

# Clubhouse Design Important in Municipal Golf Promotion

By CLIFFORD C. WENDEHACK

**I**T WOULD BE OF great benefit to the golfing public if our municipal courses and clubhouses were designed and constructed along the same high standards obtained by our privately owned organizations.

The ancient and beneficial sport should be encouraged and developed by the municipalities to a far greater degree. Its development should be entrusted to the most efficient and competent hands obtainable, so that the general public, regardless of its financial status, may enjoy the benefits that this outdoor exercise of golf affords.

"Municipal golf courses for all" is a slogan we have often heard expressed in all parts of the country; but because of the lack of funds or political prejudice, the movement to provide these public courses in sufficient number has not in any way kept up to the proportional growth of the golf-minded public. The matter is taken up from year to year by countless municipalities, but the percentage of completed courses are, unfortunately, comparatively few. This is due, sometimes, to the lack of available property, but more often to the knots with which politics tie up the appropriations which are necessary for their realization.

If the golf-minded voters of this country would come out definitely with their demands for more and better golf courses in return for their taxes, their representatives in government would be forced to give this subject more serious consideration.

In one of his recent articles, William H. Tucker, a well-known course architect states that of the 3,600 golf courses in Great Britain, nearly two-thirds are open to the public; whereas, in the United States, less than one-third of the 5,700 courses are open to the public or to the man of small means who cannot afford the expense of the privately owned course.

When we consider the comparatively short space of time in which America has

developed these many golf courses at 5,691 clubs as compared with the years Great Britain has devoted to the establishment of its courses, that out of this total number there are but 543 municipal courses and 700 daily fee operated in the United States today, we realize what a comparatively small chance the man and woman of modest means has of following this pastime.

It is usually conceded that the idea of municipally-owned courses started in Boston about 1890, and a few years later the first 9 holes were laid out in Van Cortlandt park in New York City. While the idea, perhaps, originated in the east, the state of Illinois today may boast of more municipally-owned courses than any other state in the Union. Perhaps, the democracy of the west is accountable for this fact; or perhaps the municipal backers in this locality were more golf-minded; but the fact remains that throughout vast areas of other parts of the country today, there is little or no opportunity for the average man to indulge in this sport.

## Build Right at Low Cost.

Few municipal courses have, in the past, been laid out in the proper manner; seldom are they a test of golf; and what is far worse, do not afford a fair opportunity for the beginner playing them to acquire a proper knowledge of the game. Some even are laid out the wrong way in relation to the compass, with narrow fairways and small putting greens, and poor turf on the fairway. We often blame this on the committees responsible for the construction; and just as in the designing of a clubhouse properly, it costs little if any more to design and build public courses correctly—so that they possess educational value—than it does to construct unsatisfactory layouts.

If we look back over what has been written on this subject in the past few years, it will be found that the concensus of opinion in regard to the municipal golf

course agrees on all the essential points, but there will be found hardly a word in all this discussion regarding the municipal golf club building. This subject seems to have been overlooked entirely; apparently, on the assumption that the tax-payer or public, because they play on municipal property, may be housed in the cheapest possible manner and segregated in a way which has long become obsolete even for the care of our live stock.

This may sound like a radical statement, but some harsh words are required to sufficiently attract the attention of those who have this sort of work under their jurisdiction, if by speaking so plainly we can make them pause and realize their responsibility; especially to the young people who by force of circumstances have to acquire their golfing tastes and environment on public courses. They are entitled to a correct and proper atmosphere in their club. This becomes a matter of education in the same way that we recognize the child in the public school is entitled to sanitary as well as an artistic environment. Basically, municipal golf is a matter of education as well as body and aesthetic upbuilding.

### Public Clubhouse Requirements.

Assuming that our municipal governments will give their best co-operation in the construction of these clubs, let us consider what some of the essential requirements of these buildings should be: First in importance, is the fact that they should be of sufficiently modest proportions to come within a reasonable budget; one which the community can afford but at the same time a budget based on actual estimates of the requirements of the local program.

Small clubhouse construction of this character does not differ materially from any other type of building of similar materials, except that its cost per cubic foot is considerably less than residential work, provided the club is efficiently planned. By this is meant the elimination of all unnecessary waste spaces and a grouping of rooms for club purposes, in such a way that the maximum benefits can be derived from them. It is in this smaller phase of clubhouse design that a complete knowledge of the subject is most essential and most beneficial to those responsible.

Possibly the next important consideration in the design of these small club

buildings is the co-ordination of their various parts to produce the most efficient operation and functioning of the club. Efficiency of operation is a much-used, and sometimes abused phrase; but in the small clubhouse owned and operated by a municipality, it is of vital importance; for while service in the lunch room and locker room should be maintained upon a simple but high standard, this service should not cost the tax-payers a dollar more than is necessary. Efficiency of operation also means management, or the control by the person in charge, of the players as well as the help. And, in the cases of municipal clubhouses, the control of the players is far more important than in the privately owned organization.

In the same sense that the smaller a kitchen is, in our own homes, the more efficiently it must be planned to properly function, the small club requires more study and experience than a large one, to make it ideal for the purposes it is to serve.

If we can be assured that our club plan can be run economically, our attention should be devoted to producing the maximum degree of comfort and livability for those who pass thru the building to and from golf. If, for instance, the weather suddenly changes, and a number of people are forced to take shelter in the club, there should be a sufficiently large area for their accommodation, without undue crowding, and the kitchen facilities should be elastic enough to furnish them, upon emergency, with sufficient food.

A fireplace in the large room will go a long way towards making the building hospitable under these conditions and ample coat room and wash room facilities are details that are accepted by all.

These physical aspects of the municipal club building do not, however, discharge all our responsibility, for it does not cost any more in dollars to have these rooms in good taste, correct as to proportions and color. Such details only require knowledge to create; but their educational value to the younger people is of incalculable value. Experience has proved many times that a well-planned, correctly proportioned and artistically furnished building does not cost any more than a poor and ugly one; but in order to create these desirable features, we must pay more attention to the selection of the materials of which the building is constructed.