



Wunderlich architectural terra cotta : the bank facade of terra cotta

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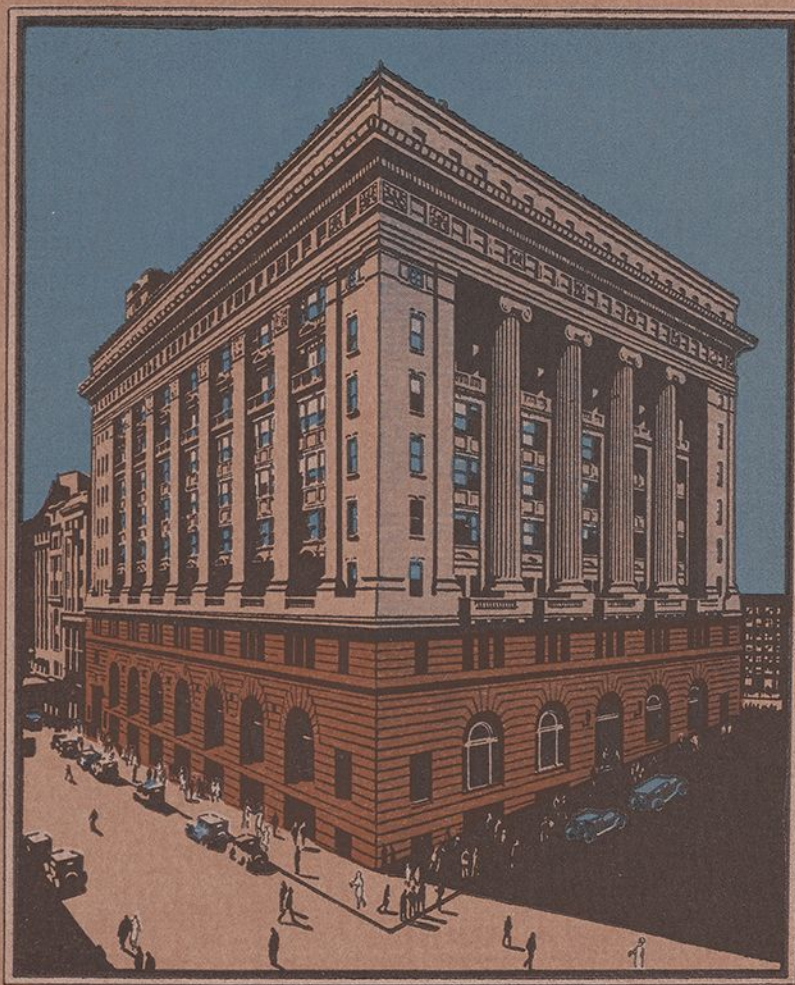
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WUNDERLICH TERRA COTTA



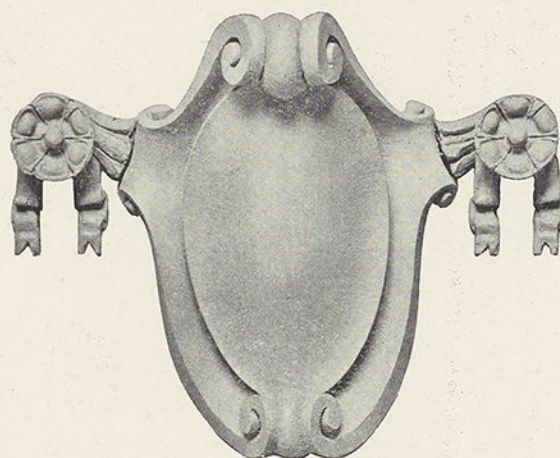
THE BANK FACADE
OF TERRA COTTA
Bulletin T.C.6

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WUNDERLICH ARCHITECTURAL TERRA COTTA



The Bank Facade of Terra Cotta Bulletin T.C.6

WUNDERLICH LIMITED

ADMINISTRATION Baptist Street, Redfern, Sydney
TERRA COTTA WORKS..... Rosehill (N.S.W.) and Sunshine (Vic.)

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Amelia Street, Valley

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King Street

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139 Macquarie Street

LAUNCESTON
71 St. John Street



H. E. Ross and H. Ruskin Rowe, Architects.

Concrete Constructions Ltd., Contractors.

Head Office, Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Sydney.

The most costly and palatial Banking premises in the Southern Hemisphere, this building, above the granite base, is faced with matt glazed Wunderlich Terra Cotta, of a delicate shade of pink. Elevations to three streets are treated in this manner, the view showing the frontages of 206 feet in Castlereagh Street and 150 feet in Martin Place.

WUNDERLICH TERRA COTTA

BULLETIN T.C.6 — FEBRUARY, 1930

The Bank Facade of Terra Cotta

Head Office, Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Sydney



IN modern times, there appears to have developed a marked tendency, on the part of Banking institutions, to erect premises of commanding impressiveness in their respective locations. The results are noticeable in the capital cities of the Commonwealth and even more evident in many of the smaller communities, where the Bank building of modern advent frequently sets the standard for subsequent local architectural effort. It is a logical development, based on a recognition that the public reacts favourably, though perhaps unconsciously, to the beauty and dignified solidity of these structures, and forms an attachment for the institution whose strength, security and affluence are so monumentally proclaimed.

The present-day designer of Banking premises keeps uppermost in his mind this desire for distinction in external appearance. At the same time, he pays due regard to the traditional requirement, that the structure must represent the utmost in substantial and lasting effect. Since it is built, not for this year or decade, but for a long period of time, its style and character must be permanently acceptable, and the materials of its construction should lend emphasis to the impression that the building is the home of a well-founded and abiding institution.

These considerations inevitably direct attention to the unique qualifications of Wunderlich Terra Cotta, as a material for interpreting the exterior design of the modern bank. Its resources for the expression of modelled ornamentation are unequalled in any other standard "facing" medium. It has the additional and exclusive virtue, that it will respond readily to any scheme of colour decoration the architect may impose, however fanciful or ambitious the conception may be. No other material offers these dual possibilities in

beauty of form and versatility of colour effect, much less can it provide the same assurance as to permanence. Being a burned-clay product, brought to flint-like hardness under intense heat, and usually with a surface finish of vitrified glaze, Wunderlich Terra Cotta not only stands impervious to the corroding influences of Time and Weather, but actually gains in appearance through the cleansing action of wind and rain.

It was an understanding and appreciation of these virtues that decided the choice of Terra Cotta for the Bank facade featured in this Bulletin. Designed by Herbert E. Ross and H. Ruskin Rowe, recognised as one of the foremost architectural firms in the Commonwealth, the new Head Office of the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales is a real classic in burned clay. "The first impression which is conveyed to the mind of the observer" writes an authority in the 'Souvenir of the Official Opening,' "is the massive solidity of the building. Necessarily, a building for a State institution such as this, with a future as lasting as the State itself, must be constructed with a view to permanence. The whole design has therefore been directed towards the counteraction of ordinary depreciation, the minimum amount of maintenance cost and, as far as possible, provision against obsolescence."

"The essential structure is entirely of reinforced concrete; the whole of the upper part of the external structure, above the first floor, being encased with pink glazed ceramic, of Australian manufacture. For the first time in building construction, the ceramic facing has been made to form an integral mass with the concrete frame of the building. This ceramic material is capable of resisting all erosive effects of the weather, and will maintain its colour and present appearance indefinitely."

"Surrounded by buildings mainly of a greyish hue, the Bank presents a most conspicuous landmark, as its unusual yet dignified colour scheme appeals to the sense of beauty of the beholder."

As will be observed from the illustrations, the ceramic treatment of the plain surfaces marks a departure from customary Terra Cotta practice, in that the individual units consist of small solid blocks, only four inches square. By this method, the wall areas, pilasters and fluted columns have gained textural interest and convey the close-up impression of a mosaic formed with square tesserae. This does not apply to the column capitals and most of the ornamental features, which were prepared in accord with normal Terra Cotta methods, the various units being of liberal size, and made hollow at the back.

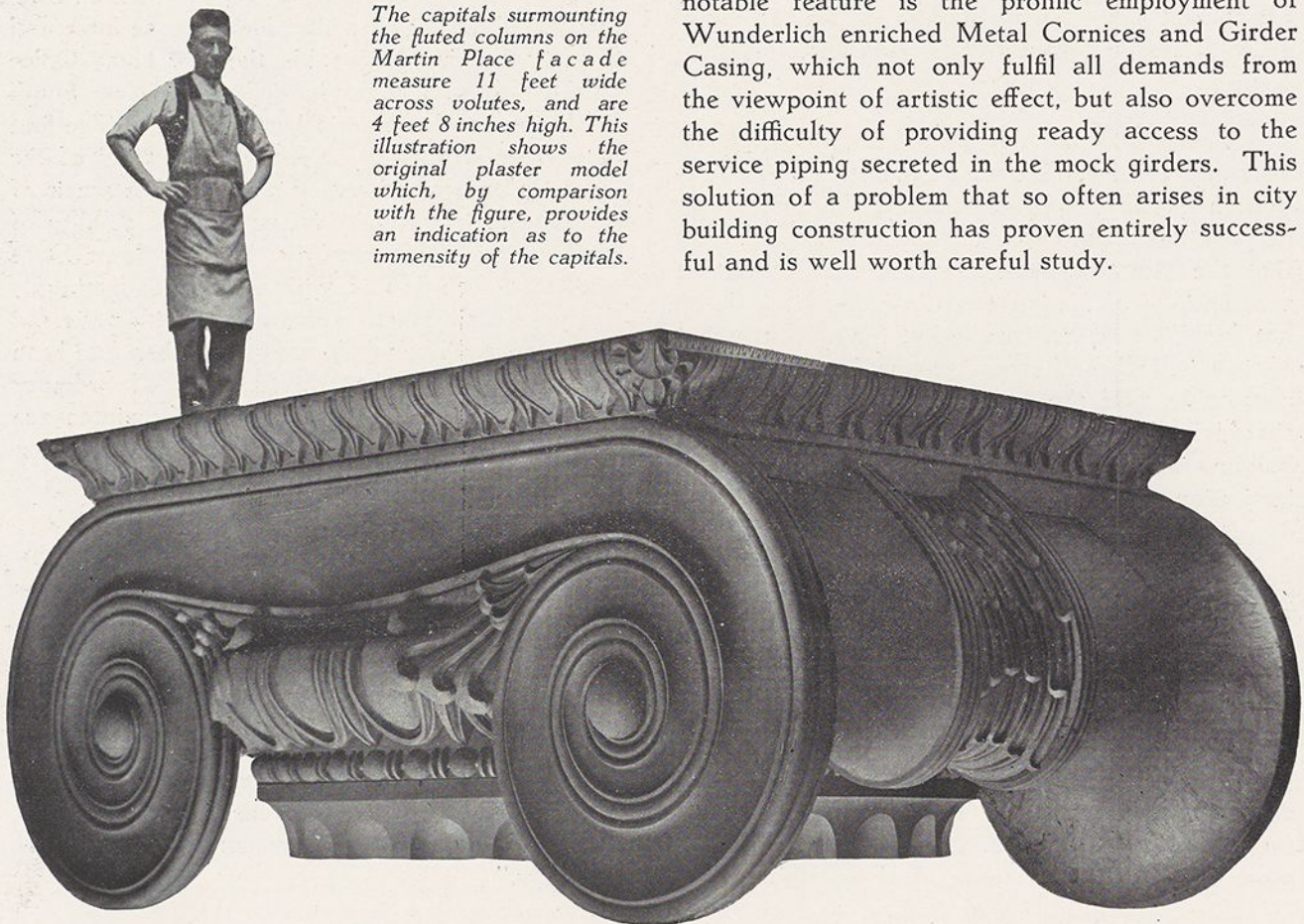
To the designer of Bank premises who may question the ability of Wunderlich Terra Cotta to respond to his most exacting demands in facade treatment, we recommend a study of its accomplishments as evidenced in the present monumental example. By its easy and economical rendition

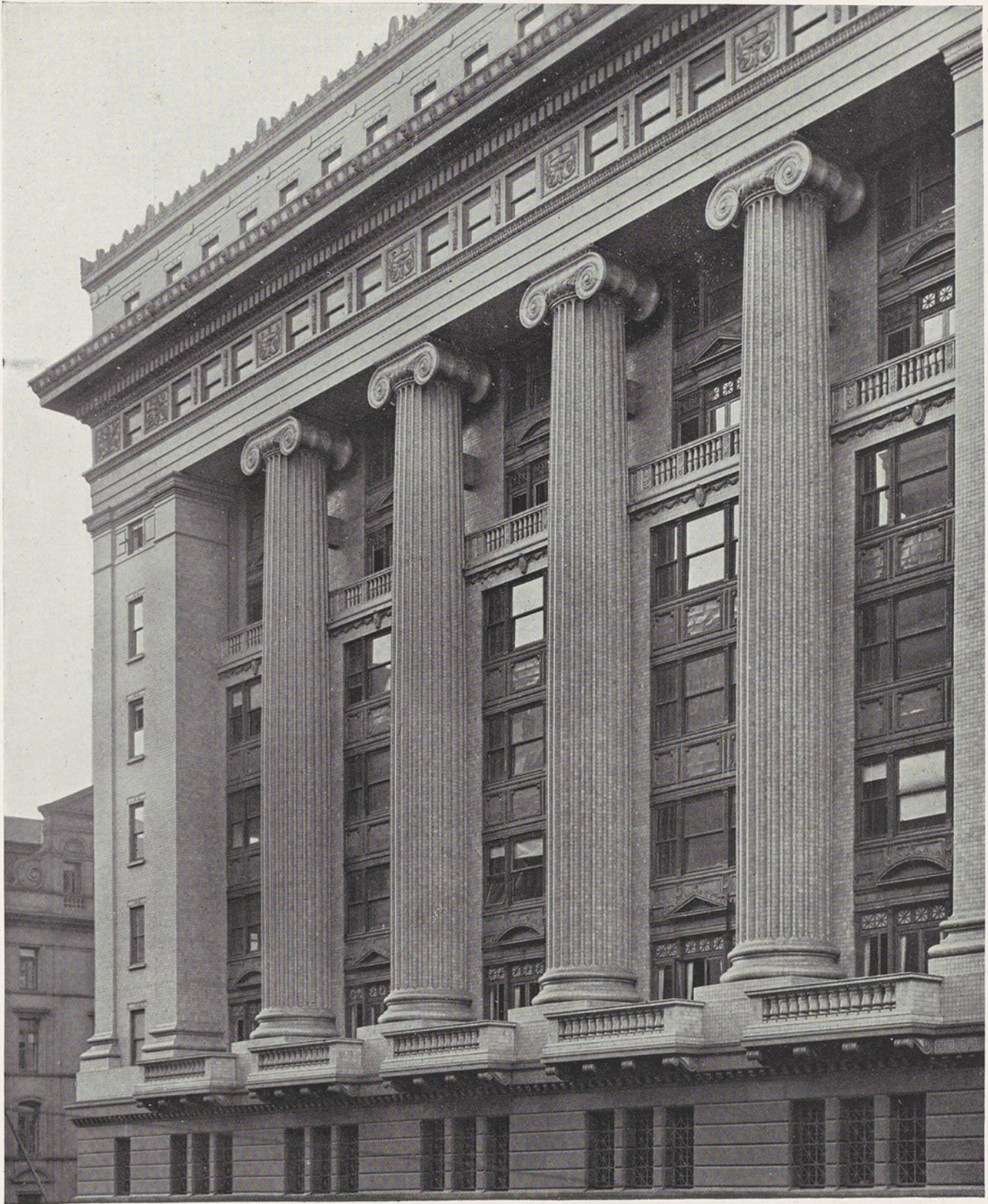
of modelled detail, the material has made practicable a conception embodying all the ornateness of classic form. Its chromatic resources have provided a colour note that attracts admiring attention and lends individuality to a structure that is the most commanding in Sydney's leading thoroughfare. And, when adjacent buildings of less durable quality have passed into shabbiness and decay, the facade of Terra Cotta will still exhibit its pristine blush of rosy colour, and present unimpaired its structural entity.

A review of the major factors that contribute to the beauty and dignity of the modern Banking premises would be incomplete without due reference to Metalwork, which is usually employed freely, especially as enrichment and for fittings in the Banking Chamber, but also for various decorative and utilitarian purposes in the exterior.

The Government Savings Bank is particularly rich in applications of Wunderlich Metalwork, as is apparent from a perusal of pages 15 to 24 of this Bulletin; the metals utilised including steel, galvanised steel, zinc, copper and bronze. A notable feature is the prolific employment of Wunderlich enriched Metal Cornices and Girder Casing, which not only fulfil all demands from the viewpoint of artistic effect, but also overcome the difficulty of providing ready access to the service piping secreted in the mock girders. This solution of a problem that so often arises in city building construction has proven entirely successful and is well worth careful study.

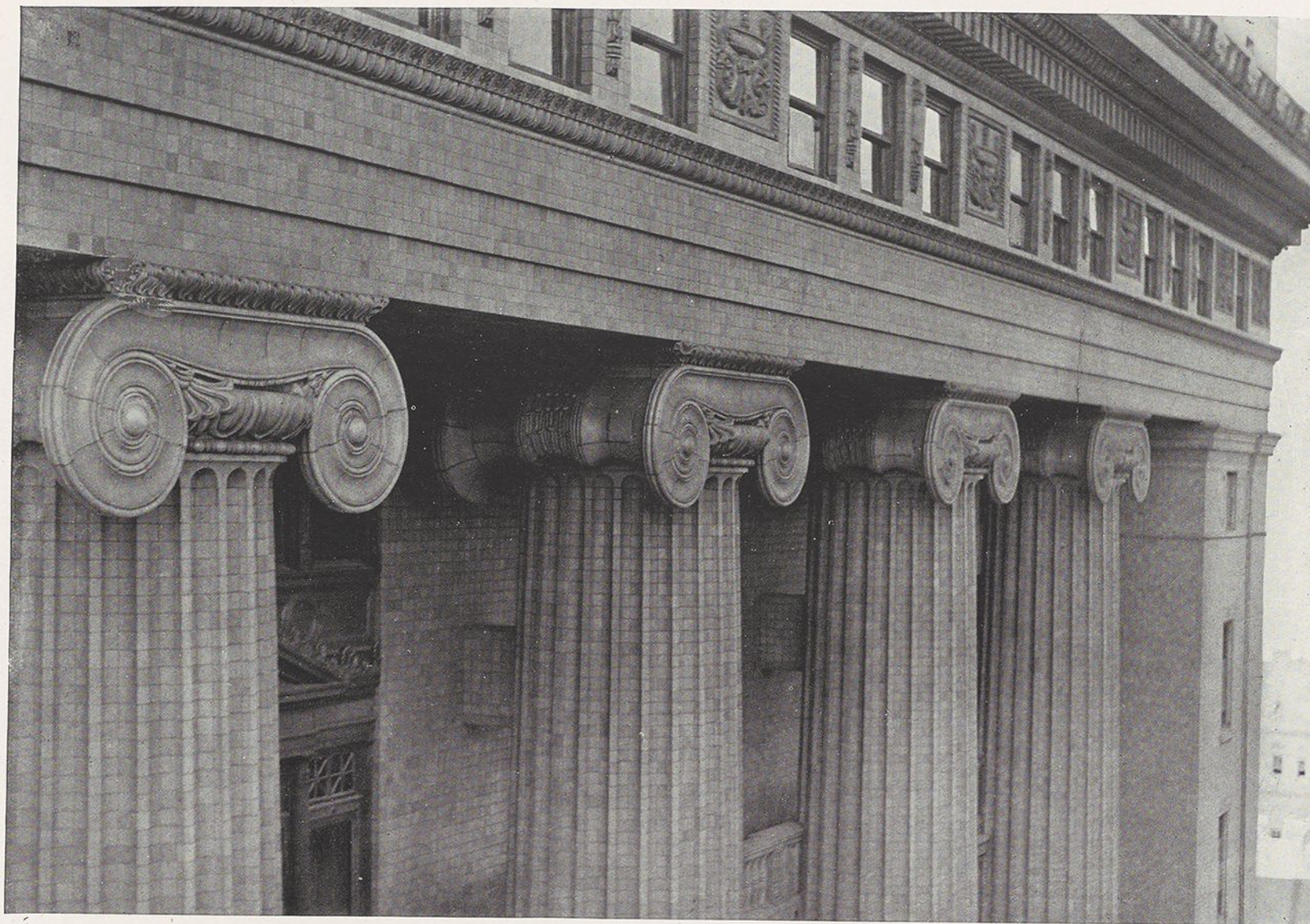
The capitals surmounting the fluted columns on the Martin Place facade measure 11 feet wide across volutes, and are 4 feet 8 inches high. This illustration shows the original plaster model which, by comparison with the figure, provides an indication as to the immensity of the capitals.





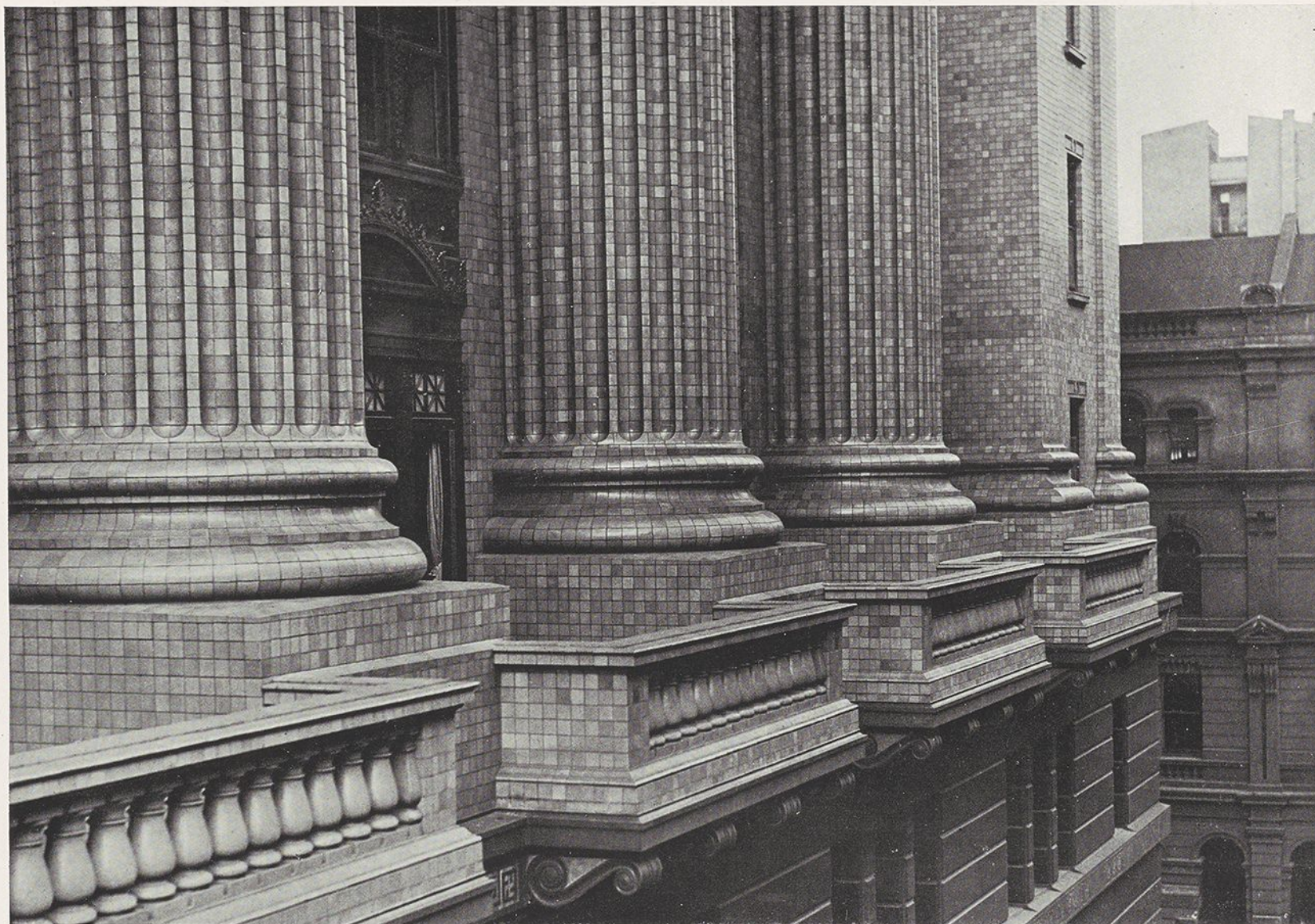
Martin Place Facade of the Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Four fluted Ionic columns, encased with Wunderlich Terra Cotta, are the chief decorative feature of this facade. Probably the highest Terra Cotta columns in the world, and, as far as records disclose, the largest Ionic columns ever built in any material, they measure 68 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the foot of the base to the top of the capital. The shaft is 7 feet 9 inches in diameter at the bottom.



Wunderlich Terra Cotta Column Capitals, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Measuring eleven feet wide, over the volutes, these huge capitals are evidence of the ability of Wunderlich Terra Cotta to respond to even the most exacting demands of decorative design. The capitals were built up from comparatively small units which, being left hollow at the back, were easily handled and assembled. Ornament such as this is reproduced in Terra Cotta exactly as approved in the model—without the loss of character or feeling which frequently results from laborious interpretation in a solid material.



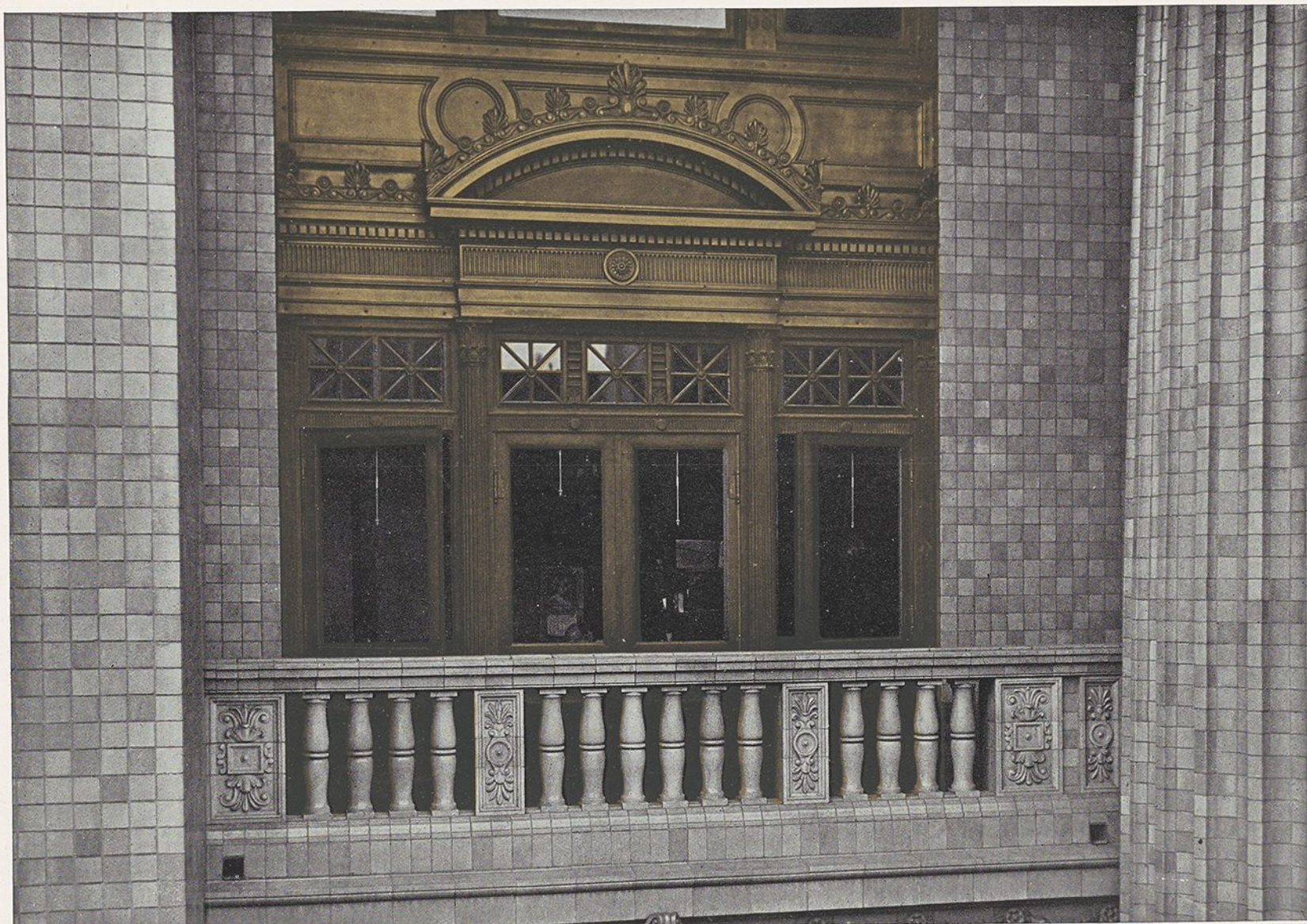
Wunderlich Terra Cotta Bases and Columns, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Massiveness in facade treatment is here attained with Wunderlich Terra Cotta of exceptionally diminutive units. Although only four inches square, the blocks combine to produce an effect of unity and solidity, at the same time imparting textural quality by reason of the slight colour variations between individual pieces, and the multiplicity of repetitive blocks. The greatest diameter of each base is 10 feet 4 inches, and the height 4 feet 1½ inches.



Wunderlich Terra Cotta Column and Capital, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

The costly city Bank Building, with its increased dependence on the impression created by architectural accomplishment, calls insistently for a treatment combining decorative elaboration, appropriate colour enrichment, and dominating massiveness of facade effect. As the illustration demonstrates, these requirements are fulfilled in the structure under review, largely through the employment of Wunderlich Terra Cotta.



Wunderlich Terra Cotta Treatment to Balcony, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Every nicety of finish requisite in architectural detail is obtainable in Wunderlich Terra Cotta, with its wide range of surface textures and its capacity for preciseness of modelled effect. This example demonstrates how successfully the subsidiary and refined decoration on the Bank building has been interpreted in Wunderlich Terra Cotta. The pediment treatment is carried out in Wunderlich wrought and built Copper.



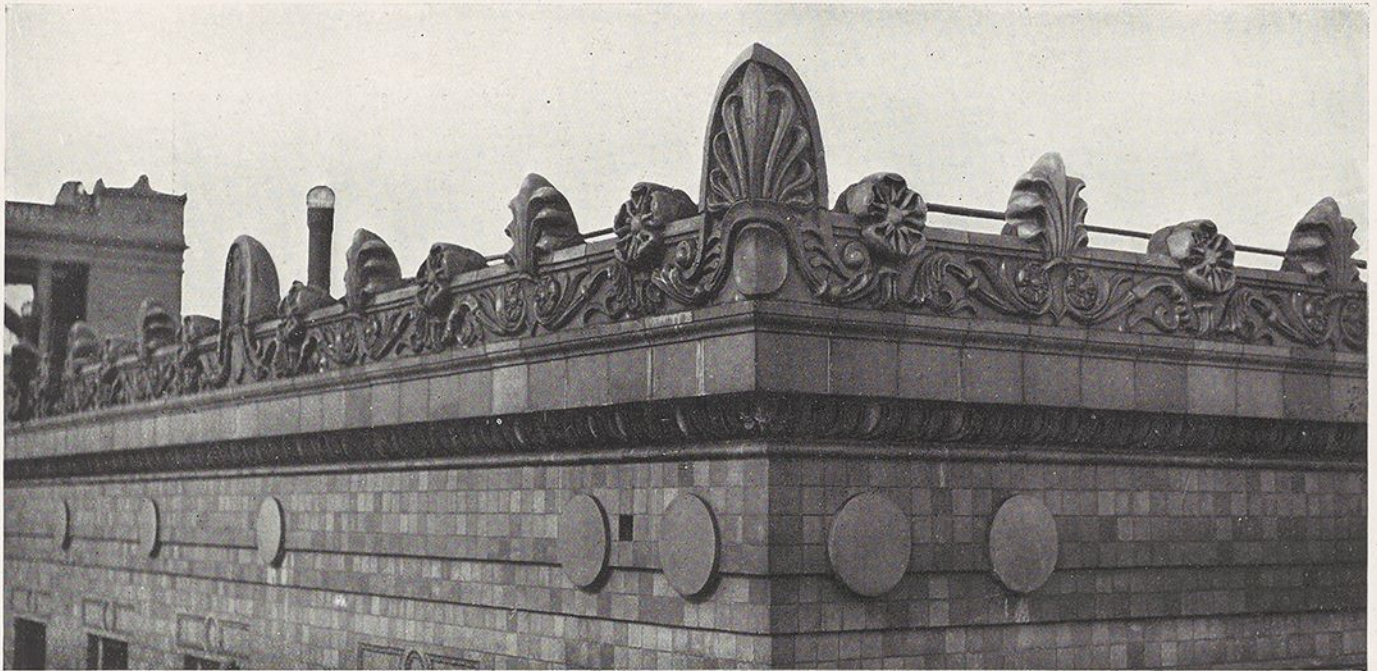
Wunderlich Terra Cotta to Entablature and Attic Storey, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

All that could be demanded of a "facing" material is embodied in this treatment with Wunderlich Terra Cotta. It has strength and beauty of modelled effect, and the added enhancement of permanent glazed colouring which is exclusively a Terra Cotta attribute. "Pink, shading to delicate mauve," says the 'Telegraph Pictorial,' "this ceramic exterior glows with a beauty that sets the beholder wondering why, for a hundred years, we have been content with the drab and sombre buildings which make up the city of Sydney."

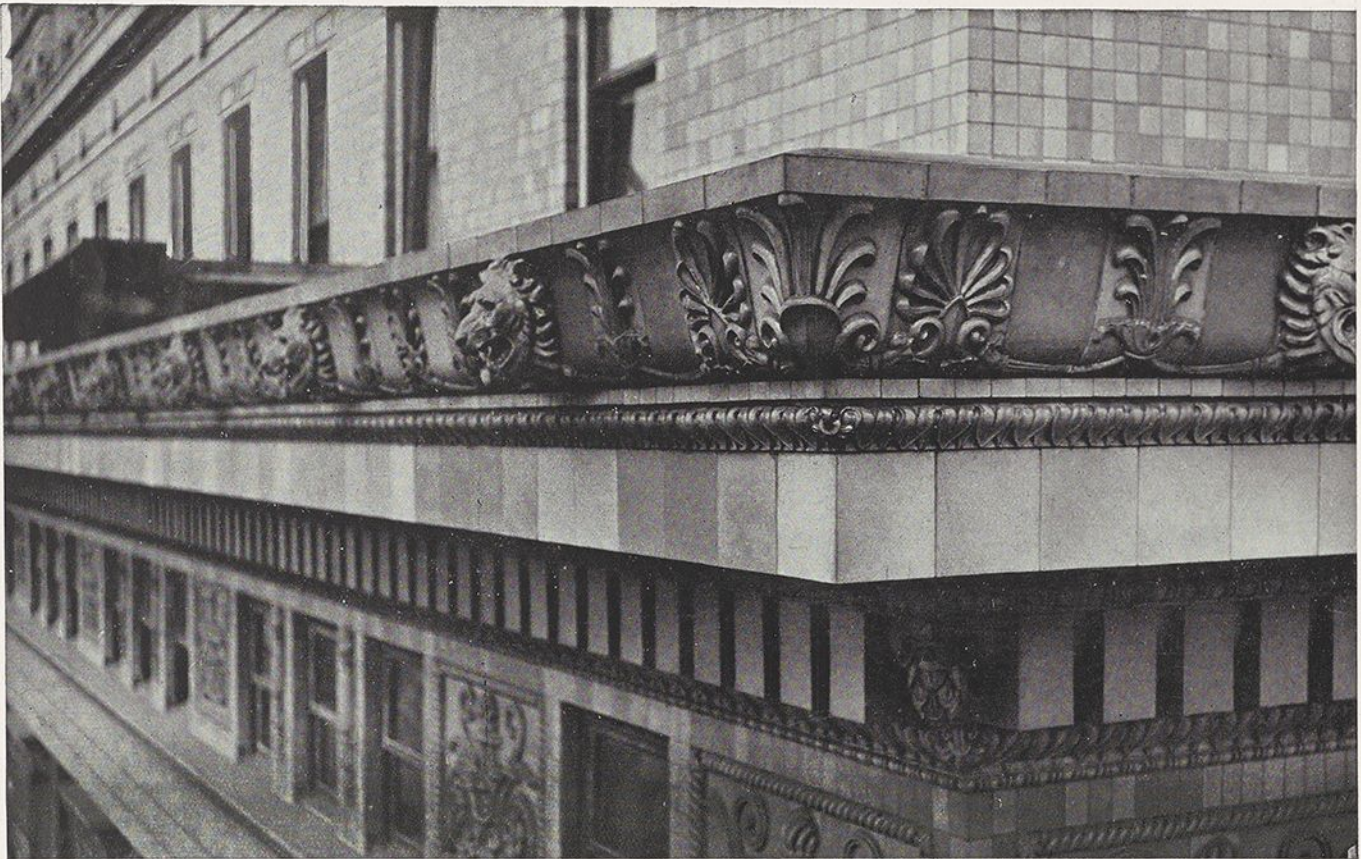


Wunderlich Terra Cotta Entablature, Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Sydney.

Decorative interest is often forgotten in the periodic trend towards simplicity, but the architecture which makes the most lasting appeal demands beauty and grace of modelled form. As the illustration indicates, Wunderlich Terra Cotta offers this completing touch, the process of manufacture permitting the duplication of identical ornamental elements, from one original model, at bedrock cost.



Wunderlich Terra Cotta Cheneau, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.



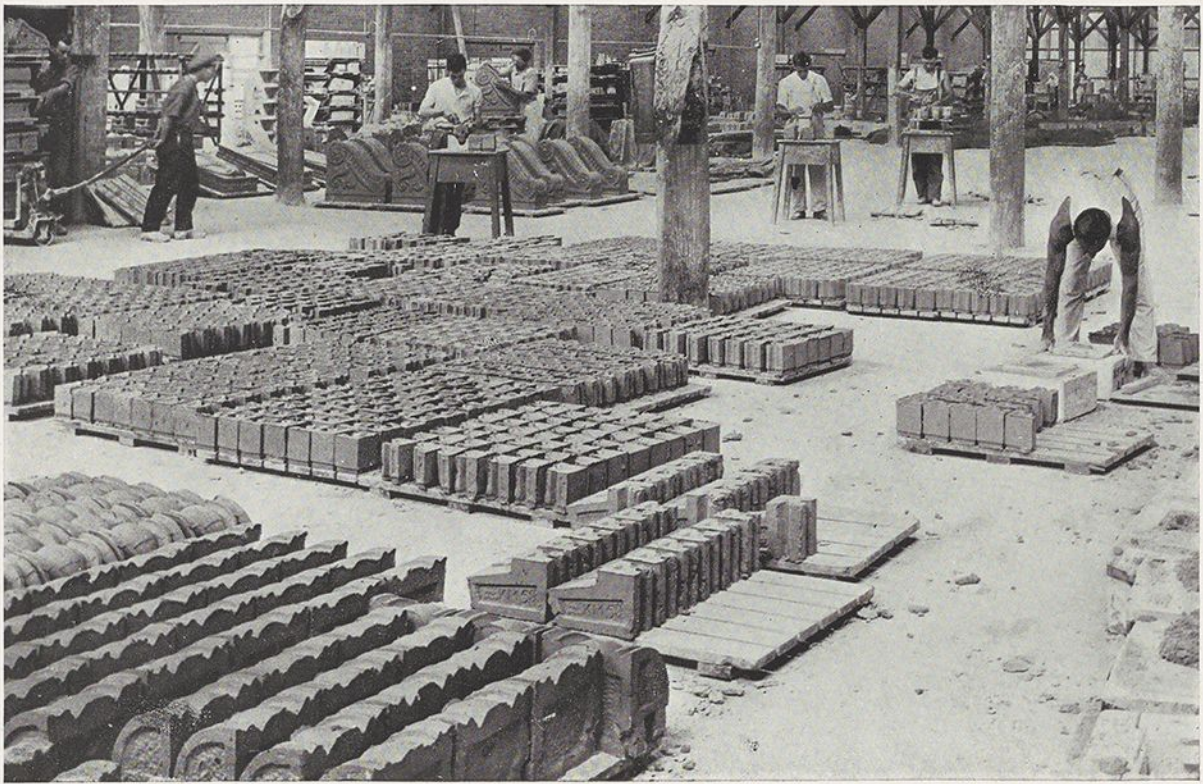
Wunderlich Terra Cotta Cornice, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

The resources which Wunderlich Terra Cotta offers for unrestricted elaboration of ornamental treatment are fittingly evidenced by these pictures. Contrast the cost of duplicating so much ornament in a solid material, with the economy of moulding it in Terra Cotta from a few initial models. As will be seen, the detail loses nothing in virility through the process entailed, during which each separate block receives the sympathetic impress of the craftsman's touch.



Wunderlich Terra Cotta Columns, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

The Ionic order prevailing in other parts of the Bank Building is forsaken for the Doric in the design of these columns, which form part of the treatment to the water towers on the roof. As was the case with the huge Ionic columns on the Martin Place elevation, the shafts have been encased with diminutive blocks of Terra Cotta, but the effect is no less successful and rich in textural interest.

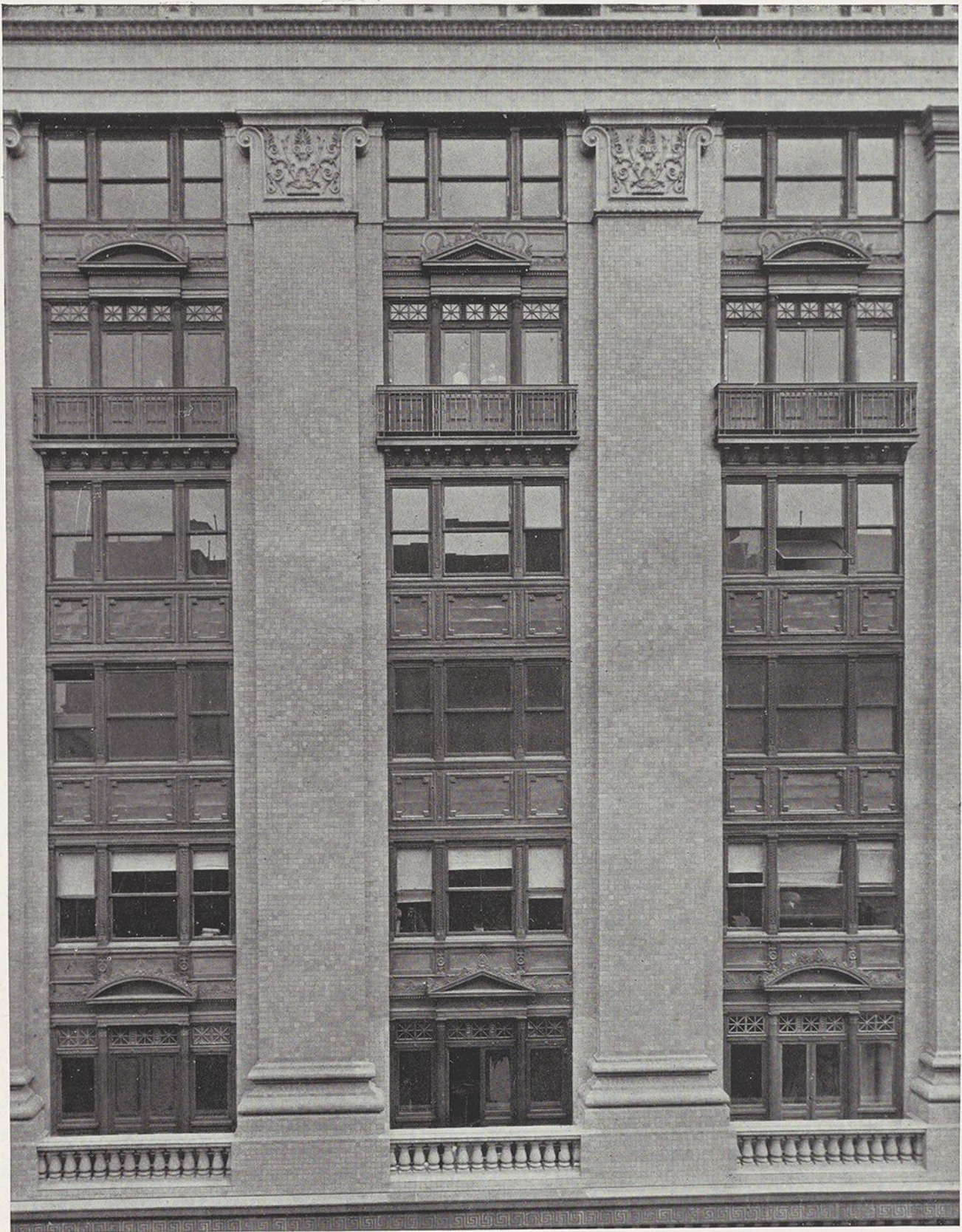


Wunderlich Terra Cotta in process of manufacture for Govt. Svgs. Bk. of N.S.W., Sydney



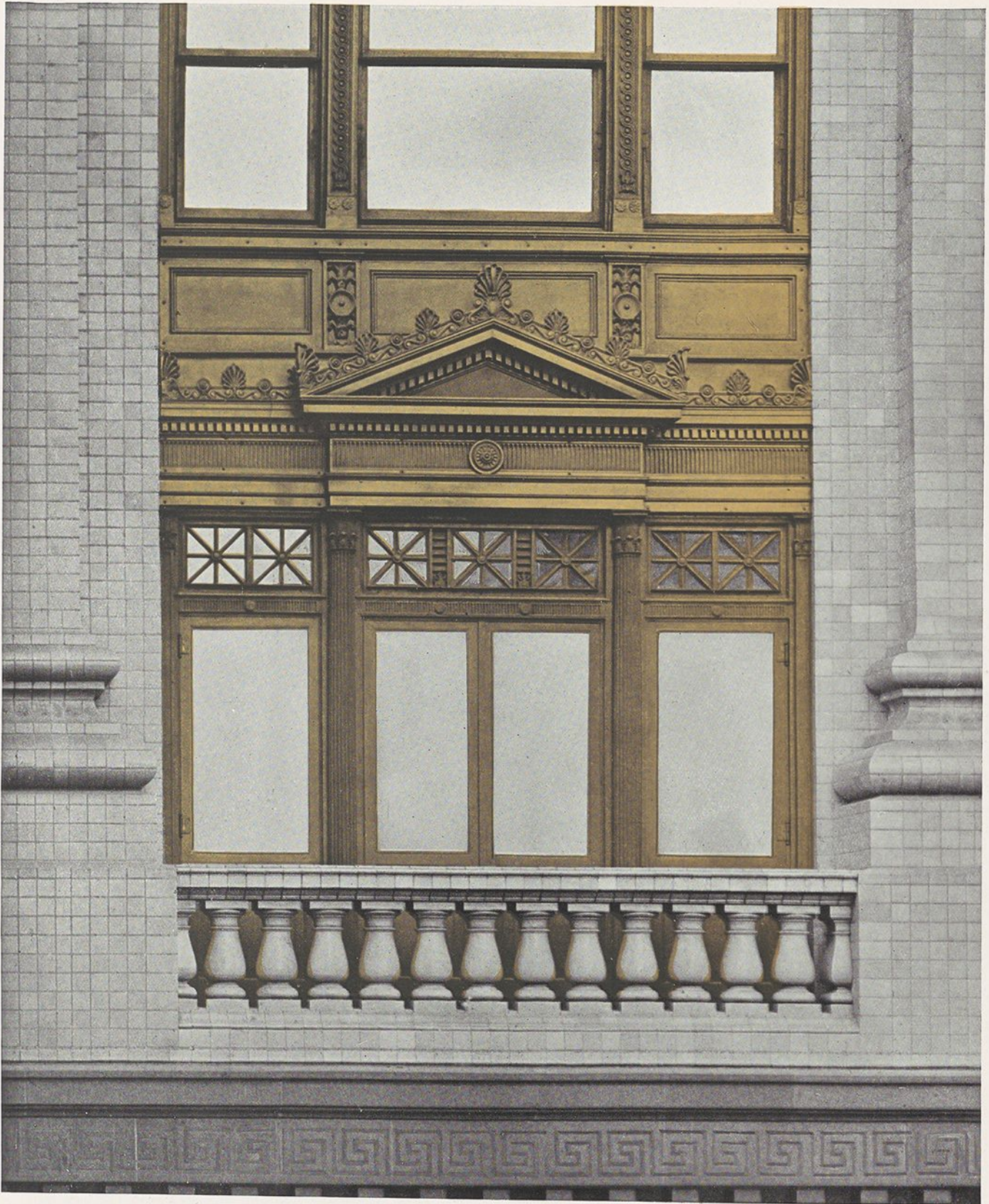
Wunderlich Terra Cotta ready for delivery to the Govt. Svgs. Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Pressed clay blocks, awaiting an application of the mixture which, under intense firing, produces the glazed surface finish, are shown in the top picture. Below are illustrated some of the finished Terra Cotta blocks. In the left foreground are the small solid blocks; while to the right are the large ornamental pieces, made in accord with normal Terra Cotta practice—left hollow at the back.



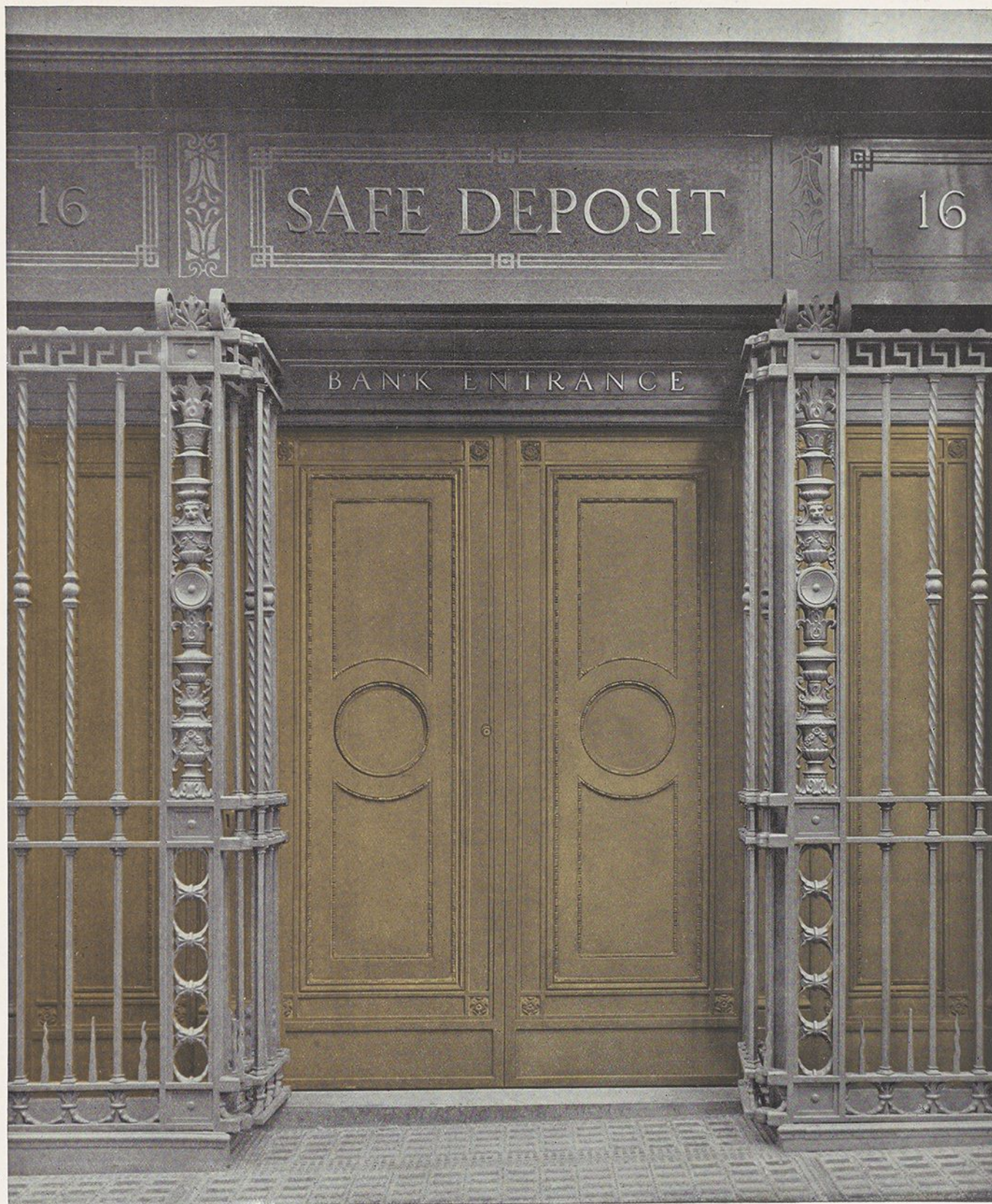
Wunderlich Copperwork to Window Spandrels, Govt. Svgs. Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

At the various floor levels, the spandrels above windows are embellished with Wunderlich wrought and built copper. The segmental and triangular pediment features at the lower and upper floor levels are exceptionally rich examples of metalwork to classic design, as is evidenced by the individual pictures reproduced on pages 9 and 16. This treatment extends throughout all three elevations of the Bank.



Wunderlich Copper Pediment and Panelling, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Copper is here shown in logical application, this metal being weather-resisting to a marked degree. Always truly artistic in appearance, it actually gains increased charm through the green patina which it acquires with age and exposure. Copper may be depended upon to reproduce faithfully the most exacting detail in decorative design.



Wunderlich Bronze Doors, Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Sydney.

Bronze is the traditional material for doors of impressive splendour, and nowhere is its use more justified than at the portals to a Banking Chamber. Although expensive in first cost, bronze doors give age-long service and never require the refreshing touch of paint or varnish. The upkeep cost is negligible.



Wunderlich Metal Ceilings in the Banking Chamber, Govt. Svgs. Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Wunderlich Metal Ceilings of rich classic character are installed in the Banking Chamber, the area covered being about 1,800 square yards. True to classic precedent, the ceilings are decorated in colours, whereby the sharp relief of the embossed detail is further emphasised.



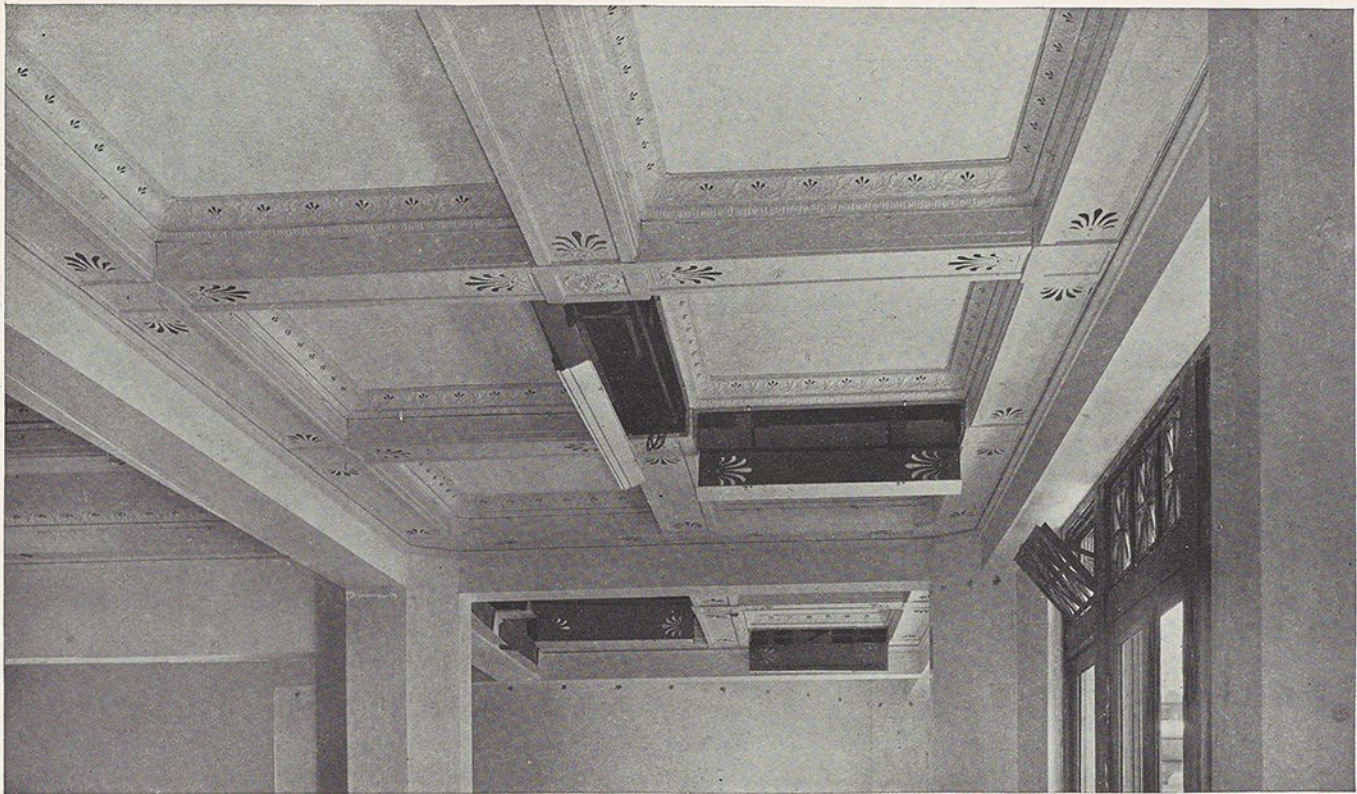
Wunderlich Metal Ceilings in the Banking Chamber, Govt. Svcs. Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

This illustration of portion of the Wunderlich Metal Ceiling treatment in the Banking Chamber shows the depth of the coffered treatment, and draws attention to the superior qualifications of Wunderlich metal for work of this nature. Being light in weight, and non-brittle, it can be handled in expansive sizes without risk of fracture, and does not entail elaborate framework for secure fixing.



Wunderlich Steel Cornice and Girder Casing, Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Sydney.

The Wunderlich Metal Ceiling treatment to the eight floors other than the Banking Chamber consists of Steel Cornice and Girder Casing, prepared to the architects' special design. In total of linear measurement, there are more than 13 miles of this metalwork in the Bank Building. It possesses the advantages that it is fireproof, will not flake or disintegrate, and remains securely in position as long as the building exists. A ceiling treatment of this character is more economical in Wunderlich Metal than in any other medium of comparable dignity.



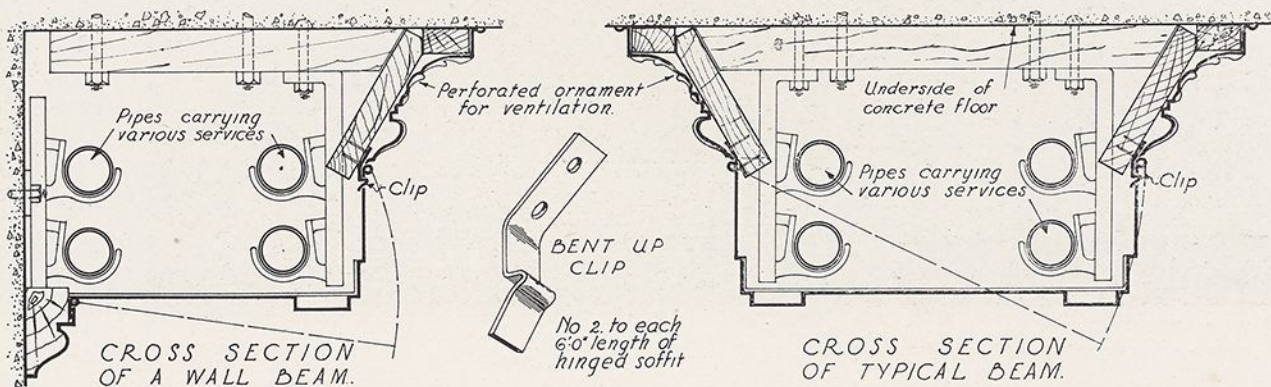
Wunderlich Steel Cornice and Girder Casing, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

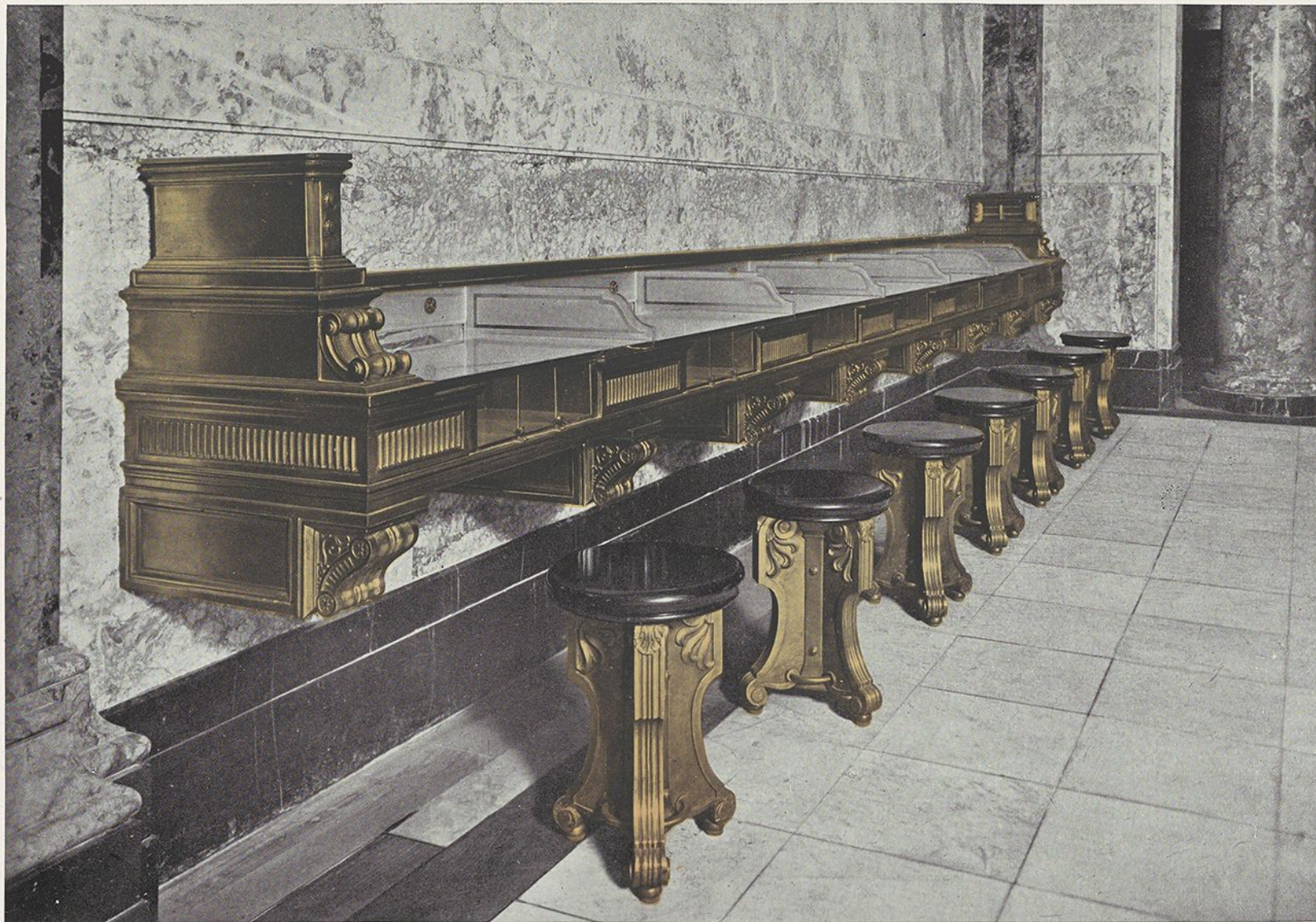
A unique feature of the Wunderlich Ceiling treatment throughout the Banking Chamber and eight other floors of the Government Savings Bank, is the hinging of the girder casing, as illustrated by this picture, where six sections of casing are shown in the "open" position. The method was adopted so as to provide ready access to the pneumatic tubes and pipes carrying the heating and electricity supply services, which are secreted in the mock beams, thus affording facilities for all future extensions of services.

This scheme marks a distinct advance on the usual system of carrying these services in the concrete floors, and becomes practicable only through the employment of metal for the hinged casing. Brittle and organic materials would not withstand the severe treatment to which the metalwork will be subjected.

The sectional drawings printed below explain the construction adopted. Each section of steel casing, comprising the soffit and fascias, is stamped in one piece, and strengthened with a reinforcement of strip steel, attached transversely at regular intervals. One edge of the casing is hinged and fixed along the bottom member of the cornice. The other edge, strengthened with a rolled finish, is slotted at intervals, so that with the casing in a closed position, the slots spring over projecting nibs in special clips fixed below the cornice. A small lug at each end of the steel casing facilitates handling during the closing and opening operations.

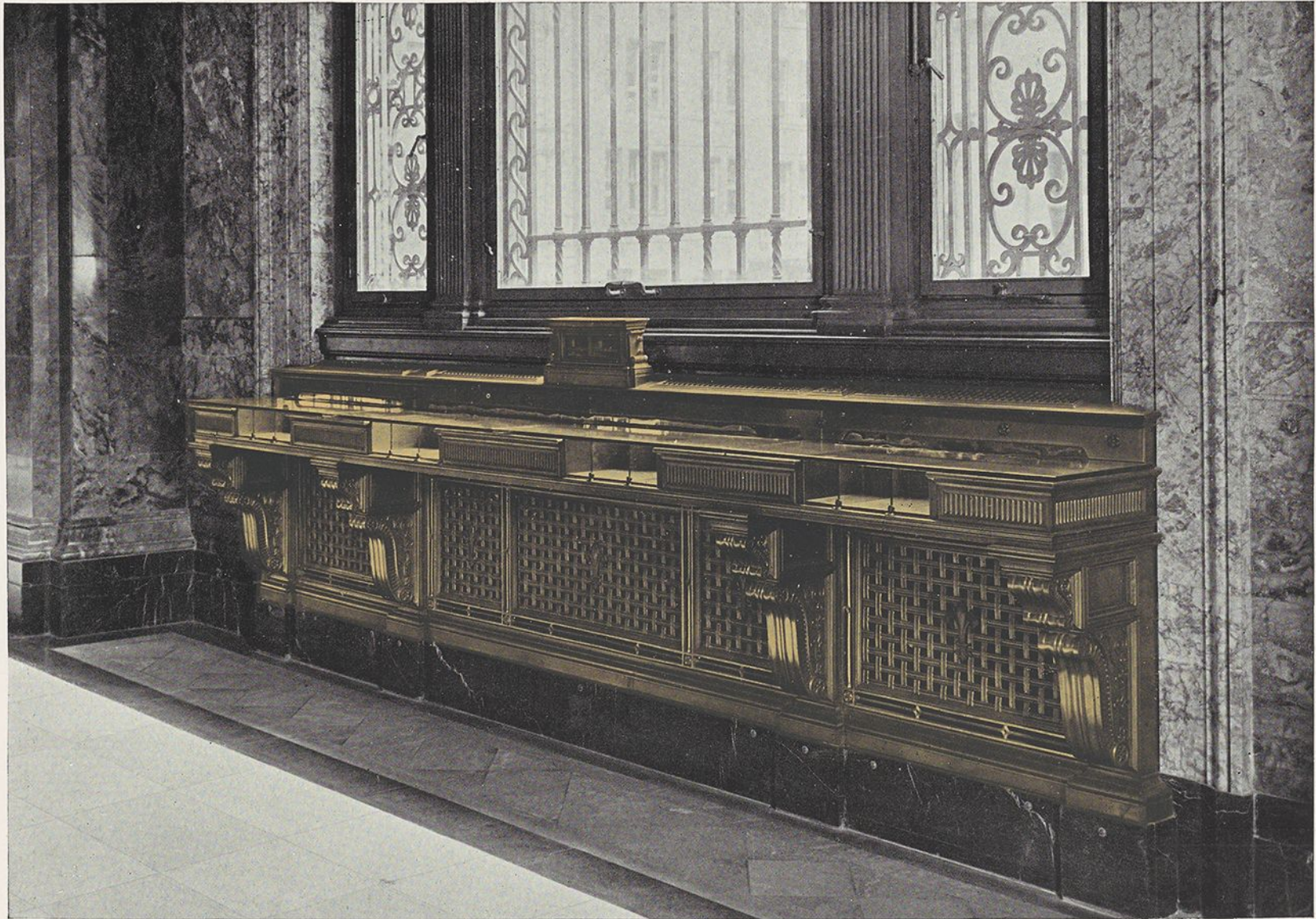
From the illustrations appearing above and on the previous page, it is apparent that the steel casings not only fulfil successfully their practical function, but also produce an effect, when closed, that is artistically in full accord with the standard demanded.





Wunderlich Bronze Wall Desk, Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Sydney.

The Wunderlich Bronze Wall Desks, of which there are eighteen in the Banking Chamber, are of vigorous design and refined workmanship. They are built up on a skeleton framework of steel which provides the necessary rigidity and strength. The stools are of Wunderlich Cast Bronze.



Wunderlich Bronze Writing Table, Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, Sydney.

Three of these Writing Tables, of Wunderlich manufacture, are installed in the Banking Chamber. Of impressive and dignified design, they demonstrate the value of bronze for Bank fittings combining richness of decorative effect with lasting utility. Underneath the table appear the bronze grilles screening the radiators connected with the heating system.



Wunderlich Bronze Wall Desks in the Safe Deposit, Govt. Svgs. Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.



Wunderlich Bronze Radiator Screen, Government Savings Bank of N.S.W., Sydney.

Above are shown the Wunderlich Bronze Wall Desks in the Safe Deposit, the mirror frames also being of Wunderlich wrought Bronze. The bottom picture illustrates a Radiator Screen of Wunderlich wrought and built Bronze, of which there are five in the Banking Chamber, made to a design that is in complete harmony with the decorative treatment of other bronzework in the building.

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