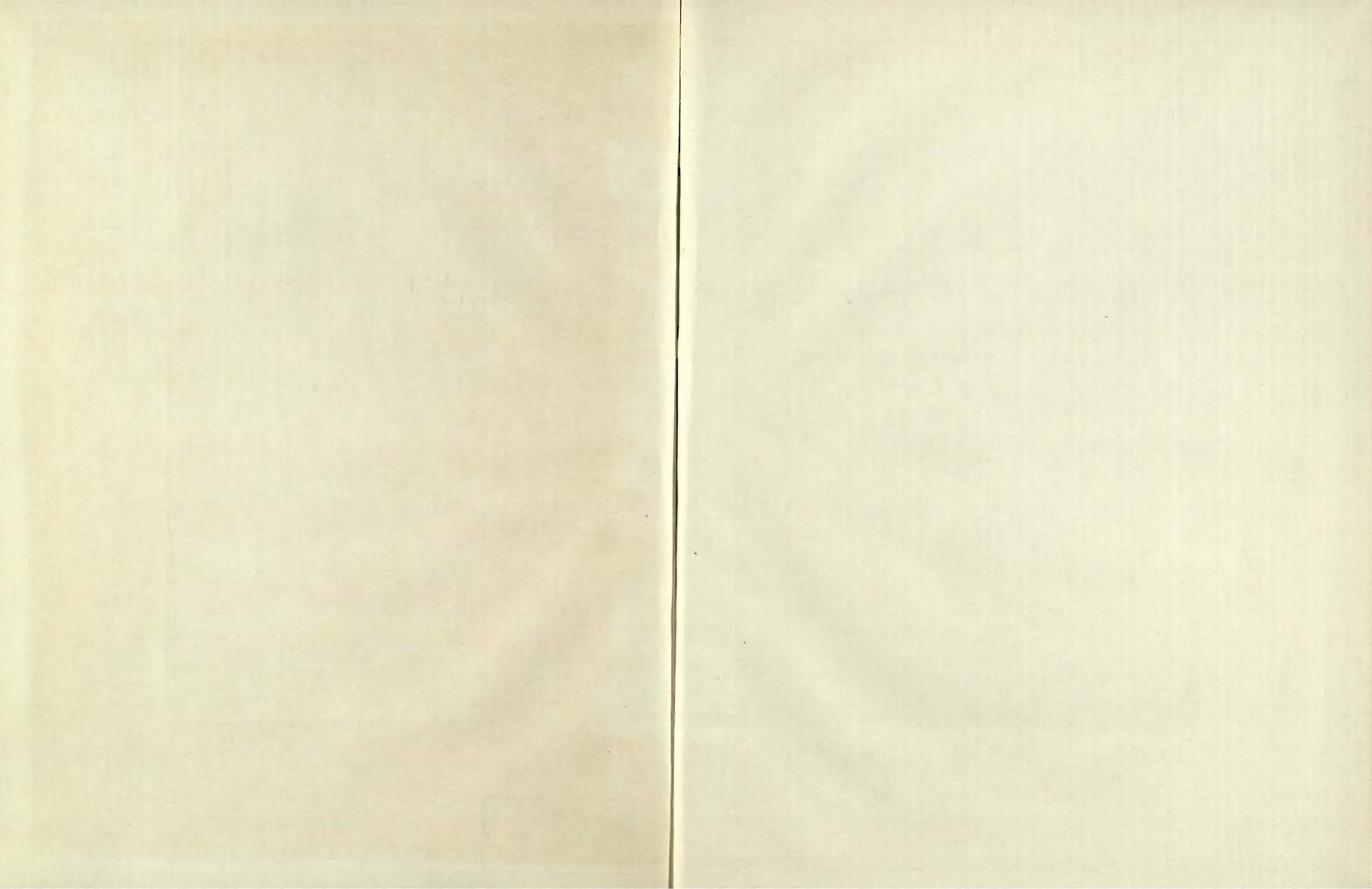


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T H E S I S

on

A HOTEL in BHAMDOUN

planned and studied

by

PHILIP S. MUJAI'S

1945

The hotel industry in Lebanon is still in its infancy, and presents one of the most attractive projects in ~~the~~ our country after the war. Good hotels are one of the best means of propaganda for the place, a thing that is needed much here. Besides, from a financial point of view, it is a paying concern if properly managed and well looked after.

The plans were made after several discussion with the landowner, a hotel keeper himself, who intends to build a hotel de luxe in the near future.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof. Yaramian for the valuable suggestions related to several delicate points in the design. A number of Architectural magazines, and technical books were consulted, for various matters.

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Lebanon stands out majestically with its historic mountains, with their peaks covered most of the year with snow, and their feet bathed by the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Thus, nature, has combined, through its artistic touch the white peaks of Sannin, to the blue and vast sea by a series of smaller ranges of mountains, known all over the Near East, for its fascinating panoramas and its fresh air. They are connected to one another by a network of asphalted roads, with trees planted on both sides making the drive a pleasant and inspiring one.

As the hot season approaches, an influx of Egyptians, Palestinians, Iraqis and Lebanese from the Coastal regions, to the fresh and soothing mountains of Lebanon. One of the most frequented places, as a summer resort, is Bhamdoun, towering some 1100 meters above sea level and at 22

kms. from Beirut. All this suggested the idea of a "Hotel in Bhamdoun" for my thesis.

The industry of hotel keeping in Lebanon is flourishing and increasing in magnitude, having once realized its vital importance. Unfortunately up till now, very few of those who are running such





business are following a correct & sound scheme. The hotels are not constructed on scientific basis and up-to-date plans to match the place and the climate, and thus fall short of the standards of comfort, services and the many requirements sought by the clients coming there-in.

The choice of the place is one of the main factors, and needs careful study. One must consider the transport and communication facilities, far from Beirut and the other big towns, should have a good, healthy and refreshing climate. To my mind the only place that fulfills all these requirements can only be found in Bhamdoun; central, situated about twenty minutes, (average drive) from Beirut; where social life, amusement and all the above mentioned factors are available.

This is a very brief introduction to which I'll confine myself, and explain hereafter all the technical, engineering and architectural problems involved in the attached plans.

#### GENERAL LAYOUT & SITUATION

Having decided on the town where this hotel is to be erected, another difficulty confronted me; the choice of a favorable site. I have to admit, that I was lucky enough to find the ideal piece of land for such a project. A hilly lot with a flat stretch on its top, dominating all Bhamdoun,



the sea on the western side, Hammama valley, Dhour-el-Chou-eir and the Sanning mountains on the Northern side. Trees and two asphalted roads surround the land. One of these is the Damascus-Beirut road and crosses the lot on its southern boundary, while the other one outflanks Damascus-Beirut road, turns to the north around the boundary and then joins it further up.

Two main attractive entrances to the Hotel are to be constructed. The first extending from the main road around the hill with trees and flowers on both sides of the alley. The second a direct large stair, from the southern part, with flower basins, a good display of electric lights on both sides, leading to a beautiful flower garden.

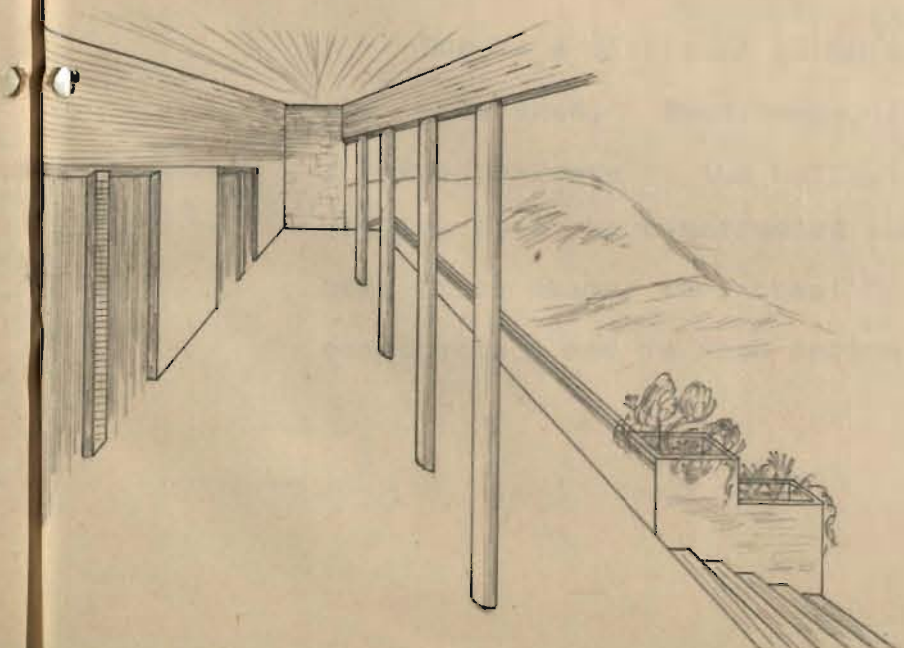
CONSTRUCTION & PLANNING

The Principle parts that constitute this hotel are:

- a/ Basement;
- b/ First Floor;
- c/ Second & third floors;
- d/ Fourth floor.

Basement:

As it is, the piece of land has a depression on the eastern side. As such it would be wise to construct a kitchen, a store-room and a washing room,





thus economizing in space and construction, avoiding smell, noise, and dirt in the first floor. The storage room should be as near to the kitchen as possible.

Earth pressure is accounted for, by constructing a strong masonry retaining wall. Humidity will be taken care of by the retaining wall and the corridor that serves also as an inner passage to the different rooms. A small lift and a stair lead from the basement to the first floor.

First floor: Nearly all the first floor is to be constructed of masonry, bearing thirty cms. walls. Masonry walls due to its abundance, cheapness, resistance against weather conditions, besides its beautiful architectural effect, and bearing due to the scarcity of iron and its exorbitant prices.

Foundations are not deep. This can be judged from an inspection and a study of the strata of the land.

In very few places concrete blocks of fifteen cms. are to be used, only as partition walls, and this is due to lack of space.

Due to a different planning in the second floor, beams are to be used. Such beams, if left uncovered, will give a bad appearance to the halls. To avoid this, a false ceiling is to be constructed whose function is simply to hide those beams, thus creating beauty and harmony with the construction and as such enrich the building.



As one could see from the plan of the first floor, big spacious and luxurious salons and halls are to be constructed. To keep the aesthetic notion and ratio of the area to the height, these halls are to be made five-and-a-half meters high. The rooms on the southern part of the dance hall, if left at that height will look like a chimney. To take care of this, these rooms will be four meters high, and above which there will be a space where beds, tables, chairs and other goods will be dumped. Such places are very useful and handy in hotels. A stair will be built to use this space when needed as the plan shows. Whereas to the wing south of the dining room, the level of the ground is made a few steps lower than the other parts thus forming a mezzanine of about three meters high. This mezzanine will be a sleeping quarter for the servants of the hotel. The stair that leads to the kitchen extends to this apartment.

In the planning of the first floor two beautiful fa-

acades are kept in mind. The south facade (being exposed to whoever crosses Damascus-Beirut road, while the north one is the center of focus to the people of Bhandoun. On each facade, wide stairs lead into a wide varanda, and then to a big reception hall. This may serve as a waiting hall, where all necessary information may be obtained. Out





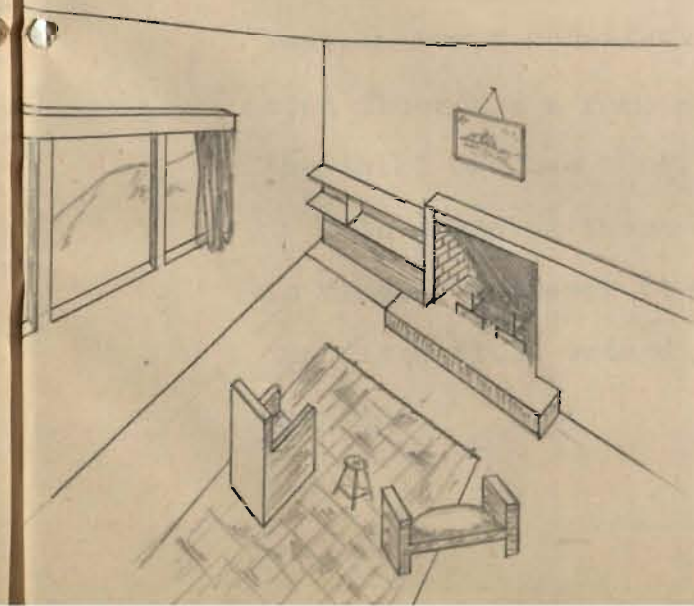
of it, one has access to any one of the following quarters, each of which will be discussed seperately:

- 1: Quiet quarter
- 2: Noisy quarter
- 3: Service quarter
- 4: The bar

Quiet quarter: As its name indicates this quarter must be as far from noise as possible. Some people in the hotel would like to gather in a quiet hall or salon, to discuss private or intimate matters among themselves. Others prefer to be in a place where they can read; and still others who care to smoke with friends and chat for a while. Taking all these matters into consideration that is why this quarter has been chosen the place it is, as the plans indicate.

Noisy quarter: Contra ry to what the name denotes, this quarter is the most important and lively in the hotel. It consists of the dance hall and part of the dining hall.

The dance hall is a vast one, beautifully decorated, inspiring joy and amusement. An orchestra stand and a buffet add to its charm. A big v-  
randa with well placed colonade combines the charm of Hammana valley, the grandeur of Sanin





to the vastness of the sea, thus creating, harmony, beauty and is an attraction for all to enjoy a full view of nature at its best,

The dining hall is placed near the service quarter thus contributing a good deal to a higher efficiency of service.

Service quarter: This is composed of all the rooms south of the dance and dining halls. Here, are the offices of the hotel manager, telephone operators, barber's shop, luggage room, refrigerator room, ironing and washing places.

This quarter is connected with the kitchen by a lift and a stair as shown on the plans. All hot foods will be ordered from the kitchen. Cold foods and breakfasts will be prepared in a separate large place in the same floor. Once the food is ready, hot or cold, the waiter passes on his way by the cutlery room where he picks up what he needs then onto the dining room.

The Bar: A large hall almost independent from all the others, where drinks only are served. It has its own buffet and serves beer, champagne, whisky or other liquors.

The Second & Third Floors: These floors are nearly the same in their construction and planning except that the second floor has a common big varanda on the dining room while the third one has none.

In planning these floors, economy and comfort were kept in mind. Whenever it was found feasible, bearing walls of the first floor extend into the other floors to avoid beams.



The beams where required are designed according to the weight they carry. Concrete hollow brick walls will then be used to economize steel and concrete. All exterior walls are to be made of hard limestone.

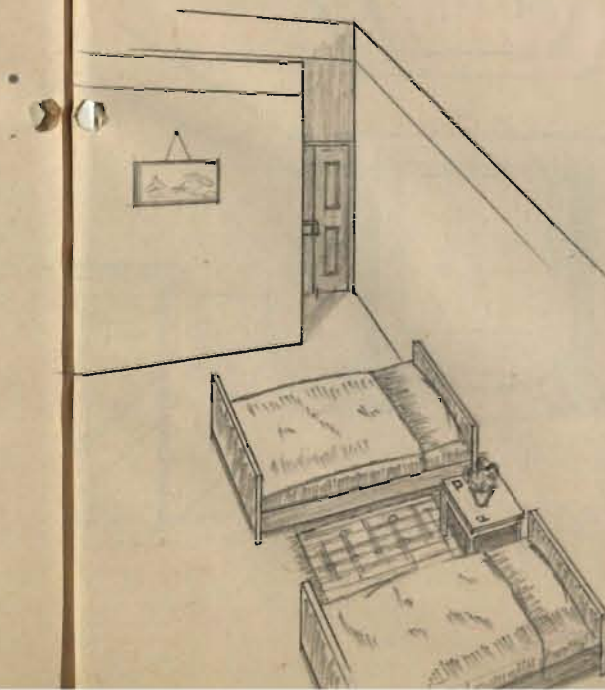
Nearly all the rooms, double or single beds, are planned on the same basis thus all the clients will be treated on the same footing. Each room contains a bath, a varanda, and a closet, big enough, to accomodate all the clothes. Semi-private rooms of all kinds are accounted for, since there is sometimes a demand for such rooms. The sizes of the rooms, as well as the air and light openings, are correctly planned and studied very carefully.

Two reasons justify the baths as shown on the plans:

First: to economize in the length of the façade and second in order not to spoil the harmony and beauty of the façade. A large enough clearestory gives it enough light

and draws off the smell from it.

Dirt accumulating in, is cleared off by means of an opening allowed for in the second floor. The height of each of these floors is four meters while that of the bath will be 290 cms. leaving a practically useless space of about one meter. It might be used however for luggage, even as





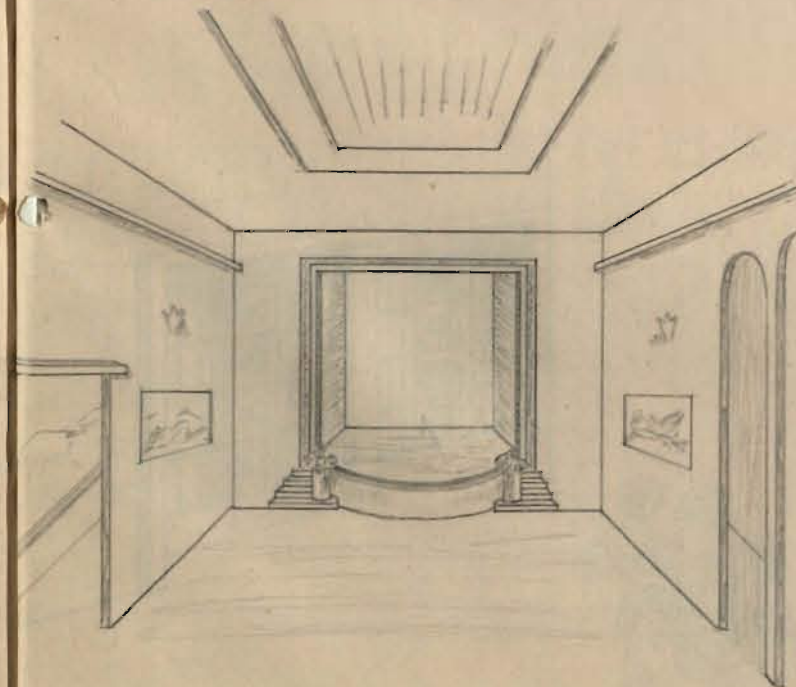
such, one cannot devise easy means for its use.

In each story, there are a general hall, two stairs (principle and service), two small rooms for luggage and two toilet common rooms. An apartment of one room and a private salon, can be arranged upon demand for outstanding personalities.

The Fourth Floor: It is nearly the same as the second and third floors, except that the rooms on the south-western and the north-eastern wings are made smaller in order to provide for wide, & beautiful varandas. This reduction is specially done, to create a variety in the construction and a better general appearance of the hotel. Besides these wide varandas, will count a lot for social moonlight gatherings in the hotel.

This is a general description of the planning and construction of the hotel, which I trust, gives a complete pic-

ture of the principles involved in the design. All the minor details, interior decoration, paintings, and the like, are not discussed here due to lack of time and space. These details, if looked after by a specialist for interior decoration,





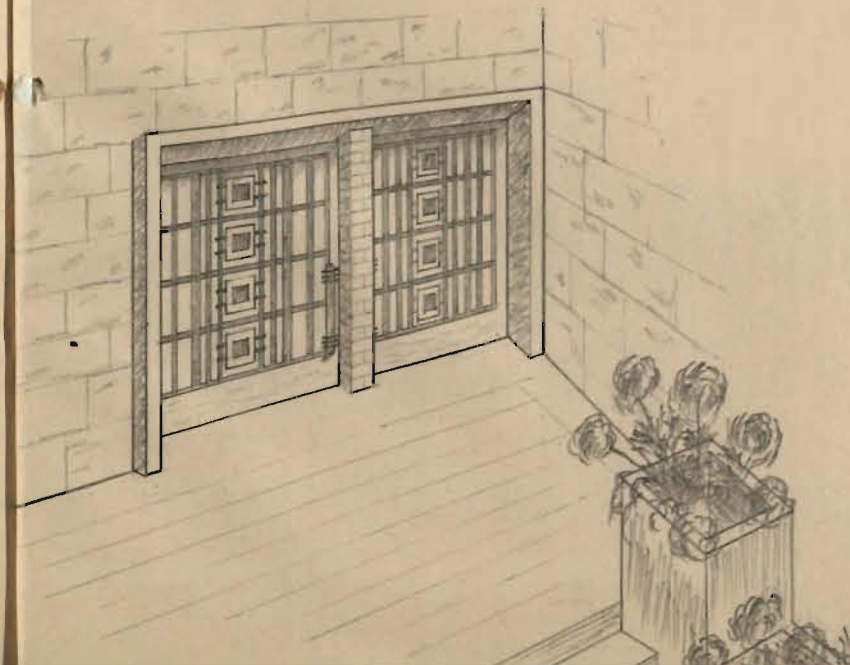
contribute a great deal to the richness and comfort of the hotel.

Woodworks, ironworks, plastering, plumbing and tiling are of the best quality and finest workmanship, for these too, add to the beauty of the place.

Due to the absence of a sewage system in Bhandoun, a septic hygienic tank of three compartments will be built to dispose of all the dirty water and sewage.

Water to all parts of the building is supplied from two big reservoirs built on top of the staircases.

A comprehensive and exhaustive study of all the principles, laws and requirements of up-to-date hotels was made. This is reflected in a thorough examination of the plans. Personally, I have a firm conviction that when the project of mine comes true, it will be a work of art. Anyhow, I leave this to others to decide.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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