

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

VOL. CI.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 1912

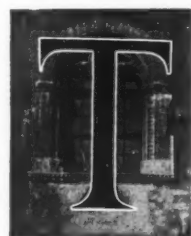
No. 1895

EUROPEAN SKETCHING CENTRES

By G. A. T. MIDDLETON, A.R.I.B.A. (Past Vice-President of the Society of Architects, England)

Illustrated by Sketches and Photographs by the Author

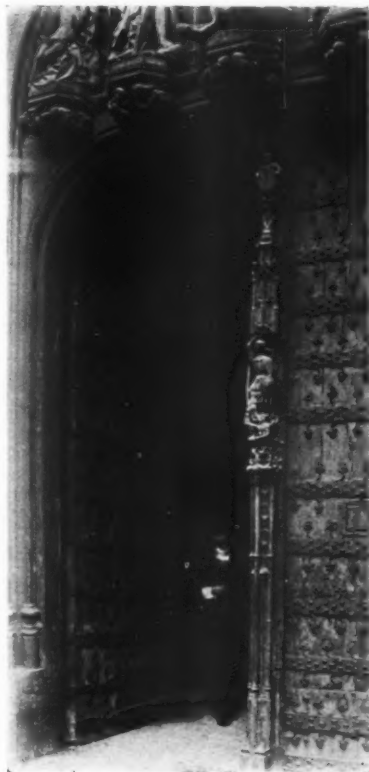
Brussels



THE first impression of Brussels, from whichever direction it is approached, is that of a large and prosperous modern city, free from all suggestion of mediævalism. To a great extent this is a true impression, for it is a town which has reached its present considerable proportions, housing a population of nearly three-quarters of a million, during comparatively recent years only, while other great Belgian centres, once almost as large as this, have dwindled into comparative insignificance. Yet even in those days, when each Belgian city was practically an independent state, if there was a capital in the country at all, that capital was Brussels, except during the short period when Margaret of Austria resided at Malines. This was particularly the case during the rule of the Burgundian princes, who succeeded to the Courtship of Flanders through the female line in 1384, and occasionally held their court at Brussels, and under the Austrian Hapsburgs, who kept an even more brilliant court there, into whose hands the whole of the Netherlands passed in 1477 by

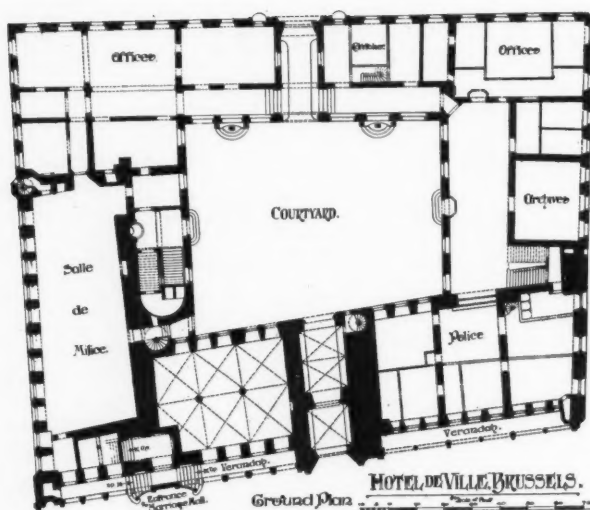
the marriage of Mary of Burgundy, the daughter of the last Duke of Burgundy, with Maximilian, afterward Emperor of Germany. In 1555 the country fell under the sway of Spain, but soon revolted, the first rising taking place at Brussels and several of the more significant events of that period occurring there, such as the execution of Counts Egmont and Hoorn in the Grande Place. On the cessation of the Spanish rule in 1598, this country reverted to Austria; but it changed hands frequently, so that although the seat of Government remained at Brussels, it was only now and again that material progress was made until the present stable condition of affairs was established.

This necessarily meagre outline of the history of Belgium, and particularly of Brussels, is sufficient to indicate how it has come about that the older civil buildings of that city are confined to a small area in the centre of the town, but that at the same time they include some which, in their way, are unrivalled. The Grande Place has been called, with a great deal of justice, the finest Gothic square in the world; though only its two principal buildings are Gothic (the Hotel de Ville and the Maison du Roi), the others



NORTHEAST (MAIN) ENTRANCE, HOTEL DE VILLE, BRUSSELS

Copyright, 1912, by The American Architect

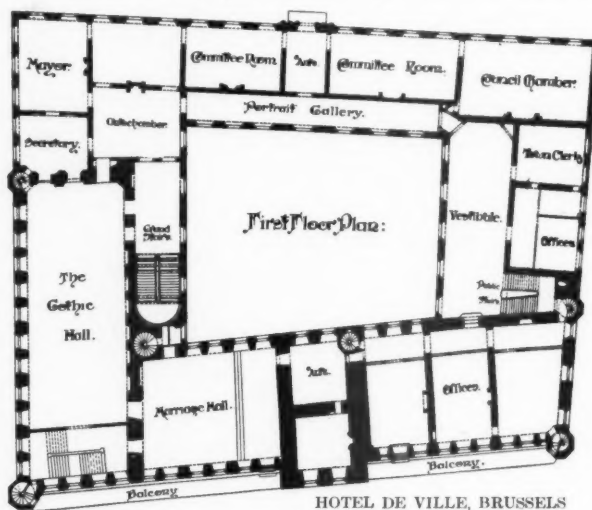


having been erected during the Renaissance period mostly in the early years of the eighteenth century, but at different dates and varying greatly in design. They are known as the Guild Houses, or Maisons des Corporations, and are in perfect preservation, being kept in repair by the Corporation. They extend right round the Square, in which a flower market is held regularly every day; and no sketch or photograph can give any idea of their effect, which is Spanish, rich in coloring and gilded ornament. The three illustrated herewith, which are only separated from the Hotel de Ville by the narrow road at the side, are the Hall of the Brewers (Maison des Bressems) erected in 1752 and surmounted by an equestrian statue of Duke Charles of Lorraine; the Swan House, occupied by the Guild of Butchers, built in 1720; and the House of the Bailiff, otherwise known as the Maison de l'Etoile, at the corner, this, as it now stands, being a modern reconstruction of the old building. Each of these possesses some feature which is worthy of attention, though it is doubtful whether all the details are equally commendable; the extreme attenuation of the columns, obtained by raising them on separate pedestals, being particularly open to criticism, except that the impression of height is emphasized and a vertical effect produced which is suitable to the narrow frontage

and perpetuates the Gothic idea established by the Hotel de Ville close by.

This last is one of the really important buildings of the world, for it is one of those which have "counted"—from which inspiration has been drawn. There are several similar Hotels de Ville in Belgium, as at Andevarde, Bruges and Louvain, but this is the largest and in many respects the most beautiful, while it is certainly that which has been most studied and followed. Yet it has rarely, if ever, been successfully copied. This may be due to some extent to its deceptive general symmetry, the two sides of the main (N. E.) façade being superficially similar while

actually differing greatly, the portion to the left of the great lantern tower, as one sees it from the Place, containing the Salle de Milice on the ground floor and the Gothic Hall above it, having been begun in 1402, while the corresponding wing on the right dates from 1444. The central tower was finished ten years later than this and is 370 ft. high. It is said that the original intention was that the building should not extend beyond it, but that it should stand at the corner; but this is difficult to believe. The present composition is such a



complete unit entity that it is hard to think that anything else could have been contemplated, and if the courtyard was not in-

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

tended, to what purpose was a large gateway carried through the tower? The whole front is covered with an intricacy of late



SOUTH WEST (BACK) ENTRANCE, HOTEL DE VILLE, BRUSSELS

Gothic tracery which, originally executed in soft limestone, has been several times restored, particularly the statues with which it is almost superabundantly adorned.

How much figure carving has been introduced may be gathered from the accompanying photograph of the main door, under the tower, the surrounding stonework and the oak centre post being all modern restoration excellently carried out and undoubtedly approximating closely to the destroyed or decayed original work which it replaced. The door itself is original, both iron and oak, except where repairs have been essential, the iron strap-work being one of the finest examples extant of its period, well studded with nails and with the leaves and their stalks made separately, stamped in a die and welded to the straps. It will be noticed that the open leaf of the door has another semi-circular headed smaller door cut in it to give ingress to one person at a time, but that it is not carried down to the ground. This

is structurally necessary for the continuity of the bottom rail, but it also served to compel anyone on entering to raise one foot awkwardly, thus placing himself in a most disadvantageous attitude if his intentions were hostile; and such considerations as these had weight in the days when the door was made! In the other leaf, shown closed, there is a small shutter, or opening for parleying with an applicant for entry, about 6 inches square.

The back of the Hotel de Ville suffered severely, as did the town generally, in a bombardment by Louis XIV, of France, in 1695, and was subsequently rebuilt in a severe Renaissance style. The doorway leading out from the Courtyard, opposite the tower, with its flanking drinking fountains, is typical of a great deal that was done in the 18th century both in France and Belgium, the great hollow chamber with its strongly marked radiating joints to make the voussoirs, being not merely characteristic, but also eminently adaptable to modern work; and so, too, is the elaborate and



MAISON DU ROI, BRUSSELS

beautifully designed iron balcony over, with its substantial truss supports.

Internally the marriage and reception halls on the first floor have been richly deco-

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

rated recently—that is, some forty years ago, during the Gothic revival—by Mons. V. Jamaer. The principal room is known as the Gothic Hall, and is adorned with



GUILD HOUSE, GRANDE PLACE, BRUSSELS

tapestries representing the various Guilds, arranged as panel pictures on the walls.

The same architect, Mons. V. Jamaer, designed the beautiful Maison du Roi which faces the Hotel de Ville on the other side of the Grande Place. It occupies the site of the old Broodhuis, and is in the same style

as was that building—the late Flemish equivalent of the French “Flamboyant,”—with covered balconies on the ground and first floors, the canopy work over the arched openings being suggestive of Spanish influence, with the externally cusped (rather than crocketed) hood mouldings.

THE PAINTER AND THE ARCHITECT

THE architect is, or should be, responsible for the absolute completion of a public building, and it is unfair to criticize him if some local authority assumes the responsibility of its decoration. It would be a great step on the way to obtain a perfect and completed scheme if the architect and the painter were brought into more intimate contact, and, by the interchange of ideas, to help each other to understand the peculiar claims of their individual crafts. During the last generation the architect has taken the sculptor more thoroughly into his confidence, and the author would like to see the same confidence extended to the painter. The place of the mural painting should have been considered by the architect in the creation of his plan, as much as that of the sculptor; neither is required for the actual structural qualities of the building, but both are a necessity for its perfect completeness.—*Sir Alfred East, Hon. A.R.I.B.A.*

THE LITTLE THEATRE

MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS and MR. F. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., *Associated Architects*

THIS latest addition to the buildings of this class in New York is, as its name implies, of quite limited proportions. It condenses in small space so much good architecture and well designed decoration as to make it one of the most, if not the most, successful artistically of the numerous playhouses that have recently been built in this city. Whether one views this theatre from without or within, the impression conveyed is so satisfactory as to inspire something akin to enthusiasm. Suffice it to say, that the result reflects credit on the refined taste both of the architect and client. We fail to detect a discordant note.

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel marked a new and much to be approved departure from heretofore accepted ideals in hotel construction in this country, and now the Little Theatre emphatically conforms to the newer and better conception of a modern playhouse, although it is not found in the role of pioneer, the movement having been inaugurated some half dozen years since. Probably the first theatre in New York to suggest to any marked degree the private playhouse of refined architectural treatment and to give its frequenters that restful feeling of witnessing the presentation of good drama in a private drawing-room was Maxine El-

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

liott's Theatre, erected on 39th Street some three years ago. This excellent example of restraint in design remained unrivalled in this city until the Little Theatre was projected. Of these two playhouses there is little in common, either as to period, style or construction, and yet they both suggest insistently those refinements that are becoming a necessary part of our daily life. The Little Theatre presents a good example of the Georgian in its design; the façade on 44th Street not only in its proportion but in its color scheme as well, leaves small room for objection. Placed between buildings that are widely different from the theatre, its beauties are in a sense accentuated.

The materials used in the exterior are red brick and French (Pierre de Lens) limestone. The exterior wood-work is painted white; shutters are a "blind green" and the iron-work flat black. The plants that line the top of the balcony furnish both in form and color just the proper note, and so well-balanced is the whole effect that it is like viewing some well-conceived stage setting. Especially is this the case at night when concealed lights are reflected upon the façade producing an even and pleasing illumination.

Entering through the vestibule one is at once impressed with the artistic character of the detail of wood and plaster work. It reflects the best period of the Georgian and the best examples of the Adams brothers. It is in the auditorium, however, that one fully realizes that the Little Theatre is constructed on lines totally different

both as concerns arrangement and design from anything previously attempted. As will be seen by reference to the illustrations, the auditorium is elliptical in shape and does not present those features of proscenium opening and boxes with which we usually associate a theatre interior. The seats are all on the main floor and all of equal importance. There are no impressions of class distinction between boxes and orchestra, balcony and gallery. Every

frequenter, as far as the location and price of seats are concerned, is on an equal footing. The wood-work of the auditorium is of birch, stained a deep walnut brown. In the panels have been hung tapestries, reproductions of the famous Bouché tapestries. The scheme is low in tone and the interior is seen at its best when the diffused rays of the concealed lights are thrown on the well-executed Adams ceiling and are reflected on to the brilliant costumes worn by

women in the audience. The lighting is by two indirect ceiling candelabra and several groups of electric candles around the walls. The curtains are of blue and silver brocade, with tapestry borders, and the drop curtain is of Gobelin blue. The carpet is mouse grey and the seats, of walnut effect, are upholstered in brown leather.

The theatre seats but 300 people. This small capacity, the elimination of boxes and galleries, the repression of the orchestra, all tend to bring the actors and their audience in close contact and emphasize those features sought for by the founders.



THE LITTLE THEATRE



THE LOBBY

It all savors of an entertainment in a large drawing room.

And while this idea of privacy and exclusiveness has been very successfully attained, it is of course quite natural to inquire if those mandatory provisions of our fire and building laws have been complied with. It would seem that they have and in a manner that insures the greatest measure of safety to the audience.

The stage equipment is probably as modern as that possessed by any theatre of recent construction. In fact, it includes a feature—a revolving stage—only to be found, it is said, in this country in the Century Theatre in this city. This revolving stage is thirty feet in diameter and permits of the permanent setting of the various scenes. By this expediency time is saved and the plan also allows a much more elaborate staging of interiors than is

possible by other means. The placing of the curtain again differs from other theatres. It is in front of the proscenium wall and not at the rear as is usual.

The heating system employed is of the fan type with exhaust chamber for the auditorium. The dressing rooms on the upper floors are cleverly lighted and are easily accessible from the stage. The various rooms for rest and refreshment of patrons are all executed in the same simple and dignified manner as the more important rooms of the building.

In short, the Little Theatre may be said to be so radical in its departure from the spectacular types at one time so common in this country as to cause us to give thanks for its existence and indulge the hope that it will serve as an example for future construction. It is safe to say that the influence for good cannot fail to be large.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Founded 1876

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT (INC.)

No. 50 Union Square, New York
(Fourth Avenue and 17th Street)

G. E. SLY, PRESIDENT

E. J. ROSENCRANS, SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Address all communications to "THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT"

SUBSCRIBERS' RATES:

In the United States and Possessions (Porto Rico, Hawaii,
Philippine Islands and Canal Zone),
Mexico and Cuba

TEN DOLLARS PER YEAR, POSTAGE PAID
ALL OTHER COUNTRIES . . . \$12.00 PER YEAR
SINGLE COPIES (Regular Issues), 25 CENTS

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

VOL. CI APRIL 17, 1912 No. 1895

CONTENTS

EUROPEAN SKETCHING CENTRES	- - 173
THE LITTLE THEATRE, NEW YORK	- 176
EDITORIAL COMMENT	- - - - 179
LEGAL DECISIONS	- - - - 180

ILLUSTRATIONS:—

THE LITTLE THEATRE, NEW YORK. STUDENT
WORK, SOCIETY OF BEAUX ARTS ARCHITECTS

FRONTISPIECE:—

HOTEL DE VILLE, BRUSSELS

THEATRE DESIGN IN AMERICA

PROBABLY even the most pessimistic observer of the trend of architecture in America will acknowledge that in the design of theatre buildings, if nowhere else, we are rapidly adopting saner forms and more logical schemes of decoration. Of course, there was ample opportunity for improvement, if we consider the blatantly ornate and offensive structures devoted to this purpose of twenty years or more ago, but exceedingly bad design does not in itself furnish the elements that lead unerringly to better things. In fact, the designers who have made conspicuous contributions to the general improvement in this department of architecture have been obliged not only to arrive at correct conclusions in their own minds, but to overcome a more or less firmly fixed popular feeling that for some reason

theatre buildings were not amenable to the standards of taste employed in judging other buildings—a feeling that the use to which the structure would be put permitted and in some manner required ornate, grotesque and aggressively vulgar treatment. Perhaps such feeling was due to the impression that the theatre was in some way related to and should partake of the nature of the American circus, with its tinsel and glitter, its clowns and all manner of extravagances and unrealities. But in any event and regardless of the cause, how greatly such an impression was in error is perhaps best shown by the now practically unanimous commendation of architects, theatre owners, and the cultured public, of the new régime.

The Little Theatre, just completed and illustrated in this issue, seems to justify unstinted praise not only for its perfect adaptation to the purposes for which it was erected, but also as probably the most conspicuous example of the new order of things in theatre design.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

FEW American architects will deny that there are certain evidences of necessity and limitation in much of our architecture that a strict adherence to precedent and tradition would not wholly justify, and it has seemed to them that this evidence should be recognized and taken into account by anyone making a close study of the subject. They have felt, in fact, that one could scarcely judge whether a problem has been well or poorly solved without knowing the conditions as well as the result. For this reason, it has not always seemed necessary to regard as competent and serious the verdict of certain foreign critics who have apparently overlooked the facts referred to, especially that our architecture has been produced under conditions much more severe than those that have governed in the case of the greater portion of modern European work.

It is therefore gratifying to find that after all the actual situation in this country is recognized by an English authority, as appears by an editorial published in a recent issue of "The Builder," of London, under the title, "A Lesson from America." In this article it is stated that "whatever lim-

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

itations American architecture may have, from the European point of view or by comparison with the great periods of the past, it would probably be safe to say that in no other country at the present day does architecture more readily respond to the demands of the moment," which are interpreted to be "the erection of the best possible building in the shortest possible time." It is stated freely that "the demands of a comparatively new and rapidly growing community are different in some respects from those of a mature and more settled civilization. In the rush of material progress something of value may have to be left behind; subtleties may possibly be overlooked, but the essentials necessary to that progress are demanded and American architecture does not fail to supply them."

It is also suggested that "the very limitations of the conditions under which Amer-

ican architecture has been compelled to develop have not been altogether detrimental to its progress. A generation or two of practice with a short time limit and so exacting an instructor as practical necessity is no bad preparation for the more leisured maturity which the future seems to promise for American architecture."

The article proceeds to point out the shortcomings of the English architect and the causes which in the opinion of the writer leave the English architect hopelessly outclassed in international competitions.

"The Builder's" appraisal of the situation seems thoroughly reliable and accurate, and if the truth of the article is accepted in England and the suggestions made for improvement are followed, there can be little doubt that conditions and the relative excellence of work in America and England will be largely changed within the next decade.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

RECOVERY OF COMPENSATION BASED ON SAVING OVER LOWEST BID

The owner of a building made a contract with an architect for the preparation of plans and specifications for the alteration thereof. The architect's compensation was to be one-half of the difference saved on the lowest bid that the architect could obtain from local contractors. The lowest obtained was \$26,480. The architect interviewed several subcontractors from whom he obtained estimates, but the enterprise was abandoned. The architect sued on the contract for one-half the difference between the lowest estimated cost of the alterations and what would have been the actual cost to the owner, and also on quantum meruit for the reasonable value of his services. It was held that there could be no recovery on the contract in the absence of proof of what the work would actually have cost if done by separate contractors. It was also held that the plaintiff was entitled to recover on a quantum meruit. The contract was not in any sense a building contract, but one for the rendition of services as an architect, notwithstanding that the particular contract was an unusual one

for an architect to make and one not approved by the American Institute of Architects because of the contingent nature of the remuneration provided for.

Hunter v. Vicario, New York Appellate Division, 130 N. Y. S. 625 (J. S.)

CONSTRUCTION OF PROVISION FOR WEEKLY PAYMENTS

A building contract provided that payments were to be made weekly as the work was done. This provision, it was held, did not mean that the amount of the weekly payments were to be determined by computing each week what fractional part of the entire labor and materials had been performed and furnished, or by ascertaining what relation the cost of the labor and materials of each week bore to the entire contract price. It meant that each week the owner should pay the contractor the expense incurred for labor and material actually performed and furnished, not exceeding the contract price, and that when the work was finished he should pay the contractor the remainder of the contract price.

Kelly v. Alling (Conn.) 80 Atl. 782 (J. S.)



THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK

MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



DETAIL OF ENTRANCE

THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK

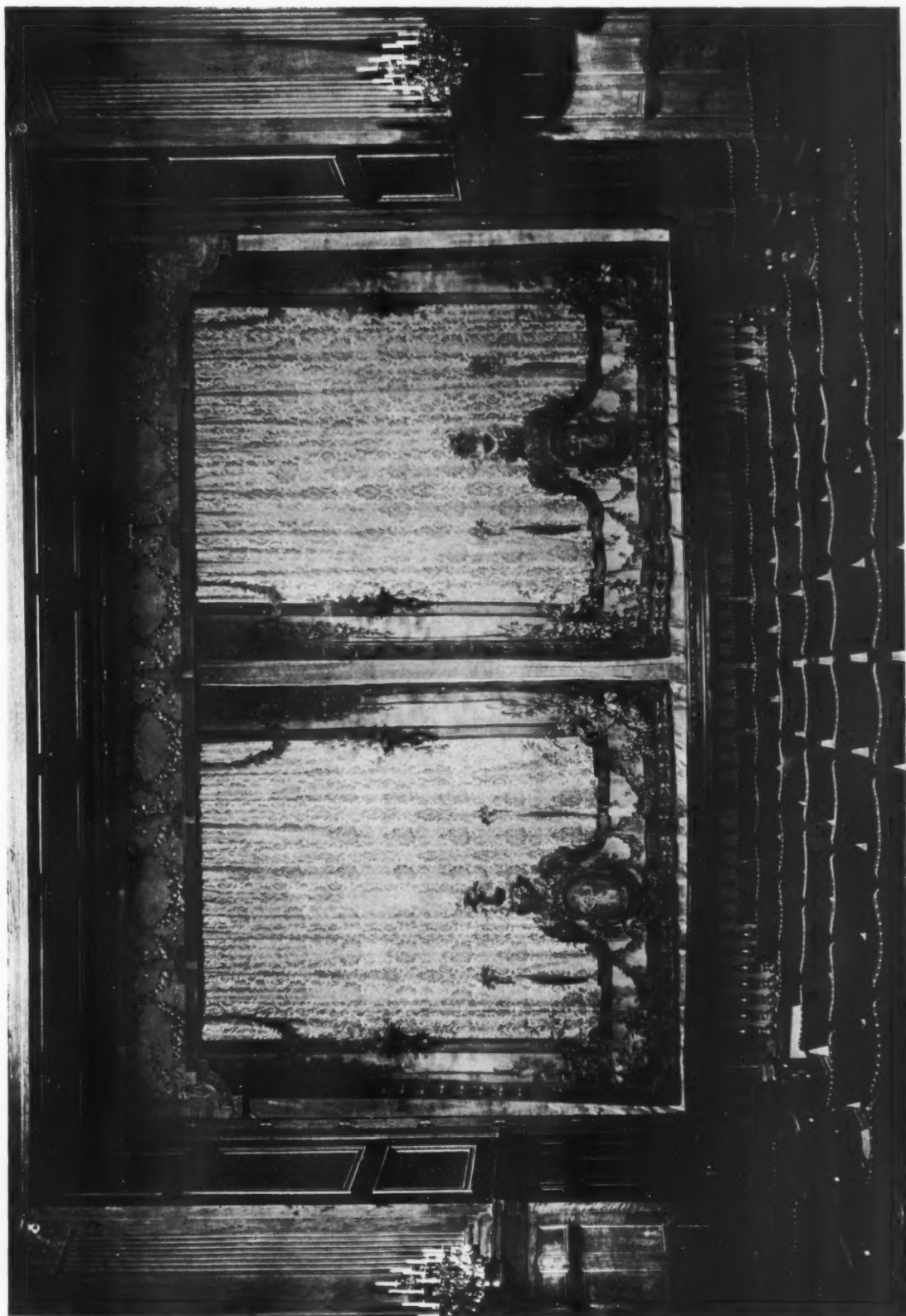
MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. F. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



THE VESTIBULE

THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK

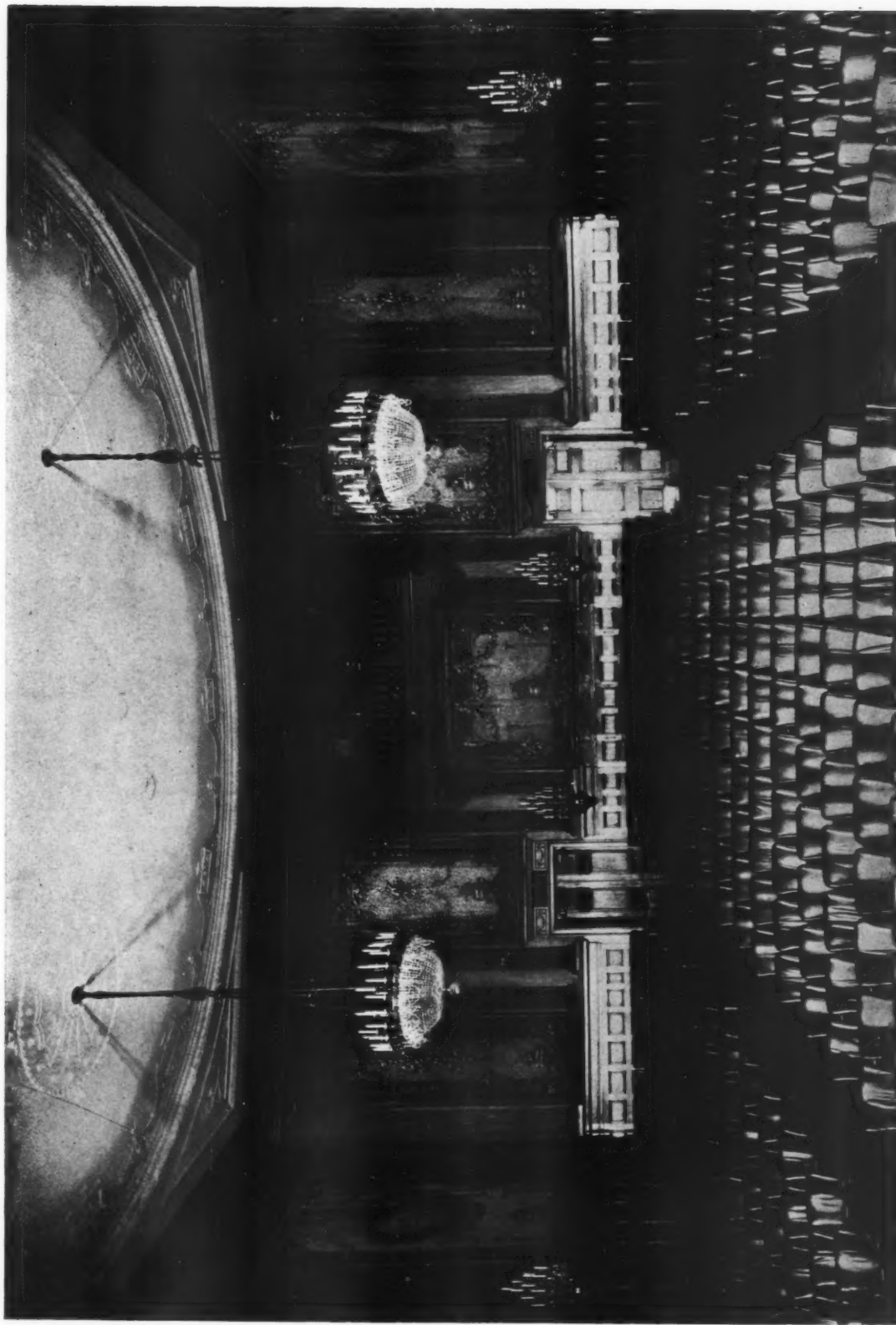
MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. F. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



PROSCENIUM AND CURTAIN

THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK

MRS. HARRY CRIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. F. BURRILL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



LOOKING FROM THE STAGE

THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK

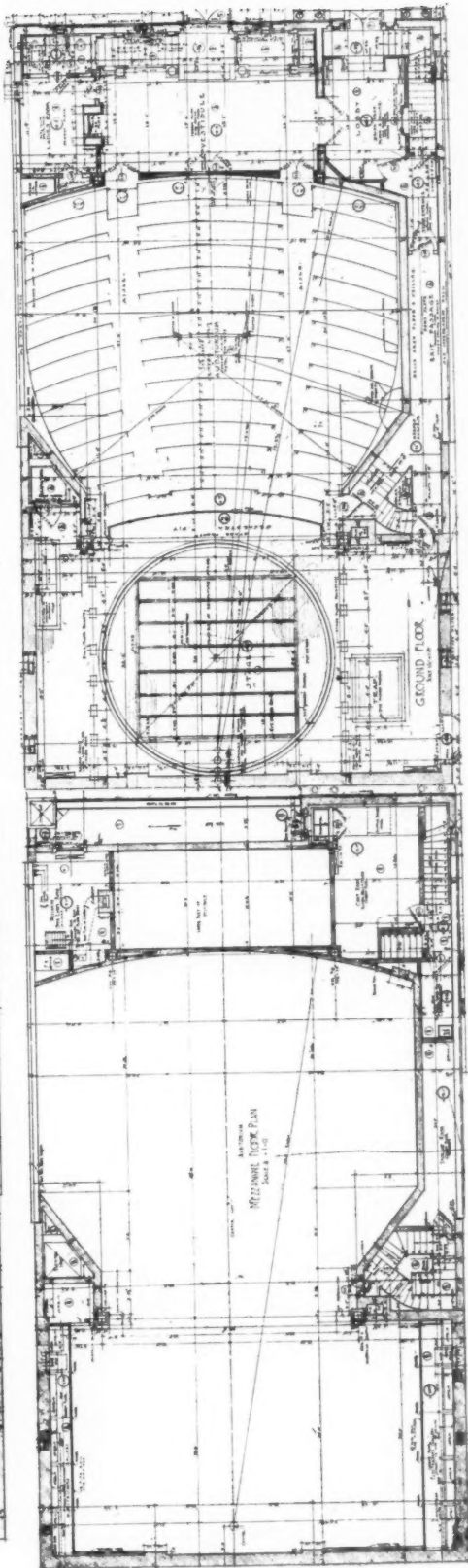
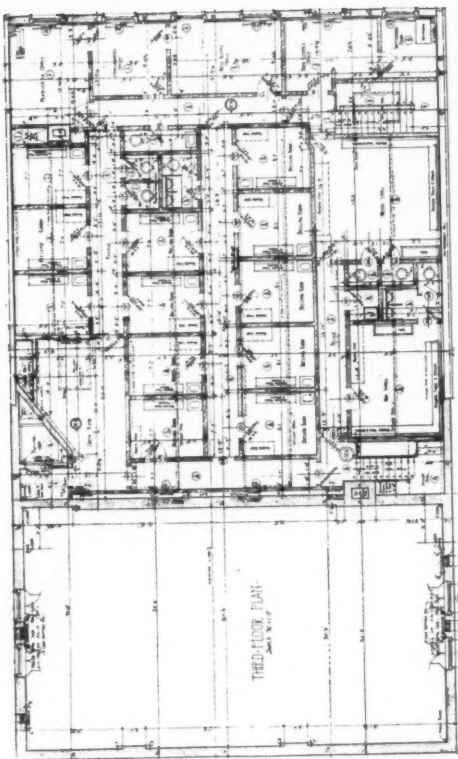
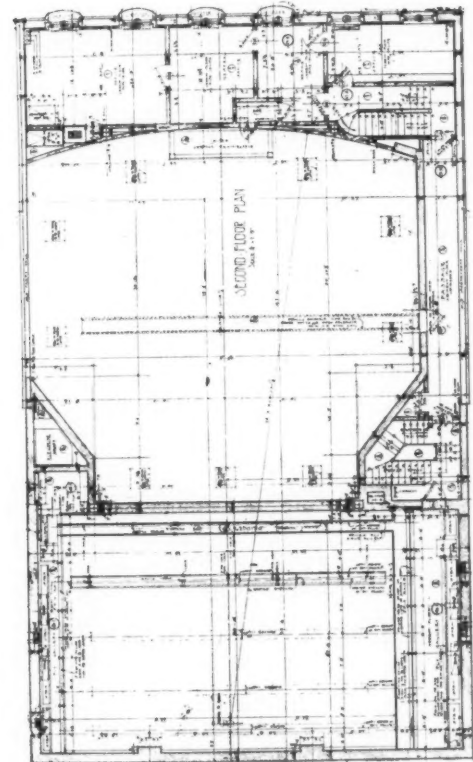
MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. F. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



THE TEA ROOM

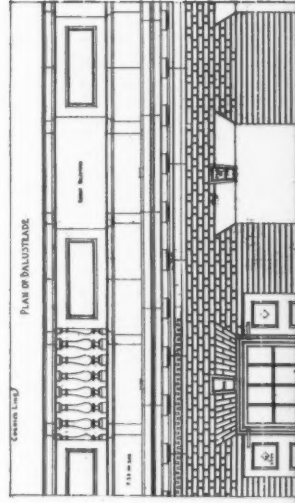
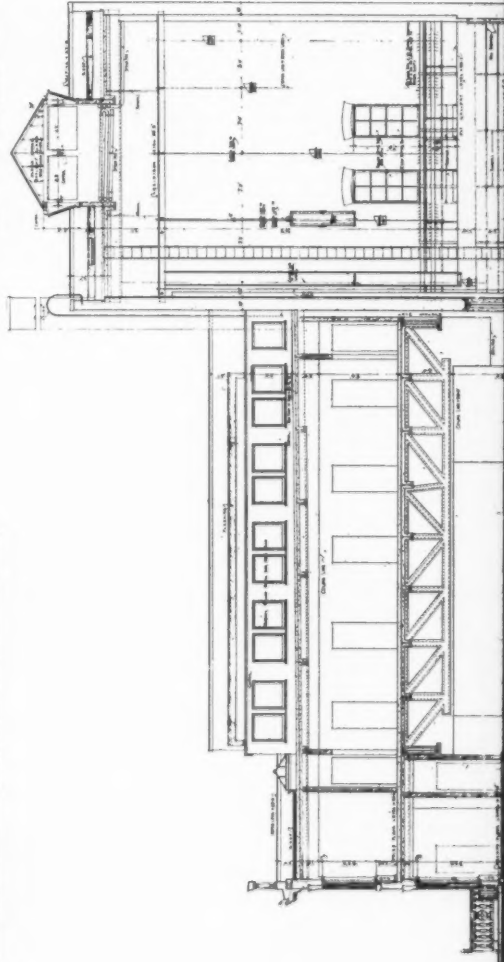
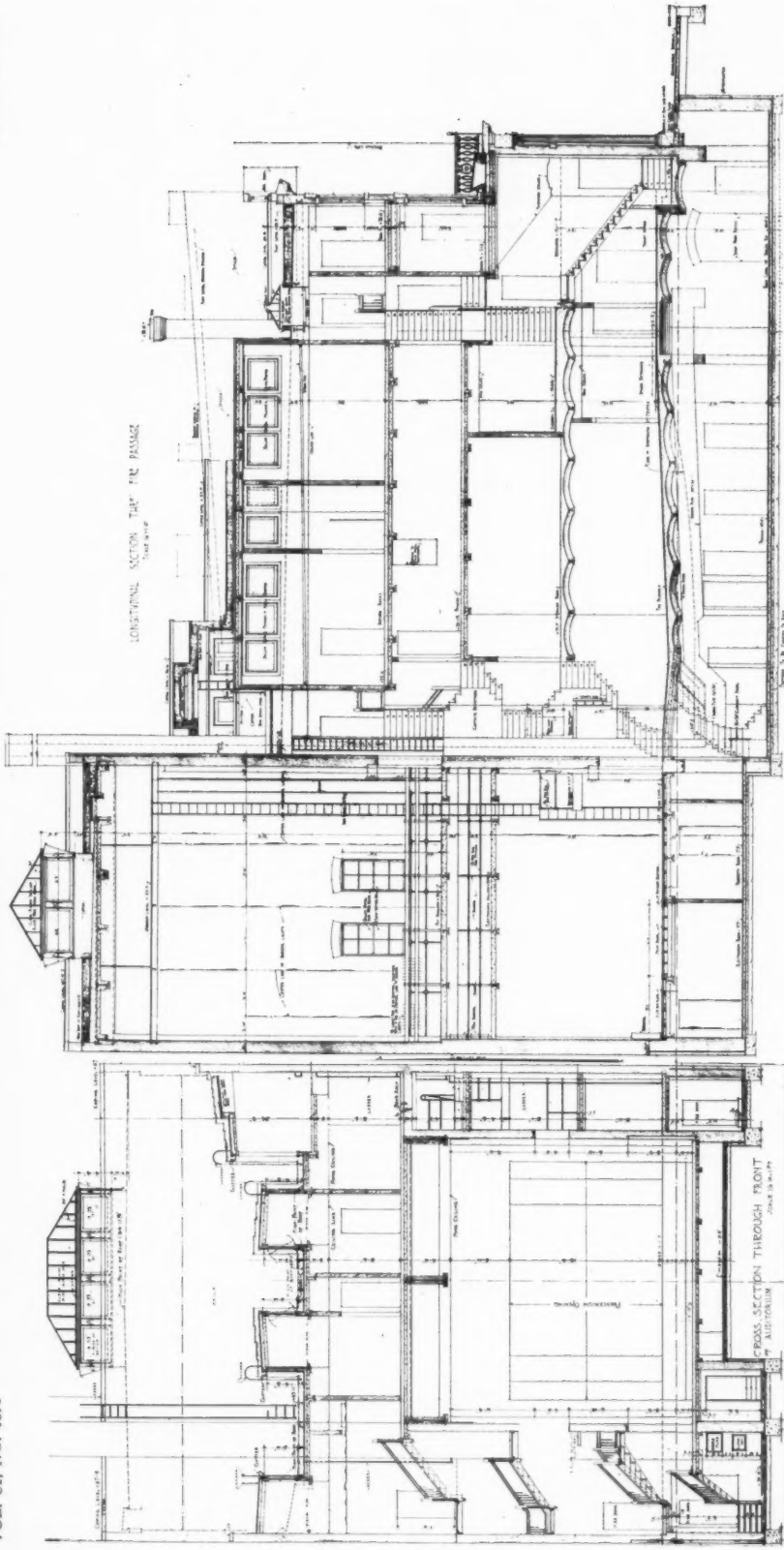
THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 4TH STREET, NEW YORK

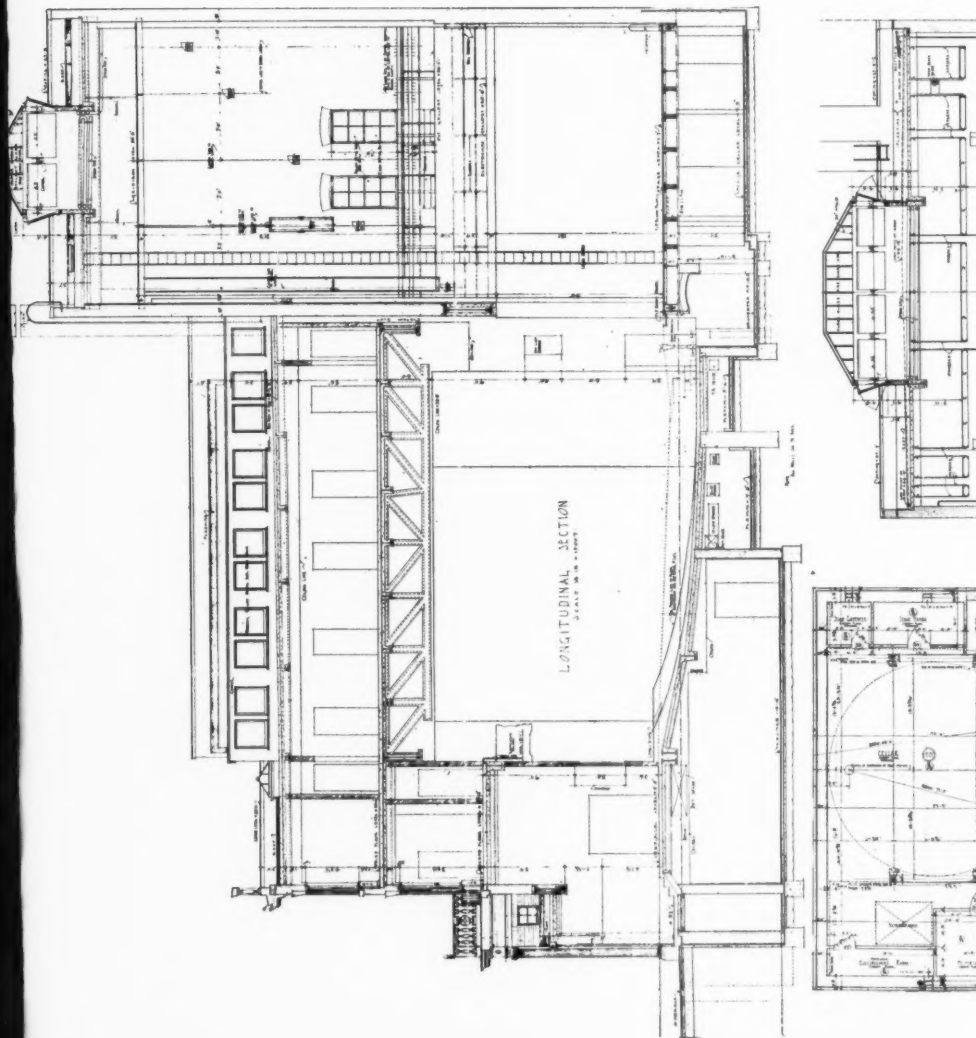
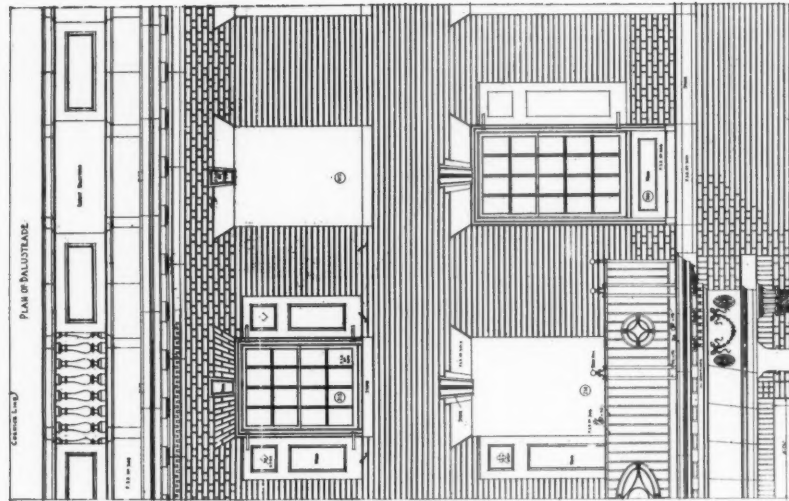
MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. F. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

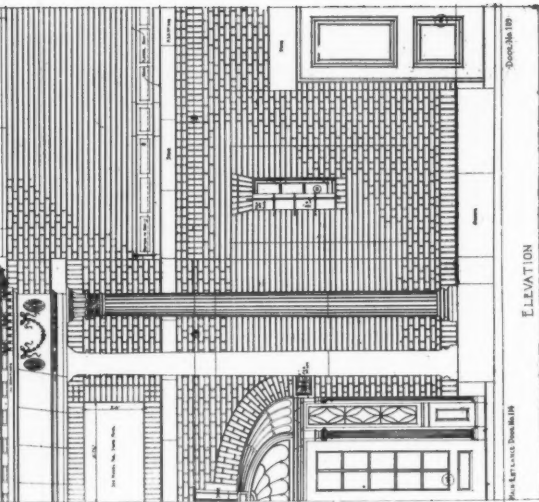
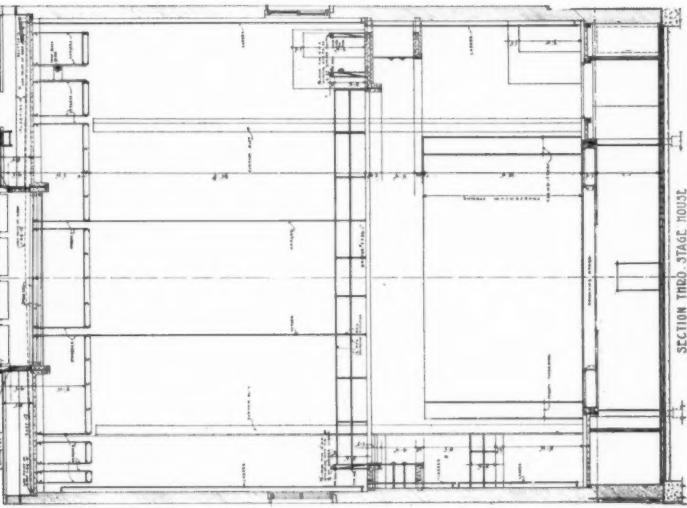
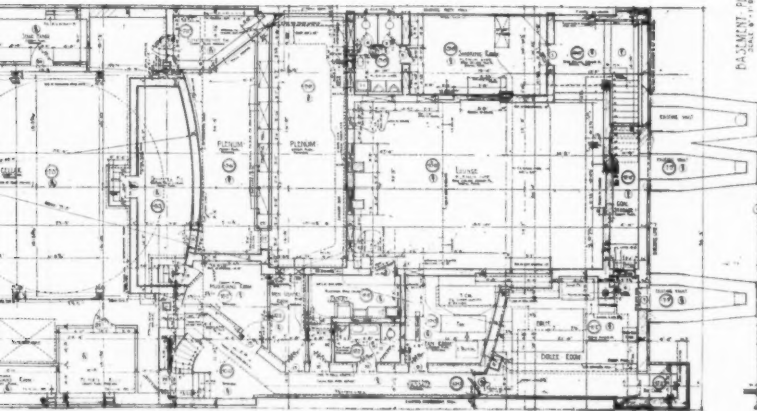


THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK

MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. F. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

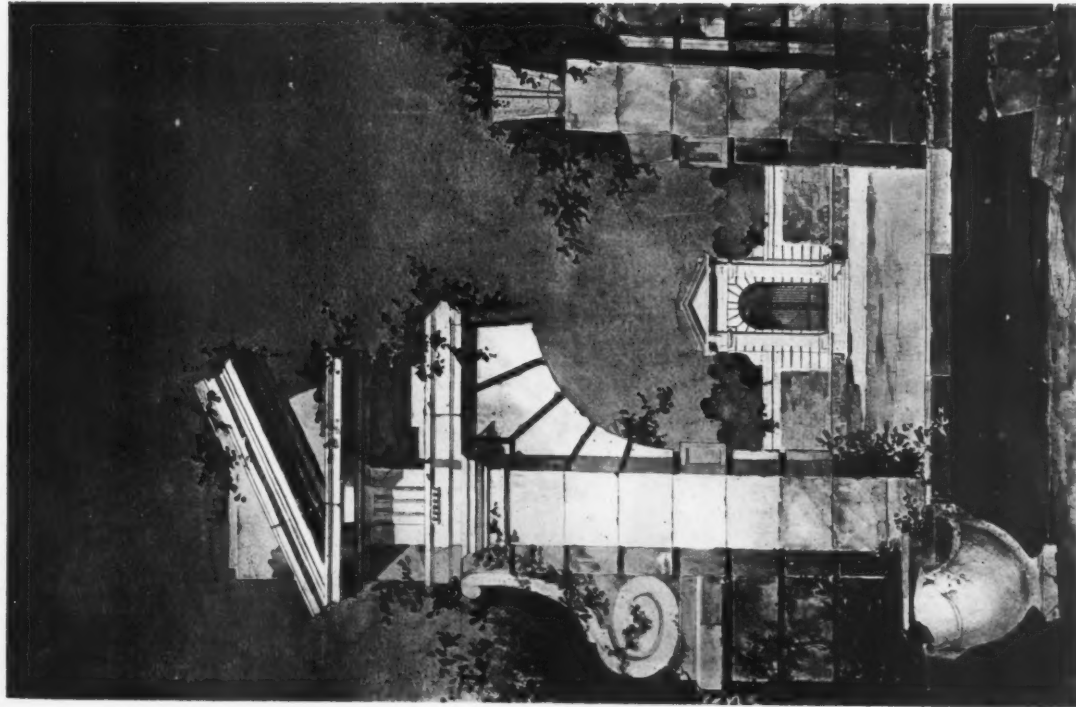




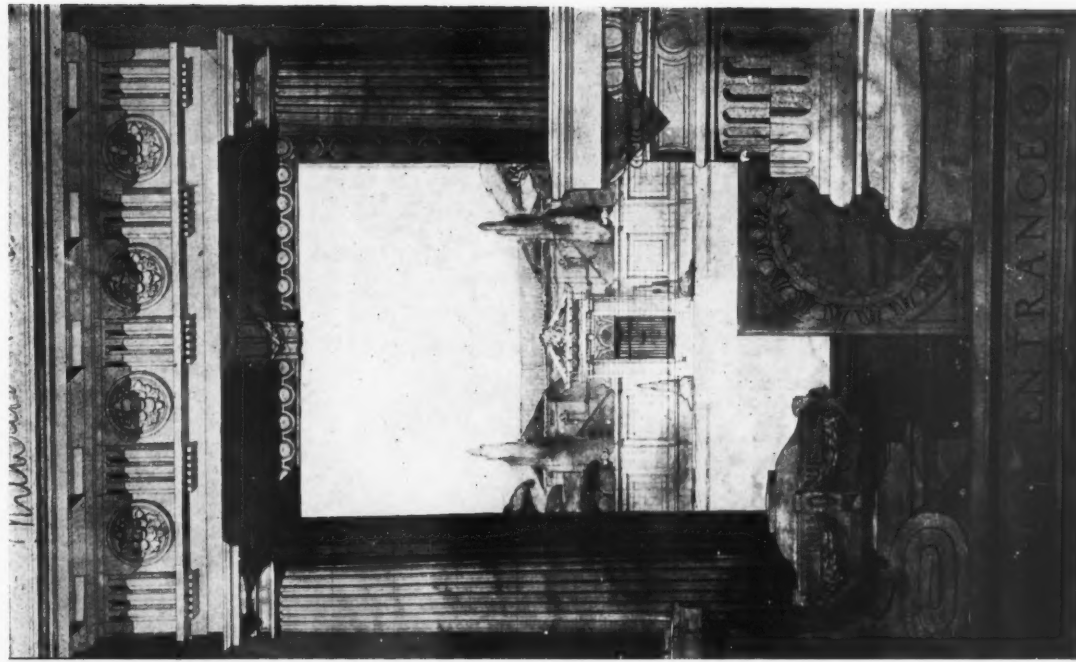


THE LITTLE THEATRE, WEST 44TH STREET, NEW YORK

MR. HARRY CREIGHTON INGALLS AND MR. F. BURRALL HOFFMAN, JR., ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



R. F. MARTIN, MENTION PLACED, ATELIER LICHÉ

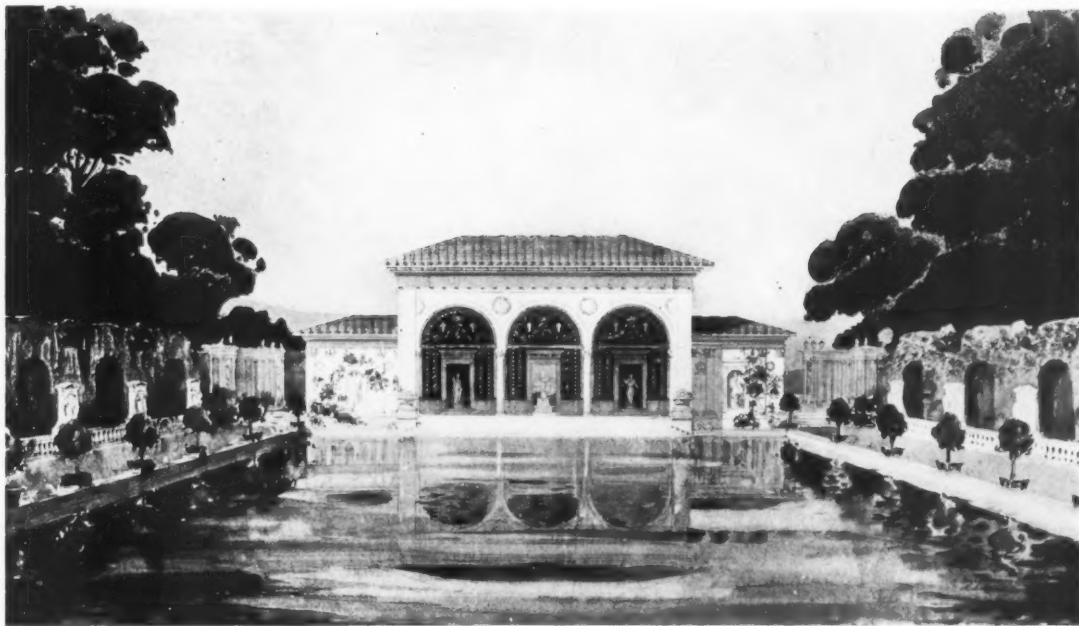


R. E. L. WILDMAN, MENTION PLACED CARNEGIE TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Class "B"—IV Analytique (Order Problem) An Entrance Doorway to a Garden
STUDENT WORK, SOCIETY OF BEAUX-ARTS ARCHITECTS



R. PALLISON, FIRST MEDAL, ATELIER WARE



H. BESHGETOORIAN, FIRST MEDAL, ATELIER PREVOT

Class "B"—IV Projet (Problem in Design) A Reservoir and Loggia

STUDENT WORK, SOCIETY OF BEAUX-ARTS ARCHITECTS



W. JACKMAN, FIRST MEDAL, ATELIER PREVOT



E. CRUMP, JR., FIRST MEDAL, CARNEGIE TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Class "B"—IV Projet (Problem in Design) A Reservoir and Loggia

STUDENT WORK, SOCIETY OF BEAUX-ARTS ARCHITECTS

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT



COURT OF THE PALAZZO BALBI-SENAREGA, GENOA, ITALY

(The garden is surrounded by arcaded colonnades designed by the Architect Corradi in the eighteenth century)