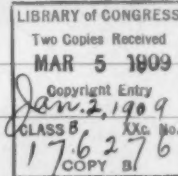


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The Elements of Design in Interior Decoration

IT WAS Fra Elbertus, the "sage of Aurora," was it not, who exclaimed, "blessed is that man who has found his work"? Can it not be stated with equal truthfulness that he is thrice accursed who through ignorance and lack of skill mars the well executed work of another?

This iconoclastic propensity runs riot in this country.

Let us be charitable and say that he is laboring with the best intentions who, posing as a decorator, invades the building that has been pronounced a good work by a competent architect, and by possibly well-meant but poorly directed effort sets up a decorative effect that ruins the entire result. This fact is not referred to as something new, and not patent to every architect, but is directed more to the attention of the client who, when he discharges the architect and calls in the "decorator," to quote Lincoln's apt illustration, "swaps horses crossing the stream," with the inevitable result of securing a bad bargain.

The elements of design in interior decoration should be well understood by every architect, as his preliminary education tends to an appreciation of those tenets of good decorative art. If he has not acquired this knowledge he lacks the ability to carry to successful completion what might otherwise be a satisfactory effort.

Mr. T. R. Spence, in an article read before the Royal Institute of British Architects, at a recent meeting, most exhaustively reviews the principal elements of design in interior decoration. As the decoration of architecture has been practised by many different nations for a period exceeding three thousand years, the enumeration, as stated by the speaker, of all the elements of design would mean a

list of great length. As the speaker truly remarked, "notwithstanding all these examples, there is no reason why we should be complete slaves to their magnificent domination. Neither should we in any way despise the triumphs in line, form, or color, on which the ancients have set the seal of beauty."

"As an early example of a choice of elements which go to make a scheme of decoration I may quote some fragments from the *Odyssey* of Homer, in which he speaks of the Palace of Alcinous and its threshold of bronze. To quote: 'There was a gleam as it were of sun or moon through the high-roofed hall of Alcinous. Brazen were the walls, which ran this way and that,



CHAPEL AT NARNI, PERUGIA, ITALY

from the threshold to the inmost chamber, and round them was a frieze of blue, and golden were the doors. . . . Silver were the doorposts, that were set on the brazen threshold, and the hook of the door was of gold;



STAIRWAY, DUCAL PALACE, VENICE

on either side stood golden hounds, and within were seats ranged against the wall from the threshold even to the inmost chamber, and thereon were spread light coverings, finely woven, the handiwork of women. There were youths fashioned in gold, on firm-set bases, with flaming torches in their hands.'"

Referring to the splendid suggestions of decorative effects of form and schemes of color to be found in the canvases of great artists, particularly those of Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, Mr. Spence dwelt at length on the advantages of the selection of such elements as may be taken from nature: the olive, the laurel, the pomegranate, the orange, the vine and its leafage. He stated, "a combination of these in forms of wreaths, festoons, and other motives, lends itself to the adornment of architecture—the curving festoons for horizontal shapes, the pendant for vertical shapes, and the circular wreath for telling expression at a distance. These particular fruits and plants have had a long domination in architecture, and go to prove that there is a limited number of things in nature that can be used with success. As architectural or decorative detail, there are of course many other plants in nature that may be used, but they require, shall I say, transfiguration or convention. In those mentioned, however, there is a precision of form and suitability needing no convention except in their grouping. In the way of a limited number of natural forms as decorative elements, the Egyptians have shown what can be done with the lotus, the cane, and binding bands of reeds. The festoon has become in careless hands a very baggy sort of detail, generally dubbed the 'swag,' a term which rightly indicates its debasement. For examples of the diversified and successful treatment of the wreath and festoon, there is no better master than

Mantegna, who evidently raided his garden for the finest fruit and plants, arranged them in festoons and other forms and actually painted from them as models, not merely trusting to his memory of classic renderings."

It is truly stated that decoration is a language appealing to the emotional side of life, and in its expression should truthfully interpret what we designate as beauty, which the speaker quoted as "the splendor of the true."

It was stated by the speaker that the full and sumptuous quality of color in decoration is the hardest to secure, and commenting on this he again refers to the paintings of the Italian renaissance as offering the least suggestive ideas in this direction. To quote:

"It may appear that quoting pictures is wide of the mark, but as decoration the greatest triumphs in color and design have been set within the compass of a frame, with such examples as are incentive, the standard of our work should reach higher. The study and value of pattern is of great importance, but pattern is not the crown of imagery."

Speaking of the desire for the use of permanent decorative material, Mr. Spence tersely states that its injudicious selection may become a permanent reproach. We have good evidence of the truthfulness of this statement here in America. The decorations in many of our public buildings, particularly the Library of Congress, have refused to answer to the supposed softening touch of time, and stand forth to-day in all their brightness, with none of the "envelopment" so necessary in decorative effect.

As to marble, the speaker stated that while a fine decorative material and susceptible of endless variety of color as a palette, there was danger in a redundant palette. The greatest reserve was necessary in the placing of marble, and lack of care in the selection of colors was bound to result disastrously.

The use of gesso, when sparingly applied, found favor with Mr. Spence, but he was not equally well disposed toward the use of gilding, more particularly in the high lights. An interesting suggestion advanced was the gilding of shadows where the reflections are many and various.

Referring to the decorative treatment of friezes, Mr. Spence is so thoroughly in accord with best methods in decoration that we quote him in full.

"The frieze of a room, notwithstanding the numerous examples as a decoration (or desecration) which we see in modern times, still remains to me one of the best spaces for treatment and effect. It is the crown of your walls, and is a space sufficiently isolated not to interfere with other objects which are included in the ornament of the walls; and if its area is generous the decoration has an opportunity of showing his claim to that title. All pictures being below the scheme of decoration included in the frieze and cornice, the common practice of hanging pictures near the ceiling or building them up in pyramids is prevented. The haven in which an artist would have his work is on the line, where the owner can examine it with comfort, and so enjoy whatever it holds. At the present time we see many examples of friezes showing so-called landscapes, seascapes, and incident fresh from the roller stridently repeating their crude irreverence to nature.

"In regard to pictures more attention might be given to what would be a great additional means of decoration, that is, the design of the frames on more architectural lines. Think of the frames of Crevelli and other Italian masters. Objections have been made that deep friezes lessen the apparent height of a room. This can be obviated by vertical elements in the details of your design. Friezes modelled in low relief and colored are very effective. It goes without saying that the design and technique should be of the best.

"Is there not in many cases a charm and a sense of restfulness in rooms that are low? Our moods and pleasures vary in scale, so that height, light and space are not always soothing. In the Rezzonico Palace occupied by the Brownings is a small suite of rooms that are low and shadowy, making a pleasant change from the large reception-rooms which form the greater part of the palace. The favorite living-room of Philip the Second in the Palace of the Escorial is an example of snugness and quaintness very soothing amongst the great apartments of that huge pile."

We can only quote, through lack of space, from this article, which in its entirety is a valuable addition to the literature on the subject of interior decoration. It is stated:

"Ornament to tell at a distance should be large, in the areas of its parts, rather than deep or intense in color, and for such purpose should lean to incisive geometrical forms. In designing for spaces think of the general flow of shapes needed to help their right expression and sympathy within the architectural lines of enclosures. Accentuate the best features of your design, following up the shades to their full expression. Cultivate an instinct for the true use of vertical or horizontal lines and features, guard the purpose of

the architect's moulding contours, and tread gingerly when attempting to pick out different members with separate tints. The purpose of a moulding's section is to gain the effect of certain incisive lines and certain soft half-tones in juxtaposition: this natural result has a beauty of its own that needs, as a rule, no tinkering. It is not design to fit in mere details of a style or period—it is *ingenuity*.

"If single figures are painted within frames of architecture, they should amply fill the space enclosed. For circular spaces remember the Greek coinage. My sympathies lean strongly to the interlacy of detail so placed that the general broad color scheme is not jeopardised but helped in quality and interest. Exact translations from nature need a new birth, to be restrained or winnowed through imagination; this process commonly goes under the title of convention; small-scale color drawings only help you a little. Schemes of color should be 'offered up' on the walls; alterations, eliminations, and strengthening must follow on the actual work. Each colored part should always have its proposed neighbors on its borders, and should include the ornament, as the color of these added forms materially alters the ground colors. Generally, schemes should first be of gradations of one color, opposite tints afterwards being carried through in forms of ornament with the idea of bejewelling the work. These are mere suggestions. You cannot lay down laws for color. The grammar of 'the styles' (which is generally accepted as those of the French Louis) is very well known, so that they can take care of themselves."

In this country, the result of well-directed effort when applied to interiors may be interestingly studied not so much in our public buildings as in the more expensive class of private houses, both city and country. We can form an idea as to the value of this work when superintended by the architect by a visit to the annual exhibitions in Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

PROPOSED STATE ART COMMISSION FOR NEW YORK

A State Art Commission is provided for in a bill recently introduced. The Commission is to be composed of eleven members: The Governor, the Presidents of the Albright Art Gallery, of Buffalo; the Albany Historical Society; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences; the Commissioner of Education, and five persons to be appointed by the Governor—including one painter, one sculptor and one architect, and two other persons not members of any branch of the profession of fine arts—from lists to be supplied by the Fine Arts Federation of New York, the Central New York chapter and the Buffalo chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The term of office is to be three years, except in the case of the first members of the Commission, whose terms are to be fixed by lot at one, two and three years. They are to receive no compensation other than reimbursement for expenses. It is to be hoped that this bill will become a law, as a legally established commission can be of greatest service.



XIV CENTURY COURTYARD, PALAZZO DEL PODESTÀ, FLORENCE, ITALY



SOUTH WRAXALL MANOR HOUSE

SOUTHWEST FRONT

From domestic architecture in England during the Tudor period. Courtesy of E. T. Batsford, Publisher, London. Charles Scribner's Sons, Importers, New York.

THE LURE OF OLD ENGLISH MANSIONS.

By ARTHUR G. BEIN.
PART II.

Passing north from Yeovil to Bath (with the chance to stop off at Wells) the landscape constantly increases in interest. Somersetshire, Wiltshire, and Herefordshire are full of lovely hills which must have appealed to the Elizabethan home builder, for this portion of England is as full of architectural and gardening masterpieces as the low fennlands of the east are devoid of them.

Bath presents much of historical and architectural interest to tempt the student into sketching and sightseeing; but all this is paled by the glory of St. Katherine's Court, an old residence about five miles northeast of the city. It was built after 1584 (the exact date being unknown) by Sir John Harrington, a godson of Queen Elizabeth. The building must have dragged through centuries, judging from the various styles that assert themselves, from early Tudor to late Jacobean. The oldest portion, now the back of the house, overlooks a declivity where a fine kitchen garden has been laid out. In front of this, and carrying the house almost to the edge of the highroad, are the later parts. The main entrance shows some great Jacobean balusters which form a sort of screen in the openings of the vestibule.

Here the gardens are of such extraordinary beauty that the house is of secondary interest. It is of rough irregularly shaped gray stones with a roof of stone slabs. These vary from six to fourteen inches in width with sometimes as much as one and a half inch of thickness and with from five to twelve inches exposed to the weather. The window glass, as mentioned at Ightham Mote, is leaded into the stone. Only one casement in each series composing the window was made to open. The elliptical relieving arches over the window seem to

be of doubtful necessity, for I was informed by the gardener and in one instance was able to see for myself that the window opening was spanned by great stone lintels to the entire width of the wall.

Although the house sets nearer the road than is customary this means no loss of privacy to its occupants; for a high, densely planted hedge extends the full length of the property, concealing both house and terraces from view.

For the gardens every advantage was taken of the site—a hillside terraced at different levels. The spotting and placing of the different colored shrubs and trees has been thought out with admirable result and the whole—house and garden—fits into the surrounding country like a gem in its setting. One leaves St. Katherine's with the conviction that he can hope to find nothing better in the way of Elizabethan gardening.

Ten miles north of Bath by train lies Box, the nearest station to the estate of South Wraxall. Although little known, it proved well worth the visit. It had lain idle for a hundred years until its present owner, a retired army officer, came into possession and made it habitable again. The work of restoration, which is all one could ask as to harmony and good taste, is naturally very extensive (things having become decidedly dilapidated during a century of disuse) and it will probably be some time before the gentleman has his "house in order." He proved to be the soul of cordiality—showed me over his place and told me its history; and for him every nook and corner of it has a history. His interest in architecture was not limited to the restoration of South Wraxall, for he was well informed on our American work both domestic and municipal.

Most of the exterior of this old place is early Tudor, but has undergone many alterations of a decidedly Elizabethan character. The fenestration is specially pleasing, one of the most attractive features of the fa-



ORIEL WINDOW

SOUTH WRAXALL

From domestic architecture in England during the Tudor period. B. T. Batsford, Publisher, London. Charles Scribner's Sons, Importers, New York.

gade being the oriel window over the main entrance archway. This dates from James the First's reign. This house, though large, is practically but of one story, for the bedroom story is directly under the roof, most of whose dark-stained oak beams are exposed, and, faced with yellow-hued plaster between, form the ceiling.

South Wraxall, like most of the other houses visited, lies level with the ground and consequently has the squat appearance so desirable in houses of this type. But, of course, a cellar is an impossibility and dampness results; though I doubt if ever an owner was found who will admit this charge. Some of the Elizabethan houses were placed even a few steps below the outside; only in a few rare cases were they above ground level, and where there was an attempt at a cellar, it was under only a small portion of the house and designed as a storeroom.

Throughout the interior a striking contrast is maintained between plaster and woodwork by staining the latter very dark. The woodwork is most interesting, particularly in the living-room, where the ends of the huge oak trusses supporting the ceiling rest on extended figures grotesquely carved. The space between the

trusses is framed by timber into panels, each of which contains a large plaster quatrefoil. The ceiling is strikingly effective and in combination with the splendidly carved Jacobean minstrel gallery at one end, makes the room an unexcelled example of its day.

The ballroom, on the upper floor, has been well restored in the latest Elizabethan style, and is quite typical of the period. Both the plaster ceiling and the great, curiously carved mantel are well worthy of attention.

The owner corroborated a suspicion I had long entertained against ancient fireplaces when he complained that most of his smoked. His ancestors probably did not mind it but he, after vainly trying every remedy ever heard of, was forced to place in each a modern patent coal burner—not as sacrilegious as the American millionaire at whom Kipling jests for steam-heating his Elizabethan mansion.

South Wraxall undoubtedly served as the inspiration for Great Chatfield manor house, three miles farther north, for this latter, while larger, closely resembles the older house in plan and elevation. Whether the similarity was maintained in the interior, I cannot say; having planned to reach Cirencester that night I was forced to forego visiting it.

It took considerable traveling, waiting, and changing to reach Cirencester (pronounced sister), the center for several short trips to the famous stone and half timber farm houses of the Cotswold Hills district. But these trips were never to be; for the rain came down in torrents, so I went on to Oxford.

Of all places on the route, Oxford cannot be seen hurriedly. Hawthorne said of it: "It would take a lifetime, and more than one, to comprehend and enjoy it thoroughly." If this is true for the ordinary traveler it is doubly true for the architect. Its many wonderful collegiate and university buildings have been too often described to need mention here; but in the way of small details I cannot pass over the interesting lead conductor heads everywhere visible. They all appear to have been hammered out of sheet lead. The designs are both beautiful and amusing, with sometimes the high relief touched with color or gilded. Some of them by their dates attest to considerable age. This lead work along with many other fascinating bits of detail is more sketchable than describable.

The large room of the Oxford Union contains a novelty in the shape of a square fireplace in its very



BANQUETING HALL

COMPTON WYNYATES



QUADRANGLE

COMPTON WYNYATES

center, thus extending a fourfold hospitality as well as a fourfold warmth. They claimed that its flues (carried along under the floor and up outside) worked well and that, despite the lack of forced draught, a fire could burn merrily on each of the four hearths.

Stratford-on-Avon, 40 miles northwest, contains a few houses that dare to be interesting even though they cannot claim to have witnessed Shakespeare's birth, death, or marital woes. These houses prove to the architect that half timber work is more effective when the timber sets out from a quarter to a half inch beyond the face of the plaster, than when the two are flush, as in all previous examples.

To the east of Stratford, also in Warwickshire, lies Compton Wynyates, the seat of the Marquis of Northampton. The estate lies about eight miles from either Kineton or Banbury; and unless one is curious to see the Banbury Cross of nursery fame, the drive from Kineton is preferable.

Compton Wynyates was built in 1520, probably by Sir William Compton, one of the favorites of Henry VIII. As a specimen of the finest Tudor period it is to my mind without a rival, not even excepting the famous Haddon Hall.

This place deserves preeminently the adjective picturesque. No attention has been paid to symmetry; the materials used in its construction present the widest diversity of color and texture—stone, brick, wood, and plaster all help to make up the charm of the mass. Not only in the irregularity of its outline, but also in the frankly Gothic motifs and mouldings, is there an apparent refusal to recognize the approaching Transitional period.

Brick is the predominating material. Its wonderful color recalls Sutton Place—light salmon, fading in some places to buff or yellow and darkening elsewhere to every conceivable shade of brown. In addition to this wonderful tone is the interest added by the effective pattern work that covers the greater part of the surface. This is composed of headers not dark enough to cut up the surface into stiff geometrical patterns, but of a bluish shade that delicately subdues the design and adds a happy note to the general color scheme. Where there is an absence of this pattern work, I was convinced after minute observation that this was part of the original intention and not the result of repairs. Although centuries of exposure have done much for the charm of Compton Wynyates, it is reasonably sure that,

with careful study and the right selection of materials, the same picturesqueness could be obtained to-day.

The bricks resemble our modern over-burned bricks—warped in shape and apt to be discolored. They average about two and a quarter by nine and a quarter inches, with headers two and a quarter by four and a half. The joints seem large, from a half to five-eighths of an inch. The creamy, almost yellow mortar is rather coarse owing to the presence of a great deal of coarse sand. In photographs the headers of the pattern work often show up light instead of dark. This is because the dark color of the header is only a surface application of not more than an eighth or a quarter of an inch. In many spots this has peeled off showing plainly the light body color of the interior.

The stone work—mostly quoins, trimmings, etc.—is of a yellowish gray, simply surfaced and laid up with a fine joint of less than an eighth of an inch.

The half timber work, as shown in the gables, is irregular and very rough. This roughness is due probably to long exposure, for close examination reveals that the timber was originally well finished with the adz. The intervening spaces are filled in with bricks laid in every conceivable way with surprisingly good effect. The barge board is pegged to the projecting plate, to the ridge piece, and to the intermediate purlins. Its face was at one time elaborately carved, but long exposure has obliterated the design. Between the inner side of the barge board and the face of the gable, a space of about twelve inches, can be seen the under sides of the roof tiles and the laths supporting them.

The rain conductors are of lead in four-foot lengths, the end of one wedged into the end of the next. The lead is a dark dead green, but unpainted, save for a little decoration on the head of the conductor. These conductors, which add no small interest to the exterior, are held to the wall by a lead strip fastened to the brick-



PITCHFORD HALL

NEAR SHREWSBURY



COURTYARD

PITCHFORD HALL

work. Lead is also the roofing material of the towers—whose roofs, by the way, have no more pitch than is absolutely necessary to carry off the rain. All the gutters in back of the parapets are likewise of lead, in sheets four feet long, overlapped about six inches and thoroughly hammered together.

The interior of Compton Wynyates is somewhat disappointing. The long, narrow, dark entrance hall is crowded with stick and hat racks, and owing to its being that portion of the great hall that is screened in under the old minstrel gallery, the effect is particularly depressing. This same uninviting sort of hallway frequently existed in other houses already mentioned. The great hall, while not characterized by any particular architectural merit, is impressive in its severity, and remains, even to its furnishings, unchanged since it was built.

The splendid staircase leading up from the living hall is built in an enormous bay whose soft light floods its entire height.

Besides a visit to the old-fashioned informal garden, there is enough sketching and measuring to profitably fill two days here, but the intervening night must be spent at far-off Kineton for lack of a nearer inn.

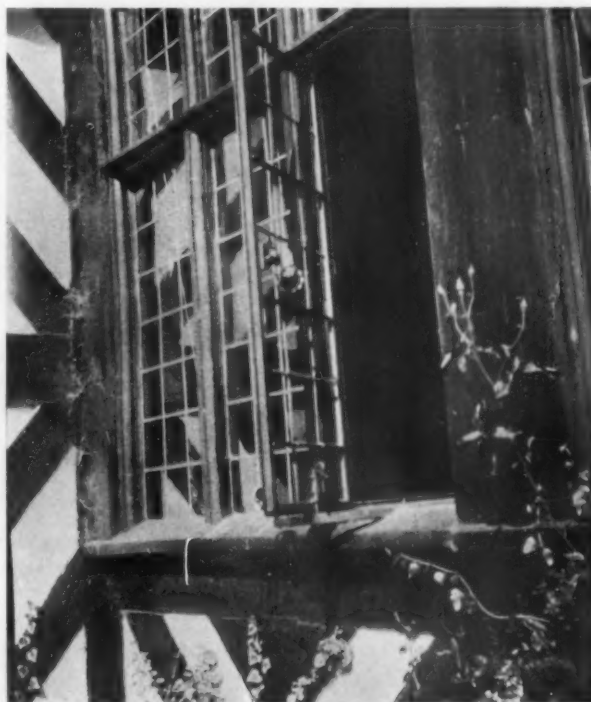
From Kineton it is only two hours by train to the picturesque pile that was once one of the greatest feudal strongholds in England—Warwick Castle. It is superbly situated on a rocky elevation on the banks of the Avon, and contains a library and a museum; but neither Warwick Castle nor the quaint group of buildings at the old west gate of the tower, known as Lord Leicester Hospital, have any secrets to give up on the subject of domestic architecture; so I went on a short distance to Topworth Station, a mile and a half from which lies Baddesley-Clinton.

Baddesley-Clinton is another fine example of a moated manor house strongly fortified in its day. The early manor of Baddesley was owned by the de Clintons during the Thirteenth Century, during which time the present building was started. The greater portion of the existing house was most likely built by members of the Ferrers family, late owners, and in whose hands it still remains.

It is interesting to note the change that has crept into the half timber treatment here, showing as it does the influence of the nearby black and white work of Shropshire. In this particular instance the strong contrast between white plaster and black wood has been modified by the proximity of the ivy-covered stone work, and the effect is even harmonious. Except for this difference in color, the house presents no structural features of striking importance different from those of Ightham Mote. My attention was directed mainly to the roof where, instead of metal flashing at the base of the chimney, a brick course, several courses above the roof line, is projected and cemented underneath. On the chimney side following the rake of the roof were projecting brick headers one above the other, and each overlapping a quarter of an inch to follow the pitch of the roof. This was the method generally used in country houses described.

Between here and Worcester there is little of interest in the domestic line, but Evesham with its famous old bell tower and gateway (all that remain of the abbey founded there in 700) and its quaint half timbered vicarage is worth stopping off for.

Worcester contains many interesting houses (in each of which, according to the inmates, Charles II hid after the rout of his army at Worcester in 1651). Of these the Commandery, a quaint old Tudor place, is the best.



WINDOW

PITCHFORD HALL



DETAIL OF ELIZABETHAN GATE HOUSE

STOKESAY CASTLE

Its present owner is Joseph Littlebury, Esq., a well-known antiquarian, who told me, among other acceptable facts, that the oak floors were originally fastened down by driving oak pegs into the floor beams; and that these pegs, at best unsatisfactory, were mostly replaced by nails when nails came into vogue years after. This was a particularly welcome bit of information as I had looked in vain elsewhere for an old floor not nailed.

Stopping at Tewkesbury, which contains the oldest parish church in England, and among its many interesting houses the reputed home of "John Halifax, Gentleman," I went on to Cheltenham to visit Southam de la Bere, three miles distant. There was nothing remarkable about this house.

Excepting the Cathedral at Gloucester there is little to stop for till Hereford is reached, the starting point into the Shropshire Hills lying off toward Shrewsbury. Not because Hereford was so interesting in itself, but because its comfortable hotel gave a chance for completing my notes and sketches, I lingered there several days and visited the so-called "Old House" in High Town Square. It is an excellently well restored specimen of early seventeenth century half timber. In the environs of the town are many fine old farm houses worth seeing.

On the way north to Craven Arms a stop at Ludlow near the Welsh border will be amply repaid. For in the once famous Ludlow Castle are visible, owing to its now ruinous condition, many of the methods of construction impossible to get at in a building that is intact. It is the Tudor portion of the vast edifice that yields the most useful data. For instance, in every case where the interior of a wall was plastered (thereby concealing the relieving construction over the windows) oak beams

were used to support the stonework. In other cases where the finish of the room was in stone, relieving arches of stone were employed. The face construction of most of the chimneys having fallen away the entire construction of the old fireplaces was revealed. In no case was there a projecting shelf at the bottom of the flue corresponding to our modern wind shelf. Instead the large fireplace opening diminished very gradually into the flue 20 x 30 inches; this pyramidal-shaped cavern often measured as high as 20 feet. These dimensions were the maximum, proportioned to a fireplace opening 7 feet across and 6 feet high. In no case had there ever been any additional brickwork at the back of the hearth to change the currents of air, such as I saw later in other places. Whether these chimneys smoked or not can be only a matter of speculation. Another noticeable feature, and no doubt an essential one, is that in place of a windshelf at the back of the hearth the brickwork invariably inclined backward for a distance of eight or ten inches, at an angle of 45 degrees, thus allowing the smoke to roll back and pass any downward current of cold air in the flue.

Aside from the technical data that give Ludlow a claim to attention, the castle is rich in historic interest; and this, along with the picturesque little town with its winding streets and ancient houses, would be sufficient to mark Ludlow as one of the most delightful little spots in Shropshire.

From Craven Arms, with an excellent inn of the same name, an excursion may be made to Stokesay Castle, undoubtedly the finest castellated manor house in England. Built in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it is now unfortunately in an irreclaimable state of ruin. But even with its crudely machicolated towers crumbling to pieces it still looks able to give battle. First crossing the moat the house is entered by way of the well-known Elizabethan gatehouse, reputed to be one of the finest bits of half timber work in the country. The wood carving of its façade is exceptionally fine.

In the house proper only the "solar" room (which served also as a dining room) and a few of the upstairs rooms are fit to enter. The rest is literally crumbling to pieces. In fact, until very recently the great hall, owing to its being on a level with the court, was used as a cow stable. But the solar room has been carefully restored and is very beautiful. It contains a stunning Jacobean mantle whose admirably executed carvings have happily survived the long neglect. As one is allowed to sketch and take notes at will, I carefully measured and drew up this old mantle.

On leaving the gatehouse a little turn to the left leads to the family burying ground with graves bearing some unusually quaint old epitaphs.

On the route from Craven Arms to Shrewsbury, Church Stretton is architecturally interesting but by no means important. Shrewsbury is rich in ancient buildings, of which the Butcher Row in the lower town must not be missed. It is a picturesque group of fifteenth century buildings embellished with some delightful wood carving.

Shrewsbury is the starting point for Pitchford Hall, seven miles southeast. This is a vast, rambling, half-timbered mansion built in the fifteenth century. Its special interest lies in the fact that it is one of the very

few large mansions built wholly of timber and plaster.

Like all similar construction in this section of England, the timber has been covered periodically with pitch or tar and the plaster whitewashed, with the inevitable result of a restless mass of black and white. But in this instance the many stately oaks and venerable yew trees so thickly planted around the house screen and subdue façades that might otherwise be spotty. Some of the mouldings are carved in an interesting manner, but generally speaking, whatever fine detail may have existed has been lost under the innumerable coats of tar. The corner posts, about nine and a half inches square, are heavier than the intermediate ones, which run from seven to seven and a half inches wide. The plaster filling the ten-inch space between sets back about a quarter of an inch from the face of the timber.

Large rough stone slabs form the roof now almost buried under a thick growth of lichens and mosses. Here, too, the fine brick chimneys were flashed to the roof by means of cement and are declared quite waterproof. But I am sure that this improper flashing was responsible for the complete rotting away of the wood and plaster alongside of the chimney, though the owner attributed it to the fungus rot that had set in after a particularly wet season.

The interior of Pitchford Hall is very beautiful and homelike. Entering the small vestibule from the front a charming vista across the living room and out into the garden is obtained. The vestibule is of a much later date than the mansion, one of those decorated entrances frequently added to fifteenth and sixteenth century residences, but in this case entirely in keeping with the general style of the place.

In the days when a moat surrounded the house, the

entrance was from the present court. Three steps lead up from this entrance to the living hall, and this difference in floor levels makes a very effective vista. Vestibule, living hall, and dining room are all paneled from floor to ceiling with 14-inch square oak panels.

Great stone blocks 18 inches square made the flooring of the dining room; but their chill was lost under a fine array of rare Persian rugs. The living hall had a floor of oak, and that too was well carpeted in the same manner. The passage hall and several of the less important rooms were tiled with red Welsh tiles, six inches square, and with their joints laid at 45 degrees to the walls.

An uncommonly beautiful detail of the casement windows throughout the place was the wrought-iron handles. Silhouetted against the panes their quaint form added considerably to the interest of the room. Unfortunately they have not always been placed at a sufficient distance from the glass to allow the fingers to grasp them without bruising the knuckles.

Among the several good fireplaces in Pitchford Hall the one in the dining hall is enormous. It is seven feet six inches wide by six feet six inches high. The flue measures two by three feet and has neither wind shelf nor damper. They confessed that in stormy weather it usually smoked and that the wind would whistle down it at a rate that kept the ashes and embers dancing around the room.

There are some details worth noticing in the arrangement of the servants' quarters in connection with the service court, while the scheme of sinking the unsightly clothes-drying yard below the surrounding shrubbery is excellent.

In contrast to the apparently unstudied picturesqueness of Pitchford Hall, Condover Hall, which may be passed on the return drive, is very grand and stately, with its massive and lofty stone walls and its great serial windows suggestive of vast, spacious rooms behind them. The gardens are extremely formal. The flower beds are of geometrical patterns, and colossal; and the shrubbery is trimmed into severe conical and pyramidal shapes, as if the garden had been fashioned when Le Notre's influence was most strongly felt in England.

From Shrewsbury a short direct train trip brings one to Chester, one of the oldest and quaintest English towns. Its formidable Roman wall, now smoothed by centuries of peace, forms a unique promenade from which one may peer under gables and into the houses, or down into the rambling crowded streets, or out into the fields beyond. The town is full of old houses with timbered fronts, steep roofs, and projecting gables that attract the architect, particularly in Watergate Street, where God's Providence House is found. Another sight is Bishop Loyd's House, remarkable for its richly carved façade.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

RIGHT OF COMPETING ARCHITECTS TO COMPEL PUBLIC BOARD TO ACT UNDER COMPETITION AGREEMENT

The Central Board of Education of the city of Pittsburgh, by resolution, decided upon the erection of a new high school building, and appointed a committee of nine



LEAD ROOF

STOKESAY CASTLE

of its members to take charge of the work. This committee was authorized, among other things, to select, subject to the approval of the board, a competent person as architect. Later on, May 8, 1906, the committee submitted to the board a report, in which it was stated that the committee had determined to select the architect by competition, and to employ a competent expert as professional adviser to prepare instructions to the competing architects as to the rules governing the conduct of the competition, and the terms under which the successful competitor, if approved by the board, was to be engaged. This report was the same day unanimously approved. The committee determined to limit the number of competitors to nine; those to be chosen by the aid of the expert assistant from among architects of the highest professional standing. The instructions to the competitors, subsequently prepared by the expert assistant, with the approval of the committee, provided that examination of all the plans submitted was to be made first by the expert assistant, who was required to report to the committee his choice of the designs submitted, and that the committee was then to carefully examine his report and make selection of the design it decided to be the best, and award the prize—the appointment as architect—to the author of the plans selected, subject to the approval of the board. A further instruction was that, in case the board disapproved of the committee's choice, the committee would then select from the remaining designs that one which in its judgment was the best, and repeat the above procedure with respect to this design and its author; and, in case the second selection by the committee failed of approval by the board, the committee would then proceed in like manner with each of the remaining designs, taken in the order of their merits as this might be regarded by the committee, until the board should finally approve the selection of one of the competing architects. Each of the nine architects submitted plans and thus engaged in competition for the prize. These several plans having been examined, the committee made its selection and reported to the board. For reasons which need not be stated this report failed of approval by the board and was held over. Without any further action having been taken with respect to the report, the board appointed a new building committee, with authority to procure plans in open competition from all competent architects, and to select from those submitted the plan it deemed most suitable for the purpose, and to proceed to obtain proposals for the erection of the building in accordance with the plans selected. This new committee reported that it had selected a certain plan, giving the name of the author. By resolution passed the same day this report was approved and the author of the plan was elected architect. Thereupon, three of the competing architects under the original scheme filed a bill in equity, setting forth the facts as above and asking that the Central Board of Education be enjoined from rescinding and ignoring the plans of competition adopted under the resolution of May 8, 1906, and that it be required to proceed to consider the plans submitted by the competing architects at the invitation and request of the earlier committee and make a selection therefrom, in accordance with the rules adopted by said committee. The proceeding resulted in a decree enjoining the de-

fendants from selecting plans and choosing an architect until the plans submitted by the plaintiffs and other architects who engaged in the first competition had been acted upon in the manner set forth in the resolution of the board of May 8, 1906, and this was affirmed on appeal to the Supreme Court.

The court decided the two questions raised on appeal as follows: First, a contract relation between the competing architects and the Board of Education resulted from the submission of plans by the architects under the resolution of the board of May 8, 1906. The court said: "The adoption of the report by the board was a full authorization for the committee to proceed in the way it had recommended, and thereafter what was done by the committee in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report was the action of the board itself. Under any fair and reasonable method of selection by competition the chief inducement for any one to take upon himself the labor and expense incident to the submission of plans would be the chance that upon a fair and impartial examination his plan might win acceptance. Disappointment in this regard, after labor expended and expense incurred, under such circumstances as we have here, constitutes not only a breach of good faith, but a breach of contract resting, not on doubtful terms, but on expressly admitted facts, from which an unmistakable legal obligation resulted."

The second point decided was that a common law action for damages for breach of such a contract would have afforded no adequate remedy, since no compensation could have been recovered in such an action for the thing lost. What the competing architects lost was the chance of having one of the plans submitted win the prize, and that was the inducement to the expenditure of labor involved in the preparation and submission of the plans. But how was compensation for such a loss to be measured? The contract itself provided no method for determining the damages, and the law furnished no standard. To recover more than nominal damages substantial injury would have to be shown, which in the circumstances was impossible. To show actual loss the plaintiffs would be required to show at least a probability that some one of the plans submitted would, had they been examined, have received the approval of the board; and as the acceptance rested in the discretion of the board this was impossible, and recovery could not be had for the value of the plans and specifications. They had not been lost. They belonged to the plaintiffs as much as ever. If the time and labor expended on them were solely to secure a chance in the competition, the plans could be of no value except a reasonable probability was shown that the chance would have been realized. The fact was not overlooked that there was a provision in the contract that the unsuccessful competitors were each to receive \$750 as full compensation, but that had no application to the case, as the parties complaining were not in the position of unsuccessful competitors. Their complaint was that there was no competition, and until the plans were fairly and impartially examined, none of the competitors could be said to be unsuccessful.

Palmer v. Central Board of Education of city of Pittsburg (Supreme Court of Pennsylvania), 70 Atlantic Reporter 433.



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CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE OF EDUCATION

CRITICISMS

ORDER PROBLEM

The jury was very much pleased with the designs submitted for the rostral column, but regretted to find that in many cases the drawing was not carefully enough done, and the shadows not correctly cast. In voting mentions for this class, the jury looks for excellence of drawing, correctness in casting shadows, neatness in rendering, and general excellence of presentation. India Ink renderings are preferred, and the use of color deprecated.

PLAN PROBLEM

The jury realized the difficulty of finding a very good solution for this problem, but as none of the designs submitted showed equally high qualities in plan and elevation, no first mention was given. They would warn the students not to amplify the strict requirements of the programme, as was done in many of the designs by the useless addition of rooms and gardens which were not called for. In this class the jury looks for appropriate character in the design, together with simplicity in composition. These qualities were lacking in many of the drawings. Some of the elevations and plans exhibited suggested rather small theatres or concert halls, than the simple façade appropriate to a hospital clinic.

In plan the jury looks for a reasonable solution of the problem, logical arrangement of rooms, staircases and circulation, but at the same time they insist that due attention be paid to proper thickness of walls, and study of the points of poché.

As for the presentation, the same qualities are required as in the order problem, except that a moderate use of color is permissible. There were a number of cases where the jury were obliged to place the drawings Hor Concours owing to the failure of the students to adhere closer to their original sketches. The jury would urge that more attention be paid to this point.

Illustration of the Warren prize designs has not been possible as they were rendered in colored crayon and soft pencil, which prevents satisfactory reproduction in the limited time between judgment and publication.

CLASS B. PLAN PROBLEM AN AMPHITHEATRE

Judgment of February 24, 1909

Walker, F. C.	Chicago	Atelier	Bennett	M
Wright, R. M.	New York	"	Donn Barber	M
Hume, R.	"	"	Prevot	M
Murtagh, G. A.	"	"	"	M
Gander, J. J.	"	"	"	M
Fielding, F. A.	"	"	"	M
Wagner, S.	"	"	Hornbostel	M
Renier, R. E.	"	"	"	M
Paul, H. M.	"	"	"	M
Sengers, Jack	"	"	"	M
Heman, F. B.	"	"	"	M
Kassurinen, J.	"	"	Ewing & Chappell	M
Biebigheiser, L. W.	"	"	T. Nast	M
Sterling, P. H.	Pittsburg	"	Carnegie Tech.	M
Smart, F. H.	"	"	"	M
Gilkison, A. H.	"	"	"	M
Lamont, A. G.	"	"	"	M
Bernardi, R. C.	"	"	"	M
Decker, J. R.	"	"	"	M
Burkhart, W. F., Jr.	"	"	"	M
Ihsen, O. H.	"	"	"	M
Mitchell, G. C.	"	"	"	M
Israeli	"	"	"	M
Weaver, A. L., Jr.	"	"	"	M
Wentworth, S. C.	"	"	"	M
Hincley, W.	"	"	"	M
Critchlow, T. R.	"	"	"	M
Shaffer, W. H.	"	"	"	M

CLASS B. ORDER PROBLEM

A ROSTRAL COLUMN

Judgment of February 24, 1909

Quirk, J. A.	Boston	Atelier	Boston Archi. Club	M
Nadel, A. R.	"	"	"	M
Voss, H. J.	"	"	Placed M	
Cook, W. W.	"	"	Placed M	
Markfeld, C. A.	Trenton, N. J.	"	"	M
Graf, Hugo	St. Louis	"	Washington Univ.	M
Wallace, R. P.	"	"	"	M
Henderson, H.	New York	"	Prevot	Placed M
Campbell, T. A.	"	"	"	M
Dykes, Geo.	"	"	"	M
Detwiller, T. K.	"	"	"	M
DeHart, A. M.	"	"	"	M
DeWandelaar, I.	Washington, D.C.	"	Geo. Wash. Univ.	M
Porter, I.	"	"	"	M
Knowles, W. A.	"	"	"	M
Russell, L. H.	"	"	"	M
O'Rourke, J.	"	"	"	M
Doyle, B. J.	"	"	"	M
Blakely, R. B.	"	"	"	M
Ebberts, W. A.	"	"	"	M
Luckens, H. A.	Philadelphia	"	Drexel	M
Foster, H. P.	"	"	"	M
Andrews, M. L.	"	"	"	M
Thuman, F. J.	Baltimore	"	Baltimore	M
Knox, E. A.	Pittsburg	"	Carnegie Tech.	M
Doerance, W. E.	"	"	"	M
Rose, R. R.	"	"	"	M
Braun, O. L.	"	"	"	M
Hasness, C. D.	"	"	"	M
Jacobs, J. H.	"	"	"	M
Jones, M.	"	"	"	M
Griffith, E. F.	"	"	"	M
Gehron, William	"	"	"	M
Gray, J. M.	"	"	Placed M	
Reeves, R. R.	"	"	"	M
James, E. D.	"	"	"	M
McCrory, W. W.	"	"	"	M
Scheuneman, P. R.	"	"	"	M
Stockwell, J. I.	"	"	"	M
No Name	"	"	"	M
Hatcher, E. J.	"	"	"	M
McWhinney, P. S.	"	"	"	M
Foster, C. M.	New York	"	Donn Barber	M
Grisez, Xavier, Jr.	"	"	"	M
Stevenson, R. L.	"	"	"	M
Messing, F.	Hoboken	"	J. Neis	M
Reinhart, A. D.	"	"	Walker Morris	M
Pallesen, Richard	New York	"	L. R. Metcalfe	M
Maybury, E. W.	"	"	A. W. Lord	M
Ingeman, A. S.	Chicago	"	Bennett	M

WARREN PRIZE

JUDGMENT, FEBRUARY 24, 1909

Pierpont, C. S.	New York	Atelier	Prevot	1st
Delk, E. B.	Philadelphia	"	Univ. of Penn.	2nd
Wagner, S.	New York	"	Hornbostel	3rd
Schivoni, M. J.	"	"	Prevot	4th
Chrystie, E. P.	"	"	Hornbostel	5th

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March 3, 1909

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WHILE confidence has grown steadily during the past three months, and conditions in the building field have measurably improved by reason of that confidence, there has been a discernible feeling that certain factors of the situation were not contributing their fair share toward making the improvement general and marked. One of these, constituting probably one of the most important elements entering into modern construction is structural steel, the price of which, except in rare instances and very limited quantities, has, until a few days ago, been maintained at an unattractively high figure. The reduction in price of structural steel which followed the United States Steel Corporation's declaration of an "open" market, on February 19, may therefore be considered most timely, and must inevitably result in greatly increasing the amount of building that will be undertaken this year. In fact, with labor abundant and unusually efficient, the business outlook most promising, and prices of building materials in general quite satisfactory, the stimulus which lower prices for steel will provide should be sufficient to insure a period of unequalled building activity.

IN a recent letter to President Roosevelt the newly appointed Fine Arts Council, through the Secretary, Mr. J. R. Marshall, expresses its opinion "upon the character and location of the Lincoln Memorial." The letter is written in response to a request from the President, and constitutes the first important public work of the Council. After expressing the belief "that the memorial should be a dignified and important architectural monument and that it should be placed in the city of Washington," the letter proceeds to discuss the three propositions which have been advanced and advocated

by various parties and interests for the proposed memorial. The first, that of a great highway from Washington to Gettysburg, is rejected because of a feeling that it would not "fulfill the purpose of a monument in the National Capital." The second proposition, which contemplates a monument in connection with the development of the plaza in front of the Union Station, is dismissed for the reason that the peculiarities of this site, in the opinion of the Council, "render the construction of a monument of the dignity and grandeur which the people will demand in a memorial to Abraham Lincoln an architectural impossibility." The third proposition, which contemplates the placing of the memorial on a line drawn from the Capitol through the Washington Monument, at a point near the Potomac River, receives the Council's unqualified and enthusiastic endorsement.

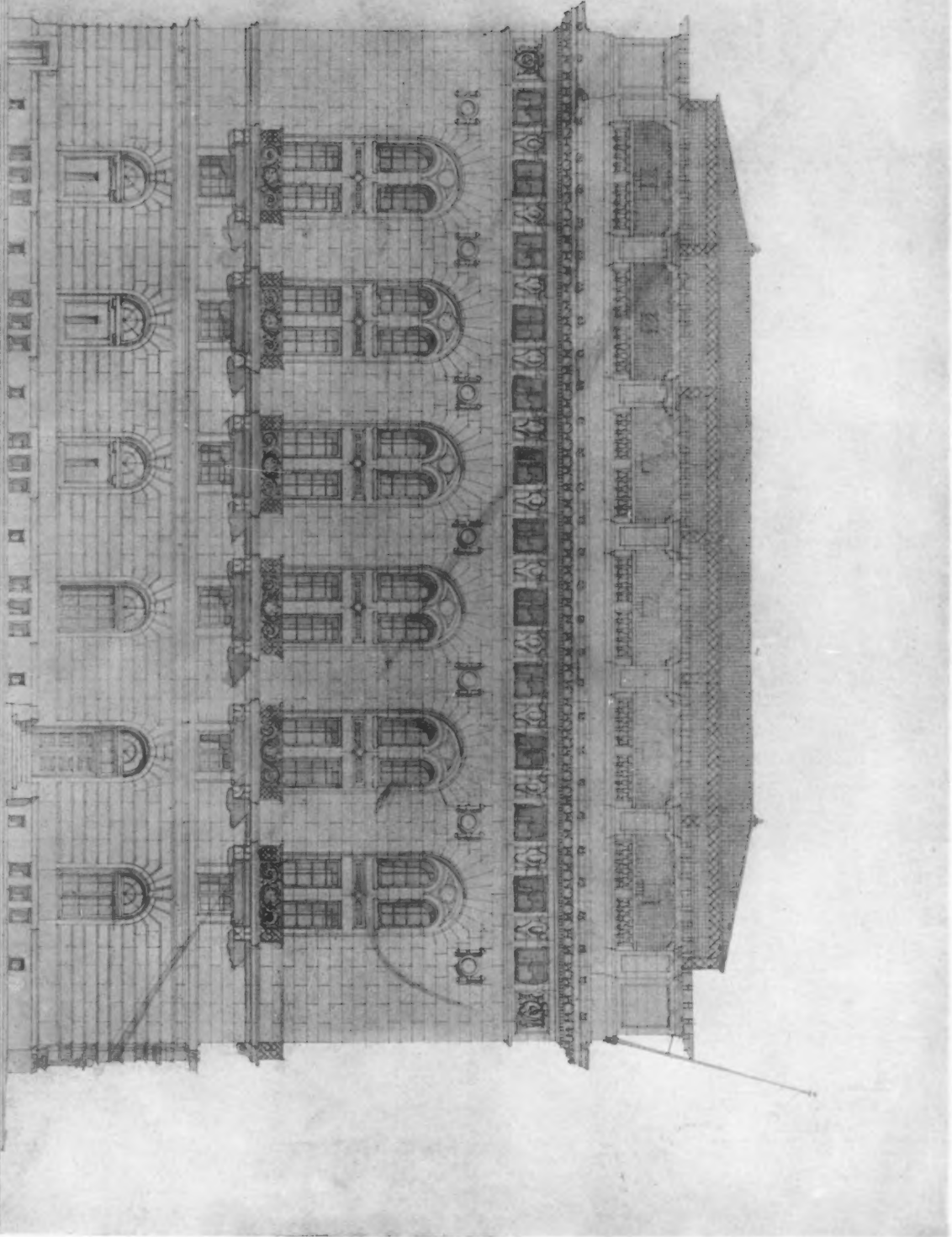
IN this instance and in view of the careful study which had previously been given the subject by a very eminent Commission the work required of the Council was not of an especially complicated or perplexing nature, and its conclusions are not unexpected. However, recent events have amply demonstrated that there are wide differences of opinion in Congress, if not among people of qualifications sufficient to enable them to form and express competent opinions, and it is probably well to have this authoritative pronouncement.

IT is with a feeling of some disappointment that the public has learned that it will still be several weeks before the Building Code Revision Commission will be prepared to render its report. Without wishing to be unreasonable, and with the fullest appreciation of the great amount of labor involved in a proper and adequate revision of the present Building Code, we are nevertheless constrained to believe that sufficient time has now been consumed for necessary consideration of questions involved, and the best interests of the city demand early action. Uncertainty as to the changes that will be incorporated in the revised code, while possibly stimulating in its effect on operations of a certain questionable character will continue to retard investment along other lines of greatest importance to our healthy development and growth. Whatever restrictions are to be made, whether in character of buildings, materials of construction, or affecting area and size, should be decided upon and made operative without further loss of time.

FROM what information is obtainable at this time, it seems unlikely that the height of New York's future buildings will be limited as proposed by the Revision Commission in its partial report transmitted to the Board of Estimate some months ago. A committee of the Board has recommended that the proposed restrictions limiting the height of buildings to a certain ratio of the width of the street on which they face be not approved. Just why the Commission adopted such an unscientific, inequitable, and in every way inadequate plan, in the face of suggestions offering immeasurably superior solutions of the problem, has been difficult of comprehension, and its rejection is a source of particular gratification.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

MARCH 3, 1909



PRIZE-WINNING COMPETITIVE DRAWINGS
Y. M. C. A. BUILDING, NORFOLK, VA.

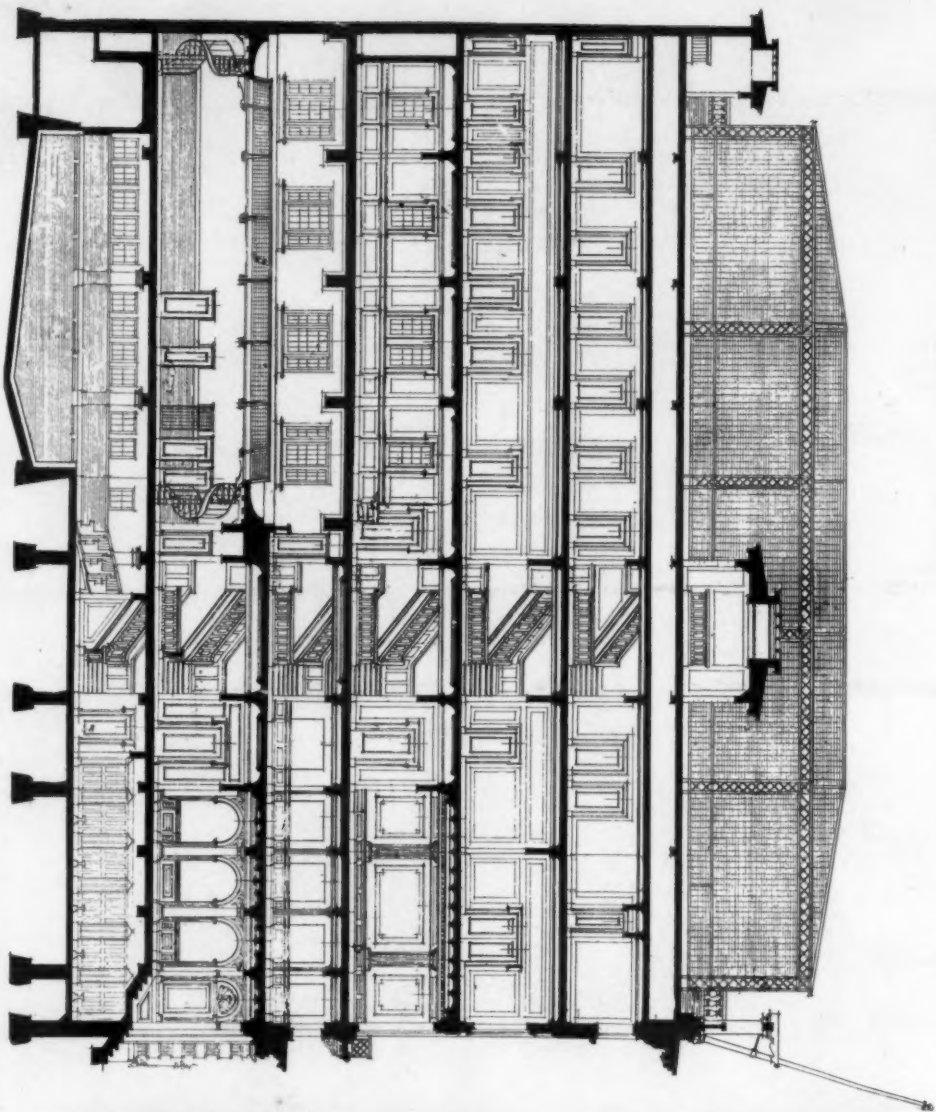
FREEMAN STREET ELEVATION

WOOD, DONN & DEMING, ARCHITECTS
ROSSEL EDWARD MITCHELL, ASSOCIATE

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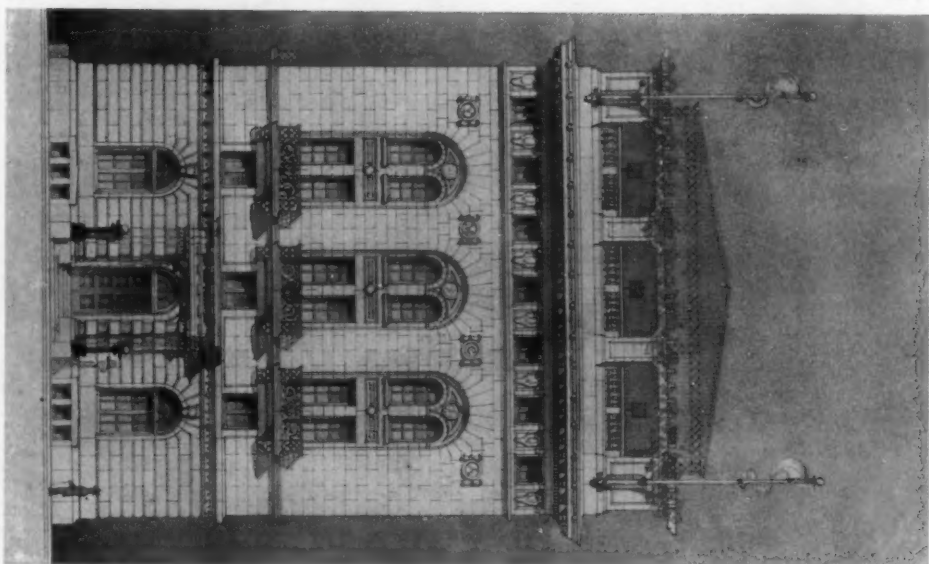
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SECTION AND FRONT ELEVATION

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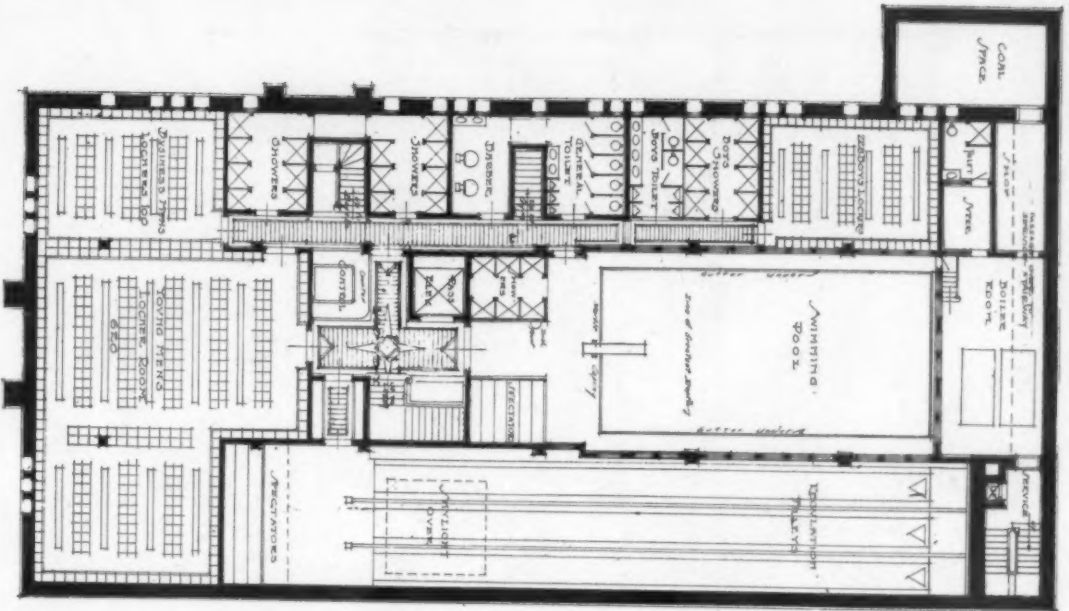


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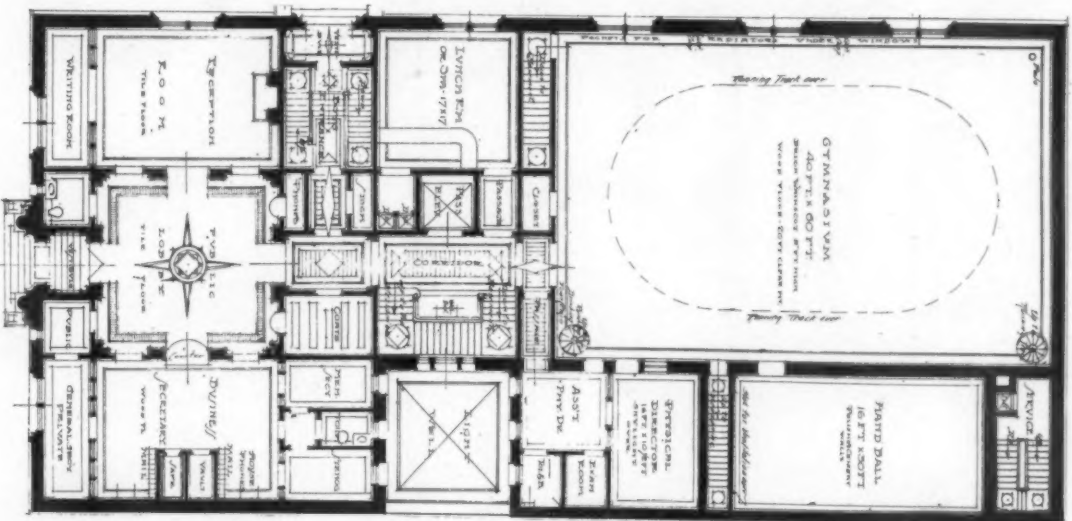
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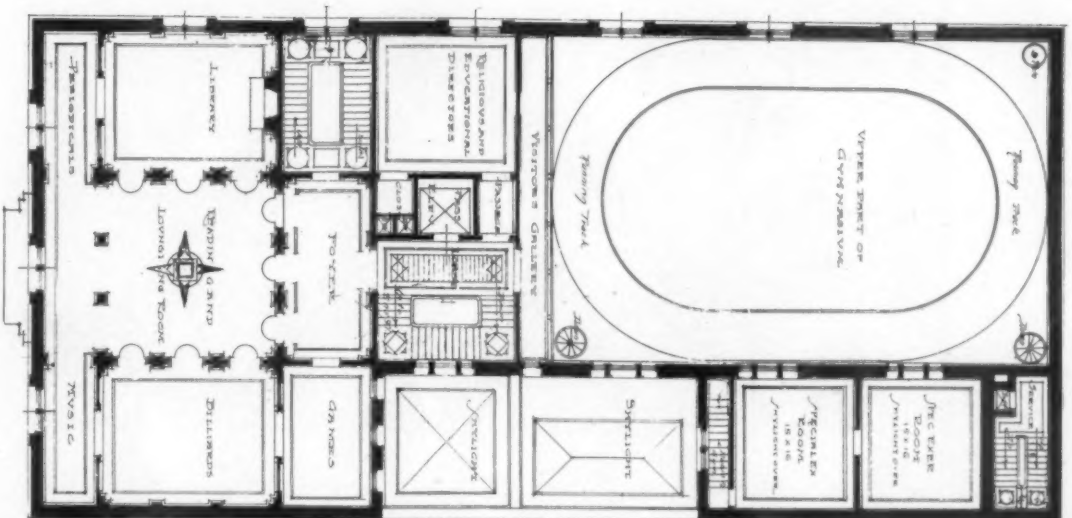
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BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

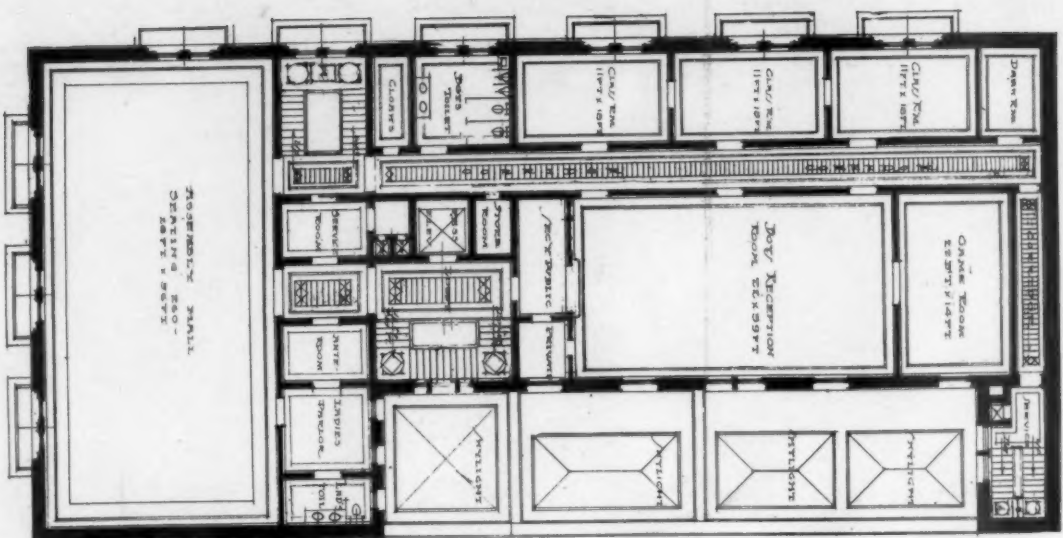


MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN

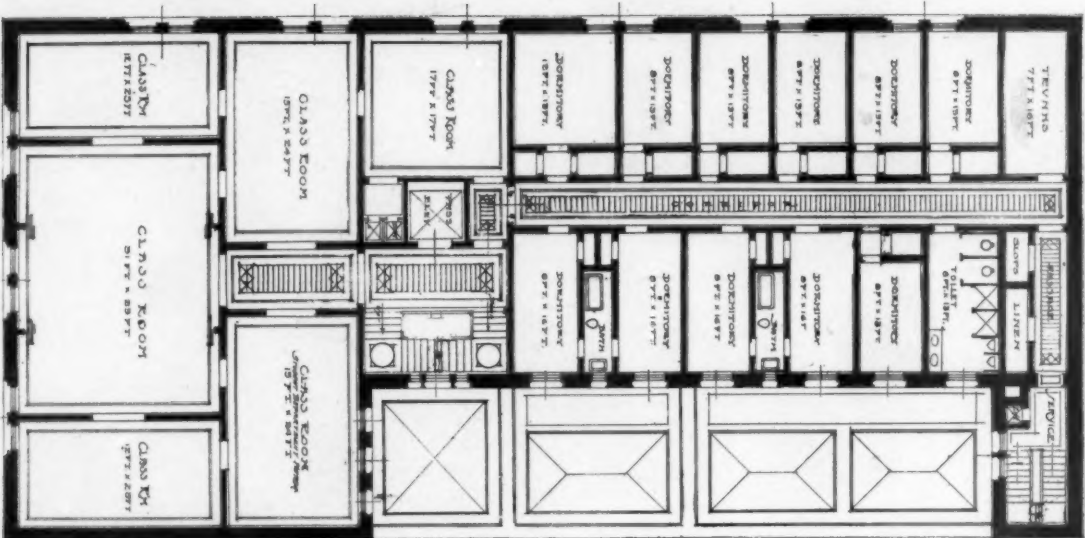
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FOR THE U. S. BUILDING, NORFOLK, VA.

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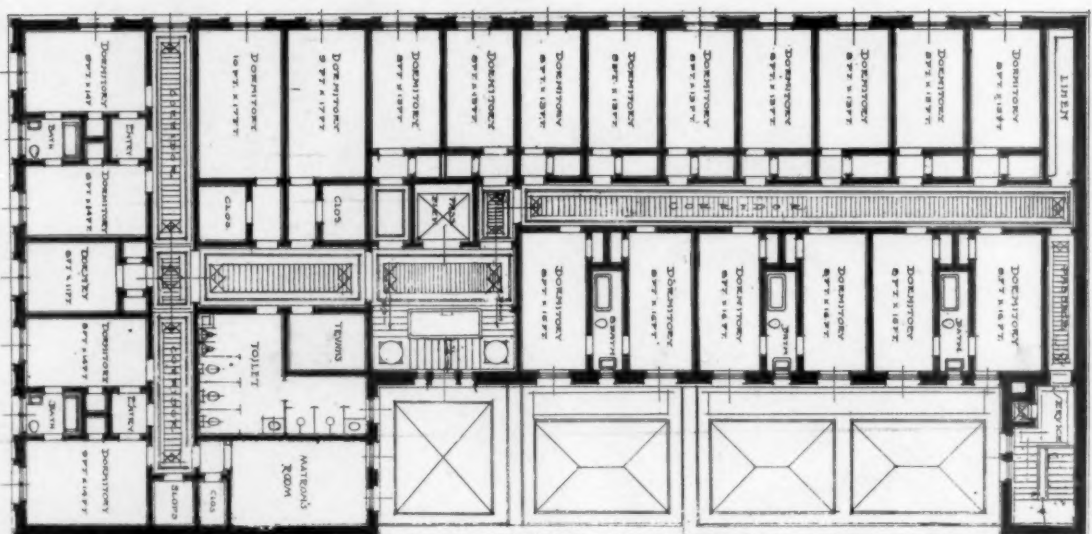
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EIGHTH 1/4 COR. 10TH ST. N.W.



SECOND FLOOR PLANT
EIGHTH FLOOR SCHEM



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



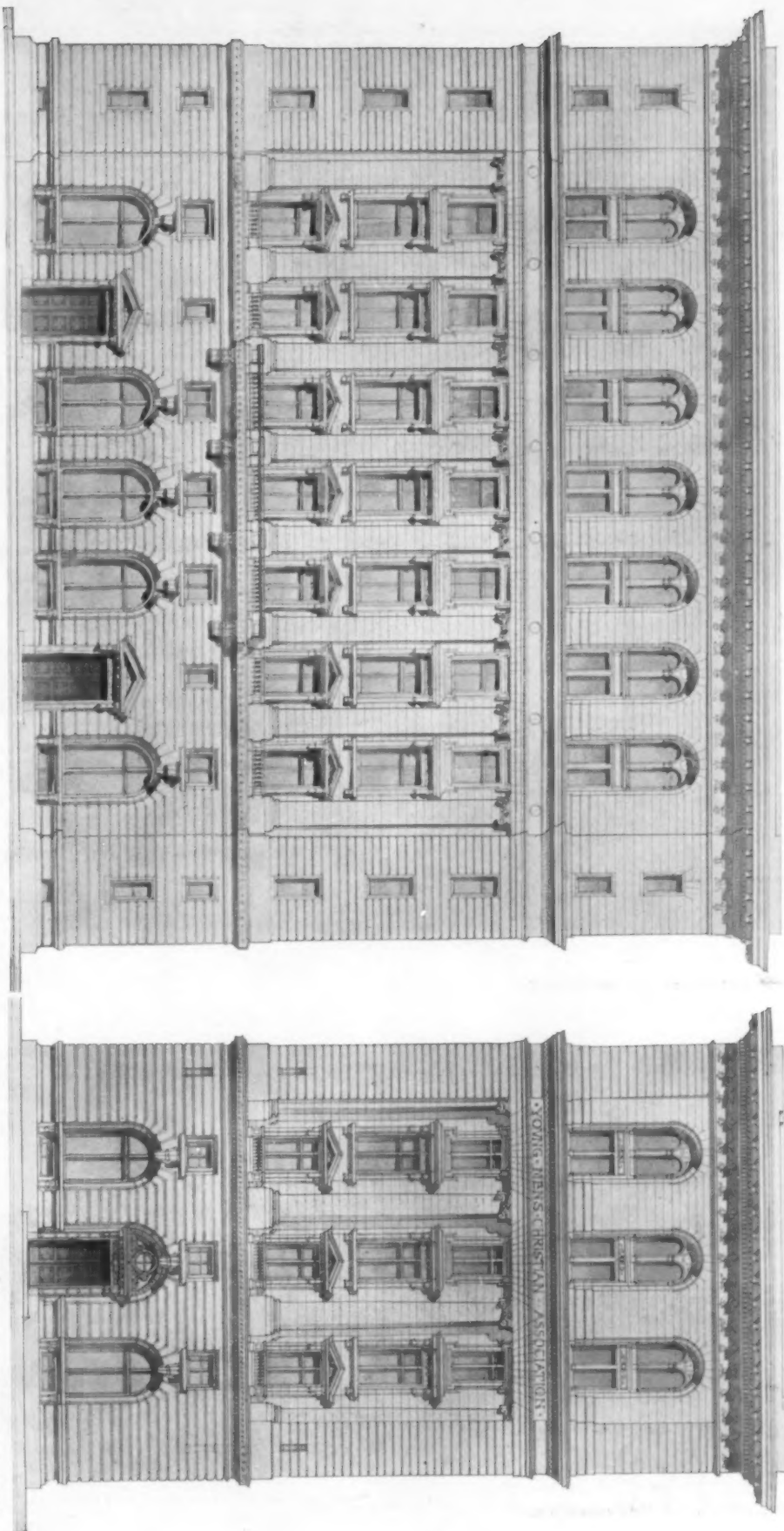
FOURTH FLOOR PLAN

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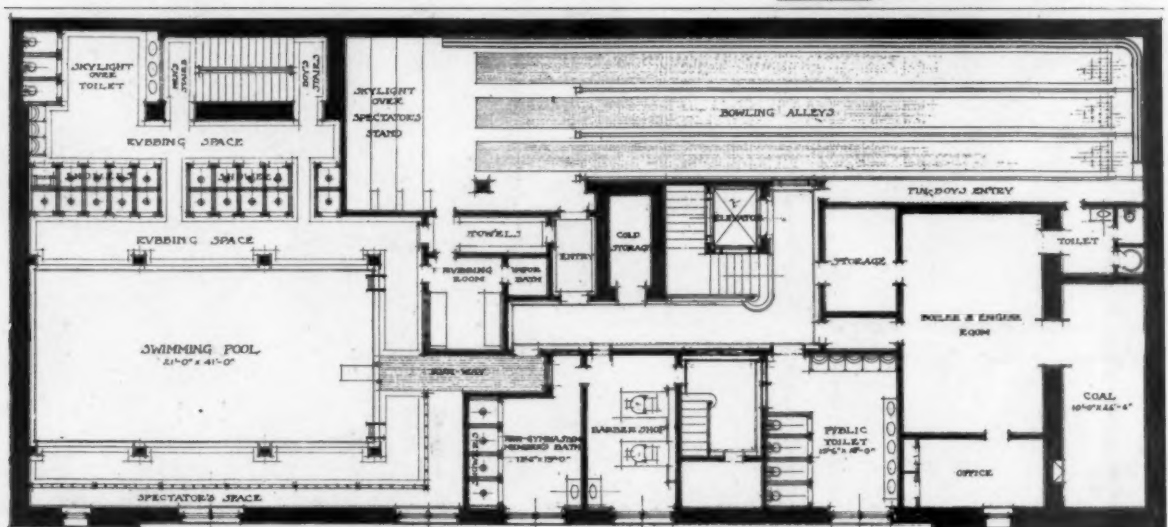


COMPETITIVE DRAWINGS
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ELEVATIONS

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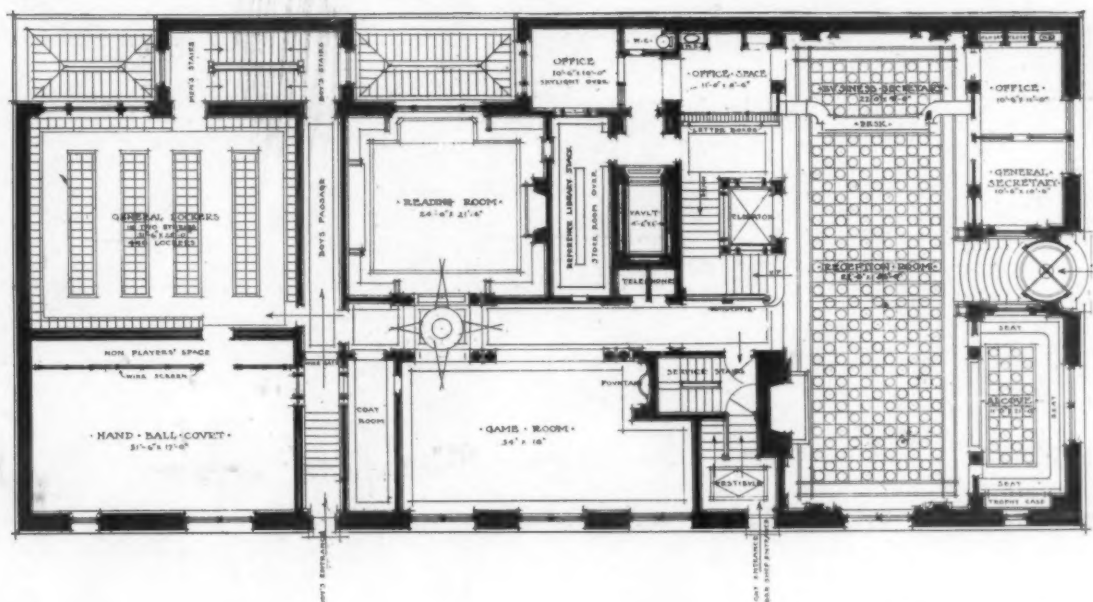
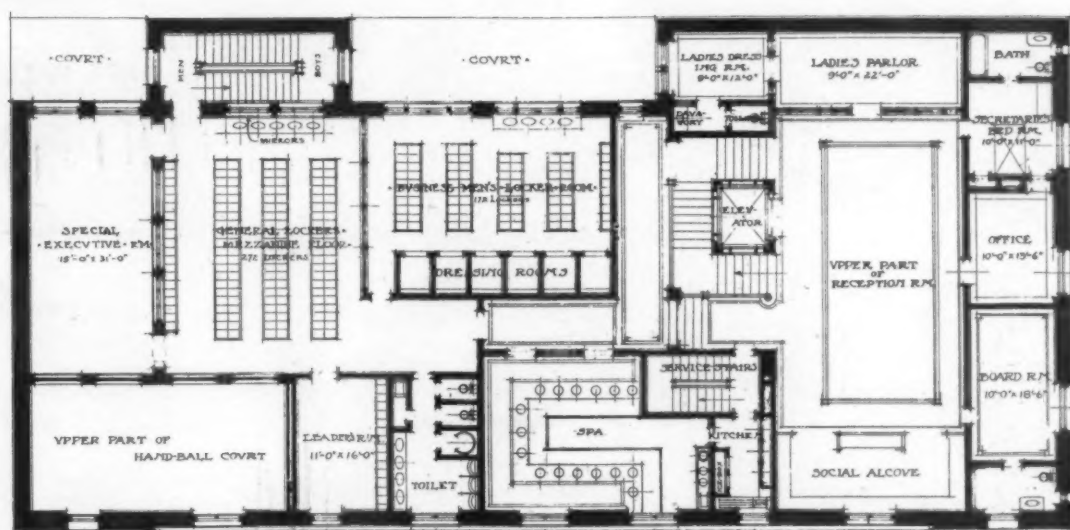
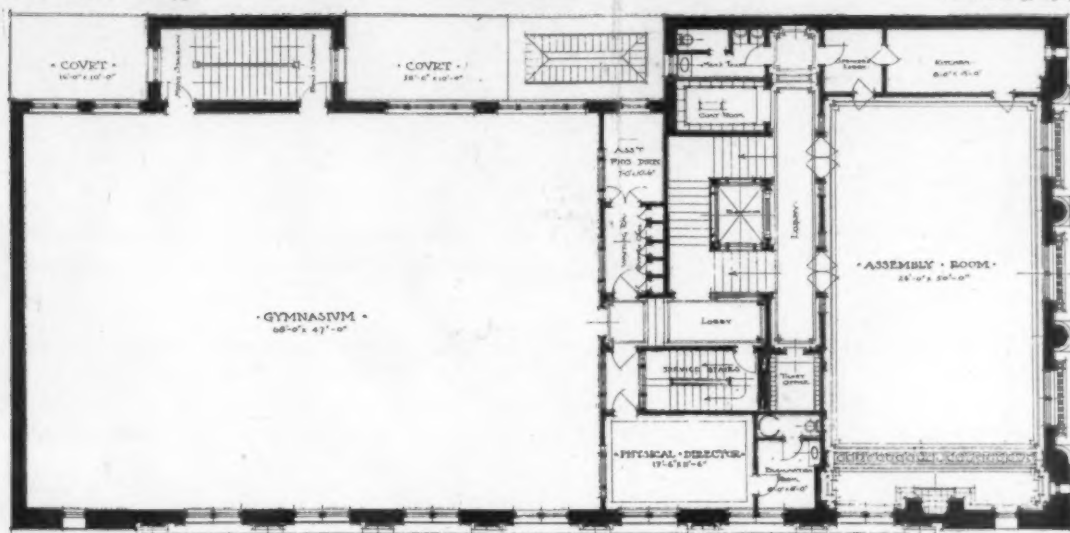


SECTION AND PLAN OF BASEMENT

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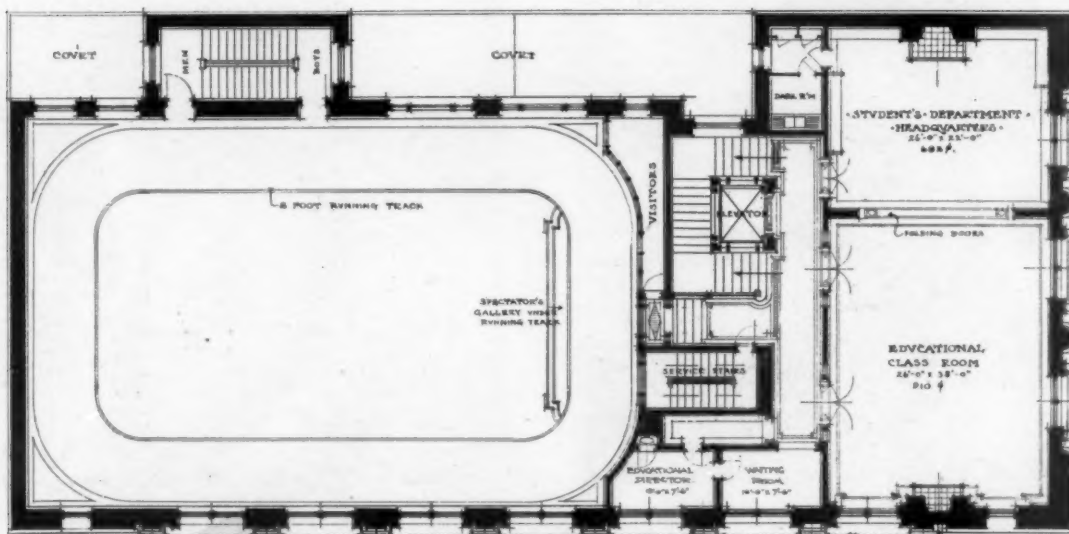
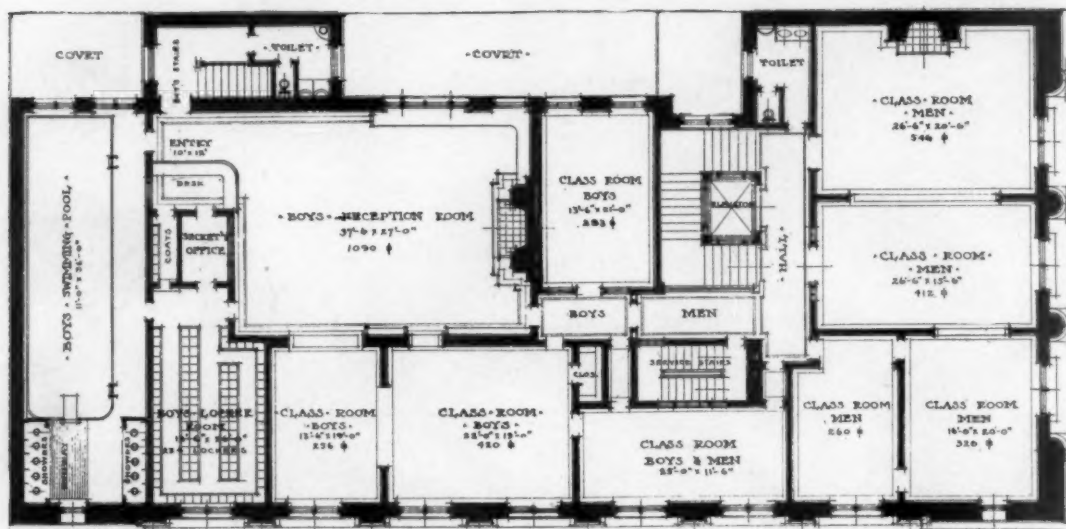
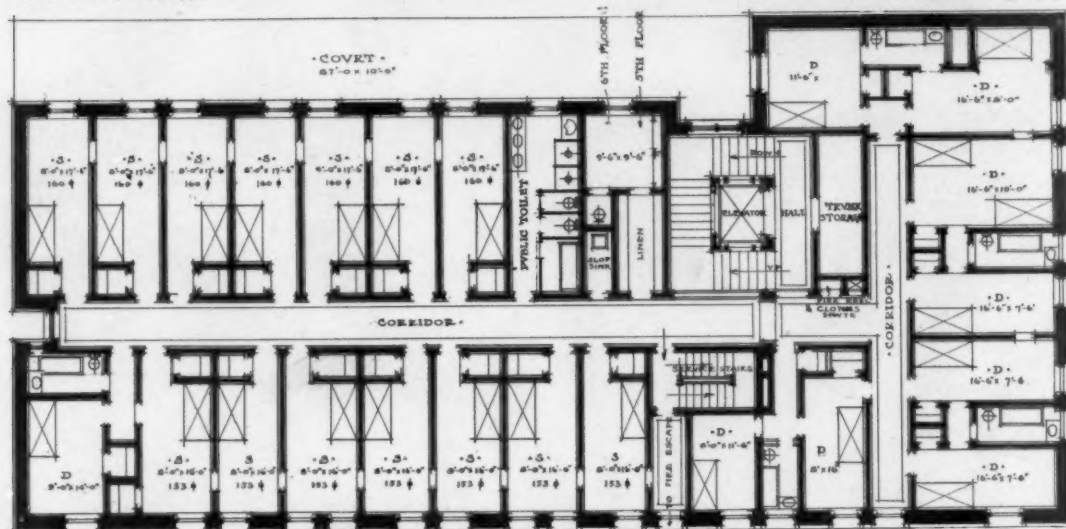


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FIRST MEZZANINE AND SECOND FLOOR PLANS

COMPETITIVE DRAWINGS
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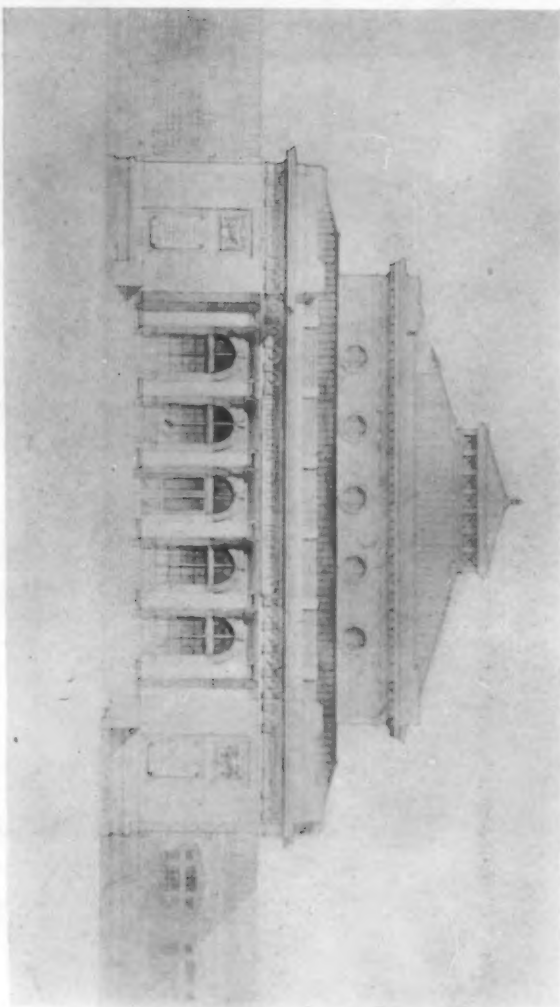
THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH FLOOR PLANS

COMPETITIVE DRAWINGS
Y. M. C. A. BUILDING, NORFOLK, VA.

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JALLADE & HUTTON } ARCHITECTS

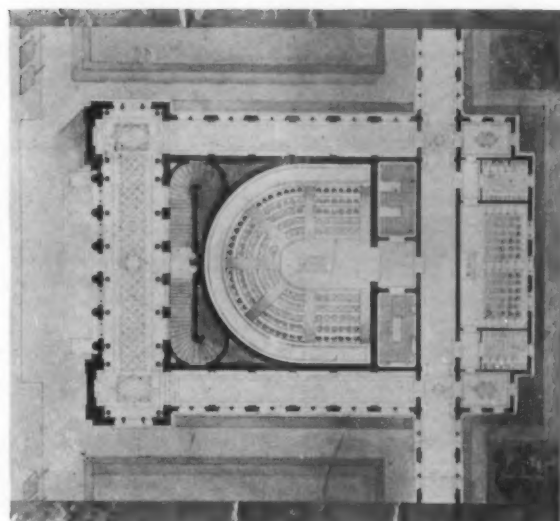
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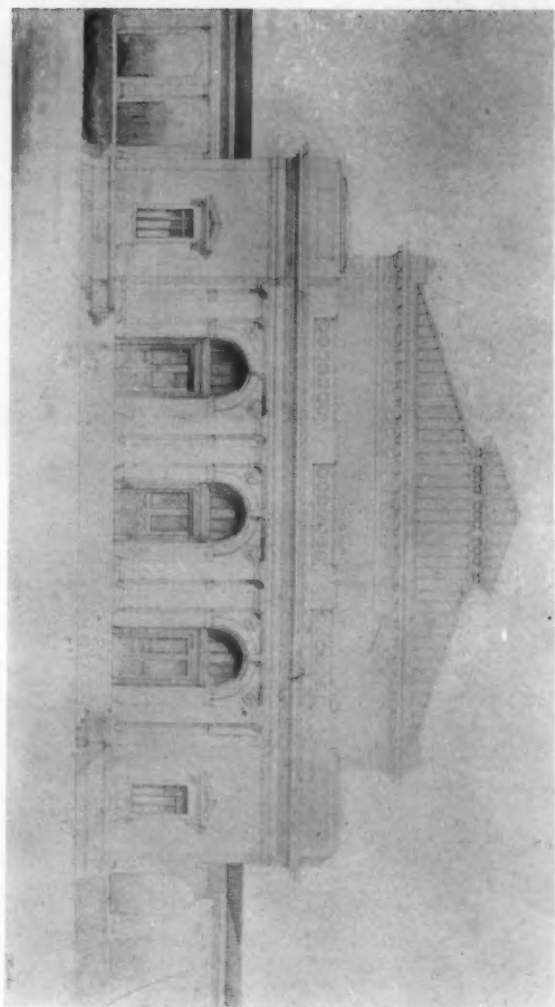


GEORGE E. MITCHELL.

CARNEGIE TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

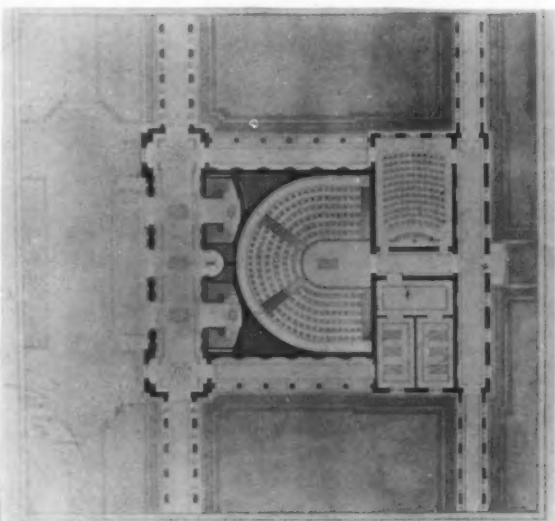


MENTION



T. R. CRITCHLOW

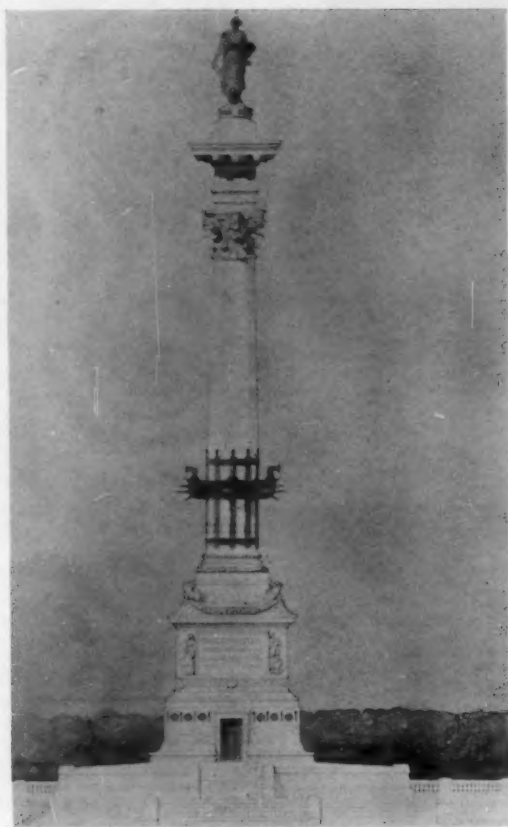
CARNEGIE TECHNICAL SCHOOL.



MENTION

PLAN PROBLEM
AN AMPHITHEATRE FOR A CLINIC

STUDENT WORK
SOCIETY OF BEAUX-ARTS ARCHITECTS



JNO. M. GRAY
MENTION PLACED
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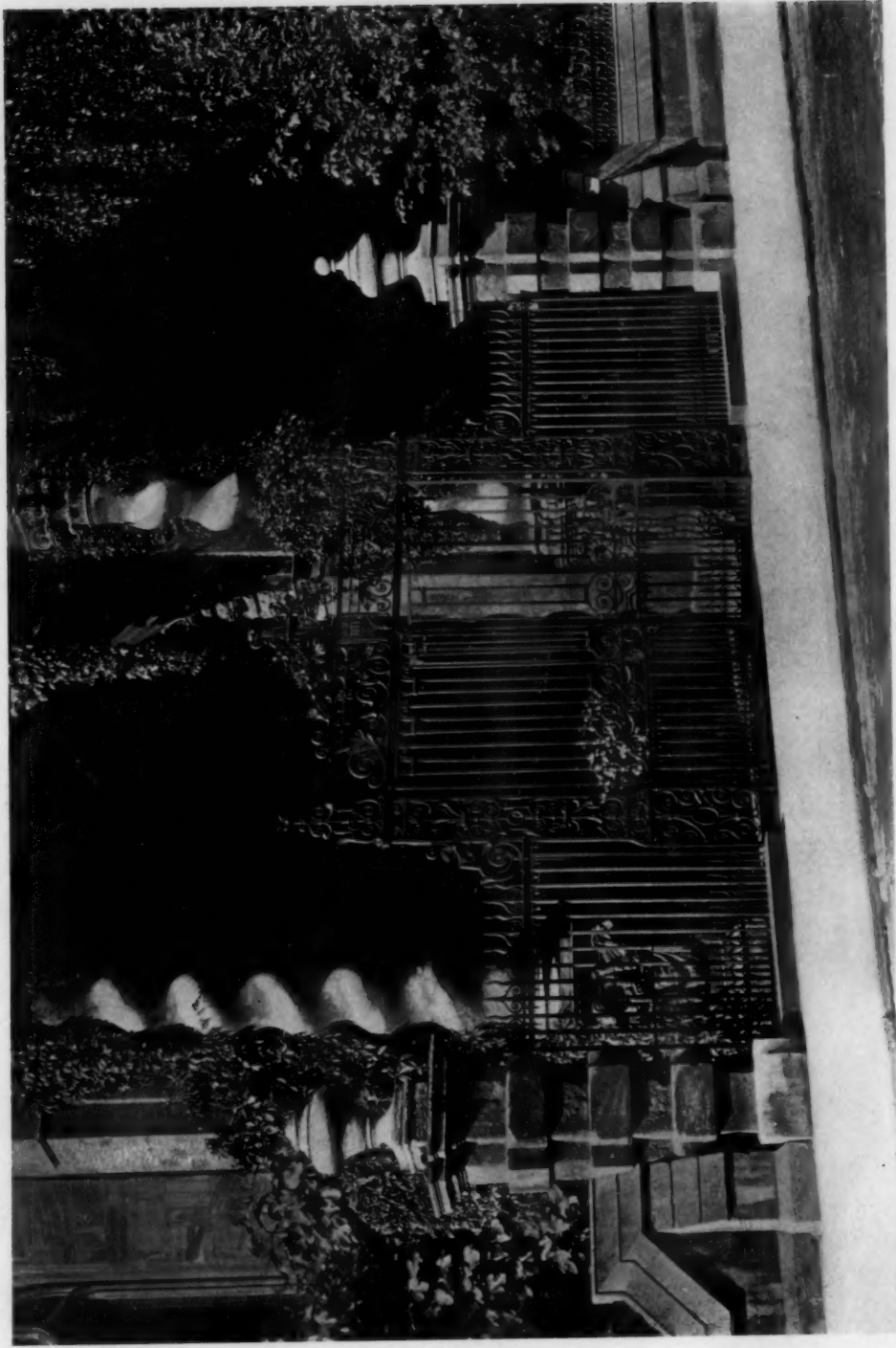


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