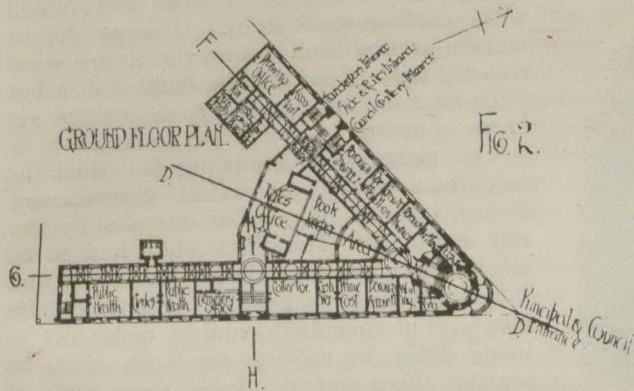
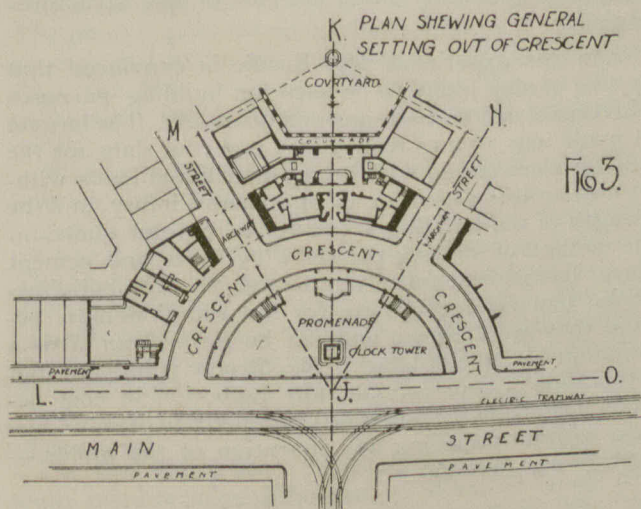


well to that of the present day. In small works, particularly private houses, we generally plan upon a Gothic system, which has come down to us rather from the castle than from Ecclesiastical architecture. As a result, we build for convenience rather than for dignified effect. In all greater matters, on the other hand, we now adopt some phase of the Renaissance, and it would be well if we were to follow the Continental fashion of basing our plans upon an axial system. Now and again we find that this is done, and always with good effect. This has been shown in a few recent competitions. Mr. Gibson's plan for the Wesleyan



Methodist Hall (Fig. 1) has a central axial line, which is in the form of a corridor from the entrance doorway, until the pair of doors to the small hall and library are met, this axial arrangement being particularly noticeable in the entrance-hall. At the junction of the entrance-hall and inner hall the axis is crossed by a secondary axis lettered B B, off which, however, things do not pair so completely as they do off the main axis. When the small hall and library are thrown into one, they form a hall which is again axial in its arrangement, with a wide nave and comparatively wide aisles, this axis C C crossing the major axis A A at right angles. The scheme is a simple one, of a type which may be traced back, as we have already said, to the

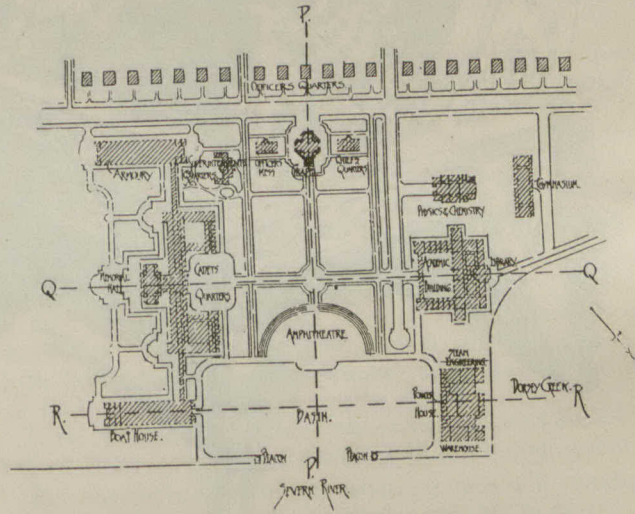


earliest times; but it is as applicable now as it always has been, and is as productive of good effect.

A further developed example is Messrs. Warwick and Hall's successful design for the Lambeth Municipal Offices (Fig. 2). This building occurs at a sharp angle, and the axis is obtained by bisecting this angle, the design being symmetrical, though not identical, on either side of it. The axial corridor only extends from the entrance to an inner hall, and there diverges to corridors on right and left, forming radial axes from the main axis. It will be seen that the major axis is lettered D D, and these two radial axes E F and E G. Of these E G is again crossed at right angles by another axis, H H, which serves to dominate the elevation to Brixton Hill, while a somewhat similar arrangement occurs on the other frontage. The idea of splitting the axis into two divergent axes is by means new; but it is used here with some ability, and in a manner which is highly instructive and well worthy of consideration. The plan is thereby rendered something

quite different from the usual haphazard schemes submitted in English competitions.

A very similar idea dominated the design for a crescent by which the Tite prize was won in 1903 (Fig. 3). The plan shows a central axial line, J K, off which everything is symmetrically designed; but for the point J there radiate a series of axes J L, J M, J N, and J O passing down various streets clear of obstructions. This is again a case of divergence of axes or radiation, the whole effect being most perfectly visible from the point J; for it may be noted that one of the great advantages of axial arrangement from an architectural point of view is that of obtaining a series of vistas. Convenience is also secured, for it is always easy to find one's way about an axially planned building.



Although these English examples are sufficient to show that the principle of axiality is becoming recognized, yet there is none in which it is so perfectly developed as in Mr. Ernest Flagg's scheme for the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, illustrated in Fig. 4. This is an almost perfect example of studied planning according to recognized rules and principles, and may be taken as being typical of modern French work, Mr. Flagg having been educated at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The scheme is controlled by two axes P P and Q Q, which cross one another almost centrally at right angles, both of them being rather axial passages than axial lines throughout their whole extent. The planning is not entirely symmetrical off either of them, while each individual building has its own independent axis or series of axes. There is, for instance a supplementary axis, R.R., which passes through the boat-house, the basin, and the tower-house, but where it traverses the boat-house occurring only as one of the several minor axes of the cadets' quarters, which is planned as a hall off the great axis Q.Q., which serves likewise as the principal axis of the academy building. It would probably cause confusion rather than elucidation if all the many axes were shown upon this plan; but it will be seen that the adoption of axial arrangement, not only in each individual building, but in the relation of building to building, has led to directness and simplicity, and the production of admirable vistas, and this in spite of an irregular site, occasioned by the Dorsey Creek, which would have led many architects to have despaired of producing a formal architectural scheme.

In emphasizing so strongly the need for axial arrangement, if successful planning of big schemes is to result, it is not to be thought that this is the only element tending to success in this direction. It is, however, one of the most important, and one of the most neglected by English architects, while it is one of the first that is insisted upon by the great French masters of the art of planning. No more severe criticism can be passed by one of them than to tell his student that he does not yet know how to lay down an axis. On the other hand, English architects hardly understand this to be a leading necessity, being too much accustomed to deal with small and irregular buildings.