

MCGILL MEDICAL BUILDING COMPETITION.

Conditions of competition for the selection of an architect for the Medical Building at McGill University were drawn up by the board of assessors, consisting of Messrs. Alex. C. Hutchison, Frank Darling, and Percy E. Nobbs, as consulting architects, and Messrs. R. B. Angus, James Ross and Chas. M. Hays, representing the Board of Governors. On the 28th of May the conditions were issued to the following architects, who were invited to send in designs: Messrs. Brown & Vallance, Finley & Spence, E. & W. S. Maxwell, Ross & Macfarlane, Robert Findlay, Marchand & Haskell, Saxe & Archibald, Hogle & Davis. All these firms deposited their plans on the 15th of July in response to the invitation. The assessors' award, recommending the scheme proposed by Messrs. Brown & Vallance, was approved by the Board of Governors on the 30th of July. The designs were placed on exhibition for a few days after the announcement of the award. The conditions and the designs submitted present a number of points of interest.

The competition was restricted to the eight firms mentioned. Each receives an honorarium of \$250 towards expenses incurred. In the case of the firm selected to carry out the work, this was increased to the usual architects' commission. No definite limit of cost was stated, but a list of accommodation, with schedule of floor areas, etc., being supplied, competitors were asked to give an estimate of cost based on a guaranteed measurement of the cubic contents of the buildings they propose. It is understood that the scheme adopted will involve an expenditure of five hundred thousand dollars. Names of competitors were sent in in sealed envelopes, to be opened after the assessors' award should be made. Eighth scale plans, elevations and sections only were called for, to be in pencil on white tracing paper, mounted on calico and delivered rolled. Tints and washes for specified purposes were admissible. Competitors were supplied with plans of site, with levels indicated. It was recommended that Montreal limestone should be employed as facing—no flank or rear walls to be of inferior materials. Competitors were free to use their own judgment in regard to architectural style.

The designs submitted show such a remarkable diversity of type as would make a consideration of them of much interest, independent of their relative merits and demerits. The reason for this is partly to be found in the nature of the site, a difficult one to deal with, by reason of its irregularity of outline and steep inclination, diagonally, from corner to corner. Streets on three sides and the University grounds on the fourth give a liberal choice of approaches, and the conditions issued by the assessors, probably purposely, leave this and similar matters to the judgment of the designer. The multifarious demands of the programme have also been a difficult problem to handle. Hence we have one design—one only, and it is the one which is recommended for adoption—which has its principal approach from the side facing the campus and the city; another has its principal entrance on University street; another towards Pine avenue; others divide the chief aspects in different ways. The types of plan are even more diverse. One very interesting scheme—that of Messrs. Ross & Macfarlane, eliminates the

difficulty of the sloping site by excavating and banking to a practically level platform and placing thereon a symmetrical building with longitudinal and transverse axes, and as a logical consequence has facades and approaches of fairly equal importance towards the campus and towards Pine avenue. In this scheme the large galleried museum, with top light, is placed in the centre of a large block of buildings which, though it contains two courts for light, one at each end of the museum, may yet be considered to represent a single building unit. The assembly room finds its place in the centre of the west end of the building. The whole block is centralized with the Royal Victoria Hospital on the other side of Pine avenue. As might be expected with a design set out on the symmetrical lines, the elevations are classical and monumental—a basement of rusticated masonry carries a range of tall pilasters framing the windows of two upper storeys. Slightly pitched roofs of moderate span, with valleys between, form an inconspicuous covering.

Of a very opposite character is the design submitted by Mr. Robert Findlay, whose buildings follow the outline of the site, enclosing an irregular open quadrangle in the middle. These buildings lend themselves to the varying levels of the ground, and in general the laboratories, class rooms, library, etc., look out towards the streets, with corridors of communication towards the quadrangle. On the side next the campus are placed the larger pieces—the museum and large lecture theatre. There is also on this side a minor students' entrance, with the students' common room, etc., in proximity. Another entrance, still of a secondary character, is from Carlton road, but the principal entrance—of a monumental and well-accentuated character, is in the middle of the Pine avenue front. As this is approached by a high flight of steps, entry is made at the top floor level.

The elevations generally are of a broad and simple classic character, such as lends itself without forcing the irregularities impressed by the nature of the site. The side next the campus has been left severely plain.

A third well-pronounced type of plan presented is that in which a long main building runs more or less parallel with Pine avenue and has wings attached at right angles, centrally, or at the ends, or both, thus forming an E or T plan. Of this type, although varying greatly from one another, are the plans of Messrs. Marchand & Haskell, E. & W. S. Maxwell and Brown & Vallance.

The design of Messrs. Brown & Vallance, as already mentioned, is the only one which quite emphatically selects the University grounds as its principal relationship. There is a secondary entrance of fair importance towards University street. Towards Pine avenue and the Royal Victoria Hospital on the other side, the rear of the building is presented with only a very minor doorway in the vicinity of the mortuary, etc. The plan roughly approximates the E type, the main part of the wings extending out towards the rear. Two principal entrances, with staircases in connection with them, are placed at the junction of the central block with the end wings. In the centre is the museum, top-lighted, and having two galleries. On each floor the outer corridors of this museum form the communication with the pieces in front and rear of the centre block. The museum cases are shown