

including the determination of the premiums to be offered for the two best designs, and the amount of moneys available for each building.

The accommodation required in the new buildings, the form of advertisement, and the detailed instructions to the competing architects, also occupied the careful attention of the Board. The results at which they arrived in these various matters will be seen in detail, in the printed instructions annexed hereunto as Appendix B.

On the important subject of the sites for the new buildings, the Commissioners deem it desirable to explain somewhat at large the reasons which have influenced them in forming their decisions, as follows:—

1. *The Post Office and Custom House (combined).*

The objects to be kept in view in the selection of a site for the Post Office were, in the Commissioners' opinion,

- (1.) Accessibility by the greatest possible portion of the public at large.
- (2.) The greatest amount of convenience for the receipt of arriving mails, at the earliest moment, and of letters for mails to be despatched, at the latest moment.
- (3.) Ample space for the extension of the buildings as the growing wants of the community might require it.

A position as near to the centre of the most populous and commercial part of the city, as was compatible with its being also near to the vessels bringing and carrying away the mails, seemed accordingly the best to choose. It was also necessary that the site should be unconfined and not circumscribed by buildings already existing, and which in such case might at a future day have to be purchased (as well as the ground occupied by them), at an enormous expense. If with these more important objects, such a position for these buildings could be obtained as would give them a handsome and effective appearance and contribute to the general embellishment of the town, the Commissioners considered that this should also be taken as one of the elements of their estimate of the relative advantages of the sites at their disposal.

With respect to the "general accessibility," the Commissioners were given to understand that this was of less importance than it otherwise would have been, because it was the intention of the Post Office authorities to establish places for the receipt and delivery of letters in various parts of the outskirts of the town, so that the inhabitants would in most cases be saved the trouble of coming in person with or for their letters to the central or head office.

*Sites available.*

The only sites at all suitable for the Post Office, at the command of the Commissioners, were,

1. The site of the present Custom House.
2. The site in Commerce Street.
3. And the reclaimable land seaward of Custom-house Street, either to the eastward or westward of the Queen Street Wharf.

The Commissioners considered that the combination of the Custom House with the Post Office, as contiguous buildings on one site, would afford much greater opportunity for producing an effective appearance as a whole, than the two buildings could produce on separate sites. The site of the present Custom House would not afford sufficient room for the two buildings, and would, moreover, be too far from the water for the purposes of the Customs. The site in Commerce Street would partake of the same objection as to size, though not to the same extent as to distance from the water. It would moreover, present only an end façade in the principal front, towards the sea, northwards. The foundations also on this site (Commerce Street) were said to be of very objectionable character,—similar, indeed, to that of the land on the eastern side of the Town Wharf, which will be presently adverted to.

It was suggested that the land eastward of the Town Wharf or Pier would in many respects be a convenient site; but upon examination it was found to be composed of soft mud to a very considerable depth, under a thin crusted conglomerate or natural concrete, which it would not be safe to build upon; and would require such an additional outlay in piling for foundations, which the sum at the disposal of the Commissioners would not admit of.

It was also understood that the space to the eastward was required for a wet dock, to be dredged to some depth, for the accommodation of coasting and other smaller vessels—a work which the Provincial Government have in contemplation.

The ground to the westward of the wharf, on a careful examination, was found to have a substratum of solid rock or stone, which crops out to the surface in the part farthest from the wharf or pier, shelving down towards the wharf, where there is a depth of seven feet of mud over the rock.

The last-named site, that is to the westward of the Queen Street Wharf or Pier, appeared to the Commissioners to combine, in by far the highest degree, all the objects mentioned above as those which should be kept in view in the selection of the site.

*Custom House.*

It appears to be admitted on all hands that this site is in every respect most suitable for the purposes of the Customs Department; and it had already been recommended by the Provincial authorities.

The Commissioners having procured from the Commissioner of Customs and the Postmaster-General a definite and detailed statement of the actual and probable future requirements as to accommodation, that is, as to the number, character, and relative position of the rooms or offices required; caused the same to be embodied in the printed instructions to the competing architects.—See Appendix B.

*Supreme Court House.*

The Commissioners found two sites available for this building—one, the piece of land in front of the General Assembly House, and the other, the reserve on which the present Government House stands, together with the open land on the brow of the hill on its western side.

The Commissioners selected the latter of these sites for the following reasons. It is, in the first