THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Vol. XCIX WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1911 No. 1850

PARKS AS BUILDING SITES*

By FRANK MILES DAY, F. A. I. A.

THE subject of this paper is the use of parks and other open public spaces as sites for buildings. The discussion of that subject obviously involves a consideration of the question, "What conditions justify such a use?" and that question is one that should be considered with entire calmness and answered with judicial poise. Unfortunately it is rarely so considered, for if it were we might hope to reach agreement as to its fundamental principles. As a fact, attention is from time to time focused upon the merely controversial aspects of it.

Though I should like to handle the question in a broad and calm way, I fear that before I have spoken many minutes you will find a natural predilection for the preservation of open spaces at odds with a desire for stately settings for fine buildings, and that whatever general argument I may make against putting buildings in parks is weakened by special pleading for them in certain cases. The whole question, it seems, is like so many others that confront us in life, one that needs a reasonable exercise of common sense in each particular case rather than an attempt to establish rules that permit of no exceptions. Yet, after all, from many special cases one must try to deduce some general principles.

The question has then at base two aspects, one the kind of open space proposed as a site, the other the kind of building proposed for erection on it.

Great cities own many open spaces varying from plots of a few square feet to noble stretches of natural landscape. In any list of such spaces we find some temporarily occupied as storage yards by city departments, some held subject to sale, others serving as public dumps, some reserved as sites for future schools or firehouses. Many are in such neglected condition that any change, whether into a playground with its attendant buildings or into a site for the most modest and utilitarian public structure, would be a welcome improvement. Proposals for the sale or use of such apparently unimportant places are rarely scrutinized with the care that every such proposal should receive. Their passage into private ownership or use as a site for a building often deprives the city of what might in the end be an open space of great value. The snapper up of unconsidered trifles is always with us.

It is when we reach the use as building sites of somewhat larger units, more fully developed and having a more permanent character, that controversy usually begins. I refer to squares, greens, abandoned burial places and similar pieces of ground. Propositions are made with great frequency for the erection on such places of buildings intended to serve the most diverse purposes. It is natural and proper that those who feel the need of breathing spaces in the built up portions of the city should be keenly on the alert to prevent the diminution of such areas. Their value to the surrounding population has gained permanent recognition. For their preservation and increase, societies exist in many cities, for example in London, Metropolitan Garden Association, in Philadelphia, the City Parks Association.

The need for such small parks has been so urgently felt that many have been established, frequently at great cost, sometimes by the purchase and destruction of a whole block of buildings. So vital for the public welfare have such spaces seemed that New York has carved them out of congested areas at a cost, in some instances, of three-quarters of a million dollars per acre. Such spaces in lower New York, amounting in all to sixty-seven acres, have been acquired of late years at a cost of fourteen million dollars. That sum is about three times the original cost of Central Park, which contains ten times their acreage.

If, then, these city parks are so vital as to justify even in special instances such vast expenditures, it is obvious that the potential value of the city's existing open spaces must never be lost sight of when it is proposed to erect in them any structures of sufficient size to appreciably affect their character as open spaces.

The use to which they are put is altogether another question. Many a decorous city square with its grass and flowers, its cement walks, its park benches and its preposterous little guard house would be of much more obvious utility to the community if converted into a properly equipped playground for children, but it must be borne in mind that the fundamental utility of the area as mere breathing space, mere unincumbered ground, is the same in either case, and that its value as such probably far exceeds the value of the temporary use it may serve from time to time.

It is this value of mere breathing space as apart from the more obvious use or lack of use of a piece of open ground that is so difficult to establish when a proposition is made to convert that piece of ground into a site for a specific building. No such place "is safe until public sentiment is educated to the controlling belief that breathing space in a city is quite as essential to the mental, moral and physical health of its people as building space, and that the very best use to which certain

*An address delivered before the Third Annual City Planning Conference, held in Philadelphia, May 15, 16 and 17.

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portions of its territory can be put is to . . . . keep buildings off of it."

It would seem, therefore, that there should rest upon those who advocate the erection of a building upon any public open space of moderate size, and especially within the built up part of a city, the onus of proving:

First—That the service to the public of the proposed building will be greater than the service of the open ground plus the use to which that ground may be put without building on it.

Second—That the increased public service due to the erection of the building shall be an affair not only of the immediate future but of the distant future, for it is quite conceivable that the utility of the ground as mere open space may advance much more rapidly than the utility of the intended building.

Third—That it is impossible to obtain any other site suitable for the proposed building.

In addition to its minor pieces of land and to its squares and commons, nearly every large city has an area called a park, and some cities are fortunate enough to have several such areas. Now although the word park is loosely applied to open spaces of all sizes, serving the most various purposes, I think we may all agree that it is generally used to indicate an area of considerable size, having a rural or sylvan character, affording a change from the sights and sounds of a busy city and serving as a place of bodily and mental refreshment. And since refreshment of mind comes for most of us very distinctly from the influence of beautiful natural scenery, it follows that "the value of a city park, for a city population, is greater or less according as the poetic charm of *its scenery is preserved and developed.*" This point was very clearly made by Frederick Law Olmstead and Charles Eliot many years ago in an article in "Garden and Forest" where they enforced it by saying, "The beauty of its landscape is all that justifies the existence of a large public open space in the midst or even in the immediate borders of a town, and its directors holding to the supreme value of fine scenery will take pains to subordinate every necessary construction, and to perfect the essence of the park, which is its landscape, before elaborating details or accessories. Large public buildings, such as museums, concert halls, schools and the like may best be placed near or facing upon the park, but to place them within it is simply to defeat the highest service which the park can render the community."

I take it that the chief incentive to the establishment of our large parks was a desire to give the people a space near at hand but large enough to have that free *open tranquil character which is the antithesis of the congestion and turmoil of urban life.*

The question whether such parks should be used as building sites comes down in a large measure to whether we have lost sight of the very purpose which they were meant to fill or whether we have changed our conception of their chief use.

So much easier is it to deal wisely with the abstract than the concrete that until a specific case arises all are agreed that a large park of sylvan character should not have buildings erected in it. Now let us take up some special cases. Where, as is sometimes the case, a portion of the park is more or less separated from its main body and so surrounded by buildings or by land that will be built upon that no parklike charm can be maintained, the question may well be weighed as to whether it would not serve a better purpose as a site for a building of general public use.

Many years ago there was in New York a space of seventeen and one-half acres adjoining Central Park to the westward. This space, enclosed on three sides by building lots and separated from the park by a broad avenue, was dedicated to the erection of the American Museum of Natural History. The open space gradually disappears as the museum grows, but its loss is scarcely felt on account of the great area of the adjoining park. The employment of a part of a park as a building site under such circumstances appears to be fully justified.

A case in point at the present moment is the proposed use of a part of Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, known as Snyder's Woods or the Cliffs, as a site for a convention hall and stadium. It is ravine like, little frequented, and it is cut off from the rest of the park by definite physical features, a city street at one end, a double track railway at the other, the high embankment of a reservoir on one of its larger sides and a four-track railroad on the other. The development of this piece of ground in consonance with the fundamental purpose of Fairmount Park is difficult to conceive. There would seem to be no good reason why it should not be applied to its intended uses.

Let us take a third case. Central Park, New York, has long, high reservoirs centrally placed within it. Eastward between them and Fifth avenue is a narrow strip of park, cut off from the rest of the park at its ends by deep roadways with heavily planted banks. This is the site of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. So reasonable seemed this choice that even the able landscape architects in charge of the development of Central Park concurred in it, yet to-day there are many who hold the opinion that its placing was a grave error. Certain it is that one cannot pass on the east side of the park from the northern to the southern half without recognizing the Museum as a most unfortunate intrusion.

But it would be unreasonable to set up as our ideal for all parks under all circumstances, the natural type or, as in many cases it is, the artificially natural type. Frequently by reason of its size, of its surroundings, of the very character of its site, it is folly to attempt the sylvan landscape. A formal treatment of many a park area, though in this country we are rather prone to sniff at it, would give us a finer, a more reasonable and a less expensive solution than would an attempt to lead unwilling nature into an imitation of herself. With this kind of park we are unfamiliar. We have not even a fair example of it. It seems to us more artificial even than the artificially natural. Some day we are sure to have a splendid example of it. The meandering roads and dotted trees of the Mall in Washington, at variance with its original design and totally out of harmony with its surroundings, seem so preposterous that its dignified development with tapis vert and leafy avenues serving as a setting for the monumental buildings along its flanks cannot much longer be deferred. We should urge upon Congress the importance of such a transfor-

mation of the Mall. It is sure to come with the increasing artistic enlightenment of our people.

Having now considered several sorts of public open spaces, let us turn to several sorts of buildings which it is from time to time proposed to erect in them.

If buildings placed within parks are, as a rule, detrimental to the effect of the parks, it must be borne in mind on the other hand that parks as a setting for buildings ordinarily greatly enhance their effect. There can hardly be any question that the proper placing of a public building in ample grounds designed to harmonize with it is of the highest importance, and this element of the problem must not be ignored.

It is obvious that no reasonable objection can be advanced to the erection in a park of buildings used in caring for it and in supplying the immediate needs of those who frequent it. Such buildings are usually small and unobtrusive and often they may be screened by foliage.

Among buildings of great size, those that appear to have been the most successful in securing sites in parks are museums, whether of art or science. In New York there are several in addition to the two of which I have spoken. In Philadelphia the museum called "Memorial Hall" is a relic of the Centennial Exhibition just as in St. Louis the Museum of Fine Arts dates from the Exposition and in Chicago the Field-Columbian Museum from the World's Fair. Chicago also has its Art Institute in Grant Park and its Academy of Sciences in Lincoln Park. In Cincinnati the Art Museum stands in a park of great natural beauty. In Buffalo the Albright Art Museum has recently been erected in Delaware Park, while in Pittsburg the vast Carnegie Institute stands in Schenley Park. A long list of museums built in parks in Europe might be made. Many of these sites are of relatively small size, for the placing of large buildings in parks of naturalistic design is rarer in Europe than in America.

I take it that consent to the placing of museums in parks in so many instances is an expression of public appreciation of the high educational value of such institutions, but it is also an evidence of a failure to keep constantly in mind the high value of a park as such. It must be remarked, however, that in a number of the cases cited the museum has been left from an exhibition of which it was a mere incident and in the general excitement attendant upon the establishment of which the ill effect of its permanent placing in the park was overlooked.

But if promoters of museums have on the whole succeeded well in seizing sites in parks, promoters of zoological gardens have succeeded even better. The nature of the undertaking demands a large area and many well separated buildings. A large part of the exhibition needs to be carried on out of doors. The buildings may be many but they are not usually large. There are two chief objections to the placing of such gardens in existing parks; one that they diminish the park area, the other that they are destructive of the charm which we regard as the peculiarity of a good park. When such gardens are to be established they should be placed either in isolated parts of existing parks where their presence will not be injurious or, better, new areas should be sought for them.

In America, State capitol buildings are very generally placed in parks or squares. Sometimes the buildings have been placed in large grounds already in public ownership, sometimes adequate spaces have been bought for them, in other cases after their erection the need of a suitable setting has been felt and sufficient ground for it has been provided.

Municipal buildings have not, as a rule, sought their sites in parks though some have found them in squares. Philadelphia offers an example of the most thorough obliteration of a space of enormous potential value by the erection in it of a vast structure. That we are now trying to carve out a plaza to the northwest of City Hall shows that we realize too late the vital error in having used William Penn's Central Square as a mere building site.

Such purely utilitarian structures as pumping stations have been singularly successful in gaining sites in parks. We have to go no further afield than Fairmount Park to see at least three parts of it seriously marred by such great unsightly buildings. No public protests prevented their erection and though we doubtless feel that no such injury could to-day be inflicted upon the chief park of one of our great cities, we must not forget that even within the last few years, and in spite of the most vigorous protests, pumping stations have been erected in parks in Harrisburg, Seattle and several other cities.

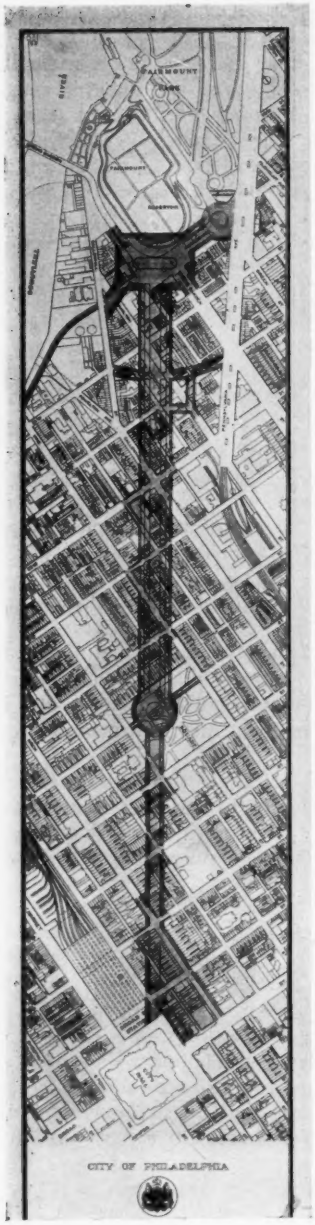
To state the kinds of buildings for which from time to time sites are sought in parks and squares would be to make a list of nearly all the sorts of buildings that we now erect. I give in an appendix a much abbreviated list of the kinds of buildings that have sought sites in a single park and from one you may in a measure judge all.

To conclude, then, it is fair to say that the pressure for the erection of buildings in parks or squares comes generally from a small number of people intensely interested in some specific end and unable to view it in true proportion to other things. Such movements are usually attended by excitement. They seldom reflect a general sentiment. It is natural that those who desire their erection should see very clearly the great advantage to the building, and incidentally to their cause, and fail to see the injury to public welfare through the perversion of the open space from its proper purpose.

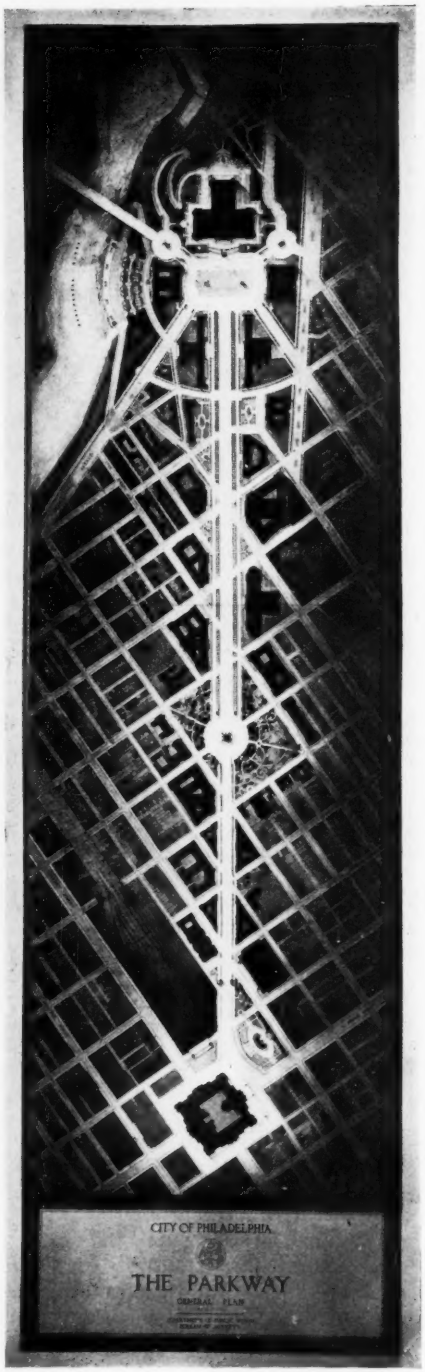
It takes but little imagination to conceive of a well developed park or public square as an admirable building site, but it is hard to realize how infinitely more difficult it is to find a desirable site for a park than for a public building.

Obviously the first duty of a community in respect to parks is their establishment, its second is their defence against unjustified encroachments. For if attacks upon their integrity be not beaten off, in the end there will be no parks, every successful attack being a precedent for other destructive projects.

Eternal vigilance is the price of the preservation of open spaces. Upon those who would diminish their area should be thrown the burden of proving the wisdom of such a course. Few will be found to controvert these general statements. Public sentiment is all on their side. You cannot rally a corporal's guard in support of a general proposition that parks should afford sites for public buildings. But a position impregnable



PROPOSED DIAGONAL PARKWAY



THE OLD "GRIDIRON" PLAN

THE PHILADELPHIA IMPROVEMENT

WILLIAM E. GROBEN, ARCHITECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC PARKS, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

to general and open assault may sometimes be taken at a weak point by a small and determined band, especially if animated by a sense of the righteousness of its cause.

The danger to a park or to any open public space lies in the diversion of a part or the whole of it for buildings that at the moment seems to a certain section of the public to be of pressing necessity. The question is not unlike the tariff. Every special interest presses with skill and force to carry its point. It is only the public welfare that lacks consideration and defence.

You may notice that those who would erect gymnasia in our public squares are pained by the thought that the opposite side of the square should be used for a branch library, physical development being, of course, so much more fundamental than intellectual. The library people, who are all for the intellectual, will not for a moment tolerate the use of a third site for a pasteurized milk establishment, while these lacteal idealists in their espousal of a new cause can grant no space upon the fourth side for so old fashioned a purveyor of liquid refreshment as a pumping station. You can gather an ardent band of citizens to work in support of any one of these propositions but not of all, not even of any two. And so you may run the gamut from a Metropolitan Museum of Art down to a pavilion for perambulators, each with its own advocates, the public at heart opposed to all yet only too often failing to make its voice heard at the critical moment.

THE THIRD ANNUAL CITY PLANNING CONFERENCE

THE City Planning Conference held in Philadelphia on May 15, 16 and 17 was the third conference of the kind that has taken place in this country, the first having been held at Washington in 1909, the second at Rochester last year. Mayor Reyburn, assisted by committees of representative men and women of the city, acted as host. The day sessions were held in the Mayor's commodious reception room in the City Hall, the evening sessions at the Hotel Bellevue-Stratford.

Eighty per cent. of the cities of the United States with a population of 100,000 or over were represented by delegates. From numerous foreign countries, also, there came officially designated experts. England was represented by Mr. Raymond Unwin, author of "Town Planning in Practice," and active in the construction of garden cities in England and in the Hampstead Heath development, also by Mr. Thomas Adams of the Garden City Association and a city planning expert of the Local Government Board.

The three-day program opened with an automobile tour of the city and the outlying suburban district to the north, including Germantown and Chestnut Hill, which are the best developed suburbs within the city limits. This served to enlighten the visitors upon the physical characteristics of Philadelphia and to show them improvements already begun, notably the new thoroughfare, 250 feet wide, carved out of built-up blocks between the City Hall and Fairmount Park, and known as the "Parkway."

This excursion was followed by the first conference session, at which Hon. Frederick C. Howe, of Washington, D. C., read a paper on "German Municipal Real Estate Policies." He made clear the advantage that German cities possess in having adopted the policy of "excess condemnation," by which is known the method of taking more land than is actually needed for a municipal park, waterfront or thoroughfare and afterward selling the surplus at an advance, the city thus financially recouping itself to a degree, if not entirely, for the outlay.

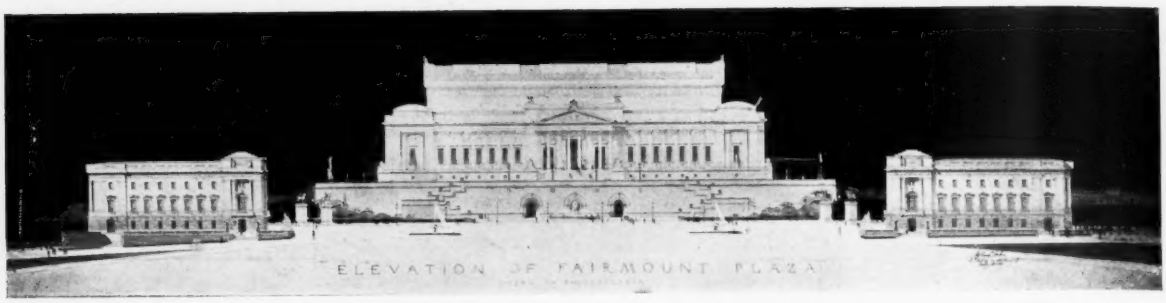
"In Germany," said Mr. Howe, "the city is sovereign. It controls the land owner and the builder in the interest of the community. The rights of the community are superior to the rights of the individual, and the health, convenience, comfort and well-being of all the people are superior to and must control the rights of the land owner or the speculator.

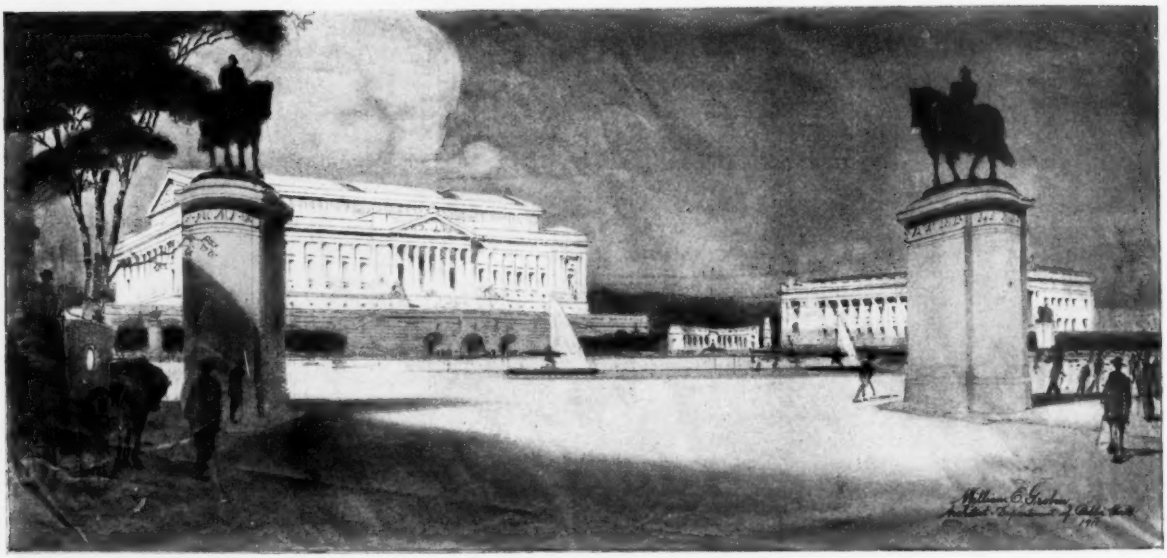
"In America, on the other hand, the city is almost helpless. It has very limited powers, and these are specially granted—usually after it is too late for them to be of value. Rights of eminent domain are strictly construed against the city and must be exercised with great care. Excess condemnation, in order that the city may acquire some of the profits accruing from its own improvement, is denied, as is the acquisition of land for any other than enumerated things. The right of special assessments for benefits conferred is carefully prescribed by statute, varies greatly in different communities, and leaves but little discretion to the cities. The individual can lay out streets of such width as he wills. He can sewer them and pave them, build them up with cheap tenements or skyscraping apartments, and the city cannot successfully protest."

As a result of the almost complete home rule every German city has now a comprehensive plan well formulated by landscape architects, engineers and other specialists for the future growth of the city. Mr. Howe also told of the successful levying of a tax upon the unearned increment, or the increased value of land given it by the developing community rather than by any effort of the owner. In some cases this tax amounts in Germany to 40 per cent. of the increase in value.

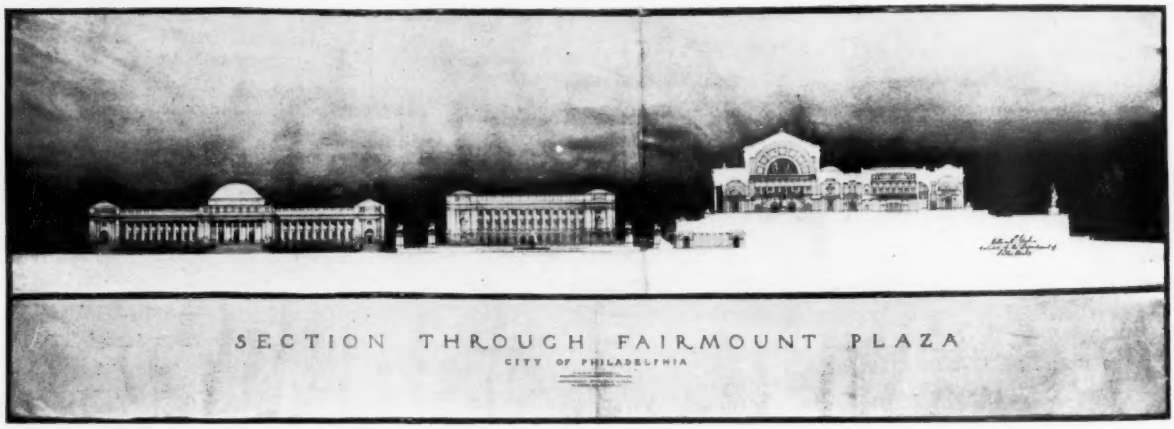
Discussion following Mr. Howe's paper was led by Mr. Thomas Adams, who first read a greeting from the British Ambassador, Hon. James Bryce, and from Mr. John Burns, President of the Local Government Board. He then outlined the chief features of the British Town Planning Act and told of the recent legislation in Birmingham, England, which stipulates that only fifty houses are to be constructed on an acre of land. The speaker declared that 50 per cent. of the crime and misery came from sickness, which is invariably present where there are poor housing quarters, and this condition may be alleviated to a marked degree by improving the houses.

"In America you count on your cities doubling in every ten years," he said, "and in England each fifteen





PERSPECTIVE OF FAIRMOUNT PLAZA, LOOKING DIAGONALLY ACROSS TO ENTRANCE OF FAIRMOUNT PARK



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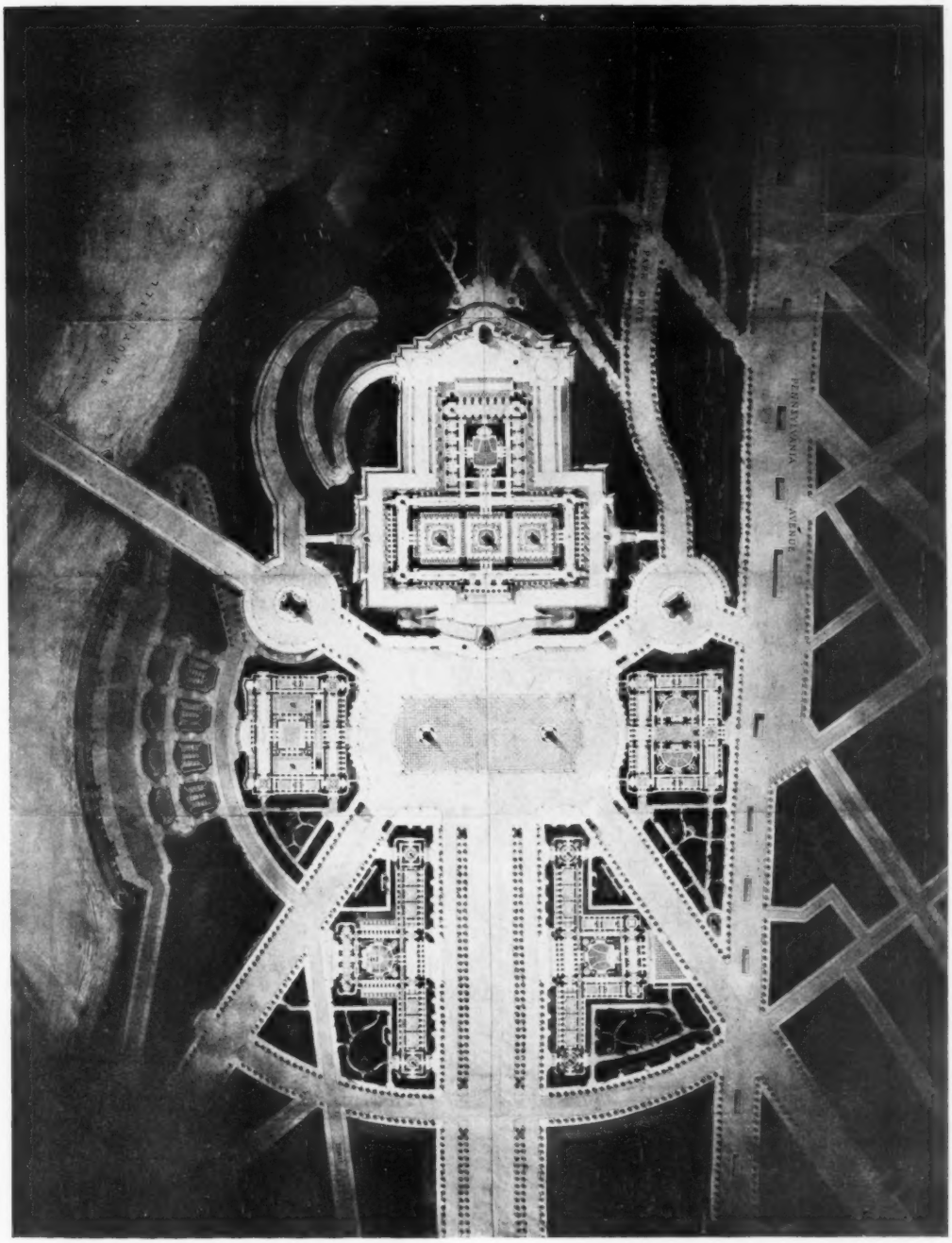

FAIRMOUNT, PLAZA—THE MUNICIPAL ART CENTER

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years showed that 550,000 acres of land were covered with factories and houses, and that as many acres had been filled in and near London during that time." Mr. Adams paid a high tribute to Roland Park, Baltimore, which he regards as the ideal suburb of America.

Emil Seidel, the Socialist Mayor of Milwaukee, provoked a round share of applause when he made a short Socialistic speech in which he alluded to our vaunted "liberty," which might be explained, he said, by two men purchasing adjoining properties. One builds a magnificent home, while the other erects a stable on his property, exercising his liberty at law. "He may be well within the law, but the odor is not confined by law."

Mayor Seidel told of some of the activities in Milwaukee, such as the purchase of the ground along the river to prevent the pollution of the stream. He spoke of the necessity of protecting the residential sections of the cities from noises and disturbances and that the poor of the city, who are unable to leave the city at night after business hours and seek quietude in the country, must also have just consideration. Henry Reed, of the Bureau of Public Works, Denver, Col., also spoke.

Each of the sessions was under the direction of a committee devoted to a given aspect or sub-division of the City Planning. Thus the Committee on Public Buildings, Open Space and Waterways, of which Mr. Frank Miles Day was chairman, had charge of the second conference session, at which two papers were read. Mr. Ernest Flagg, speaking on "The Proper Distribution of Public Buildings," surprised the Philadelphians by calling their City Hall "a monument of bad taste." "The New York and Hartford post-offices," said Mr. Flagg, "are ever-to-be-regretted instances of this sort of folly, and here in Philadelphia one finds perhaps the most glaring case of all. Notwithstanding its immense cost, I do not think that public money could be spent in any way so advantageously for the improvement of the city as in the removal of the Philadelphia City Hall, for, standing where it does, it is nothing less than a monument of bad taste, and a most conspicuous advertisement of the lack of artistic instinct in the people who permitted it to be put there.

"If the design were as good as it is bad, and the building was the finest architectural creation of modern times, it could be nothing but a disfigurement to the city in blotting out as it does the square on which it stands and in destroying the vista of the streets which it obstructs."

Mr. F. M. Day read a paper which appears elsewhere in this issue. Discussion followed by Mr. Thomas Mawson, of the University of Liverpool, and a well-known English landscapist, and also by Mr. F. L. Olmstead.

The third conference session was under the direction of the Committee on Buildings in Relation to Site, and its chairman, Mr. Lawrence Veiller, director of the National Housing Association of New York, read a paper on this subject.

He declared there was a popular belief that city planning would solve the ills of the housing problem, which, he said, was entirely an error due to the fact that the question of housing was largely a sanitary problem.

"A problem," he said, "of the sanitary control of diverse foreign people seeking to adjust themselves to urban conditions of living with which they are unfamiliar. To a certain extent, it is the problem of regulating their habits of life, of protecting them from themselves, and of protecting the community from the results of their ignorance and carelessness."

He then entered into a polemic regarding alleys and small back yards, which, he said, breathed diseases, and that the time will come when legislation will be enacted when houses will be built in strict uniformity and all alleys widened to small streets and cleaned by the city. He further called attention to the fact that many of the Utopian plans presented to the convention were impractical and that it was scarcely probable that a tired workman would have time, or care, to cultivate a little garden at the rear of his house; he advocating that the alleys and back yards be abandoned and great air spaces left for proper ventilation and for the admittance of light. He said that we should not permit in any of our cities buildings of a greater height than 60 feet.

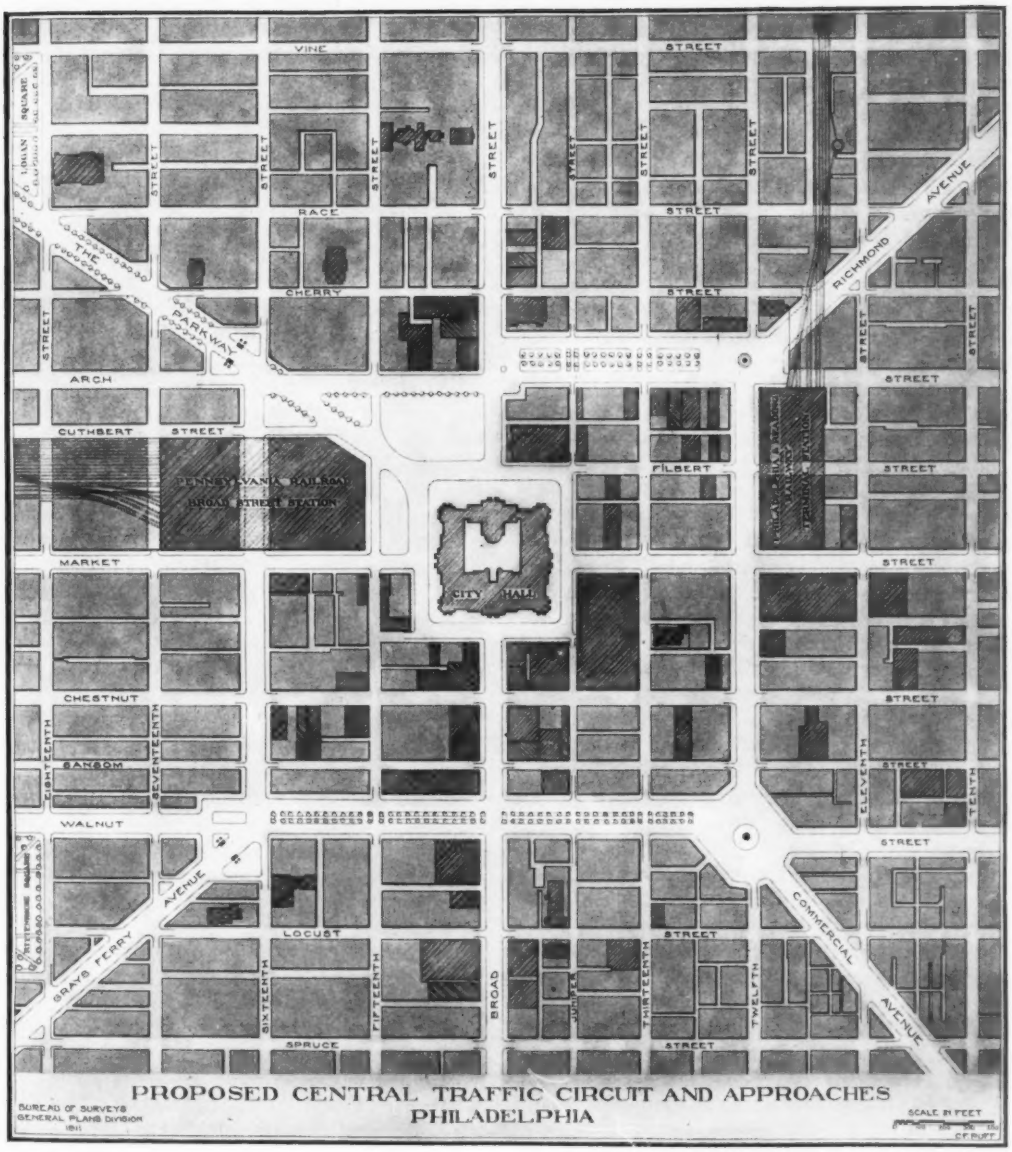
Following this was a discussion by Messrs. E. A. Kent, of Buffalo; Allen Pond, of Chicago; A. W. Brunner, New York, and Thomas Mawson.

Honorable Lawson Purdy, LL.D., president of the Department of Taxes and Assessment, New York City, read a paper entitled "Taxes, Assessment and Condemnation," at the fourth conference session. "City Planning is the art of so arranging streets and public places that privately owned land may be put to its best use," said Mr. Purdy. "When land is put to its best use the maximum land value is one of the results; land is the kind of property that is increased in value by improvements in the city plan. Land, therefore, ought to pay the bill and can well afford to pay it."

The next session was under the control of the Committee on Traction Lines, Railroads and Docks, and had for its general topic "The Dock Problem," upon which papers were contributed by Hon. Calvin Tomkins, Dock Commissioner, New York City; Hon. Joseph Hasskarl, Director of Department of Wharves, Docks and Ferries, Philadelphia; Hon. T. E. Gibbon, president of Dock Commission, Los Angeles, Cal.; Mr. George C. Sykes, formerly secretary Chicago Harbor Commission.

"Street Widths and their Subdivision" was the next subject for consideration in papers contributed by Mr. Charles Mulford Robinson and Mr. John Nolen. "At the present time," said Mr. Nolen, "an average of 20 to 40 per cent. of the total area of cities is devoted to streets, rising in the case of Washington, D. C., to 54 per cent. Therefore, even a slight variation in the width of the streets of a city becomes a matter of importance. Consider, for example, what an excess of two feet in the width of the 1,400 miles of paved streets of Philadelphia would involve in the cost of land and paving. On the other hand—and here the lack of intelligent and discriminating action has even graver aspects—consider what the lack of a few feet in the width really necessary for streets in Philadelphia already involves."

Mr. George S. Webster, Chief Engineer of the City of Philadelphia, discussed the space under the street, and called attention to the necessity of making the best possible use of the available cross-section of the street in order to accommodate an ever-increasing number of underground structures. "This in a measure can be accomplished," he said, "as it is in Philadelphia, by grouping the structures as closely together as possible,



THE PHILADELPHIA IMPROVEMENT; SHOWING PROPOSED DIAGONAL AXES RADIATING FROM THE CITY HALL

but a much better method would be by the construction of one or more lines of sub-service galleries, of sufficient size to accommodate all future structures, preferably one on each side of the street, close to the curb lines, thus doing away with the usual form of conduit construction and avoiding the necessity of continually opening the street surface and interfering with the proper maintenance of the paved area."

Mr. George W. Tillson, a consulting engineer of Brooklyn, discussed the street surface especially with a view to various kinds of paving and to planting.

Next came a discussion of Legal and Administrative Methods. Under this head Mr. Andrew Wright Crawford, of Philadelphia, contributed a very thorough paper entitled "The Principles of a Uniform City Planning Code." He said that the English town planning act was of little use to Americans on account of the Federal and State constitutional provisions with which a similar act here would conflict. Upon excess condemnation, Mr. Crawford said: "It is practically essential that the power of excess condemnation shall sooner or later be upheld, if American cities are to be rebuilt as European cities are being rebuilt. Excess condemnation was considered by the Conference on City Planning at each of its former sessions and a brief reference here will, therefore, suffice. I would refer to constitutional changes proposed in Massachusetts and New York expressly authorizing such acts of excess condemnation. Whether this is an advisable method is at least questionable. While the constitutional change may be effective in the States concerned, they will not avoid a difficulty possibly presented by the Constitution of the United States.

"The Constitution of the States providing for excess condemnation will have to be upheld as not unconstitutional under the Constitution of the United States. For my own part I am inclined to think it more likely that a decision by a State Court upholding excess condemnation within reasonable limits would in turn be upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States. Up to the present time there has been no case before the Supreme Court of the nation in which a decision of a State Court holding that a condemnation is for a public use has been reversed. If, instead of a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, a constitutional declaration passed by the people at the polls is presented to the Supreme Court of the United States I fear an entirely different attitude will be found upon the part of that distinguished tribunal."

The final session consisted of a subscription dinner given at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel by Mayor Reyburn and the City Club. Honorable Walter L. Fisher, before entering upon his duties as toastmaster, expressed himself as follows:

"All of us, I assume, have been impressed with the importance of the city. The cities seem to typify the civilization of the time. We've been told that the problem of the city is the problem of the country. We all know what a preponderating influence Paris has had on France. The great problem to solve is how to work out the difficulties of the cities. I want to record myself with one of those city-planners who has said: 'The City, the Hope of Democracy.' The city is no longer to be the menace, but the citadel of the nation. The things we are concerned about are no longer governmental problems, but we're considering the city as the place where men live and work, and we are trying to make it more beautiful and pleasant."

Following a brief speech from Mayor Reyburn, Count J. H. von Bernstoff, the German Ambassador, responded to the toast "City Planning in Germany." His address consisted of a detailed description of the manner in which Frankfurt has been planned and developed. He said the City Council had full power to fix the widths of all streets and to prescribe the kind of paving to be used. The naming of streets, the placing of open squares, playgrounds, schools and hospitals and the distribution of all open spaces are in the hands of the Council. "There are no hindrances," he said, "in the purchase of land, and the city has a large fund for the acquirement of property. Our building regulations are designed to prevent congestion and to provide air spaces for the homes of the poorer classes."

Senator Francis G. Newlands made a warm plea for the establishment by the Federal Government of a new Department of Art and City Planning. Speaking of the revolution that might be wrought by such a department, Senator Newlands said: "We can accomplish this only by creating a public opinion in favor of such really constructive work. Now, the first thing that will happen will be a conference of the constitutional lawyers. They will say that the nation cannot do this thing because it is not within the granted power of the Government. But I cannot see anything in the Constitution which granted the power to establish a Department of Agriculture. We must create a public opinion, and then your representatives in Congress will reflect this opinion because it is this public opinion which will send them back to Congress."

The choice of the time and place of the next Conference was left in the hands of the following executive committee, which was elected for the coming year: Chairman, Frederick Law Olmstead, Brookline, Mass.; vice-chairmen, Nelson P. Lewis, New York City; George E. Hooker, Chicago; Frank Miles Day, Philadelphia; Lawrence Veiller, New York; Andrew Wright Crawford, Philadelphia; Frederick C. Howe, New York; Frederick L. Ford, Hartford; Richard B. Watrous, Washington, D. C., and Secretary Flaval Shurtleff, Boston; Lawson Purdy, New York.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY
BY THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT (INC.)
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, JUNE 7, 1911

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CITY PLANNING CONFERENCE

THE Third National Conference on City Planning was held in Philadelphia from May 15 to 17, inclusive. In every essential feature the meeting surpassed any so far convened to consider a subject which, in far-reaching importance, is probably second to none now demanding attention of the profession and public alike. More than two hundred and fifty delegates were in attendance from various sections of the country, among them men of prominence both in and out of the profession who have identified themselves with the nation-wide movement for improved city planning, which offers relief from many civic ills. From the enthusiasm displayed and the convincing manner of presentation of the various topics considered, it seems safe to assert that a point has now been reached in our country's development where nothing short of the most comprehensive plans for the future growth of cities will be proposed with any likelihood of adoption. In fact the wisdom of proceeding along lines established after careful study, having regard for the city's interests and not those of the individual, may be considered as granted by an intelligent public, which having accepted the principle henceforth will be concerned only with the plan. Philadelphia has taken an advanced position on this entire subject and one that is well worthy of emulation by other cities. Pride in civic growth and development is a cardinal virtue, and there has probably been nothing done that has contributed more to the awakening of civic pride and ambition than the National Conference on City Planning just ended.

INVASION OF NEW YORK CITY HALL PARK

DUE to the vigorous protests of the New York Chapter A. I. A. and many other local bodies the original Stilwell bill, the passage of which would probably have resulted in placing the proposed new County Court House in City Hall Park, New York, has been abandoned. In its place one which under certain quite possible contingencies would accomplish the same result has been substituted. There is little likelihood of its passage, to be sure, but when matters of such importance are involved it is the part of wisdom to be ever on the alert. Only by prompt and concerted action, such as has thus far met each attempt to invade this and other New York parks, can these open areas so necessary to the beauty and well-being of the city be safeguarded.

A PROPOSED NEW BUILDING CODE

WHEN Mayor McClellan vetoed the proposed new Building Code after its passage by the New York Board of Aldermen two years ago, it was hoped that the pernicious measure would be abandoned by its sponsors. The hope was vain, for, apparently encouraged by a belief that conditions more favorable to the interests served by the proposed code now obtain, we find it again presented for consideration, little changed and scarcely less objectionable than when it called forth such a storm of protest in 1909. Mayor McClellan, apparently impressed by the representations of certain protesting interests that the code was discriminatory, suggested actual tests of the various materials and types of construction in question, but such tests by competent disinterested parties have not been made. Tests of the character indicated would certainly be worth their cost to the city, and why they have not been conducted, and the results made a public record, can only be conjectured. Assuming that their personal knowledge of the matters involved is insufficient to enable them to determine the truth of the various representations made, the fact that the proposed measure is practically without a supporter among those competent to judge of the subject, by reason of technical education, practical experience and lack of affiliation with any of the interests affected, should convince the Mayor and those members of the Board of Aldermen who are honestly endeavoring to serve the city of its total unfitness. A consideration of the origin of the instrument, its sponsors and supporters, should add confirmation to such conviction.

Until the public becomes sensible to the perfectly obvious fact that public service of an order above the intelligence of the public servant is unobtainable, and that fidelity of service in public life from one not conspicuous for integrity of purpose and action under all circumstances is not to be expected, it will be exposed to such dangers as now threaten. When our civilization advances to a point where the interests of the community are placed above the interests of individuals such matters as the drafting of a building code will be placed in the hands of technically educated, experienced and wholly disinterested men, whose only concern will be the city's welfare. Certain European countries have already adopted such a plan, and the fact only serves to make more glaring the deficiencies in our laws that permit the travesty on code revision now being enacted in New York.

It is to be hoped that the Mayor, if not a majority of the members of the Board of Aldermen, will insist that any new code in order to receive sanction must at

least be so drawn as to present a semblance of fairness and not bestow palpable privileges on certain favored interests. It does not seem possible that the public will fail to hold those in charge of this unwholesome measure, as well as those whose approval must be gained to make it effective, strictly accountable at the proper time.

TOWN PLANNING

TO make an old city keep step with modern progress, to reform areas of congestion and redeem "slum" districts are the problems that confront those whose efforts are bent toward the amelioration of present-day conditions in our fast growing cities.

As proof that these problems are not insurmountable we have ever before us the example of Baron Haussmann, who, as Prefect of the Seine under the Second Empire, laid the foundation for a beautiful Paris and set an example for emulation by future generations.

While it is conceded that the solution of civic problems, variously styled under the name of town planning, civic betterment and other titles all more or less confusing in their adaptation, logically fall to the work of architects, who by reason of their training are best fitted to successfully handle these questions, it is interesting to note that the first important action toward these ideas of city improvement came from a profession generally considered to be far outside the field of art.

Haussmann was a lawyer, and when not holding office was actively engaged in the practice of his profession. What he was enabled to accomplish was due to an indomitable energy, combined with an unlimited amount of money and the strong support of the Emperor, whose vanity led him to endeavor to eclipse in the Second Empire every accomplishment that had been secured in the First.

As Prefect of the Seine, Haussmann redeemed the slums of Paris, and in condemning certain quarters, rebuilding them along wide and well planned avenues, he is said to have spent in seventeen years the enormous sum of one billion dollars. To every one familiar with the Paris of to-day the results of this well directed energy and expenditure of money are apparent and the wisdom of it all is unquestioned. The lesson to be drawn from all this is that in operations contemplating improvements in cities whose beginnings have been at fault a parsimonious outlay of money is fatal.

The problems are gigantic and the cost of their solution correspondingly large. When it is proposed to open up new avenues paralleling others, or to set out wide and radial boulevards, we, in this country, immediately sit down to calculate the present cost. When it mounts to enormous figures we stand appalled and allow the matter to drop as (measured by the dollar sign) impracticable.

Haussmann did not allow such considerations to affect his acts. He relentlessly pursued his way, razing every structure that stood as a barrier to the improvement he contemplated.

It is certain that private interests often suffered, but it is equally true that after the lapse of more than half a century the result so thoroughly vindicates Haussmann that no one will endeavor to prove he was wrong in what he did.

The visitor to the Town Planning Conference in Philadelphia will have been impressed with the earnestness and practical ideas that dominate the men who are foremost in this movement for civic betterment. Fortunately we hear very seldom that unmeaning phrase "the city beautiful," at one time used to sum up in a few words what is now known as "town planning."

The desire to facilitate modern business and increase the comfort and consequent happiness and content of the dweller in our cities appears to be the prime motive of those in the various large cities who are most active in this movement. To the student of the subject there is a never-ending variety that always presents some new motive or some heretofore not considered problem. That of transportation, as most directly related to the comfort of the people, is so complex and so varied, owing to character of location, water front, communicating lines of travel and other reasons, that many men are led to devote all their energies to the study of these conditions.

In short, the questions involved are so many and have so rapidly multiplied during the very few years that they have been taken up that it is realized how impossible it is for one man, in the brief space of life, to successfully and thoroughly study the entire subject.

This fact has therefore led to specialization along certain lines, which will tend to the more rapid advancement of the cause by reason of the restricting in each specific case of the field of study, and therefore permitting more time and accurate research.

It is significant of the importance of the question to note the rapid growth in number of those interested in the movement of town planning.

The first conference, held in Washington two years ago, had not more than thirty active members, of which very few were architects. The second, held in Rochester last year, enrolled about 80 active members, with a much larger proportion of architects.

The present conference shows the enormous proportionate enrollment of nearly 400 members, and the prominent part taken by architects in these deliberations shows a correspondingly larger increase of members of the profession.

President Pond, of the Institute, it is stated, has signified his intention to recommend that every Chapter appoint a delegate to attend the fourth conference next year. If this excellent idea is carried out we may confidently expect results of the highest value and greatest practicability.

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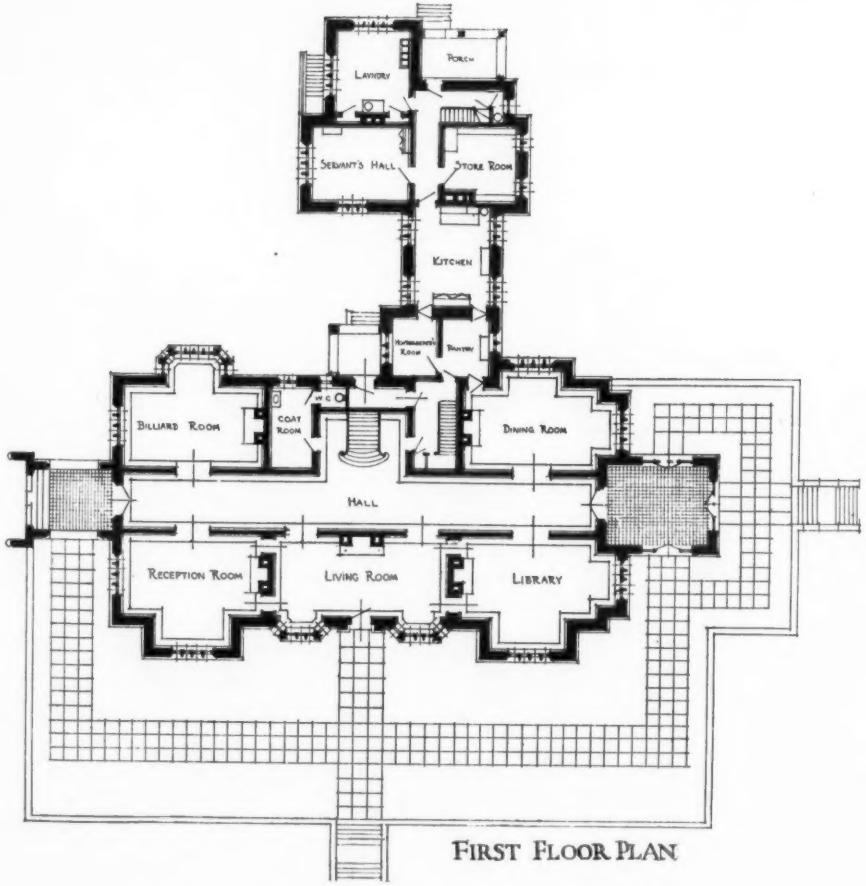

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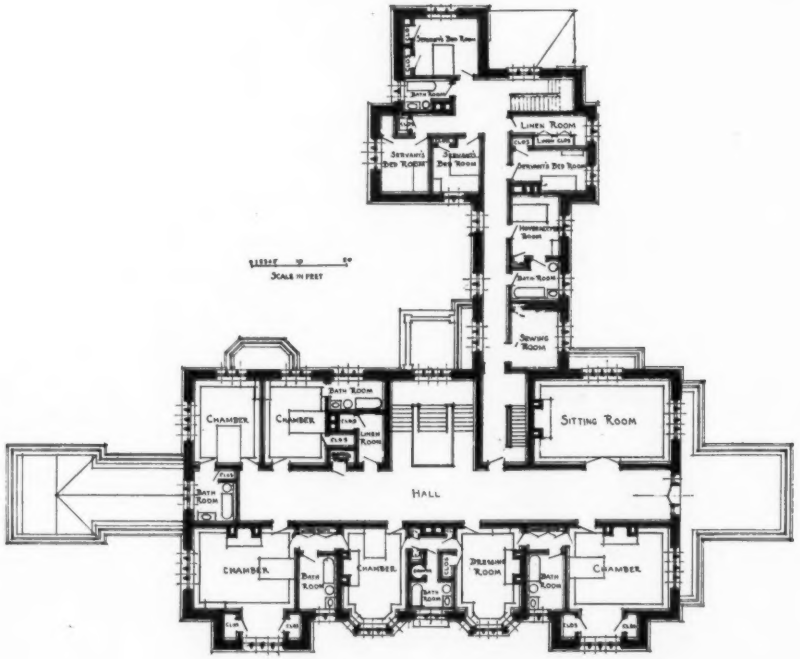

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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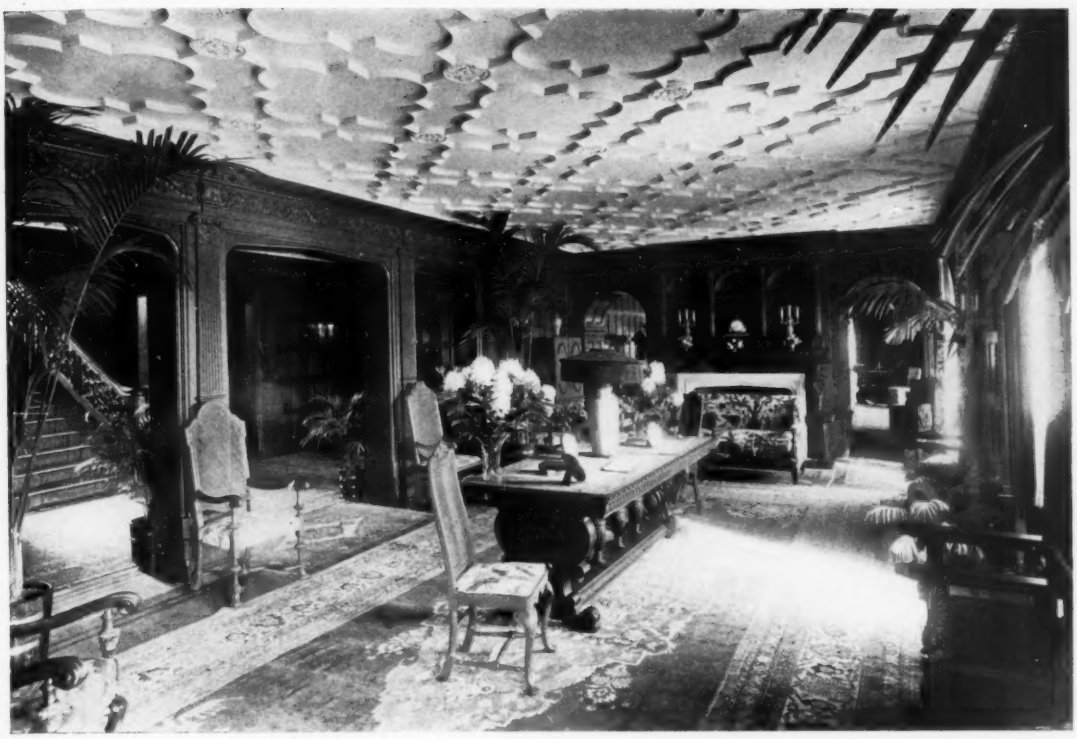

LIVING ROOM

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LOOKING FROM FRONT ENTRANCE

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RECEPTION ROOM

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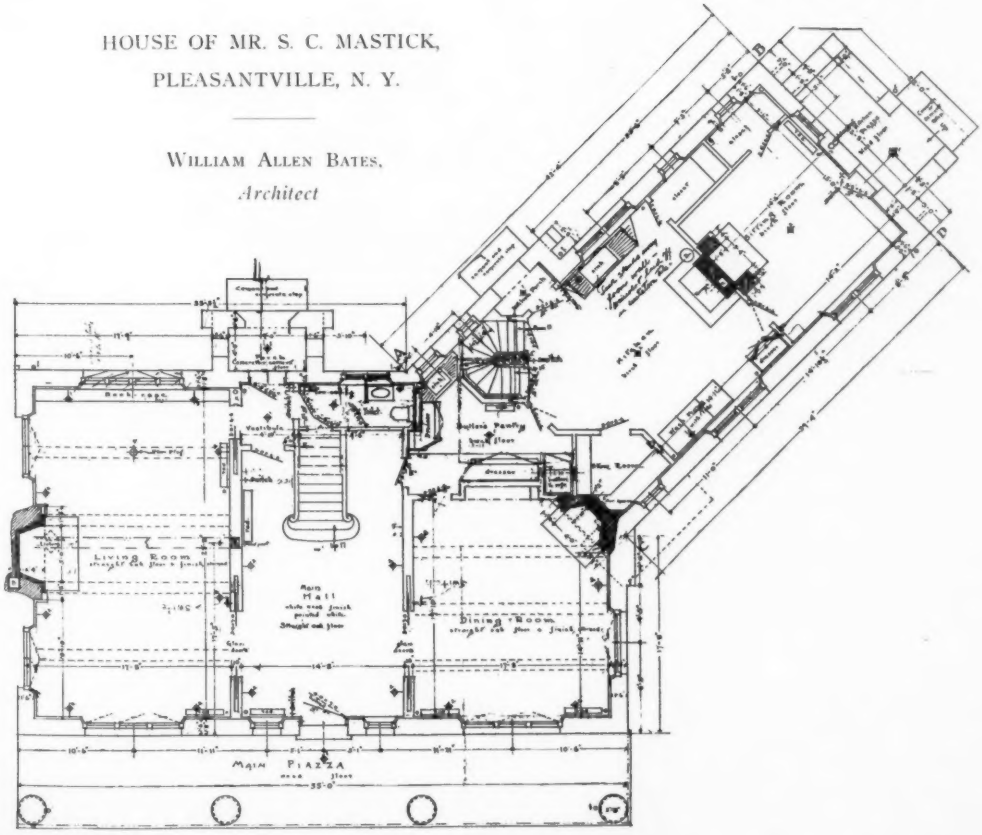

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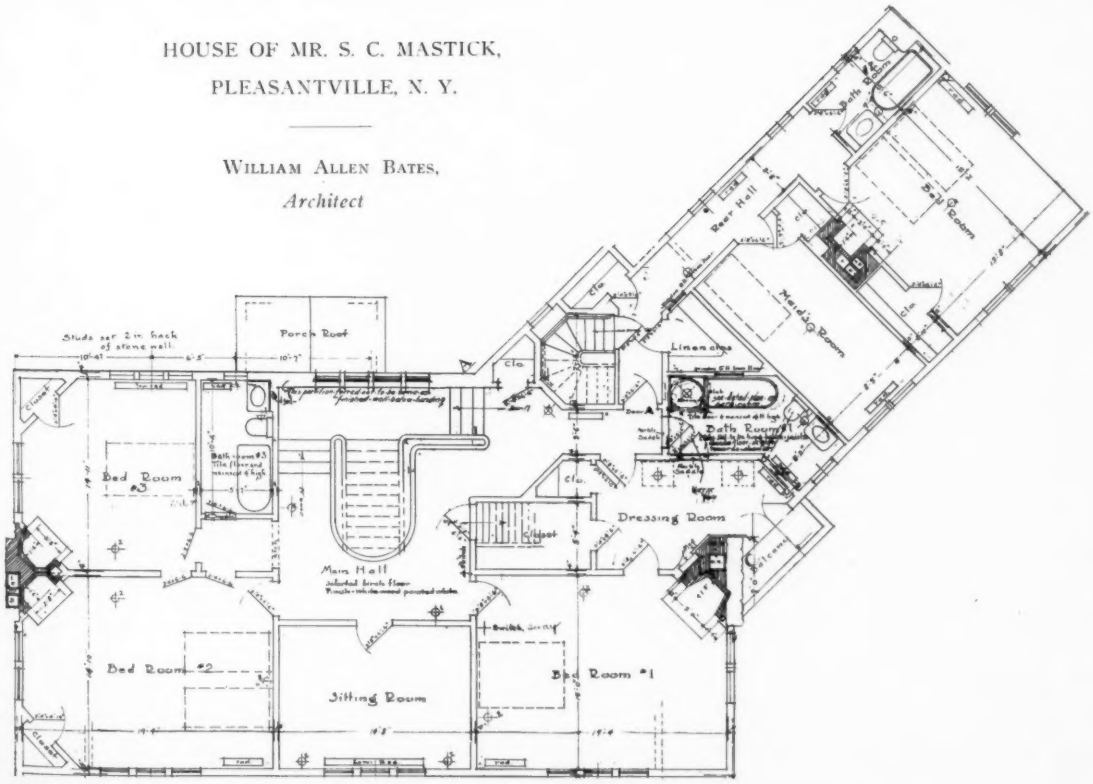

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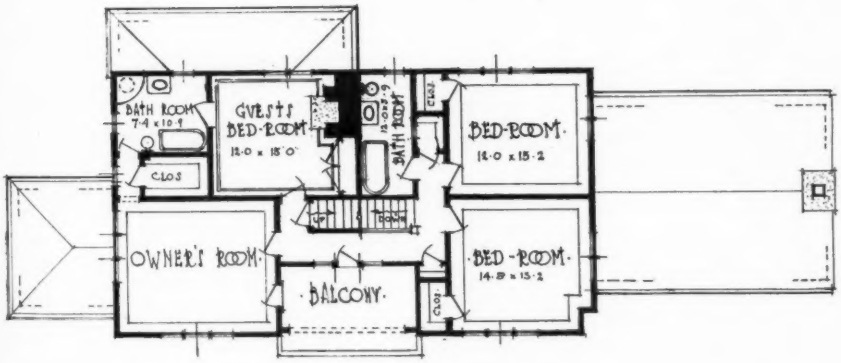

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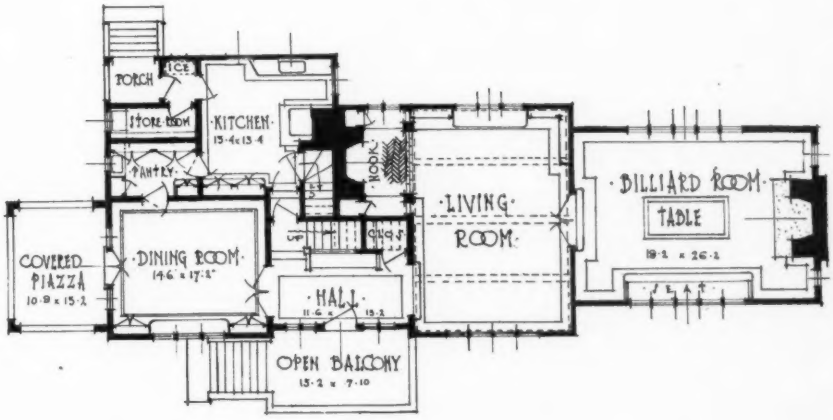

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