

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS EXHIBITION OF WARTIME HOUSING

An Exhibition of Wartime Housing will open at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, on Wednesday, April 22. The exhibition has been arranged in collaboration with the National Committee on the Housing Emergency. It will be on view through July 19.

The exhibition will show by means of graphic and dramatic installation why adequate housing designed by the country's best architects is necessary to help America win the war. It will present various new methods for producing such housing with maximum speed and economy according to contemporary design.

A private preview of the exhibition will be given to Museum members and their friends Tuesday evening, April 21, from nine to midnight. Preceding the private showing the President and Trustees of the Museum are giving a buffet supper in honor of John B. Blandford, Jr., Administrator of the National Housing Agency, recently appointed by President Roosevelt. At 7:45 P.M. a nation-wide broadcast over the Blue Network will be made from the Museum. John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum, will introduce the speakers, who are Mrs. Samuel I. Rosenman, Chairman of the National Committee on the Housing Emergency, and Mr. Blandford. This will be Mr. Blandford's first public address since taking office.

Eliot F. Noyes, Director of the Museum's Department of Industrial Design, has assembled the material and <sup>designed the</sup> installation with the help of Alice Carson of the same Department, and Don Hatch, New York architect retained by the Museum as special consultant for the exhibition.

Mr. Noyes comments on the purpose of the exhibition as follows:

"During the next year or two, hundreds of thousands of new houses will have to be built for workers in war industries. In this program lie great dangers for, with the vital need for speed, long-range planning tends to be sidetracked, and what is built hastily now may become slums and ghost towns of tomorrow. The people of a community can do much in planning the future growth of their town; if they fail to do so, they fail in their responsibility as American citizens.

"What we are trying to show in this exhibition is very simple. If you add a wing to your house, you plan it very carefully, and have architects, plumbers, electricians,

and all sorts of specialists to consult with you about it. If you add a wing to your community, it should be planned just as carefully with experts advising just as thoroughly. Many communities will be adding wings these days to house the hundreds of thousands of war workers.

"The exhibition has been designed to make clear the fact that while there are dangers there are also the greatest opportunities now for communities to work out plans for their own growth according to predetermined and well studied schemes. When this is done, time and money are saved, and the community can control its own development for the best interests of everybody. There also exists now outstanding opportunity for honest evaluation of new building technics and the needs out of which we must evolve a fresh architecture. Some of the best examples of new design direction are shown in the exhibition."

The exhibition has a twofold purpose:

1. To show that war materials can be produced in sufficient volume to assure victory only if workers are available to man the plants. Workers must have living quarters; therefore housing is essential to the war production program.
2. To show that housing is not a one-man job but that it requires careful planning by many people to insure a good future for the whole community. Only in this way can we be sure that the wartime housing will not become slums or ghost towns after the war.

The exhibition tells its story in a series of scenes presented by movie shorts, blown-up photographs and architectural models. In addition to this visual presentation each scene is accompanied by voices which dramatize the idea of the exhibition scene by scene.

As the visitor enters the exhibition he is greeted by an excerpt from President Roosevelt's speech of January 6, 1942:

"Production for war is based on men and women...Our task is hard. Our task is unprecedented and the time is short. We must strain every existing armament producing facility to the utmost...."

"First, to increase our production rate of airplanes so rapidly that in this year 1942 we shall produce 60,000 planes, 10,000 by the way, more than the goal that we set a year and a half ago. This includes 45,000 combat planes, bombers, dive bombers, pursuit planes. The rate of increase will be maintained, continued, so that next year, 1943, we shall produce 125,000 planes, including 100,000 combat planes.

"Second, to increase our production rate of tanks so rapidly that in this year 1942 we shall produce 45,000 tanks, and to continue that increase so that next year, 1943, we shall produce 75,000 tanks.

"Third, to increase our production rate of anti-aircraft guns so rapidly that in this year 1942 we shall produce 20,000 of them, and to continue that increase so that next year, 1943, we shall produce 35,000 anti-aircraft guns.

"And fourth, to increase our production rate of merchant ships so rapidly that in this year 1942 we shall built 8,000,000

deadweight tons, as compared with a 1941 completed production of 1,100,000. And finally, we shall continue that increase so that next year, 1943, we shall build 10,000,000 tons of shipping."

The visitor then goes on into the exhibition as a crowd of war workers, in movie projection against the wall, perform their jobs before him. They travel along with the visitor, in movie or voice projection, as he passes from scene to scene of factory production, migration of workers, housing conditions in overcrowded areas, make-shift homes, sleeping in basements, tents, shacks, waiting rooms and automobiles.

The theme of the first half of the exhibition is given in Ben Franklin's verse:

For want of a nail the shoe was lost.  
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.  
For want of a horse the rider was lost.  
For want of a rider the battle was lost.  
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.  
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

or, in modern language:

Machine Needs Man  
Man Needs House

and the three together spell production which will win the war. Without any one of these three essential elements production is bound to lag and the war may be lost.

The scene brightens in sequences showing new housing going up quickly by mass production methods, with schools, churches, stores and other community services being fitted into the community picture. But the story does not end with war. The second half of the exhibition shows how, by intelligent community planning, wartime housing facilities can be converted to peacetime use instead of leaving slums and the empty industrial ghost towns of the last war. The visitor comes out into a final gallery which acts as a clinic to show the individual citizen and citizen groups what every American can do to bring about wartime housing that will be a big factor in victory and contribute to a happy peace.