

THE NEW SAN ANTONIO COUNTRY CLUB

An uncommonly Picturesque Spanish Mission Type of Clubhouse in the South West of Texas

By HAROLD H. HOUSE

TO the uninitiated, at the first glance, a view of the new San Antonio Golf Club of San Antonio, Texas, might lead one to believe that he had been surreptitiously transported to Sunny Spain, but probably a second look would divulge a number of very American business men and their just as American golf clubs and the illusion would be removed.

Texas, and particularly San Antonio, is well suited to Spanish architecture, a century of Spanish occupation having left an indelible imprint upon this rare old city. The fine old buildings which still remain as monuments of the city's picturesque past, even in the busiest commercial centres, are a source of pride to its inhabitants and to-day definite steps are being taken to safeguard them from the destruction with which they are being threatened by the city's rapid growth. Amid such an atmosphere architecture of the Mediterranean Countries is especially appropriate, because the climate is so similar to that of the South West of Texas. The architect, George Willis, fully realized this and adapted the Spanish type admirably to the requirements of his problem. The stucco walls and the long, low lines so characteristic of the Spanish mission buildings are finely suited to the location on a hill crest, while a rambling plan has the effect of corralling stray breezes. Compactness for economy of heating, which dominates so much of the planning in the north, is a negligible factor there, and Mr. Willis' design, although consistent in plan, indicates that he availed himself of the freedom which these conditions permitted and gave rein to his fancy and to his love for the picturesque.

The old frame clubhouse which preceded the present structure and was destroyed by fire in 1916 necessitated a building that would prevent to a large degree a repetition of the catastrophe and would produce a thoroughly safe and up to date, fireproof home for the club. Safety from fire has been made possible by the use throughout the building of non-combustible materials in so far as they could be used and obtained the striking and pleasing architectural effects. The struc-

ture of the building is of the skeleton type of reinforced concrete. The pitched roof and overhanging rafters are of this material. All outside walls are interlocking hollow tile and covered on the exterior with stucco of an ivory tone. All pitched roofs are covered with red Spanish clay tile. The open air swimming pool thirty feet wide and seventy feet long is of reinforced concrete.

The building itself is of the rambling type with a decided bend in plan, providing to the fullest extent the indispensable southeast exposure for all the principal rooms and at the same time, from these rooms, the most sweeping view of the golf course and tennis courts,

etc. An abundance of deep, well shaded verandas and balconies add materially to the "out-doors" use of the building. As planned no provision is made for guest rooms. The only permanent resident of the club is the manager, whose apartments are situated on the second floor and are reached by an independent stairway from the service portion.

On the northwest side is located the automobile entrance, adjacent to the main stairs.

These stairs are at the end of a transverse hall in each story. To one side of this hall on the first floor is located a large lounging room, also an office and writing room. Opposite this is the large grill room and buffet. From the entrance a corridor leads to the men's locker room in a one story wing of the building. Between the grill and locker rooms is located the service portion of building, consisting of the kitchen, pantries and servants' dining room. Directly under this is the basement, with the heating and refrigerating plants and cold storage rooms.

The men's locker room, furnished with individual steel lockers, the

shower baths and the golf shop are housed in the one story wing of building. On the axis of this wing, and midway between it and the tennis courts, is the swimming pool. An exterior stairway makes this pool easily accessible to the ladies' locker room in the second story. A semi-circular pergola at one end of the pool gives a slight separation. The roof of the one story wing



THE CLUBHOUSE TOPS THE CREST OF THE HILL
Its location is therefore a very commanding one.



Photographs, Courtesy of Architectural Record

George Willis, Architect.

THE STAIRWAY TO THE ROOF GARDEN ABOVE

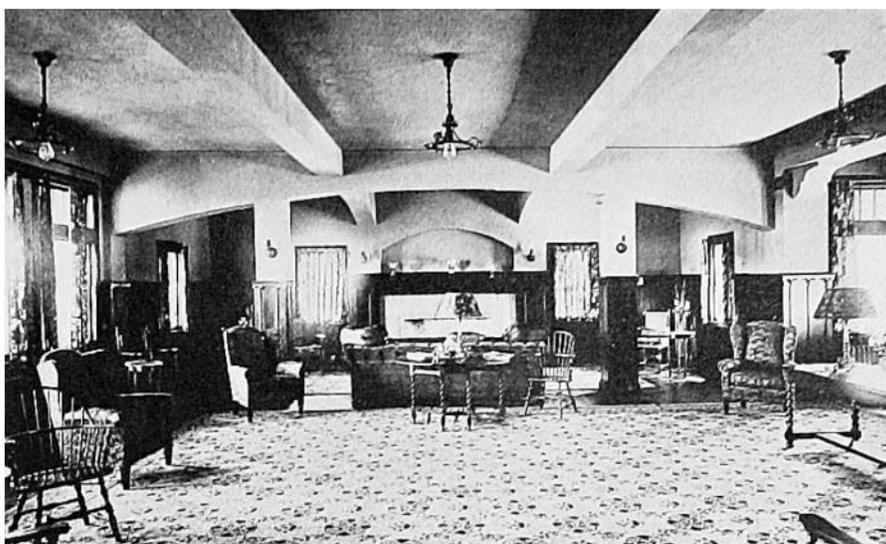
From which a splendid view of the surrounding country is obtainable.

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will be a roof garden for outdoor dances. This is reached by the stairs from the ground and also connects with the balcony in the second story. A direct connection with the kitchen facilitates the serving of refreshments.

The suite of rooms for women members, comprising a lounging room, locker and shower bath accommodations, is located in the second story of the main building near one end and is completely separated except for the corridor leading to the stairs at the main entrance. The balance of the second story is devoted to the ball room, main dining room and men's smoking room, making possible a private dinner dance without interfering with the use of the rest of the building by other members.

As a result of this particular development and study of style, there is a diversity of charm varying with every change of view. Seen from the golf course below the hill the building presents a simple, low lying composition of warm gray stucco and red tile, with masses of deep shadow under its overhanging eaves and arcaded veranda. As one approaches by auto the view is cut off largely by a heavy planting, which affords glimpses of stucco walls, touches of red tiled roof and openings made bright by window boxes well filled with flowers and vines. From the tennis court is seen a complex of swimming pool, pergola and inviting stairways against a rather be-



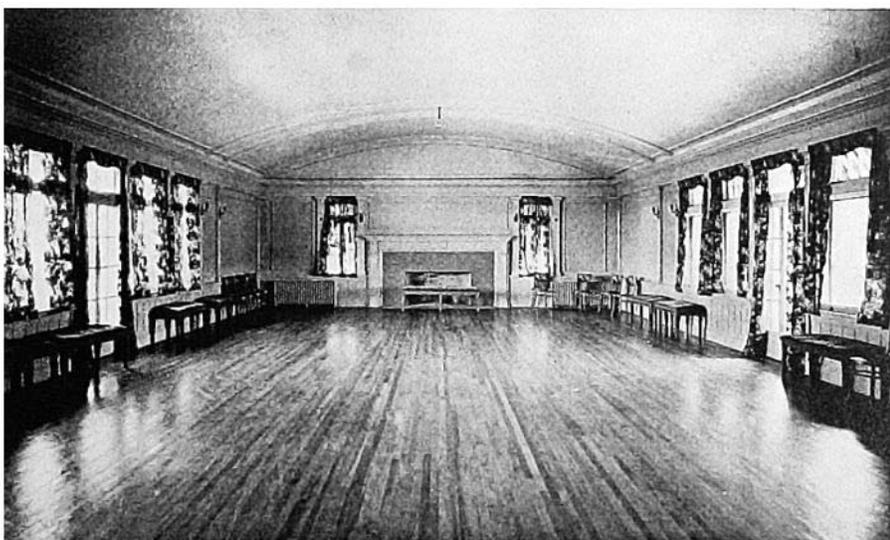
THE LOUNGING ROOM IS BOTH INVITING AND COMMODIOUS
The tired golfer will find it very enjoyable after a hard game.



WHAT COULD BE MORE REFRESHING THAN A PLUNGE IN THIS POOL

wildering background of gray walls, giving the general air of a stage setting which, when seen by daylight, makes one long for the evening shadows, well studied lighting effects and the music, brilliant costumes and drifting groups of dancers and merrymakers. The interior is quiet in color, relieved from monotony by the judicious use of gay cretonnes. There is a most comfortable atmosphere of harmony and of rest.

The Spanish architecture may not be in accord with



Photographs Courtesy of Architectural Record

HUGE BALCONIES FLANK BOTH SIDES OF THE BALL ROOM
Making most agreeable promenades during the dance intervals.

the gray skies of the north; but under the brilliant sun of Texas the broad simple walls, the vigorous texture of tile roofs and the rich shadows of arcaded cloisters are wholly in tune. New England borrowed from old England, and the adaptation of the Georgian to its needs has developed the Colonial style that seems indigenous. The southwest, however, has different requirements, and buildings like the San Antonio Country Club are strong arguments in favor of the Spanish tradition in this semi-tropical climate.

The climate of Texas is not conclusive to golf at all times but provides opportunities that compensate for its shortcomings. In the extreme heat of the day of course golf is practically impossible but in the late afternoon and the early morning, conditions are almost ideal. These things have had to be considered in the construction of this clubhouse and there is little doubt that they have been admirably accounted for.