

# The Hotel Pennsylvania, New York

McKIM, MEAD & WHITE, Architects

*This Last Addition to a Chain of Hotels Operated by the Statler Company, is Not Only the Largest Hotel Structure in New York City, But is Also the Commanding Feature of the New Civic Center Created by the Pennsylvania Terminal, opposite, and United States Post Office Building on Eighth Avenue, of which McKim, Mead & White were also the architects.*

**T**HE problem confronting the designers of the new Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City was to produce the largest hotel building in the world in the greatest hotel city and in so doing to translate into concrete expression the ideals and

Streets. It has 22 floors from street level to roof, inclusive, and three levels in the pent house.

The entire area is covered with solid building for four stories above the street level to the approximate height of the Pennsylvania Station opposite.



SOUTH, OR THIRTY-SECOND STREET FRONT

enthusiasm of the great railway system as owner and the Statler Company as lessee and operator.

The building has been erected on a plot of ground 200 x 400 feet, bounded on the west by Seventh Avenue, on the north and south by 33d and 32d

This solid base is faced with Indiana limestone and treated with an order of Roman Ionic pilasters with lightly rusticated walls between, and a story of plain ashlar. This treatment relates the building in design and scale with the station. In the center of

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the Seventh Avenue façade is a portico of six Ionic columns marking the main entrance. The building line has been set back fifteen feet on Seventh Avenue to assist in the scheme of producing a plaza in front of the station.

These lower floors contain most of the public rooms. On the street level are the main lobby, office, dining room, tea room, men's café, bar, main serving pantry and shops of various kinds with entrances from street and hotel and also the customary

hair dresser shop and the maitre d'hôtel's office. On the ballroom floor is a very complete and extensive entertaining area of great flexibility. This is divided into grand foyer and ballroom, two large parlors, banquet room and foyer, and three smaller dining rooms arranged en suite. All of the above have their necessary auxiliary spaces and in addition to having private elevator service from the ground floor are arranged for direct service from the large banquet kitchen. The arrangement permits of one



MAIN DINING ROOM

florist shop, telegraph office, public telephones and checking accommodations.

In a half story above the ground floor are housed the hotel executives' offices, baggage and parcel rooms, print shop and help's dining rooms. The baggage room is connected by a conveyor to the service driveway through the easterly end of the building, avoiding any reversal of direction of incoming or outgoing baggage.

On the mezzanine are the lounging and writing rooms and library and also a large exhibition space,

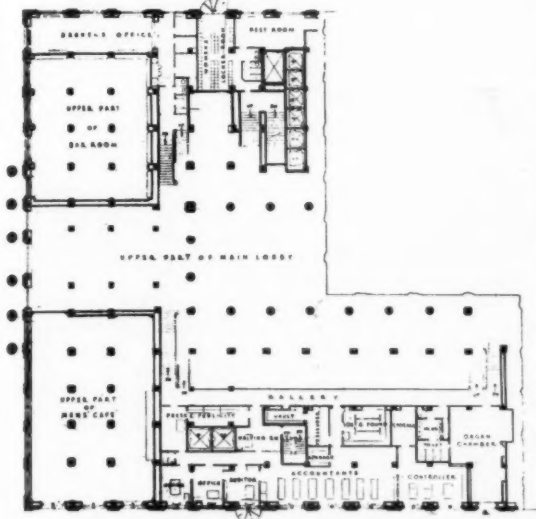
or two large or several smaller parties being accommodated at the same time. The second mezzanine, a part floor, and the entire second floor, are devoted to service bedrooms, storerooms, sewing and linen rooms, and the telephone exchange, which latter is the largest of its kind ever built.

Above this lower area the shape of the building has been dictated by the typical bedroom floor plan. After much study a plan of alternate wings with wide courts opening to the south was adopted. There are four bedroom wings each 54 feet wide

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over all, and three courts each 40 feet wide. The easterly court facing the Gimbel Building is 50 feet wide.

In general a wing consists of a central corridor



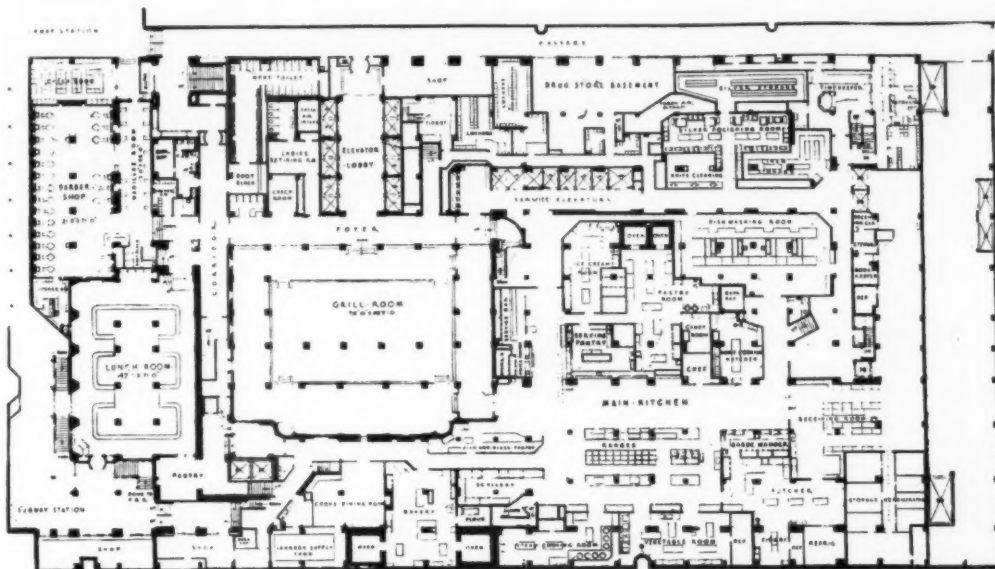
OFFICE MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN

with bedrooms on each side, each bedroom having its own bath. The westerly or Seventh Avenue wing contains the larger rooms with some outside baths, the other wings having inside baths. There are seventeen bedroom floors, with an average of

125 rooms to the floor. Two of the floors have special sections composed of living and reception rooms, dining room, pantry and bedrooms arranged to allow from three to ten rooms to be thrown into one suite. Three of the upper floors in the easterly two wings are arranged with large size rooms with extra size closets. At the easterly end of the first bedroom floor are two complete Turkish baths, one for men and one for women. The women's department is entered by a direct stair from the second bedroom floor, which is to be reserved for women guests. Each of the Turkish baths has a large plunge and ample equipment of all other desirable features. All the water is to be sterilized by the violet ray system as well as by the regular filter system, and in addition will be constantly renewed.

The bedroom stories are contained in a shaft faced with light brick of a warm gray or buff color, with a crowning feature consisting of a three-story order of pilasters with a main cornice of terra cotta. A structure on the Seventh Avenue wing roof contains the roof garden restaurant, on the floor above which is an extension of the elevator pent house. The second wing roof is left uncovered for use as an outdoor after-dinner lounging space accessible from the roof garden by a wide bridge across the first court.

The roofs of the two easterly wings are left open for future development and provision is made in the framing for connecting these roofs with bridges similar to that in the first court to provide for a complete scheme of circulation.



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN



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The easterly 50 feet of the first floor area under the easterly court is occupied by two parallel drive-ways, a service drive for the hotel with its loading platforms, elevators to workshops above and storage rooms and kitchen below, and conveyor to baggage storage on the mezzanine over; and at the extreme east a service drive for the Gimbel store with elevators and loading platform to care for the store deliveries which are now crowding the 33d Street pavements.

lobby. A well-lighted underground passage under the 33d Street sidewalk will lead past the hotel to the concourse connecting the Hudson & Manhattan Railway and the Broadway subway and to Sixth Avenue.

The sub-basement mezzanine, a part floor, contains shops and service dining rooms and locker rooms. The sub-basement houses the house and guest laundries and extensive refrigerating, pumping and filtering plants and the machine rooms. The



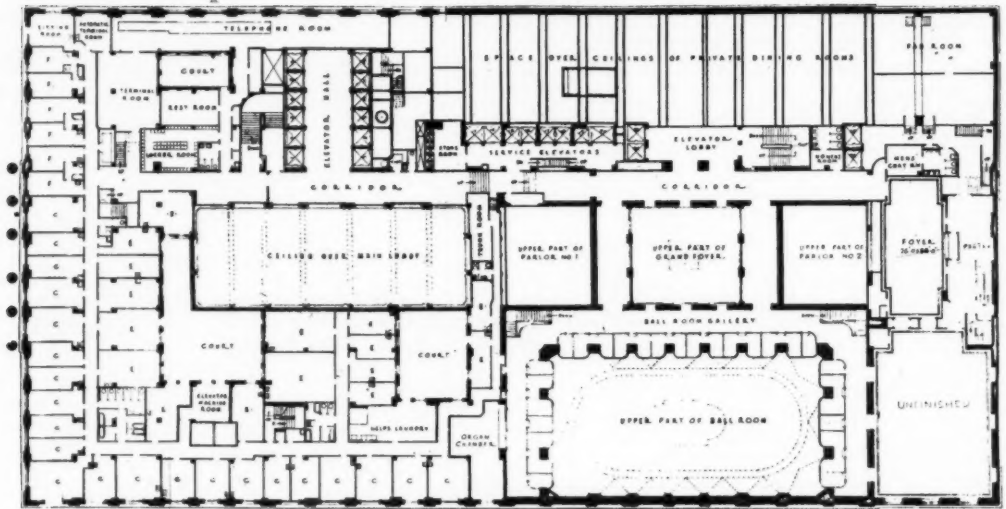
MAIN ENTRANCE LOBBY

There are three floor levels below the street. The basement contains main kitchen and auxiliaries, grill room, lunch room, barber shop and wash room. This floor has direct entrances from the platform of the 34th Street express station of the Seventh Avenue subway. At the 33d Street side of the hotel there is a wide passage under Seventh Avenue connecting directly with the Long Island Railroad station. At the 32d Street side is a similar passage for Pennsylvania Railroad passengers. The latter passage can also be reached by elevators from the hotel

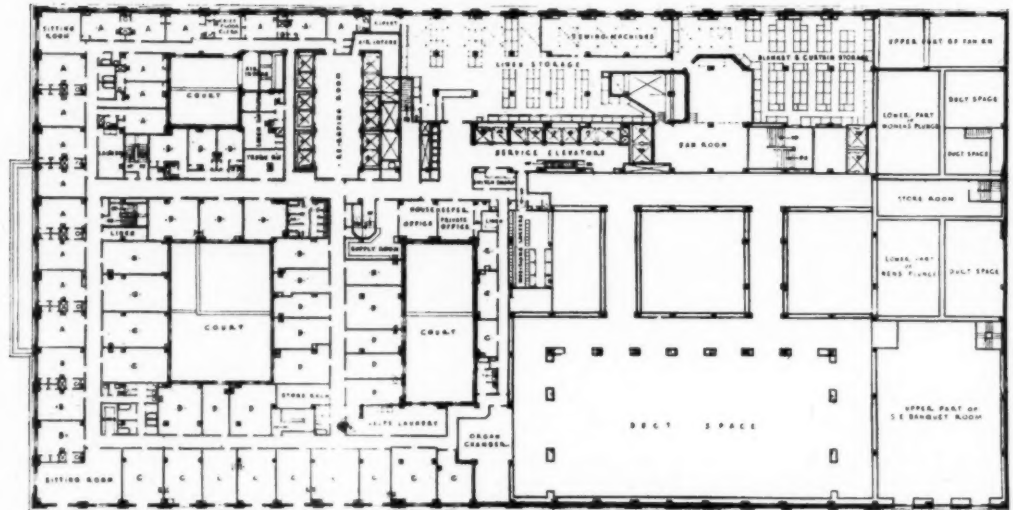
electric power and steam service is supplied by the Pennsylvania Station Power House.

The ground floor has been designed with a view to meeting the problems of circulation presented by the throngs of people which the great metropolitan hotels are called upon to handle, and to produce effect of spaciousness in scale with the magnitude of the structure, which will not be disassociated from the simple dignity of form and harmony of color which the American people demand in their own homes. The classic architecture of Italy has been

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SECOND MEZZANINE FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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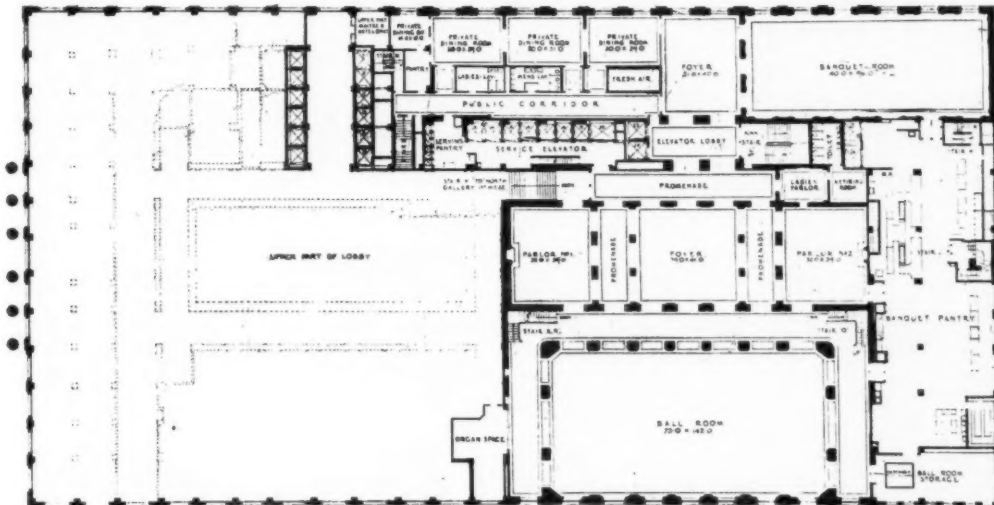
TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

the inspiration for the decorative treatment for all the public rooms.

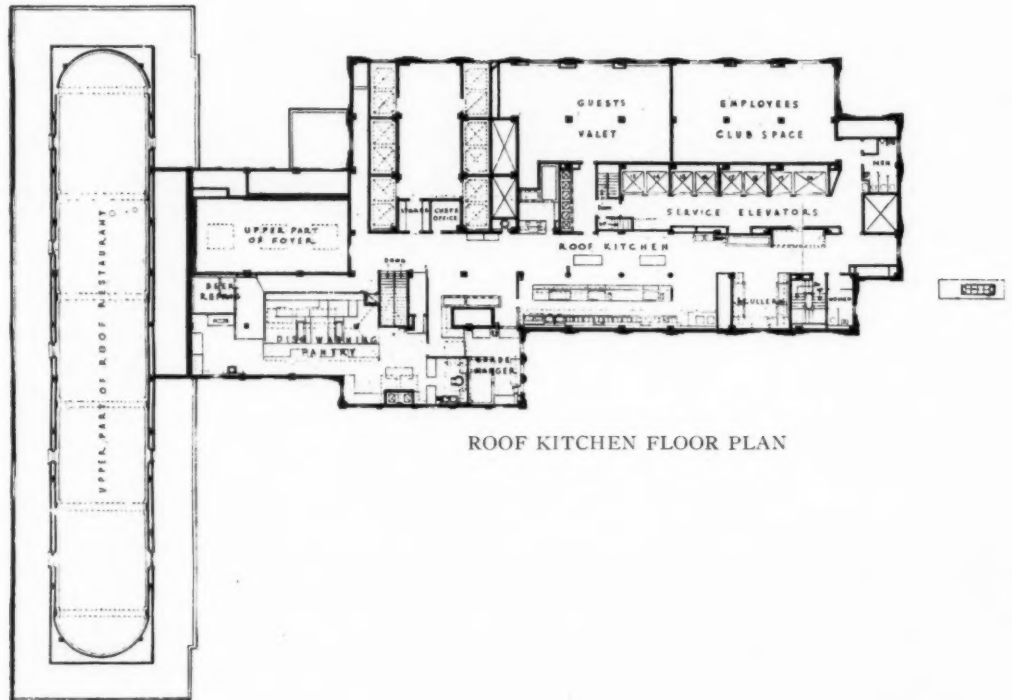
The architectural feature of the main lobby is a colonnade of Doric columns producing the effect of a great atrium in the Roman style. Above is a metal and translucent glass ceiling thirty-five feet from the floor, from which a glow of golden light descends. A mezzanine gallery forms a promenade

and lounging space entirely around the colonnade. On the ground floor there are two direct entrances each from 32d and 33d Streets to the lobby and a special entrance on the 33d Street side for the ballroom, with direct stair and elevators to the ballroom floor.

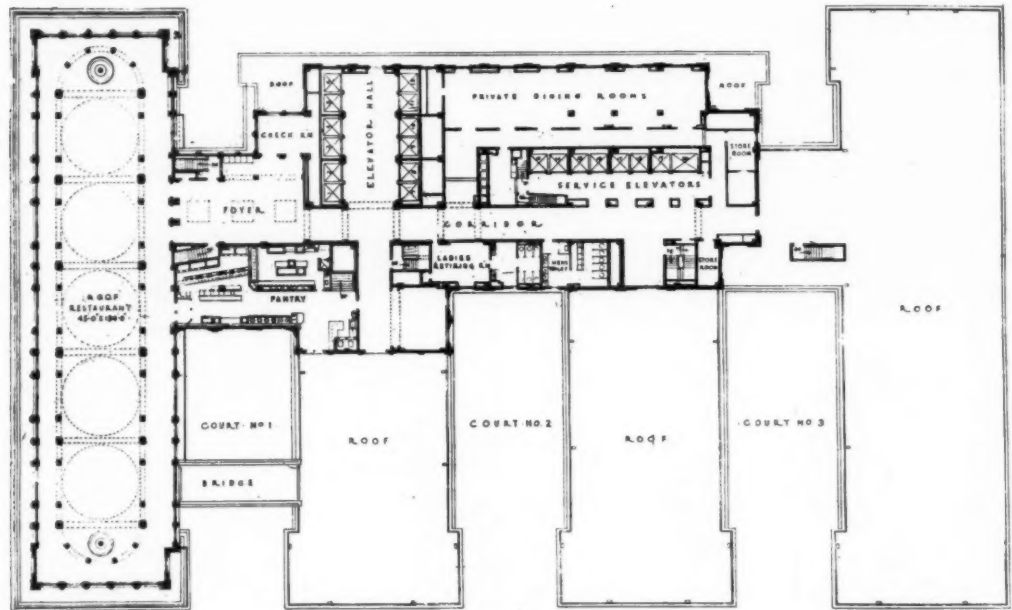
On the right of the main entrance, with a direct entrance from the street, is the men's café. It is



BALLROOM FLOOR PLAN



ROOF KITCHEN FLOOR PLAN



MAIN ROOF PLAN



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panelled to the ceiling in a natural finished chestnut. The floor is of imported quarry tiles. The lighting fixtures of pewter and brass are a development of the Georgian and Flemish chandeliers.

On the left of the main entrance is the bar. The stone walls, vaulted ceiling, leaded windows and mosaic tile floor give the atmosphere of Tuscany of the Early Renaissance or Quattrocento, where every hill town had its world-famous product of the fruitful vine.

opens the main restaurant. This vast room measures 60 x 140 feet and is over 20 feet in height. At each end is a terrace or dais raised above the floor level of the central portion so that those seated at the end tables may include the entire room in their field of vision. At the edge of each dais a light screen of four columns adds scale and architectural interest to the great space. The walls are of artificial limestone, with a base and window and door trims of terra cotta decorated with delicate Italian



GRILL ROOM

Opening from the east end of the main lobby is the tea room, the design of which suggests the Adam period of English decorative art, with a close relation to the Italian Renaissance rather than to the severer classic forms which the Scottish architects used as their inspiration. The walls present an alternate composition of arched openings with mural decorations in the tympanums and wall surfaces with magnificent mirror sconces.

A promenade which forms an extension of the aisles of the main lobby colonnade makes a complete circuit of the tea room, from the south arm of which

arabesque ornament. The beamed ceiling is richly decorated in the style of the Italian and French ceilings of Renaissance times, yet with colors so soft and harmonious that they increase the apparent height of the ceiling in spite of its enormous span.

Opening from the south colonnade of the mezzanine level is the writing room, which in turn opens to the library. The latter room is a study in the English Jacobean period, panelled in oak to the ceiling. The centerpieces in the modeled plaster ceiling are representations of the old printers' marks of the sixteenth century, which were used by the

## THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

first masters of the printers' craft in Italy, France, Flanders, Germany and England.

From the mezzanine gallery of the main lobby a short flight of steps leads to the ballroom floor. A grand foyer, with its aisles and parlors on either side, opens into the ballroom. These rooms are carried out in the spirit of the Italian Renaissance as it is typified in the palaces of the sixteenth century.

The ballroom itself, on the south side of the building directly over the main dining room, is some 12 feet wider than the latter, and has a ceiling height of 30 feet. The gallery of boxes extends around three sides of the room. The vaulted ceiling is delicately modeled with Italian arabesque ornament decorated in color on an ivory toned ground in a manner suggestive of the fresco decorations of Raphael and Giovanni da Udine in the Vatican and the Villa Madama in Rome. Two great crystal and silk chandeliers are the main illuminating features.

The banquet room, on the north side of the same floor, is panelled in white oak to the ceiling, while its foyer—like the grand foyer—has walls of artificial stone.

The private dining rooms, which can be used singly or en suite, suggest in their decorative treatment the styles of the early Georgian period in England, which borrowed its motifs from the Palladian architecture of Italy.

The roof restaurant occupies the entire roof of the Seventh Avenue wing. From its many windows and from the open promenade outside, over the main cornice of the building, an uninterrupted view is possible of the entire city and its environs. The harbor and North River are in view from the Narrows to Hastings. This room has been designed on simple architectural lines conveying an impression of lightness and openness. A vaulted plaster ceiling is supported by a colonnade, forming a great central hall with aisles. The walls are of plaster above a tile wainscot, and the details are of the utmost simplicity with a view to forming a background for the changes in decorative scheme which will be made from season to season.

In the grill room in the basement the effect has been made to escape entirely from the dungeon-like quality of most below-grade rooms. The guest enters the grottoes and orangeries of an Italian villa garden, surrounded by warm and happy colors reminiscent of Mediterranean shores. The columns and wall arcades are executed in sgraffito, the etched plaster work of the Italian Renaissance, all of which has been executed in place by Italian artisans. The sgraffito is bound by terra cotta to structural lines and a base of the same material affords protection to the lower part of the wall. The tile floor has been made specially to harmonize in color with its surroundings.





PLATE 63

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA, SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

McKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS



PLATE 64

MAIN ENTRANCE DETAIL

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA, SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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PLATE 65

LOWER STORIES, THIRTY-SECOND STREET FACADE

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA, SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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PLATE 66

THE LOBBY

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA, SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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PLATE 67

MAIN DINING ROOM

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA, SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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PLATE 68

TEA ROOM

HOTEL PENNSYLVANIA, SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

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