

Planning the Postwar Clubhouse

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Architect

Clifford Wendehack has designed probably more clubhouses than any other single architect in America. He was architect for the well known Caracas CC, in Venezuela, as well as the club in Maracaibo; he designed the famous Winged Foot Club in Mamaroneck, New York, the Park Club in Buffalo, Ridgewood at Paramus, Cascade Hills at Grand Rapids, Michigan, and many others, too numerous to mention.

At the present time, he has plans and designs for many clubhouses, to proceed when our men return and the old American custom of combining recreation with business returns to its rightful place in our post-war world.

★ After V-Day, what will happen to our Golf Clubs? A much more pertinent question would be: what will our club organizations do for millions of our boys and girls when they return to private life?

If I were to judge from the numerous inquiries that I received in the last month from all parts of the country, asking for advice on plans, or a visit to a proposed country club site, I would say that there is undoubtedly a great force at work, a force more impelling because it has been dormant for so many years, to revitalize old clubs and build new ones just as soon as the restrictions are let down by our government.

It cannot be imagined that our former "G.I. Joes" will be satisfied to sit in an armchair and smoke a pipe, or our former Wacs and Waves happily sewing by an open fireside. That is what many of them

envision while they are so far away from home; but, the human body cannot and should not suddenly turn off the lights.

Several years of intensive physical training, followed by active service in a land foreign to the majority, then a sudden let down! An office chair with its ensuing confinements will seem like heaven on earth—for a while—but the morale as well as the physical build-up for two or more years will require an active and healthy outlet.

The post-war clubhouse must help provide the answer to this American post-war question. It is "must" business which both golfdom and sportsdom must take up now and carry on; it must be faced now and solved—to be expedited when post-war demands will create that new run on golf and country clubs and all they will have to offer in the way of recreation and out-door physical exercise.

In the golfing world, the subject divides itself naturally into a number of categories and responsibilities. These in order of their importance in my opinion, are:

1. Rehabilitation of existing private golf courses and buildings.
2. Construction of new courses.
3. More and better municipal courses.
4. Construction by all large industries of courses adjacent to their plants; courses which should serve the office workers—veterans of this world war, some of whom have perhaps never previously had any club affiliations, as well as the older men and women now engaged on the production lines

Not necessarily the style or the design, but the simplicity combined with efficiency of operation, which our post war clubhouse will possess.



who will need the relaxation and beneficial effects of golf when the rush has subsided and their savings may be diverted to such needed rest-cure.

It becomes, therefore, the duty of the respective communities and the officers of our American golf and country clubs to organize and promote an intelligent program to meet the broad demands of the game in the post-war era.

Let us start with the golf course itself; a good, simple course to provide golf within the means of the working man. (The day of deep sand traps and highly tricky courses will have gone along the way of gilded ceilings). The first step in the right direction is the possession of low-priced property; the second, consultation with a practical and experienced golf-course architect, a man who has profited by the mistakes of pre-war courses; a fellow who knows whether the topography and soil will be suitable and who has vision focused by years of observation to by-pass costly errors in construction and ultimate upkeep.

The next consideration is the club house. It should be simple. This does not and should not necessarily mean a building which offers but one form of recreation, but one that permits of varied sports. Swimming, tennis, badminton, and other sports in which our millions of young men and women have participated during their service training should be included in the victory clubhouse.

The important consideration in the design of a low-priced club is the coordination of its various parts in order to produce the most efficient operation and functioning. Efficiency-of-operation is of vital importance to any club; and while it is no doubt a much abused phrase, it is the secret of operating on low budget.

In order to insure such maximum efficiency combined with the minimum amount of upkeep, a club should seek the best advice obtainable for the club's planning. Keeping costs down is a matter which can always be counted on as being appreciated by the entire membership; but it is a difficult matter to accomplish wisely and easily. Club buildings should not differ materially from any other type of building, except that in cost per cubic foot the club should be considerably less than residential work, if the club is properly planned.

In planning a club and providing for the various sports which it should include, the swimming pool should take an important role. A pool is a good source of revenue and a popular source of revenue during the summer months. All the children want it; the grown-ups—hardly ever admitting it, go to it as they did to the ol' swimming hole—and so a pool is popular with everyone in a club membership. What it does for the club is to

bring both old and young—the whole club family—to the club's terraces, to watch their prodigies in their swimming and diving lessons.

Other items for consideration of club committees are the bowling green, a badminton court, tennis courts, a skeet range. Bowling alleys are now, more than ever before, being talked about most generously by club committees who plan to build in post-war. While this form of lively winter sports may not bring large income in a golf club setup, it has the proved advantage of being a drawing card for the golfers and their families.

No one knows as yet what our post-war world is going to be like. From the angle of Golfdom, however, I may say that large, sumptuous buildings and elaborate locker rooms and service will be things of the past. In this instance, I cite the case of a clubhouse I designed about twenty years ago in Caracas, Venezuela. For all these years, this club has been the mecca of golfers from every part of the world; it is a social club as well. It is a fine building, I will admit, because I was its guest a couple of months ago; but it is entirely too grandiose for the professional and white collar workers of this South American Republic; golfers and sports lovers from the States, England, and Holland. What they now need, in addition, is a small, cozy, economically run building catering to golf miscellaneous sports; a substantial and most simple cuisine.

There is not time nor space here to explain the difference of rooms, their sizes and the relation of the service, as well as the architectural design and interior decor; this will all be analagous with the size of the building—low in cost, simple in taste.

To crystallize the foregoing remarks I would say that post-war clubs for the next five years at least should have first of all a comfortable locker room. It should have simplified service; it should have a layout that permits of an economical administration; it should have business men in the saddle, get a good manager and give him the support they would give to an important department head in their own businesses.

If this is done in the organization of the club, a visionary Board of Governors will not shout for the moon and demand a clubhouse which they should not and cannot afford. Our men (returning from rugged army and navy life with its down-to-earth principles in both financial as well as human relationships, will be willing to accept a round of golf for a fox-hole, but they will be pretty wary of the costly trimmings. Economy and efficiency of program; economy and efficiency of execution; and later, economy and efficiency of operation must all be paramount in the post-war golf club program.