

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

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CONSISTENT BRICKWORK. PART IV.

By GEORGE J. JERVIS



WHILE the American architect of today is giving continual proof of his ability to demonstrate new and refreshing ideas as regards details of brick ornament, we are still at times confronted with examples of what a well known authority recently described as doubtful "decoration" carried out in an equally doubtful "ornamental manner."

"Decorative" panels have been constructed, so crowded with design that they have the appearance of either almost overlapping their borders or else they are of such minute detail that most of the effort sought after is wholly lost on the casual observer. Not only do they transgress in the matter of lineal design but also various discordant notes are struck by the lavish introduction of foreign materials such as stone, cement, marble or highly glazed and brightly colored tile. Whatever their effect in subdued tones or in conjunction with other building material may be, they

are in many cases totally out of harmony with their brick surroundings and more especially when that particular brick has a rough surface.

In regard to this wild expression of ornament which often tends to destroy the effect of what would otherwise be a creditable brick structure, an uninterested observer might well imagine that brickwork itself was some novel introduction in building material which had but reached the experimental stage instead of being as it is the most common and one that has been in existence for thousands of years; but like some musical instrument which, in the

hands of a talented performer, is capable of producing the most exquisite harmony, often emits the most nerve-racking discord when left to the inexperienced efforts of an amateur.

It is not the purpose of this article to discount the use of decorative building material other than brick, for occasionally even in a building of rough textured brick, the architect's scheme may well call for some spot of color which can be obtained only by using some



WESTMINSTER APARTMENTS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.
MR. GEORGE F. ROOSEN, ARCHITECT



HOUSE IN BROOKLYN, N. Y.

MESSRS. MANN & MacNEILLE, Architects

foreign material which reflects that particular shade; but it is the purpose to protest against the practice of introducing such materials as cement, stone, marble, brightly glazed tile, into a design on a thoroughly brick building, where, with a little thought expended upon the consistency of such details, brick or tile of a different shade but similar finish might well be used to better advantage.

The introduction of glazed tile in a brick building should be a matter of grave consideration; for there is a certain contingency which must be met by the architect before it arrives, if he wishes to preserve the general color scheme of his building. This contingency is the toning or weathering of the brick field.

Several well known examples of recent brick architec-

ture decorated with tile patternwork, have, in the last year or so, toned down to the extent of several shades of color; but, while the brick field has been subject to this natural change, the glazed tile retain their original color and stand out in such vivid contrast with the rest of the structure that they seem altogether out of harmony with the general scheme.

This condition might have been avoided in two ways: the color shades of the glazed tile might have been more subdued in tone; or the decorations, being carried out in brick, would have toned down in sympathy with the rest of the building.

Details of design in brick need not in an ordinary way necessitate the use of special brick which might have to be manufactured by the brick maker at a good deal of extra expense. Today some of our

best known face brick manufacturers have anticipated the wants of the architect and include, in their stock sizes, brick units of



A HOUSE IN BROOKLYN, N. Y.

MR. W. B. TUBBY, Architect

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HOUSE OF MR. REGINALD DEKOVEN, PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY

MR. JOHN RUSSELL POPE, ARCHITECT

such dimensions that they can be readily adapted to different forms of design.

The simplest designs to execute, so far as the mason is concerned, are naturally those in which standard size brick are used and in which the pattern-work does not interfere with the particular bond used.

Examples of this are to be observed in Fig. 1, Flemish Bond, and Fig. 2, English Bond. In both of these the border is



HUBER'S RESTAURANT, CONEY ISLAND, N. Y.

MESSRS. HELME & HUBERTY, ARCHITECTS

composed of standard stretchers which in the particular designs illustrated represent a brick measuring eight inches by two and one-quarter inches by three and three-quarter inches, the joints used being five-eighth inch in thickness; thus, if the

design were used as a panel bordered by a brick field, the vertical eight-inch brick would equal three courses.

The shaded portions show the relative color values which in these cases are three only; but the artistic effect is greatly enhanced by using a variation of shades in all three colors.

An interesting variation of chain pattern worked out in English Bond is shown in Fig. 2. The color values would of course depend on the general shade of brick used in the whole building, a dark pattern showing on a light field or vice versa.

With regard to simple brick patternwork laid out in any of the principal bonds, it is worth noticing that, while in English Bond the centre line of any symmetrical design may well lie in either the stretcher or header course, yet, in Dutch Bond, owing to the alternating courses of stretchers breaking joint, this centre horizontal line can be situated only in the centre of a course of headers.



DETAIL PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 95, NEW YORK CITY

MR. C. B. J. SNYDER, ARCHITECT

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Fig. 3 shows a suggestion for Heraldic detail, particularly applicable in Tudor decoration.

In Fig. 4, another effective design is shown. Both this design as well as Fig. 3

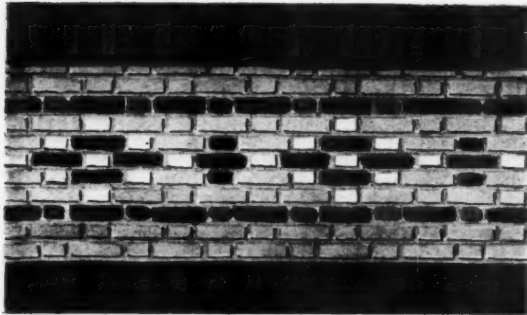


FIG. 1. CHAIN DESIGNS IN THREE SHADES

would necessarily be constructed of pieces ground from standard size brick.

Fig. 5 shows a suggestion for a running pattern in brick using standard size stretchers for the border and the same cut to size for part of the field, the rest of the field being composed of a brick or smaller units, six by six tile, half diagonals, and special cut pieces.

So many excellent works have been published on brick designs generally, that

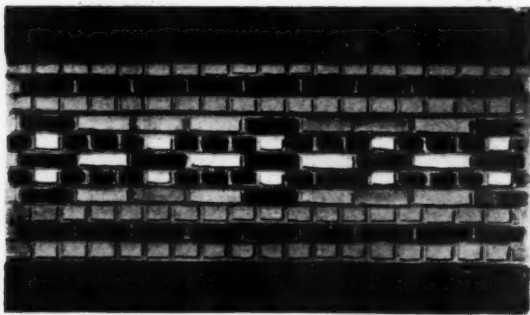


FIG. 2. CHAIN DESIGN IN THREE SHADES

it would be idle to attempt to describe the numerous forms of patternwork possible in this material. Unfortunately, however, brick patternwork, until quite recently, was restricted to experiments in monotoned red and blue brick until the very term became symbolic of checkerboard ornamentation of the "oil cloth" school of decoration.

It was not until the advent of the artistic face brick of today with its different shades

of color and varied texture that the brick manufacturer gave the architect a material worthy of serious and careful treatment.

The Elizabethan residence illustrated in this article is a charming example of delicate arrangement of brick decoration, the field being composed of numerous shades of red, olive, brown and brownish purple

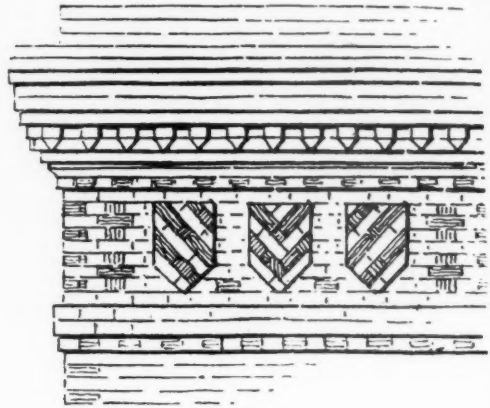


FIG. 3

bricks, which give the whole surface an effect of old-time brickwork.

Another excellent example of brick treatment may be noticed in the case of a residence in Brooklyn, particular attention being called to the details of the chimney, frieze course, bricotta ornament as well

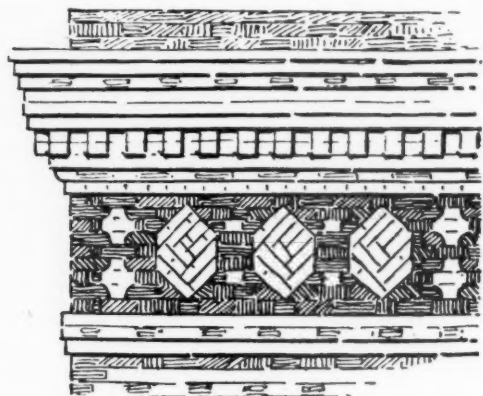
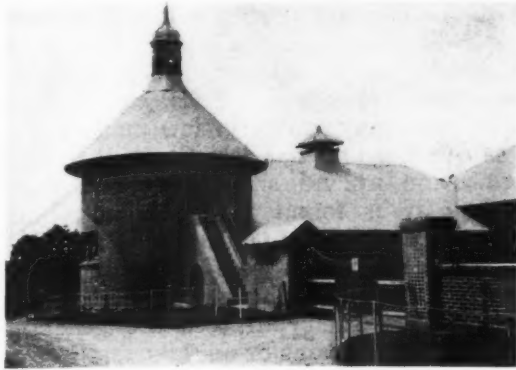


FIG. 4

as the panels over the windows composed of tile and small sized brick.

The Persian Mosaic panels in the frieze of the five-story apartment house of which an illustration is shown, lend a particularly

decorative effect to the building which is constructed of various shades of red rough textured brick, similar to the Elizabethan residence mentioned above; the brick for the field of the panels being selected shades from the same group as used in the field of the building, with the addition of ivory



FARM BUILDING, BERNARDSVILLE, N. Y.
MR. ALFRED HOPKINS, ARCHITECT

gray brick which are used for the lighter shades of patternwork.

The restaurant building, in half-timbered work is typically old English in design with a particularly effective horizontal panel over the arch.

The accompanying illustrations would serve to show that architects today are

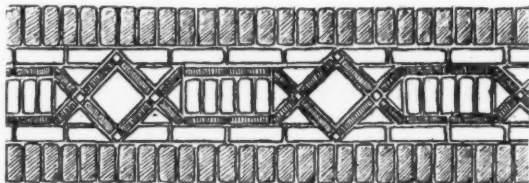


FIG. 5

availing themselves of opportunities to express decorative features in the same material as that of the buildings they adorn and which in detail, texture and color are absolutely consistent with the entire architectural scheme.

A splendid heritage of brick architecture has been handed down to us through past centuries. We have, at the present day, better material, increased facilities, and an unlimited field of action, all of which may well augur a bright and brilliant future for brick architecture.

GENUINE MAHOGANY

MAHOGANY (*Swietenia mahagoni*) is one of the standard woods brought into this country from tropical America. It is procured nowhere else, and the extent of the territory in which it grows and the available supply are matters of unusual interest to architects and furniture manufacturers. These points have been the subject of a good many articles in the trade and scientific journals, but in nearly every instance the writers have claimed that this wood is very scarce and difficult of access. This is true in part, but there is still an enormous amount of mahogany throughout the West Indies, Mexico, and Central and parts of South America. No one knows just how much standing mahogany there is left. Vast areas are believed to be available in Mexico and Central America that have never been estimated.

During 1910, 18,000,000 feet of mahogany were imported into the United States. It is difficult to ascertain the quantity of mahogany cut and sent to other countries or the amount used locally, but it is a conservative estimate to put this figure at 12,000,000 feet, making a total consumption of about 30,000,000 feet. The United States is probably the largest consumer of true mahogany. In addition to these 18,000,000 feet used in the United States there is an annual consumption of about 22,000,000 feet of other woods sold for mahogany. The bulk of these substitute mahoganies comes from Africa. This substitution of other woods for the true kind does not mean so much that deliberate deception is being practiced as it does that the demand for genuine mahogany greatly exceeds the supply.

In the United States, and particularly in the eastern states, a considerable demand has arisen for tropical American woods, which, to a large extent, means mahogany and mahogany-like woods. There are other timber trees in the forests that are equally, if not more valuable for special purposes, but for general cabinet making, furniture, interior finish, patterns, and numerous other purposes, the timber of this tree stands pre-eminent. This fact points to the value of this wood and how desirable it is to maintain

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a permanent supply. Mahogany is without doubt the most valuable timber tree in the American tropics, and meets every requirement of the architect for interior finish. It is still more highly esteemed in all parts of the civilized world for furniture and cabinet making, and for these purposes there is an increasing demand. This demand is now being made upon this wood, not only because of its excellent qualities, but also because it is the fashion wood, and, consequently commands excellent prices. The stumpage value, however, is exceedingly low as compared with our native cabinet woods. This is due largely to the fact that the merchantable trees of mahogany are very scattered with a mixture of many other kinds. It may be safely stated that on an average there are not more than two large mahogany trees to the acre. This peculiarity of the scattered growth of the merchantable trees and the present unsatisfactory and expensive means of transportation are of great disadvantage to mahogany loggers.

Mahogany has as wide a range of growth as any other important species with which it associates. The tree produces abundant seeds and young trees may be seen everywhere in the open forest, which seems to insure the future supply of this timber. It is a fine straight tree with a trunk that is cylindrical and comparatively free from branches, except at the top. It is not uncommon to find considerable areas in which the majority of the mature mahogany trees attain heights of from 80 to 160 feet, with good stems from three to six feet in diameter, and from 50 to 70 feet to the first branch. Taking an average, however, a mahogany tree in a good condition and one representing a fair average matured specimen of its kind would run from about 80 to 90 feet in height, and from three to five feet in diameter at the base. Under such conditions trees of this size might be expected to be sound and convertible into good marketable timber. The large trees often have a log content of from 3,000 to 10,000 feet. When a tree has attained a diameter of two feet it is considered fit for the axe, but sometimes trees only eighteen inches in diameter are felled.

Mahogany is generally considered to be a lowland tree, and it has an areal range of

growth almost coinciding with that of Spanish cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), but in altitudinal range these two species differ in so far that mahogany grows also on the uplands of Mexico and Cuba. The areas which contain the largest mahogany trees are along the water courses in southern Mexico and parts of Central America, with the choicest portion midway between the Gulf Coast and the interior mountainous districts. In all cases it delights in an ironstone formation. It is well known that mahogany grown in low moist soil is less durable and has less figure than that grown on upland situations. The finest mahogany is found in the higher, drier situations of from 1,000 to 3,000 feet.

The largest trees were originally cut by the Indians for making canoes and the trees suitable for such purposes are generally found along streams or on flats, and canoes made from them will last in water for many years. Mahogany is famed for its indestructible qualities. It is not attacked by the teredo or the white ants. Its resistance to the latter is remarkable, and houses built of this wood when thoroughly seasoned are almost indestructible and have been known to stand in perfect preservation for nearly 100 years. The wood has the peculiar property for turning quite dark with age and it retains this characteristic color as long as a piece of it is left. Altogether it is a remarkable timber and is highly esteemed for all sorts of outside work as well as for interior finish and furniture. In case any decay does occur after having been in use it will always be found that this is confined largely to the sapwood, which, therefore, ought always to be avoided in places where the wood is subjected to conditions favorable to the growth of fungi.

The weight of the wood when freshly cut, is a little over 75 pounds per cubic foot, which is reduced to about 45 or 50 pounds when thoroughly seasoned. While the wood is strong and durable, it is easy to work, and when seasoned or partially so, will float in water. It will take a beautiful polish, and, owing to its peculiar qualities, resists the influence of close contact with iron. Up to this time there has been no suitable substitute found to take the place of mahogany for making canoes in the tropical American waters.

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AN EXAMPLE WORTHY OF EMULATION

IT must be acknowledged, however distasteful the admission, that members of the British Parliament not infrequently exhibit qualities of intellect incomparably superior to those possessed by our average member of Congress, as evidenced, for example, when matters involving an appreciation of architecture or any of the multitudinous questions connected with its practice are at issue. We have but recently had occasion to refer to the scholarly and able letter written by Mr. Arthur W. Soames, M. P., to the *London Times*, anent, the question of the selection of an architect for Government buildings to be erected at Delhi, India. Mr. Soames exhibited not only a thorough knowledge of his subject but a keenness of mind and an appreciation of the conditions governing architectural practice of an order not often encountered in this country outside of the profession.

A further instance indicating a realization on the part of those in public service in England, of the importance of art in the general scheme of life is afforded by a study of the personnel of the recently formed Parliamentary Committee of the Imperial Arts. The purpose of this Committee, as stated, is to keep members in touch

with such artistic interests as are, or may be, affected by legislation, or lack thereof, and to assist in the preservation of historical buildings and art treasures and promote the architectural improvement of London and other cities. Acting on this Committee are found many members in both houses of Parliament with Lord Plymouth as chairman.

The importance of the objects sought by this body of men, whose culture, position and attainments so admirably equip them for the work undertaken, can scarcely be overestimated, and it is to be hoped that an organization with similar aims may be formulated in this country. It is quite obvious, however, to any one who has heard or read their utterances in Congress and the reports of Congressional committees, during recent years, on the subjects of architecture and architectural practice, that such a body could not at the present time be largely recruited from our legislative halls.

DISCOURAGEMENTS ENCOUNTERED BY THOSE LABORING FOR CIVIC BETTERMENTS

THE obstacles which must be overcome before the realization of any comprehensive, or even for that matter, restricted plan, of city development, are unquestionably legion, and only by the exercise of an unusual amount of energy, tact and perseverance can results of any lasting importance ever be accomplished. One of the greatest impediments to progress in the direction of civic improvement is, of course, a desire for gain on the part of individuals, although we not infrequently find city departments either consciously or unconsciously lending themselves to personal ends. A case in point is furnished by New York's present attempt to secure a site for a much needed and long delayed courthouse. After many years of more or less arduous labor a location was determined upon and steps taken to acquire the needed property. It now develops that the assessed valuation of the land in question has, since the condemnation proceedings were instituted, been increased \$1,200,000 over the valuation of 1912, or practically 33½ per cent. Of course, such action can only be interpreted as an attempt to influ-

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ence the amount of the impending award to property owners at the expense of the city.

It will probably be as difficult in this, as in many other cases, to fix responsibility but it is perfectly apparent that under conditions which make possible the gratification of personal greed at the expense of the municipality, projects for civic improvements are undertaken at very great disadvantage. The legitimate and proper cost of accomplishing an adequate plan for the development of a city of any consid-

erable size is one of its most discouraging features and hardest to overcome, but when this must be increased beyond all reason in order to meet the demands of those deficient in civic pride, who are, unfortunately, often in a position to enforce their demands, either directly or through political channels, the situation becomes measurably more difficult. Personal interests have so long been considered as above public welfare that some time will doubtless be required for the education of the public to loftier ideals.

RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS

BUILDING RESTRICTIONS—ENFORCEMENT BY TENANT

In an action to enforce building restrictions the Iowa Supreme Court stated the law as to their enforcement by tenants as follows:—Building restrictions and other limitations on the use of property will be enforced in equity in favor of and against all parcels designed to be benefited or burdened, in whosoever's hands the parcels may be, without regard to whether the restriction is a covenant running with the land, or whether the right created is in the nature of an easement, provided the person in possession took with notice of the restriction, either actual or constructive. In a suit to enforce a building restriction, the vital question is not whether there is a covenant running with the land, but whether the restriction was imposed on the servient estate for the benefit of the land in behalf of which it was sought to be enforced.

Building restriction covenants, especially when negative, create equitable easements, amenities or servitudes, which may be enforced by any one interested in the property, without regard to privity either of contract or of estate, and without reference to whether the covenant is one that runs with the land or not, and hence a tenant for years of property, for the benefit of which the covenant was created, may sue in equity to enjoin a threatened interference with plaintiff's use of the easement. Specific performance of a building restriction covenant rests largely within the discretion of the court, and relief will be denied if defendant will be subjected to great hardship, or the consequences would be in-

equitable, but mere pecuniary loss to the defendant will not prevent enforcement.

Johnson v. Robertson, Iowa Supreme Court, 135 N. W. 585.

INJUNCTION OF CONTRACT FOR PREPARATION OF PLANS

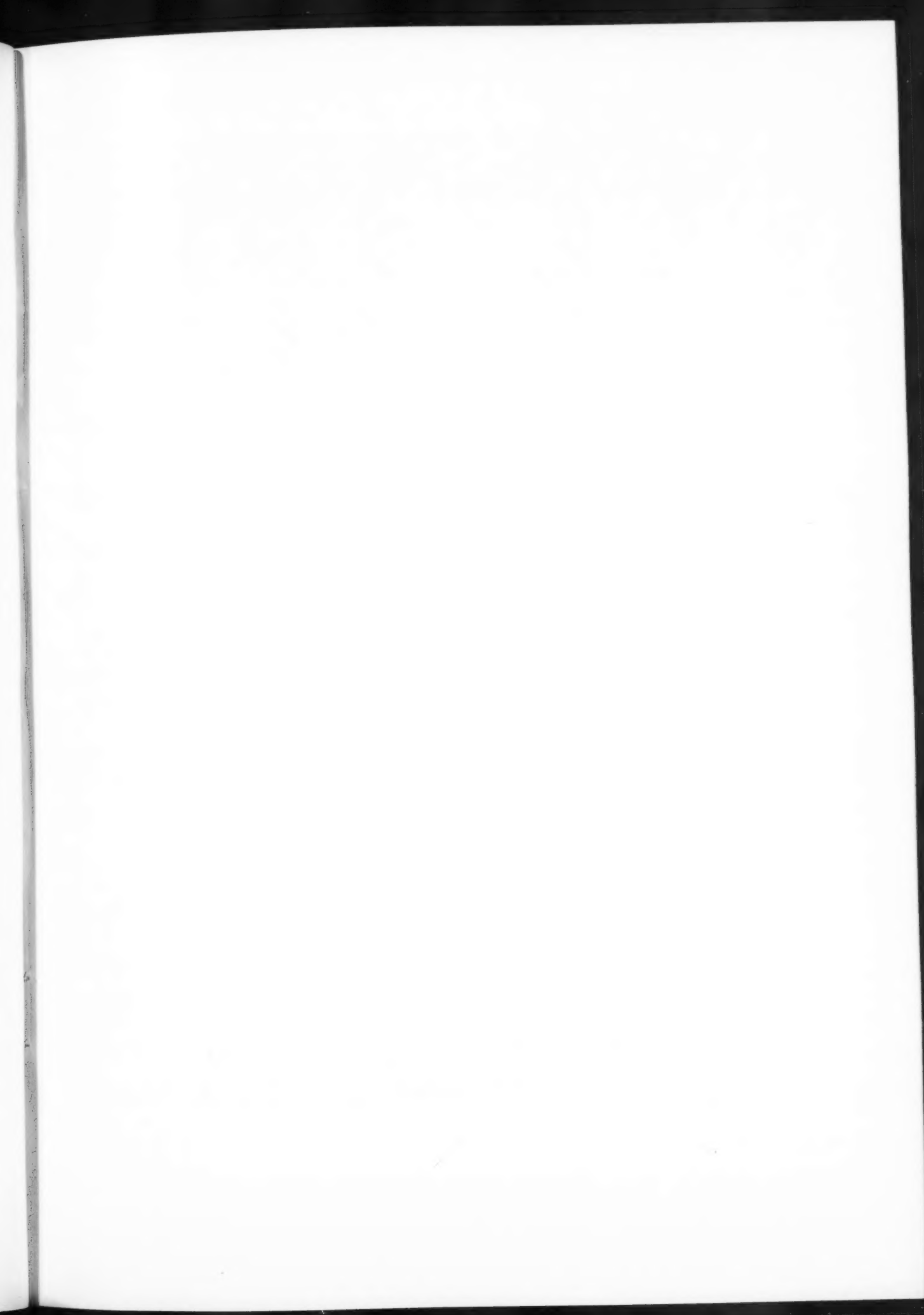
A taxpayer sued to restrain a borough from contracting with a firm of architects for the preparation of plans for a municipal building. It appeared that the real purpose of the action was to compel the approval of an alleged oral contract made by a former president of the borough with another firm of architects. That contract was specifically disapproved by the corporation counsel of the city of which the borough forms a part, his approval as to form of all such contracts being essential under the city charter. The employment under this contract was held shown to be only for preliminary plans. The motion for preliminary injunction was denied.

Hoyt v. Steers, New York Supreme Court, Special Term, 136 N. Y. Supp. 58.

EXPERT TESTIMONY AS TO COST OF WORK

In an action for damages for refusal to allow the plaintiff to perform a contract for the alteration of a building, the plaintiff attempted to show the difference between the contract price and the cost of the work by the testimony of a competent expert in estimating cost of work. The witness did not separate the cost of the labor from the cost of the material in computing the cost of the work. It was held that this did not disqualify him from testifying as to the profits. The fact merely affected the weight to be given to his testimony.

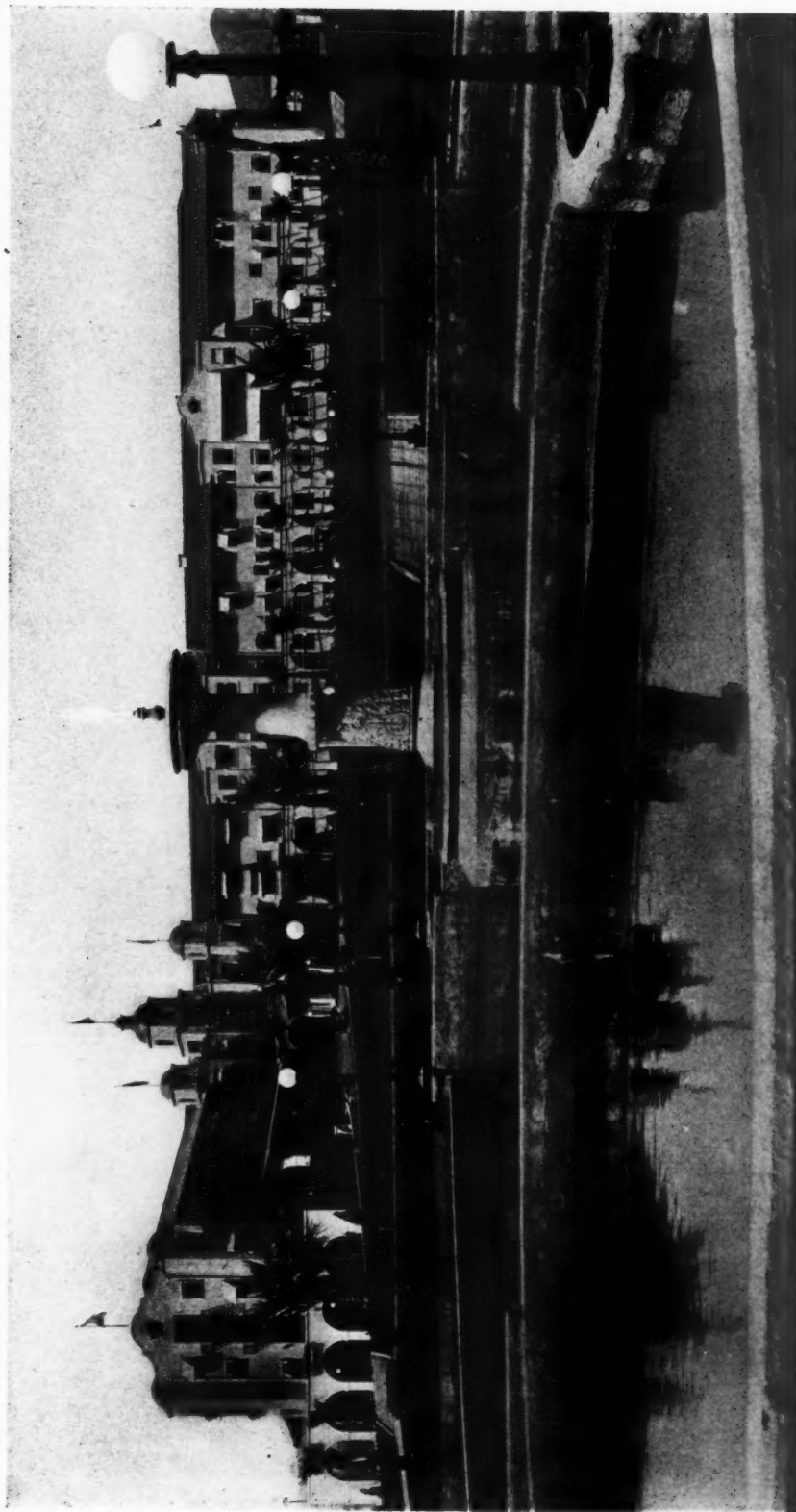
Petterson v. Thomas, 136 N. Y. Supp. 74.



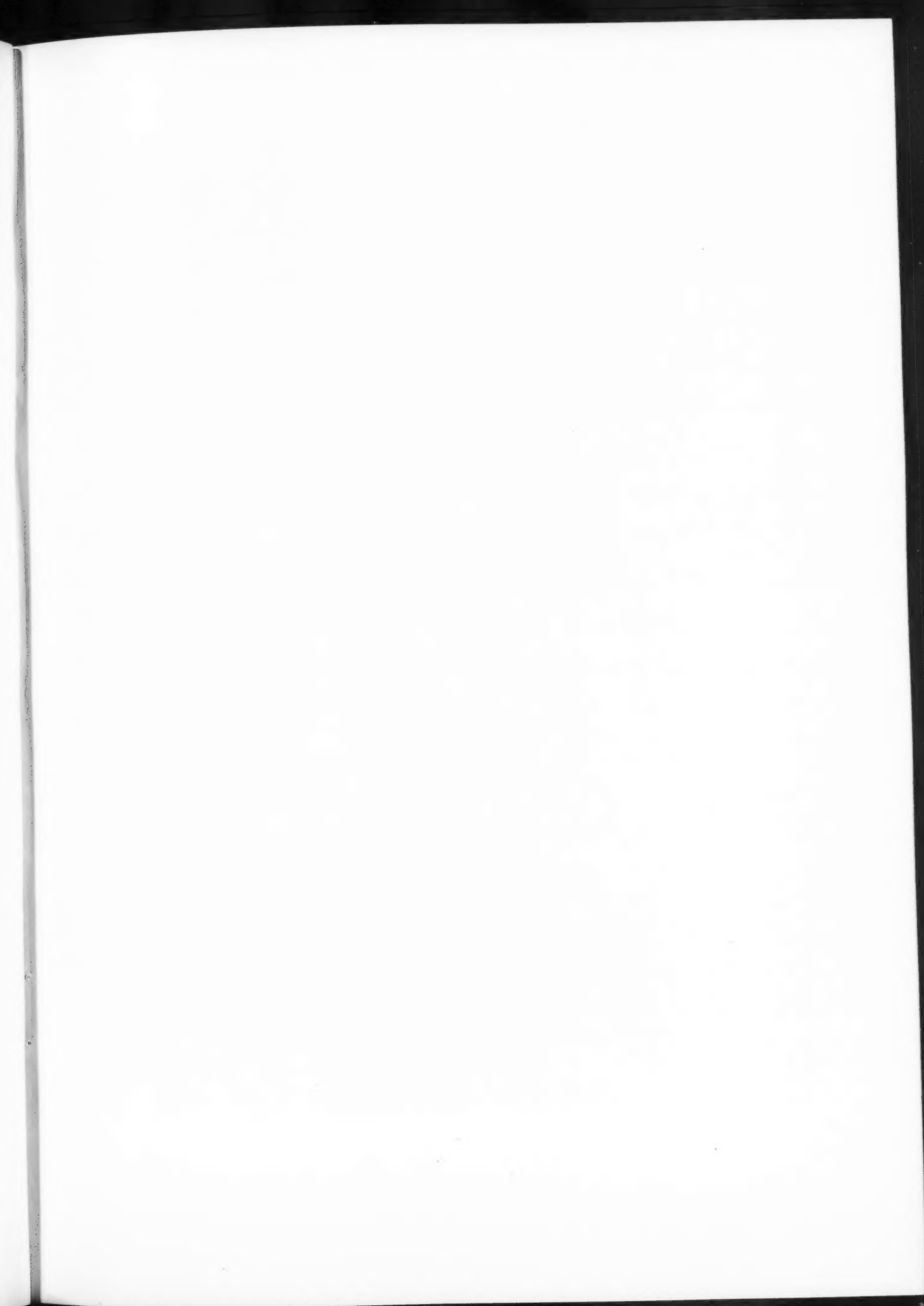
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HOTEL AT BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA
MR. ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT

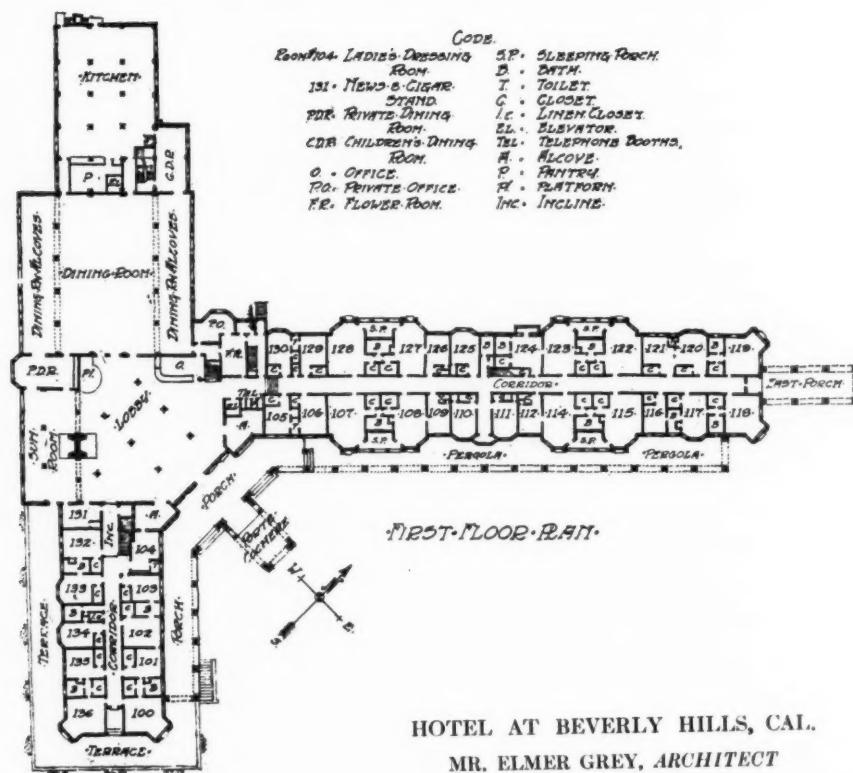




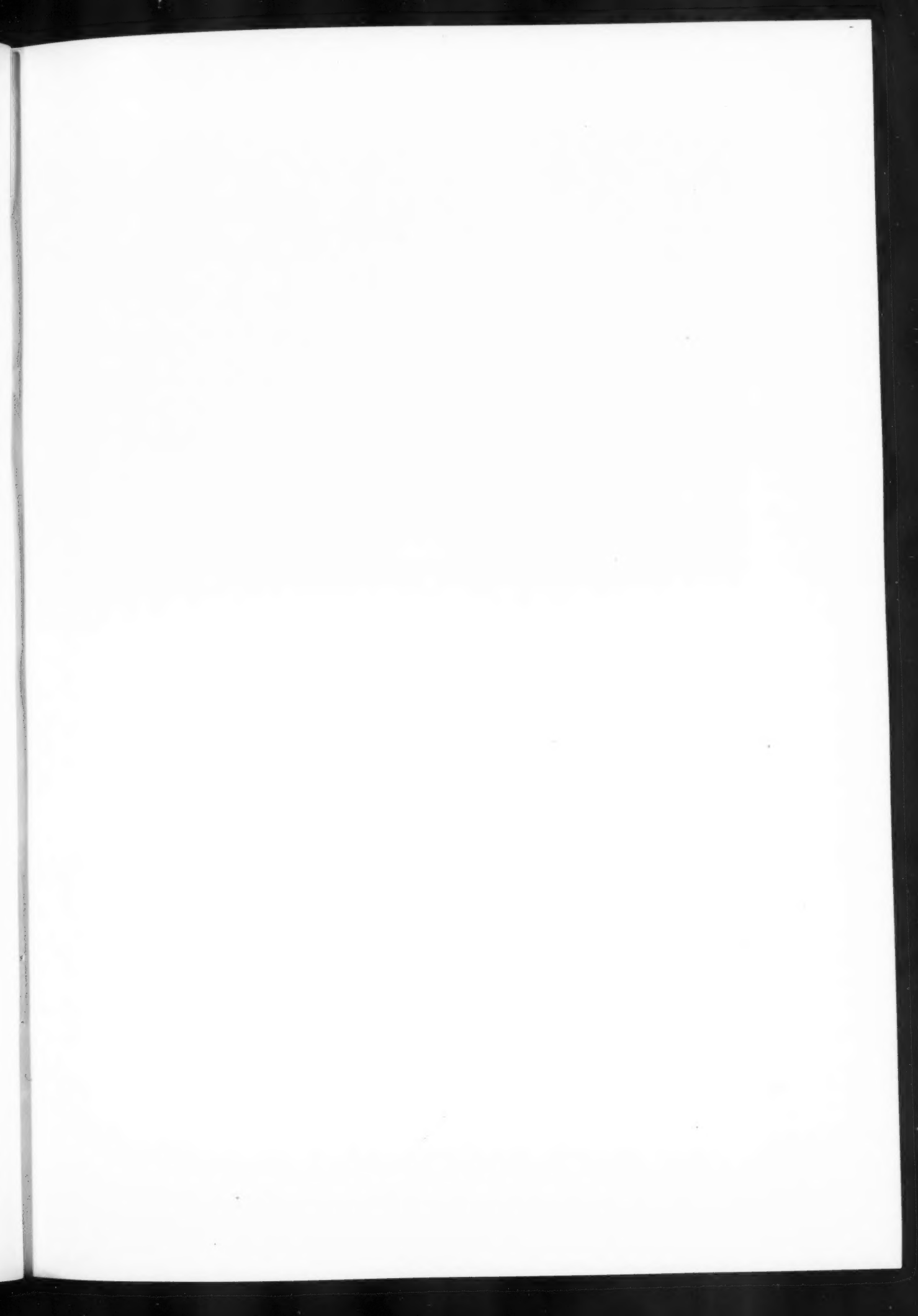
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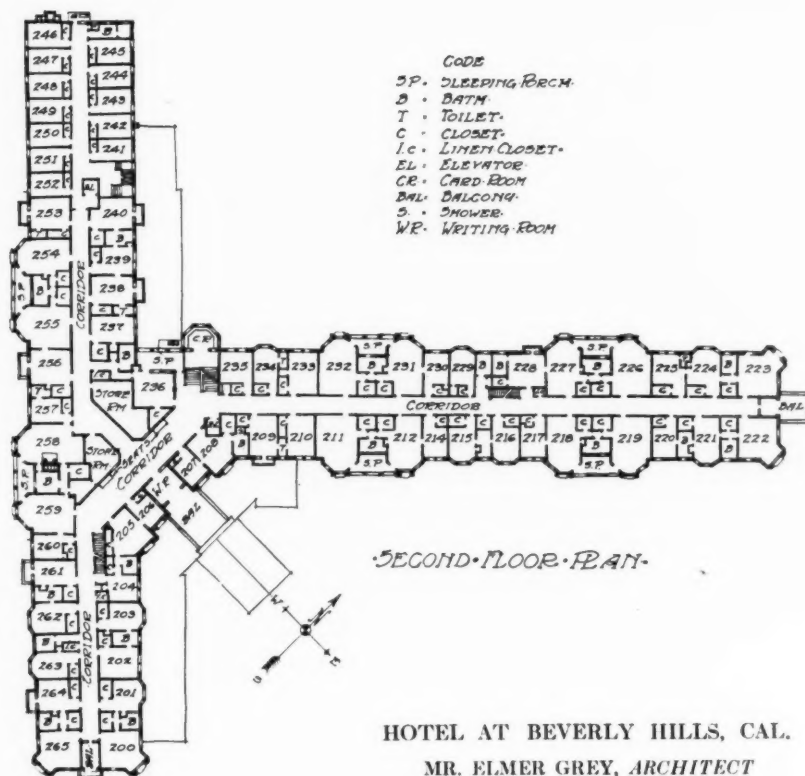
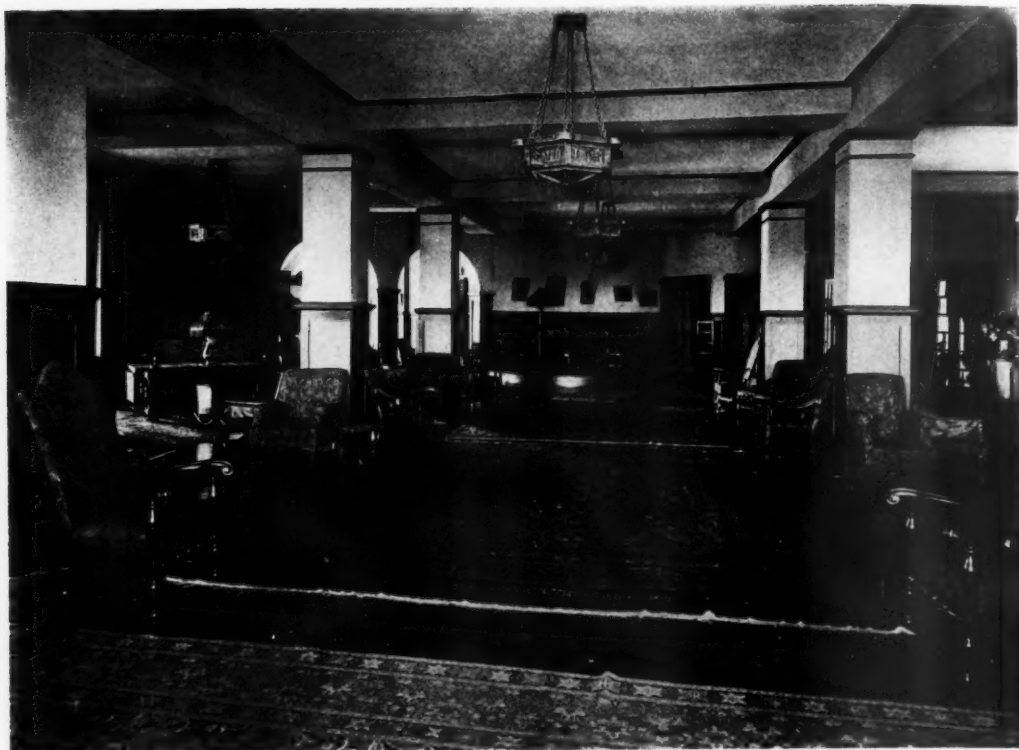
HOTEL AT BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA
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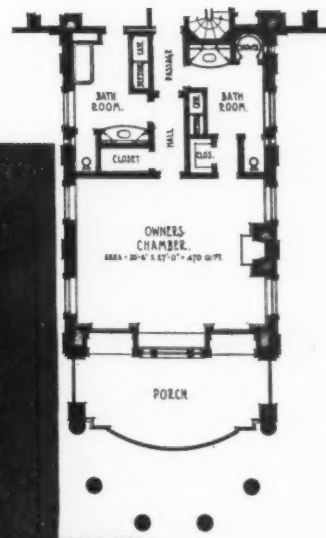
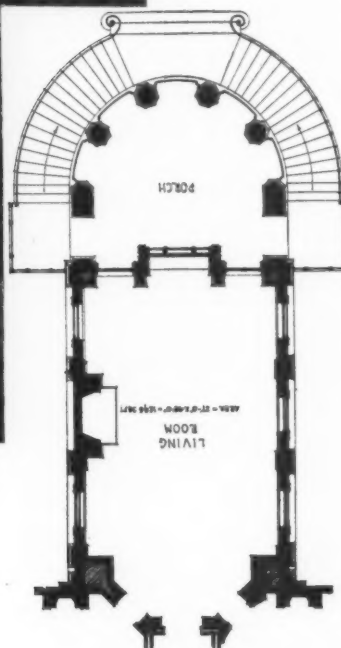
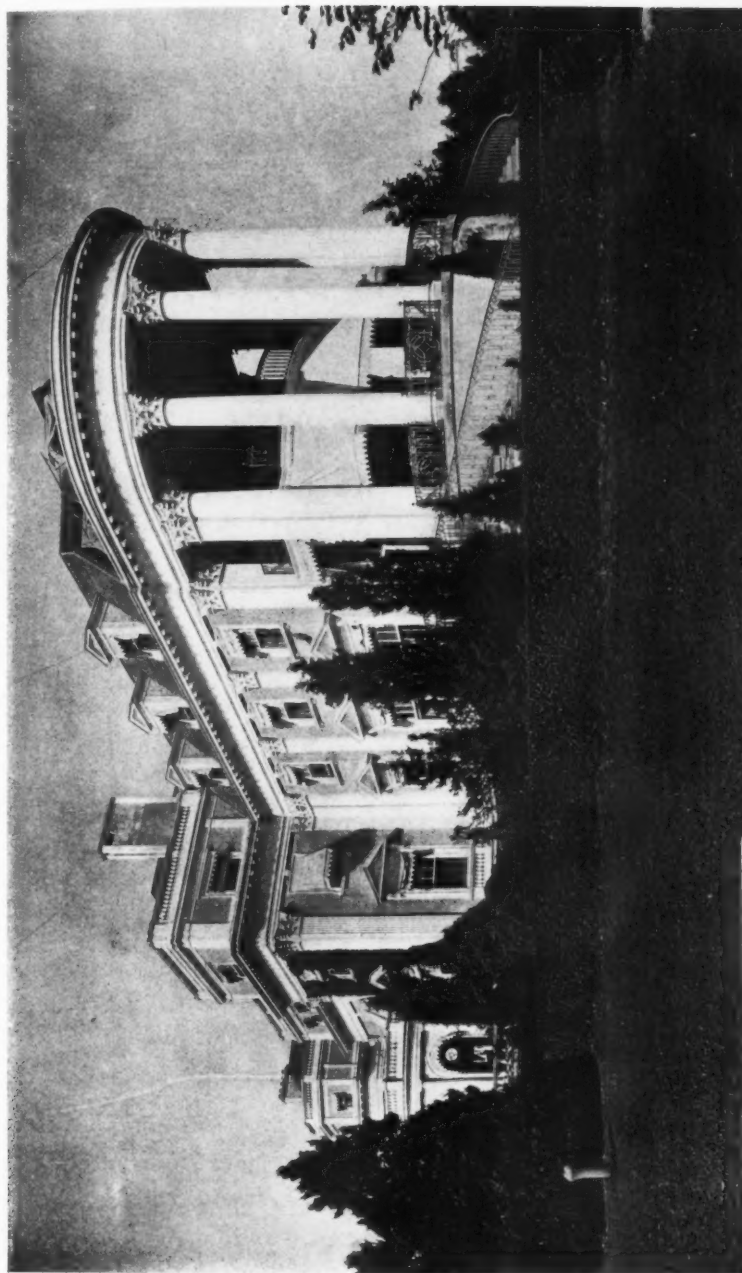
HOTEL AT BEVERLY HILLS, CAL.
MR. ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT





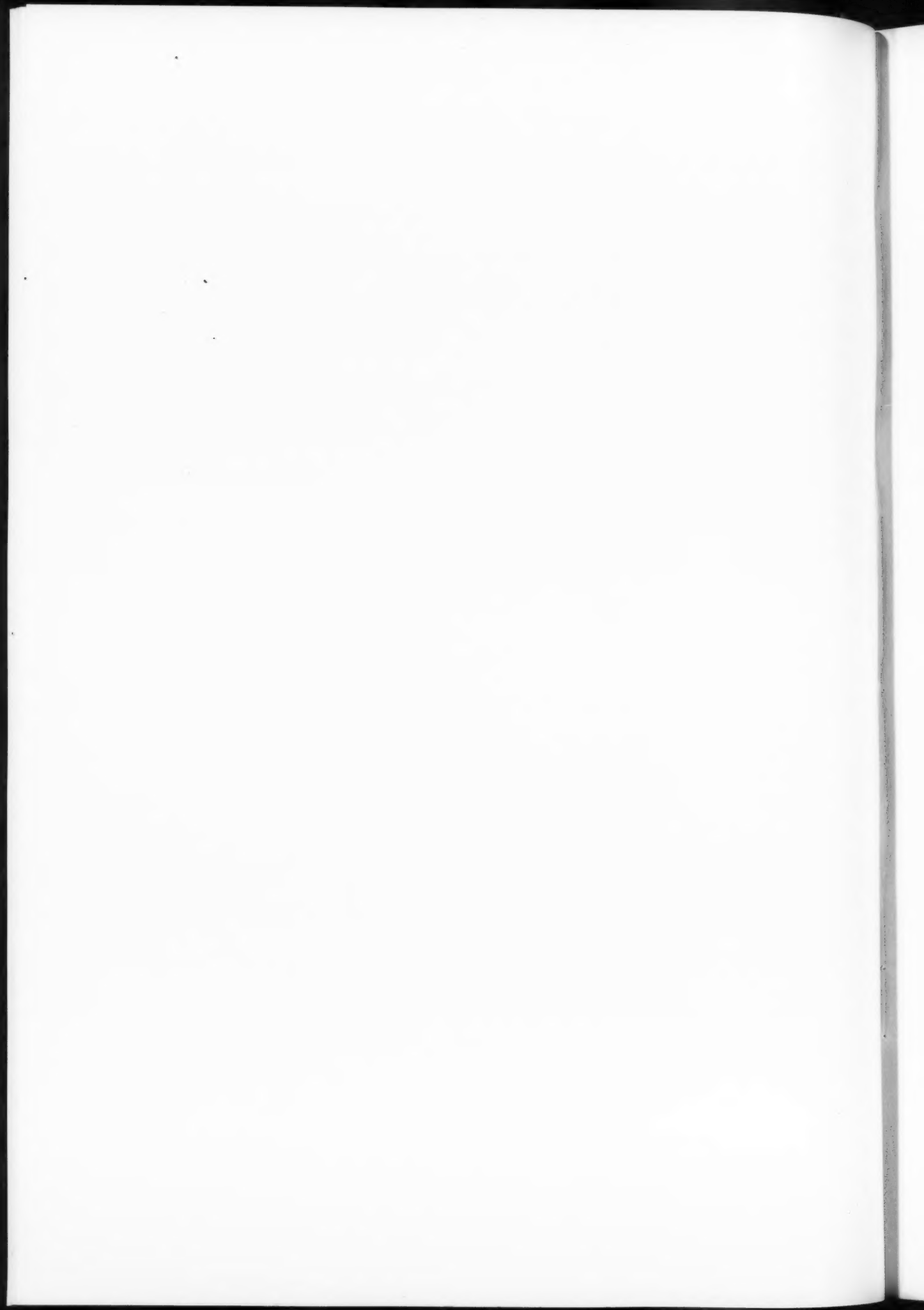
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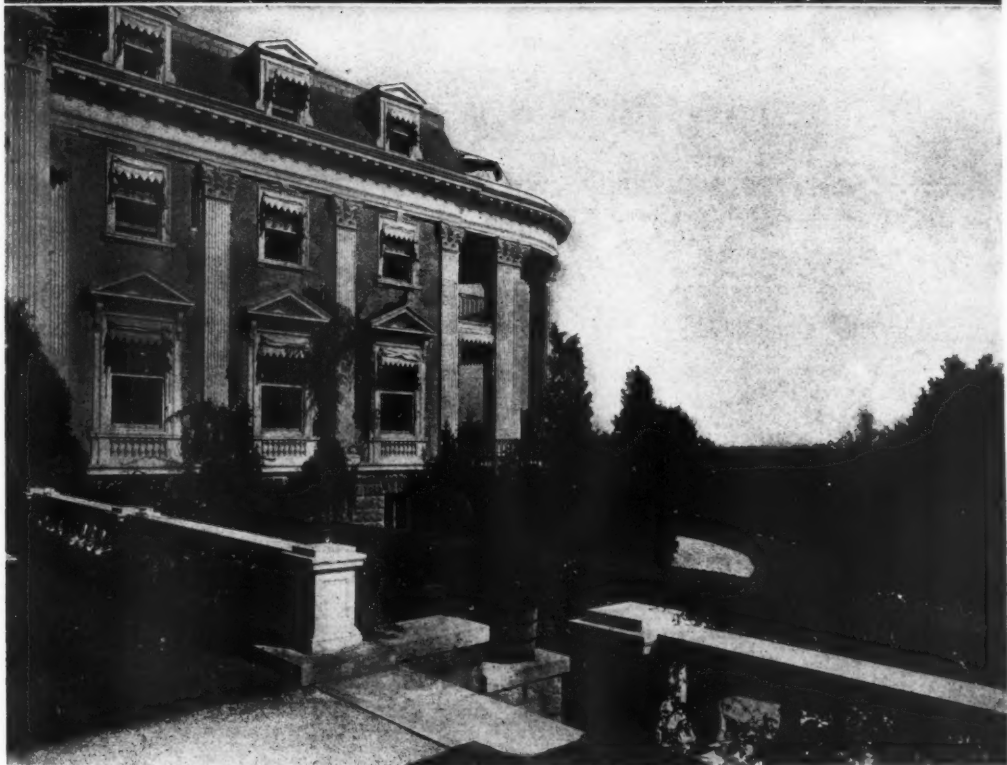
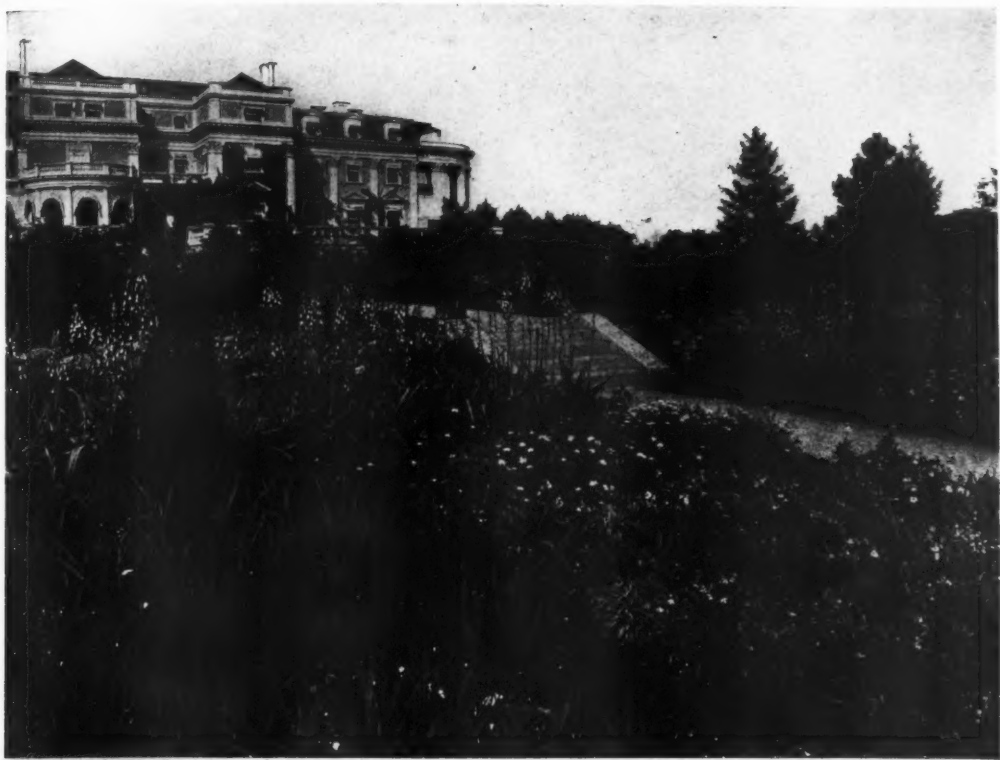
MR. ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT



MR. DONN BARBER
ARCHITECT

ALTERATIONS TO HOUSE OF W. A. READ, ESQ., PURCHASE, N. Y.



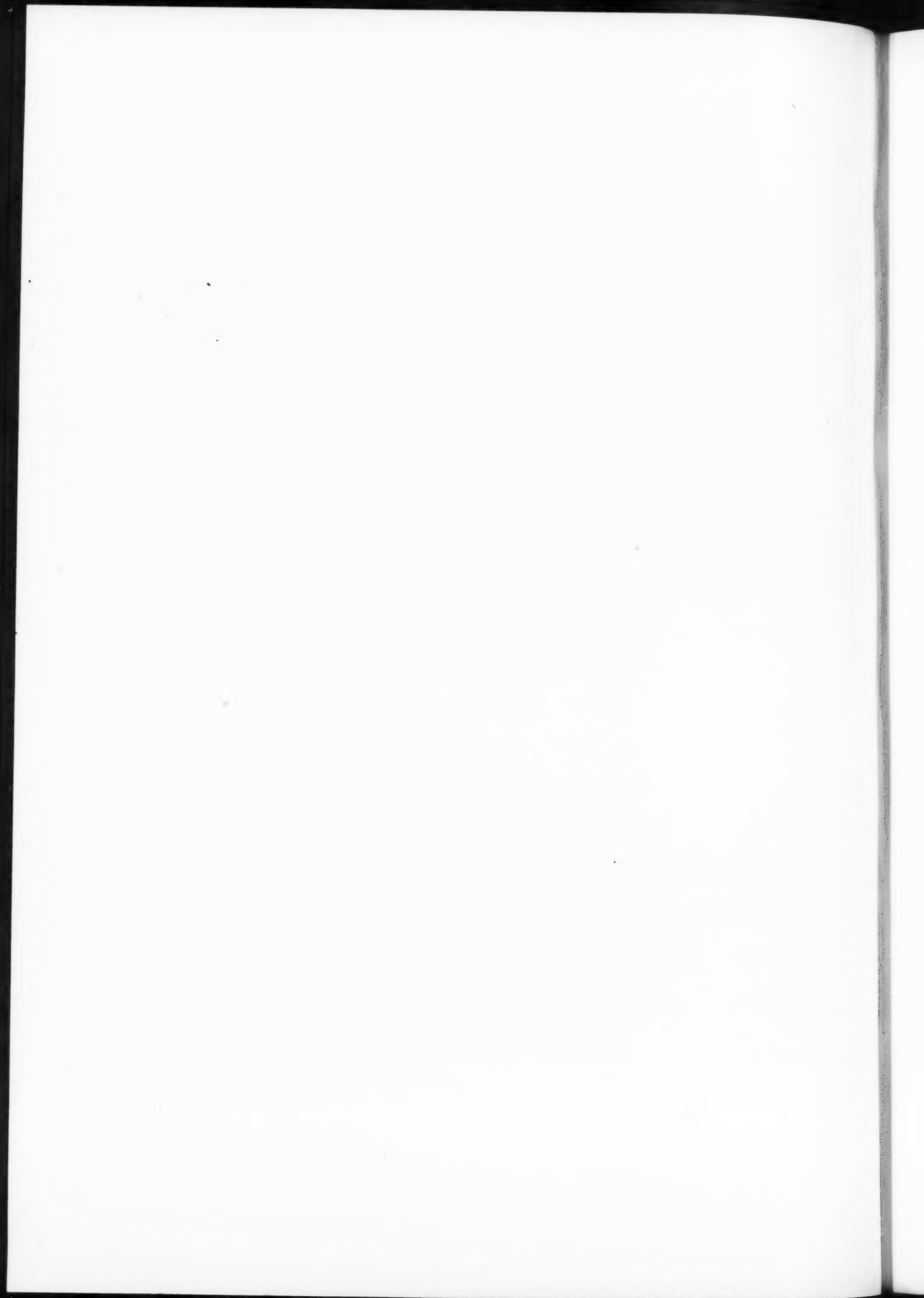


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ALTERATIONS TO HOUSE OF W. A. READ, ESQ.,
PURCHASE, N. Y.

MR. DONN BARBER, ARCHITECT

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ROTHENBURG ON THE TAUBER—COBOLZELLER GATE, VIEW FROM OUTSIDE