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SHAPES OF CLAY

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GLADDING, McBEAN & CO.
LOS ANGELES PRESSED BRICK COMPANY
The lofty follower of the sun,
Sad when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
Drooping all night; and when he warm returns,
Points her enamor'd bosom to his ray.

—Thomson
Two Californian Landmarks

In the impressive list of recent Californian achievements in architecture are the two distinguished buildings designed by the firm of Schultze & Weaver, of New York. One is the Hunter-Dulin Building, situated at the southwest corner of Montgomery and Sutter streets, San Francisco. The other is the Subway Terminal Building, which extends from Hill Street to Olive, between Fourth and Fifth streets, Los Angeles. It is an interesting coincidence that both of these structures stand upon ground of historical importance. They are Californian landmarks which complete two typical stories of the amazing metropolitan growth that is characteristic of Pacific Coast cities.

In the Life of James Lick, written by Dolores Waldorf for the Quarterly of The Society of California Pioneers (June, 1924), we read: "In the late Fifties he [James Lick] set about the improvement of his San Francisco property. He would build a hotel, the most pretentious on the Coast. San Francisco would be proud of it. The Lick House was built on Montgomery between Sutter and Post streets, on the very fringe of the business district."

That last phrase, "on the very fringe of the business district," provides a yardstick by which the development of San Francisco may be measured. For the Hunter-Dulin Building stands on the site of the Lick House.
SHAPES OF CLAY

There is a similar background for the Subway Terminal Building of Los Angeles. Turning to that valuable book, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, by Harris Newmark, we read the following: “Upon my return from New York in 1868, I observed that the approaches to the hills were dotted here and there with little homes. This extension of the residence area, together with the general lack of street and sidewalk improvements, making travel to and from the town somewhat inconvenient, suggested the need of the first railway here. In 1869, Judge R. M. Widney, together with his associates, obtained a fifty-year franchise; and by 1874, the little Spring and Sixth street line had been built and was in operation. . . . This line (partly paid for by subscriptions from property owners along the selected route, each of whom contributed fifty cents per running foot), began at the Plaza, and extended as far out as Pearl and Sixth streets, by way of Main, Spring, First, Fort, Fourth, Hill, Fifth and Olive. . . . For the convenience of the traveling public, two bob-tailed, one-horse cars with a small platform at each end were used over a single track.”

From 1874 to 1927 is a short span in the life of any great city; but in phenomenal growth Los Angeles is like no other city in the world. From the two bob-tailed cars running over a single track for the convenience of those who had to “travel to and from the town,” to the congested activities of Pershing Square and the headquarters of a great electric railway system, what a stride there has been in half a century!

The Hunter-Dulin Building is a class-A structure of steel clothed in terra-cotta that rises twenty-two stories, with two main façades, north and east, that front Sutter and Montgomery streets, while its west side faces Lick Place and its court space with a southern exposure opens above the adjoining banking-room of the Crocker First National. As mentioned above, Schultze & Weaver were the architects; the structural engineer was H. J. Brunnier, and the general contractors, Lindgren & Swinerton, Inc.

This sky-scaper represents a happy combination of Romanesque with the French Chateau style of architecture. The adaptation to present-day needs has been accomplished with an artistic skill that provides the student
TWO CALIFORNIAN LANDMARKS

with a real intellectual pleasure. From the belt-course above the second story the piers and mullions spring upward lightly and gracefully to the top of the seventeenth story, and the same motive is repeated in the setback stories above the eighteenth level. Romanesque ornament is richly applied to the main entrance on Sutter Street. On both main fronts there are beautiful medallions to enliven the wall surfaces of the lower stories, and the corbels of the belt-courses, showing alternate bull’s-heads and eagles, set off a series of charming bosses. The Chateau roof is high-pitched, with interesting dormer windows and delicate finials.

From the sidewalk level to and including the dormer windows, the two main façades are invested with a terra-cotta known as buff Granitex, produced by Gladding, McBean & Co. In order to hold to the jointing scheme used by the architects, Gladding, McBean & Co. found it necessary to make exceptionally large pieces for the typical piers of the main façades. On the western and southern sides of the building, as well as in the light-court, the facing is Gladding, McBean & Co.’s coated brick known as Library Gray. There are on these walls terra-cotta returns which not only add to the rich effect of the general scheme, but serve admirably to illustrate how perfect is the color harmony between the two materials. The treatment of the rear walls with architectural distinction responds to one of the new, significant developments of the building art, and the desired result was achieved by use of this lovely coated brick combined with the generous terra-cotta returns. The building has monumental unity, an end sought for and appreciated nowadays by owners as well as architects. The tile of the Chateau roof is Gladding, McBean & Co.’s Varicolor Berkeley, topped with weathering copper.

It would be difficult to designate any building that is finer in color. The architects knew just what color combination they wanted to achieve, and terra-cotta, alone among materials, could exactly meet their demands; for terra-cotta, in the hands of skilled chemists, has as broad a color-range as the artist’s palette. The buff Granitex has a golden glamour in sunlight, while the tile roof is radiant with warm reds, pinks, and browns that are truly magical in their beauty.
To render animate the beauty of design in this splendid new skyscraper reared in the financial district of San Francisco, the architects chose an investiture of terra-cotta and a roof of tile. Both terra-cotta and tile are products of the Gladding, McBean & Co. kilns.
II - Hunter-Dulin Building, San Francisco

Schultze & Weaver, Architects

Named for a strong investment institution, this terra-cotta monument to business soars aloft in bold yet steady flight, its architecture seeming to express that vigor controlled by conservatism which is the dominant note of San Francisco finance.
SHAPES OF CLAY

In the buildings they have designed on the Pacific Coast, Schultze & Weaver have demonstrated a fine versatility. The Hunter-Dulin Building is Romanesque and French Chateau. The Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, is a Spanish adaptation of the classic. The Jonathan Club of the same city is Georgian. The Los Angeles Subway Terminal Building is Florentine of the Renaissance.

This huge structure, for which Paul Jeffers was the structural engineer, and P. J. Walker Co. the general contractor, rises, in class-A steel construction, twelve stories to the Los Angeles height limit and burrows deeply into the ground. It consists of four serried units, separated by light-courts which will eventually be enclosed courts, for the building’s location admits of future expansion. It had to be designed for a three-fold function: surface and subway terminals, and an office building; and the architects happily expressed all three functions by their treatment of the two major entrances on Hill Street, both equally accented. Rising as it does on the slope of a hill, the Olive Street level of the building is three stories higher than the Hill Street level. The problem thus presented was solved by designing the lower floors on the Olive Street frontage as garage spaces, with a capacity of 150 cars. The Olive Street entrance, therefore, leads directly to the third story.

From the belt-course above the main entrances all the way to the roof the Subway Terminal is faced with terra-cotta, combined in places with coated brick. The terra-cotta—ashlar of a distinctly large size—is Gladding, McBean & Co.’s Granitex, and the Granitex brick is from the kilns of the same company. The color throughout is a warm gray. The ornament, including two great cartouches on Hill Street and the urns of heroic size at the top of the tenth story, is similarly executed in terra-cotta. The very low-pitched roofs of the four units are tiled with Gladding, McBean & Co.’s large variegated Cordova.

The waiting-rooms and approaches are conceived in a vein of chaste richness. The walls, columns, and balustrades are of an enamel terra-cotta, a warm grayish pink in color, also produced by Gladding, McBean & Co.
EDITORIAL COMMENT

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Edward F. O'Day, Editor

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The cover of this issue of SHAPES OF CLAY shows an excellent picture of the Chateau roof of the new Hunter-Dulin Building of San Francisco. The Chateau roof for tall buildings is not entirely unknown on the Pacific Coast. The old Mutual Bank Building (now the Bank of Italy), at the gore of Market and Geary Streets, San Francisco, is an example. But one must turn to New York to find a more general use of this distinctive roof. Notable instances there are the Heckscher Building, on Fifth Avenue near Fifty-ninth Street, and the Woolworth Building.

The remarkable advance in the art of roof tile is one of the principal factors in making the Chateau roof popular with architects and owners. This advance, which is closely woven into the history of Gladding, McBean & Co., permits the roof of today to be a thing of outstanding beauty—a condition that applies equally to residences and skyscrapers.

There is an oriental aphorism that runs: "I would rather be a crystal and be broken than remain whole like a tile upon the roof-top." The thought is that a crystal, though broken, may still spread its message of beauty, while a tile upon the roof-top, however beautiful, is not visible. This is perfectly correct when a flat roof is in question, and applies in a lesser degree to a low-pitched roof. It is no wonder, therefore, that architects and owners, desirous of endowing their buildings with the full beauty to be evoked from tile, should pitch their roofs higher and higher. In this evolution the Chateau roof comes into its own.

A glance at our cover picture establishes something of this, but not all. In coloring the Hunter-Dulin Building as a whole is most distinctive, and the Chateau roof, especially when flashing its variegated hues in the sunshine, is truly superb. San Francisco being a city of hills, this roof is a feature of innumerable views from all points of the compass; it broadcasts its message of beauty in every direction. It is an eloquent witness to the high state of development which the roof-tile art has attained on the Pacific Coast, and it justifies all that has been done by Gladding, McBean & Co., the pioneers in this development. The studies of experts who were sent abroad to absorb the lore of roof tile at first hand, the unwearied experimentation of chemists and kiln-masters—these efforts have amply justified Gladding, McBean & Co. in a policy dictated some years ago by wise foresight.
III - HUNTER-DULIN BUILDING, San Francisco

Distinctly metropolitan is this Chateau roof done in Gladding, McBean & Co. tile that smiles gaily in the sunshine. There is nothing that more pleasantly compels the eye in the vivacious new skyline of San Francisco.
The upper stories of the building are seen here in the midst of a striking Gladding, McBean & Co. composition. The Russ Building in the foreground and the Hobart and Telephone buildings to the left, like the Hunter-Dulin, are all clothed in our terra-cotta and roof tile.
The main entrance is on the south side of Sutter Street, just above Montgomery. All this superb Romanesque ornament, that seems to flower in northern California as naturally as in northern Italy, was produced by Gladding, McBean & Co.
Were it not for the name displayed just above the sidewalk, one might excusably place this view in Florence instead of in San Francisco. The texture of the terra-cotta, ashlar and ornamental, has called forth a great deal of admiring comment.
The models for the sculptured panel and lunette in the vestibule were made in New York under the direction of Mr. Schultz, and were rendered in terra-cotta by Gladding, McBean & Co. All the rest of the modeling was done by artists on the staff of this Company.
This huge structure extending from Hill to Olive Street between Fourth and Fifth, is clothed, from the belt-course above the main entrance to the roof, in Gladding, McBean & Co.'s Granitex terra-cotta, combined in places with Granitex brick. The roof tile is our variegated large Cordova.
IX - Subway Terminal Building, Los Angeles

Schultze & Weaver, Architects

On the Hill Street front the top stories are set back to provide two open-air breathing-spaces guarded by large floriated urns. All the ornament, sparingly yet judiciously used as it is, was produced in terra-cotta by Gladding, McBean & Co.
These lovely interiors take their charm primarily from terra-cotta. The walls, columns, and balustrades are all from Gladding, McBean & Co. kilns. Here the terra-cotta is enamel, in color a grayish pink that gives an agreeable feeling of warmth.
There are two of these cartouches supporting flagstaffs over the Hill Street entrances to the building. The plasticity of terra-cotta permitted the perfect reproduction of an antique ship design surmounted by the unmistakable crown of old Neptune.
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sun dials, and bird baths
Owing to their exquisite proportions the urns that top the tenth story of the Subway Terminal Building, Los Angeles, do not look their twelve feet of height. Their terra-cotta loveliness was specially designed for Schultz & Weaver, architects of the building.

* 

GLADDING, MCBEAN & CO.

Urns that top the tenth story of the Subway Terminal Building, Los Angeles, California
Schultz & Weaver, Architects