A Memorial Museum
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Preliminary.

To my mind a thesis should differ somewhat from the usual school "project" both in subject and in treatment, - should in fact be a step in advance, a link joining the ideal and useful to the practical work that will be met with in the years to come. It is an opportunity to treat a reasonably practical problem academically, to put to the test the possibilities of pure design of a building such as are in demand in our own country and our time; and logic requires that such a building should be true to itself and to whatever of natural
traits can be claimed for this heterogeneous civilization we qualify as American. It should be a building absolutely inseparable from its surroundings, its tenants and its destination, not to be confused with any other time or any other place. In this way alone can there ever be a true and distinguishing American Architecture and it is the student of today who must accomplish this result.

And what better time than now, when still in the atmosphere of the ideal and as yet unhampered by financial restrictions. The thesis should be the first attempt.

The fact that an effort is being made to anticipate the
future should be taken seriously and kept well in mind throughout the study and presentation of the problems chosen. Not only should the practicability of each step taken, be well considered, but the design studied as though to be actually built and presented in a way to show that these considerations have not been neglected.

There was one other factor which influenced my choice of subject and that is my intense love of beauty thru simplicity rather than richness, a beauty such as is seen in a finely textured plain wall surface, in the noble simplicity of the Greek Doric Order or the massive solidity of a Norman crypt.
With the above considerations in mind the following program was evolved:

Program.

During the early history of the Middle West, beginning with the explorations of Marquette and Joliet and culminating in the famous march of Capt. Clark which established American rule over the entire Ohio valley, there sprang into life many forts, such as Vincennes, Chatauqua, Detroit or Duquesne, whose histories are as varied and romantic as those of the strongholds of the Rhine Barons or of the Rhine. One of these forts was located on Lake Erie in that section of Northern Ohio known as the Connecticut Western Reserve.
It was still in use at the time of the War of 1812 and its garrison and the people of the surrounding country contributed largely towards the furthering of the aims of Commodore Perry. In short, both the fort and the community immediately surrounding it were intimately connected with the pioneer warfare of the Middle West and were influential in ridding the land of the power of the Indians and French, and later the English. Around the site has grown the city of Cleveland.

The fort itself has long since disappeared but the site and the land around it have always been maintained inviolate as an historic landmark, and fortunately many of the cannon, a great
quantity of arms, equipment, furniture and uniforms were saved and have been collected.

The people of the Western Reserve have always taken great pride in the part played by their forfathers in the history of this section of the country and a number of years ago a society was formed, known as the Western Reserve Historical Society. The object was to recover historic relics, documents, arms, costumes etcetera, and also, by study and research, to ascertain and keep alive as much as possible of the customs and incidents, both historic, political and personal, of the years gone by. During the brief course of their existence a large mass of documents, letters, arms, uniforms
costumes and cetera, have been collected, restorations in model form have been made of the fort and of Commodore Perry's flagship and the historic events have been portrayed on canvas, not only local talent, but some of the best talent of the country having been called in for this purpose. These collections have become so extensive that the present quarters of the Society are entirely inadequate and it has become necessary to erect a building to be devoted exclusively to their own interests. The site chosen is that of the fort.

This site is about two miles from the center of the city and about a quarter of a mile from the lake on a rise of ground commanding the entire vicinity. The land toward the lake is open
and around the whole has been developed a municipal park. Along the lake front runs a broad boulevard which forms the main thoroughfare of the wealthy residence section of the city. At the rear of the site and parallel to the boulevard, runs another important thoroughfare.

The site is therefore, not only well located historically, but lends itself admirably to the development of any monumental characteristics which may seem expedient as a setting for the building to be placed thereon. The building is to be essentially a museum to house the collections, but will also serve as headquarters of the society and will contain:

1. A court or room to contain the model of the fort.
2. An exhibition hall for arms, cannon etc.
3. An exhibition hall for costumes, ornament, furniture and other historic relics.
4. A gallery or galleries of paintings in chronological order.
5. A library and document room.
6. The administration.
   a. Curator's Office.
   b. Headquarters of the Society.
      1. Committee Room
      2. A large office for the officers.
      3. Toilets etc.
   The public toilets shall be in the basement.
   As the Society has a large and wealthy membership, no
expense must be spared to make this not only a beautiful museum building, but also a monument expressive of the glory of the achievements of those who fought and died for their country upon this spot.
In any correct method of attack upon the problem in question, the interior court to contain the model of the fort, becomes at once the central, the dominating feature of the composition, around which all the other parts shall be arranged and to which all other considerations shall be subordinated. With this point settled, it serves as a basis upon which to work and the logical arrangement of the other units next deserve our attention.

In the study which was then made, the lecture hall, which was semicircular in form and essentially a Greek theatre in plan, was placed at the rear of this central court and the galleries, society rooms and curators' offices were grouped around the court.
making the whole composition in the form of a square, all of one storey, and with a semicircular projection at the north end.

The elevations and sections were next studied with the preconceived idea of an exterior composed of large plane wall surfaces and pure Greek Doric Colonades. The value was at once seen of surrounding the semicircular projection with such a colonnade.

In studying the various elevations it was seen that a building built upon this plan was ordinary, uninteresting and entirely unsatisfactory in mass and silhouette.

Both from a desire to gain height, and to express the interior court upon the exterior, the raising of this court one storey higher than
the surrounding portions of the building seemed to show great possibilities. The conception of this second storey as an Ionic temple and of the rest of the building as a great podium ultimately governed the composition of the mass of the structure and consequently the plan and section. Inspired by the podium of the Maison Carrée at Nîmes and many other examples of Greek and Roman temples, a study was made with the general plan much as before, but with two wings flanking the forecourt, and thus making the rest of the building virtually adjoining to the temple-like structure above and in which can be seen suggestions of the inspiration gained from the examples cited above.
With further study of the proportions of the plan and their relation to the several elevations, the solution of the problem became practically as it was finally presented in the finished drawings.

With the general mass and proportions of the exterior and the general layout of the plan thus decided upon, the question now became one of detail. Before going further with the elevations, the suitability and practicability of the various rooms to their respective functions was studied quite thoroughly.

As to the proper proportions of the galleries for the best lighting of the objects contained therein, it is referred to the Report of Observations made by the Commissioners from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
after studying the existing conditions in the great museums of Europe.

To be brief they found that small rooms, of no great length and with comparatively small square top-lights, were more satisfactory than others. The various examples they cited were compared and the proper re-adjustments were made in my plan and section. This of course required changes in the elevations in order that all should harmonize and compose. When the front elevations of the two wings flanking the forecourt, which, as may be seen in the plan, should be direct expressions of the cross-sectional proportions of the galleries were composed with the facade and the superstructure upon the central court had been adjusted.
so that the ensemble was well composed in mass and silhouette, the detail of the interior, the proche of the plan and the layout of the entourage alone remained to be studied.

The detail of the entire building, with the exception of the Ionic peristyle above, is in spirit not in actuality Greek Doric; the proportions of the order being those of the pro Parthenon and the detail of the windows, the anti-pilasters on the various pavilions and the various moulding thence are taken from good examples of the Greek Doric. The Ionic order of the superstructure was taken directly from the Erechtheum. The reason for the difference in level between the court and the lecture
Hall is evident from the transverse section.

The treatment of the interior court as to lighting and as to proportion, presented difficulties. If left as one room with the full height, it was absurd in proportion but well lighted. If divided at a level which gave good proportion to the court below, the room above was well lighted, but the court below received no light whatever. A compromise was made whereby the room was divided, but only partially, an aperture being left in the middle of the coffered ceiling much like the aperture in the roof of a Roman atrium, thus giving the desired proportion and also the proper light to the court below and forming a balcony.
like circulation at the upper level. The filtered light from the high side windows gave added charm to the play of light and shade in the court.

The composition of the rear façade seemed to necessitate a pyramidal form above the semi-circular colonnade and below the Ionic pilasters. This want was very admirably filled by the exterior staircase, as seen in the elevation of this façade, the dark accents given by the bronze grill work being felt necessary.

In laying out the entourage it was largely governed by existing conditions, having obtained a sufficiently accurate contour map of the site. I placed the building at the highest point
upon a platform approached from four directions by flights of steps. It was my idea to eliminate any architecture whatsoever from the entourage and to have the approaches and setting entirely that of nature; thus the entire slope from the building to the lake was conceived and presented as a simple expanse of lawn, flanked by walks and avenues of trees.

In the presentation of the design it was my effort to show as far as can be shown on paper my conception of the solution of the problem, to show that it was studied from all possible angles and conceived as a building composing well with its setting and within itself from any view.
point. I have attempted not only to express the character of a ruin and a monument, but have attempted to express it by means of proportions, mass and silhouette to the exclusion of all ornament.