

We Can Sell the Public Architecture

WHEN WE SELL OURSELVES

By

Ernest Ray Denmark, Editor

"WELL, I'm an ironworker. I build skyscrapers and walk steel beams a sixth of a mile up in air. Sure it's dangerous. A hell of a game. If a man had any sense he wouldn't be at it. But guess a guy just has to follow his natural bent. Some folks aspire to reach the top of Everest; or find Cathay. Most young janes have their heads full of a trip to Paris, or a hitch-hike through New England. All looking for a kick, a thrill. That's what attracts men to this savage pastime and invariably keeps them there for a lifetime at hard labor."

"What does a man think of when he is up in the air? He thinks of his work. All the time. Every second. What's coming next. What he has done. If anything was not made safe, he goes back and makes it so. Safety first and last. He may not step on a loose beam, or a protruding plank, but some one else will. And they depend on your work, just as you have to depend on theirs. It wouldn't be bad if everything depended on yourself, but it's all team play." These lines from James Martin, in a recent issue of "New Masses," make us think.

If we in architecture today could only catch the spirit of the ironworker. There is something virile and fine about this man that scales dizzy heights for the love of it. He has no time for petty things. His is a big job where jealousy finds no place. There is not a spark of selfish pride about this man. He gives his best every minute of the day for the common cause, to bring the building to completion on schedule time. And looking up at those towering masses of concrete and steel he finds some satisfaction in his contribution to our civilization, just as you might have been responsible for those dreams put on paper from which he works. Team play . . . it is the only way.

Architects have big things to do, I don't mean the usual things . . . designing, planning, checking construction . . . that requires the same virile strength of the ironworker. We are struggling to bring beauty, order and harmony to our cities, but a single example here and another there is not enough. If our cities are to express anything other than the debasing influence of a purely material life of wealth, we must improve the mass of buildings which now clutter up the landscape like so many thistles in a pansy bed.

How can it be done? It will never come to pass so long as we wait for the public to come to us. We must go to them and sell our ideas of better buildings. One, two or three architects in a city can't do the job. But if a united effort were put forth in the right direction results would be surprising. Theory? Not altogether. In this issue of *THE SOUTHERN ARCHITECT*, Horace Peaslee tells us how and what they did in Washington to bring about a general improvement in the appearance and practical planning of buildings. What has been done in the National Capital can be accomplished in every city if local architects will attack the problem as did the architects in Washington. Maybe, Chesterton was right when he said, "We are disposed to make a problem of everything nowadays, the more easily to excuse ourselves for not settling it." Your interest as architects, as well as that of the public, seems to me to lie in the restoration of that intimate and democratic contact one with the other which permeated the building industry when the masterpieces of old were being molded into shape . . . when architects gave of their time and talent and inspired their clients with their enthusiasm.

The American Institute of Architects is urging the formation of Architects' Advisory Councils throughout the country as a means of bringing all building under control of the profession. The Washington Chapter has worked out the plan . . . applying criticism in the blueprint stage, which after eight years has proven a practical solution of the problem. Here is a challenge to the architects in every city. By meeting it adequately you will be rendering an honorable and valuable service to your community and at the same time will be placing your profession on a higher plane in the eyes of the public.



HOUSE OF POWEL CROSLY, JR., ESQ., SARASOTA, FLA.
GEORGE ALBREE FREEMAN, ARCHITECT
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

TRANSIENCE---OR TRADITION?

By LEWIS E. CROOK, JR., A. I. A.

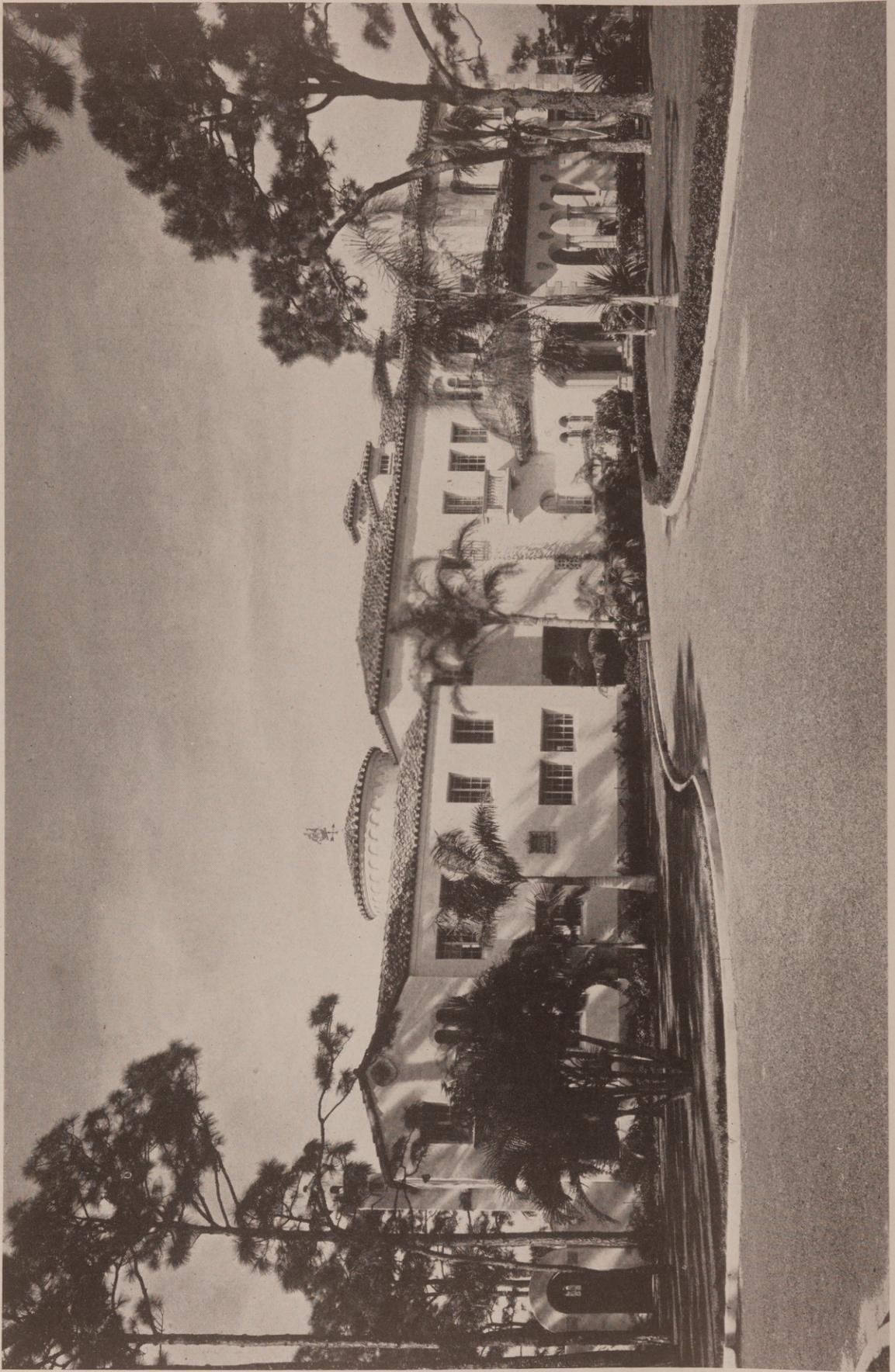
ONE of the by-products of this industrial age in which we live is a loss of individualism—a standardization of national taste which has asserted itself in our domestic architecture. We have tried to express our individualism in house design by using a style different from that of our neighbor, but our other neighbors have the same idea of being different. The result is that we can go from one end of these United States to the other and, with few exceptions, find the same kinds of houses of recent construction in one locality as in another. We have thought more of “styles” than we have of climate or topography. By trying to be individualistic, we have become corporate and collective. It seems strange that in a country with the extremes of climate that ours has and with sections whose people have fundamentally different characteristics and backgrounds that, generally, we find the same confusion of styles. The architects are not altogether to blame for this. The average layman thinks in details, details too often gathered from the same magazine that goes to all sections of the country. Our ideas have become generalized. Sections have mimicked one another.

Then, too, our present day mode of living causes us to rush feverishly from one enthusiasm, one worry and one passion to another; never static, never still, never content with marking time or staying put, hurrying to new conquests and new follies, new triumphs and new thrills. We are a restless people and we tire of moving rhythmically, but unadventurously, through a mechanical routine. Our starved desire for romance has found one outlet at least in our domestic architecture. The borrowing of Old World styles of architecture, regardless of their inappropriateness, and the vogue of romantic names for streets and sub-divisions are present day characteristics of our industrious nation. The sensational and universal adoption of the “Spanish” house, brought about by the Florida boom of a few years ago, is typical of the transformation of the plain into the spectacular. Will not a creative spirit in domestic architecture stagnate on such an illogical basis? Can we not best express our individualism or personal-

ity by the intelligent use of the tradition with which we have been endowed in each locality?

In this immediate section, that is Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, and I use it as an illustration because I am more familiar with it, we have had little regard for our architectural tradition. By grace of the taste and inspiration of Jefferson, and the culture and political propensities of our forefathers of the first half of the nineteenth century, we have inherited an architectural tradition which, generally speaking, we have not appreciated. I am referring, of course, to the Classic Revival type of domestic architecture which was evolved in the deep South. It fulfills every requisite of our present day mode of living, except taste. Which is bad: The style that is the most personal expression of American domestic architecture and in which a creative spirit and a new sense of form first appeared or a taste which has been generalized by the movies, radio and the press? We cannot, in justice, say that the use of a style is poor taste just because we do not understand it. We have not endeavored to appreciate it. We have maintained an indifference to its merits. Generally, it has been condemned because of ignorance. Not one book, devoted exclusively to the Classic Revival type in this section, has been published. However, excellent books have directed our attention to it.

The architectural tradition which we have inherited in this section is unsurpassed in dignity and monumental quality. It is simple, austere and refined and yet it has a flexibility which is unusual in an academic style. The fusion of Greek and Roman proportion and details, the Greek temple form and the colonnade with a flat roof, the wood and cast iron balconies, the circular stair and the elliptical and lintel headed doorways are a few of the characteristics it embodied. It is elastic and simple enough for modern use and above all it possesses scale and proportion which is far in advance of what we are generally doing today. If we could recover and retain its spirit, we would be blest in ourselves and in our boon to the common country. Are we not losing a great opportunity by ignoring our architectural birthright and letting it pass into oblivion?



HOUSE OF POWEL CROSLY, JR., ESQ., SARASOTA, FLORIDA



House of Powell Crosley, Jr. Sarasota, Florida

This house was erected on an estate covering sixty-three acres, and is fifty-five by one hundred and seventy-five feet, of reinforced concrete and steel construction, with stucco finish on sixteen-inch hollow tile walls. Sixteen-inch foundations of reinforced concrete go down six feet to hardpan and rest on reinforced concrete footings four feet wide and sixteen inches deep. The house is built three feet above ground to insure proper ventilation and eliminate dampness. The cost was three hundred thousand dollars.

GEORGE ALBREE FREEMAN
ARCHITECT
SARASOTA, FLA.

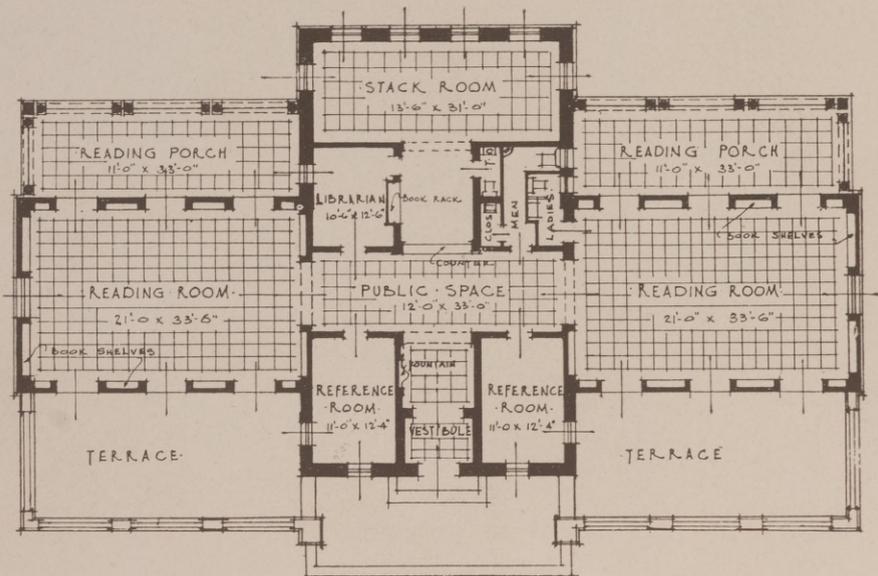






The San Pedro Branch Library

San Antonio, Texas



ATLEE B. AND
ROBT. M. AYRES
ARCHITECTS



ENTRANCE FACADE, MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
AYMAR EMBURY, II, AND MILLER & MARTIN, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

The Problem

The design to be Early American Colonial carrying out the rich traditions of the ante-bellum South. To be gracious enough to be luxurious, yet intimate enough to be homelike. That it would neither be a small country hotel nor an enlarged and exclusive roadhouse, but rather a convenient, comfortable, and beautiful country residence.



MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB

Birmingham, Ala.

ONE hundred and eighty rolling acres in the southern portion of Shades Valley, cupped by two ridges of Shades Mountain, watered by a winding brook, studded with natural hazards, was selected for fulfillment of a new ideal for country club developments in Birmingham. This ideal is:

A friendly club, whose membership is restricted to a small and congenial coterie of cultured people with kindred tastes, interests, and acquaintances.

A restful club, ensconced in a serene and peaceful setting, affording a delightful privacy and welcome seclusion from the din and dust of a growing industrial city.

A cozy, homelike, comfortable club in which the hospitable spirit and traditions of the old South are personified in architecture and appointments, environs and atmosphere.

A serviceable club, which combines the conveni-

ence and the service of an up-to-date hotel with the informality and charm of a country residence.

An enjoyable club, which affords complete facilities for healthful outdoor recreation and diversion and pleasant social contact.

The club house is of that Early American Colonial design, so long associated with the rich traditions of the ante-bellum South. There is a graciousness enough to be luxurious, yet so intimate that hominess completely permeates it. This club was planned with the idea that when it was completed it would be neither a small country hotel nor an enlarged and exclusive roadhouse, but rather a convenient, comfortable, and beautiful country residence.

The exterior, therefore, has been designed in a loose rambling way, so as to appear like a big country house, so beloved by its people that from time to time enlargements were necessary. Factors which



DETAIL IN DINING ROOM

MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

AYMAR EMBURY, II, AND MILLER & MARTIN, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



DINING ROOM, MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

suggest the institution were carefully avoided. It is, of course, fire resistant; its exterior walls are of whitewashed brick and stone, the roof of small rough slates, the floor of concrete finished with wood on the interior and varicolored stone on the exterior.

All the features which are requisite in the modern country club have been included. These are so disposed as to be readily accessible but without the undue emphasis on the service elements which tend to mar the homelike atmosphere that should be characteristic of a building which is, after all, the communal home of its members, and not a casino.

The entrance is under a porte cochere, large enough to hold two cars at a time, and leads into a vestibule, flanked by a check room and the club office. From the vestibule one enters a long hall leading on the right to the dining rooms and the men's locker rooms and grill, and on the left to the ball room, the card room, the women's lounge, lockers, etc. Immediately opposite the entrance is a large general lounge with a fireplace at each end and as one enters the building an excellent vista through the lounge and over the main piazza to the golf course is opened up.

On the main floor are those rooms which are

used the most frequently. Of these the more important is the lounge, a panelled room with carved frieze and pilaster, following the English Georgian precedent as used in Charleston and other parts of the Old South. This room is furnished in a way commensurate with its dignity with reproduction mahogany and walnut furniture like one of the great country houses of the XVIII century. To the right of the lounge are stairs leading to the second story and to the men's quarters in the basement floor. Beyond these stairs are the private dining room, and general dining room. The private dining room will accommodate a party of about twenty, and the large dining room one hundred and twenty-five, although when dinner dances are given, the center of the floor will be left open for dancing and seats for at least eighty will be available around the walls. This dining room is of unusual shape, with octagonal ends and of great height, lending itself to a modified English Georgian treatment. The porches and piazzas are very lovely and extended views of the golf course and the pleasant valley through which runs the mountain brook may be had. In the second floor is a large private dining room or meeting room and eight bedrooms comfortably furnished in the colonial style, with well equipped bath rooms.



LOUNGE, MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

The wing of the building is on sharply sloping grounds. The basement is as fully lighted as the main floor. Advantage has been taken of this factor to segregate the athletic activities from the purely social so that the varieties of costume employed will create no embarrassment. On the men's side is a locker room for two hundred and twenty, a big and attractive grill, and game room with tile floor, and comfortable and handsome furniture, adequate and well designed showers and toilet rooms, and a separate dressing room for boys. On the women's side is an octagonal lounge with all the comfortable furniture required for seating after games, a number of small dressing rooms for those who wish to use the pool, a locker room for eighty, good shower and toilet rooms, and toilet rooms for girl children.

Separate entrances are provided for the men's and women's locker rooms and the boys' and girls' locker rooms to the golf course, tennis courts, and pool. The golf professional's shop is so located that it can be readily reached by either the men or women golfers without passing each other's quarters. All the principal rooms are provided with fire places.

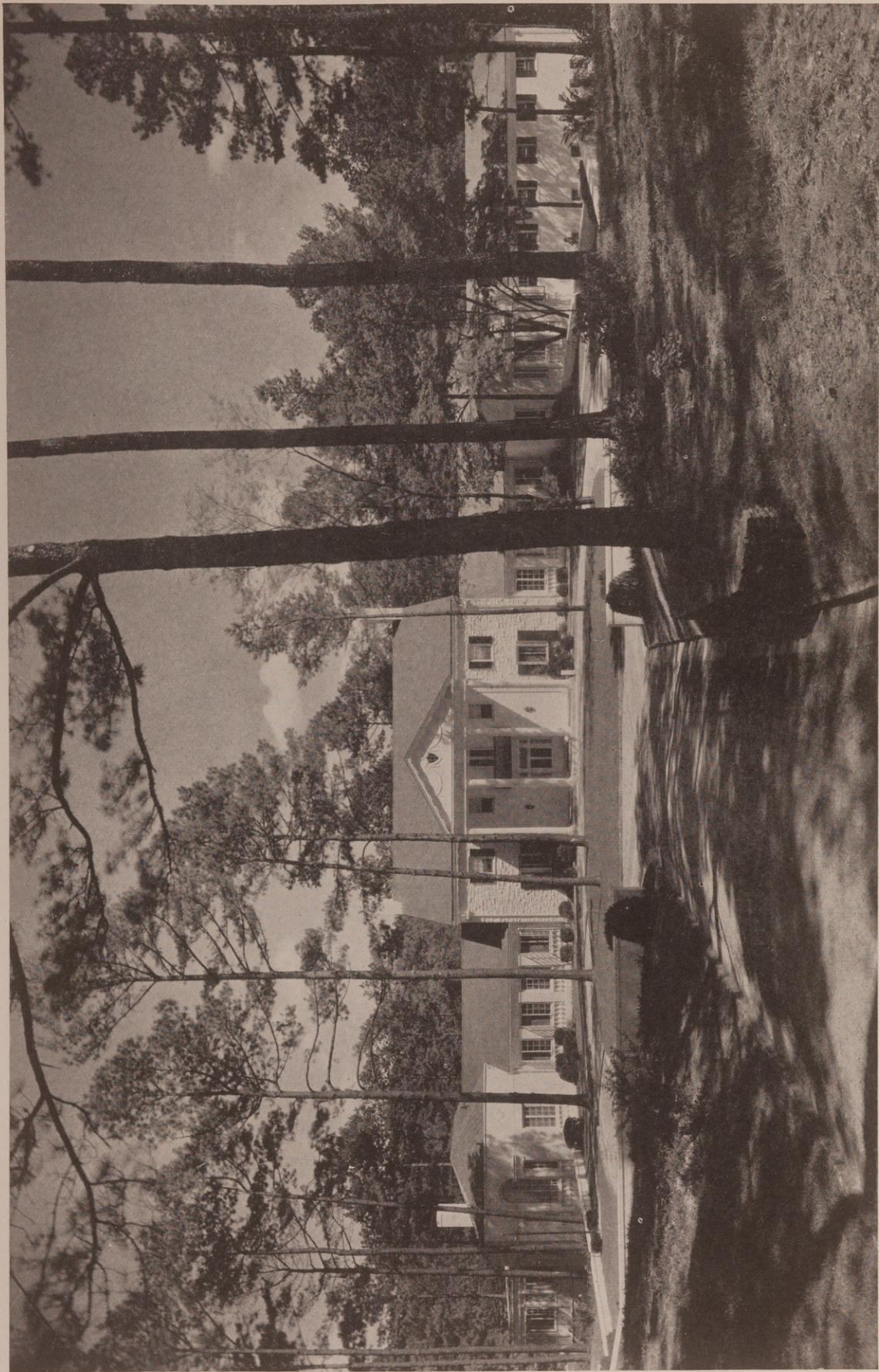
A very noteworthy feature is the care with which the problem of ventilation has been studied. The ball

room, the main dining room, and the men's grill room have windows on all four sides, the lounge on three sides with excellent cross draught and the men's and women's locker rooms have cross ventilation by windows in opposite sides.

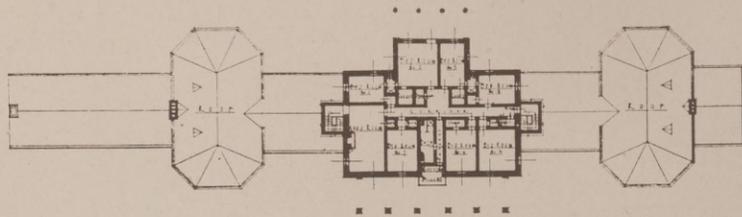
All desirable accessories, such as valet's and maid's room with driers for wet clothing, pressing spaces, and provision for service of tea or ice drinks in any part of the club have been provided.

The pool is in close connection with the house, on a terrace somewhat lower than the basement floor, and so placed that it will neither be annoying because of the noise of the bathers nor of the glare from the pool, nor will it be so far away that its colorful activity is out of sight of those who wish to see it.

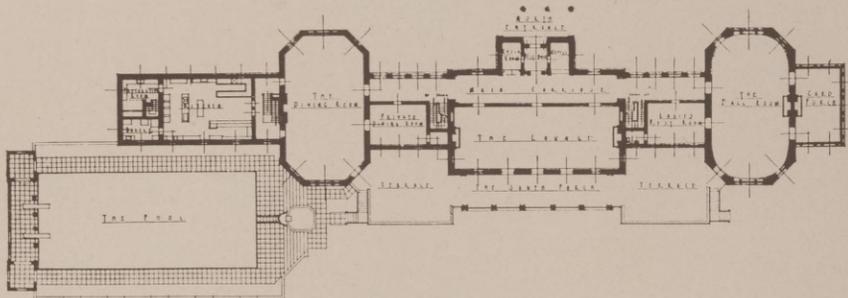
In conclusion, it may be said that both the building committee and the architects made a careful study of those country clubs most successful socially and artistically and tried to avoid errors committed by them where those in charge of operations have pointed them out, and believe that they have succeeded in making this building one of the most attractive, practical and charming of any in the United States.



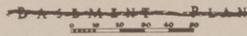
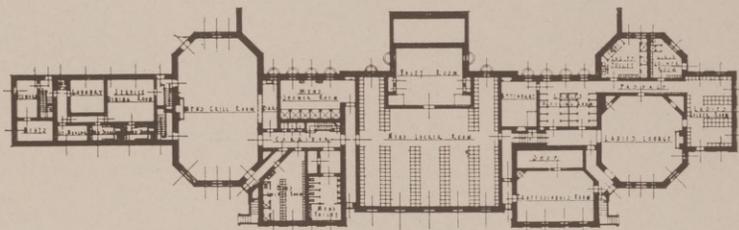
ENTRANCE FACADE, MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
AYMAR EMBURY, II, AND MILLER & MARTIN, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



SECOND FLOOR

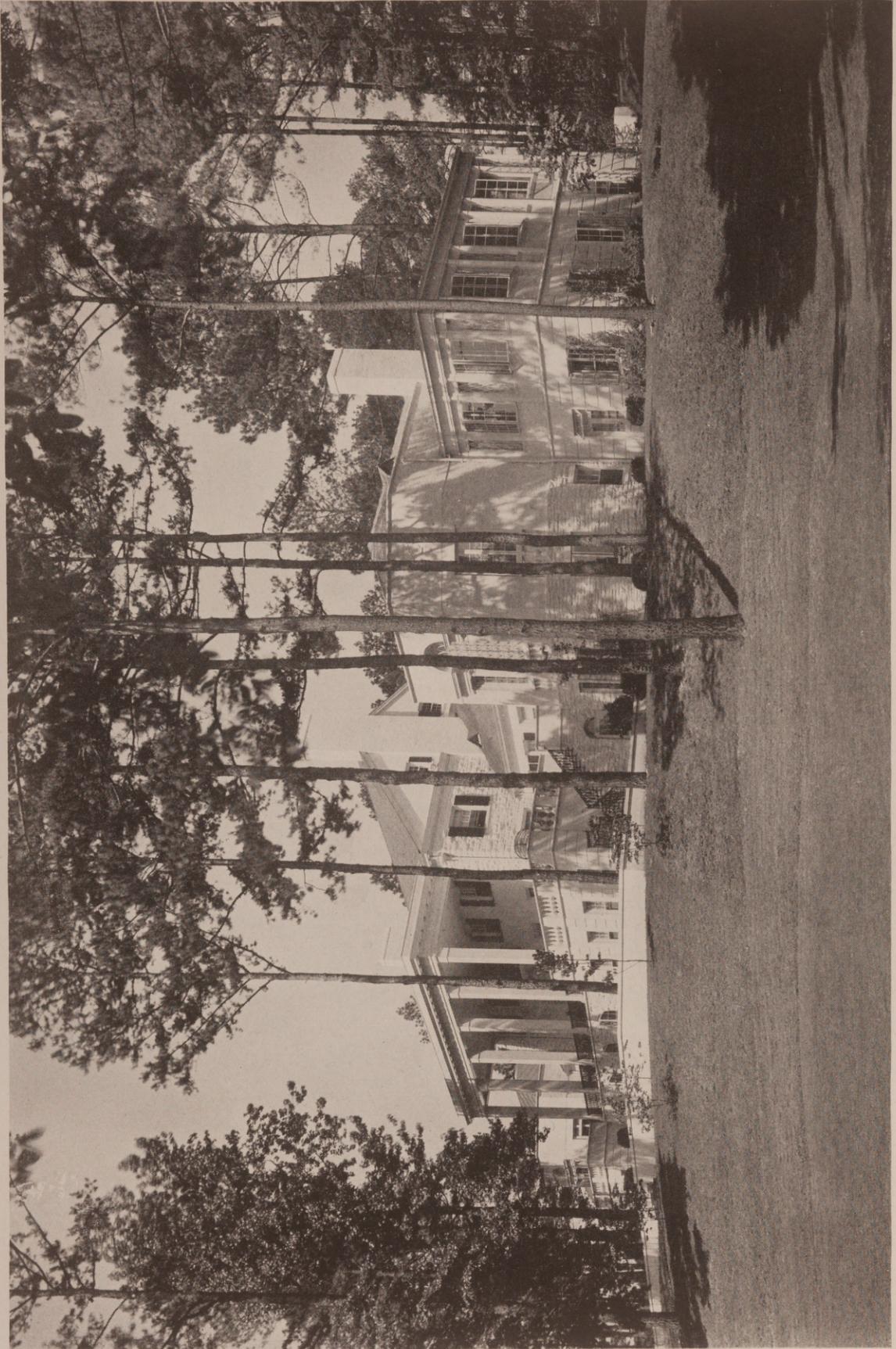


FIRST FLOOR



BASEMENT FLOOR

MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
 AYMAR EMBURY, II, AND MILLER & MARTIN, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



REAR FACADE, MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
AYMAR EMBURY, II, AND MILLER & MARTIN, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS

CONSTRUCTION DATA SHEET

Mountain Brook Country Club, Birmingham, Ala.

Aymar Embury, II, and Miller & Martin, Associated Architects

Roof : Slate.

Floors : Bar Joist Construction, Oak Finish.

Interior Walls : T. C. Block.

Heating Equipment : Kewanee Boilers, Coal Heated.

Plumbing Equipment : Standard Sanitary Mfg. Co. Make.

Lighting Equipment : Part Specially Designed, Part Stock Fixtures.

Windows, Frames and Fittings : Wood.

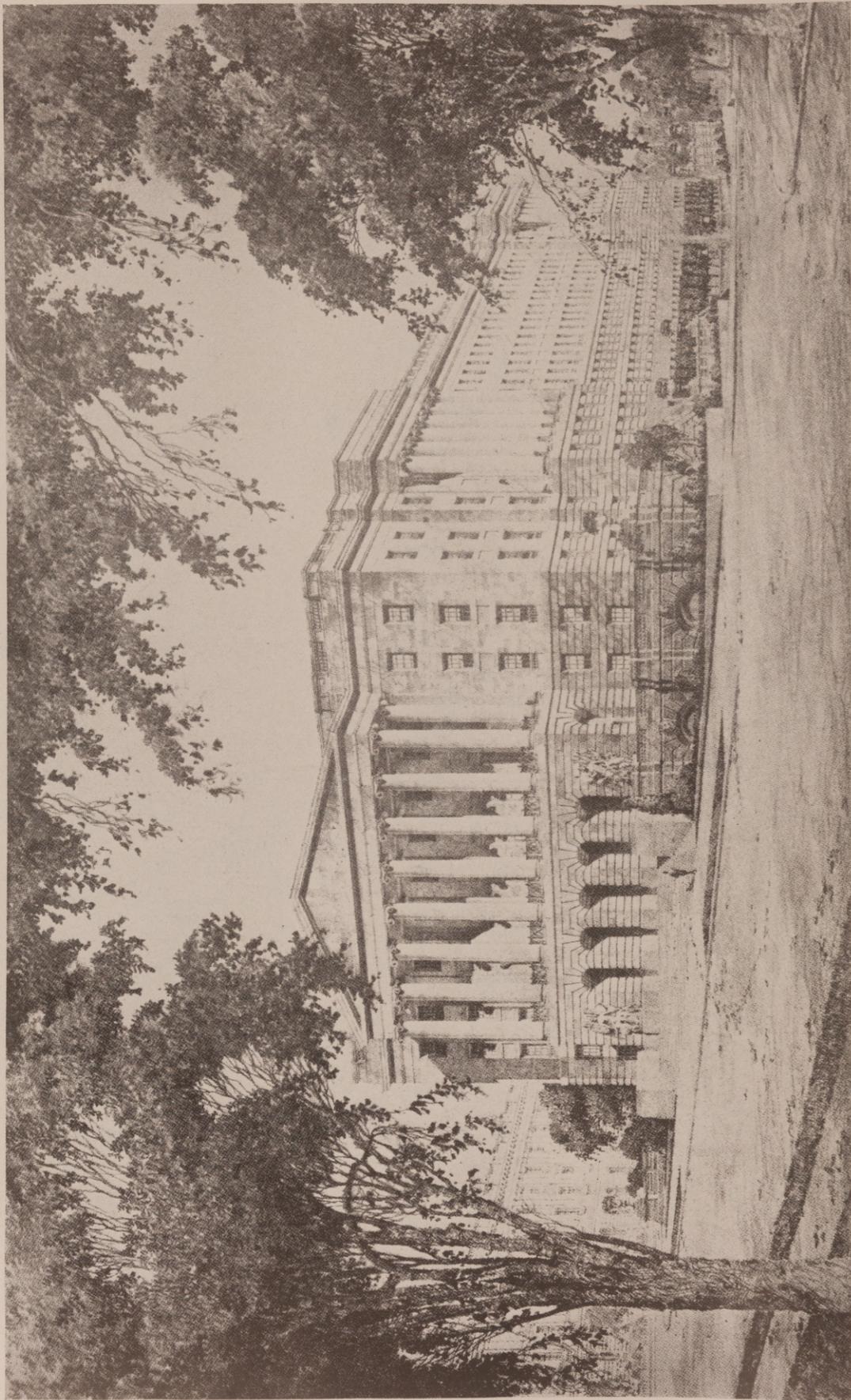
Cost Per Cubic Foot : 43 Cents.



BALL ROOM, MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
AYMAR EMBURY, II, AND MILLER & MARTIN, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



DETAIL IN LOUNGE, MOUNTAIN BROOK COUNTRY CLUB, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
AYMAR EMBURY, II. AND MILLER & MARTIN, ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS



DAVID LYNN
Architects of the Capitol

NEW OFFICE BUILDING, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WASHINGTON, D. C.

ALLIED ARCHITECTS OF WASHINGTON, D. C., INC.
Consulting Architects

CONSOLIDATED ENGINEERING COMPANY
Constructors

CRITICISM

Will Improve Our ARCHITECTURE

For eight years once a week, three architects, drawn from a panel, have criticized constructively all plans filed for building permits in the District of Columbia. Its value to the public and profession has been demonstrated.



By Horace W. Peaslee, A. I. A.

WHEN we think of architectural criticism we generally think of it as being applied to completed buildings and while the architectural profession might approve of such a procedure, at the same time, individually architects are prone to fight shy of any such criticism, especially when it concerns their own work. But criticism can be made effective by reversing the process, that is, by suggestion at the time the plans are being prepared. That such a plan is feasible and workable to the satisfaction of all concerned has been definitely proven after eight years of practice by the Architects' Advisory Council in Washington. This council was organized by the Washington Chapter, American Institute of Architects and at the time of its inception the purpose of the council was clearly outlined to the Washington public and the local profession as follows:

"The majority of people can tell whether a building is beautiful, mediocre or ugly; but in completed buildings nothing can be done about it. The trained eye can detect potential ugliness and possible improvements in blueprints. At this stage, improvement may be made in proposed buildings. If the members of the architectural profession will focus their trained eyes upon buildings in the blueprint stage, and will give co-operative, constructive criticism of each other's work, and if even a minority of the public will lend moral support, there need no longer be any reason why entire sections need be repeatedly injured by endless rows of mediocrity; or well ordered neighborhoods by single eyesores. Well designed buildings need cost no more than mediocre

structures. They are better investments for the purchasers and for the community as a whole.

"It is all very well to talk generalities of city beautifying; but do you meet your personal responsibility to the extent of our personal opportunity? The responsibility for the beauty or ugliness of the great bulk of your city rests with you, the individual, for whom and by whom this bulk is created building by building; homes, offices, shops, institutions. In its bulk it seems impossible of correction; but building by building as erected, results can be accomplished."

This was a statement of conditions, with a definite plan for their betterment. It seemed very doubtful whether the members of the busy profession could and would find the time from their routine work to give to this civic philanthropy. It seemed doubtful whether any definite results would be accomplished even if the effort were given by the architects. But now, after a period of eight years of continuous successful operation, we may take stock of the actual accomplishment.

For eight years once a week, three architects, drawn from a jury panel, have criticised constructively all plans filed for building permits in the District of Columbia. One new man goes on the jury each week, one former juror dropping off; the term of service being three weeks. When it was proposed last summer that because of the heat and vacations the service might be dropped for a couple of months, those architects scheduled for summer service unanimously agreed that under no circumstances would they take advantage of the situation. It would seem, *(Continued on page forty-eight)*



By Eleanor Cochran Reed

*Sunlight and shadow—and grief,
A heart-searching cry for a faith,
Urgings of hope for a life that shall be,
Surgings of love toward a dim, far sea.
Death that hath been,
And that is,
And shall be.
Love that is left with its Memory!*

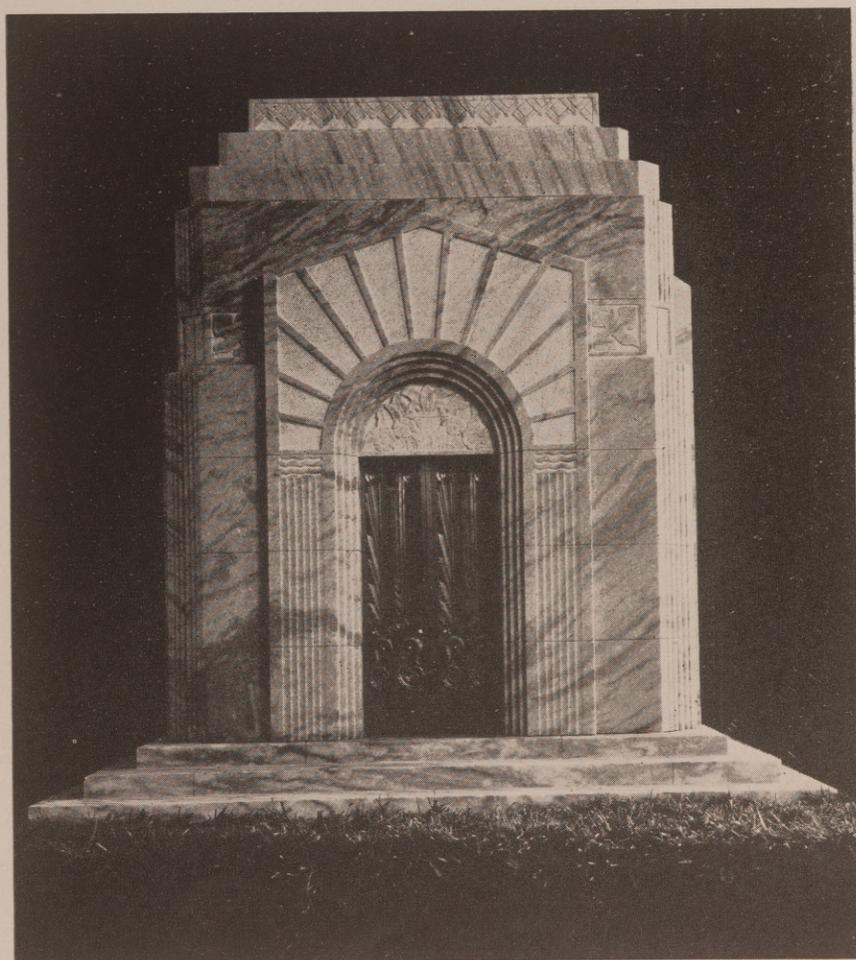
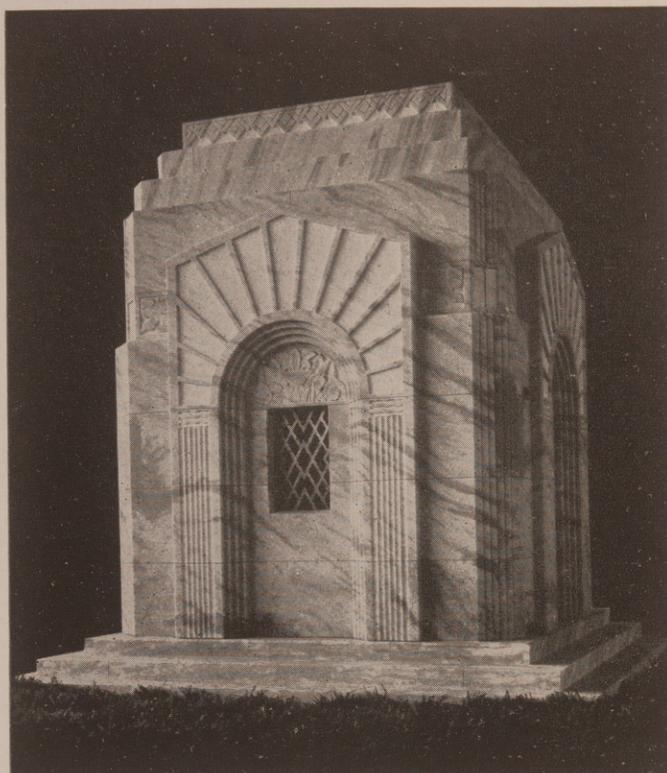
*Sunlight and shadow—and song,
A passing from night to the dawn,
Dreamings in stone of a dream that was real,
Gleamings in marble that live and heal,
Life that hath been,
And that is,
And shall be.
Love—and Love's cherishing Memory!*

An 8 Catacomb MAUSOLEUM

17' x 17'

Mezzotint

Georgia Marble



Of all the places where beauty and good taste should be given the greatest consideration, we find there the least, in the monuments erected to the memory of our fellowmen who have passed on to the great beyond. This is a field in which the architect has not been called, except in a few rare instances, and one that needs his service most of all in order to improve the standard of cemetery monuments. Here is a problem to which the profession should attach itself.

I. MISCOWITZ
ARCHITECT
ATLANTA

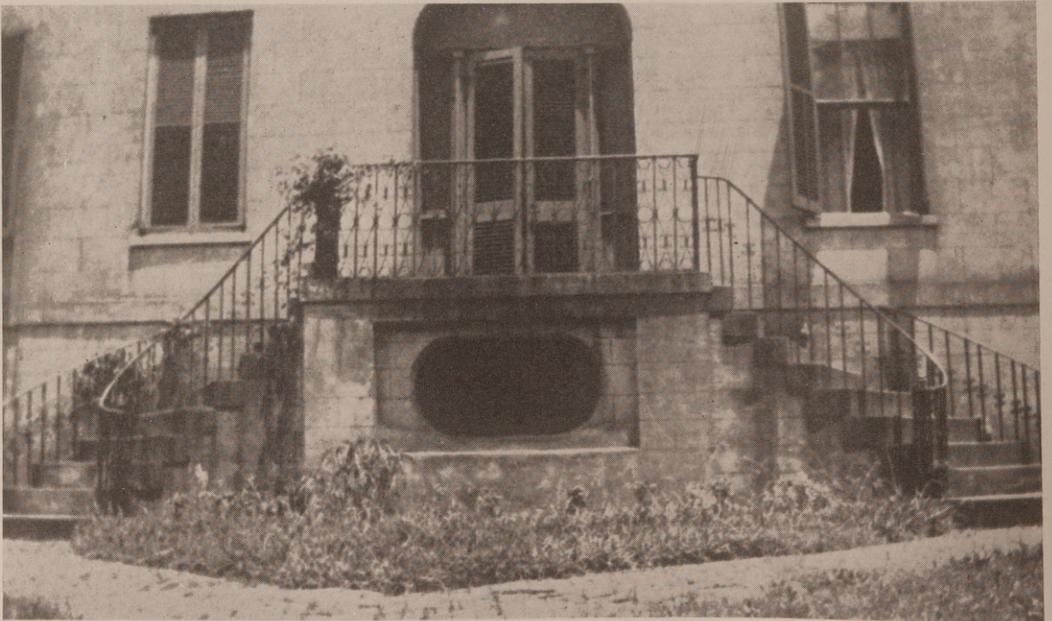


BUSHFELD

Westmoreland
County
Virginia

Wrought Iron Stairway

Old House
at
Macon
Georgia



In The Garden
at
CHATHAM

Fredericksburg
Virginia



SIDNEY CLAY

House

Near
Lexington
Kentucky



What Can Architects Do To Improve



DETAIL FROM IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MEMPHIS

GEORGE AWSUMB, ARCHITECT

Consecrating ourselves to the task and having interested the pastor, religious educational director and publisher, in our problem, aims and hopes, we have just begun to find ways and means of promoting interest and demand. Admitting our belief in the thought, so often expressed, that the beautiful churches of the past reflect the very lives and living of the people, we ask what can we in architecture do to contribute to the cause in the interest of better buildings?

Southern Church Architecture?

By

P. John Hoehner

HOEHNER, BAUM & FROESE

ARCHITECTS

ST. LOUIS

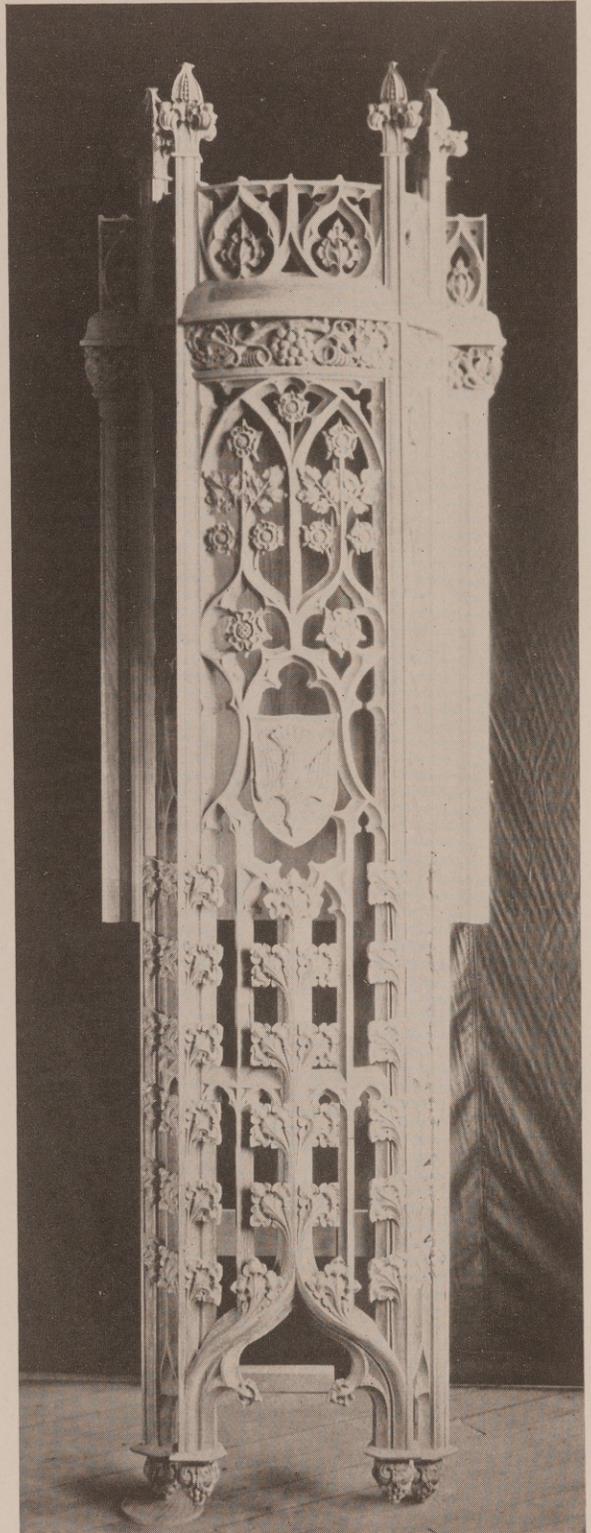
PROMOTING interest in better architecture, I believe to be the direct responsibility of the practicing architect. For by his completed work, is he judged, and a worthwhile completed project is an anchor about which will revolve many demands for other good buildings. This then compels the architect first to appreciate the responsibility of his profession.

These duties and responsibilities cannot be properly discharged unless his motives, conduct and ability are such as to command respect and confidence.

To make the public appreciate better architecture so it will *demand* only good and better buildings always, is a task of such Herculean proportions that the stout hearted only will approach it. We have in architecture those who are interested in the profession only as a means of profit. These practitioners are perhaps largely devoting their time to industrial work, that work which is concerned only in a building program which provides so much floor space at as little per square foot cost, as is consistent with fair construction.

Then a group is interested in another class of commercial buildings which still demands a low square or cubic foot cost, but which must be more attractive, because the owners of these buildings realize a certain part of their patrons will be halted and perhaps drawn to the tenants of these buildings because the quarters do express some beauty. This is the first step toward evaluating the esthetic. The motive is commercial only, and unless returns are produced, all thought of the beautiful will be discarded. Unfortunately these two groups command by far the greater volume of work and therefore affect the practice of each of us by contact influence.

Again a large group is concerned in creating places of abode where pride of ownership demands some expression of culture. Oft times not expression of the owner, but the outgrowth of rivalry (*Continued on page fifty*)



In the creation of distinctive interiors fine wood-carving adds immeasurably to the effectiveness of the church ideal. This is an example of a Lectern done by the American Seating Company



PROPOSED DRUID HILLS METHODIST CHURCH, ATLANTA, GEORGIA

IVEY & CROOK, ARCHITECTS

GOVERNMENT In ARCHITECTURE

An Echo From The Supervising Architect's Office

By

H. G. LITTLE.

THERE has been a great deal of discussion in recent months, both in the professional journals and at organization meetings, upon the subject of the disposition of Government architectural work. Now that it is being demonstrated that the Treasury Department will give jobs to outside architects where it is to the Government's interest to do so, and retain them in the Supervising Architect's Office where it is not (an arrangement which should be a satisfaction to every thinking citizen), certain non-controversial comments seem to be in order.

There is considerable regret among many professional individuals and organizations that, in order to give publicity to this discussion, it has been felt necessary to pillory and brand as unneeded a very efficient and praiseworthy Federal organization, the Supervising Architect's Office. As a matter of fact, this organization is an absolute necessity, and has for many years been a strong factor in advancing the cause of good architecture throughout the country.

The basic reason that the Government has an organization of its own to do this architectural work is because it is entirely unlike any kind of private work in that it is highly specialized. The buildings handled are not only post offices, but also house many of the other Federal activities: the Courts, Internal Revenue, Agriculture, Prohibition, Civil Service, Veterans' Bureau, etc. All of these activities have certain peculiar requirements, and certain relations to each other, which cannot be learned in a short time, and as any one private practitioner would probably not get but one or two of these buildings, it is clear that he could not do the work as well as an office that has specialized in it for many years. It has also been determined, by actual figures, that the required work can be done by the Supervising Architect's Office at much less cost to the Government than when done by outside architects.

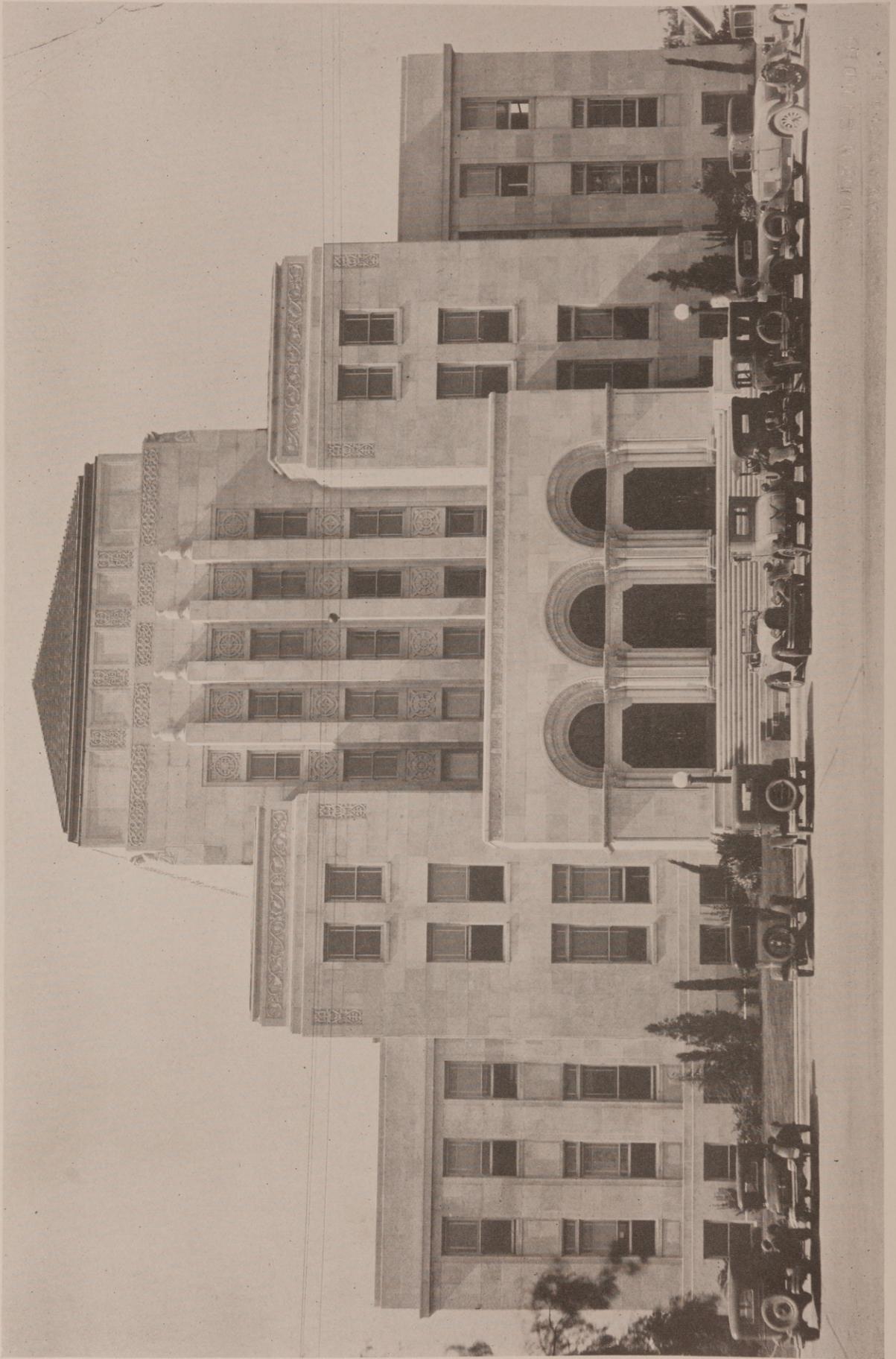
The greater proportion of Federal work is of a size that would not interest the best professional men, on account of the amount of the fee allowed and the high costs of getting the work out. About 90% of this work averages not over \$100,000.00 in

total cost, and with an average fee of 4%, without supervision, few of the larger offices of this country could afford to accept commissions, even during a serious financial depression.

There is an enormous amount of work connected with Government buildings that necessitates a special knowledge not available except to the Supervising Architect's Office. If the precedents established by the Office were to be followed, there would be an almost constant checking of the private architect's drawings, requiring a large corps of trained men, probably as many as are now considered "designers" in the office. There would be needed a great many visits by representatives of the private office to the Washington office, for instruction, data, checking, approval, etc. So the Government would not only be paying the commission for the work, but would also be paying salaries for the men necessary to straighten out and instruct the private architects in doing their own work. It is obvious that the work could not be expedited by this method, as has been so generally claimed.

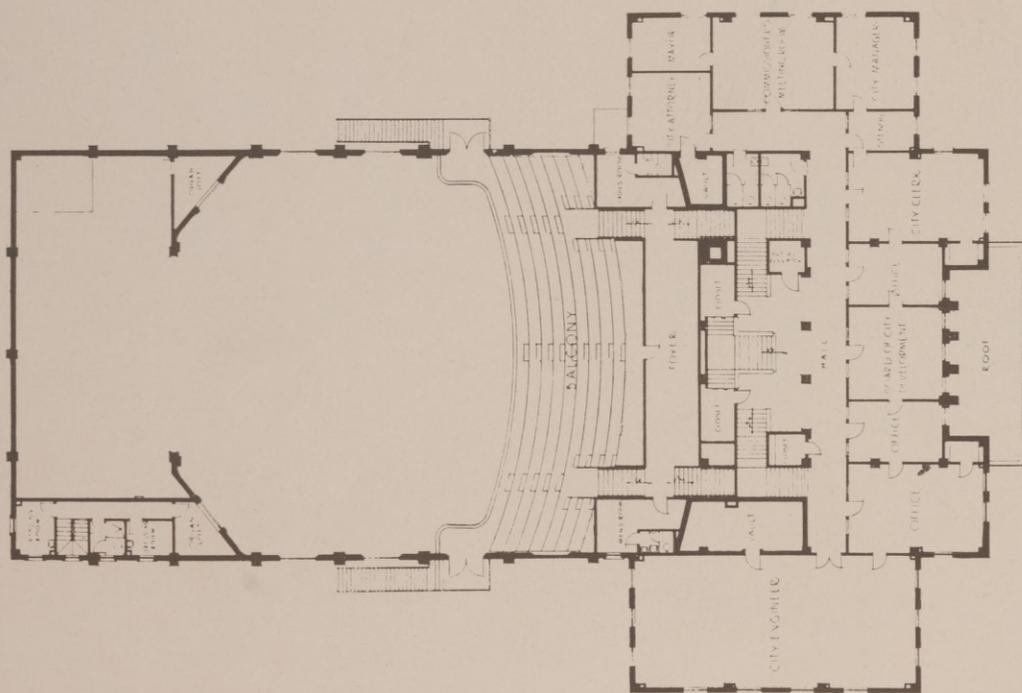
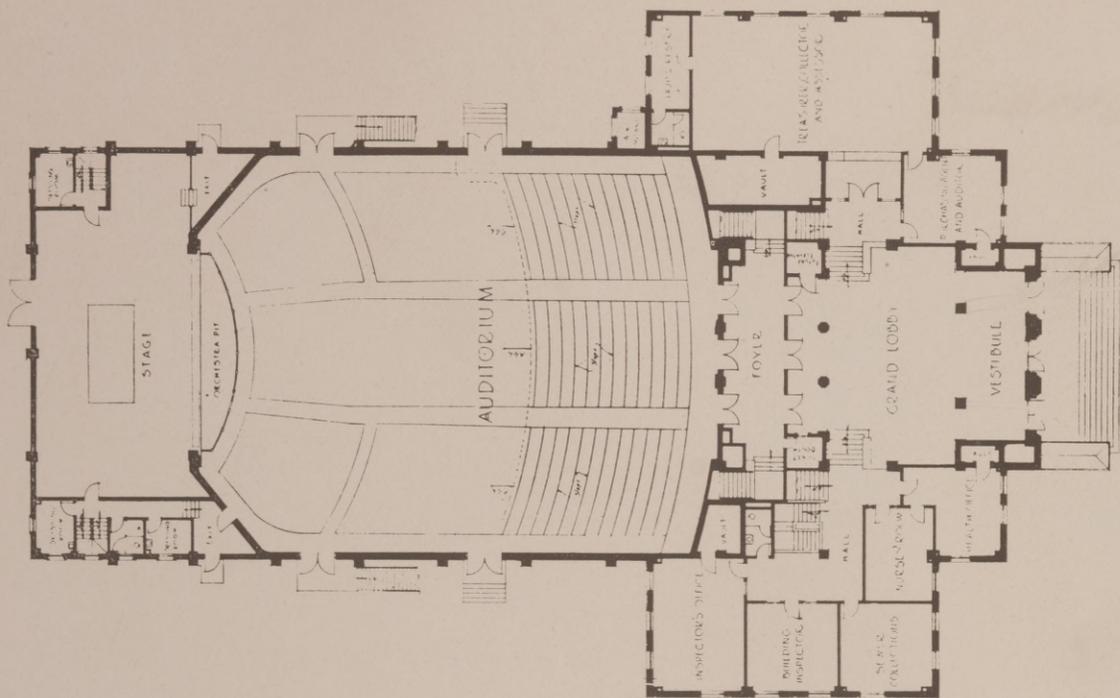
A recent writer says that the Government has discovered that a private contractor can give the best results in this highly specialized industry. This is not, in general, true, although in specific cases it may be, as in the event that the contractor has creditably completed similar work for the Government. It would surprise many to know that a large percentage of the present lettings are to firms that have already demonstrated their ability and honesty on Federal projects.

It is, however, one thing for the contractor to carry on an operation when guided, not only by drawings and specifications from the Supervising Architect's Office—that are noted for efficiency and completeness—but by a Federal engineer who is thoroughly familiar with all of the peculiar details that surround these projects; and quite another thing for an architect, be he ever so clever a technician, to wade through the mass of instructions, details and suggestions that would be necessary, and then design and carry through the drawings and specifications with anything approaching the celerity expected by
(Continued on page fifty-two)



CITY HALL AND AUDITORIUM, SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

TROST & TROST, ARCHITECTS



CITY HALL AND AUDITORIUM, SAN ANGELO, TEXAS

How Can We Make Building More UNDER STATEWIDE BUILDING



Under the leadership of Mr. Adams a Florida Building Council is being rapidly organized at this time

What Are We Going

By Franklin
Regional Director



Problem:

Building as a distinct activity has not kept pace with other human activities; it is in an unhealthy condition because it does not offer sufficient safety or profit to either the operator or the investor; and finally, this condition is undoubtedly due to the lack of intelligent, concerted direction and control. The pertinent question therefore becomes "whose duty and responsibility is it to exercise this control and through what medium may it be established."

PRACTICES characterizing the average building operation in the southeastern states, from the initial financing to the completion of the building, may be assumed as representing the average for the entire country outside of the large centers. These practices usually result in an unsatisfactory condition from the point of view of those who are interested in the building up to completion and also for those who are interested in the behavior of the building from an investment or sales point of view after it has been completed. As a matter of fact the activities preceding the completion of the building do not deserve to be classified as an industry, for the word "industry" usually conveys the idea of something that is quite stable and founded upon broad economic principles. Projects classified as building do not offer the same chances to the gambler as does the legalized slot machine from which he is supposed to receive as a minimum, the value of his money in merchandise with the possibility of receiving, if lucky, a far greater value. In building, the maximum that can be hoped for, if one is fortunate, is the full value of his money in terms of building while the least that he may receive is some indeterminate fraction thereof. This regrettable condition is too generally known to require proof. That it has been allowed to continue is a reflection upon the business acumen of all those agencies concerned with the building operation. It has a ten-

dency to discourage investments in building and to lessen the opportunity for profit for the operators. How these practices were allowed to creep into the building field is hardly a matter with which we are interested at the present moment. It was the probable result of the growing complexity and diversity of the processes and materials which have characterized the development of building. In the beginning, one man was architect, builder and mechanic, the materials were branches and leaves and the process was one of assembling these materials into the form of a shelter. From that day to this day of almost limitless material wrought into almost limitless forms by almost limitless types of skill and assembled in a limitless variety of relationships, represents many steps. The manufacture of building products of all kinds from old and new materials has developed a multitude of industries fully deserving appellation as such, but the great task of financing and designing and of the assembling of this great variety of elements into a completed building has been allowed to proceed without adequate direction.

To sum up: ¹building as a distinct activity has not kept pace with other human activities; it is in an unhealthful condition because it does not offer sufficient safety or profit to either the operator or the investor; and finally, this condition is undoubtedly due to the lack of intelligent, concerted direction and control. ²The pertinent question therefore

Profitable For The Investor? COUNCIL CONTROL THE ANSWER

To Do About It?

Oliver Adams
Southeast A. I. A.



Solution:

A co-operative state-wide organization of all building interest is necessary. Control of practices could be assured by establishing certification of the buildings as having been promoted, financed, designed and constructed in accordance with standards that have been approved by every interest involved as being proper and economic. Such a certificate would be strongly indicative, if not an established proof, that every dollar invested is yielding the maximum of value in the building.

becomes "whose duty and responsibility is it to exercise this control and through what medium may it be established." The success of the building congresses in our larger cities and the profitable result accruing through the co-operation of the American Institute of Architects and the Producers' Council indicate very clearly where the responsibility lies and also suggests a method through which control may be exercised. However, the classes of organizations just referred to are inherently lacking in certain important elements, the most important of which is "influence upon state legislation which probably affects building to a greater extent than either national or local legislation. It would seem therefore that the future welfare of building and the hope of developing it into a cohesive industry in the best sense of that word lies in statewide organizations composed of representatives of all of the interests concerned with building. An organization of this kind should have certain other characteristics. In addition to being statewide and embracing all the interests concerned with the building, the following characteristics would seem advantageous: An organization of this kind should be representative and not popular in its composition. The representation should be from statewide organizations and should be equal. Its scope should be advisory, based upon careful studies of the problems to be solved and should carry its weight through the logic and economic value

State Building Councils Should Be
Organized Under The Leadership Of
SOUTHERN ARCHITECTS

By
Ernest Ray Denmark, Editor

THAT the construction industry is today going through an apical test from which it will finally emerge either profoundly stronger or decidedly weaker cannot be denied. In speaking of the construction industry we, of course, must consider the status of the various groups composing the industry—architects, contractors, builders, engineers, craftsmen and material manufacturers—in their relations with each other. That some steps should be taken immediately to further strengthen the position of each group and further co-ordinate these groups into a better working organization is, I believe, agreed.

Just what should be done and how best the problem can be solved is, of course, a question much easier asked than answered. Franklin O. Adams, Regional Director of the South Atlantic Division of the American Institute of Architects, has offered a suggestion which if followed would undoubtedly be far reaching in its accomplishments. In making an urgent appeal to the architects of Florida to assume definite leadership in the formation of a state-wide building council, Mr. Adams has at least presented a clue to the solution of the problem. Here is a challenge for action and alone to the leading groups of Florida but to the construction industry in every state throughout the South. A co-operative movement operating through such an organization in every state would undoubtedly result in a better understanding between the various factions in the industry—would mean better buildings, a higher standard of workmanship, improved materials and thereby gain the confidence of the public in the building industry which at present seems to have been somewhat lost.

Architects cannot do the whole job, nor can the contractors, the engineers, the builders—building construction today requires co-operative effort in the fullest sense of the word from all branches of the industry if the public is to be served to the best advantage. This is an opportune time for the organization of state building councils—councils that would actually function for the best interest of the building public. Millions of dollars are wasted annually due to poorly planned and poorly constructed buildings, to say nothing of the money which is lost through lost moments within the industry in getting work completed when once under way. This is a result of a misunderstanding and a lack of appreciation of the various groups of the industry for the problems and hardships under which each group is working.

The building council idea is not a new one. The New York Building Congress, a similar organization in Philadelphia and in several other of the larger cities have been successfully operating for several years. The cooperation of the several divisions of the construction industry through these building congresses have gone a long way towards relieving many of the problems which at one time seemed almost impossible of solution. State building councils throughout the South would be equally successful if founded upon the principle of "letter service to the public."

If such councils were in operation today they could render a nation-wide service to the public by furnishing concrete information on the building needs of each city in each state. There is undoubtedly many sections of the South where certain types of buildings are badly needed and which would pay excellent dividends as investments, but unfortunately the public has no way of making the necessary surveys to establish these facts without great expense which prohibits such a procedure, consequently the needs of the community are not being met. If these councils could do no more than establish in the minds of the public the desire of the building industry in all its branches to eliminate the annual waste in building they would be worth while.

Mr. Adams article is in response to the above editorial in the February issue, THE SOUTHERN ARCHITECT.

of its findings. Its object (economic rather than altruistic) should be to make investment in building safer and more profitable, and its activities, whether in research or in legislative, should be confined within the scope of this objective.

I would like to close this article at this point but I am afraid if I did so few of the readers would be convinced that any practical solution of the question had been suggested. I can imagine them after reading this far asking such questions as the following: What is the nature of all these objectionable things which the writer seems to have discovered in the industry and in what way can such an organization as he proposes be expected to correct those evils? The evils themselves are nearly all the outgrowth of certain practices that have grown up like weeds in our field—practices which do not meet the approval of the intelligent element but in which they commonly indulge as a matter of self-defense. To begin with, it happens all too often that sufficient money is not forthcoming from the owner (usually because of bad financing practices) to pay for the building when it is completed. Incompetent architects are frequently employed and incompetent plans and specifications, upon which a definite contract could not possibly be based, are put out for figures. Irresponsible contractors are invited to bid against responsible contractors resulting in irresponsible



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HERBERT M. GREENE, LAROCHE & DAHL, ARCHITECTS

Florida Has Taken Preliminary Steps Toward The Formation of a Statewide Co-operative Building Council

bids in which the gambling element is distinctly in evidence. Because of such competition, even otherwise responsible contractors will use irresponsible sub-contract figures. Credit is extended by supply dealers to irresponsible contractors and sub-contractors permitting them to compete successfully against those who are more responsible. Some contractors force sub-contractors and material dealers to finance construction.

To the operators themselves these practices result in loss of proper profit and often of capital besides. The owner's losses are represented through interest paid by sub-contractor and material dealer on money borrowed to finance the general contractor, through loss of the discount for cash, through higher prices for material made necessary on the part of the dealer to cover his bad accounts and finally through loss of actual value in the building because of the use of material and labor of a lower quality than that called for. These are merely a few of the evils which result in loss of stability and profit to all concerned. In addition a building built under these conditions does not present the value as collateral for the loan which might be reasonably expected by men or companies who make a business of financing building operations.

A co-operative statewide organization would be in a position to correct these evils in several ways. For the correction of some, state legislation would probably be required and any such proposed legislation would receive the careful scrutiny of the best minds representing all the interests involved. If approved it would go before the legislative body with the backing of a larger body of voters than can be mustered by any other industry within the state. Control of other practices could be assured by establishing certification of the building as having been promoted, financed, designed and constructed in accordance with standards that have been approved by every interest involved as being proper and economic. Such a certification would be strongly indicative, if not an established proof, that every dollar invested is yielding the maximum of value in the building. The real value of this certification will be fully appreciated by the building-finance organizations (who would have representation within the co-operative group) because of the fact that they had assisted in preparing the standards upon which certification was based. There is a distinct relation between the rate of interest charged on a loan and the margin of protection within the collateral. Thus bonds bearing a low rate of interest are usually accepted as

carrying a more positive security. Therefore, an investor wishing to borrow money for building purposes will immediately learn that he can secure his money on more favorable terms and at a lower rate of interest on a certified building than upon any other type. This should result in increasing the demand for certification. A certified building should also appeal to the real estate operator, represented in the co-operative group, as being more salable and having better value. The influence and control of building practice by such an organization could be further augmented and perfected by properly handled publicity through which the investing public as well as the operators could be convinced of the economic value of adopting the approved standards in any building operation.

Most of the readers of this article will in all probability be architects and the natural question arising in their minds will be "just where does the architect come into the picture." The chief reason why he will enter the picture is the same as that which would motivate any other agency involved, that of self-interest. Adherence to proper standards of building would obviously make his work very much pleasanter and would certainly tend to make the results more effective and more profitable, largely through the elimination of irresponsible competitors. Then the success of the plan is dependent for results upon the participation of all interests involved, among which his is far from being the least important. As a matter of fact there is no element in the building game whose participation would be as essential as that of the architect. He is the natural leader in any movement which affects the industry as a whole because he is the one individual that directly or indirectly comes in contact with every other element which enters into the building operation. In addition, he is looked to for leadership because he has no pecuniary interest in any part of the operation, deriving his emolument solely from the owner.

Florida has taken the preliminary steps toward the formation of a statewide co-operative building organization similar to that which has just been described. Delegates from the state organizations representing both the operators and the affiliated interests in building have enthusiastically approved the plan as embodied in a tentative constitution and by-laws. These are now in the process of adoption by the various organizations themselves. Permanent representatives will then be selected by the organizations, forming what will be known as the Florida Building Council.

Criticism In The Blueprint Stage Will Improve Our Architecture Everywhere.

(Concluded from page Thirty-Three)

therefore, that in so far as the architects themselves are concerned they have found the effort interesting and worthwhile.

What is there in this work which would take these busy men from their offices regularly, week after week, year after year? There is not only the satisfaction of definite accomplishment for the improvement of their city, but a personal benefit in sharpening their analytical and critical faculties and in improving their own work. They see what other architects are doing, how other architects handle their problems. They discuss these problems with their peers, and in return have full and frank discussion of their own problems in the earlier stages. One finds among the Washington architects the same freedom in discussing their problems which one finds in the school drafting rooms; and this mutual confidence which has been established has been largely instrumental in effecting the organization of representative Washington architects in the Allied Architects corporation which has successfully produced the new office building for the House of Representatives.

The jury, in reviewing the plans before it, groups them into five classes, divided as follows:

Distinguished: Outstanding among buildings of its type.

Commended: Meets exceptionally well the standards which should be maintained for private buildings in the national capital.

Approved: Meeting the standards which should be maintained for private buildings in the neighborhood.

Average: A building which does not tend to improve the neighborhood.

Disapproved: The type of building which is considered "below average;" to be discouraged.

Where a building seems eligible for the Distinguished Architecture award, or Commendation, this particular project is referred to a "board of review" composed of the elders of the tribe, who meet at six weeks' intervals. Their function is to insure a continuity in the classifications, and especially to make final decision as to whether a building warrants the Distinguished rating. In any event, no Distinguished award may be made except on a completed project.

It should be noted that there is no delay whatever in the issuance of building permits, even though the council meets only once a week. On the day of the meeting, all plans received since the previous meeting are placed before the council, whether or not permits have been granted. It is frequently too late to make radical changes; but it is never too late to

simplify, and that is usually the need in an ugly building. It is never too late to correct the one detail which may spoil an otherwise good design. To make the workings of the council even more effective, the architects are urged on their major projects to bring their plans before the jury in preliminary sketch form rather than in the form of final working drawings.

As to the effect on building generally, it is a matter of common observation that the quality of speculative building in the national capital has made tremendous improvement within the last half decade. Where organized opposition to the council existed at its beginning, we now find co-operation between architects and builders. It is perfectly true that the architects by their freely given constructive criticism—not too detailed, but rather general in character, have given service for which they have received no direct compensation, and have improved the character of the work of operative builders and mediocre architects who might be regarded as in competition. But on the other hand, the work of the architects themselves has been improved by constructive criticism, and in many cases they have been retained by operative builders who in the past have had their work done by unqualified draftsmen.

The findings of the council are published regularly in the current press. The Commended awards are featured by any builder who receives them, and the public generally has come to have confidence in and respect for the work of the council. The latest development along this line has been the establishment of another council upon almost exactly corresponding lines, by the architects of Cincinnati, who attended a jury session during the last convention and acquainted themselves at first hand with the workings of the council. It is the hope of the Directors of the Institute that other chapters will investigate the workings of the Washington council. Further detailed information will be furnished upon the request of any interested group.

The architects as a whole have exerted their organized influence for better city plans, park improvements and the like; but after all, they have not put their full force into effect in their own special field, where it can have most weight. Regardless of any plan or park system, it is the individual buildings of a city which make it or mar it. If these buildings can be dealt with one at a time as erected, the quality of a city can be immeasurably improved. The establishment of the Washington Architects' Advisory Council has demonstrated its value to the profession and to the public.

MANY MODERN HOMES PROVIDE COMMUNICATION FROM ROOM TO ROOM OVER REGULAR BELL TELEPHONES



A 750-A intercommunicating system and eleven telephone outlets provide complete telephone convenience in the residence of Mr. Merle Thorpe, Rockville Pike, Montgomery County, Maryland. APPLETON P. CLARK, JR., Architect, Washington, D. C.

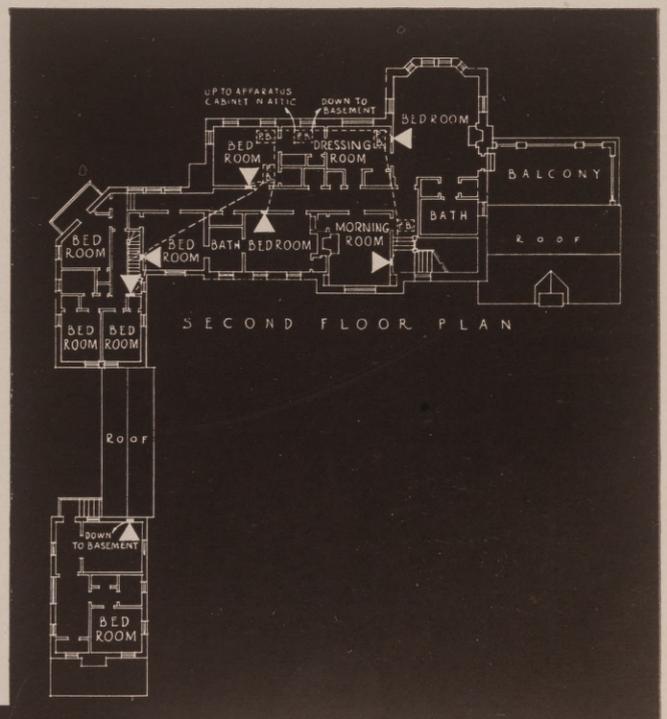
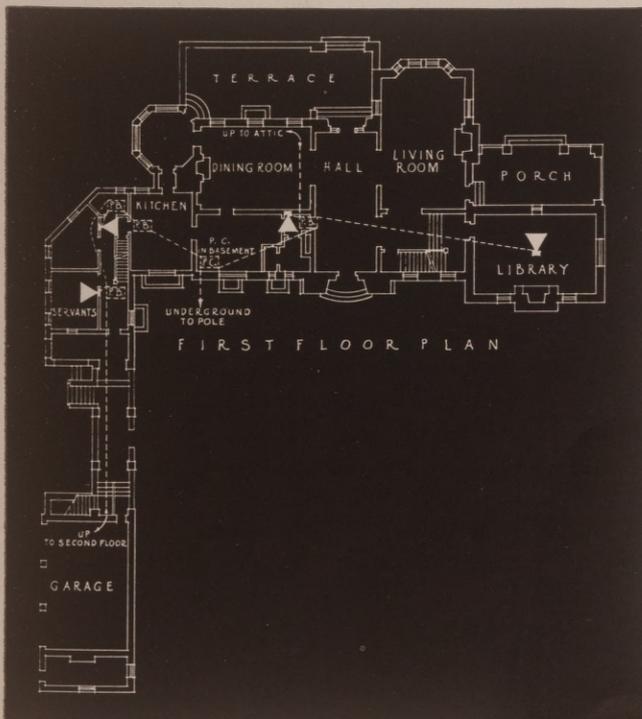
Today most well-planned homes, whatever their size, include *enough* telephones as a matter of course. Conveniently located in all important rooms, they save time and steps and energy for every member of the family, every day.

In larger homes, it is often desirable to be able to talk from room to room . . . from boudoir to kitchen . . . from library to garage . . . as well as to the world outside. Where such a need exists, it is easily met by one of several available intercommunicating systems employing regular Bell telephones.

For efficient and satisfactory results, all telephone

arrangements, and particularly intercommunicating systems, should be planned in advance. By specifying telephone conduit throughout the house, it is possible to place outlets wherever they are most convenient and to move the instruments easily as requirements change. All unsightly wiring is concealed and there is greater freedom from service interruptions.

To architects everywhere, the telephone company offers expert advisory service in the matter of providing for many types of equipment. You'll find such assistance valuable on projects you are planning. There is no charge. Just call the Business Office.



LEGEND

- ◀ TELEPHONE OUTLET
- CONDUIT
- ☐ PROTECTOR CABINET
- ☐ PULL BOX

WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE CHURCH BUILDINGS?

(Concluded from page Thirty-Nine)

which will give to his place a more pretentious appearance. Akin to the ownership of an expensive, but not necessarily beautiful car. Sometimes, if the architect is not unduly hampered, entire localities are developed which have fine characteristics and in course of time the demand for good homes in this section has been created.

But what of the church? The building of which should express inspiration, aspiration and higher devotion.

The work of an architect interested in churches should be so interlocked with that of the pastor that I would there place a first emphasis, because the man of the cloth molds to a large degree the mind of his congregation. And experience has demonstrated that where the pastor is not receptive or is even openly antagonistic to competent architectural direction the resultant building is without exception inadequate and distinctly bad.

Also I am aware that the curriculum of the aspirant to pulpit work is today quite involved, but to my mind this task of church building is of such importance, that we should encourage a continued and enlarged course of lectures relating to church architecture in all schools and colleges, teaching theology. Not that we would have ministers become architects, but that there might be better understanding between us.

Next I would include a similar form of study in those centers which are developing, that new man in the field of education, the religious educational director. Before projecting theoretical courses of study upon thousands of churches I believe educational directors might well consult with interested architects to ascertain whether their scheme is possible of economical housing. For no matter how perfect the course might be unless it is possible to so design a building that churches and church schools can afford to build, you will find always an acceptance of these courses only in part, which means reduced effectiveness. Personally I think we need to make greater use of our educational quarters, for very few churches can afford to provide a major portion of a building intended only for half an hour or possibly an hour's use once a week. Unless the building is intelligently planned and intensive use made of floor areas.

Directors of public schools have long realized the need of co-relating theory and practice and out of this realization has grown a program and buildings which are basically sound and not too wasteful of building budgets.

The public is just beginning to understand that a very definite relation exists between the demands of the educational directors and projected buildings. Therefore, I believe the practicing architect needs

to be in conference with the directing heads, of course, planning so the demand of the public on this phase of church work can be anticipated.

Having reached these two important sources, then next might be inaugurated a more general use of church papers. This involves the problem of having editors and managers of publications more fully appreciate the value of building influence in worship. Today, my observation has been, a very casual mention is made of the good church buildings and the same casual mention is made of many horrible examples of church building.

Motivated no doubt by a desire on the part of editors as representatives of the people to treat all congregations fairly, but in fairness to a well directed consummated building program, I believe it is the duty of the publishers to realize and themselves distinguish the better building and then give additional space to it.

We all appreciate I am quite sure that the size of the project in dollars and cents overshadows the value of the work religiously and esthetically. I am speaking of conditions generally, fortunately we do find a sufficient number of exceptions to keep our spirits and hopes buoyed, so we may feel our efforts are worth continuing.

Consecrating ourselves to the task and having interested the pastor, religious educational director and publisher, in our problem, aims and hopes, we have just begun to find ways and means of promoting public demand and interest.

Admitting our belief in the thought, so often expressed, that the beautiful churches of the past reflects the very lives and living of the people, we ask what can we in architecture do to contribute to the cause in the interest of better buildings?

A thorough understanding of the technique of worship is essential and we must rely upon the pastor for his assistance in having the public realize that basically, Christian religion has not changed; our modes of living and philosophies are changing; methods of construction and an economic fabric complicated beyond any vision of the early Christian, make it imperative that in the buildings we build we must show our religion as expressed today.

Traveling at the rate of 120 miles an hour in the air, 60 miles an hour on the highway and with comparable speed in business it is most difficult for us to say, now turn to the twelfth century for your church, unless we can also say whole heartedly to the congregation, worship and support with the same spirit of worship as the people of the twelfth century.

The process is slow and the weight of our duties may become heavy and arduous, but asking of the public faith, we must have faith in the work.

MILWAUKEE
GAS & ELECTRIC BLDG.



ARCHITECTS: ESCHWEILER & ESCHWEILER, MILWAUKEE, WIS.
CONTRACTORS: H. SCHMITT & SON, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

COMplete hollow metal installation by Dahlstrom . . . elevator entrances, office and corridor doors and metal trim . . . assists this fine building to the efficiency, serviceability and interior beauty that the modern metropolitan structure must have.

Complete Metal Door & Trim installation by
DAHLSTROM

THE DAHLSTROM METALLIC DOOR COMPANY {Established 1904}, JAMESTOWN, NEW YORK
WITH OFFICES AND REPRESENTATIVES IN ALL PRINCIPAL CITIES

GOVERNMENT IN ARCHITECTURE

(Concluded from page Forty-One)

those who call for allocation of the work to outside offices.

Local conditions, of course, affect both the design and the construction of all Government buildings, but they are studied on the ground by the actual designer, in important work, and for the less expensive buildings all such details are worked out by the designer, the engineers and the specification writers to meet the specific needs of the situation; especially such matters as available materials, construction peculiar to the locality, and similar considerations are checked with the data in the Supervising Architect's Office, which is complete and up to date.

President Kahn of the American Institute of Architects, in a recent utterance, stated in this connection that he felt the Supervising Architect's Office had done the smaller types of Federal buildings better than outside architects. This is also the conclusion arrived at by the office, after experience with outside architects on Federal work for a period of over forty years.

In instances where the Government now finds it necessary, for political or other reasons, to give out smaller jobs—within the half-million dollar range, possibly—these are usually in the small towns where

the local architect has had a very limited experience in similar projects. The best plan has been found to be the offsetting of the local architect's inexperience by association with an architect who has had the needed experience in a previous connection with this work. Yet this is an unsatisfactory and quite cumbersome arrangement. The local architect practically "buys" his experience from the bigger man professionally, and both have to submit their work, as combined, to Washington for further revision, so that the final result is, at best, but a poor compromise, and little like the unified effort of a single designer with efficient assistants.

The Supervising Architect's Office is probably the largest architect's office in the world, and has a tradition extending back for more than seventy-five years—which is a historical background enjoyed by few similar organizations. Outside architects having dealings with this office are impressed with the feeling of efficiency and serious purpose that permeates the organization. The office has been in sympathy with the allocation of work to outside architects when the best interests of the Government would allow it, and between one hundred and one hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of work has thus, with its earnest co-operation, been given out.

THEY TALK ABOUT GOVERNMENT IN ARCHITECTURE

PRIVATE ARCHITECTS CAN HELP

OF course, all of us realize that the character of architectural service that would be obtained from a more extensive use of outside architects to assist the Supervising Architect's office, would make for buildings more expressive of the locality, climate, life and customs of the districts in which those buildings are erected. In the present crisis, all of us must also recognize that a more liberal use of the power which the Supervising Architect already has, to call in outside help, would speed up the Federal building programs and be of great assistance in the unemployment situation.

The one objection which seems to prevent the Washington authorities from going further and faster in this matter is that when the Federal Government employs outside architects it loses a certain amount of direct control of the architectural machinery. In consequence, the results depend entirely on the performance of the particular architectural firms selected. From the Government point of view, it becomes a matter of prime importance to get an architectural firm which is not only thoroughly competent, but perfectly willing to subordinate its per-

sonal and individual leanings and preferences to those desired by the Government. In short, the architect selected must be not only a good master of his profession but a good servant of Uncle Sam. So far as I know, these outside appointments have been to architects of the highest standing—men thoroughly competent to carry out the projects given them.

R. E. Lee Taylor, A. I. A., Baltimore, Md.

NEWSPAPER CO-OPERATION

I WAS very much interested in your recent editorial regarding Employment of Private Architects on Federal Government work. I might mention that upon reading your editorial I took the matter up with the *Augusta Herald* and they immediately co-operated by writing a strong telegram request to Senator William J. Harris urging him to take some action on this matter in relation to proposed work to be done here in the Southeast. We received a prompt reply from Senator Harris stating he was taking up the matter with the proper Department heads and hoped for favorable result.

Willis Irvin, Architect, Augusta, Ga.