Both had great method in their madness and their concerns were surprisingly similar.

I have tried to show some of the method behind their planning and the many things they had in common, but I'd like to finish by saying that the period still fascinates me greatly because it was so open-ended, so exploratory. Architects were attempting to get beyond received prejudices about what buildings ought to look like, and to consider instead what they are.

Peter Blundell Jones 13/2/15 4720w

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<sup>i</sup> He seems to have gained it in lieu of fees for an unbuilt housing project, see..

<sup>ii</sup> Aino book and her contribution.

<sup>iii</sup> Visit for the Scharoun lecture and credit Esa.

<sup>iv</sup> Wege zur form and discussion in my monograph.

<sup>v</sup> Extract from *Arbeit am Grundriss* 1952, first published in *Baukunst und Werkform* vol. 5, 1952; reprinted in Joedicke/Lauterbach 1964, p. 77, my translation.

<sup>vi</sup> Porphyrios, Demitri, *Sources of Modern Eclecticism*, Academy Editions, London, 1982.

<sup>vii</sup> Extract from *Arbeit am Grundriss* 1952, first published in *Baukunst und Werkform* vol. 5, 1952; reprinted in Joedicke/Lauterbach 1964, p. 77, my translation.

<sup>viii</sup> *Bauwelt* no. 27, 4<sup>th</sup> July 1960, p. 780.

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- <sup>ix</sup> For a general justification see Chapter 2.1 *The primacy of bodily experience* and Chapter 3.1 *Space as a product of bodily movement* in Peter Blundell Jones and Mark Meagher, *Architecture and Movement*, Routledge 2014, pp 96-101, 164-171.
- <sup>x</sup> Famously the Frankfurt kitchen by Margarete Schütte-Lihotsky, but also the studies by Bruno Taut as in his book *Die neue Wohnung: Die Frau als Schöpferin* of 1928.
- <sup>xi</sup> Häring shared this interest and published a text entitled *Probleme des Bauens* in *Der Neubau* vol 17, September 1924, reprinted in Joedicke/Lauterbach 1965, pp. 14-15.
- <sup>xii</sup> Ein Fenster hat drei funktionen, ref.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Drawings preserved in Häring's archive were chosen for publication in Joedicke/Lauterbach 1965, p.119; no references have yet identified the client.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Discussions at the Aalto Foundation's seminar in Rovaniemi, February 2015, but no direct evidence proffered.
- <sup>xv</sup> See Göran Schildt *The Decisive Years* Rizzoli 1986, pp, 61,62, 65.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Contact would have been difficult after the Nazi takeover. Häring's plan for Haus E was as far as I know first published in the Joedicke/Lauterbach monograph of 1965.
- <sup>xvii</sup> A kind of small greenhouse with glass both sides: the dotted line on the planter closest to the hearth suggests this, as does the subdivision of the glazing.
- <sup>xviii</sup> It was planned as a two-storey house with a separate flat and garage below, but further discussion of this would not add to the argument. Häring's liking for first floor living rooms in many projects is attributable to improved view and increased privacy.
- <sup>xix</sup> I disagree with Matthias Schirren, who read this comparison as proof that the angle changes were superficial. The differences are many, particularly in relation to patterns of movement.
- <sup>xx</sup> *Ein Wohnhaus* Page 13 continued
- <sup>xxi</sup> Adolf Behne, *Von der Sachlichkeit*, included in architextbook Nr 5, Archibook verlag 1984, p. 38, my translation.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Roots extend about the same distance as the crown of a tree, and its life is in danger if disturbed or buried deeper, so ground levels cannot be changed. Embedded boulders from the last ice-age are not only significant features in the landscape but are legally protected in Finland.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Discussed in Blundell Jones *Gunnar Asplund's National Bacteriological Laboratories, Solna, Stockholm, 1933-1937*, *The Journal of Architecture* vol 15, no. 4, August 2010, pp 379-395.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> This seems to be the only published site plan (carried over into Quantrill's book) that shows the boundary as an accurate square, and though the smaller square within is not quite precise in alignment, it is pretty close. Aalto surely supervised the selection of material for the monograph, and perhaps took this opportunity for a reinterpretation, re-presenting it in an idealised version.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Ranulph Glanville claimed origins in the Finnish farmyard: see *Is Architecture just a Hollow Space, or is it the Empty Set?* *Architectural Association Quarterly*, London, vol. 8, no. 4, 1976, p14, and *Finnish Vernacular Architecture* vol 9, no. 1, 1977 p. 16. The idea is revealed also in the concentricity and squareness of Aalto's summerhouse at Muuratsalo.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> The atrium house scheme and Muuratsalo
- <sup>xxvii</sup> See photo page 23 and plan figure 27 on page 17 of *Alvar Aalto Vol 6, The Aalto House 1935-6*.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> The Frentzel House at Elbing in East Prussia was relatively modest and executed at a distance. It is also poorly documented, but I attempted a reconstruction in my Häring monograph *Hugo Häring: the Organic versus the Geometric*, Menges 1999.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Schirren for identifying client and connection through Behrendt.
- <sup>xxx</sup> I attempted a reconstruction in my monograph (see previous note), but without recourse to the originals and guessing the layouts of cellar and attic.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Reference to TU drawings and ref numbers.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Following room uses as specified in writing on the drawings, and guided by Häring's practice elsewhere. I also guessed the door-swings, which clarify openings and again confirm scale.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Colin St John Wilson, *The Other Tradition*.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> In a station design of 1921, his competition entry for the Friedrichstrasse offices of 1922, house designs of 1923, and most strikingly the second version of the Berliner Secession Art Gallery 1926, see my monograph (note 24).

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<sup>xxxv</sup> City architect Fritz Schumacher had been among Häring's teachers. Häring was present during the period of elaborate brick detailing with ornamental specials promoted by Schumacher, and famously culminating in Fritz Höger's Chilehaus: see Fritz Schumacher *Das Wesen des neuzeitlichen Backsteinbaues*, Callwey, Munich, 1917.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Böttcher statement

<sup>xxxvii</sup> The photographs suggest that it was in fact a render coating, with the joint to the brickwork uncleanly managed.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> There is no written documentation, but alterations on the drawings suggest that they worried about the proportion and centring of windows even on the back. The lower parts of the pergola structure are actively crossed out.