

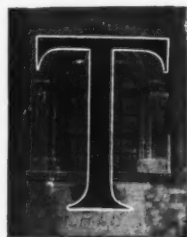
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

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PORTLAND POST OFFICE COMPETITION



THE controversy between the Treasury Department and several firms of architects, two in New York, one in San Francisco, and three in Portland, over the terms under which they were to compete for the honor of furnishing plans for the new million dollar postoffice in Portland has been the cause of considerable feeling among the architects of the country and of interest to the public. As the case has never been fully presented, it may be of sufficient interest to review it in the light of the official correspondence on the subject.

The Secretary of the Treasury selected seven architects, or firms of architects to enter upon the competition under regulations he formulated. Six of the prospective competitors asked that the regulations be modified, whereupon they were notified by Assistant Secretary Sherman Allen, by direction of the Secretary, as follows:

"Your entrance into the competition was by invitation. The Department holds that your acceptance of the invitation carried with it the acceptance of the conditions set forth in the programme, a copy of which accompanied the invitation. It feels, however, that your attitude toward the programme of the competition and the objections which you now see in it place you wholly out of sympathy with the result which the Government desires to obtain. For this reason, and in view of the objections which you raise, the invitation issued to you July 21st is now withdrawn."

This letter brought immediate response and protest. Whitehouse & Foulhoux of Portland wrote to Senator Chamberlain:

"We cannot help but feel that the Secretary of the Treasury has acted very arbitrarily in connection with this matter. It is no more than right for a citizen to be granted an interview when he has some business dealing with any of the Departments of the Government. If there are some good reasons for not granting an interview, or for denying a request sent by letter, these reasons should be stated so one could feel that one had been treated fairly by whomsoever the official may be. We feel that our requests were perfectly legitimate and we fail to understand the meaning of the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury, when it states that our objections place us wholly out of sympathy with the result which the Government desires to obtain. Inasmuch as this sentence makes the only apparent reason for the withdrawal of the invitation we feel that we should have some explanation as to its meaning. We had, at the time of the withdrawal of the invitation, spent considerable of our personal time and money in connection with the carrying out of the drawings and we are sure you will agree with us in admitting that we are the victims of a gross injustice.

The main object of our request was to have the drawings selected by a jury of award. This has been the former policy of the Treasury Department, in connection with many public buildings. Our firm was invited to compete for the sub-Treasury Building in San Francisco and in the programme for this competition it was

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stated that a jury of three architects would decide upon the best of the drawings submitted. The question of compensation was also a matter involved and we feel that inasmuch as it has been customary for the Government in the past to allow six per cent commission, we think this same should be allowed in connection with this building. According to the programme, quite a large portion of the inside equipment would be taken care of by the Supervising Architect's Department. This would naturally reduce the proportion of the cost of the building on which we would be entitled to a commission."

Ellis F. Lawrence and Wm. G. Holford, of Portland, also wrote to ask the intercession of Senator Chamberlain. They explained that the request for certain changes in the programme of competition was signed "by six of the seven competitors invited and a personal interview by our New York representatives was sought. This was not granted and apparently the Secretary of the Treasury has gone on record as being opposed to any changes in the programme of competition. Apart from the fact that we have in the meantime been spending our time and money believing that our requests were reasonable and would receive consideration by the Secretary of the Treasury, we feel that owing to the Secretary of the Treasury's stand it will be necessary, for the protection of the Portland public, to bring all pressure to bear possible to secure the modification in the terms of the programme, as none of the leading architects of the country will participate in the competition under the present terms of the programme, now that the Secretary of the Treasury's attitude has been declared.

"We see no reason why the Architect for the Portland building should not be selected under the same rules as followed by the Government in past competitions, which call especially for a Jury of Award made up of professional experts to assist the Secretary of the Treasury in his decision. Such a Jury would not only protect the interests of the competitors, but also the good name of the Secretary of the Treasury.

"We also feel that it has been proven by the House Investigation Committee

during its examination of James Knox Taylor, then Supervising Architect of the United States, that it cost the United States Government well over six per cent of the cost of the buildings to produce the architect's services, and as the United States Government has in the past been paying six per cent to private practitioners wherever they have entrusted their work to them, that the Portland Postoffice should not be an exception to the rule. It goes without saying that if it is to be an exception to the rule, the best talent in the profession, which we desire to be brought to bear on the problem, will be eliminated and practitioners of a lower standard of ethics and professional ability will have to be used."

So much for the professional protests and objections. In replying to Senator Chamberlain's intervention in behalf of the Portland architects, Secretary McAdoo went into the matter rather fully and, it would seem from an official standpoint, conclusively. He said: (Sept. 30).

"My dear Senator: I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant, inclosing letters addressed to you by Messrs. Lawrence & Holford, Whitehouse & Foulhous, and Doyle & Patterson, of Portland, Oregon, protesting against the withdrawal of the invitation tendered to them by me to enter the architectural competition for the new Postoffice building at Portland.

"I do not feel that my action in withdrawing the invitation requires justification, but knowing your very great interest in this matter, as a Senator from Oregon, I am glad to give you the facts.

"The original list of competitors was as follows: Lawrence & Holford, Whitehouse & Foulhous, Doyle & Patterson, Portland, Ore.; Bliss & Faville, San Francisco, Cal.; John Russell Pope, Clinton & Russell, J. H. Freedlander, New York, N. Y.

"With the exception of Bliss & Faville, John Russell Pope and Clinton & Russell, all these gentlemen actively importuned the Treasury Department for invitations to compete.

"The list of competitors was made up with great care. The three competitors from Portland were selected after a careful study of such evidences of skill as were

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submitted by some fifteen aspirants from that city. Messrs. Bliss & Faville were selected without their knowledge, upon the recommendation of the Supervising Architect, because of their recognized capacity. Mr. Freedlander was recommended by the Supervising Architect, partly because of his skill, and partly because he was already architect of the Portland Auditorium. Messrs. Pope and Clinton & Russell were my personal choice.

"The invitations to compete were simultaneously forwarded each prospective competitor;

"Each invitation to compete was accompanied by a copy (under separate cover), of the programme governing the competition, as approved by me;

"The letter of invitation stated that the competition was to be held in accordance with the conditions of the programme;

"Each of the invited competitors transmitted to the Treasury Department an unqualified written acceptance of the invitation;

"After a time there was forwarded to me a typewritten protest against certain phases of the competition;

"This protest was signed in typewriting with the names of all the competitors, except Messrs. Clinton & Russell;

"The protest was against certain phases of the programme which the protesting competitors had already accepted; the Secretary can no more give attention to communications not signed in autograph than to anonymous communications;

"In this case, however, the two New York protesting competitors were given an opportunity of authenticating the protest signed in typewriting; this they did over their signatures, stating that they were acting for themselves and the four competitors from the Pacific Coast;

"The protest contained certain criticisms of the programme, asking that the paragraphs criticized be modified, and wound up with a request for an interview. This was submitted by the protestants to Messrs. Clinton & Russell, with a request that they join. They replied that, while there might be conditions of the programme which they would not object to having changed, they had nevertheless accepted the invitation and thus entered into an

agreement to compete. They considered that the agreement was binding and declined to make the protest unanimous.

"Messrs. Clinton & Russell took the correct view of this matter. The Treasury Department had no intention of failing to carry out its part of the agreement, and since the protestants' objections went to fundamentals of the new regulations and conditions adopted by the Department for such competitions, it seemed useless to discuss the question with them, and I therefore, withdrew, in the interest of the Government, the invitations.

"The withdrawal of the invitations was made only after careful consideration; the Secretary assumes full responsibility for it, and it is necessarily final.

"Mr. Lawrence, in his letter to you of the 30th ultimo, states that the cost of the work in the Supervising Architect's office is well over six per cent, against the six per cent fee paid for private architects. I inclose a copy of a hearing before the House Committee on Expenditures on Public Buildings, at which the present Supervising Architect was the witness. You will find, commencing on page 43, a discussion of the relation of the private architect to the Treasury Department. This shows that the total cost to the Government for the employment of the Supervising Architect is seven per cent of the cost of the work, and for the private architect ten per cent, on the six per cent fee, or nine per cent on the five per cent fee.

"Several of the gentlemen who address you state that they had expended considerable time and money on the problem up to the time the protest was submitted to me. If while protesting they continued to work, awaiting the outcome of their protest, that is their own risk, and the Department is not at fault.

"Messrs. Doyle & Patterson state that the New York competitors who were dropped out, and Messrs. Bliss & Faville, are at the head of their profession. They express a fear as to what will now be the outcome. The fact that even the original competitors approve the choice of the Treasury Department should carry with it an assurance that the Department will bear in mind the claims of the city of Portland to a satisfactory building.

"The conditions of the programme, to which the six competitors objected, and which probably would have been explained to them had they sought an interview, instead of submitting a formal paper requiring formal action, were the following:

"1. The absence of a jury.

"The legislation requires the Secretary of the Treasury to select an architect in competition. No authority is given to delegate this power to another. Had a jury been employed the jury could merely have advised the Secretary of the Treasury; he could not have been bound by their choice.

"Until the repeal of the Tarsney Act there existed legislative authority for the employment of judges in competitions. With the repeal of the Tarsney Act that discretion was taken away from the Secretary of the Treasury. The legislation for the Portland building does not reconstitute it, and the Secretary of the Treasury is restrained by law from accepting gratuitous services. The Secretary of the Treasury, however, has an expert adviser provided by law in the Supervising Architect. The Secretary looks to the Supervising Architect for advice on all architectural matters referred to the Treasury Department. The Office of the Supervising Architect was created for that specific purpose. There is no more reason for the Secretary of the Treasury to deprive himself of the advice of the Supervising Architect in this matter than in all the other matters connected with the office of the latter—now entrusted with the direction of annual expenditures amounting to over \$20,000,000. The law, however, requires that the Secretary of the Treasury, and not the Supervising Architect, should secure the plans for this building and, therefore, the programme was necessarily drawn in accordance with the law.

"2. The fee of five per cent instead of six per cent.

"Under the Tarsney Act the private architect duplicated a considerable part of the service rendered by the Supervising Architect. The Supervising Architect must render this service, in any event. The Portland programme was carefully drawn so as to relieve the private architect, as much as possible, of the work which the

Supervising Architect must do in any event, and which the private architect would do for his private client. As the Secretary is responsible for the expenditure of this appropriation, he exercised his right to protect this expenditure and reduced the six per cent fee to five per cent, believing that to be ample compensation for the work which the private architect will perform.

"Incidentally I may say that Mr. Sayre, secretary to Senator Lane, of Oregon, who claims that he knows, is authority for the statement that at the present time on the Pacific Coast the usual fee to architects is not more than five per cent.

"3. Under the Tarsney Act the architects were compelled to pay their own traveling expenses, whether their fee was five per cent or six per cent. It would manifestly be impossible, from an administrative standpoint, to allow the architect to visit the building, at the public expense, any time he chose to do so. On the other hand, it would be equally impossible to agree to a stated number of visits, the expense to be paid by the Government, because in that event the Government would be in the position of stipulating the amount of supervision the architect should give the work; whereas, the contract with the Government requires him to furnish all the necessary supervision. For these reasons the architect, under the Tarsney Act, was required to defray his own traveling expenses, and the programme for the Portland competition, therefore, follows a thoroughly established precedent, accepted by all the architects employed under the terms of the Tarsney Act.

"4. The right to declare the competition void.

"In a certain sense these architects are bidders. No advertisement for any public work is without the clause reserving the right to reject any or all bids. The Secretary of the Treasury is not justified in agreeing to select any one of several sets of drawings, no one of which he has seen. It is conceivable that all the sets of drawings may fall below the standard desired, and the right to reject them is, therefore, one that is entirely in the public interest.

"5. Removal of the architect.

"A contract will be made with the

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successful architect, but he will not be bonded to the Government. Without the right to remove him, the Department would be absolutely at his mercy if he neglected his work. It is, therefore, distinctly in the public interest, and it is one of the administrative responsibilities with which the Secretary is charged, viz.: the duty to remove the architect, for cause.

"6. Modifications of the programme.

"In the usual programme, as approved by the American Institute of Architects, modifications are provided for, if agreed to by a majority of the competitors. After plans and specifications are sent out for bids, an architect will modify any one of them, or the form of proposal, and will not ask the consent of a majority of the bidders. In this case, should the Secretary of the Treasury agree to modify the terms of the programme only upon the consent of a majority of the competitors, he would be sharing with them a prerogative regarding the administration of the competition given him alone by the legislation.

"The protesting competitors for this

building, however, protested against this clause, stating that after the programme was issued it should not be modified, and in the same breath asked for a number of changes.

"It would seem that the protesting architects are merely the victims of their own lack of judgment. You need have no fear that architects of recognized ability and capacity will not be obtained to compete for the Portland Postoffice. Invitations have already been sent to the following architects, who are men of recognized standing and ability in their professions:

"Clinton & Russell, New York, N. Y.;
Griffin & Wyncoop, New York, N. Y.;
James Gamble Rogers, New York, N. Y.;
Stem & Fellheimer, New York, N. Y.;
Lewis P. Hobart, San Francisco, Cal.;
Goodrich & Goodrich, Portland, Ore.

"I return the inclosed letters and papers, as requested.

"Believe me, my dear Senator, with warm regards, sincerely yours.

(Signed) W. G. McAdoo."

BULLET WOOD OF BRITISH GUIANA

BULLET wood (*Mimusops globosa* Gaertner) is one of the common and at the same time one of the most important timber trees of British Guiana. It is a well known tree and is variously called bully tree, horse flesh, beefwood, red lancewood, balata rouge. There are several other tree species growing in the same region, which produce bullet or bully wood, but they are smaller and the wood is of lesser importance. The true bullet wood often reaches the English and American markets under the name of beefwood, but it must not be confused with the Australian beefwood (*Casuarina*) which is also called she-oak or ironwood. The latter is light red, coarse and cross-grained, and does not attain the same large proportions as the South American bullet wood which is brownish red somewhat resembling true mahogany.

From a study of common names of tropical American woods, one is led to believe that the term bullet or bully wood is applied to any hard, heavy, and close-grained wood. This is true particularly of sapotaceous trees belonging to the genera *Sideroxylon*, *Sapota*, *Bumelia* and *Dipholis*. All the trees of these and several other genera yield a gummy sap which is collected and sold under the name of balata or simply gum, and the term "bullet" is probably a corruption of balata.

The trees are without branches for nearly one-half of their total height. They generally have clean, symmetrical boles for thirty or forty feet, and like a number of tropical trees are provided with three or four stout and powerful roots which form enormous buttresses above the ground. The straight massive trunks are covered with a grayish brown bark. The tree is an evergreen and has rather large, thick leathery leaves

which are dark green above and somewhat lighter beneath. Owing to the absence of distinct annual rings of growth, the age of a mature bullet tree cannot be accurately determined. It is known, however, that the rate of growth is exceedingly slow, and it is probable that a tree sixty inches in diameter is fully 400 years old, while others of still larger proportions are relatively older.

The wood is brownish red turning darker with age and upon exposure to light and air. One writer states that the wood is red in color resembling the lean of the boiled salt-beef of the sailor, and this is probably why this wood received the name of beefwood. The trade recognizes three varieties—red, white, and black. All are cut from the same species and the reason for these three grades can be explained on the basis that the red is the true normal heartwood, the white is from young sappy trees, and the black is from the old over-matured trees which grew up in low mucky soil. The nature of the soil frequently affects the color and lasting qualities of the timber. The darker colored heartwood would indicate that the tree has taken up highly colored substances which have been deposited on the inner walls of the wood elements in the form of gum and resin derivatives. The darker colored grades of bullet wood are said to be more durable than the lighter grades.

The wood is very hard and heavy often weighing seventy pounds per cubic foot. It is strong, having a crushing strength of 4.77 tons per square inch and a modulus of rupture of 16,000 pounds per square inch. The latter was determined by testing a spar six inches in diameter. Bullet wood is very tough and elastic which are two qualities required in fishing-rod material. While this wood has not been used very extensively for this purpose it possesses the properties of a number of other good fishing-rod woods. The wood is very close and straight-grained and works very easily, but it is subject to serious heartshakes which unfit it for use in the form of large timbers for construction work. It is also liable to the attacks of the teredo and cannot be used successfully for marine construction. Bullet wood has been used

successfully in this country for furniture, and it is now sold in the New York and Baltimore markets where it brings from twenty to twenty-five cents per square foot. Some of the principal uses of this wood in British Guiana are for house-building, telegraph poles, mill rollers and beams in sugar factories, field work, bridging, and spars. It is used also for making shingles and the native workmen frequently make planes of it. When the wind mills were still in use in British Guiana, the bullet wood was considered the best for the arms of the mill.

In purchasing bullet wood great care should be exercised to get the true kind. The forests are full of inferior kinds and the natives are prone to substitute worthless material in place of genuine bullet wood. There is good and bad bullet wood in the market, as is the case with a number of other imported kinds. A timber known as "balata chine" which resembles the black grades of bullet wood is often cut and sold but it is practically worthless. The true bullet wood is considered the most important trees in South America, where it is taken into account that it yields not only very valuable timber, but also a gum, the collection of which is controlled by special laws. This gum possesses properties intermediate between caoutchouc and gutta-percha and is in great demand in the United States and in Europe for making chewing gum and a variety of other purposes.

Bullet wood is one of the easiest woods to be recognized by means of a hand lens magnifying from four to six diameters. It will be necessary first, before examining the wood, to cut a smooth transverse surface by means of a sharp knife. It will be seen that there are numerous, fine, short rows of small pores arranged in radial rows. In addition to these radial rows of pores there are numerous less conspicuous lines of soft tissue (wood-parenchyma fibers) which run at right angles to the indistinct pith rays. These lines of soft tissue are invariably lighter in color than the harder and denser wood fibers between them. These characters which will always aid one in identifying the wood may be made to stand out more clearly under the hand lens, if the smooth surface is moistened.

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STATE REGISTRATION LAWS NEED FOR UNIFORM LEGISLATION

THE proposed legislation intended to regulate the practice of architecture in the state of New York contains clauses that make it of more than local interest and importance. The primary purpose of the bill is the protection of the public against the unscrupulous and incompetent practitioner of architecture. To this end it provides for the appointment of a board of examiners who shall determine the qualifications of each applicant to practice, and, if these are satisfactory, the Board of Regents of the state university shall issue to the applicant a certificate of registration.

The qualifications of registered architects—not already practicing in the state for two years or more, previous to the passage of the act—are very high. Before being granted a certificate of registration the applicant must give evidence of having satisfactorily completed the course in an approved high school or its equivalent, and also such courses in mathematics, history and one modern language, as are included in the first two years in a higher institution. Such a candidate, in addition to this training in the "humanities," shall submit satisfactory evidence of at least

five years' practical experience in the office of a reputable architect, and after complying with these requirements shall pass an examination in such technical and professional courses as are established by the board of examiners.

The Board may waive all examinations and recommend the registration of an applicant who presents a diploma of graduation or satisfactory certificate from a recognized architectural school, and who has had at least three years' practical experience in the office of a reputable architect after the completion of his technical course.

The registration or certificate as an architect in another state or country, where the standard of qualifications for the same are not lower than those required by New York, entitles the applicant to registration in this state.

It would seem that an applicant who met these rigid, yet not too exacting requirements would certainly be qualified for the performance of the usual technical work and be a man of such broad, general education as to entitle architecture in New York State to rank as a "learned profession."

Architects now practicing in other states, and desiring to practice in New York must, if the proposed bill be enacted, measure up to its standards. There is a marked lack of uniformity between New York's proposed law and existing legislation in a certain neighboring state. The latter makes no definite requirements as to general education or practical experience but provides that any adult citizen upon payment of a stated fee shall be entitled to an examination to determine his qualifications. A graduate in architecture from a recognized school may be granted a certificate without regular examination if he has had sufficient practical experience, but, if he lacks the latter, the certificate may nevertheless be granted if the applicant passes a formal examination for which absolutely no experience is required. Even a ready technical knowledge is non-essential as reference is permitted to any books or drawings during the examination.

This comparison is not made for the purpose of discrediting well-intentioned, if inadequate, efforts toward progress in any

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state, but to show the great need for uniform legislation on this subject throughout the country. If one state has certain minimum requirements to be met by any person practicing in that community, the standards of every other state should be equally high, provided they are not unreasonable. A practitioner registered in one state and desiring to practice in another in which the qualifications are higher, is obviously liable to much embarrassment and annoyance.

Exacting as are the proposed requirements for registration in New York, they do not set a standard too high for the best interests of any state in the Union. The need for legislation to protect the public against incompetent practitioners is coming to be so generally recognized that the time seems now to be favorable for well advised and uniform legislation on the subject. Such action, besides being of benefit to the public at large, would measurably tend toward a fuller recognition of the standing and authority of a profession which now too often suffers from public indifference or worse,—a condition begotten by irresponsible practitioners.

THE QUANTITY SURVEYOR

WHO PAYS HIM FOR HIS SERVICES?

THE QUANTITY SURVEYOR, a monthly bulletin issued, it is stated, "under the auspices of the American Institute of Quantity Surveyors," has for its avowed mission "the promotion of better methods of stimulating and dealing with bids."

That there is need for reform is conceded by all familiar with conditions, but it is essential that errors of principle be care-

fully avoided where a new practice is going through a formative process. For example: Under the heading of "Correspondence" in the September issue of *The Quantity Surveyor*, the question is asked:—who pays the quantity surveyor for his services? This is a question that in the movement to create a new personality in building operations will at once suggest itself to every architect. The reply is printed as follows:

"The architect selects the quantity surveyor and agrees with him what his percentage is to be upon the contract price, according to the class of building required. At the end of the bill of quantities will always be found a summary of all the different trades covered by the bill, and at the foot of the summary, after the total has been arrived at, the following will appear:—'add to the above total — per cent upon the total amount of same, to be paid to the quantity surveyor by the contractor, out of the first payment received.'"

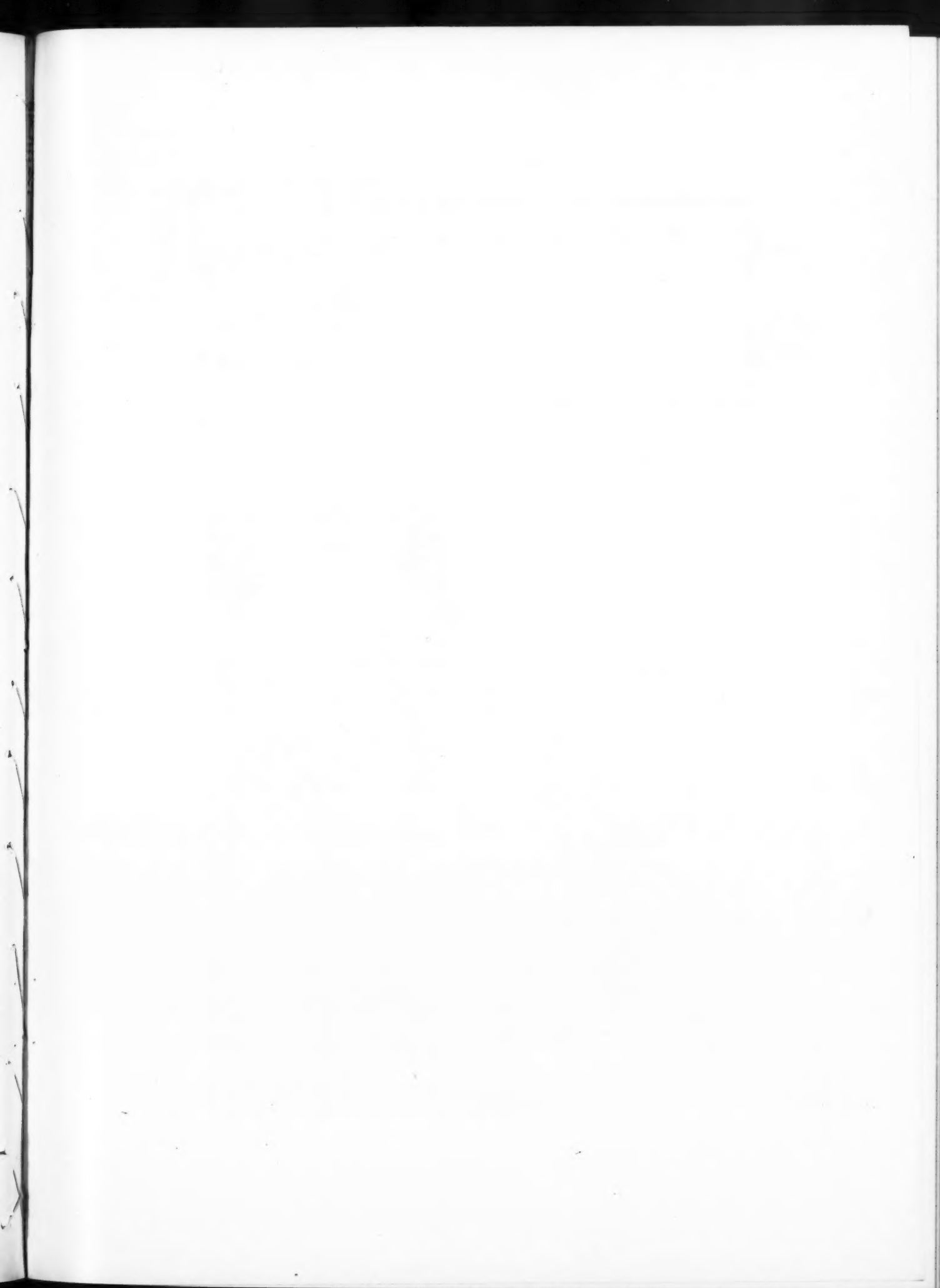
It therefore becomes apparent that the quantity surveyor will be directly in the pay of the contractor but will be selected by the architect.

All this is very definite as far as it goes, but, as is well known, very many proposed buildings never pass the estimating stage. Estimates are too high, or for some other reason no contracts are let. Who then pays the quantity surveyor, or is he in the same position that the contractor finds himself under similar circumstances in present practice?

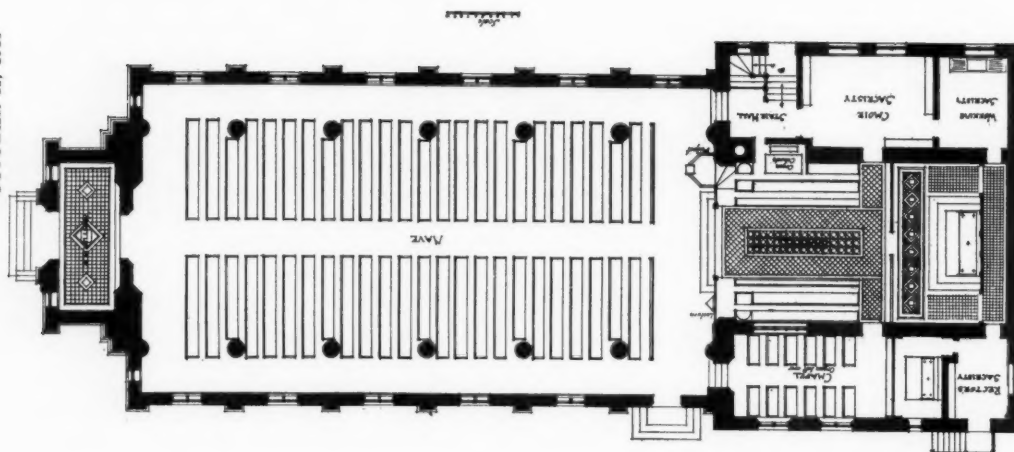
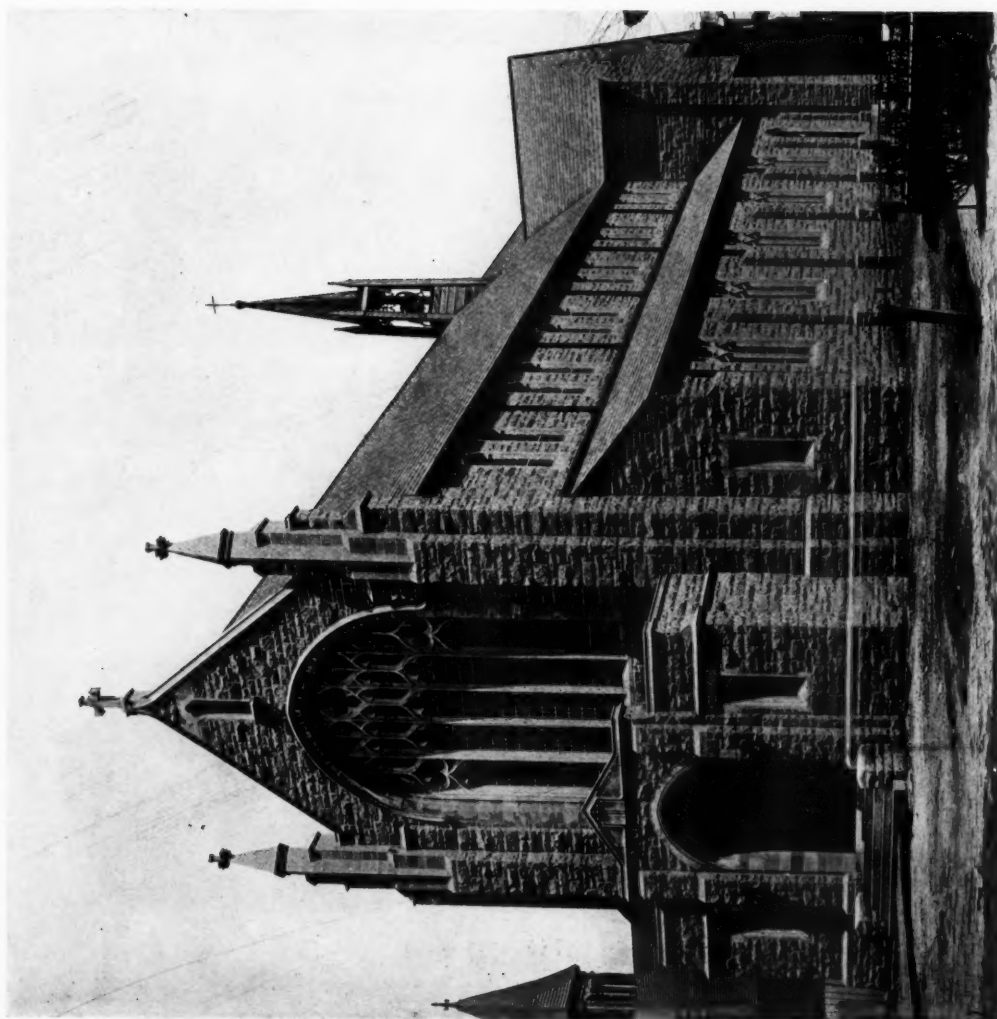
Would it not be wiser to place the quantity surveyor directly in the employ of the owner the same as the architect is?

The owner pays the quantity surveyor his fee in any event if it is paid, and by doing so directly, instead of through the contractor, a very obvious objection would be removed.





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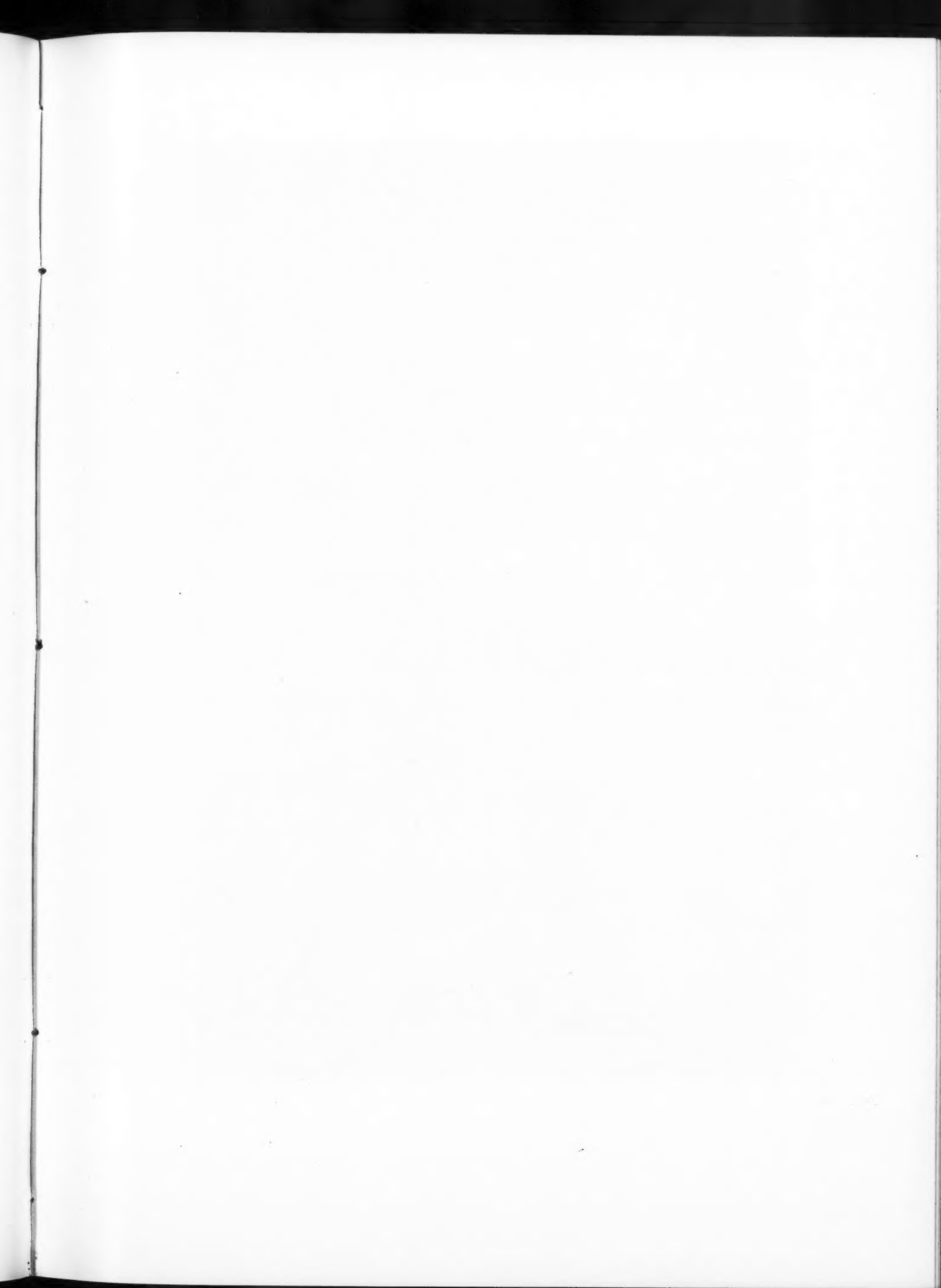
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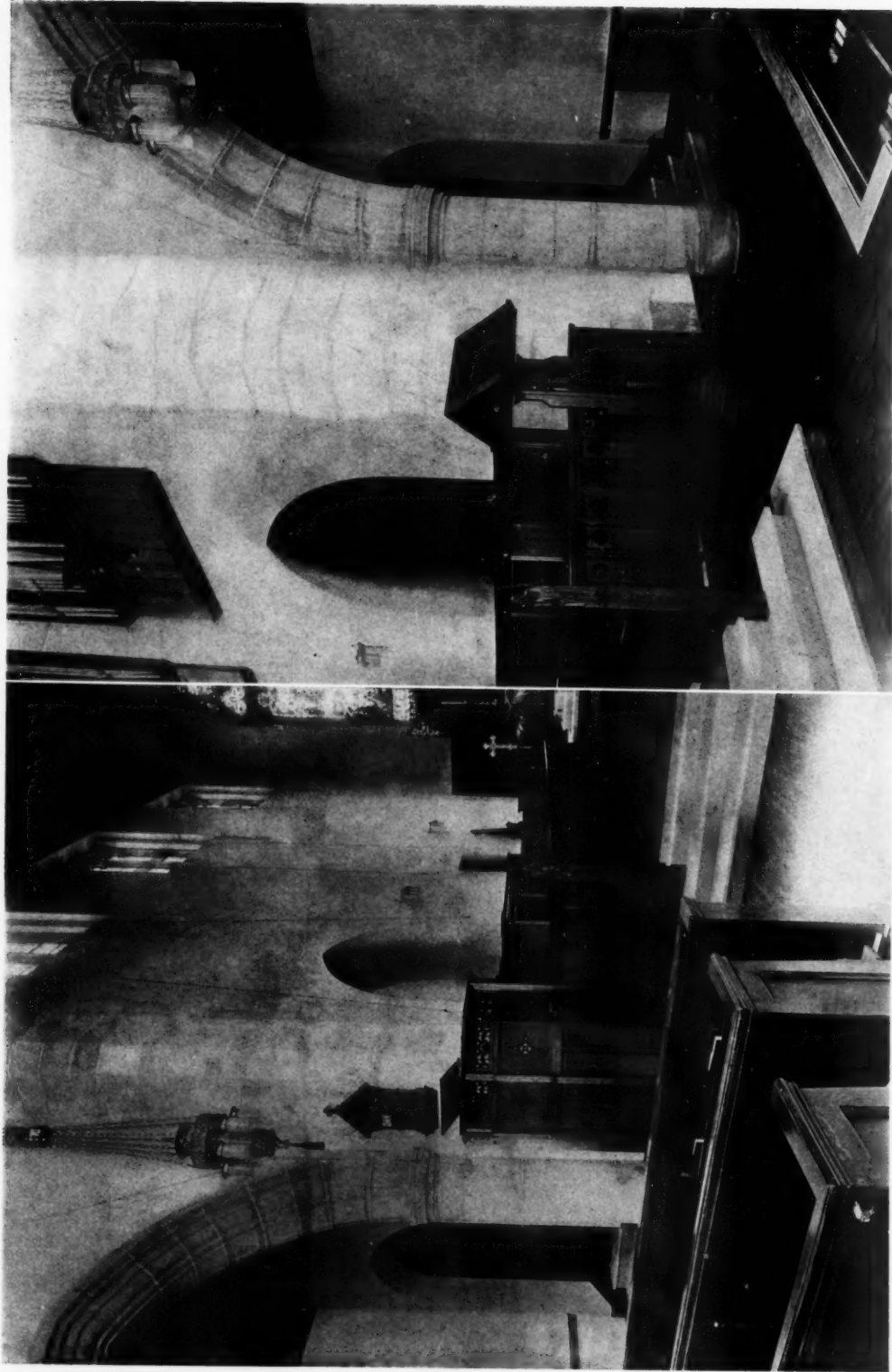
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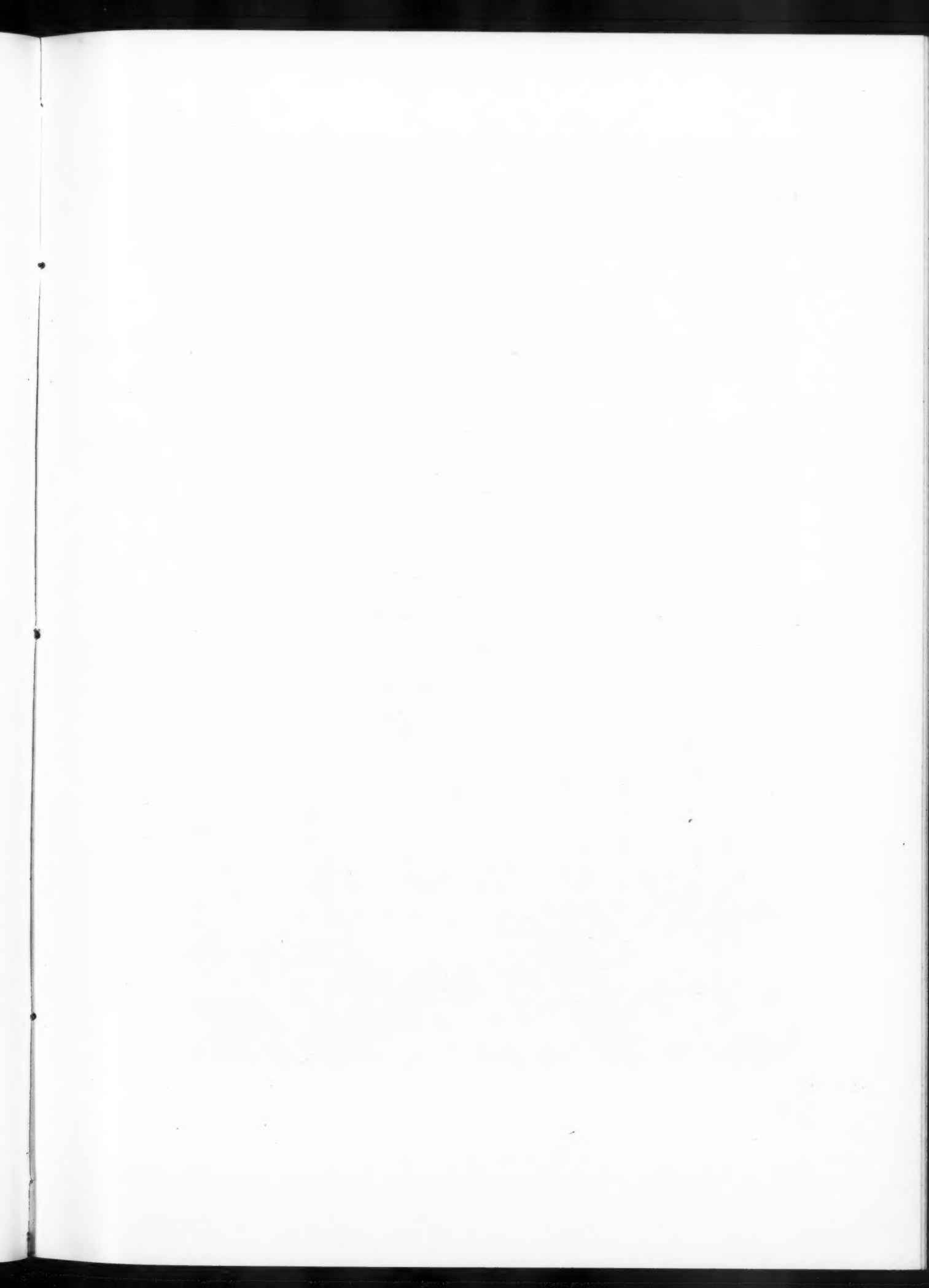
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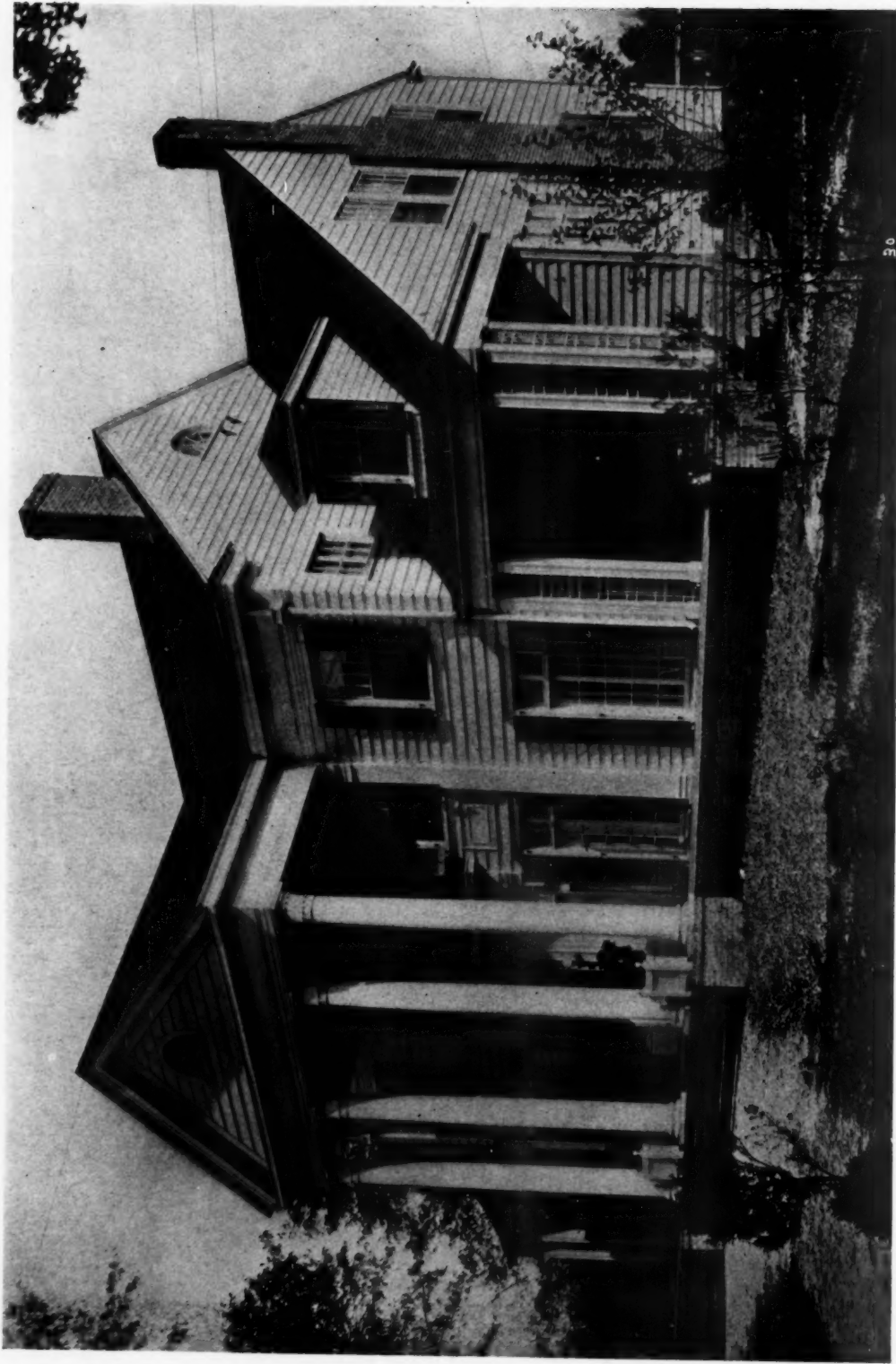
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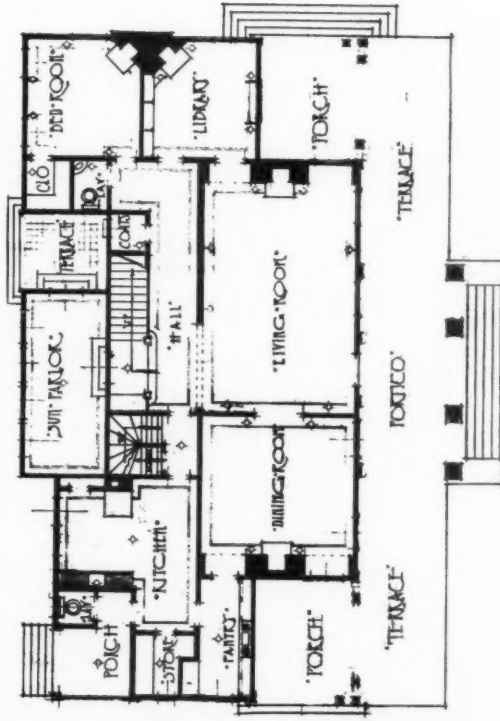
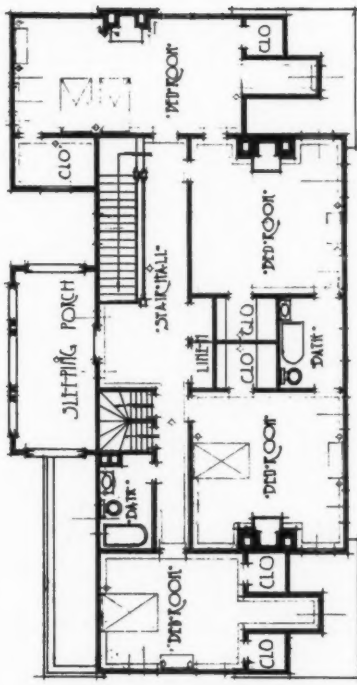
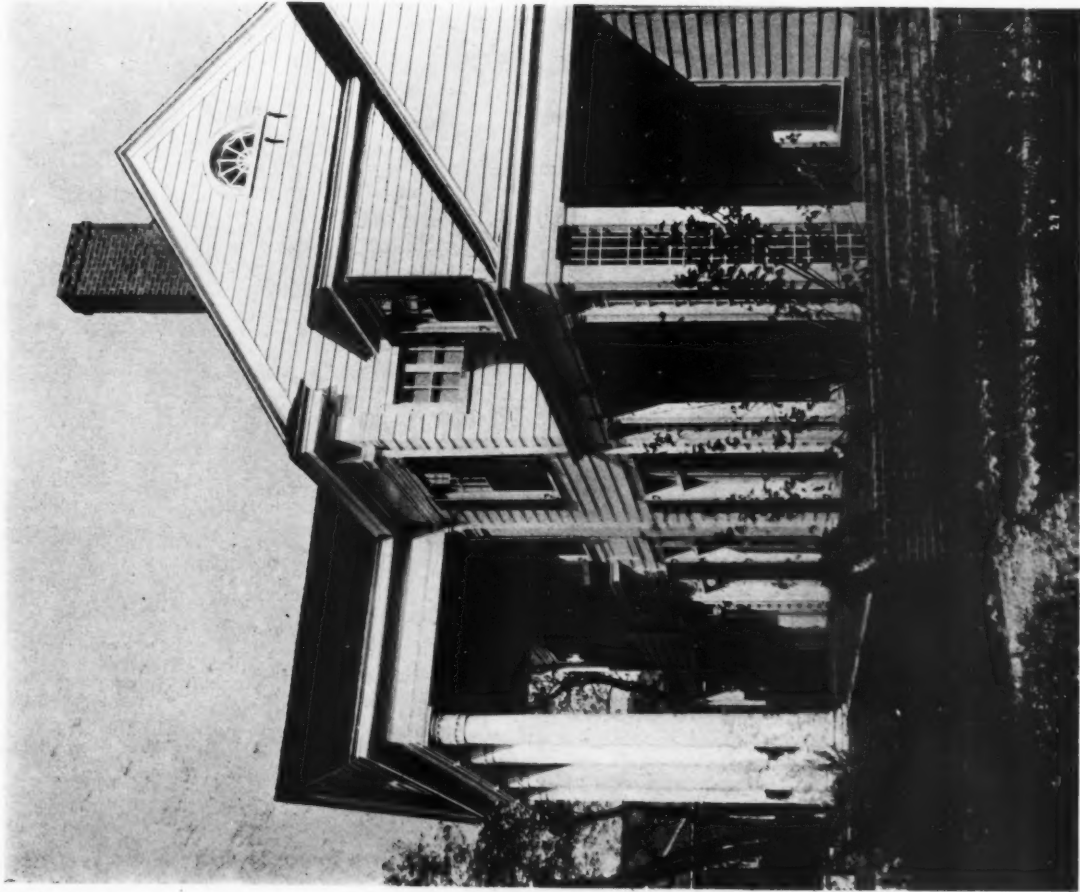


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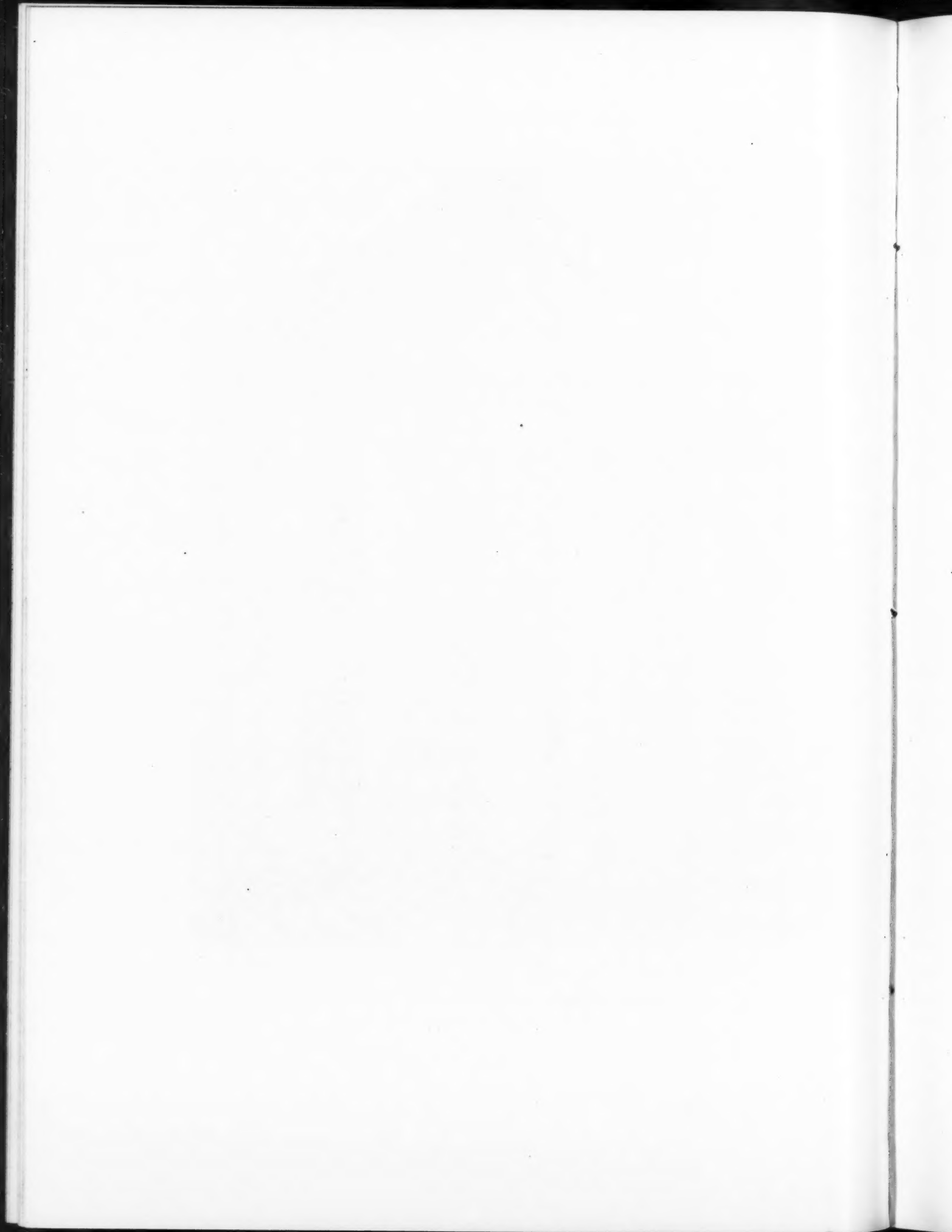
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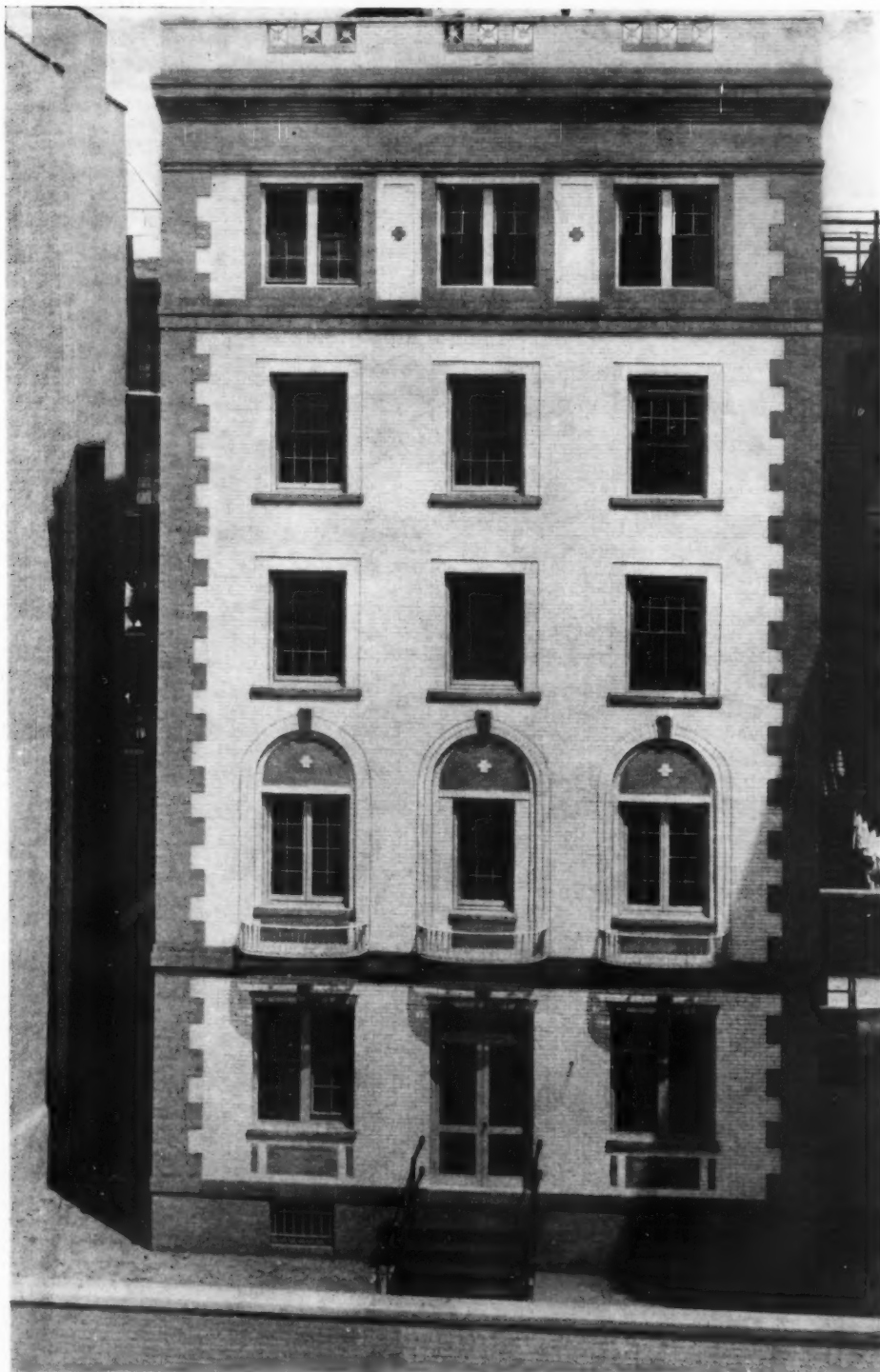


DETAIL OF PORCH

HOUSE OF J. H. BOSTON, ESQ., MARIETTA, GA.

MESSRS. HENTZ & REID, ARCHITECTS

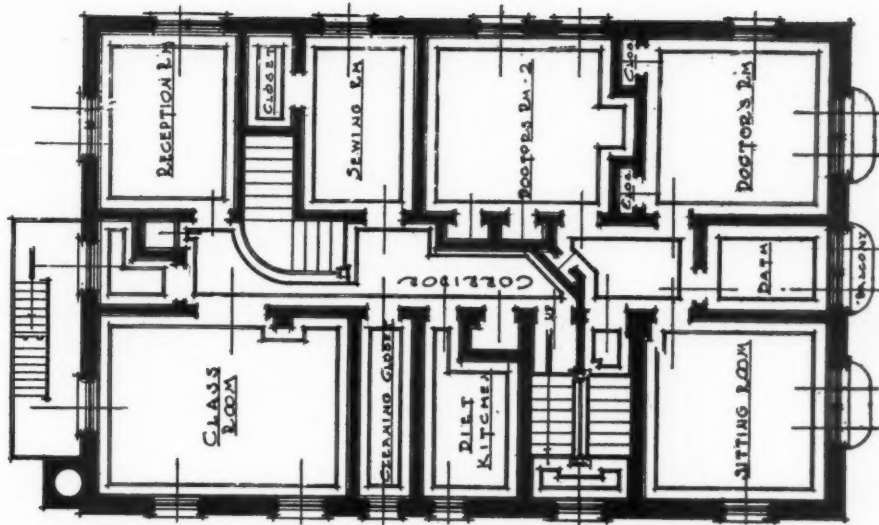
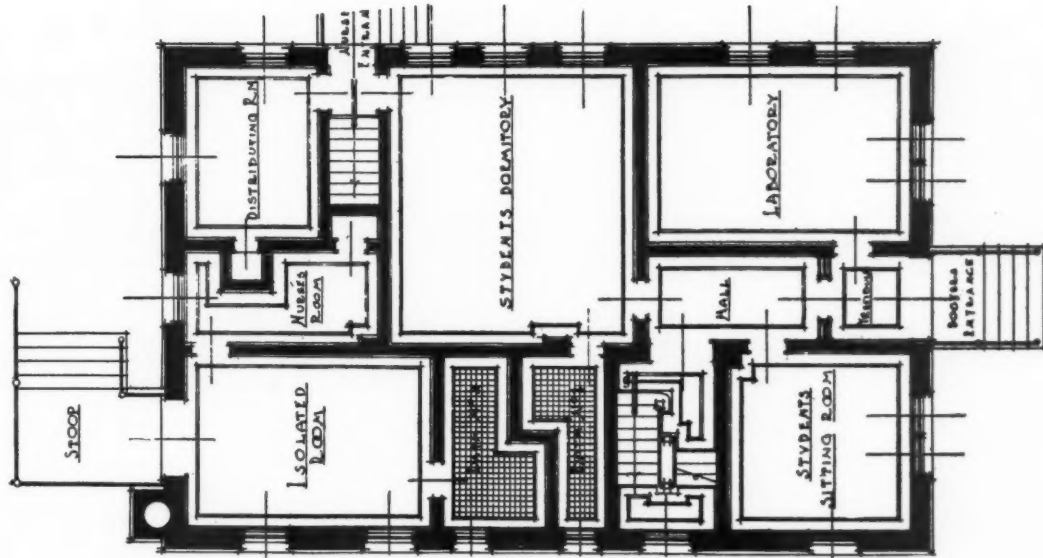
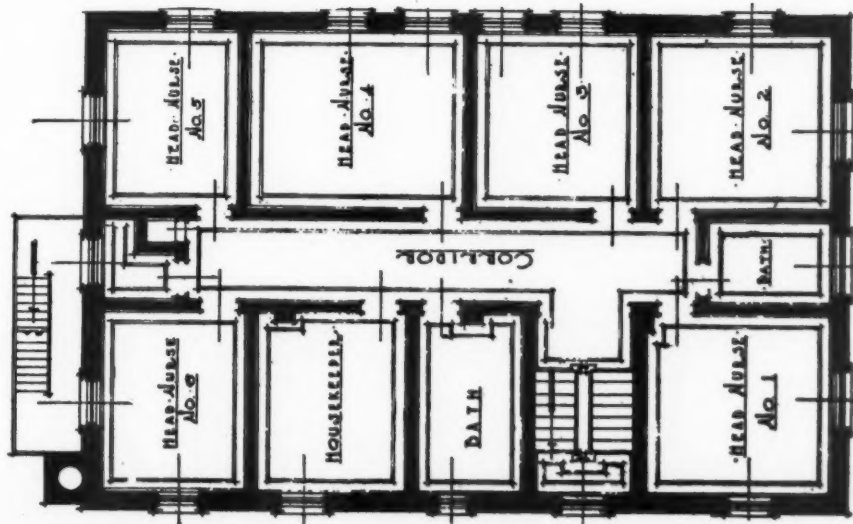




NURSES' HOME FOR MANHATTAN MATERNITY HOSPITAL AND DISPENSARY,
EAST 60TH STREET, NEW YORK
MESSRS. LUDLOW & PEABODY, ARCHITECTS

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

OCTOBER 15, 1913



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CURRENT NEWS AND COMMENT

PRIVATE CAPITAL VS. MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATIONS

Reference was made in these columns in issue of September 24th to the part played by wealthy citizens in the development in this country of an appreciation of art. It was endeavored to point out how very unselfishly our rich men have helped to make it possible for the general public to be able to see and study the best extant examples. A further example of art patronage is now shown by the contemplated action of a group of wealthy and public spirited citizens in Philadelphia.

A very dignified and expensive scheme for civic improvement that has been approved and will soon be begun in that city contemplates a total expenditure on the part of the city of about \$10,000,000. Contingent on these improvements was the consent of railroad corporations and private interests as to grade crossings, a parkway system requiring large areas of condemnation, and the erection of a public library and art gallery. In the case of the latter building it is reported that the city will probably be relieved of all the cost of its erection—a matter of \$3,500,000. Men who have long been identified with the art interests of Philadelphia have generously signified their intention to provide this building.

Instances of this nature are so well known all over the country that it is difficult to understand how any man can rise in his place in Congress, as one did recently, and accuse our wealthy patrons of art of accumulating pictures and other objects merely to satisfy a taste or fad, and that in making these collections they are locking them away from the general public.

THE NEW GERMAN EMBASSY BUILDING IN WASHINGTON

With further reference to the announcement in these columns of the result of the competition held in Berlin for the proposed German Embassy building, at Washington, D. C., it may be stated that official advices have been received as to the acceptance of the design submitted by Prof. Bruno Moehring. It now seems likely German artists and decorators will be sent here to superintend the work on the interior of the building. This embassy building will contain rooms for the Chancellerie, a large ballroom and a spacious study for the Ambassador, and is expected to be in every way a structure in keeping with the dignity of the German Empire. It is to be located on S street, between 22d and 23d.

The progress of this building—the first embassy building in Washington to be typical of the nation

it will represent—will be watched with interest. It is regrettable that our own government should not proceed in as thorough and intelligent a manner in settling the question of embassy buildings in foreign countries.

MANHATTAN APPROACH TO THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE

Determination of a final plan for the treatment of the Manhattan Plaza of the Queensboro Bridge has been delayed until recently, as it was not possible to determine what rapid transit railway lines would use the bridge. As this uncertainty has now been removed by the approval of the new subway and elevated railway routes, Bridge Commissioner O'Keeffe has had prepared under his direction a series of plans covering the terminals on the New York side.

This plaza is evidently destined to become one of the most important traffic centres of the city, and it was therefore necessary to treat the plaza and terminal in a comprehensive manner and one that would provide for traffic needs as well as the improvement of what is at present a rather commonplace neighborhood. The proposed plan provides for sub-surface terminals and thus affords an opportunity to convert the surface of the block to park purposes.

PAINTINGS AND OTHER OBJECTS OF ART IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL BUILDING

A public document, recently issued by the Senate, describes works of art in the United States Capitol. It is a compilation of great value. Nearly 140 paintings and 120 pieces of sculpture have been catalogued. This valuable accumulation represents portraits by the most famous American painters, from the day of John Singleton Copley down to artists of the present generation, while historical painters who works are in this collection are men who have added the highest lustre to American art. It is significant that the greater part of this collection has been acquired by gift from private individuals interested in the preservation of the historical, biographical or pictorial art of the nation, and but a small portion by gifts from the various states or by actual purchase by the government.

At the present time there is no specific appropriation available for the purchase of works of art, or, in other words, the government does not appear to be in any sense a patron of the fine arts, aside from the mural paintings and sculpture that adorn its buildings.

The apathetic attitude of the government toward

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art has been the subject of comment on the part of foreign art critics and has been so often referred to wherever art or art interests are discussed as to become trite. Of the vast amounts appropriated by Congress for all sorts of purposes there has been no disposition to set aside a fund that would purchase and preserve to posterity the dignified examples of the work of American artists. To be sure, we have our National Gallery, but this accumulation has almost in its entirety been given to the government.

BILLBOARDS IN SAN FRANCISCO

The daily press in San Francisco continues to wage a war against billboards, and particularly against the elevated or "double-decked" type. The Chronicle of that city in a recent editorial directs attention to the failure of the authorities to enforce the ordinance calling for the removal of billboards exceeding ten feet in height. While the committee of the Supervisors appear determined to prevent any additional infractions of the law, it would seem that they are indifferent to present offenders, and, while this would appear to be unfair discrimination, it has the merit of preventing an extension of the evil. The ubiquitous question of vested rights is always brought forward by every offender, and this contention is no doubt responsible for the reluctance shown by the authorities in enforcing the law.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONDEMNATION LAW

Two amendments of the constitution of the State of New York affecting the methods of taking private property for public use are to be voted on at the coming election, and unless public attention is directed to their importance they may fail of approval. The dilatory way in which sites for public improvements in New York City have been acquired in the past has almost amounted to a public scandal. The city has been entirely at the mercy of unscrupulous people who were quick to take advantage of the city's necessities, and it was only by the most drastic action that matters were ever brought to a conclusion.

The first of the proposed amendments provides that the compensation to be given to the owner whose property is taken in condemnation proceedings for public purposes may be ascertained by the Supreme Court, with or without a jury. The present method provides that the compensation shall be ascertained by a commission composed of three men residing in the vicinity. While at the time of the enactment of this law it was probably adequate to meet the conditions in small cities, we have entirely outgrown a method so fraught with danger in a large city like New York.

The second amendment, known as the "Excess Condemnation Amendment," provides that when

property is taken for public use, not only the exact property needed for the improvement but the excess amount, sufficient to form suitable building sites abutting on the improvement, may be taken. This method, it is said, will prevent owners from claiming not only direct loss for the property actually taken, but consequential damages for injury to the rest of the lot as well. The present law prevents the city from taking more property than is actually needed. This leaves plots of unusual sizes and often presents serious obstacles to the proper development of adjoining property.

INTERESTING DISCOVERY AT POMPEII

Signor Adolfo Cozza, the archaeologist, proposed some time ago to the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction to carry out excavations at Pompeii with the object of tracing the site of the port where, in his opinion, three-fourths of the population sought escape from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, hoping that the Roman fleet would be able to remove them into safety. The "Times" Rome correspondent now records that after various try-pits had been sunk Signor Cozza discovered plaster and concrete and finally a road leading to the sea showing signs of the passage of wheels. The masonry-work of a harbor was then unearthed with the marks left by the waves. The port of Pompeii which has just been discovered is at a distance of about 1,300 yards from the existing seashore and about 700 yards from the ruined city. It is covered with a layer about 23 feet deep, consisting of earth, lava, ashes, and lapilli. Great importance is attached to the discovery, and the "Press" urges that the work of excavation shall be carried out actively, as it is believed that the skeletons of the majority of the population of Pompeii, as well as treasures of gold and works of art, will be discovered.

STREETS OF MISADVENTURE

While the acknowledgment of our faults may be a first and necessary step in the progress of their correction, we are not sure that we are doing ourselves justice if we go about proclaiming our shortcomings from the housetops. This thought suggests itself upon reading the leading article in a recent issue of *The Architects & Builders Journal* of London.

If we are to accept the opinion expressed the "demon of unrest" has never at any period in the history of English architecture manifested his presence to such an extent as the writer believes is in evidence today in London. While the critic is quite correct in the assertion that "we are only beginning to focus clearly events in architectural circles of a hundred years and more ago," it should also be borne in mind that contemplation of the achieve-

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ment of the past is simply a matter of viewing the best of former periods without having the vision clouded with the vast amount of architecture that being of a character that would not warrant its preservation, has ceased to survive. Perhaps when time has eliminated the unworthy examples now erected or in course of construction, there will yet remain something of merit from which future generations will judge that architecture was not entirely moribund at the beginning of the twentieth century.

MODERN HOSPITALS

We have received the first issue of *Modern Hospitals*, a monthly publication which, it is announced, will be devoted to the building, equipment and general administration of hospitals and allied institutions and to their medical, surgical and nursery services. It is issued from the Metropolitan building, St. Louis, Mo.

The present issue contains articles and editorial matter that will be of interest to architects engaged in hospital construction, and it is announced that these will be a feature of future issues.

THE CAMBERRA COMPLICATION

THE "PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH" POLICY BEARS ITS USUAL FRUIT

It is being realized through experience (the necessary vigor of imagination having been lacking), says *The Architects' and Builders' Journal* of London, that the creation of a commonwealth capital city is not an enterprise that should be undertaken with a light heart—nor with a light purse. Really the Australian Government has acted throughout with extraordinary ineptitude, even for a Government. It deliberately deprived itself of the best architectural advice, and denied itself the advantage of obtaining designs from the organized architects of the world simply because it was too stiffnecked to recede from a false position. Then, from the painfully narrowed field of choice, it had perforce to accept the work of outsiders—that is, of men who, by reason of their nationality, were outside the Empire. As a matter of art, this is no great disaster; but as a matter of sentiment it carries with it a considerable degree of poignancy. The affair went from bad to worse when an attempt was made to pick out for use the best features of what a lay writer calls the "premeditated" designs. One hardly knows how to characterize such procedure. The kindest thing that can be said about it is that from first to last the whole thing has been badly bungled. Of course the attempt by the Home Affairs Department to devise a scheme of their own, made up of "points" from the premiated designs, was foredoomed to produce a sorry hotchpotch. Equally, of course, this miserable result has pro-

voked a storm of adverse criticism. Having brought matters to this pretty pass, the Government are now asking Mr. W. B. Griffin, the Chicago architect, who got £1,750 for the first-premiated design, to go to Australia to help them out of the trouble. It is to be imagined that he will think twice before undertaking so unenviable and so invidious a task.

A NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

It is reported that a resolution was adopted at the recent National Drainage Congress, held in St. Louis, calling for the institution of a National Department of Public Works.

Speaking for the resolution during the debate thereon, Mr. Isham Randolph, an engineer of prominence, very aptly summed up the matter in the following concise language:

"This great government of ours needs a new department, the cabinet a new portfolio. Our national defence is cared for by two departments, each headed by a secretary—war and navy. Statecraft has its portfolio. The vital importance of agriculture is recognized, and the farmer has a seat in the national council. Our fiscal system is administered by the secretary of the treasury. Through the postmaster-general, our President keeps in touch with the needs and accomplishments of our postal service. An attorney-general represents the strong arm of the law, and labor has a voice in all of the intimate councils presided over by the head of the nation; and the secretary of the interior looks after the nation's wards, and is a watchful guardian of what is left of the public domain.

"But what of our public works? Who cares for them? The answer is that they are parcelled out among the departments, the chiefs of which have enough resting upon them to burden the greatest minds in the right discharge of the duties which are legitimately theirs. Public buildings come within the jurisdiction of the secretary of treasury. Why? Is a mind trained in the school of finance peculiarly fitted to pass upon architectural design or structural fitness? We need a national department of public works, and its executive head should be a member of the President's cabinet."

Recent happenings in the field of Federal architectural competitions provides an illustration of the need voiced by Mr. Randolph. Whether intentionally or not, that being apart from the present discussion, the fact remains that the honorable Secretary of the Treasury has antagonized a number of important men and firms of the highest repute and sympathetically a great many others. The unfortunate incidents of recent occurrences would never have happened had the matter of Federal competitions been under the control of a man whose high qualities as an architect would have secured his appointment to an office created to supervise our public works.

It would seem that the forthcoming convention of the Institute with the incentive of present conditions, and the very well expressed idea conveyed in the resolutions referred to, might formulate such a policy as would serve to give the wishes of those best fitted to direct in such matters an importance in legislative councils.

INDUSTRIAL INFORMATION

IN this section will be found information concerning late catalogues issued by manufacturers of building materials, fixtures or equipment. Also under this head will be printed, from time to time, certain data relative to new devices or methods of construction considered to be of interest to architects. Architects are invited to make use of THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT'S Catalogue Files and Information Department whenever they can do so to advantage. Any assistance we can render or information we can furnish in this connection will be freely given

SHOWER MIXERS

Many devices to regulate the water in shower baths to a desired temperature have been perfected, and among them is one made by Hoffman & Billings Mfg. Co., Milwaukee, Wis., illustrated and described in a pamphlet recently issued. This device, called The Niedecker Mixer, is of the compression type, and has, the makers state, no coils or springs to complicate the mechanism. When properly installed, it is further stated, this mixer gives a perfect anti-scalding shower control.

This company also makes a line of lavatory fixtures that include in their design many features that are claimed to be exclusive with them.

The pamphlet referred to will be forwarded on request.

OAK FLOORING

The Oak Flooring Manufacturers Association of the United States, Hammond building, Detroit, Michigan, have issued a pamphlet on Oak Flooring that contains a large fund of just that kind of information that will be useful in writing definite specifications.

The different grades are explained and their method of sawing, computations to arrive at the quantity for given spaces, handling and laying of oak floors with approved finishes and care are all clearly explained in this pamphlet, which may be had on application.

STORE-FRONTS AS SILENT SALESMEN

The commercial value in retail merchandising of a well designed store-front is dwelt upon in a pamphlet recently issued by the Kawneer Mfg. Co., Niles, Mich. This pamphlet has for its title "Boosting Business," and may be had on application.

In these progressive days of keen competition, good merchandise, the dependable kind, must surround itself with an equally good environment. People trained as they are today in more æsthetic habits of thought and action, will frequent the attractive store in preference to one that does not seek to cater to these well-defined characteristics. All these advantages of good modern construction in store-fronts are well illustrated by actual installations in the pamphlet under consideration. An interesting feature is the presentation of pictures of the stores before and after the introduction of Kawneer "fronts."

The mechanical details, sectional drawings and the various matters that will interest and influence architects in selection are not overlooked. The pamphlet will be found exceedingly helpful in store-front construction.

BRICK

"Western" brick, as made by the Western Brick Co., Danville, Ill., is illustrated and described in a pamphlet prepared for free distribution.

This Company manufactures medium priced facing brick in both smooth and rough textures and in shades ranging from dark brown—practically a black brick—to rich reds, with the intermediate buffs and mottled effects.

The extended use of brick handled decoratively has stimulated manufacturers in the production of colors and textures that enables architects to attain effects that have high artistic value.

It will be interesting to note that these brick permit the introduction of these effects in the lower cost buildings and thus advance the æsthetic progress of our suburban architecture.

EXPANDED METAL CONSTRUCTION

Expanded Metal Construction is the name of a publication issued monthly by North Western Expanded Metal Company, Chicago, Ill., to disseminate general information as to the latest methods of metal lath construction with special reference to the company's own product.

The October issue illustrates a variety of designs of stuccoed houses and presents suggestions that will be interesting and valuable in the construction of this at present popular style of country houses.

Architects can receive this publication monthly on request.

ROOFS AND DECK CLOTH

Messrs. John Boyle & Company, Inc., 112 Duane Street, New York, have issued Booklet R., which gives detailed information concerning a canvas fabric called "Bayonne Roof and Deck Cloth." This cloth is offered as an efficient covering for roofs and decks, and is, the makers claim, when properly laid, waterproof, and unusually durable. It is further stated that its use is strictly in the line of economy, as it requires but one coat of paint and is easily laid.

THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER STATOR AT
ROME

The capital

THIS temple originally thought to have been dedicated to Jupiter Stator is now conceded to have been erected about the end of the first century A. D. by Domitian and dedicated to Minerva. Judging by the scant remains it was a most beautiful structure of white Pentelic marble. The capital illustrated on this plate gives some idea of the beauty of character and workmanship of the detail which also displays considerable originality in design. The foliage is of the olive, closely adhering to the natural form and is beautifully modelled, while the volutes are strong but very graceful, the small ones being entwined, which arrangement is, I believe, peculiar to this temple.



TEMPLE OF JUPITER STATOR, ROME, ITALY

(For description see preceding page)