

OUR NEW OPERA HOUSE.

Architect Cobb interviewed by a Tribune Representative on Yesterday Afternoon.

The House to be Handsomely Built, Finished, Furnished and Fitted—A Full Description of the Building.

Architect Oscar Cobb of Chicago has arrived in the city and is registered at the Park hotel. Learning of his arrival a representative of the Tribune called on him at his room. He was courteously received and when his purpose was made known the architect kindly unfolded the plans and gave the following complete description:

The house is situated on Third street, between First and Second avenues north. It extends along Third street seventy feet and is 115 feet deep. Of the seventy feet on the street sixty compose the frontage and ten are devoted to an entrance leading to the dressing-rooms.

The auditorium proper is located on the ground floor and is reached by an entrance on Third street. This entrance is sixteen feet deep by twenty feet in width. On the left-hand side is a ticket office, furnished with a window, from which tickets to the lower auditorium and balcony are sold. From this same box-office, but from another window, tickets to the gallery are sold. On the opposite side of the grand entrance the manager's office is situated. The auditorium is sixty by seventy feet and the lower part is divided into a parquet and parquet circle. The seating capacity of this lower portion is 500. The balcony accommodates 375 and the gallery 300. The house will therefore seat about 1,400 people.

The cutting off of ten feet of the front on the side next the alley has several advantages. It makes an excellent actors' exit and there being no rooms behind the stage gives an opportunity for perfect light and ventilation. Besides this it locates the dressing rooms very conveniently. Of these, four are on the ground floor, six are above the stage and three are placed in the basement, under the stage and will be reserved for minstrel purposes.

The stage is 70 feet long and 42 deep. This width, the architect says, gives ample opportunity to produce, without curtaining or diminishing scenic or spectacular effects, any attraction which can be shown at Helena, Butte or indeed at any leading point on the way across the continent. The height to the rigging loft is 50 feet and the space between will easily contain the longest and widest drops. The scenic grooves will be adjustable, double-jointed and will move from 16 to 25 feet in height, thus insuring an easy shifting of scenes.

In the auditorium at the right and left of the proscenium are the boxes, four in number, two on each side. A long lodge box is also placed along the front of the balcony over the lower boxes. The orchestra will be of proportions sufficient to accommodate twenty pieces and a piano.

The grand entrance is paved with encaustic tile. Entering the auditorium from this, to the right and left stairs are seen leading to the balcony. These are five feet wide and, being built out at an angle, leave an ample space below for ladies' and gentlemen's toilet rooms. The balcony proper is reached directly at the sides and rear from these stairways and is divided into a balcony and balcony circle. It is also furnished with a retiring foyer or lounging room sixteen feet wide by twenty long.

The gallery is entered from stairways leading up directly from the front corners of the building. It is seated with peer benches and is nicely ventilated. The lines of sight and acoustics are perfect.

The parquet, parquette circle and balcony are seated with the latest improved upholstered opera chairs, furnished with hat racks, foot rests, shawl racks, cane racks, etc. In the parquet the architect advocates putting in at least four rows of divans or double chairs. These are for the accommodation of people who desire a close acquaintance, or for people whose physical proportions are so pronounced as to make one chair uncomfortable. Should the committee approve, the entire parquet may be seated in this way.

A particular feature of this particularly handsome house is the proscenium proper. This is built in sounding boards, which extend into the auditorium sixteen feet and then splay off at an angle of forty-five degrees. Proceeding at this angle the proscenium meets and intersects with the side walls, then taking on a circular form it goes from the floor to the ceiling where it meets a similar formation from the opposite side. It is modeled after the famous Chicago Auditorium and is the very perfection of acoustics.

The house is to be heated by steam. The boilers are placed under the farthest projection in a corner, at the rear of the basement. The undercurrent system is to be used. By this no radiators or coils are visible in the house, excepting such as are on the stage and in the

orchestra space. The architect will add lighting the house entirely by incandescent lights, these being the best for showing off decorative and scenic effects. Their perfect safety from accidental fires, and their clear, pure light also strongly commend them.

In the lower house and boxes the carpets will be a rich body Brussels. The balcony will have tapestry and the gallery Napier matting. A two-ply Ingrain will be used for the dressing rooms. The upholstery will consist in the draping of all the arches about the stage as well as all the doors and windows on the lower floor. Curtains will be hung in all windows both before and behind the stage. The fresco and decorative work are intended to give to everything what might be termed an amusement effect. The grand entrance, proscenium front and underlines of the balcony are all done and treated in a general orange buff harmony, the style being a light tinted Romanesque. In the ornamentation, antique ivory will be largely used, relieved by gold, silver and nickel bronze, all blending in harmony and accord with the architecture and finish of the auditorium.

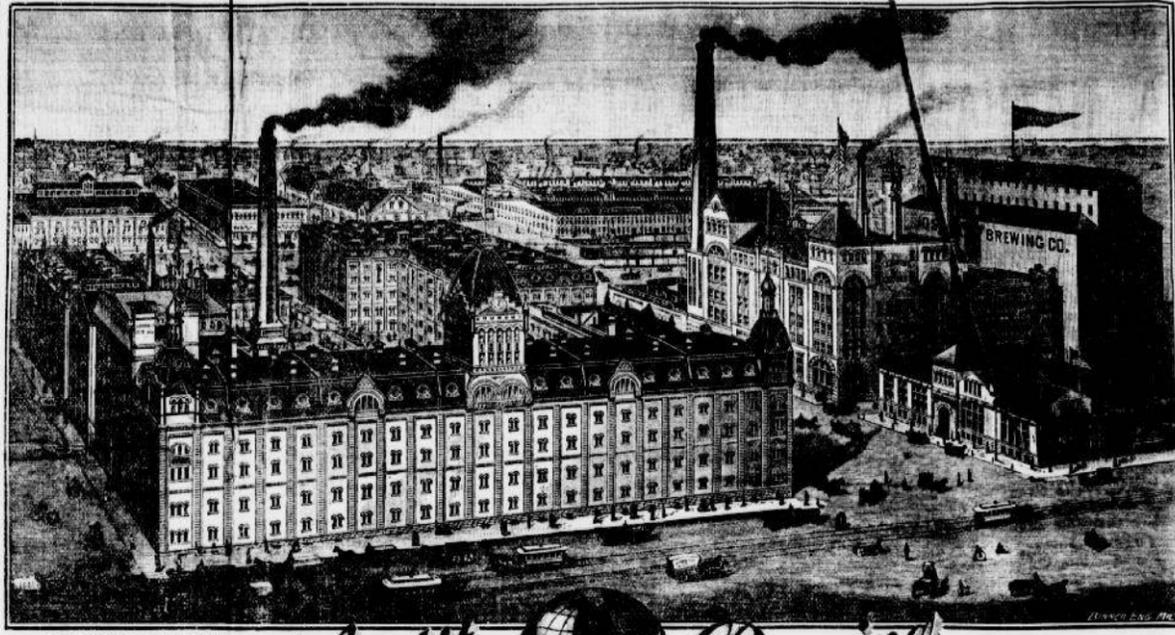
Outside the study of the building is entirely of stone. The exterior walls will be finished in rustic effects with skewback arches over the windows. This front gives to the building both character and effect and makes the structure seem like a house of amusement. From the front a broad porch projects over the sidewalk and furnishes at once an excellent location for a band and a protection from the rain for those below.

Outside stairs are to be built along the sides of the building. These lead from both balcony and gallery, are broad and roomy, and open directly into the alleys. They insure to the occupants of these places perfect safety, even if the stairs leading to the grand entrance should be blocked by fire or panic.

The entire opera house is perfectly planned and doubtless the building will equal or exceed the plans. Architect Cobb will attend to letting all the contracts and will see the house fairly under way before leaving. Mr. Cobb is one of the best known members of his profession. Over 200 opera houses testify to his ability. Among them are Heucks in Cincinnati, Faurts in Lima, O., the Columbia in Chicago, the Grand in Minneapolis and the Grand in St. Paul. Beyond a question the local house will also receive his careful consideration and will add still another jewel to his architectural crown.

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