

APPENDIX B. ALTGELD ON ARCHITECTURE

Governor Altgeld expressed his architectural convictions on several public occasions.¹

In his second biennial message to the State Legislature:

Owing to the rapid growth of our population and the great demand for room in public institutions, but little consideration was given to the subject of architectural design in public buildings in the past, the principal effort being in each case to get as much floor space as possible. Consequently, while the Senate has a large number of buildings, there are but few whose exterior architecture is commanding or impressive. The appropriations made during the present administration were so small as not to admit of ornamentation; but it was felt that the time had come when we should not only fireproof buildings, but give a little more attention to their external appearance. After an examination of the subject I became satisfied that the most inexpensive, as well as the most impressive style for buildings that are to stand alone in a grove, or in a field, is what has been called Tudor-Gothic style, as the effect is produced by simply carrying the mason work, that is the wall, above the cornice lines in such a way as to produce small towers, battlements, etc. This style has consequently been adopted in most of the buildings that have been erected during the last two years, and is found to be very effective. Had we possessed large appropriations so that Grecian columns, Roman arches, and other forms of ornamentation could have been indulged in, it is probable that some other style of architecture would have been selected; but for the money which the State has expended it would have been impossible to get the same desirable effects in any other style.

¹ Excerpts from Altgeld's speeches are quoted in Waldo R. Browne, Altgeld of Illinois (New York, 1924), 228-29.

In a speech at the laying of the cornerstone of the Rock Island Hospital for the Insane:

You have observed that the style of architecture adopted is what has been called Tudor-Gothic and has something in common with some of the famous castles found in Europe. . . . In the centuries which are to come, as the intelligent traveler shall ascend the great Father of Waters and see this magnificent structure commanding a view of the surrounding country, he will exclaim: 'There stands a monument to the intelligence, the civilization and the humanity of the people of northwestern Illinois.'