



GARGOYLE, CREWKERNE, SOMERSET.

## OFFICE MANAGEMENT.

A series of excellent articles, on the business side of an architect's office, which have been coming out during the current year in the *Brickbuilder*, are worth reviewing and condensing for the use of architects in this country.

Method is essential, even in a small practice, and the different heads under which office method is here outlined must have place in some form in every office, if work is to go smoothly. It is better, as the author of the articles in the *Brickbuilder* says, to adopt, at the beginning of a small business, a comprehensive scheme which may be expanded, so as to avoid making revolutionary changes at a later date.

FILING is the first thing to be considered; to keep the letters, drawings and other documents, so that they may be surely and easily produced for use. The great thing is to keep everything that relates to any given building in receptacles devoted exclusively to that building, all marked with its mark. The most convenient mark is a number; the number which that commission bears in the office history. This marks the position of all files of this building in the set of files of their kind. The number serves for both file number for orderly arrangement and as a means of identification for every kind of document relating to the particular piece of work so numbered.

In connection with the file system two card catalogues are necessary. One is an index of addresses and the other of drawings. In the address catalogue tray every name connected with the office work or correspondence is inserted in alphabetical order and the card bears, below the name, the nature of this connection. Thus, John Smith who has below his name and address—

"13—Residence on St. George St."

19—Stable on Huron St."

is a client for whom were done works 13 and 19. John Smith who has below his name and address—

"13—Plumbing and Heating,"

was the contractor for those works in the residence of the other Mr. Smith on St. George St. If there is another John Smith who has done nothing but introduce a friend, his letter and reply will be found in the miscellaneous letter file.

If then Mr. John Smith the owner writes about something on the second floor of his residence on St. George St., anybody in the office can find the drawing or any document relating to the question, by looking up Mr. Smith in the address tray and getting file 13 of the kind of document required. If it is a drawing he may refer first to the drawing catalogue. Here the raised guide card, marking off the other cards relating to this building, is marked "13 John Smith, Residence", and is of course in its numerical order in the tray. All necessary information about John Smith and his build-

ing may be written on this card against printed headings of location, description (brick, frame, etc.) total cost, cubical contents, cost per cub. ft., date of first contract, date of last certificate. After this may come a card, if the building is of any size, giving the scheme of numbering for the drawings. Thus, preliminary sketches may have a letter prefixed to them; if there is more than one series of these sketches they will be marked A, B, etc., before the drawing number. Then, when the design is settled, the working drawings may be subdivided, on the same plan that rooms are numbered in large buildings, so that the number itself indicates where to look for it, thus:—general drawings, 1-99, iron 100-199, plumbing, heating, electric light, etc., 200-299, scale details 300-399, full size details 400-499, etc. This being done each card may be filled with numbers—five on each side would make a convenient progression for turning over rapidly, as each card will count ten. The five numbered spaces on each side should be ruled off from one another and have also spaces left to enter the dates of beginning and approval of the drawing, the scale and the draughtsman. Here, as in all other forms, everything that is fixed should be printed; not only to save labour but as a perpetual reminder of what must be recorded.

LETTERS.—The modern practice is not to copy letters in a letter book, but to typewrite them in duplicate and file letter and answer together. With the increased use of stenographers and typewriters, correspondence may be made and should be made a complete record of business. Every time the owner gives instructions he should receive a letter accepting the instructions; every time a warning, or instruction, or order is given to a contractor a letter ought to record it.

DRAWINGS.—The stamp for drawings should have spaces headed as recording the initials of the maker, tracer and reviser, the date of the drawing, its building number, drawing number and issue numbers, besides a space to letter its descriptive title and scale. The architect's name and address will of course be part of the stamp. The essentials for filing, and for record in the issue book, are the numbers.

Drawings must be kept flat. It has been customary to do this by keeping them in portfolios and this has advantages for facility of handling folded drawings; but hanging appears to be the modern way, and it is certainly better for frequent handling. The drawings are clipped in files after the manner of newspapers and can be hung very close together, end on to the back of the closet. A closet a little more than 3 feet or 3 feet 6 inches deep is necessary and all drawings must be made or folded to hang from a file of this length. Hanging in this way, according to building numbers, and drawing numbers, drawings are easily found and used. Full sizes larger than the standard size of the file should be drawn on paper which is a multiple of that size, so that they will fold to match the other drawings. Bond paper 27" x 40" with a blank title printed in one corner, is in use for full size details, in the office of Messrs. Cope & Stewardson. These sheets are said to give good prints from lead pencil lines. Most details can be got upon paper of this size, and others can be folded to the same size. It is a great help to draw some details not only full size but at full length, but a drawing of this kind is intended