Shapes of Clay
Vol. III, No. 5, June 1927

Published by Gladding, McBean & Co.
General Office: 660 Market Street, San Francisco
Edward F. O’Day, Editor
Printed by Taylor & Taylor, San Francisco

Gladding, McBean & Co., Founded 1875
Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company, Founded 1887
San Francisco Office, 660 Market Street – Los Angeles Office, 621 South Hope Street
Seattle Office, 1500 1st Avenue, south – Portland Office, 454 Everett Street
San Francisco Sales Yard, 445 Ninth Street – Oakland Office & Sales Yard, Twenty-second & Market Streets
Tacoma Office & Sales Yard, 15th and Dock Streets
Seattle, University Yard, San Joaquin Materials Co., 744 G Street
Fresno Office & Sales Yard, San Joaquin Materials Co., 744 G Street

This booklet, which begins on the next page,
is presented on the Stone Quarries and Beyond web site.
http://quarriesandbeyond.org/

Peggy B. Perazzo
Email: pbperazzo@comcast.net
June 2013
O! to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day—

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in clusters, knots of Paradise.

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruitied tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea.

—LOCKSLEY HALL
“Knots of Paradise”

I should positively hesitate to say how bad Island architecture is, if so quintessential an Islander as Mr. W. R. Castle, Jr., had not said it before me.” A dozen years have passed since Katharine Fullerton Gerould voiced this reproach in her charming book, “Hawaii: Scenes and Impressions.” That the last few years have taken the keen edge off that reproach, and that the architecture of the Hawaiian Islands today has achieved a very special distinction, with promise of further splendid achievements in the near future, this number of SHAPES OF CLAY illustrates.

It is quite true that Mrs. Gerould had been preceded in her frank criticism of Island architecture by W. R. Castle, Jr. That keen authority on all matters pertaining to the Hawaiian Islands deprecated the low architectural standards of Honolulu and other Island communities in his standard volume, “Hawaii, Past and Present.” As Mrs. Gerould agreed with him, let us quote a few more of her vivacious words:

“The architecture of Hawaii is uncompromising. . . . It stands rigidly by the worst traditions of the nineteenth century; it is the same that disfigures our New England streets and stultifies the fine situation of many a Western town. . . . It is a great pity that some young architect with a sense of fitness does not feel ‘called’ to make man’s part in the aspect of Honolulu a little more akin to God’s.”
SHAPES OF CLAY

To accomplish the substitution of good architecture for bad, a dozen years does not seem a sufficient length of time. It is undeniable, however, that wonders have been accomplished in that brief period. Were Mrs. Gerould to visit the Islands today, she would be astonished.

Blunt criticism is just as good for the soul of a community as for the spiritual health of an individual. The Islands rose to the challenge of the recurring reproaches leveled at their architectural deficiencies. And the architects were there to heed the "call." It is due to them, and to the understanding of the clients for whom they have planned, that man's part in the aspect of the Honolulu of 1927 is a great deal more "akin to God's."

The native Hawaiians, of course, could no more influence the first white settlers in the matter of architecture than in the matter of costume. It is never the way of the pioneer to accept the standards of the native population. It is only in a later and subtler period of occupation that the white pioneer finds with esthetic delight that the natives upon whom he has impressed his own ways have something to offer in return. This recognition comes rather rapidly in music, more slowly in the plastic arts; it is most retarded, if indeed it comes at all, in architecture.

It took American California a long time to realize the rich inspiration left behind by Spanish and Mexican architecture. The Americanized Islands have at last awakened to the charming adaptability of certain primitive native forms, and these play their part in the architectural style that has definitely developed in the Islands. Oriental forms and influences play their part, too. But the new Island architecture finds its basic strength and beauty in this, that it is splendidly American without in the least infringing the natural rights of an exotic environment.

"Life in Hawaii," to quote again the charming Mrs. Gerould, "is lived under the palm and the mango, the banyan and the poinciana, the algaroba and the monkey-pod. The great hibiscus hedges are as high as, in England, the border of ancestral yew; the night-blooming cereus hangs in multitudinous clusters over your garden-wall; the scent of ginger is heavy round your lanai; the orange and the lime bloom in your compound, and the guava runs wild by the wayside; your yard-boy eats his dinner under a
“KNOTS OF PARADISE”

banana-tree. A garden is old in ten years; in thirty it has become a tropical forest, a gigantic and fragrant bloom."

That architect were unimaginative indeed who did not hold these gorgeous growing things in the forefront of his mind while planning a Hawaiian structure. Judging by recent results, the architects of the Architectural Awakening in the Islands have imagination, and are not afraid to apply it to practical problems. Whether it be a home, a school, an academy of art, a government building, a hotel, a store, or an office building, the Hawaiian environment conditions the treatment for these alert practitioners of an exacting art, while at the same time the best practice of continental United States disciplines that temptation toward exuberance which the mind dallies with anywhere under a Polynesian sun. The American architect may “let himself go” in the Islands, but his independence must not become license.

And it is precisely because the architects who express the new note in the Islands have found the pleasant balance between mid-Pacific lavishness and the insistent requirements of American practicality that there has arisen what may justly be called “the Honolulu School of American Architecture.” Austerity would be out of place in this school, but laxity would be just as bad. Nature is lush here, but man must use the spade and the pruning-knife. There can be no “beach-combing” in architecture. Even amid these “Knots of Paradise” it must be an art under control.

Does this seem like a laying down of too exacting conditions for the architects who have co-operated to make a new Island school? Certainly not, because this is not an attempt to formulate academic rules for their work—they have done, they are doing, the work, and the observer has only to analyze it to find that it justifies critical praise.

“Architects of Honolulu,” says Loraine E. Kuck, writing in the Pacific Coast Architect (January, 1927), “face a group of conditions unique in the world today, both in interest and in possibilities. These conditions are hinted at in the various names by which Hawaii is described, the ‘Paradise,’ the ‘Crossroads,’ and the ‘Melting Pot’ of the Pacific. The way in which the Island architects are beginning to meet these conditions gives promise
To the beauty and utility of this great new hostelry on the beach at Waikiki, Gladding, McBean & Co. contributed polychrome terra-cotta in green and blue for elevator grilles, balconies, and urns. Also a roof of blue and green glazed Italian Pan tile, with cover tile of medium Cordova, and the red Promenade tile of the Lanai.
For this noble home of welfare, reared by Island citizens to accommodate the activities of the Young Women's Christian Association, Gladding, McBean & Co. furnished a matt-glaze Granada roof tile in a charming variegation of greens.
SHAPES OF CLAY

of forming one of the most fascinating chapters in the development of American architecture.”

“An Americanism compounded not only of the racial elements of Europe and Africa, but of Asia and Polynesia as well,” is the expression noted in this architecture by the writer just quoted. “The polyglot population of the islands,” she continues, “forms a background that is all-pervading in its influence, and not to be evaded in the final expression. This, together with the climatic and physical characteristics of the islands, makes up the unique conditions which have produced already a number of interesting buildings.”

“The climate,” this writer points out, “is a combination of hot direct sun and cooling trade-winds. Together these make for an unvarying balminess, night and day, winter and summer. Protection must be had from the sun and the frequent drifts of mist-like rain, but the trade-winds must be allowed to sweep through without restriction. These two needs have brought into existence the ‘lanai,’ or deep porch or open porch-like room, which is perhaps the most invariable feature of Hawaiian planning. The ‘lanai,’ with its roof and no walls, is the exact antithesis of the patio, with its walls and no roof, which is so successfully used in California, where the sun’s warmth is usually grateful, and the winds are often chill.”

Add to this the (to continental Americans) almost disturbing luxuriance of vegetation, and one begins to glimpse the outer aspects of Island architectural planning. The spiritual side of the problem remains, and may be permitted to remain in the safe custody of architects who understand better than laymen the personality of this mid-Pacific American outpost.

Does it seem strange that these architectural interpreters should find in “shapes of clay” the solution of their subtle problems? Certainly not, since terra-cotta, old as recorded history, proves itself, every day of modern life, as adaptable as American progress. Terra-cotta lives with sunlight and with rain, with stimulating fog and cleansing trade-wind, with “the algaroba and the monkey-pod” no less than with the rose and the carnation; it is cosmopolitan, it can cross all waters and suffer “no sea-change,” its plastic beauty speaks all languages, and its utility is universally understood. And, like terra-cotta ashlar, burned clay roof-tile is [Continued on page 7]
EDITORIAL COMMENT

SHAPES OF CLAY
Published by Gladding, McBean & Co.
General Office: 660 Market Street
San Francisco

Edward F. O'Day, Editor

VOL. III JUNE, 1927 NO. 5

From centuries so remote that our principal record of the state of mankind and the progress of civilization is embodied almost entirely in the books of the Old Testament and the writings of Herodotus, it has been recognized that architecture is one of the chief handmaidens of culture and civilization.

Buildings that had crumbled into dust long before the dawn of our era, such as Solomon’s Temple and the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, exerted a powerful influence on the upward march of man from his cave-dwelling days.

Against such a background, a single century seems but a day, and yet only a matter of a hundred years ago the Islands that are the Territory of Hawaii boasted only cruelly thatched huts.

The American Missionaries who settled in the Islands brought with them the severe ugliness of New England.

It remained for the present generation — indeed, it might almost be said the present decade — to discover the fact that burned clay in its various structural forms was, under that bright sunshine, and among those deep shadows, the ideal building material. The same brilliant light that in the old lands around the Mediterranean is softened to the eye by the varicolored tiles, lives perennially in tropical Hawaii. The blue sky and the sea are there too, so it is not strange to find coming into their own in Hawaii the tile roof, terra-cotta, brick, the cool promenade tile floor.

It is a long way, indeed, from the Mediterranean to the Islands that are the crossroads of the Pacific. It is a long time since Father Junipero Serra brought to California the architectural traditions of old Spain. It was a long time before these traditions flowered again in California, and finally spanned the Pacific, but the gap has been bridged.

* * *

Our cover picture shows world-famous Honolulu Harbor, viewed from Diamond Head. The first building on the right is the magnificent new Royal Hawaiian Hotel. In the foreground is the residence of Walter F. Dillingham, for which David Adler and Robert Work were the architects. The roof is of Gladding, McBean & Co.'s Medium Cordova tile.

* * *

[Continued from page 6] just as much at home in the Hawaiian “Knots of Paradise” as along the Mediterranean or in the shadow of the Sierra Nevada. When at last, following the reproaches of constructive critics, architecture came to the Islands, inevitably it brought with it a beautiful material that was plastic enough to reproduce the sensuous curves of a native hut and at the same time capable of expressing the full dignity of an American stronghold fronting the mysterious East.
This great structure devoted to the business of the United States Government is roofed with medium Cordova tile from the kilns of Gladding, McBean & Co. From the same source came the terra-cotta trim and the hollow tile used throughout.
IV - McKinley High School, Honolulu

These school buildings are trimmed with Gladding, McBean & Co. terra-cotta that has a pinkish cream background and is polychromed with green, blue, and salmon. This Company also supplied the medium Cordova roof tile in russet brown and red shades.
For this delightful building dedicated to art, Gladding, McBean & Co. produced a small Mission matt-glaze roof tile of mouse color.
Academy of Arts, Honolulu – Bertram A. Goodhue and Associates, Architects

The east and the west side of the center court has each its distinctive appeal, the roof tile in both instances playing an important part in the harmonious whole.
(above) S. M. Damon Building, Honolulu – John Mason Young, Architect
Terra-cotta with a garden pottery glaze was first used on this huge all-terra-cotta building. It is a mottled green-brown glaze, in lovely harmony with the green hills of the background. The ashlar was made with a rounded joint and in uniform size, eliminating the use of setting numbers.
IX - Home of Mrs. C. W. Cooke, Honolulu

Hart Wood, Architect

For this residence on Makiki Heights, Gladding, McBean & Co. furnished a Granada matt-glaze roof tile of mouse color.
GLADDING, McBEAN & CO.
Founded 1875

LOS ANGELES PRESSED BRICK COMPANY
Founded 1887

San Francisco Office, 660 Market Street
Los Angeles Office, 621 South Hope Street
Seattle Office, 1500 1st Avenue, South
Portland Office, 454 Everett Street
San Francisco Sales Yard, 445 Ninth Street
Oakland Office and Sales Yard, Twenty-second and Market Streets
Tacoma Office and Sales Yard, 15th and Dock Streets
Seattle, University Yard, 4041 University Way
Fresno Office and Sales Yard, San Joaquin Materials Co., 744 G Street

*

Lincoln Plant, Lincoln, Placer County, California
Tropico Plant, Glendale, Los Angeles County, California
Los Angeles Plant, College and Date Streets, Los Angeles, California
Santa Monica Plant, Santa Monica, California
Alberhill Plant, Alberhill, Riverside County, California
Auburn Plant, Auburn, Washington
Renton Plant, Renton, Washington • Taylor Plant, Taylor, Washington
Van Asselt Plant, Seattle, Washington • Portland Plant, Portland, Oregon

*

Terra-Cotta: In enamel and unglazed finishes for the facing and trim of buildings

Roof Tile: Both machine and hand-made tiles in wide color variations

Face Brick • Enamed Brick: Brick for buildings and mantels

Vitrified Brick, for paving and sewer work • Acid Brick

Faience and Floor Tile: Tile, glazed and unglazed, for floors, walls, bathrooms, terraces, and mantels

Vitrified Salt Glazed Pipe: For sewage, drainage, and irrigation: Conduit pipe, culvert pipe, drain tile, grease traps, flush tanks, segmental sewer blocks

Hollow Clay Tile: For partitions and bearing walls

Fire-Clay Chimney Pipe: Chimney tops, flue linings, gas flues

Fire Brick and Fire Tile: Fire clay, fire-brick dust

Laundry Trays • Kitchen Sinks

Garden Pottery: Vases, benches, urns, fountains, pedestals, sun dials, and bird baths
This entrance to the McKinley High School, Honolulu, illustrates the charm and plasticity of Polychrome Terra-Cotta. The colors — green, blue, and salmon against a pinkish cream background — establish a delightful relationship with the brilliant tropic sunshine. The roof tile is medium Cordova in russet brown and red. The architects: Ripley & Davis, and Davis & Fishbourne.

*Gladding, McBean & Co.*