

In front of the house, paved terrace for the family to enjoy sitting out is accessible from the dining-room and main bedroom, and from the sitting-room balcony. The brick chimney stack is used to unify the junction between the tiled and flat roofs





HOUSES FOR THE LIFE YOU LEAD

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THEIR 20TH HOME!

In nearly 25 years of marriage, Col. and Mrs. D. B. O'Flaherty have had 19 homes in six different countries.

So when they came to build their present house—the 20th—they had a certain amount of consumer knowledge to draw on!

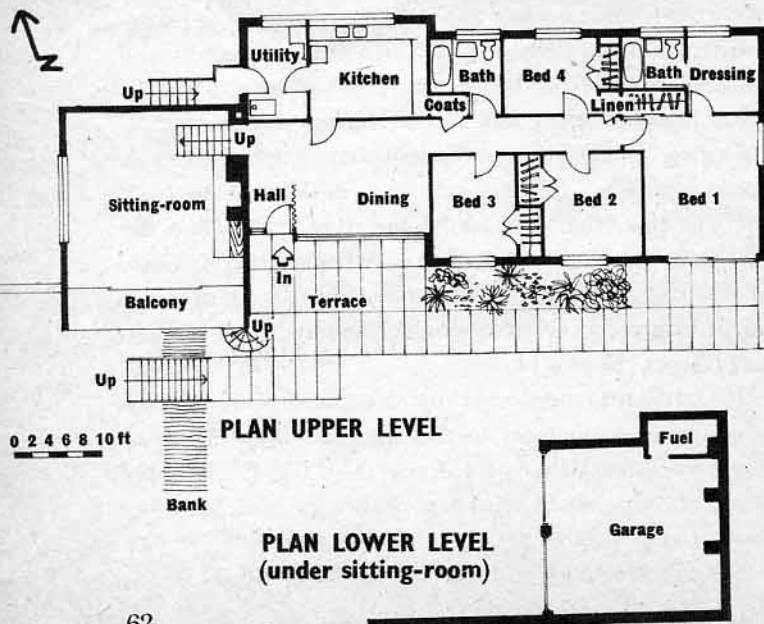
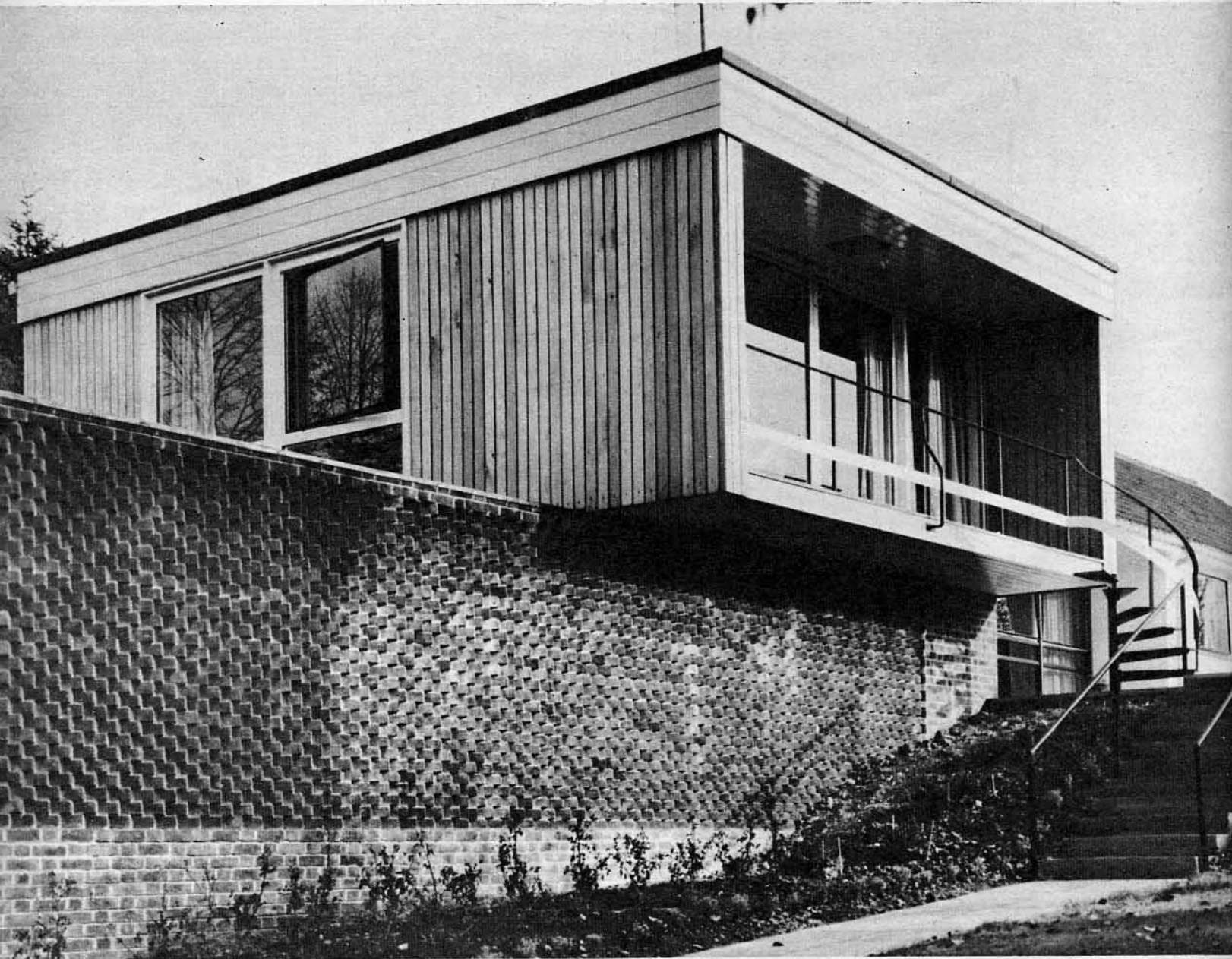
Colonel O'Flaherty is a regular army officer and most of their previous homes were army quarters, only two being their own. Equipped with this experience and two complete files of cuttings from glossy magazines and books, the O'Flahertys, facing army retirement at an early age, and sick of wandering, seized on a War Office posting in the London area to sink a great big permanent root in the Home Counties.

During house-hunting expeditions they viewed a house with a plot of land for sale next door. They liked the situation, the view across the river valley, and the fact that Guildford was within easy commuting distance of the War Office and any London job that retirement might bring. So they abandoned their search for a house and bought the plot of land.

It had been a tennis court and an orchard, and a number of restrictive covenants to the sale made appointing an architect essential. Apart from this, the O'Flahertys knew nothing about building or design and felt they wanted an expert to design the house.

Not knowing an architect, they contacted the R.I.B.A.

Cedar boarding covers the outside walls of the sitting-room. Note dramatic effect of bricks placed at an angle in ground-level wall which does double duty as a sitting-room support and as a screen for the double garage



View of large double garage shows how it is built under the sitting-room and hidden from the garden by the brick wall

who put them in touch with the Guildford Chapter of Architects (there are subsidiary bodies of the R.I.B.A. in every district), and Douglas Bundy A.R.I.B.A. of Barber, Bundy and Greenfield was recommended. Their brief to him was enormous—the two files of cuttings, plus an instruction that the house *must* be warm.

Mrs. O'Flaherty wasn't sure about modernity; on the other hand, she was certain that she wanted a bungalow and one that was easy to run. Driven to the point of making a decision and aided by the fact that Douglas Bundy was only prepared to design a modern house, she took a chance on the 20th century, and hasn't regretted it yet.

The O'Flaherty's sons are only home spasmodically. One is at Cambridge reading history, and his elder brother, following his father's career, has a regular commission in the Gurkhas.

Each one has a small bedroom, and there is an adequate guest room. As the most permanent residents, their parents have the most generously-sized bedroom, with doors on to the garden and an adjoining dressing-room and bathroom *en suite*.

Together with another bathroom for sons and guests, the bedrooms form a self-contained wing at the opposite end of the house to the sitting-room. The space between is occupied by a large dining hall and, off it at the rear, a kitchen and utility room.

Beyond this point, the plan becomes split-levelled, and wide, shallow steps lead up to a pavilion-type timber clad sitting-room perched over a double garage and furnace room.

The bedroom and dining-room wing is built on what used to be the old tennis court, and the garage and sitting-room are set on what was a bank leading to it. This is the proper way to use a split level design—as an expedient to cope with a sudden fall in ground height—and here it has been done very well.

The considerable length of tiled and pitched roof was a condition imposed in the sale of the land, but the architect would have preferred a flat roof similar to that over the sitting-room.

One of the most pleasant points about this house is the way the living areas merge into one another and then out into gardens and balconies at various levels. This is equally satisfactory whether the O'Flahertys are on their own or entertaining, and it makes a superb setting for the boys to hold parties.

Having spent 25 years thinking about the ideal home and another year or so getting it built and occupying it, how does reality match up to the dream?

Pretty well. But Mrs. O'Flaherty has realised one error. If they built again—and this isn't contemplated just yet!—she would make the kitchen more of a living-room. She has discovered that modern life is brisk and the kitchen is more often dined in than the dining-room; that if a friend calls they invariably have coffee in the kitchen because it isn't worth carrying it into the sitting-room.

What she visualises is a farmhouse type of kitchen, fairly gay with at least one comfortable chair. I am quite certain that she is right and this is a universal trend many people are feeling.

The recent Parker-Morris report on housing standards ("Homes for Today and Tomorrow" H.M.S.O. 4s.) gave support to the idea when it stated that people of every income group ate at least some meals in the kitchen.

Well-known domestic architect, Eric Lyons, O.B.E., F.R.I.B.A., has been propounding this theme for several years and I should be surprised if he weren't right. So watch out for the return of living-kitchens and back parlours, or perhaps more likely, the gradual transfer of the dining-room from the sitting-room to the kitchen.

Dining-room includes the hall making a larger area, but it can be screened off with a curtain for entertaining; large windows overlook paved terrace



Wooden stairs cope with the different levels of sitting and dining-rooms. Floors are wood block throughout. Central heating is by radiators all over the house except in the sitting-room where there is skirting heating



Exposed brick-work fireplace in the sitting-room has a mantelpiece front which continues to form the handrail of stairs leading to dining-room. Sliding doors lead to balcony and steps to lower level

