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L U X U R Y H O T E L

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L E B A N O N

B y

Labib Abu-Khalid.

1948

A
LUXURY HOTEL
IN
LEBANON

BY

Labib Abu-Khalid

Title should be as reported previously
"Architectural Design of a modern Hotel
in Bhamdun & (Structural Design of the
Garage")
seems to have been
omitted

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L U X U R Y H O T E L
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By

L A B I B A B U - K H A L I D

Being a thesis presented to the
Department of Engineering of the
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rements for the Degree of Beche-
lor of Science in Civil Engineering.

BEIRUT, LEBANON
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PREFACE

The following thesis is an attempt to design a Modern Hotel in Lebanon.

Although, our country is full of summer resorts and receives thousands of tourists and visitors from abroad, yet ^{done} it remains a bare fact that we have not ~~added~~ anything to build beautiful hotels to encourage tourism to a large scale.

Most of the existing one^s have been designed and built on very commercial lines with the only purpose of just night accomodation for temporary visitors. Or even where such features are absent, the choic^e of the site has not been made intelligently to present the necessary attraction^s for customers.

It is therefore the purpose of author here to present ^{the} design of a hotel possessing all modern features of a high-class luxury hotel.

The architecture was studied carefully and the entity (ensemble) of the different units were put together in such a way as to satisfy a variety of tastes.

The plan was worked out in such a manner as to introduce American novelties in hotel design and to create special effects of grandeur, comfort and luxury.

The author in the preparation of the following design wishes to express his gratitude and indebtedness to the kind supervision and help offered by Professors J. R. Osborn and K. Yeramian.

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Beirut, Lebanon

INTRODUCTION

Lebanon is a small country, three hundred miles of enchanting Mediterranean coast, by a width of forty miles of mountains, valleys and plains. It is considered as the gateway of the Near and Middle East. It is the natural bridge on which pass all merchants going from Asia to Europe and Africa and vice versa.

Called by the great traveller Ibn Batuta the "Fian of the world", Lebanon is still the nearest and most comfortable place where thousands of people coming from all the cities of the Arab world, spend the summer time. They enjoy its amphitheater of gardens and terraces, ^{at} culminating in majestic mountains. They can bathe in the calm, temperate water of the Mediterranean sea and in less than an hour's time, driving on modern highways, they may climb to the highest hills when they enjoy winter sports on the eternal ⁱⁿ snows.

Parallel to the coast and towering above the sea the chain of Lebanon mountains still bears many Crusaders' Castles full of romantic memories. Behind this chain lies the plain of Bekka, at the south of which the sacred River Jordan, where Christ was baptized by Saint John, takes its source and from whose northern part flows the blue crystal waters of the Orontes. In the middle of that plain stands the Roman Temple of Baalbeck with its gigantic columns and huge stones.

Its natural beauty--the ruins scattered all over its hills and its geographical situation between Syria and Palestine, make of Lebanon one of the most visited centers of tourism.

Because of its small area, the absence of underground richness, Lebanon cannot rely upon its agricultural or industrial resources to feed the one million of population living in its cities and villages.

All the above reasons, namely, its exceptional topography, its geographical situation, and the presence of one of the best collections of ruins representing a history of all the ancient civilizations, contributed in giving the industry of hotels a vital importance in Lebanon.

Situation of the Hotel

The hotel is to be built in Bhamdoun on a hill 1,000 meters above the sea level at a distance of fifty meters from the highway going from Beirut to Damascus.

In spite of its nearness to the sea coast, the village of Bhamdoun has a particular dry climate due to the belt of valleys surrounding the hill on which it is built.

Another advantage is its moderate altitude and its situation on the main road leading from the Mediterranean Coast to the interior of the land.

A new resource for hotels industry appeared recently with the creation of American Petroleum interests in the Near and Middle East. Being the outlet of all the Arabian and Iranian pipe lines, Lebanon will be the residential country of all the workers, employees and chiefs related to these big enterprises.

Taking into consideration all these reasons and accounting for the annual benefit that the existing hotels are giving, I found that the erection of a large modern hotel in that spot of the world may be of great interest.

DESIGN

The Room

Hotel design, like hotel economies, begins with the

room. The cost of a hotel building is directly proportional to its size. Size in turn, is a function of individual room dimensions and the total number of rooms.

In our country the size of the room depends to a certain extent upon the type of clientele to be sought, but adopting the idea of the American designers we can do a great deal to save space by an intelligent approach to furnishings. For example, the bureau with which practically every hotel room is equipped is a waste of space and money, for the average guest has no need for more than a couple of drawers; By placing these drawers in another piece of furniture, desk or vanity, the bureau is eliminated in favor of a composite unit and it becomes possible to design a smaller one and still give the guest more usable space.

The traditional first class hotel room is a bedroom-size rectangle, flanked by a bath, corridor and closet. Its furnishings usually consist of a carpet, twin beds, a small night table, chest of drawers, vanity, desk, one easy chair, and two straight chairs. These articles, all taken from the furnishings of an ordinary home bedroom are generally so disposed that it is difficult for the guest to use the room for anything but sleeping. Among the innovations used in designing the hotels built recently in America, the combination room is the most striking.

Its many advantages will be discussed fully in the following study. This new idea, being unfamiliar to our clientele, I thought it would be wiser to design besides the combination rooms, some traditional bed rooms for the conservative guests.

The Combination Room

The most important change that has taken place in hotel design is the emergency of the combination living-bed room. The theory behind the room is identical with that of the one-room apartment, a small space is to be used for a variety of purposes, the beds are used for sleeping or sitting. The great virtue of the convertible room is that it provides most of the advantages of the parlor-bedroom in half the space, and it presents the possibility of using some elements of luxury accommodation to medium-price rooms. But to work properly, the convertible beds that can be handled by guests and maids with a minimum of effort, other furniture must be specially designed and built. Another possible advantage of the convertible room could be seen in a depression period by renting the rooms for residential use as one-room apartments. To some extent, this may give a good result when the hotel does not do well with permanent guests.

I concentrated my work on the bed room because, whe-

ther a hotel is classified as transient or residential, its basic planning and economic unit is the room. The construction cost or purchase price of a hotel is always expressed in pounds per room.

The question of design, being closely tied to the problem of competition, I multiplied the number of small services rendered to the guest in his room, to create an impression of greater luxury, and hence to permit a psychological as well as a material foundation for the price charged.

Design for Suiting Different mentalities:

A hotel in Lebanon must be a place where the Easterns and Westerns have to live together and enjoy their time each one according to the way he is accustomed to, in his own country. To solve this problem I equipped some rooms with special furnishings like (rich rugs, oriental divans etc.) Besides that there is in each floor an independant apartment composed of a combined living-dining room, a kitchenette and two bed rooms. One of these rooms may be separated by closing the door leading to the corridor of the apartment. These apartments are reserved for permanent guests who desire maximum convenience with minimum house keeping. The kitchenette can be used by the guest when they don't like to be served in the hotel dining room.

Capacity and Number of Bedrooms:

The bedrooms are divided into two groups:

1. Single bedrooms
2. Double bedrooms

A single bed room is 4 by 4.4 meters, lighted and aerated through a large window facing the East. The entrance to the closet and bath room is hidden with a curtain whose shape and color is in harmony with the furniture shown in Fig. A(1).

A double bed room is 6 by 5 meters with a bath room and a private veranda 2.8 by 3 meters admitting enough air and light to the room through a large glass door.

In each floor there are 8 rooms of the first type and 10 rooms of the second type the total of which will be 84 beds in the 3 floors.

Dining Room:

According to hotel keepers calculations, it is the profit on rooms that has to take care of all taxes, interest, amortization, air conditioning or central heating, power and maintenance. Hotel dining rooms and bars do not have to share these charges. The dining room is not designed only for those

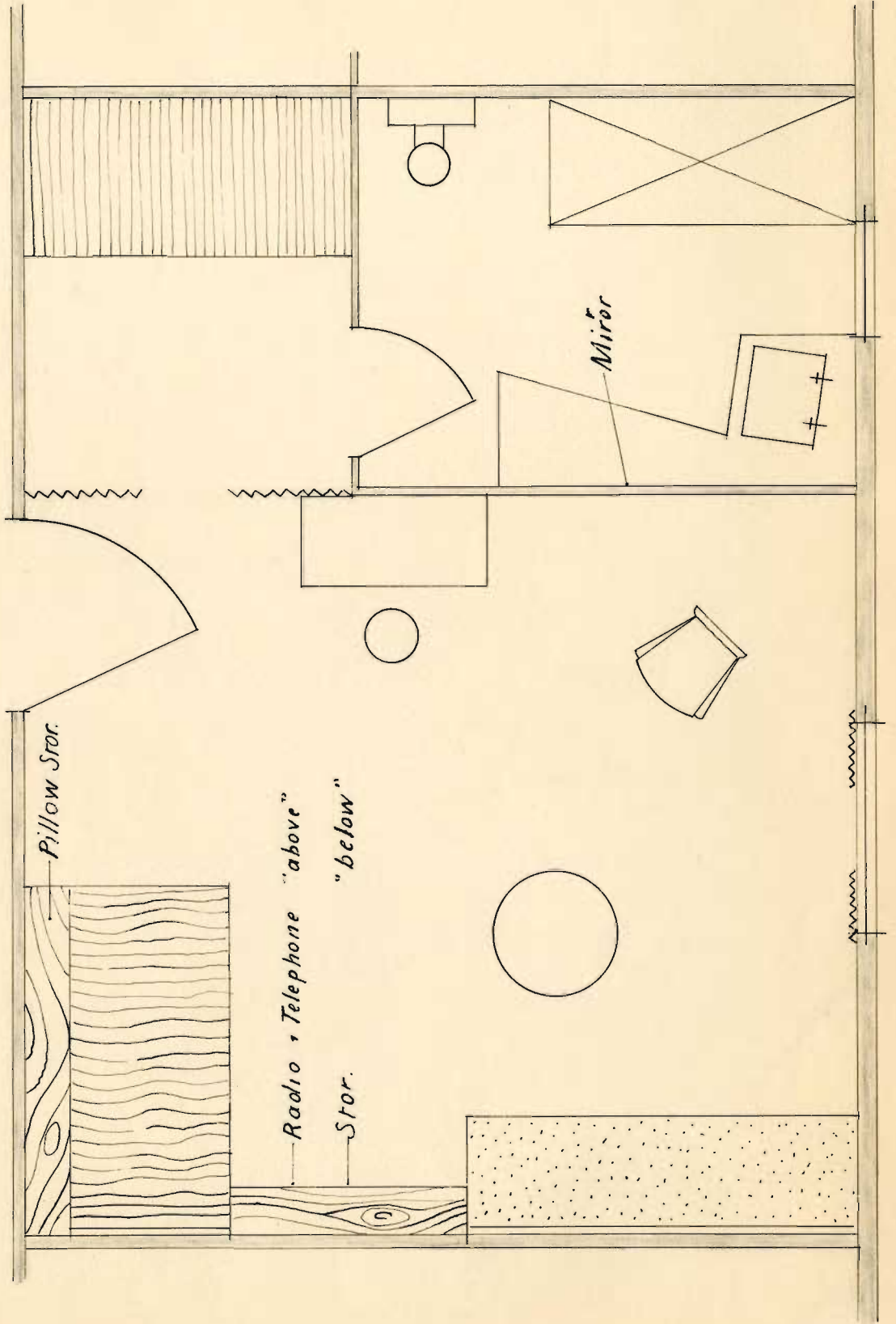
(1). Design copied with some modifications from The Architectural Forum, December 1946. Terrace Plaza Hotel, Cincinnati.

7.7
General

Fig. A

Combination Living-Bed-Room

Scale : 1 : 33 1/2



charges.) The dining room is not designed only for those living in the hotel, but it is made large enough to serve customers and people from the community. Therefore, the dining room is to be considered as a restaurant run more or less independently. In order to be attractive the restaurant is facing the west overlooking a wide terrace, which will be used for summer dining. Large steel and glass windows with fancy ceiling and walls contribute in completing the interior decorations.

The terrace used for summer dining is protected against sun and humidity with a dome shape steel structure covered with colored canvas.

The dining room occupies an area of 132 square meters and the terrace an area of 120 square meters. If we allow an area of two square meters per person there will be sufficient space for the 84 guests living in the hotel plus 42 people coming from the community. The dining room itself is made to contain only 66 seats, because the hotel is never supposed to be full ~~house~~ during rainy seasons when the use of the terrace is impossible.

Bar

The bar is located in a central place permitting to serve in the same time the game room, the patio and the dancing terrace during the day when it is used only for rest.

Ballroom and Terraces:

The inner dimensions of the ball room are 12 by 20 meters. It is 8 meters high with two balconies at the two ends where people can sit during big receptions.

The dancing terrace is 28 by 28 meters paved with large blocks of mozaic. With the swimming pool it has to make of the hotel an attractive center of amusement for a large number of neighboring towns. The two other terraces on the top of the northern and southern aisles are partially covered with reinforced concrete slabs supported by equally spaced columns.

Kitchen and Service Quarter:

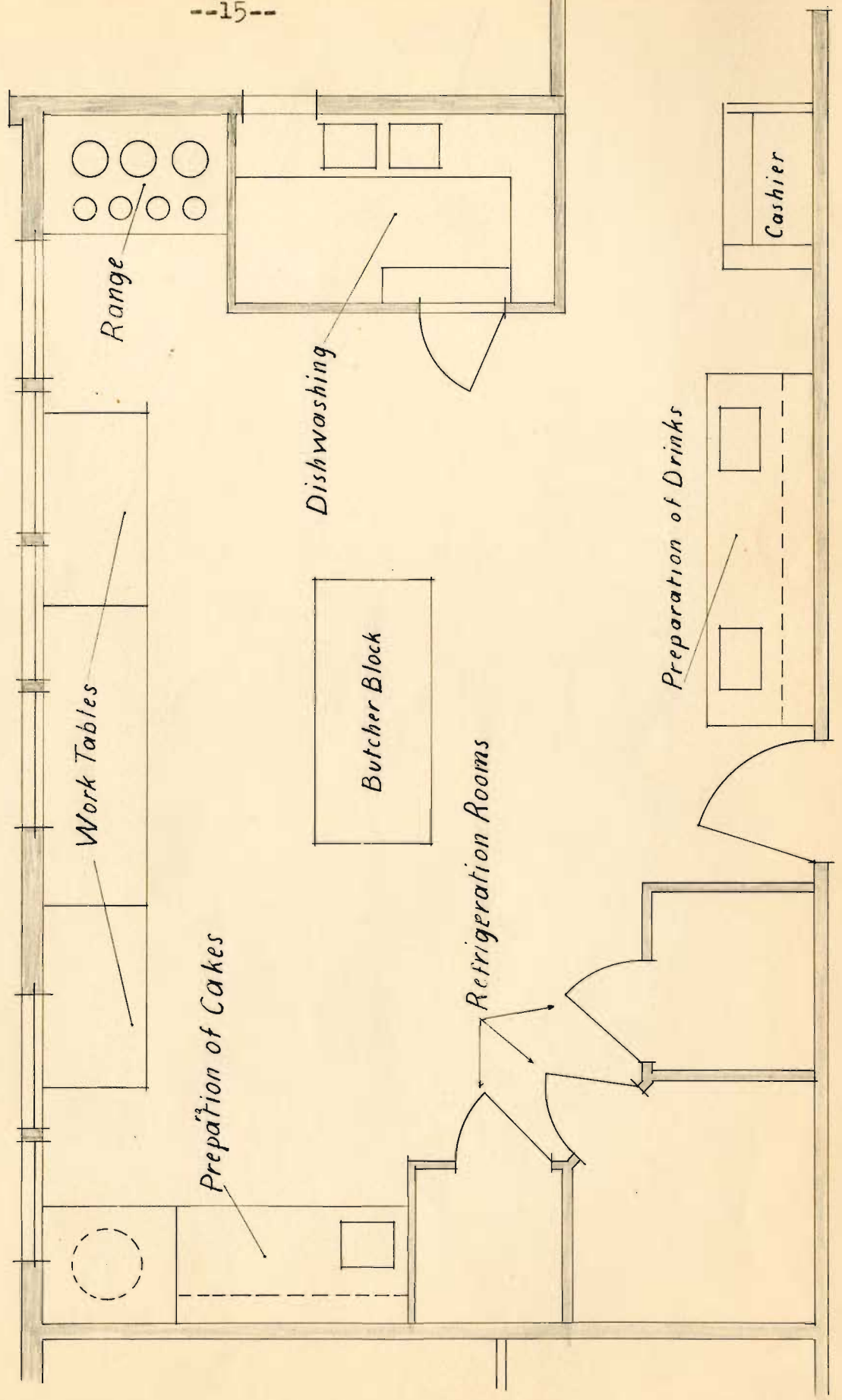
It is 14 by 9 meters. It communicates directly with the exterior through a private door which is in the same time the entrance to the service quarter. The kitchen contains besides the ordinary sinks, ranges, butcher blocks, work tables, etc. a refrigeration room and a special place for the preparation of drinks and cakes to serve the guests in the ballroom, the dancing terrace, the upper terraces and the garden around the swimming pool.

Next to the kitchen is the workers sleeping quarter. It is composed of 4 dormitories with 24 beds, two independant bed rooms, one for the chief de cuisine and the other for the maitre d'hotel and a large combined living-dining room. It is

Kitchen and Refrigeration Rooms

Fig. C.

Scale 1:100



advisable to have all serving people living in the hotel or near it, because, according to hotel superintendents, the efficiency of the servants increases noticeably when most of them live near their work.

Garage:

The basement occupying the underground area below the gymnasium, the sleeping service quarter and the laundry makes a parking place for about 40 cars. If we allow 8 square meters per car, the 40 cars will occupy an area of 320 square meters. The area of the garage is 480 square meters. The 160 square meters are left for the ramp and the open spaces permitting the free manœuvres of the cars.

To enter the parking place a car has to pass through a large opening 5 meters wide and at the ground level and then go down on a helical slab 36 meters long and having a uniform slope of 10%. The height of the parking place is 360 meters and the sloping slab is fixed in the bearing wall in one side while the other side is supported on beams and columns so that a car can park between each two columns. ?

Swimming Pool:

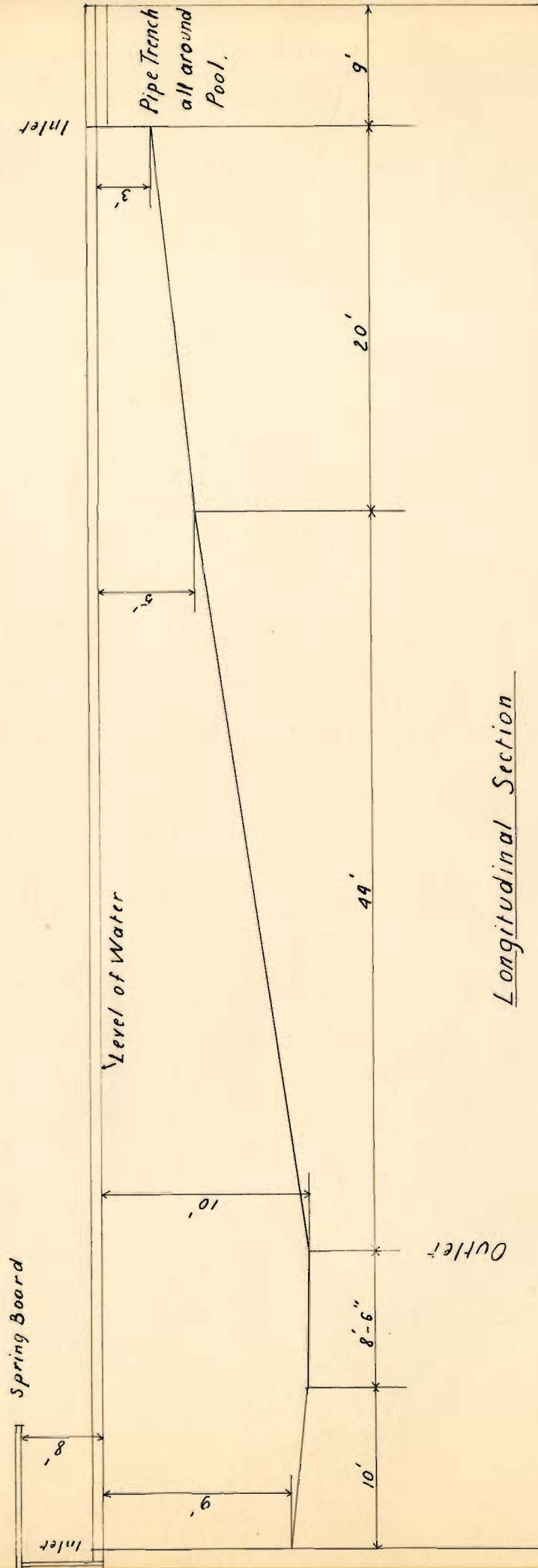
The swimming pool has a standard size of 25 by 10 meters. It is built according to the A.A.U. Recommendations for Ideal Metric Pool.(1)

(1). Ramsay C. G. and Sleeper H. R., Architectural Graphic Standards.

Fig: B.

Swimming Pool

Scale 1:100



Longitudinal Section

At the deep water end there are two boards, one of the spring type, 10 feet high and the other of the rigid low type. The pool is fed with four inlets, 2 of the spray type located at the ends of the semicircle; The two others are of the under water type located near the corners of the deep side.

The semicircle is a shallow pool designed specially for children; it is 8 inches deep separated from the main pool with a railing projecting 8 inches above the water level to prevent the children from reaching the deep water. The semicircular part has a good architectural effect but without the railing the pool would have been unfit for racing. A longitudinal section of the swimming pool is shown in Fig. B.

The cabins are not shown on the plan because they are made of rods and canvas which can be removed easily during the rainy seasons. Only few movable cabins are used because the pool is made principally for those who are living in the hotel and these people can change their clothes in their rooms and go to the swimming pool through a private staircase located at the southern end of the sloping aisle. This stair case can be used in the same time as an escape of safety during a fire for those who are in their bed rooms or on the higher terrace.

Central Heating:

The installation of an air conditioning system is not justified economically. During the hottest period of the year the

the highest temperature recorded is never more than 25 degrees centigrade. A central heating system is sufficient because it is never expected to have a large number of guests during winter.

The Element of Contrast in the Architecture:

If we consider the hotel as a whole, we see that the the element of contrast is fully emphasized. The most striking items to be considered are:

A. In the plan composition we notice the contrast of:

1. Size
2. Shape
3. Direction.

The northern aisle is short and narrow while the southern one is long and wide.

Next to the rectangular parts stand a large semicircular veranda, a round percola and the circular part of the swimming pool. Normally to 110 meters rectangle extends the 25 meters rectangle forming the ball room.

B. Contrast of tone.

The columns, the cornices and the lateral sides of the stones around the openings are bush-hammered finished, the corners are chisled while the walls are simple pitch faced. The courses have the same height and are composed of the same kind of stone, a hard reddish limestone. The contrast of

color is secured by the shade caused by the windows and the projecting parts.

Contrast of Mass:

If we look at the two main elevations of the hotel we see a very typical design where the vertical central block produces a characteristic contrast of mass with the high longitudinal southern aisle, the low northern one and the in-between ballroom.

The unroofed structure above the lobby with the columns facing the east and the three circular windows facing the north are added only to break the abruptness of the gradation and give to the whole mass a pleasant appearance.

D. Harmony, Unity and Rhythm

A simple look at the perspective shows that the contrast is artistically balanced to give to the structure a unity resulting in a pleasant reaction upon the observer. He feels an unseen harmony enveloping all the parts of the hotel. The rhythm created by the repetition of the openings is not monotonous on the the contrary it is a strong element of unity and harmony.

CONCLUSION

The number of bed rooms is relatively small if we consider the area occupied by the whole structure, but if we remember that the design is made not only for a first class hotel but a luxury one we get a satisfactory justification.

There are in Lebanon ten hotels of the first class but none of them has the real qualities of a perfect one. If it has comfortable living rooms and bars it fails in its situation and design (Hotel Normandy, Beirut, Grand Hotel Jibaily, Aley). If it is surrounded with beautiful landscapes it fails in its architecture and many minute~~x~~ elements (Grand Hotel, Bhamdoun; Hotel Kassouf, Dkhour-el-Shouir).

In the above design due consideration was given to the appearance, the comfort, and the situation. The amusements namely; swimming pool, dancing hall, dancing terraces, bars, patio, game rooms, gymnasium, gardens, etc. were purposely emphasized. The site is on one of the most picturesque hill sides, looking down on a valley named after the French Poet Lamartine. Here any one can fully relax and enjoy to his best comfort and leisure all the condition and commodities that a home can afford. Within its walls, a guest can enjoy all kinds of activities and enjoyments known to modern societies.

A simple solution may be proposed to increase the number of bed rooms. This solution consists in adding one floor to

the southern aisle and another one to the northern wing. This will be composed of single and double room apartments. In this way the number of rooms in the whole hotel will be about 85 rooms or 132 beds. This arrangement needs only the widening of the dining room in the direction of the dining terrace.

The above discussion shows clearly the necessity of the existence of such a hotel in Lebanon and shows the reciprocal interest that the country and owners of the enterprise will get from that project.

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