THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Vol. XCIX WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1911 No. 1835

A DECORATIVE PANEL
ISIDOR KONTI, *Sculptor*

THE MODELED RELIEF IN DECORATION

TO assume that sculptured or modeled ornament can only find a place in the interior decorative treatment of the larger and more monumental buildings is to overlook one of its greatest possibilities. While it would not be just to assert that architects have failed to realize the value of relief in the interior decoration of the house, it would seem to appear that they have not been generally successful in convincing clients of its desirability.

The idea prevalent for so many years that sculpture even in its simplest forms is only associated with the most expensive work is gradually giving place to a better and more intelligent appreciation of what can be accomplished with a small outlay of money.

One of the most encouraging signs of a growing appreciation on the part of the people of to-day is the tendency to surround their home lives with the better and consequently more artistic forms of decoration. Pictures in color or monotone, draperies, rugs and tapestries, carefully selected wall coverings and the accompanying furniture and floor coverings have all received the careful and discriminating attention of the home builder, and now, happily through the trained services of his architect, more often than ever before.

The use of well executed relief appears to have been in many instances overlooked.

It is quite apparent that certain places in our domestic interiors present more difficult problems of good treatment than others. Of these probably the mantel and space above it, together with the frieze, are the most important. Clients who build suburban homes generally require that in the living room there shall be a large fireplace with its accompanying mantel and chimney breast. Here the inmates of the house congregate, particularly in winter, and here might with advantage be employed some decorative treatment in relief that will throw varying shadows caused by the light from the flames of the fire on the hearth. Even such restricted form of low relief as is shown under the mantel shelf in a sitting room, executed by Daniel Chester French, N. A., gives added charm to the whole interior and relieves it of the monotony of flat surfaces only broken by the four square picture frames of the adjoining walls. It is a

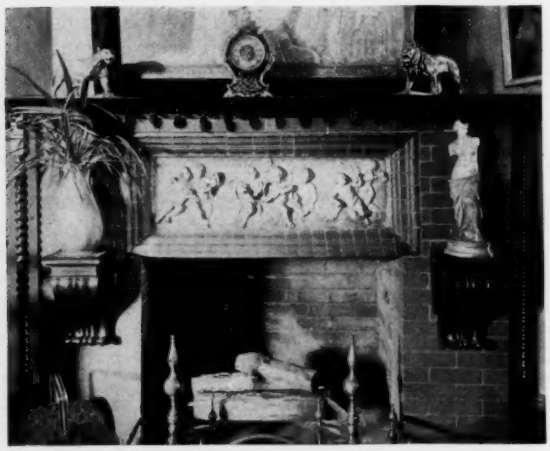
Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect.

PORTRAIT GROUP FOR AN OVERMANTLE
JONATHAN SCOTT HARTLEY, N. A., *Sculptor*

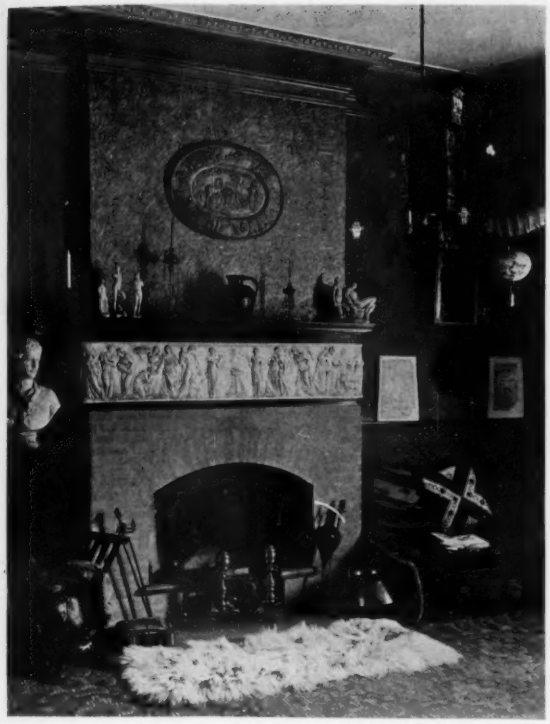
good illustration of the importance sculptors attach to the value of this form of decoration when men of national reputation give time tnd thought to the execution of this class of work.

It would seem that a more satisfactory form of decorative treatment could hardly be devised for an overmantel in a living room than is shown in Mr. Hartley's relief of a family group. Here the owner has secured a beautiful result, but has also before him the well executed family portraits.

In the more formal drawing or reception room, where the intimate suggestion of the home life is not considered so essential, we have as a motive the beautifully executed panel modeled by Mr. Karl Bitter for a house at Buffalo, N. Y. The entire house may, by the means of modeled ornament, be made to show the artistic tendencies of its owner by the means of decorative relief more than in any other way. His fads and hobbies, the scenes in an eventful life, may by symbolic figures in low relief bring before him constant reminiscences, just as he may and often does incorporate these in some suggestive way in the book plate by



INTERIORS SHOWING SMALL PLASTER RELIEFS AND CASTS OF FIGURES USED IN DECORATIVE TREATMENT



FRIEZE FOR MANTEL
DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH, N. A., *Sculptor*

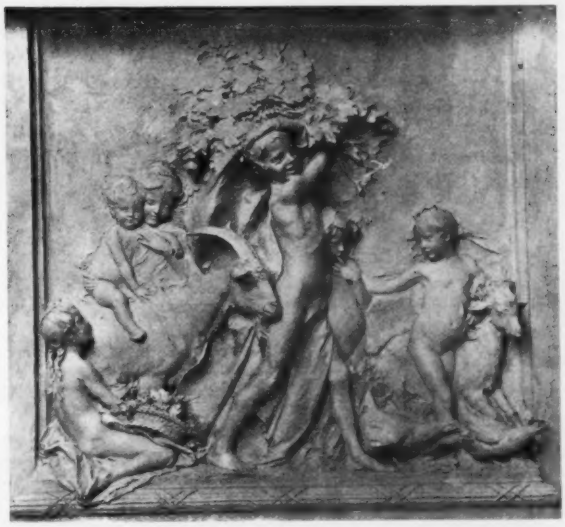
means of which he marks the cherished volumes that form his library.

Here the architect has many opportunities to lead his client along the paths of consistent forms of decoration and by this means avoid what has so often and so unfortunately occurred in the past, the marring of a well designed interior by poorly directed efforts on the part of the client.

If the cost of an original work is so great as to make its adoption prohibitive there is no need to abandon the project. There may be obtained, and at small cost, replicas in plaster of many of the masterpieces of the renaissance period in Europe. These, when toned to harmonize with the color scheme of the room, are very satisfactory and of decided artistic value.

Architects know how readily these may be permanently set into the walls where desired, while the wall is being finished, and how they enhance the feeling of permanency, and thus at all times set the note for future embellishing and furnishing.

To see "color" in form requires a trained eye. When this faculty is latent or has been acquired a most fortunate thing has happened to the possessor. What to others is often a weary monotony is to him as much of a delight as a brilliant painting, and he goes abroad prepared to find entertainment wherever his eye rests. If we are to round out our appreciation of art, let us not confine it to color alone, but also strive to learn to know



DECORATIVE PANEL FOR A HOUSE AT BUFFALO, N. Y.
KARL BITTER, *Sculptor*

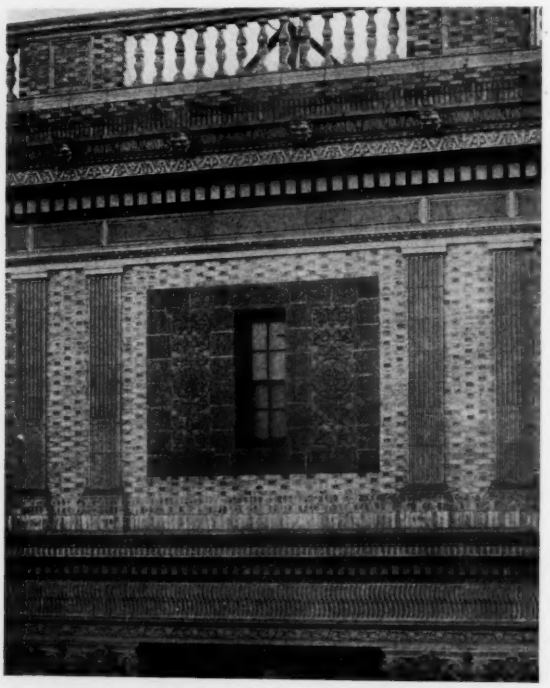
DECORATIVE PANEL FOR A GOVERNMENT BUILDING
HERBERT ADAMS, *Sculptor*

and appreciate the rare excellence of form and proportion, without which even color fails to convey its true importance. To achieve these desirable things in our education there can be no more efficient means than to surround our daily lives with such good examples of form as will tend to please while they instruct. This, we believe, is considered the most successful method of either imparting or acquiring knowledge.

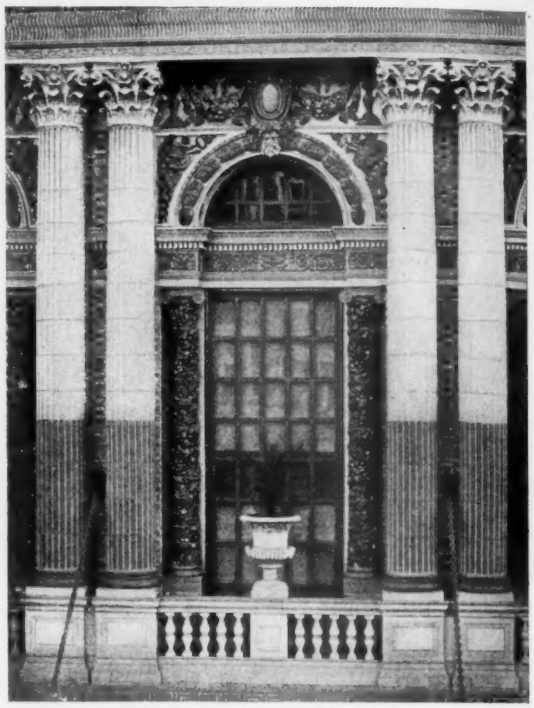
THE CURRENT ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

The Brick Builder begins the new year with the first of a series of articles by Hubert G. Ripley, entitled "The Presentation of Preliminary Studies of Architectural Subjects." The topic is an alluring one, especially to the man who specializes in domestic work. The article is well illustrated and lucidly written. There is also begun in this issue a series by Mr. William B. Ittner on "School Planning," and one by William L. Mowll on "The Principles of Architecture." Mr. Ittner's acknowledged ability in school designing makes anything that he writes authoritative and of value. The illustrations in this January issue are, in most part, already familiar to the readers of THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT by reason of their recent publication. A complete list of these will be found in the index to current architectural publications, which we print on another page.

The Western Architect for February reproduces nothing particularly new or representative. "The Preliminary Report for the Civic Commission" is discussed and there are articles on "The Possibility of Factory Site Improvement" and "Electric Lighting for Dwelling Houses."



Exterior Detail, Columbia Theatre, San Francisco, Cal.
Bliss & Faville, Architects
(From *The Brickbuilder*)



Exterior Detail, Columbia Theater, San Francisco, Cal.
Bliss & Faville, Architects
(From *The Brickbuilder*)

The International Studio for February presents a review of current happenings in the field of art. There is an interesting article on "Japanese Temples" and some very clever etchings of street scenes in France by Herman A. Webster. The recent exhibition of the National Society of Craftsmen is described and illustrated at some length. The reader will be impressed with the fact that these earnest workers in the allied arts are doing much to redeem articles of every-day utility from the monotonous lines which have been heretofore characteristic of them. The drawing-room, reconstructed and decorated by W. Reynolds-Stephens, "decorator and sculptor," shows the inevitable result when the architect is ignored.

An interesting article in the February *Architectural Record* is "A Comparison of Modern American Architecture with That of European Cities," by Professor Stanley D. Adshead, of Liverpool University. This article is very thoroughly illustrated, and the writer shows a keener insight into American conditions than is usual with authors whose viewpoint is so thoroughly European. The writer in his conclusions as to American architecture says: "American architecture sadly lacks composition, but this can only be attained by ownership control in one of its many forms, its absence is no fault of the art. The American city is mediæval in its composition, classic in detail, and is built on a classic

(*Continued on page 78*)

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY
239 West 39th Street, New York
G. E. Sly, *President*
E. J. Rosencrans, *Secretary and Treasurer*

Address all communications to "The American Architect."

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
United States and possessions (Porto Rico, Hawaii, Philippine Islands and Canal Zone), Mexico and Cuba, $10.00 per year.
All other countries, $12.00 per year.

Entered at the Post-office, New York, as Second-class Matter.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 22, 1911

CONTENTS

The Modeled Relief in Decoration 73
The Current Architectural Press 76
Editorial Comment 77
Proportion in Architecture 79
Illustrations:
Mutual Bank, New York
Capital City Club, Atlanta, Etc., Etc.
Frontispiece:
Vault at Blois, France, period of Louis XII.

PRESIDENT POND'S ADDRESS

We regard it as highly desirable that every member of the profession of architecture read with thoughtful care President Pond's address, delivered on the occasion of the opening of the recent Institute convention, and printed in full in our February 1st issue. In it were discussed the vital issues which concern not only the Institute but the entire profession. The attitude of the organization toward non-members is particularly worthy of note. President Pond stated: "The Institute would gladly welcome to its fold every high-minded practitioner of the art of architecture. The Institute desires within its ranks no one who is not willing to make sacrifices for the good, not of the Institute but of the profession."

Certainly this is a lofty sentiment, but it is one amply borne out by the splendid record made by the leaders in the profession who have directed the affairs of the Institute. Considered from an unselfish viewpoint it is difficult to understand why any architect, interested in the future welfare of the art which he serves, should withhold his support from an organization that has done so much to improve the conditions of practice in this country. Unquestionably the most effective manner of lending support is by affiliating, and then rendering the assistance due from an enthusiastic member. The coming year should see the membership of the American Institute of Architects greatly strengthened, and we are strongly of the opinion that the wise and forceful utterances of the president will assist materially to that end.

AN IMPORTANT PROPOSED EXHIBITION

Architects, who derived both pleasure and profit from a visit to the recent cement show, will be gratified to learn that an exhibition conducted on similar lines will be undertaken by the Clay Products Industry during the coming year. Chicago has been selected as the place and February as the probable time for inaugurating what it is hoped will become a recognized annual feature. The inestimable benefits to be derived from the course that has now wisely been determined upon are many and varied. An exhibition worthy of the great industry which it is intended to exploit will be well worth traveling many miles to visit.

AN UNJUST CRITICISM

The New York daily papers have recently announced that the purpose which gave birth to the New Theater in this city is soon to be abandoned. One newspaper assigned as the chief cause for the contemplated step the bad acoustics of the theatre auditorium, intimating that inferior architectural services, the effect of which it was found impossible to correct, were chiefly responsible for the failure of the enterprise. A more unreasonable and unjust attitude would be difficult to imagine. While its architects would, no doubt, be perfectly willing to admit that its acoustical properties may not be perfect, no competent expert would differ with them in the assertion that this defect, if it really exists, can readily be corrected. Of course, the architectural profession and the discriminating public do not, for a moment, countenance the charge of incompetent architectural services on account of this possible but certainly reparable defect.

They know that the New Theater stands alone among American playhouses as a distinct artistic accomplishment, snap journalistic condemnation notwithstanding. Those who are competent to judge recognize and appreciate a piece of work well done and are not to be misled, but it is lamentable that the popular press should even unwittingly lend itself to an expression that creates an erroneous impression on a portion of the public mind, and incidentally may do wholly unjustifiable injury to a professional reputation.

FIRE LOSSES AND DEFECTIVE FLUES

Perhaps the statement now going the rounds of the press, that defective flues constructed in buildings of the United States have been responsible for double the number of fires resulting from any other known cause, is not entirely accurate. It is, however, sufficiently so to command the attention of architects and those entrusted with the framing of building laws in the country. We are all perfectly familiar with instances where defective flues have led to property loss, if not loss of life. In some instances, no doubt, the fault has been of construction rather than design, but in such case adequate supervision was not furnished. It is probably a fact that a single conflagration resulting from a defective flue has caused the loss of an amount of money sufficient to have corrected or rebuilt every improperly constructed flue in the country. The situation is not one that reflects particular credit upon architects or builders. It indicates carelessness and lack of appreciation of the danger resulting from slack methods on the part of either the designer or constructor. There is no reasonable excuse for disregarding the known danger of fire kindled from flues that are not properly built. It is not the result of ignorance but carelessness which it may be necessary to penalize before the needed reform will be fully accomplished.

(*Continued from page 76*)

plan." As to the modern architecture of England, he believes it to be confused in its intention, and that this is due to the effect of the Gothic revival from which it has but recently recovered. He regards the French style as theatrical, and regrets that Germany is at present "heart and soul in the throes of l'Art Nouveau." A splendidly illustrated article on "English Roadside Cottages with Their Doorway Gardens," by Alexander E. Hoyle, photographed by Thomas W. Sears, landscape architect, carries with it the same interest that always surrounds any description and illustration of picturesque England. Other articles in this issue are continuations

Entrance to House at Fitchburg, Mass. William G. Rantoul, Architect
(From *The Brickbuilder*)

of Mr. George S. Chappell's series on "Paris School-days," and Montgomery Schuyler's on "The Architecture of American Colleges." As a whole, the issue is full of interest and is largely a return to the more technical field of architectural publication.

The January issue of *Architecture,* interesting by reason of its publication of recently completed good examples, is marked by a most indifferent method of presentation. Important work that undoubtedly merits much commendation is so inadequately presented as to afford small opportunity to judge of its merits. This is noticeable in the illustration of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. But two illustrations are shown—one each of the upper and the lower stories. No attention has been taken of the

Residence at Los Angeles, Cal. R. D. Farquhar, Architect
(From *The Western Architect*)

interesting and most unusual interior features and there are no plans. Perhaps a subsequent presentation is contemplated. The absence of plans is also noticeable in other instances in this issue. We fail to see how this method of illustrating important work can interest the technical reader or satisfy the author. In the text there is an article by A. H. Wheeler on "Specifying and Selecting Specialties." We note with some surprise an article in this issue entitled, "The Driving Forces of Architecture," by C. D. Warren. This article was published in THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT, issue of July 10, 1910, and was reprinted from *The Builder,* of London, to which publication due credit is given. Its appearance in *Architecture* seven months later would seem to lack the element of timeliness, and failure to acknowledge the source from which it was derived a departure from that standard of ethics that is generally supposed to govern under such circumstances.

The New York Architect for January, which reached us on February 6, devotes its entire issue to the illustration of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New York. The views seen in this issue are all familiar to readers of THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT. These views, together with many others, were shown in our issue of February 1. The text contains articles descriptive of the Ritz-Carlton, Independent Water Supply in New York and a review of the New York Municipal Arts Commission's report for 1909.

Chickering Hall, Boston, Mass. Peabody & Stearns, Architects
(From *Architecture*)

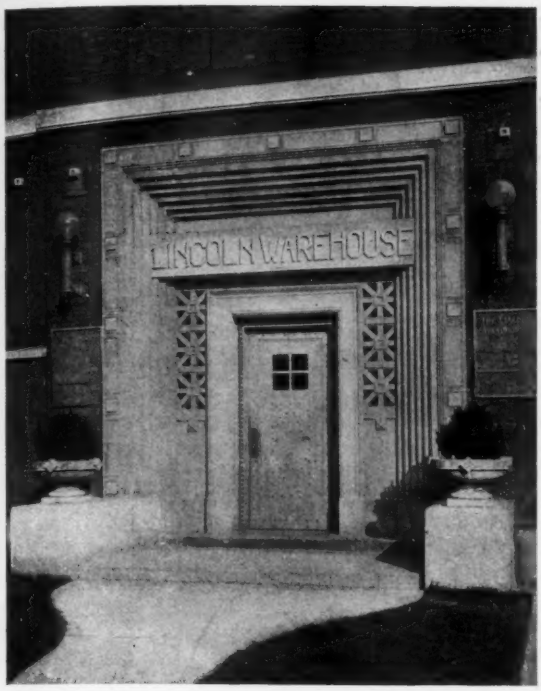


Fig. 6, Entrance: The Lincoln Fireproof Storage Warehouse, Chicago, Ill. Ottenheimer, Stern & Reichert, Architects

(From *The Architectural Record*)

Drawing-room at No. 9 Montagu Place. Reconstructed and Decorated by W. Reynolds-Stephens

(From *The International Studio*)

PROPORTION IN ARCHITECTURE

AN EXPLANATION FROM A NEW POINT OF VIEW. BY R. M. HAMILTON, A.R.I.B.A., PERTH, WEST AUSTRALIA

Proportion in architecture has been speculated and theorized upon ever since man turned his mind to the search for principles underlying design. In antiquity artificial canons of proportion in architecture were established, notably in Egypt and Greece, which were adhered to from custom, and which gained a semi-sanctity and authority through temple architecture being connected with the priestly office. How these canons were arrived at and on what reasons they were based is unknown, but probably they were founded on the relationship of certain measurements to others, numerical or geometrical, and in multiple or ratio. The difficulty of now unraveling these is due to our ignorance of the exact length of the unit of measurement of those times. These canons may be described as the mechanical method of proporton; but the matter may be approached from another point of view.

As the Greeks reached the highest pitch of perfection in architecture, and possessed an artistic perception superior to any modern people, we will limit the question to their work. What they accomplished shows such an intuitive sense of proportion, such an innate delicacy of feeling for the fitness of things, that it carried them far beyond anything moderns can show. In one respect their problems were simpler than ours. They had no enormous buildings put to multifarious uses and cut up into a multiplicity of small parts; they could almost choose their conditions; and with them largeness, breadth and simplicity were the leading motives—restfulness and dignity, in place of unrest and banality. Whether this result was attained by rules thought out from observation and deduction—the mechanical method—or by the spontaneous intuitive sense of the right thing to do and the power of doing it which gives that feeling of inevitableness to all true artistic outpouring, the fact remains: their creations still speak to us even in their now mutilated state, and still invite a speculative investigation.

Proportion in architecture may be defined for our present purpose as the relationship of large parts to the whole edifice; of smaller divisions to larger; of height to length; of story to story; and of story to height and length of façade. It will, further, apply to the relationship of an important feature, such as a cornice, to the rest of the building.

The investigations by scientists of the phenomena and laws of vibratory action and its effects are receiving great attention, especially in connection with its effects on man's psychological nature. We already see a widely extended attempt among students of this vibratory theory to supply a working hypothesis for many phenomena lately unfolded, inexplicable by any present hypothesis. In fact, the law of vibration will be found at the bottom of all bearing on the human sensitiveness, and to apply also, I venture to suggest, to the case of artistic production in general, and especially to the subtleties of proportion.

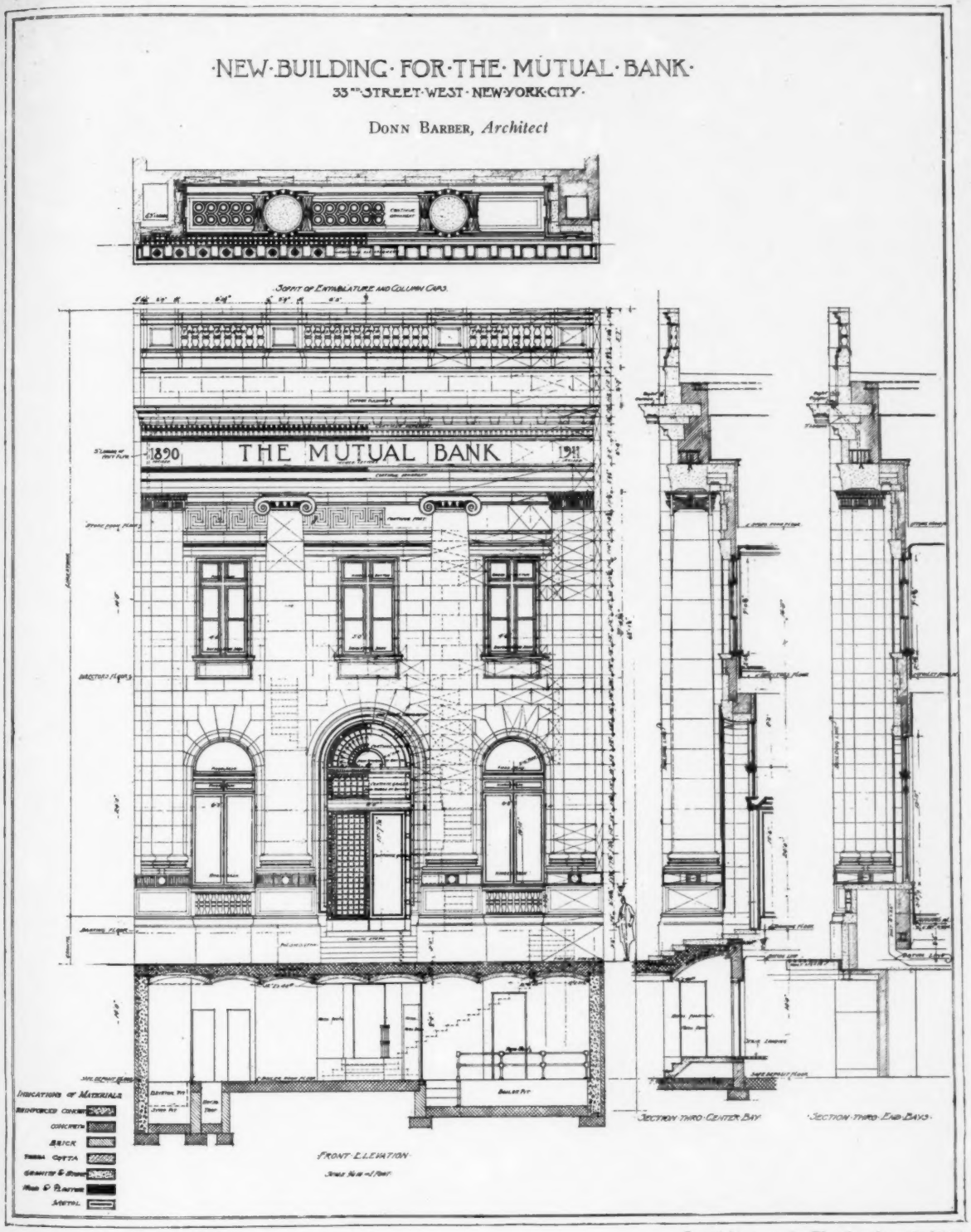
The laws of vibration we can most clearly and easily understand from the phenomena of sound and music,

as here the causes and effects can be most visibly demonstrated. Vibratory motion is shown to constitute the phenomena pertaining to sound, heat, light, color. It will be applied to another series of still more rapid action, such as electricity, radioactivity, and up at last even to human thought. Thought is a mode of vibration which will be realized as a fundamental law of life itself. We live by vibration. Psychic sensitiveness, telepathy, thought-transference, are caused by impulses, and all living matter is governed by vibratory action. Everything has its own inherent rate of vibration which emanates from and impinges upon others. With regard to musical sounds, we know that notes which produce what we call harmony are those whose vibrations synchronize most frequently. If two tuning-forks or violin strings of the same pitch are placed near each other, and one set vibrating, the second will gradually pick up that rate until it synchronizes with the first and both give forth the same sound. Wireless telegraphy is the latest application of this principle. The law runs through all nature, including human beings, especially on the psychic side of our complex organization. Our nature receives and responds to all impulses palpitating through the ether: some we receive through our outward organs of sense, others, more subtle, through our higher faculties—not much developed in many of us. As this becomes more generally recognized it will solve many of the deeper perplexing problems of our being. At the same time all the varied phenomena will fall naturally into their places.

There is only one law covering the whole domain of vibratory action—of which sound has been used for the purpose of elucidation—and our psychic nature is amenable to that law. It receives, responds to and synchronises with such rates and to such a degree as each individual's nature is capable of; some are highly pitched, responsive to certain kinds of effects and dull to others. In this respect artists of all kinds are more sensitive than the ordinary man; they are more highly strung and perfectly tuned instruments, more impressionable and responsive to subtler vibratory effects. All who minister to the loftier feelings, who seek to please and to satisfy their cravings after the beautiful, are artists—painters, poets, musicians, architects and others. All are composers (placers together) of the ideal, seeing and feeling inwardly, and objectifying their impressions. The architect is one of the completest of artists, as he composes in the round when designing a noble pile, and combines form, color and material.

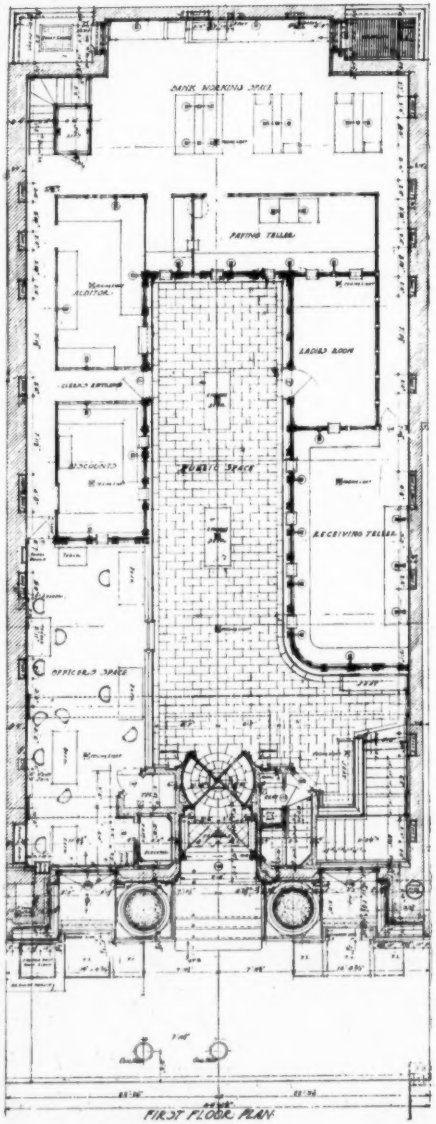
A great edifice is one of the loftiest conceptions of man's mind working within certain given limits, a delight to the eye and sense. As a composition of color, form and arrangement, what a symphony it is! It raises a lofty responsive effect within, filling us with the purest abstract pleasure and thrilling us with appreciative emotion. In producing this effect proportion assumes a pre-eminent importance. The relation of parts to the whole—unity, variety, symmetry, contrast—produces eurythmy, just as tones combined in melodies and chords produce euphony. Their subtle effects play on the finest qualities of man lying deep within his psychic nature. Proportion is the golden thread binding the whole composition together. Just what makes it good or bad has evaded and baffled explanation, for the effect is felt inwardly, and is not much reasoned upon outwardly on account of its subtlety—it is just accepted. Nevertheless, these sensations are as true and real as the most superficial, if not more so. Thereby the parts of a building, by their order, combination and correlation, raise within us an harmonious state of vibration which we call proportion.

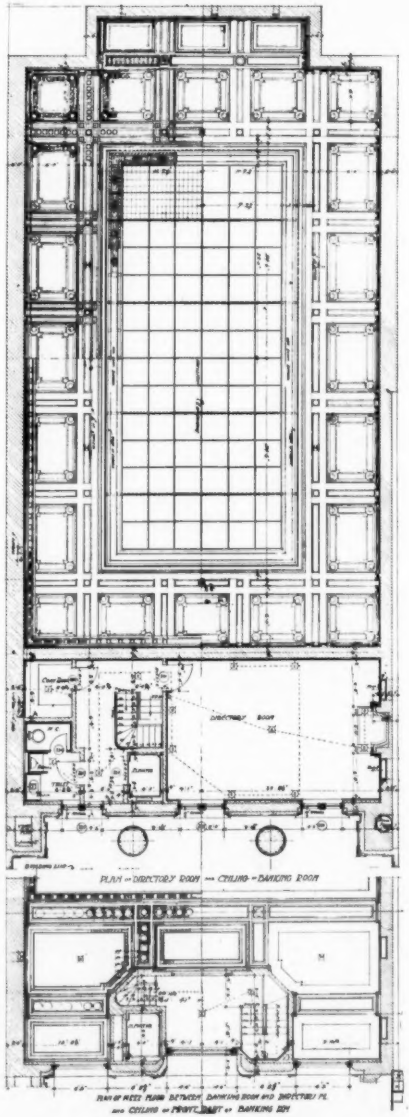
The Greeks were the most artistically sensitive of people. Music was recognized as one of their most important subjects of education, and with philosophy and metaphysics formed the greater part of their intellectual training. They fully realized the refining, elevating power of music; and in art it was their exquisite sense of harmonious fitness—intuitive probably rather than reasoned—which has established them their pre-eminence. Much search has been devoted to discover a canon of proportion by which they worked, but in all their temples variations are found. The beautiful result which appeals to us was reached, as with everything human, by degrees and by an orderly evolution, though certainly a very rapid one in their case. That spontaneous artistic feeling was due to their very sensitive temperament. The Greeks could sense inwardly the purest and most delicate *nuances*. The fine modifications introduced by them into their most beautiful edifices of the best period could only have been made to satisfy a wonderful delicacy of perception and receptivity to appreciate such ultra-refinements. It was almost a case of painting the lily. There must have been, too, a sufficiently large number of the nation who could recognize and also appreciate such artistic minutiæ outside a select few, for it cannot be presumed that such pains were taken to attain a pedantic perfection. The Parthenon was like a great chord of perfect harmony in its proportions, vibrating with that feeling of spontaneity and inevitableness with which all great inspirations palpitate on the senses, beating in on the psychic nature of man, setting it thrilling and vibrating in response, and with an intensity commensurate with his innate God-given capacity for receiving and delighting in them.—*Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects.*

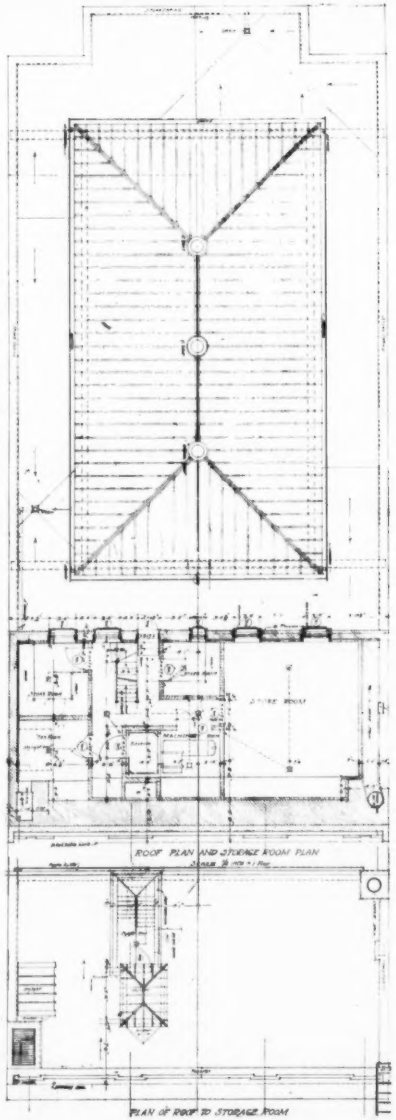


Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

This problem has been carefully studied. It is an interesting solution of the bank's requirements, which we are informed demanded that every inch of space be utilized. The plans show a well proportioned banking-room, insuring light and perfect ventilation, with a well appointed director's room across the front, on the second floor; the safe deposit vaults and security vaults being ingeniously arranged in the basement. The façade presents an interesting design in the renaissance along classical lines. This front, which is of limestone, has a pedestaled base above the water-table course, forming a pleasing start and giving an adequate foundation for the columns which are to be free-standing, some 32 feet high. The cornice and balustrade are well proportioned, with the openings in the wall behind carefully studied. All details and finish have been worked out with care. The result is a very satisfactory type of modern bank construction.





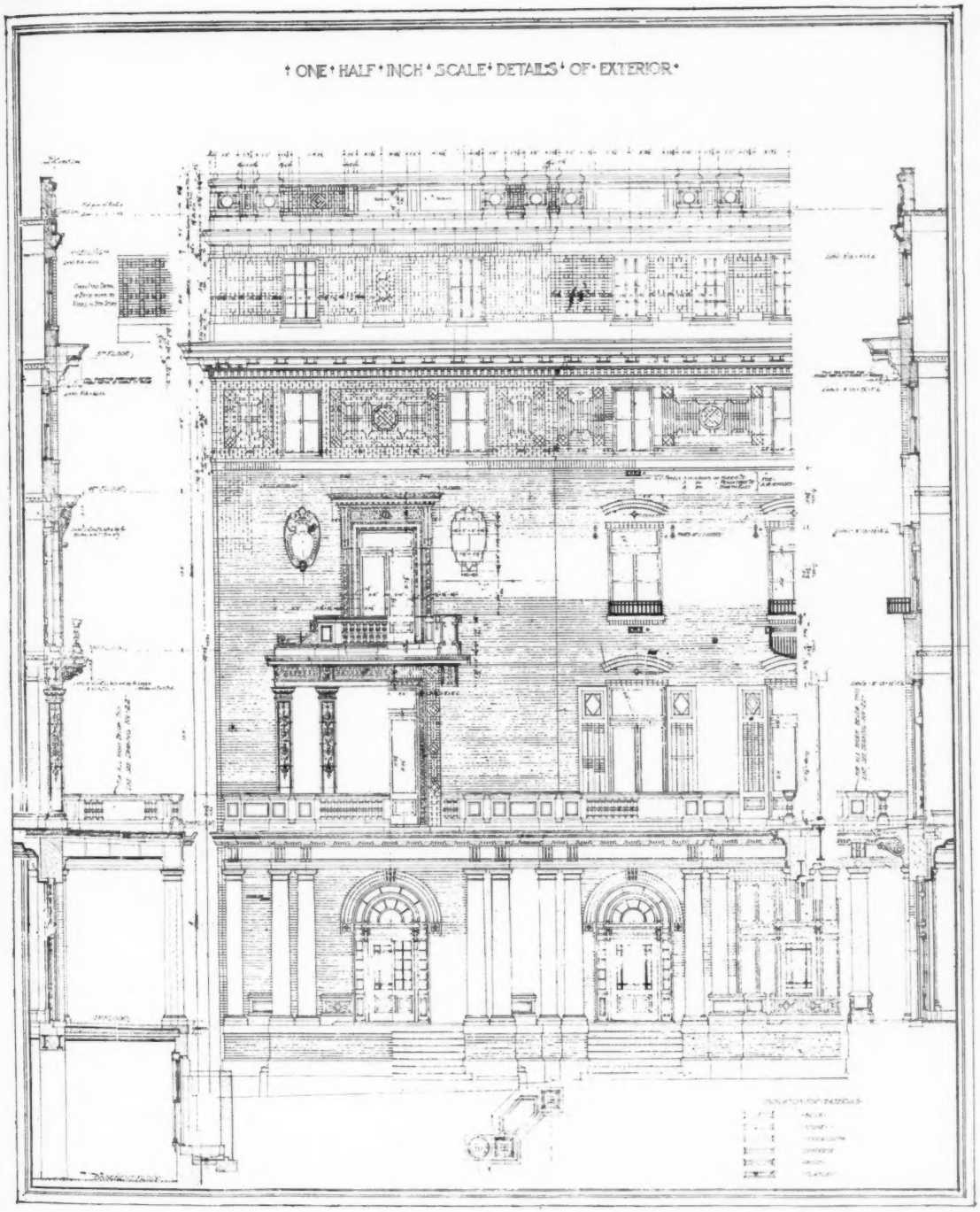


THE
MUTUAL BANK,
NEW YORK

DONN BARBER,
Architect

Copyright, 1911, by
The American Architect

XUM

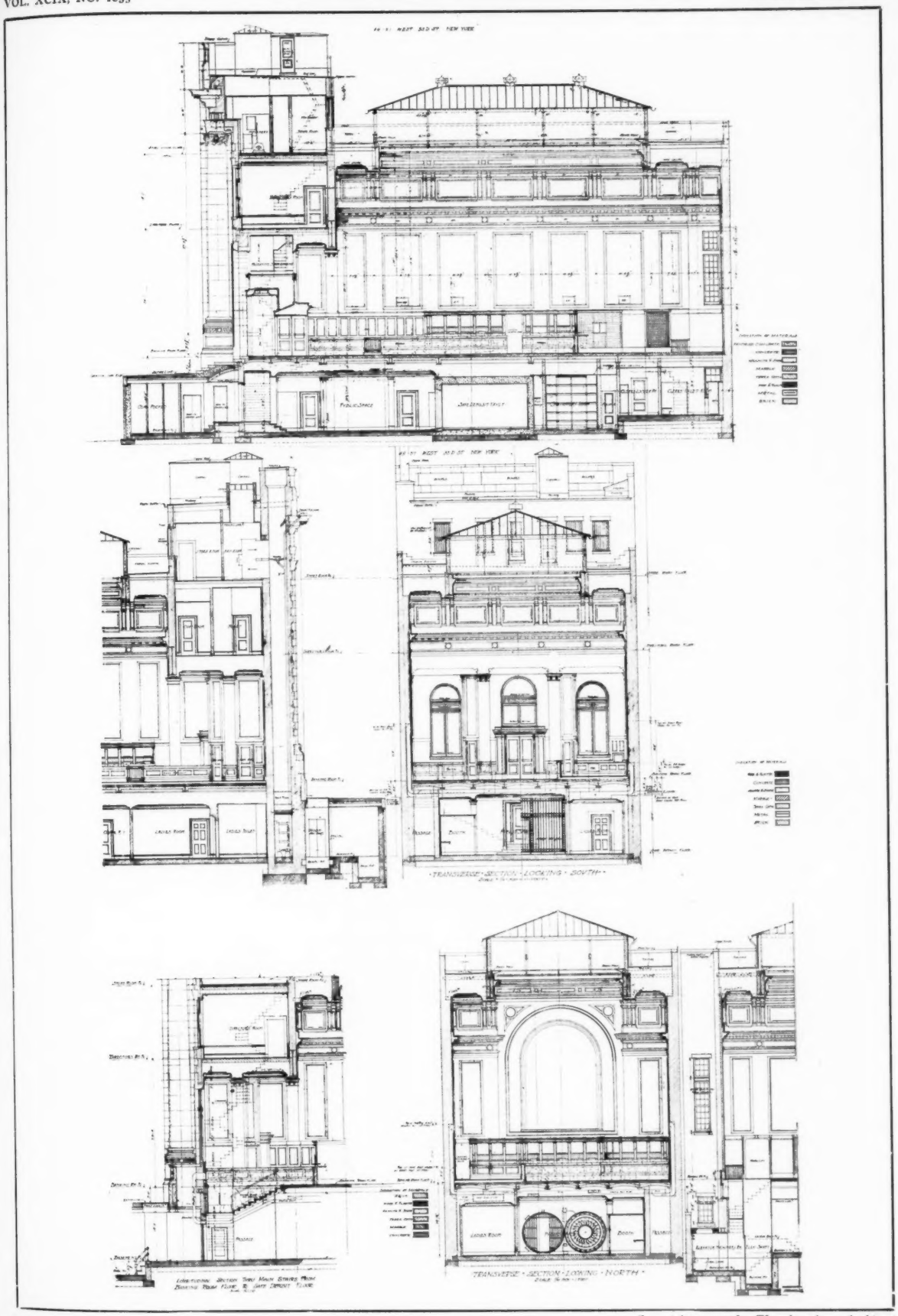


Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

The plan of arrangement is interesting and should give the hospitality of the South every opportunity it requires, to show the good fellowship for which it is so famous. The building is a self-supporting masonry shell, with reinforced concrete columns and floors of the most improved design; the exterior surfaces being of tapestry brick with inlaid panels and terra cotta trimmings. Effort has been made to design a club that would fit into its surroundings, and this suggested a feeling of the Colonial, with porches and loggias, which, owing to the rigors of the climate, would be quite impossible in the North. The problem has been worked out with care and the result, simple and straightforward, is most satisfactory.

THE CAPITAL CITY CLUB, ATLANTA, GA.

DONN BARBER, *Architect*



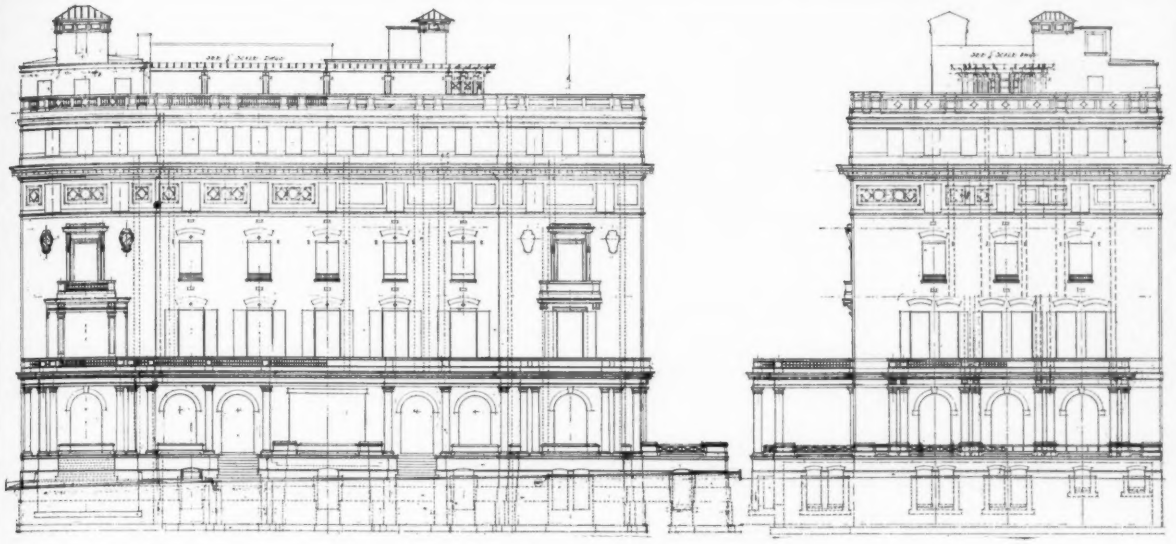
Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

THE MUTUAL BANK, NEW YORK

DONN BARBER, *Architect*

VOL

XUM

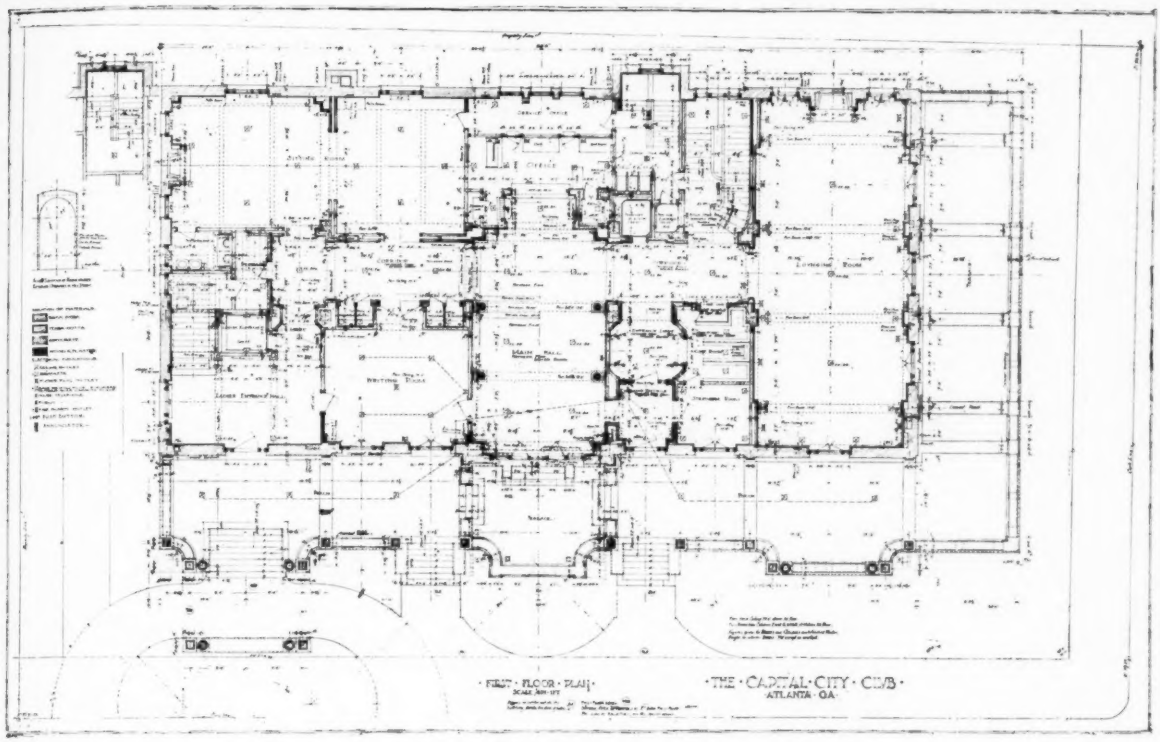


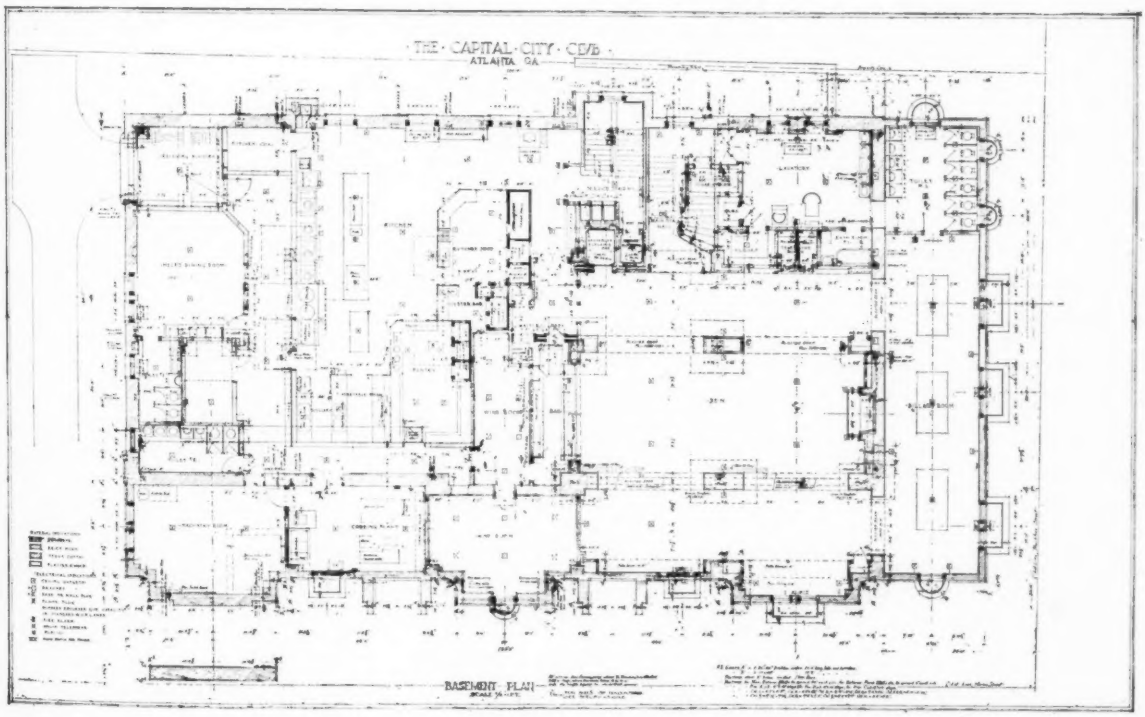
Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

ABOVE AT LEFT, HARRIS AVENUE ELEVATION; AT RIGHT, PEACHTREE STREET ELEVATION;
BELOW, LONGITUDINAL SECTION

THE CAPITAL CITY CLUB, ATLANTA, GA.

DONN BARBER, *Architect*

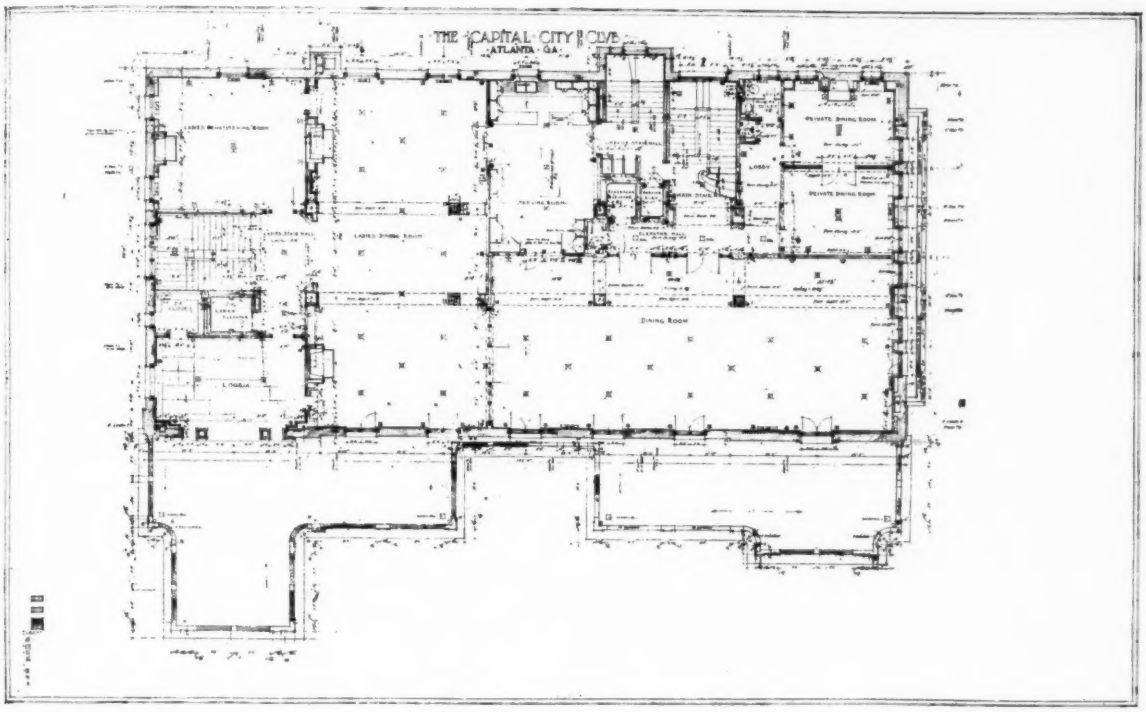




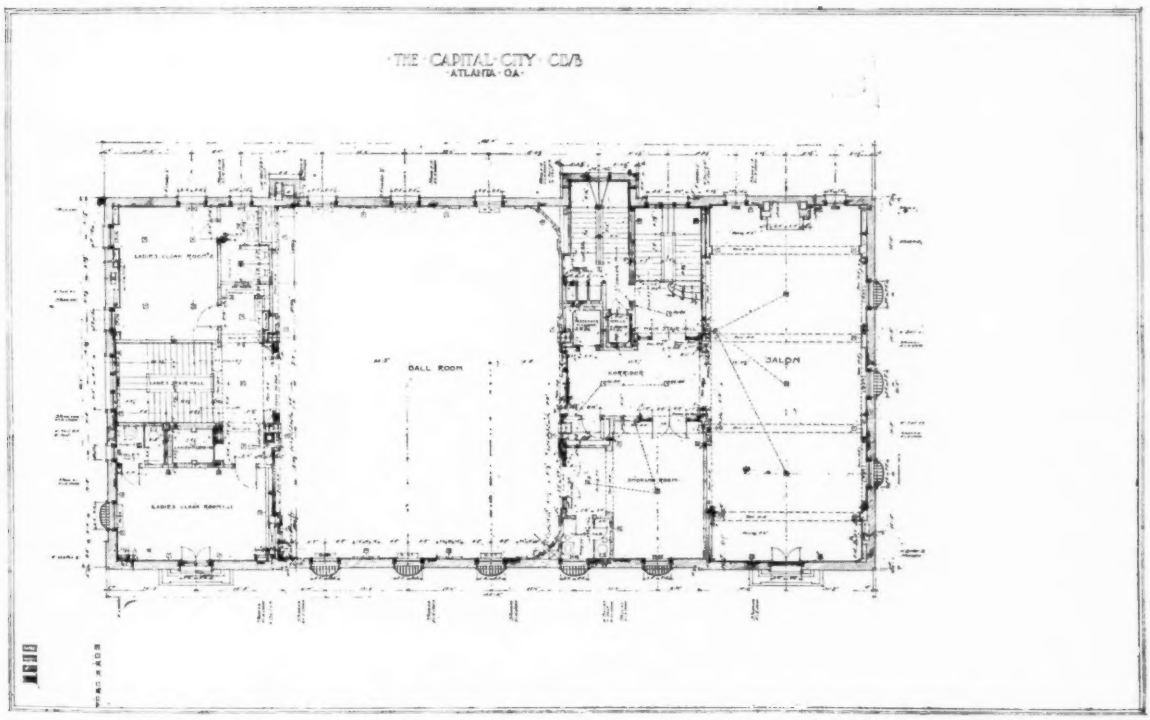
Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

THE CAPITAL CITY CLUB, ATLANTA, GA.

DONN BARBER, *Architect*



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



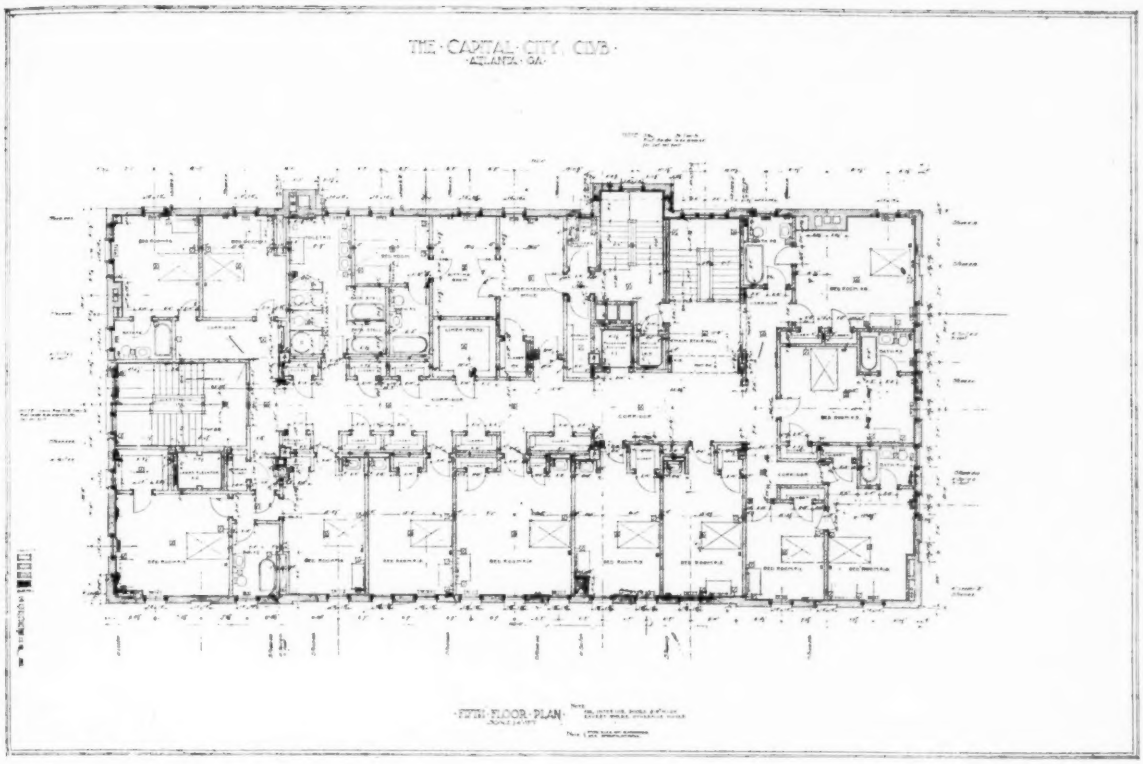
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

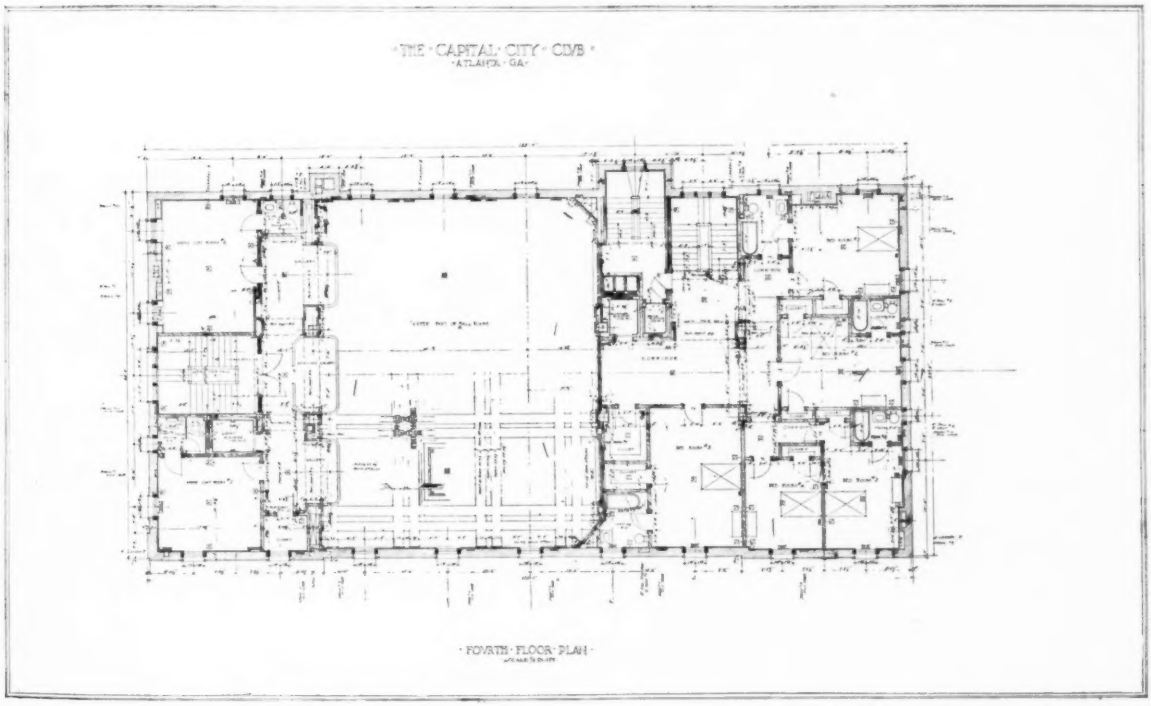
Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

THE CAPITAL CITY CLUB, ATLANTA, GA.

DONN BARBER, *Architect*

XUM





Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

THE CAPITAL CITY CLUB, ATLANTA, GA.

DONN BARBER, *Architect*

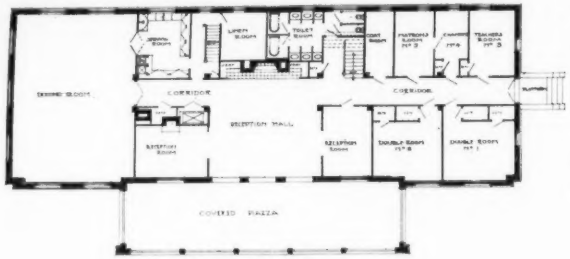
XUM

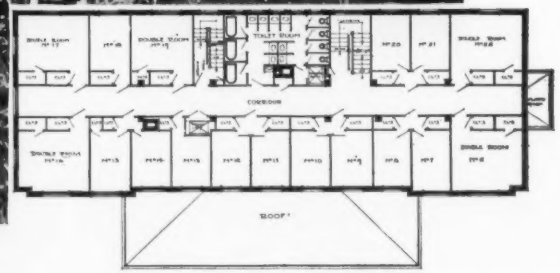
Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL, NEWTON, MASS.

GEORGE F. NEWTON, *Architect*

XUM





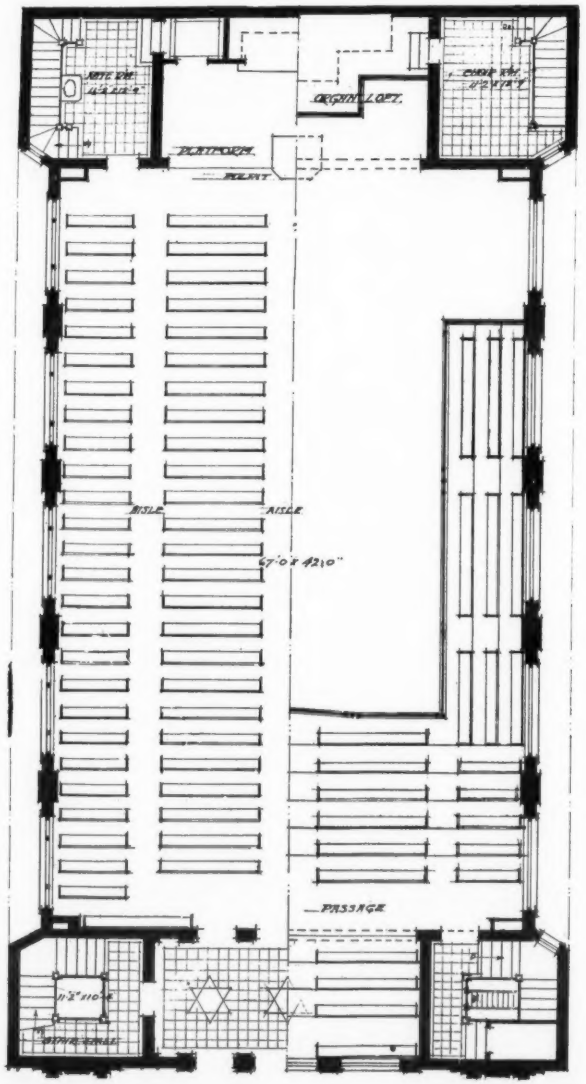
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

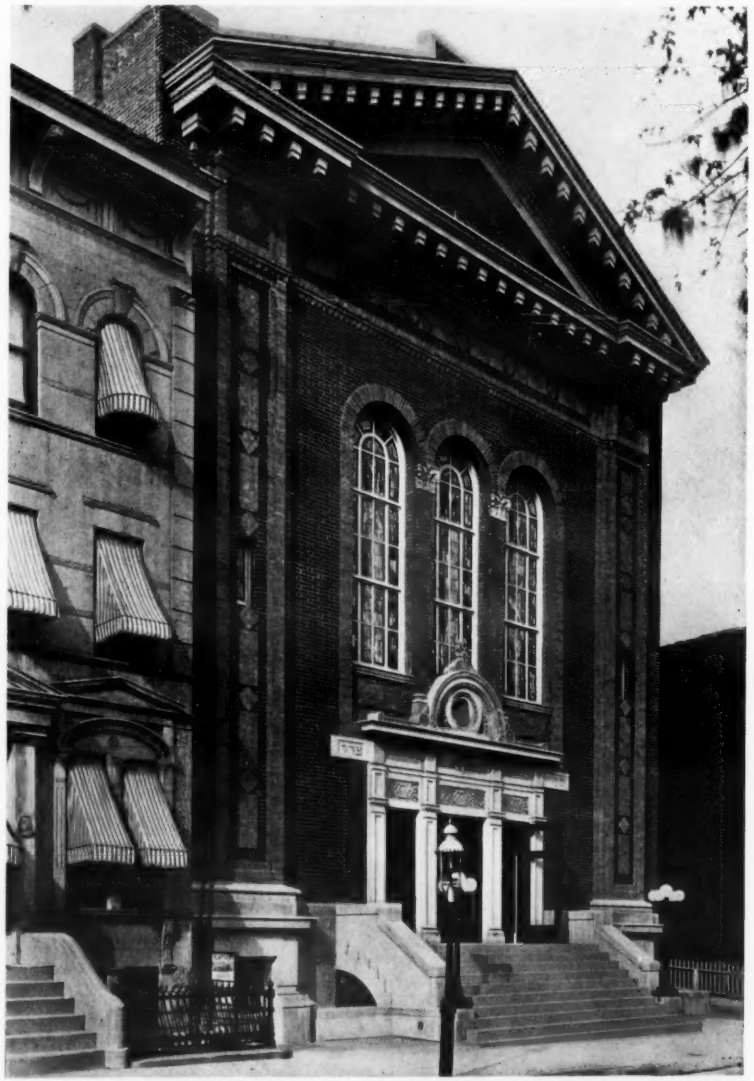
DORMITORY, PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

ALDEN & HARLOW, *Architects*

Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

XUM





Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

SHAARI ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

EUGENE SCHOEN, *Architect*

XUM

Copyright, 1911, by The American Architect

SHAARI ZEDEK SYNAGOGUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

EUGENE SCHOEN, *Architect*

GARDEN TERRACE. THE VILLA CONTI, FRASCATI.