

# THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

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CORNICE, COUNT OF ARGILLÓ'S PALACE

## SARAGOSSA, THE CITY OF BRICK

By M. STAPLEY. PHOTOS By A. G. BYNE

TO one interested in brick work Saragossa (Spanish corruption of the Roman *Cæsarea Augusta*) has a distinction beyond any other city in Spain. Not that buildings of this same material cannot be found elsewhere. Leon, for instance, abounds in them; for it was to Leon that the Christian monks expelled from Cordova went, and, carrying Moorish traditions of brick building with them, erected brick churches and monasteries all through the province. But whereas Leonese examples are isolated, Saragossa's are grouped together in one small city (whose inhabitants, however, would doubtless object to the adjective).

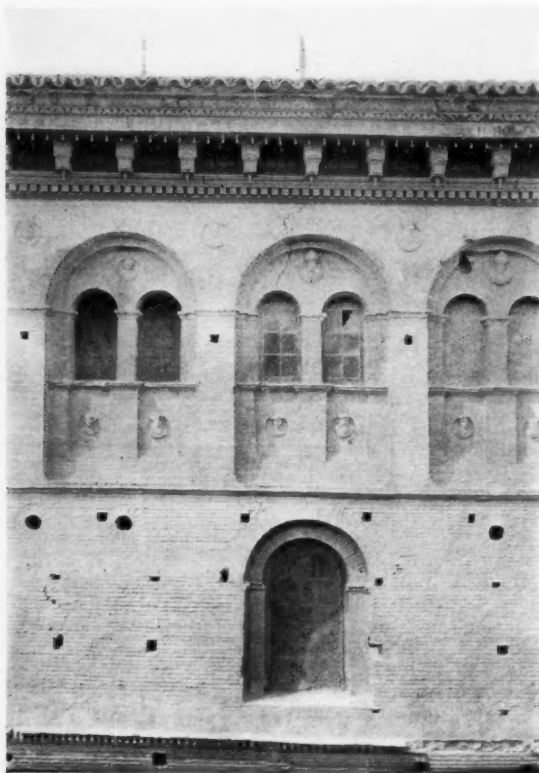
So much of Saragossa is brick that the material gives a color to the neighborhood—a dusty bricky quality in

the air which can be readily recognized in the landscapes of its celebrated son Goya. Besides the great cathedrals, the Lonja (or Exchange), the Audiencia, the Moorish Aljaferia (of which only a tiny mosque is left), and several small churches, there are any number of brick palaces. These, with their splendid spaces of brick wall and their massive overhanging carved roof timbers, make the streets of the Aragonese capital unique.

This brick architecture is a complete change from the earlier specimens to be found (if diligently and patiently hunted for) around Leon. There the monks and their little colony of brick makers centered at Sahagun restrained their Moorish technique to the ex-



INTERIOR OF LA SEO



LA LONJA

pression of early Christian austerity. But in later days, when Saragossa was building, this same technique was permitted to express itself in all its natural fanciful peculiarities. Mudejar (Christian Moorish) brickwork therefore reached its apogee in Saragossa; and along with it were used enamels and ceramics—green, blue and white—in which the ceramic workers of the region excelled. The polychrome art that resulted is very beautiful. Fine, lacy, delicately colored, this Christian brickwork of Aragon is as good as, and at the same



TOWER OF SAN PABLO

time more architectural than, anything produced by the Moors in their southern kingdom of Granada.

One of the most perfect brick structures in Saragossa has unfortunately been lately pulled down. It was the famous *torre nueva* or *inclinada* that stood leaning for centuries in the midst of the city. There was no danger of its collapsing; but wily house-tenants on its more familiar side made it a pretext for clamoring for lower rent; so their landlords, equally cunning, and as powerful in Saragossa municipal councils as in any other city, got a bill passed for pulling down the famous old tower. It was the tallest and most beautiful land-



LA SEO

mark in the city. Now the two cathedrals dominate the scene; *El Pilar* with its azulejo (colored tile) cupolas, and *La Seo* with its brick and tile tower.

Architecturally this first mentioned is poor; but the mass is very picturesque, especially when seen from across the river. From this point its contour is surprisingly like a Russian church. Viewed by moonlight one forgives it for not showing any interesting brick-work, and consoles himself with the fact that Saragossa has two cathedrals, and though the other, *La Seo*, is less romantic as a mass, it offers the most fascinating brick surfaces imaginable—"lace all wrought of solid substance."

*La Seo* (the See) was commenced in 1120, and its building extended over exactly four centuries. Though its rival *El Pilar* is one of the most important Christian monuments in Spain (since it contains the miraculous image on a pillar of jasper which the Virgin presented to St. James on that very spot), yet the *Seo*, where the kings of Aragon were crowned, was founded some years previous. Hence endless disputes between them as to which could claim the metropolitan dignity—disputes ending only when a seventeenth century Pope

declared them both to be cathedrals—each holding service for alternating six months. Needless to say a structure extending over 400 years is a somewhat amorphous looking pile; but its great apse opposite the episcopal palace and its steeple atone for all other shortcomings. The apse is richly decorated with fourteenth century brick and tile work. Many of these glazed and colored embellishments have unfortunately disappeared, but enough remain to show what luxury of surface meant to these early builders. This development of the apse was typical of the Mudéjar tradition of church building—apse always large and covered outside with buttresses and pinnacles in richly worked bricks and enamels; a very decorated tower; and the interior usually unpretentious. In the apse of *La Seo*, however, the bricks are not specially cut, but the delicate patterning is formed mostly of uncut headers, whose increased relief now that so many tiles have fallen out causes shadows that greatly enhance the whole effect.

The belfry of the *Seo* is, in surface, quite as beautiful as the apse; moreover it is the finest tower in *Zaragoza* now that the leaning one is no more. *La Seo's* is octagonal, and has glazed tiles let into the pattern-



TYPICAL BELFRY



CHURCH OF THE MAGDALENA

ing all the way to its lofty top (which was injured by lightning in 1850). Built as late as 1690 this bell tower is surprisingly *Mudejar*, and shows how slow this particular part of Spain was to relinquish Arab influence.

Among smaller churches San Pablo, started about 1259, is the most interesting—and here again the apse and tower play the most important part. The former differs from La Seo in having its patterning confined to a broad band instead of spreading over the entire surface. The latter is again octagonal, elaborately adorned with colored tiles, especially in the upper stages. Above the north portal are some quaint Gothic figures, and an excellent cornice surmounts the apse. It was of this building that Fergusson wrote, "It might be in the Crimea or on the steppes of Tartary."

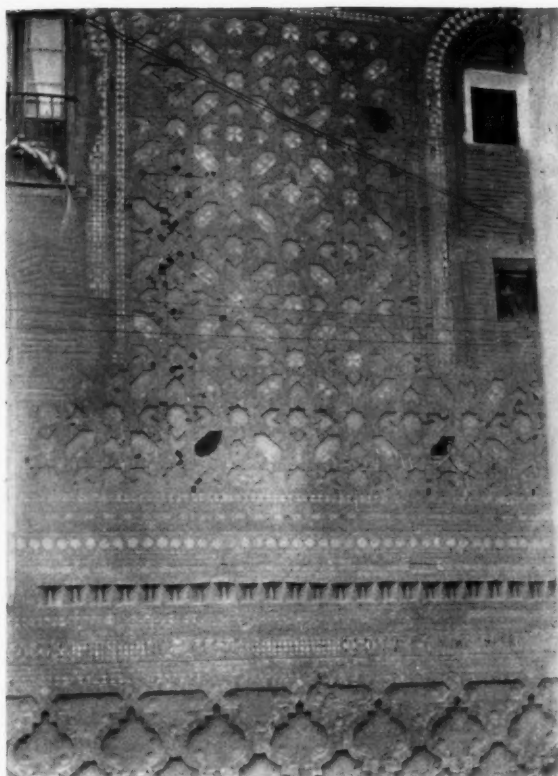
Another noteworthy church is La Magdalena, with two rich ornamental bands around its apse. Its tower is square and therefore more Moorish looking, for the traditional form of the Arab minaret was four-sided—like the Giralda in Seville; while the other type of tower—the polygonal—is purely the Aragonese imitation of the Gothic *campanile*. Square or many-sided, on

churches or standing alone, these lofty towers are the most characteristic manifestation of brick architecture in the province of Aragon. The capital still has her full share of them in spite of the great French siege and the other stormy periods through which this most indomitable of Spanish cities has passed. Saragossa is known as "*siempre heroica*" and battered towers like La Magdalena's or San Pablo's, to say nothing of those actually bombarded into atoms, tell how dearly she won her proud title. It is a lamentable fact that the eighteenth century added a poor baroque portal to La Magdalena's apse, and furthermore transgressed by brick-ing up the charming old Gothic windows. A simple but well-proportioned bit of domestic work is seen to the right of the church.

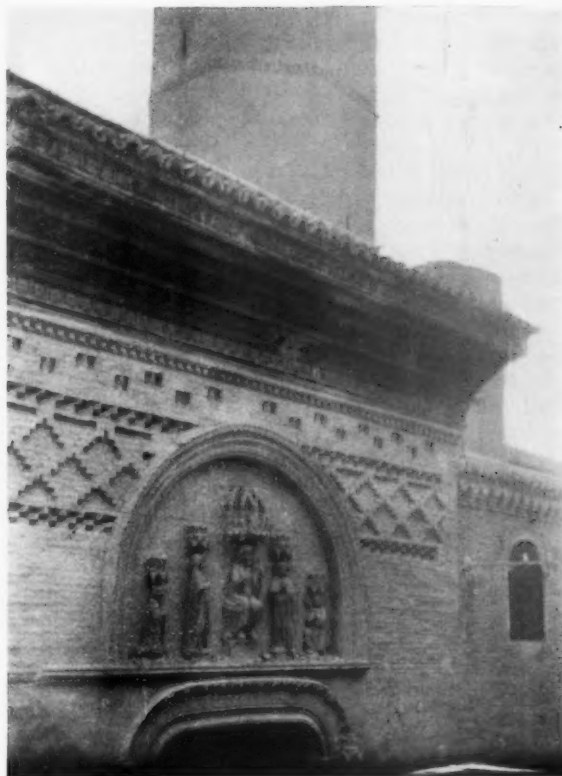
Among municipal buildings the Lonja is most interesting. In type it is like other exchanges in eastern Spain—Barcelona, Valencia and Palma on the Balearic Islands all having similar ones, but not in brick. Saragossa's Lonja is purely Spanish brickwork—not a trace of Moorish feeling in it though it was built more than a century and a quarter before the *Mudejar* tower was added to La Seo, just across the little green square.

It is merely a straightforward laying up of regular Roman bricks, interrupted only by the very excellent fenestration and the fine terra cotta medallion portraits of the kings of Aragon. With the exception of these and the superb wooden cornice, brick and brick only makes the whole exterior of this large and massive square palace. Arches large and small are made of it; and wherever a flat head was desired to a deep recess, the proper structural aspect of the head is maintained by a series of small reveals. Where some bombardment has knocked away the corners of the great band courses sufficiently to reveal the construction, it is interesting to examine how, for both strength and appearance, the lower member of each course was always formed of projecting headers; and as the ends of these bricks are not unlike dentils in proportion the result appears like good classic ornament. At the same time the headers are long enough to be securely imbedded in the wall and to thus form sufficient support to the cut bricks above.

Architecturally the Lonja is a strongly individual deviation from the ordinary way of doing things—each story being treated as a unit with its features placed most advantageously from left to right with little regard to what is above or below. However, the ensemble



EXTERIOR OF LA SEO



GOTHIC GROUP OVER DOORWAY TO SAN PABLO



LA LONJA OR EXCHANGE



THE AUDIENCIA, SCENE OF TROVATORE.

has not suffered from this Aragonese obstinacy (a quality in which they glory), for the horizontal is so admirably and strongly expressed that the vertical may safely be left to take care of itself.

The unpainted cedar cornice of the Lonja, projecting about five feet, is a masterpiece—so dust covered now that it looks of the same texture and color as the bricks below. Although a typical classic cornice it in no way attempts to imitate stone in its construction—the rich carving of the huge medallions and the coffers between them indicate clearly that wood is the material; while the fascia above is made of a single large beam projecting its full thickness. Of the many fine cornices of Saragossa this is the gem.

The Audiencia or Town Hall might really be considered along with the domestic examples, as it was built by the powerful De Luna family for their Saragossan palace. The tympanum above the main door shows their arms (a moon), and these are repeated on the vestibule columns. The populace, however, pass by its original ownership and its present purpose, and name it by the stone giants each side of the door—

*Casa de los Gigantes*. Its façade is simple and aristocratic. A charming series of brick arches acting as a frieze on the crowning story, the low corner towers, and the heavy wooden cornice of 2½ foot projection make the upper part of the building peculiarly attractive. The first story of the front is of stone and far less interesting. The bricks used above measure 12 x 1½ x 6 inches—with a three-quarter inch raked back joint. The treatment of the fine row of upper windows shows a surprising thickness to the walls, for the three reveals

measure 8 inches, 8 inches and 12 inches, respectively; while there is still the thickness from the window glass in to be considered. There is some beautiful patterning in the towers above this stage—almost too high up to be appreciated from the street.

The second story, modernized by two glass bays built out at each end to catch the rare winter sun in icy Saragossa, is interesting mainly for its flat-topped doorways leading onto the inevitable Spanish balconies that are upheld by a veritable sea of thin iron brackets. It is gratifying to know that this imposing old palace of the Luna family was the inspiration for the finest warehouse in New York—on Seventh Avenue and Fifty-third Street.

Another of Saragossa's palaces—the Casa Zaporta—has been lately sold to a Parisian. This is the fate of far too many of Spain's art treasures. It has been re-erected brick for brick out at Neuilly or Auteuil by its present owner; but Paris did not need it and we would rather see it back in the land of its birth among its sister palaces. Of these fortunately there are still enough to make the old capital of doughty Aragon well worth the



SAN CETANAYO

architect's visit. He will be struck by its likeness to brick-built Bologna both in the ensemble and in some of the individual examples—as, for instance, between La Magdalena in the Spanish and Santo Sepulcro in the Italian city. But in Saragossa there are more amusing vagaries of construction to admire, besides the *entente* between the special technique needed in laying up such small units and the geometric decoration which this technique derived under the influence of the Spanish Arabs.

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## CONTENTS.

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| SARAGOSSA, THE CITY OF BRICK..... | 177 |
| EDITORIAL COMMENT.....            | 183 |

### Illustrations:

The Ohio State University Library, Allen & Collens, Architects.  
Some Recent Work by James Purdon, Bohnard & Parsson and  
Alden & Harlow, Architects.

### Frontispiece:

Staircase, Barcelona.

## PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC MONUMENTS

THE subject of the restoration and preservation of historic monuments is attracting an amount of attention among architects and others interested in the early art and history of this nation that is cause for much satisfaction. In various sections of the country, committees whose purpose it is to take such steps as seem necessary looking toward the preservation of worthy buildings and other structures identified with the early history of America have been appointed, either by local Chapters of the A. I. A. or other civic bodies.

One of the most notable instances of successful effort along this line is reported in Philadelphia, where a committee on the preservation of historic monuments appointed by the Philadelphia Chapter, A. I. A. has finally been able, after persistent work extending over a period of many months, to achieve a degree of accomplishment greater than was anticipated by even the most enthusiastic friends of the movement. As a result of this committee's representations, an ordinance has passed the councils and received the approval of the Mayor, appropriating \$60,000 for the restoration of Congress Hall, one of the Independence Hall group of buildings inseparably connected with Colonial history.

This signal achievement should act as an incentive to other organizations in whose territory buildings of historic or artistic interest exist and lead them to take steps that will insure such buildings or monuments against the ravages of time or the hand of the wrecker.

## CONGESTION OF POPULATION

THAT there is real need for the adoption of some measure designed to relieve congestion of population in various sections of New York City is practically undisputed, but that the bills recently introduced in the Assembly at Albany are adequate, or even drawn with usual care, is open to grave doubt.

Corrective legislation of this character should unquestionably be framed only after the most careful investigation of actual conditions and a thorough research among the records of possible achievement along similar lines in other centers of population. From such press

reports as have been published concerning the bills now before the Legislature, it would hardly seem that they had been drawn as a result of such examination and research. The provisions limiting heights of various classes of dwellings can only be characterized as discriminatory. The reasons for them, if they are based upon reason at all, appear entirely inadequate. To limit the height of non-fireproof tenements to four stories in the more densely populated sections of the city would inevitably have the effect of producing fireproof structures of a dozen stories, thus aggravating the very condition it is intended to relieve. In the same manner, limiting the heights of any class of tenements in the up-town and less densely populated sections of the city to four stories would undoubtedly result in preventing their erection at all in these sections and thus put an end to the slight tendency which the builders of tenements have shown to invest in suburban property and offer inducements to tenement dwellers to forsake the congested areas in the cities. These are but a few of the provisions of the bills which appear unsatisfactory and indicate lack of study or understanding of the problems involved. Of course, there is little likelihood of their becoming law, but the incident serves to emphasize the futility of expecting a solution of problems requiring profound study and a considerable degree of technical knowledge from anyone not thoroughly equipped for the work, and also sufficiently interested to give it the requisite amount of attention. In this case, the proposed remedy appears to be in reality an exposure to additional and more serious ills.

## CONSERVATION

MUCH has been written within recent years concerning the needless waste of natural resources. The subject has attracted wide attention in connection with the conservation of forests, water power, fertility of land and mineral products. However, the lesson of economy in the use of materials, particularly those which might be considered the products of the forces of nature, cannot be too thoroughly learned.

Among existing abuses, probably one of the most frequent and unnecessary instances of extravagance and waste is in the use of water furnished by a municipality. It is only when a scarcity threatens, as in New York at the present time, that the users of water are brought to a realization of the importance of the matter. It is no exaggeration to state that a very large proportion of the water used in the average city is entirely wasted. Designers of buildings can contribute materially to the movement looking to the prevention of waste by providing a thorough insulation of water pipes, and in placing hot and cold supply pipes a sufficient distance from each other so that the temperature of the water in one pipe will not affect that in the other. The adoption of a type of faucets and fixtures which will minimize the danger of leaks will also assist in a general campaign for economy. But, after all, one of the most effective and probably, all things considered, fairest means of reducing waste would be to make the installation of water meters compulsory in every case, without regard to character of building or use that is to be made of the water supplied.



LEANING TOWER, SARAGOSSA, RECENTLY DEMOLISHED

## RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

### CONTRACTOR NOT LIABLE FOR SETTLING OF FLOORS WHEN CONSTRUCTED ACCORDING TO PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

The owner of a building which was destroyed by fire executed leases to the old tenants for a building to be erected. After an architect was employed a contract was made with a builder for the construction work according to the plans. During the progress of the work the owner decided to change the floors, putting in a patent floor. The patent holders wrote the architect, giving specifications and a guaranty. The latter did not accept the offer, but asked the builders to submit a proposition to change the floors. They submitted estimates, but did not refer to letters from patent holders. The architect authorized the builders to proceed as per the estimate, "said sum to cover the five floors in accordance with the accompanying letters" of the patent holders. The builders contracted with the patent holders to put in their flooring to the "satisfaction, approval and acceptance" of the architect. The contract between owner and builders, it was held, did not include a

guaranty that the floors would carry the weight contained in the offer of guaranty of the patent holders. The builders were not liable for a subsequent settling of the floors, which were constructed according to plans and the architect having given his approval after he had witnessed a test. *Wiggins versus Columbian Fire-Proofing Co.*, 76 Atlantic Reporter (Penn.), 742.

### NECESSITY FOR ARCHITECT'S CERTIFICATE

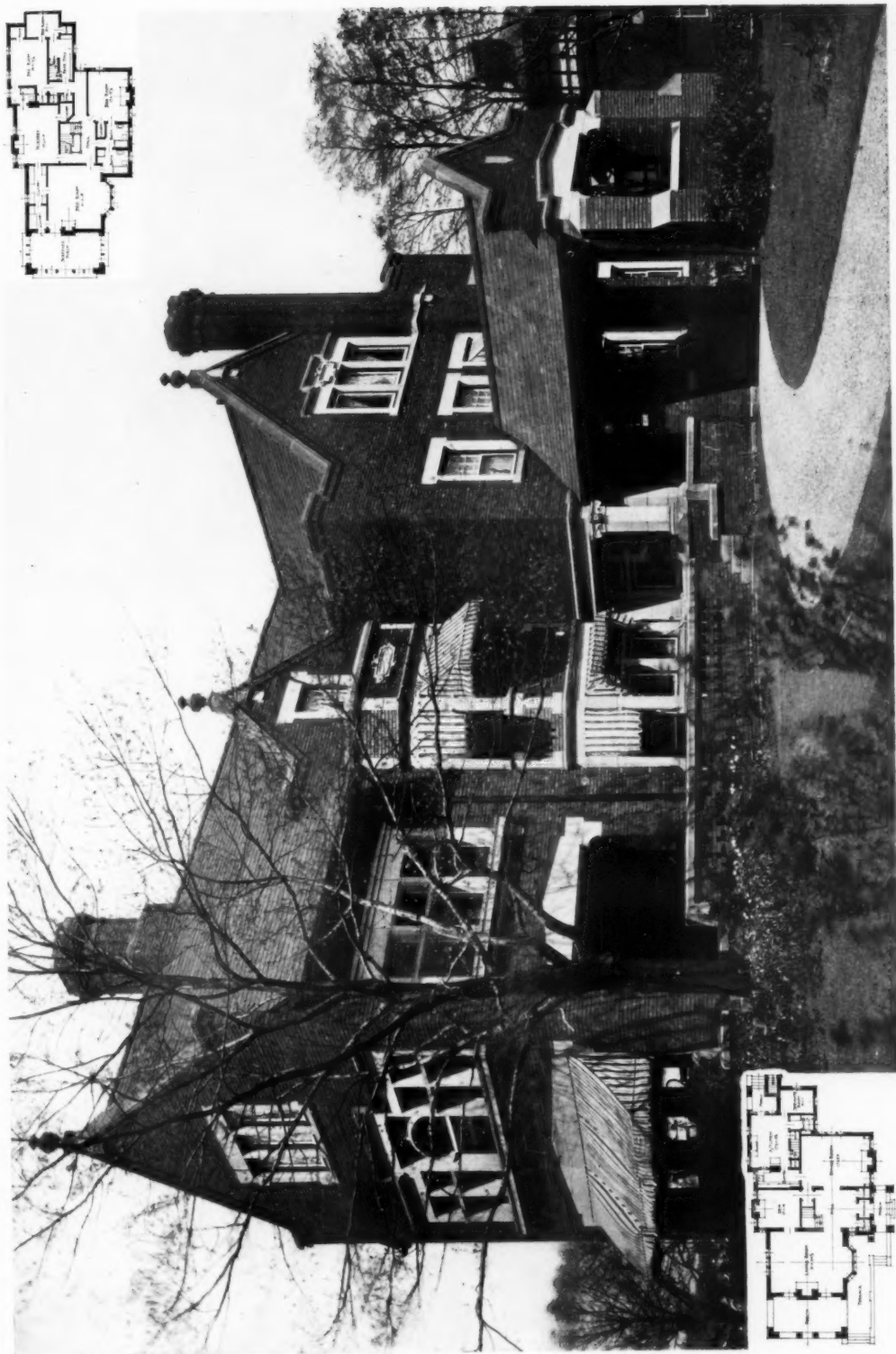
A building contract provided that a house should be built in a good, workmanlike manner, to the satisfaction of a third person as shown by his certificate. In an action for balance of the price an assertion by the defendant that the work has not been done, with a particularization, is not a waiver of a production of the certificate.—*Bell v. Fox*, New York Supreme Court, Appellate Division, 123 New York Supp., 310.

### ARCHITECT NOT EMPLOYER'S GENERAL AGENT

An architect employed in the construction of a building is not his employer's general agent. The contract limits his powers, and unless he is specifically authorized thereby he may not change the contract between contractor and owner, nor substitute a sub-contractor for the contractor, nor employ others to do the work which the contractor has undertaken. *McNulty versus Keyser, etc., Co.* 76 Atlantic Reporter (Md.), 1113.

### THE FUNCTION OF SPECIFICATIONS

A terra cotta company contracted to furnish terra cotta for a building as "shown on the drawings and described in specifications." The specifications, it was claimed, were not furnished at the time it submitted its bid, and the plans submitted did not include certain terra cotta lintels and sills subsequently required and furnished. For these it sought to charge as extras. It was held that the word "and" in the clause "shown on the drawings and described in specifications" was not necessarily to be construed in its disjunctive sense as "or," and if the plans alone were submitted to the company it was not required as matter of law to furnish terra cotta for such lintels and sills under its contract for the contract price. Evidence that the ordinary function of specifications is to show how materials called for by plans are to be treated, and not to show materials not shown on the plans, was admissible. *Atlantic Terra Cotta Company v. Masons' Supply Company*, C. C. A., Sixth Circuit, 180 Fed., 332.



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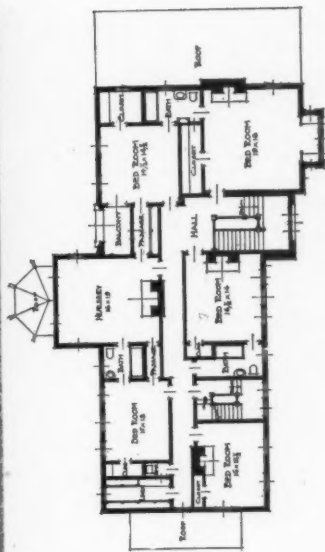
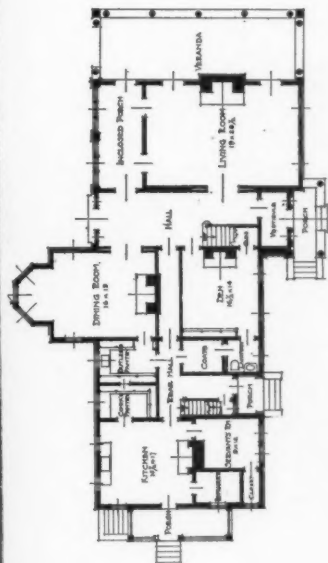
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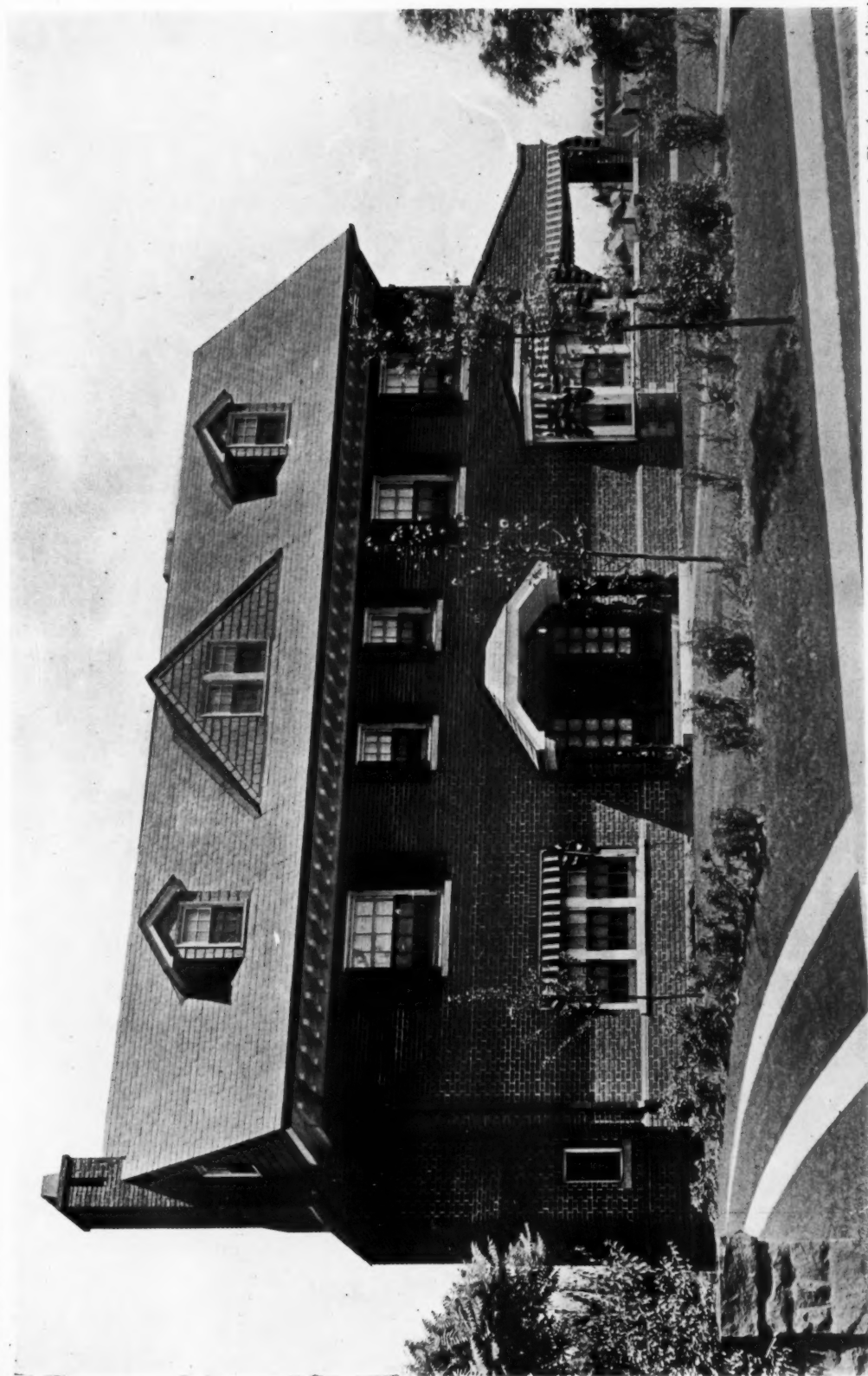
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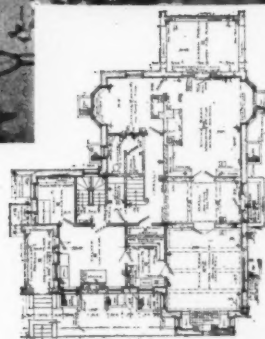
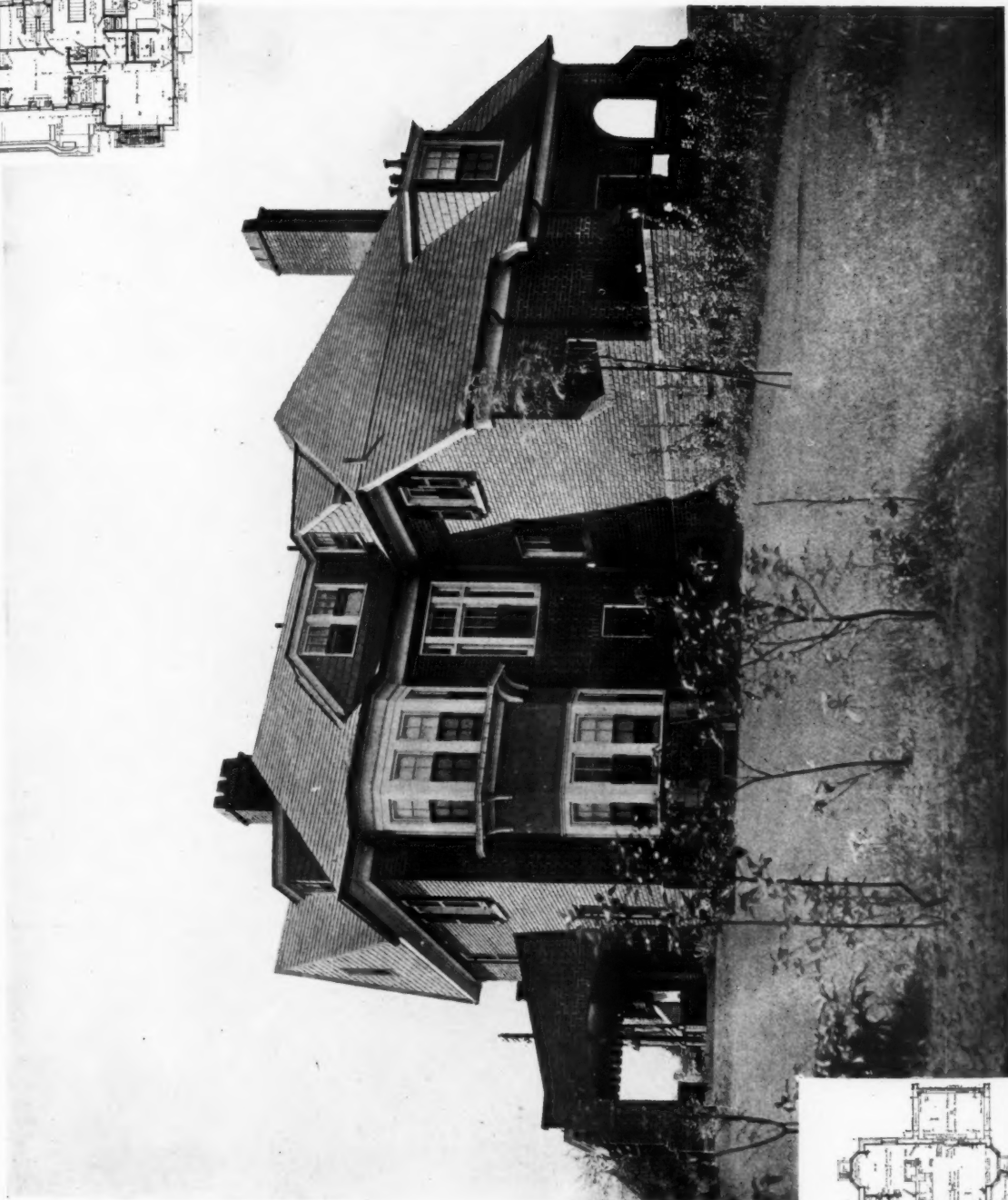
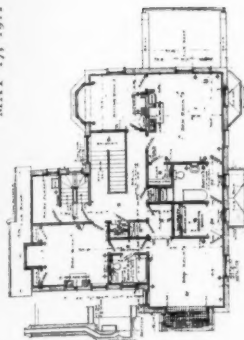


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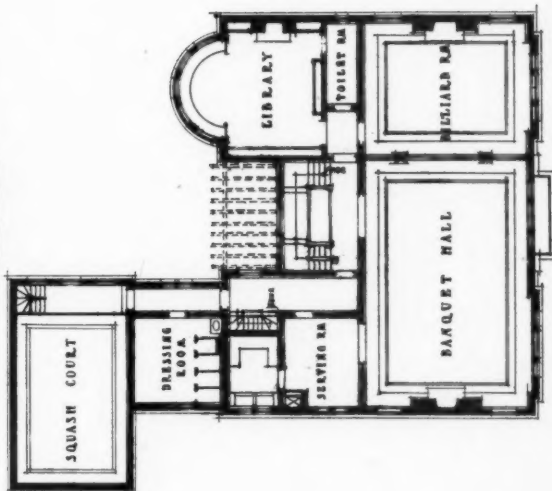
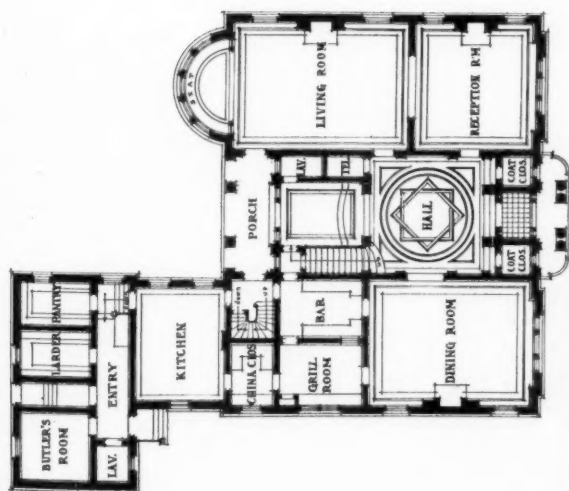


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"DELPHIC" CLUB, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

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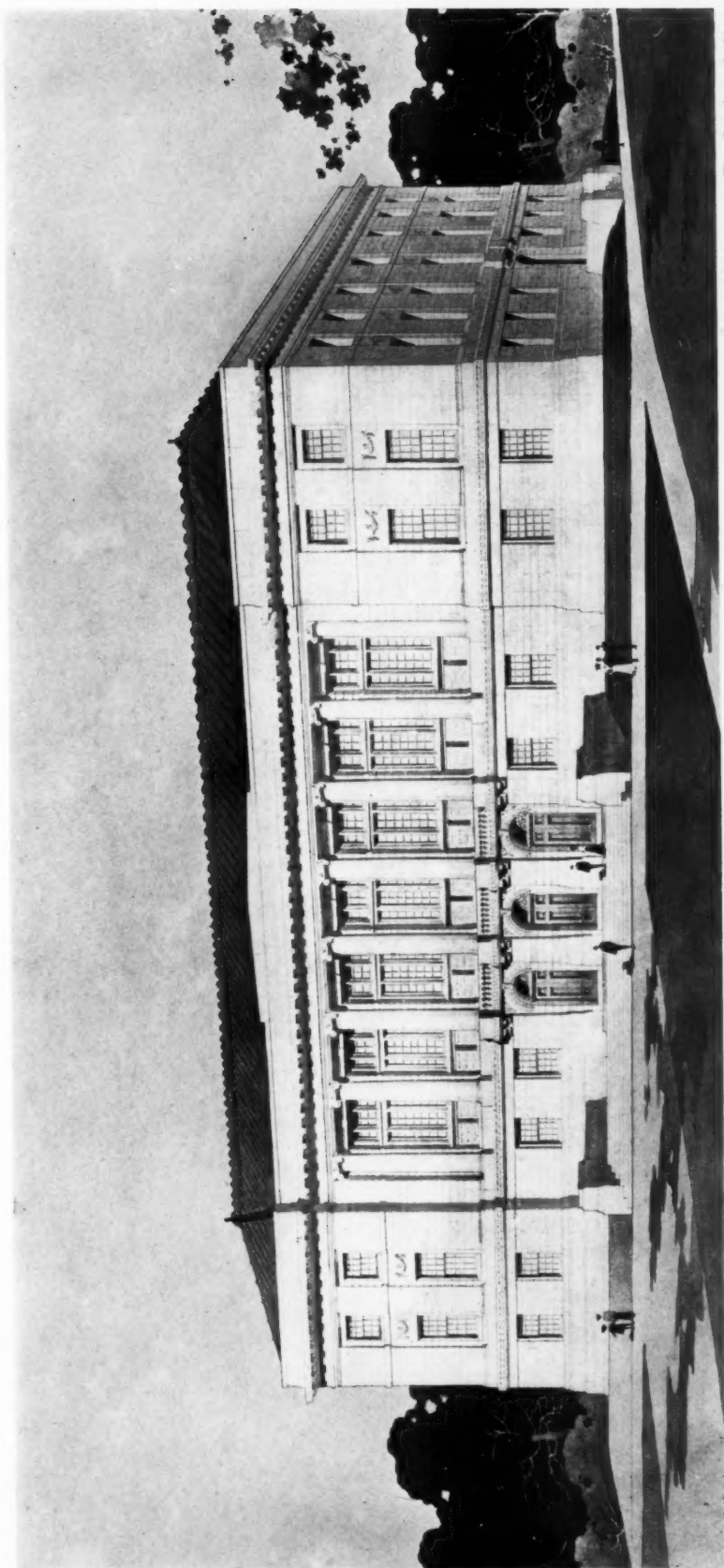
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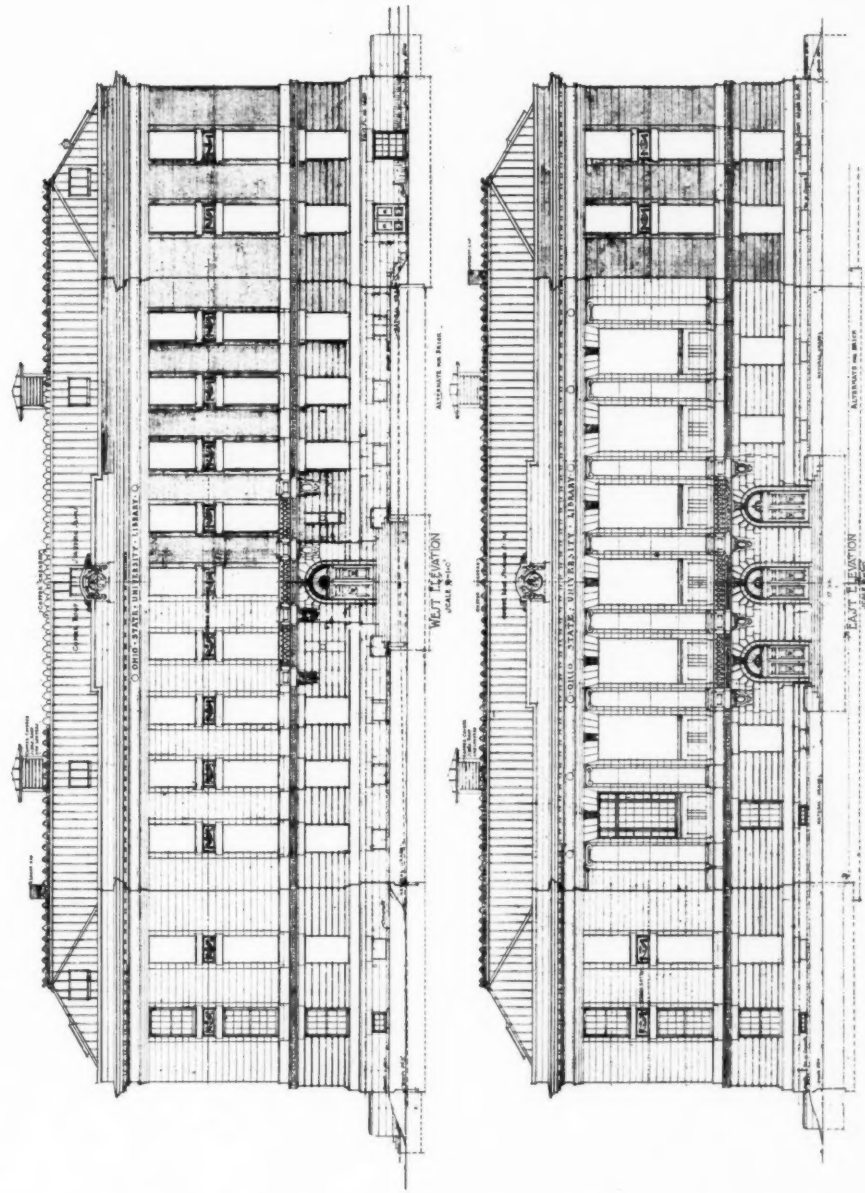


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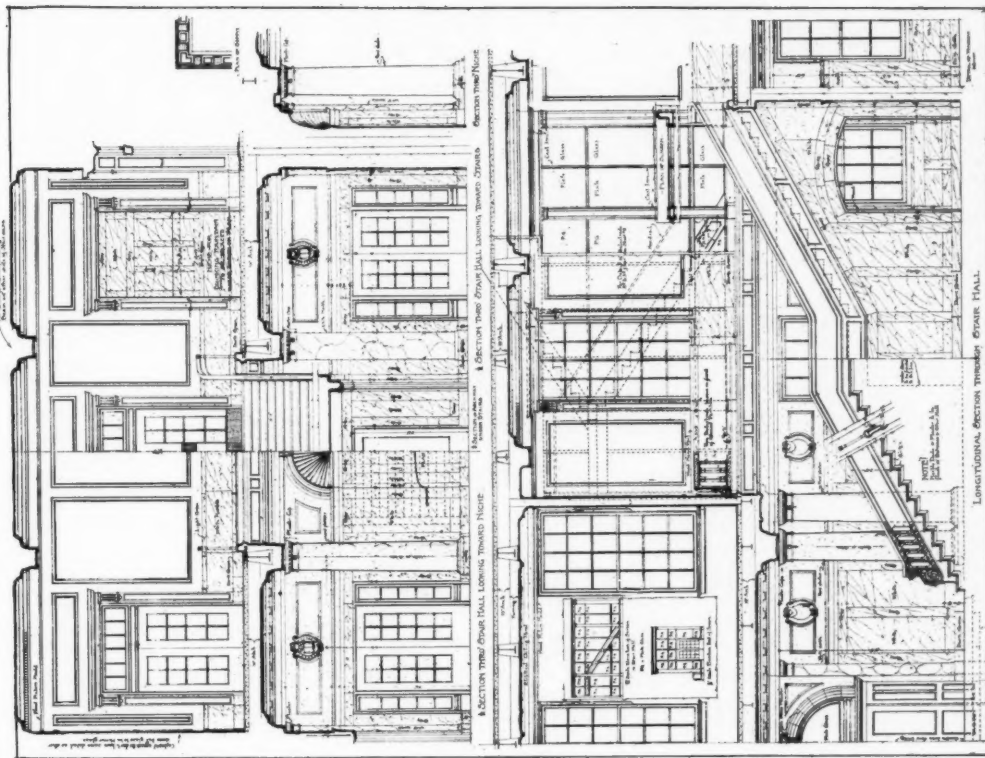
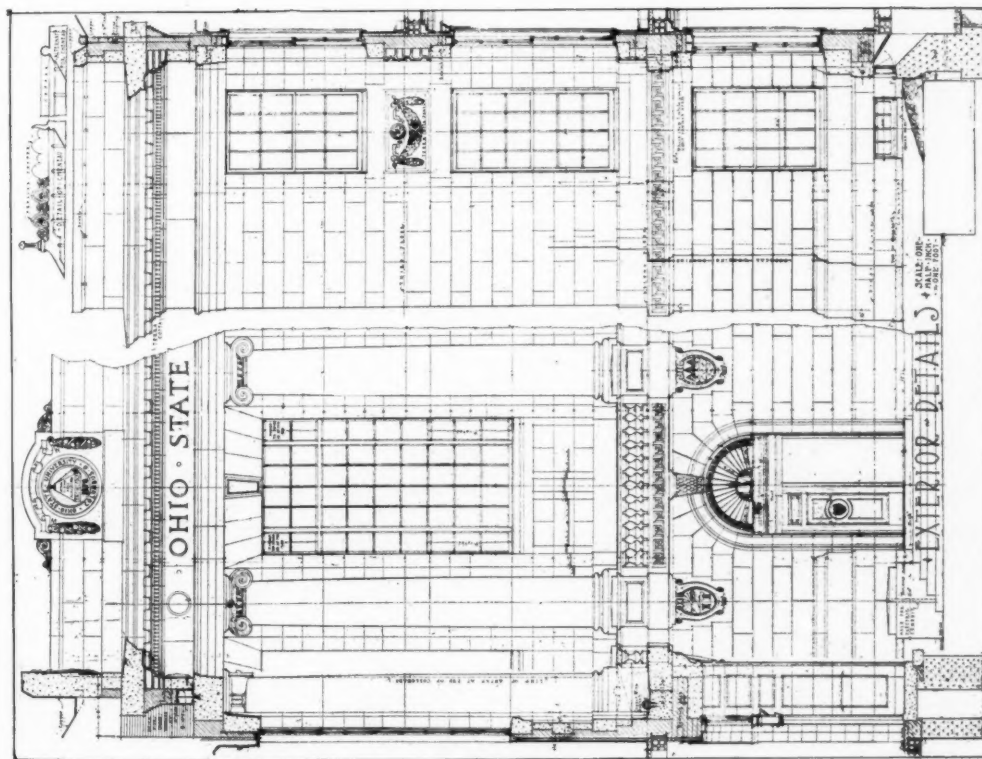




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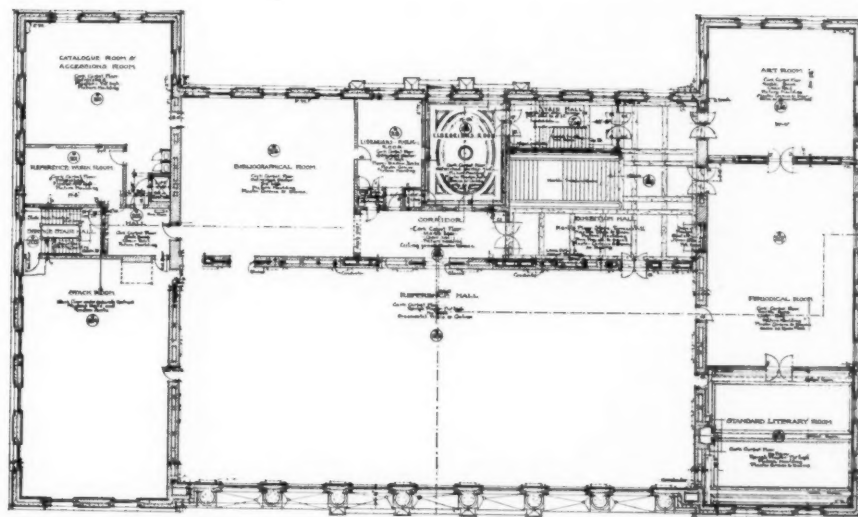
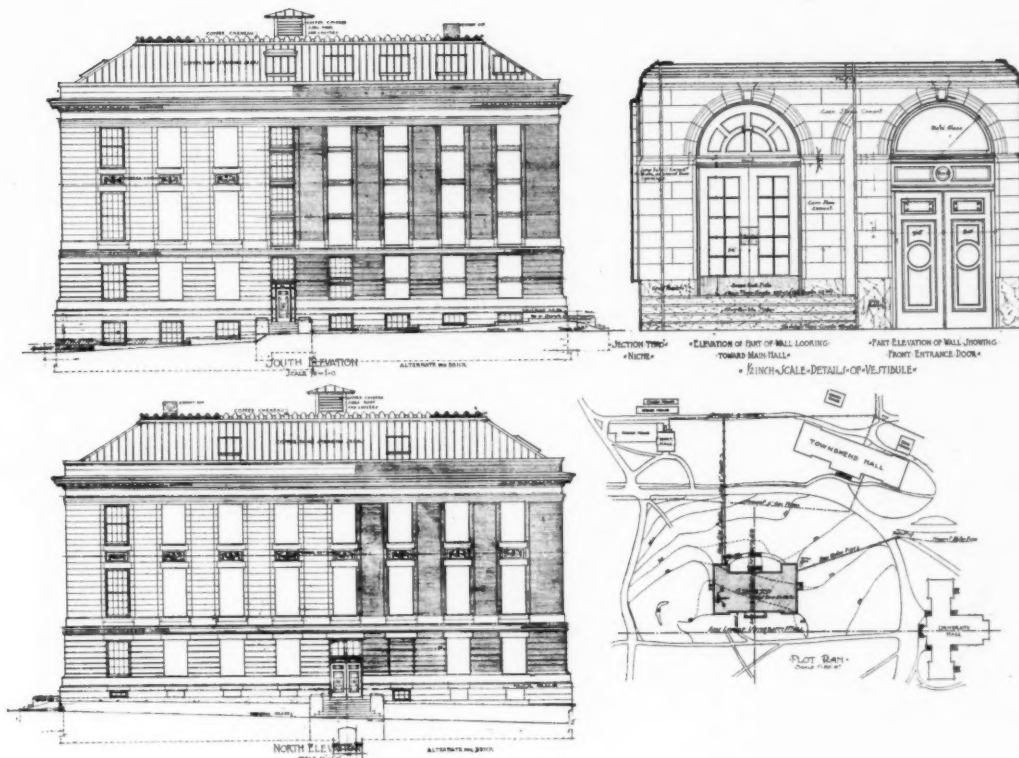


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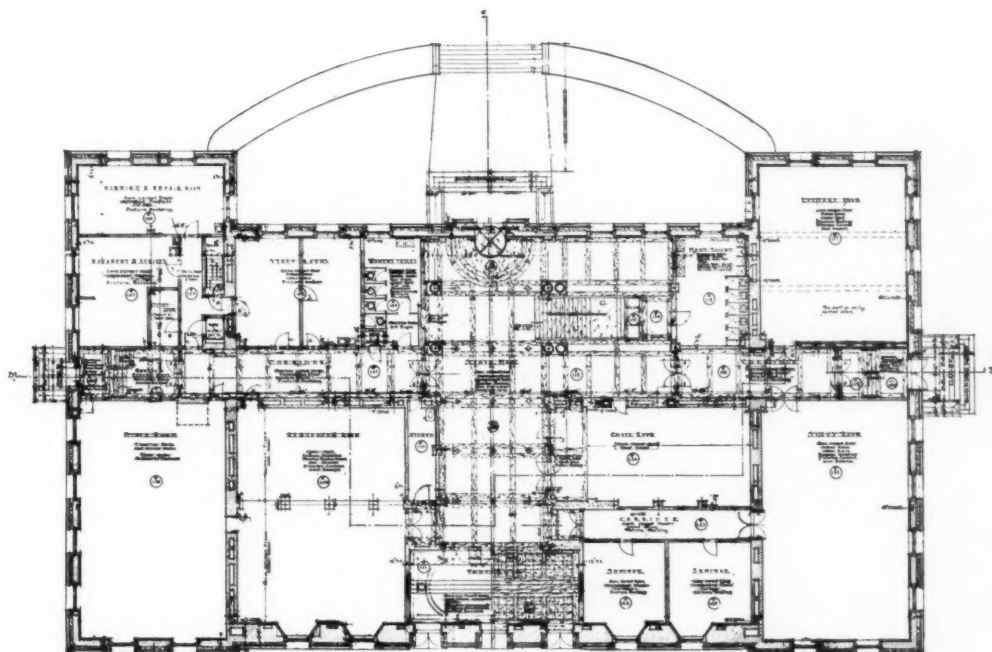
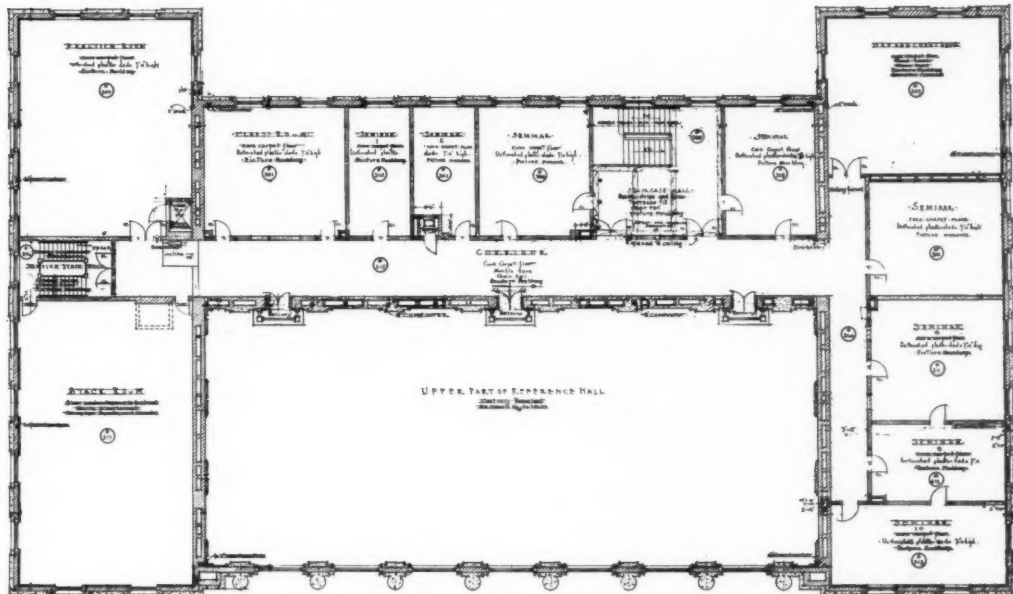


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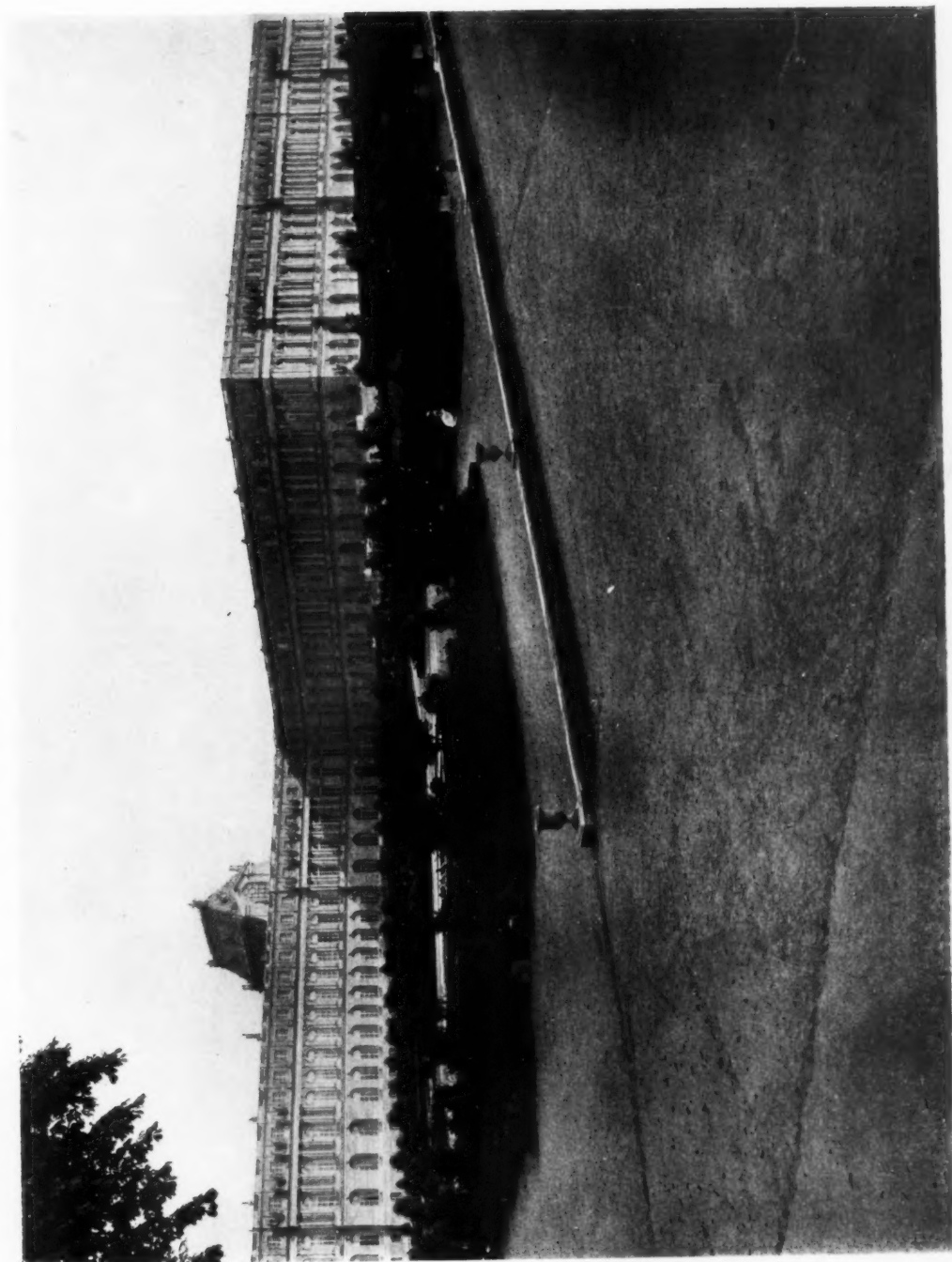
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