

# DESIGNING DECO

## Activity Two Lesson Plan

### Purpose

- Review common design elements, motifs, and features of Art Deco buildings
- Consider the factors architects must consider when designing a new building
- Explore creativity by designing a brand new Art Deco structure

### Implementation Notes

This lesson should follow “Describing Deco,” the introductory session which covers prerequisite information about Art Deco’s historic context and design elements.

### Background Knowledge and Materials

Both participants and instructors should use the knowledge provided by “Describing Deco” as the basis for this lesson’s activity. Art Deco architecture has many common motifs and design elements, such as vertical accentuation, parapets, either flat or stepped roofs, geometric patterns, sculptural decoration, spandrels, and materials like metals and terracotta. Participants should use these in their designs.

Instructors can also use the list of responses from “Describing Deco’s” warm-up (what factors must an architect consider when designing a building?) as the parameters for the design activity. If desired, use those responses to modify accordingly. Sample parameters are included in this lesson, and instructors should prepare ahead of the session by selecting and potentially modifying this list to meet their group’s needs.

### Instruction Notes

Instructor should begin by explaining the guidelines for the design activity: participants will design their own Art Deco building. It will be helpful to display the design parameters where participants can easily see and refer to them, such as on a whiteboard or Smartboard, so begin by presenting and talking participants through the goals their buildings must meet.

While participants are working, move around classroom to answer questions and provide any needed direction and guidance. If desired, allow for extra time at the end of the period to allow participants to share their designs.

### Adaptation Notes

Consider the following optional adaptations when adjusting the lesson for time and participant interest:

- Begin with a longer warm-up reviewing Art Deco and its design elements for groups that desire more background learning.
- Younger groups without a strong art background may choose to use any of the optional templates, which provide a template for a building that participants can fill in with designs and decorations, instead of starting their designs from scratch.
- Instructors can choose to provide a longer presentation time at the end for participants to show off their work, either in the form of a gallery walk or as individual presentations
- Participants can also work in groups on a single design instead of producing one design individually.
- Older or more advanced art participants can design multiple facades of their building instead of just the front, or sketch out an interior floor or lobby as well.
- Ask participants to explain their design choices in a later writing assignment; how do their aesthetic choices coincide with the architect parameters?

## Presentation Steps

### Warm-Up

This lesson contains no wholly separate warm-up activity. Instead, briefly review Art Deco architecture with participants before explaining the procedure for the activity.

### Instruction

Establish the parameters for the assignment by explaining that participants will be designing their own Art Deco buildings today. Like a real architect, they must work within set architect parameters; the building must meet certain goals, such as height, purpose, etc. Display these guidelines prominently so that participants can refer to them throughout the period. Sample sets of guidelines are provided as Appendix A, and instructors may choose or modify any of these.

If participants are using templates for their work, pass out these worksheets (see Appendix B). Show participants each option, and allow them to choose the building outline they would like to use to begin their work. Encourage them to be as creative and detail oriented as possible throughout the lesson.

### Activity

Participants should spend the majority of their time working on their designs. Their buildings should meet the basic guidelines set by the instructor, but should also include sufficient decorations and details to be recognized as an Art Deco building. Depending on time and available materials, participants should add color to their designs.

### Wrap-Up

Ask participants to briefly share and explain their designs, either in front of the group or in small groups as time allows. If such presentations are not possible or appropriate, explanations can be provided as a follow-up assignment.

## Materials

Materials available at [ArtDeco.org/Learn](http://ArtDeco.org/Learn):

- Sample architect parameters, to be displayed (Appendix A)
- Pencils and coloring supplies
- Optional building templates (Appendix B)
- Paper



# APPENDIX A

## Sample Architectural Parameters, “Designing Deco”

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### Example #1

- Building should be mixed use, and contain both residential apartments and street level commercial space for businesses, stores, etc.
- Materials should include both stone and metal
- Must have no more than 30 stories
- Location is on the corner of two busy streets

### Example #2

- An office building
- It should have no more than 100 stories
- Must have metal sculpture decorations
- Must have a wide base at the bottom

### Example #3

- A hotel
- Must have at least 20 stories
- Materials must include terracotta
- Location is in the middle of a block, with neighboring buildings on either side

### Example #4

- An apartment building
- Must have at least 5 stories
- Must have geometric decorations
- Must have lots of natural light inside

### Example #5

- A school
- Location is a full avenue block between two cross streets, and must fill that space
- Must contain terracotta decorations
- Must have one main front entrance and multiple side doors

*Note: these sample sets are examples only. Feel free to use, modify, or change them to best fit your class!*



# APPENDIX B

## Optional Building Templates, “Designing Deco”

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### Notes about Templates

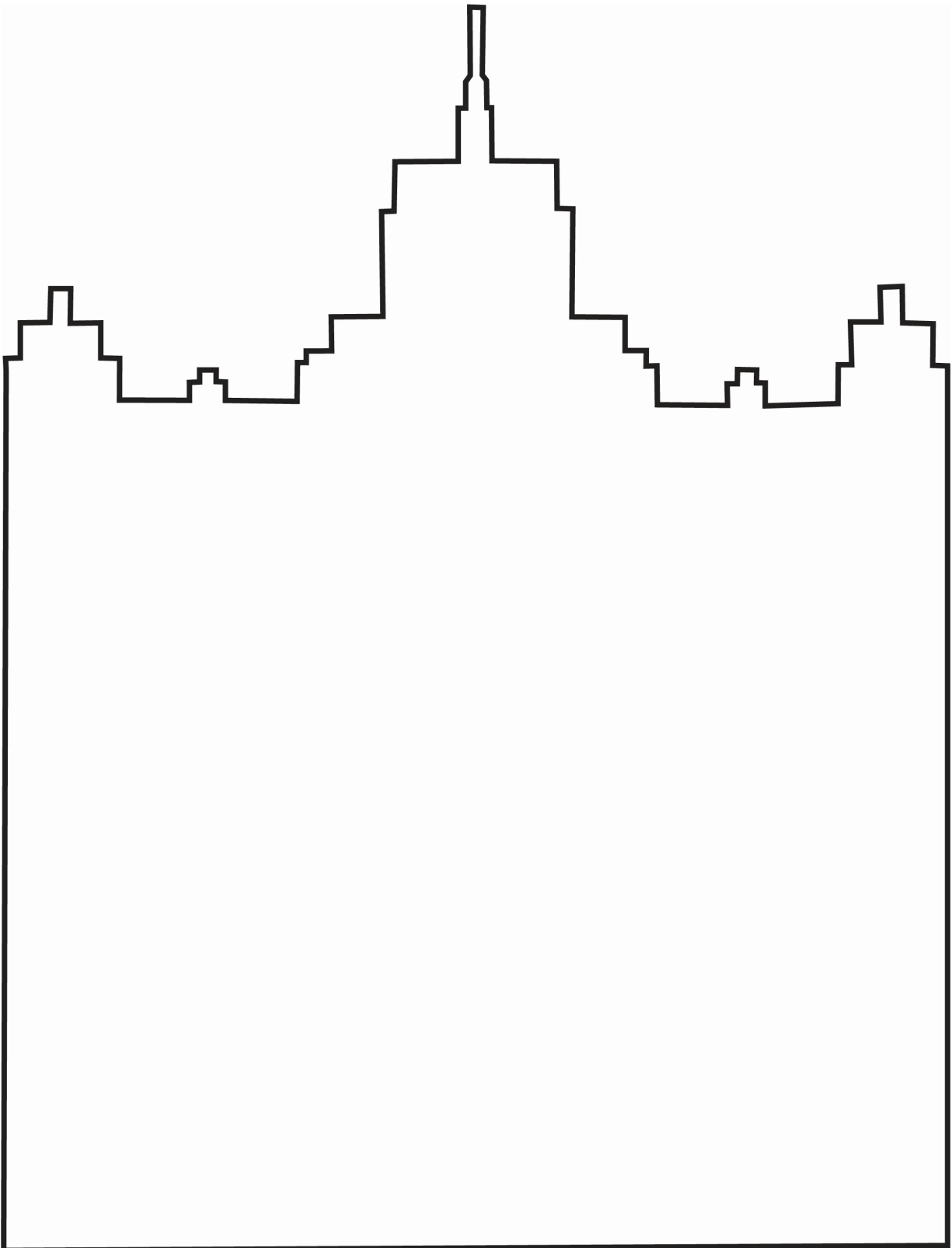
This Appendix contains 5 optional building templates for use in the “Designing Deco” lesson. These templates are intended to provide guidance for students when designing their Art Deco buildings. They each contain an outline of a building, with no decoration or forms on the inside.

Students should use the architectural guidelines to decide how to fill in these templates with their own designs. Added details can and should include windows, doors, and any other kind of decoration that fits with their design.

Instructors can decide to either provide the class with one single kind of template, or to allow students to choose between the provided options.

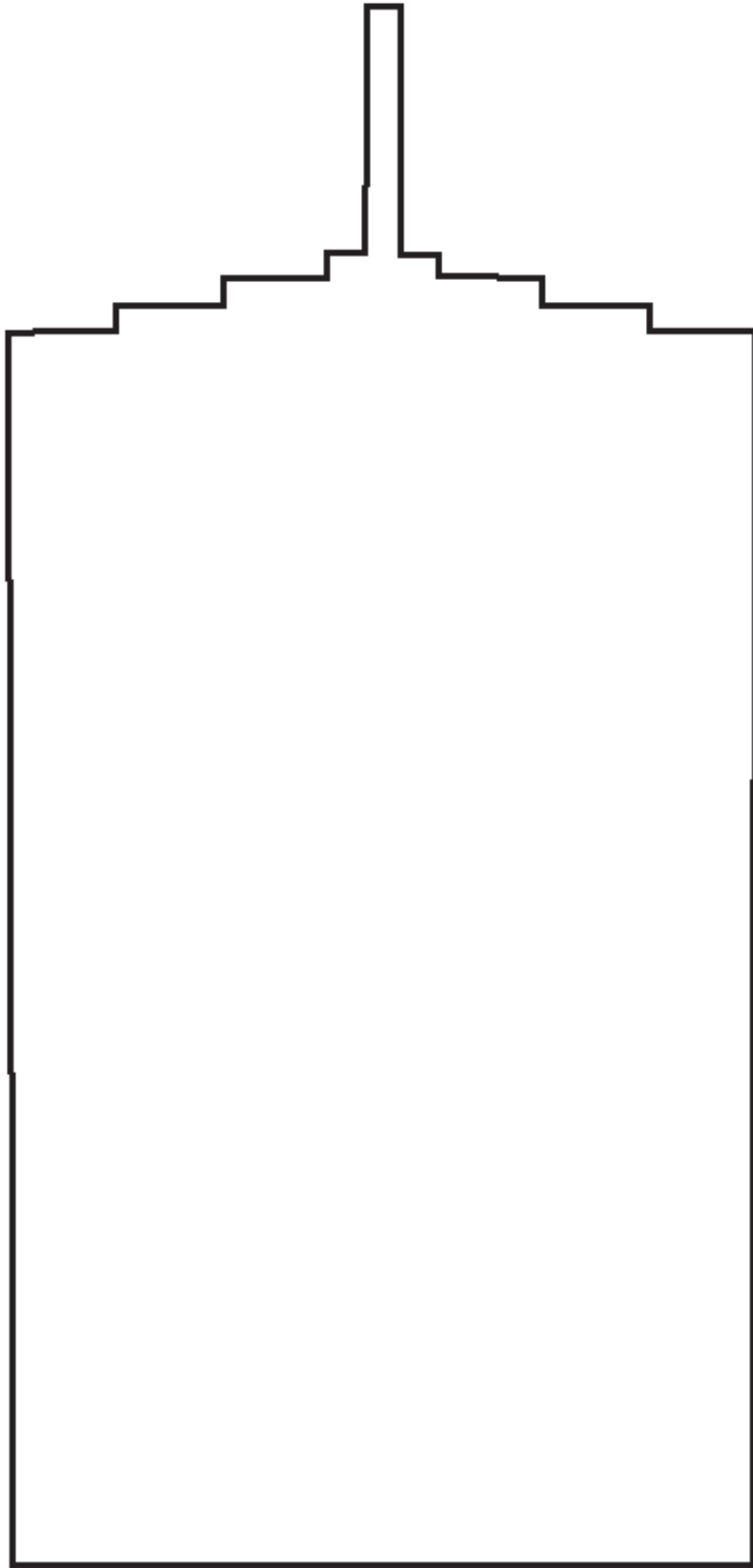
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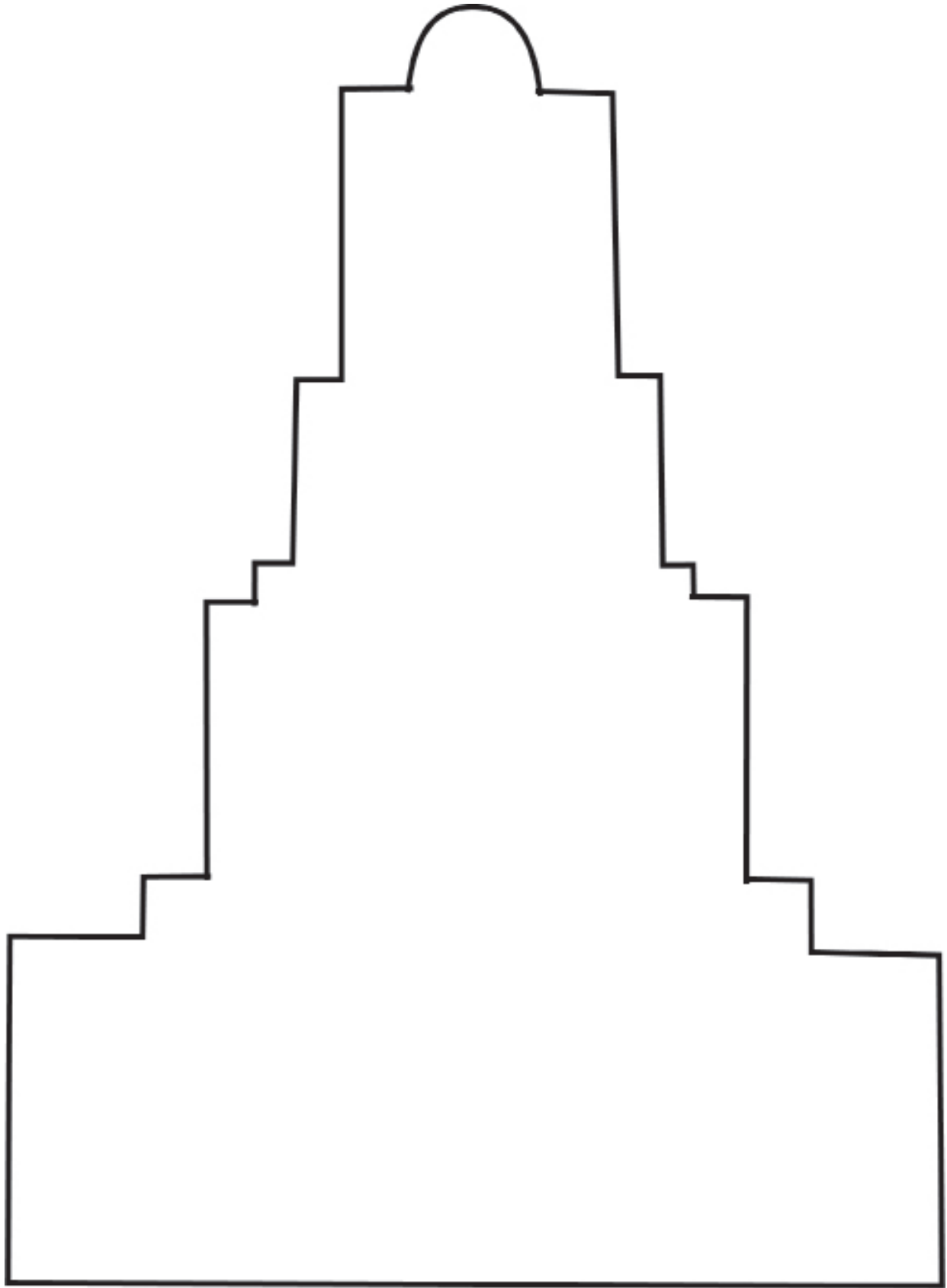
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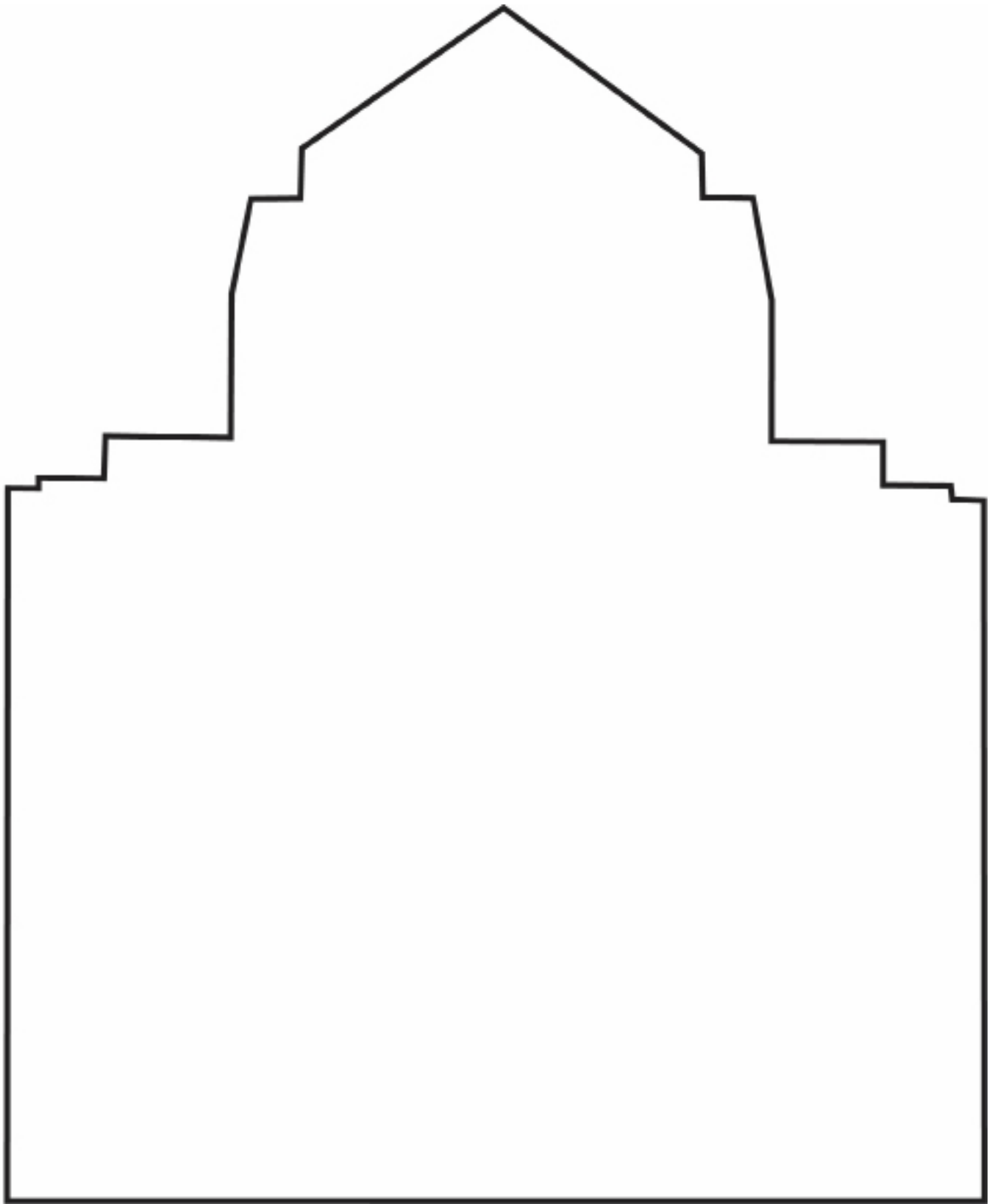
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