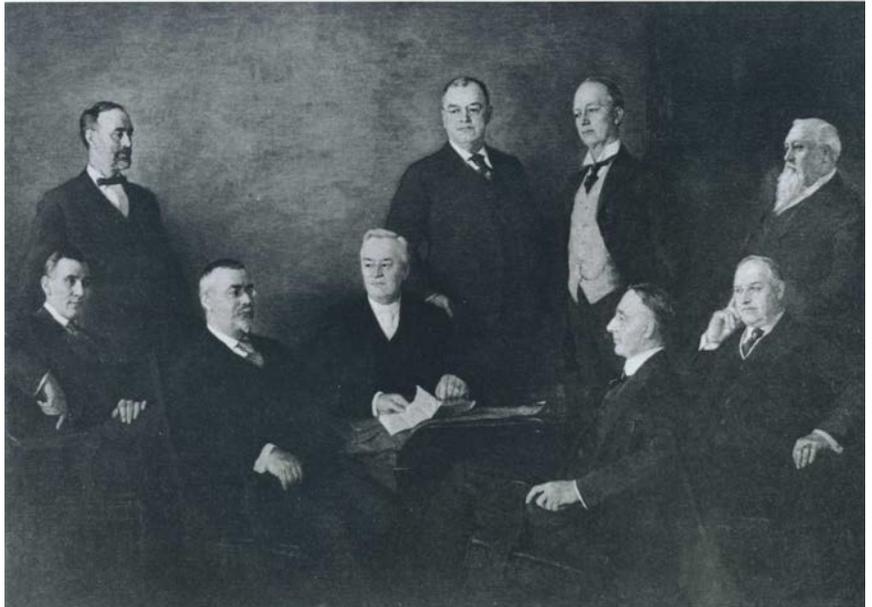

ESTABLISHING THE CAPITOL COMMISSION

Appointed by Governor Spry, the Capitol Commission was given the responsibility to oversee design and construction of the capitol building. Eight members began work immediately. The Commission initially included: John Dern and John Henry Smith of Salt Lake City; M.S. Browning, Ogden; C. E. Loose, Provo; and Governor William Spry. Secretary of State C.S. Tingey, and Attorney General A.R. Barnes were ex-officio members. In time, David Mattson succeeded C.S. Tingey and Anthon H. Lund was appointed when John Henry Smith died.

The first matter of business was to evaluate available options for awarding contracts for design of the grounds and building. One of the other early actions taken by the commission were to ascertain the state's title to the Capitol site, secure a topographical map and employ Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects of Brookline, Massachusetts to provide a park site plan and design.



PAINTING OF CAPITOL COMMISSION

In addition, the commission began a study during June 1911 of other capitol projects, particularly those in Minnesota, Rhode Island and Kentucky. Each was visited and their plans studied. This information guided the preparation of a competition program. To select between multiple design options, as well as control costs of construction, the commissioners evaluated building materials available within the State. For example, the Commission made an inspection of the State's quarries—the granite quarries in Cottonwood Canyon, the marble quarries of the Birdseye Marble Company near Thistle, the marble deposits of the Utah Marble and Construction Company, near Newhouse in Beaver County, the onyx or travertine deposits near Low Pass in Tooele County, and the sandstone quarries in Emigration Canyon.¹³

Professor Ebaugh of the University of Utah and State Chemist Herman Harms tested the fitness of sample rock taken from each site. The Commission also considered various materials for use in the capitol's elegant interior spaces. They considered decorative marbles from Georgia, Colorado, Vermont, Tennessee and Alaska along with local stone: Sanpete oolite (a limestone, not marble), white marble from Newhouse in Beaver County, Tooele County onyx or travertine, Birdseye marble, and red slate from Nephi. They chose less expensive Sanpete oolite for the ground floor and upper corridors, and Georgia marble for the atrium floor and first floor corridors. Utah Birdseye marble (golden travertine) was chosen for use in the State Reception Room, Supreme Court and House of Representatives. Cream onyx was the choice for the Senate Chamber and the Main Vestibule.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE OLMSTED BROTHERS

On 26 September, 1911, the Commission focused its attention on the site and considered the scale of the Capitol grounds and the necessity for hiring a landscape designer. John C. Olmsted, senior member of Olmsted Brothers of Brooklyn, was going to the Pacific Coast to lay out the grounds for the San Diego Exposition.



SALT LAKE TRIBUNE ARTICLE OF OLMSTEDS VISIT

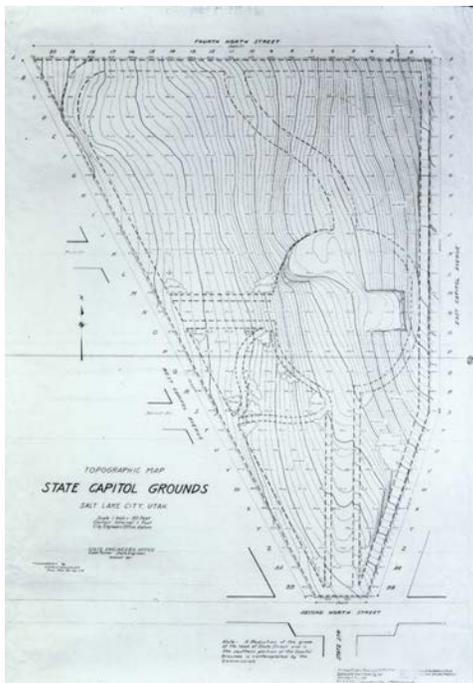
Olmsted’s firm was first established by Frederick Law Olmsted and was perhaps the most well known landscape architecture firm in the nation. If the Commission decided to employ his firm, Olmsted said, he would stop off for consultations on his way west.¹⁴ The Commission told Olmsted they desired “expert advice in locating the building on the plot and a scheme outlined for landscaping the grounds.”¹⁵ The firm responded by saying “we shall be glad to confer with the experts employed to guide the competition provided we can do so without a special visit to SLC.”¹⁶

Olmsted visited with members of the Capitol Commission in October 1911 when he assessed the available land and its relationship to the projected capitol building. He recorded his observations in a small notebook, labeled “Utah State Capitol File,” dated 10 October 1911. He wrote: “the grounds are enclosed by an iron picket fence and have been planted with trees-- East rises considerably and is bare and unfinished except one nice house-- Might be necessary to cut 2nd North St. at head of State Street down, as much as 10’-- State owns SE corner as a site for future residence for the Gov.”

It was clear to Olmsted that an architect had consulted with the Commission. This may have been a result of E.E. Meyers’ plans from the 1890’s, for there is no indication of any other architect’s involvement at that time. In considering views from the proposed Capitol site, the commission believed the building should be aligned with Apricot Street. Olmsted believed that locating the building that far south was an economic consideration “moving on lines of least resistance as to think moving forward the cheap and easy solution instead of keeping building higher and grading down streets.” During these discussions, other sites were shown to Olmsted and he advised against them.

Olmsted proposed a tunnel at the entrance of the west elevation to allow streetcars to enter a subway station at the foot of the elevators. He was opposed to the streetcar line up State Street because it would block the view of the Capitol. Protecting the integrity of the site was a key consideration. He also discouraged the notion of laying tracks on the street east of the Capitol grounds.¹⁷

Later when Olmsted wrote to Governor Spry, he emphasized the importance of protecting the view of the city in the future. “It would be possible by enforcement of building restrictions as to height to keep the view open over the city toward the south and we recommend that authority be obtained for the passing of a city ordinance for this purpose.”¹⁸



CITY ENGINEERS 1911 TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP

Olmsted included in this letter other suggestions about landscaping, grading and planting. The firm produced two preliminary plans which recommended that border planting be sufficiently “high to screen surrounding houses, tall growing trees should be avoided,” and he discouraged the use of elaborate flowerbeds and ornamental shrubbery.¹⁹

Olmsted also communicated his conclusions to the Commission in October. “The site selected for the new capitol building is entirely inadequate for the purpose intended,” he said. “If the building is erected as now planned one side will be but ten feet from the fence, which will give the structure, no matter how beautiful, a cramped and ugly appearance.”

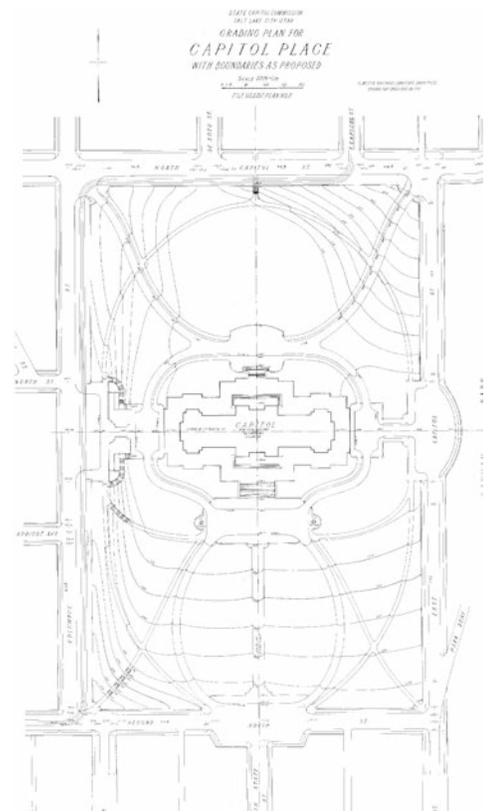
Olmsted emphasized the importance of extending the site before placing the building on the site, maximizing expansive grounds in each direction.

“If my suggestions are carried out it will be necessary to extend the grounds fully 300 feet by the purchase of the adjoining property on the east, and the taking in of the street as well. If this is not done it will be necessary to erect an unsightly retaining wall twenty feet high.” He continued, “I realize that the capitol commission has only a limited appropriation for the purpose and am afraid that the gentlemen of the commission are somewhat stunned by my report. The site easily will lend itself to effective landscape gardening, everything considered, though the result will not be so generally pleasing if my suggestion for the addition of more space is not carried out.”

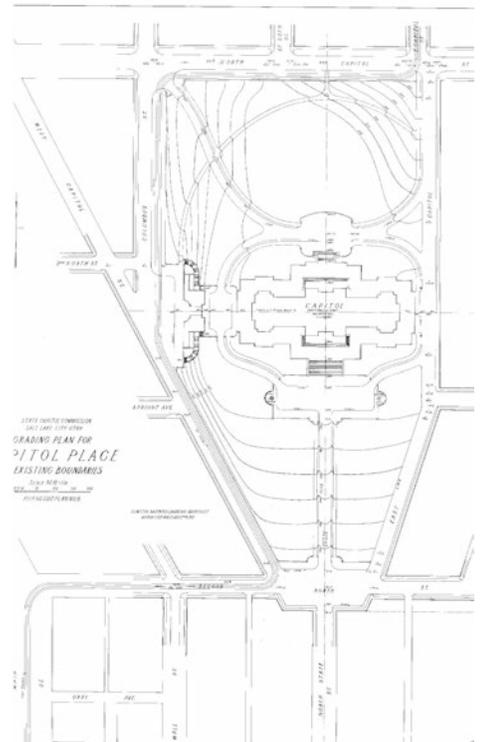
After his visit, Olmsted summarized his observations and suggestions in a plan which he submitted to the Commission. It included grading plans, and other landscaping recommendations. [see illustrations to the right]

Olmsted remembered having been to Salt Lake City a few times before. He recalled the first time in 1869, saying, “At that time Salt Lake was a small city of wooden buildings and the space between the present site and Fort Douglas was entirely nude of structures. The camp was pitched within 200 yards of a slaughter house. The foundation for the Temple was just being laid and a board fence surrounded the site, while the grounds were strewn with stone cuttings and so forth.”²⁰

Regardless of the early gift of twenty acres for the Capitol site in 1888, the debate over the site continued throughout the site planning stage. In December 1911 a special committee of three men appointed by the Board of Governors of the Commercial Club met to consider suitable sites for the capitol. Business leaders, W. J. Halloran, O.C. Beebe, and W.W. Armstrong sat on the committee. Each member had significantly different ideas about where the Capitol should be built. Halloran presented his ideas first in a meeting at the Commercial Club’s December meeting. He said: “It is an



OLMSTEDS PLAN WITH PROPOSED BOUNDRIES



OLMSTED PLAN WITH EXISTING BOUNDARIES

outrage to spend \$3,000,000 in putting a building in a place which cannot be seen from the city. With a cost of about \$500,000 the present site might be made presentable, but even then it would not compare with the location I have chosen.” Halloran proceeded to describe the amenities of a location at Fort Douglas, which he was sure the government would give to the state. “Every visitor who comes to Salt Lake finds himself upon Brigham street at some time during his stay and our magnificent building located on the site cannot fail to be seen. The distance from the center of the city is not prohibitive and the building itself can be erected for one-half million dollars less on this site than on Capitol Hill.”²¹

O.C. Beebe made the second proposal, saying he was satisfied with the present location of Capitol Hill, and had come unprepared to debate with Halloran. “There can be no reasonable objection to the present site,” he said. “I did not think it necessary to prepare myself for oratorical battle with my fellow committeemen and under the circumstances prefer to leave the matter to the common sense of the members of the board.”²²

The idea for a third site was presented by W.W. Armstrong who favored a site closer to the City and County Building in downtown Salt Lake City. “The primary object of the capitol building is not show, but business.” He asserted. “For that reason the building should be within easy reach of business men. I therefore suggest that the block bounded by First South and Second South streets and Second and Third East streets be purchased, the buildings razed to the ground and the new capitol building be erected in the center of the lot. That site will cost a million dollars, but this is a small sum to consider in so important a matter as this. The increase in the taxes on the property between Main street and the capitol site would soon reimburse the state for the additional expense.”²³

The Commission would eventually acquire extra Capitol Hill land, though not aligning the property as Olmsted had recommended. Not long after the beginning of site work, the Commission finally concurred that the original twenty acres deeded for the Capitol would be insufficient for landscaping for the building. Moreover, the Commission also decided that the building should be located in alignment with State Street and Seventh Avenue. Thus land had to be purchased to the east to accommodate both Kletting and Olmsted’s recommendation that the building be sited such that it had unobstructed views of the south, east and west. In September 1911 an offer of fifty feet of East Capitol Avenue was made to the state from local property owners to increase the size of the capitol grounds. Although this gift helped, it was not considered enough by the commission who hoped that the city would vacate another ninety-nine feet.²⁴ In January 1914, the state purchased a fifty-four foot lot on North State Street, the last needed for the two hundred feet east of the east wall of the building. The state bought the lot which was 150 feet deep,²⁵ from F.F. Hanna for \$16,000. Aware of the demand for their property, some property owners demanded high prices for their land, as high as \$110 per foot of frontage for land bordering West Capitol Avenue.²⁷ As late as May 1915 eminent domain was not enforced and some property owners refused to sell. The Commission purchased those homes built along the west edge of City Creek Canyon and any unimproved land along the ridge. When complete, the property included land along the rim of the canyon stretching from Second North to Fourth North Streets (now 300 North to 500 North) to East Capitol Street. The Salt Lake City Commission moved East Capitol Street further east so that it ran along projected new grades and approaches, therefore harmonizing with the overall landscaping plan.

By November 30, 1914, the state had receipts for \$1,777,970.68 dedicated to the Capitol project. These consisted of an appropriation from the Ninth Legislature for \$750,000, proceeds from two separate sales of bonds of \$750,000 and \$200,000, and proceeds from the state Public Buildings Land Fund, Principal and Interest authorized in 1909 among other funds.²⁶

For some reason—perhaps his inconvenient distance from Salt Lake City, or the desire to use local designers—Olmsted was not engaged to finish a landscaping plan. Instead, eventually architect Richard K. A. Kletting

and George B. Post and Sons of New York, designer of the Wisconsin State Capitol, were invited to participate. Henry J. Schlacks of Chicago, Illinois and W.E. Burnett of Denver also made the list. Cass Gilbert of New York—a major contributor to the evolution with his designs for Capitols in Arkansas, Minnesota and West Virginia—was invited but did not participate, nor did the firm of E.E. Myers, preparer of the earlier Utah State Capitol design. J.E. Tourtellotte and Company, architects of their State capitol in Idaho, was an entrant and would receive prize money. Frank M. Andrews & Company, architect of the Kentucky capitol, which so heavily influenced the competition program, was also invited to submit plans. He did and received a prize as well.

The call for proposals specifically delineated the site which included the gifted land, established rules for the competition, and listed requisite drawings.³¹ The commission spent many hours pouring over the program, considering square footages, arrangement of rooms, and countless other issues. Tingey, who wrote up the preliminary draft of the program, deemed it best to: “Leave the competition as broad and open as possible. Protect the interests of the State. Give due consideration to Utah architects and the use of Utah materials in the construction of the building.”³² Moreover, a highly detailed program laid out spatial requirements, the “character of the building” and budgetary limitations. It said:

The building must be of fire-proof construction, the exterior and interior to be of such material as is suited for a Capitol Building of the best class, type and quality, with such special finish of the more important rooms as may be deemed advisable. . .

The cost of the building must be kept within \$2,000,000 and is to include the plumbing and gas piping, electric conduits and wiring, heating and ventilating apparatus, generating plants for heat, light, and power, elevators, approaches, lighting fixtures (both gas and electric), and decorations and commissions of architects, everything, in fact necessary to the completion of the building ready for occupancy; furniture only excepted.³³

All competition drawings had to be mounted and accompanied by a typewritten explanation of materials, construction and design considerations. The proposal also needed to include an estimate of the sizes of various areas designed.³⁴

Local newspapers covered every step of the process and gave extensive descriptions of various aspects of the program, emphasizing that the result would be a building that met the high standards set by other state capitol buildings. According to the Salt Lake Republican, the program provided for “a capitol of the dome style to be erected on the capitol grounds in Salt Lake with the principal facade or entrance facing to the south and in line with the center of State Street. The building is to have four floors or stories, a ground floor, principal floor, second and third floors on which the various department offices and rooms are to be arranged in accordance with the plan outlined in the program.” The principal state offices were to be located on the main floor of the building. Also important were convenient relationships between the various offices facilitating efficient communication between the different branches of government. Although the floor space needed for each department had been designated in the program, the architect was allowed the latitude to make any changes found necessary to work out his plans.³⁵

The architectural program included specific square footage assignments for various state offices including the State Chemist, State Board of Health, Utah State Fair Association, Horticultural Commission, plus store rooms and vaults. The building was to be beautiful and also comfortable to work in. A café that would serve meals to state employees, rooms for custodians and janitors, exhibition spaces and a room for the State Historical Society were also part of the program. The Governor’s suite of offices for his staff would be located on the main floor along with the Secretary of State, Attorney General and State Auditor, Superintendent of Public Instruction,

State Treasurer, Bank Commissioner and Examiners and Commissioner of Insurance. The third floor would house the Supreme Court and clerks offices and Court Room, the Senate Chambers and the House of Representatives Chambers. Special care was taken to place the Supreme Court Chamber a proper distance away from the other public spaces in the building, physically emphasizing the separation of powers. According to the specifications, “This room is designed to be secluded from noise, being surrounded by a private corridor and well lighted from above. Special care will be taken to properly ventilate it by artificial means.” So that citizens could observe the legislative activities of their elected officials, public galleries to the House and Senate were prescribed for the fourth floor. Also on this top level were the State Road Commission, Coal Mine Inspector, Commissioner of Immigration, Labor and Statistics, Inspector of Live Stock, State Board of Sheep Commissioner, State Board of Equalization, and Adjutant General.

The Capitol Commission approved the program on 30 August 1911 and promptly sent out information about the competition. The Commissioners made a preliminary survey of interested firms and assessed their abilities to perform the requisite work. Twenty-four contestants seemed to meet the criteria and received invitations.³⁶ According to the Republican, “Most of the local men chosen for invitation have entered into the spirit of the contest with a vim and determination indicative of their intention to submit winning plans if possible.”³⁷

On September 6, 1911 the Capitol Commission received a letter of concern from the Utah Association of Architects stating that “ideals for which the reputable members of the profession have stood for years, are not incorporated in the program and knowing this we will refrain from participating in the competition...” UAIA listed five essential points that differed from their ideals. First, it did not provide that a professional advisor or jury would be retained to assist in the judgment of the design and estimating the cost of their execution. Second, it permitted the rejection of all designs without any compensation. Third, the program did not provide for the substantial prizes usually offered to a limited number of competitors who had submitted especially meritorious designs. Fourth, the program required the drawings to be signed (which negated the idea of a “blind” or unbiased selection). Fifth, competitors were not limited to drawings, definite in number, scale, and rendering, which were devoid of any mark tending to identify the author. This last point was made to protect the commission from competitors who might be more skilled in rendering than building, and to avoid lobbying by retaining the anonymity of the submitting architect. The commission answered each point but chose to stand firm, stating they “sincerely hope that you [UAIA] will reconsider your [individual] action and file with them your applications to participate in the competition.”

The commissioners met 18 September 1911 to receive telegrams from architects interested in entering in the competition for the design of the capitol.³⁸ Cass Gilbert declined to submit an entry because the architect’s fee was five percent rather than six percent. George W. Post & Sons of New York and W.E. Burnett of Denver also decided not to submit because the fee was lower than they hoped.³⁹ After each of the competitors had responded, the list was cut to eight firms, those of: Young and Sons; G. Henri Desmond; F.M. Andrews and Company; J.E. Tourtellate; Cannon, Fetzer and Hansen; Watkins, Birch, Kent, Eldredge and Cheesbro; Ware, Treganza, Pope & Burton; Headlund & Price; F.W. Moore; and Richard K.A. Kletting.⁴⁰

Those who chose to enter the competition had to submit final design solutions by January 15, 1912. Because this was only four and one half months away, German-born Utah architect Richard Kletting put all his other work aside and directed his attention to this project alone.

Beginning on 8 January 1912, the commissioners began examining the drawings that had been submitted. The commission met frequently over the next two months, inviting a number of the architects to come and discuss their ideas. Kletting made the formal presentation of his proposal to the commission on the 22nd of

January. After a series of votes the commission narrowed the group even further to two—Richard Kletting and Young and Sons. On 13 March 1912, the examination was completed and they were ready to vote. After a session that lasted for four hours, Kletting won the coveted prize with a vote of four to three.⁴¹ Just the night before the vote, Young & Sons had a majority support of the members of the commission.⁴² But after considerable debate, that changed. When compared to other submissions, Kletting's appeared to be simpler, yet dramatic and consistently classical in detail and massing. Recognizing the value of their efforts, a total of \$5,000 was paid to the other nine architects who had submitted designs, in sums that ranged from \$250 to \$750.⁴³ This prize money had been one of the requests made by the UAIA, one with which the Commission had initially indicated it would not comply.

CAPITOL ARCHITECT: RICHARD KLETTING



RICHARD KLETTING

The Utah State Capitol was the last commission Richard Kletting received in his long and prestigious career. Recognized locally as Utah's "Dean of Architecture," Kletting designed well-known local landmarks such as the Salt Palace, Saltair, the Sullivanesque McIntyre Building and the Deseret News buildings. These buildings exhibit Kletting's familiarity with a variety of styles and contemporary technologies. Conceived in 1904, Kletting's Enos A. Wall Mansion, now LDS Business College, featured a Neo-Classical facade and relatively traditional plan but included several advanced technical features such as the use of reinforced concrete. This new technology was introduced to the Salt Lake area by Kletting. The Wall Mansion sits on a reinforced concrete mat foundation, and features upper floors that span beam to beam with concrete reinforced by welded cast iron grills. Besides its aesthetically pleasing exterior and interior spaces, the Wall Mansion was significant because it demonstrated Kletting's skill with "eclectic opulence and advanced technological knowledge."⁴⁴

Kletting worked halfway across the world from the place of his birth. One of sixteen children, Richard Karl August Kletting was born July 1, 1858 near Stuttgart, Wurttemberg, Germany, the son of a railroad builder. After studying design in Paris between 1879-83 and serving in the German army for a year, Kletting came to America in 1883 with two of his brothers. Without any particular intent of settling in Utah, Richard traveled on the train with his brothers as far as Denver. Finding that his luggage had continued on ahead to Utah, he followed, ending up in Utah quite by accident. The day after he arrived in Salt Lake City he was hired as an architect.

Classically educated and trained in both architecture and engineering, Kletting introduced a blend of Old World craftsmanship with in-vogue styles and advanced structural technologies to Utah. Most of Kletting's training had occurred on the job. Although the young architect was thoroughly versed in a variety of Victorian styles his work on the Capitol reflected the influence of the Classicism of the White City in Chicago at the Columbian Exposition of 1893.

The drawings that Kletting submitted for the Capitol design competition still exist. Penned on liners and paper with ink, pencil corrections



SALT AIR

and adjustments are visible on the extant, blue-printed “as-built” set. Kletting’s skill as a draftsman is evident in the intricacies of his technique—artistically varied line weights, effective shading, and precisely designed detailing. Furthermore, his drawings show a flair for aesthetics in the carefully executed classical details of the acanthus leaves in his Corinthian columns or in the ornamental plaques for the mezzanine railings.

Kletting’s selection hit the front page of the Salt Lake Tribune on 14 March 1912. The paper quoted Kletting, who recognized the honor this job represented. “Naturally, I am very much pleased that my design has been accepted. It is an honor of which any one in my profession might well be proud. I shall now put forth every effort to get the working plans into shape.”⁴⁵ Particularly conscious of the importance of the site, Kletting said his intent was to magnify the natural qualities of the rise at the base of the mountain and “to make the building strong and massive in line that it might be appreciated at a distance as the imposing site upon which the Capitol will be constructed will enable the structure to be seen for many miles in any direction.”⁴⁶ His contract specified the 15th of July as the date for submission of the first group of working drawings. Before beginning the plans, however, Kletting scheduled a trip back East, visiting various state capitols, gathering valuable information about structure, detail and massing.

On June 21, 1912 Kletting wrote his wife from Frankfort, Kentucky after visiting the new statehouse completed there in June of 1910. Strikingly similar to the eventual Utah Capitol, this building clearly influenced Kletting’s design decisions. Although the Utah Capitol Commission did not commit the competing architects to any other state’s specific plans, it suggested the same program and same approximate cost as that of the Kentucky State Capitol. Furthermore, its architect, Frank Andrews, was one of the architects invited to participate in the Utah competition.

While proceeding with the working drawings, Kletting focused on the relationship between the Capitol and the city itself. One draftsman in his office later said, “Mr. Kletting never tired of remodeling Salt Lake City.”⁴⁷ Members of his office discussed with him ideas about connecting Capitol Hill with the downtown business district and the LDS

Church Temple Square, or an electrically illuminated avenue beginning at Eagle Gate, located next to Brigham Young’s Beehive House, and continuing up State Street’s residential district located south of the projected capitol site. The inspiration of the City Beautiful movement from the Chicago Exposition was reflected in Kletting’s attention to the building as part of a larger environment. The site became a model for his dream of a beautiful city.

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KLETTING PLANS CHOSEN FOR THE STATE CAPITOL

Plans Selected by Commission for Utah's New State Capitol and Photograph of Richard K. A. Kletting, the Winning Architect

CONGRESS GETS MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

CO-OPERATION AS POSSIBLE REMEDY

Victor Among the Many Contestants Merely Expresses Gratification and Announces His Intention of Doing All in His Power to Hasten Work of Construction.

WORKING PLANS TO BE NEXT IN ORDER

Well-Known Salt Lake Architect Will Direct Construction of Utah's New Statehouse; Commission Reaches Decision After Session That Is Not Entirely Harmonious.

THE DESIGN for Utah's new capitol, prepared by R. K. A. Kletting, a Salt Lake City architect, was accepted by the capitol commission last night.

KLETTING ANNOUNCED AS CAPITOL ARCHITECT.