



Sunset Oaks' maintenance building is located in the lower right sections of this photo. Parking lot is between it and the clubhouse area.

Put Maintenance Building in the Front Yard

Gordon Brinkworth persuades officials at Sunset Oaks to build beauty into the superintendent's workshop and put it up in the vicinity of the clubhouse

BY DON CURLEE

They built the maintenance building across the parking lot from the sumptuous clubhouse at Sunset Oaks GC in Rocklin, Calif., right where all the golfers and visitors can see it. Not only do they like what they see, but the facility has smoothed out the mechanics of maintenance for the supt., Bob Umland.

Designing an attractive maintenance facility and putting it where it can be appreciated was the brainstorm of Gordon Brinkworth, Umland's predecessor in the

supt's job and now assistant director of club operations for Sunset International Petroleum Corporation, owners and builders of Sunset Oaks and the surrounding 12,000-acre real estate development.

Brinkworth's promotion to the home office indicates that his ideas, including the radical design criteria for Sunset Oaks' maintenance building, are appreciated. He is now responsible for club operations at six similar golf-centered community developments being built or planned by Sunset, all of them in California. The Sun-

set-Whitney ranch, located about 15 miles from Sacramento and the site of Sunset Oaks, is the largest of the six. Plans call for it to eventually include four separate golf courses.

Uphill Fight

But Brinkworth's idea about a location for the maintenance building was not always appreciated. "It was an uphill fight all the way," he recalls. The owners favored alternate sites toward the back of the property and away from the main access area. If they had held out against Gordon's persuasive pounding they could have scrapped the handsome exterior he specified and saved themselves some construction dollars.

Brinkworth offered solid arguments for his preference. One of the alternate sites would have necessitated constant equipment traffic past the pro shop. And, since cart repair is part of the maintenance performed by Uhland's crew, it seemed desirable to be within reach of the pro shop.

Placing the maintenance building on the front of the property, Brinkworth reasoned, would be encouragement for keeping it neat and orderly. Furthermore, the location is central. He took advantage of the luxury image that the entire complex seeks to create and won his argument that the shop should be in keeping with the rest of the development.

Finished in Redwood

The result is a handsome structure of redwood siding and wide-spaced battens, 100 by 40 feet, with 20-foot-wide, covered shelters for the equipment extending 100 feet from each end in a U-shape. A six-foot redwood fence joins the two shelter fingers, enclosing a quadrangle and adding a measure of security to the entire area.

The shop building includes Uhland's comfortable office, air conditioned against the 100-degree plus summer weather. Two 16-foot overhead doors open from the quadrangle to the main shop area, which includes high bins with cart replacement parts, a spacious working area, fertilizer and chemical storage, clean rest rooms and work benches facing the windows.

The roofed equipment storage area is more than adequate for all the rolling stock and mowing and spraying machines

and can serve as a convenient outdoor work area whenever the weather allows — and that is most of the time. In the center of the rectangle is a concrete slab with a drain, an ideal wash-down area.

Organized by Departments

The building is organized into departments. At one end are the hand tools, neatly hung against a peg board where they are handy for use. In an adjoining area mowers and other pieces of equipment are sharpened and repaired and other course equipment is serviced. Near this



Gordon Brinkworth (r), assistant club operations director for Sunset International, which built Sunset Oaks, dusts off sign bearing Bob Uhland's name that has just been installed opposite the superintendent's office.

is the cart repair center, with parts and accessories stored at one side in vertical bins. A second vertical bin holds spare and replacement irrigation equipment and fittings. These departments take up about two-thirds of the length of the building.

The other one-third is set apart by a partition and doorway and is used for storage. Most of the space is occupied by chemicals and fertilizer, but course maintenance tools, equipment and hoses and spare parts are also kept here.

Entrance to the courtyard from the outside is by two gates at either end of the



Golf cars, mowers, tractors, etc. are stored in roofed sheds located within the maintenance department compound.

building. Uhland's office is just inside the gate that faces the course and the clubhouse. Here he can feel that he occupies something resembling a control tower, in a position to see everybody who comes and goes. Although his office opens to the outside only, it is joined to the main garage by a sliding window.

Brinkworth has estimated the value of the shop equipment at approximately \$8,000. Course equipment represents an additional \$35,000, and the cost of the building, the roofed equipment sheds and the fence total about \$28,000.

At the other end of the building is a "back gate" access to the refuse pile and to the bins of sand, aggregate and bulk mixes.

Brinkworth, who describes the maintenance unit as, "very adequate," adds, "I haven't been on a course yet that wouldn't envy our setup." With almost sympathetic lament he says, "Most of them expend their funds before they get to the maintenance building."

Not Free of Problems

Sunset Oaks, though, is not without its maintenance problems. "In the first place," Brinkworth points out, "the course is not consistent with conventional design, inasmuch as it makes allowance for a good percentage of the development's 3,500 residential building lots to adjoin it." Course architect William Bell was urged to let the holes ramble as much as practical so the building sites could be tucked around them wherever possible.

This feature in itself has complicated maintenance in that it requires turf management on about 40 acres that are not actually part of the course, but have esthetic value to homeowners. At one time Uhland's crew was responsible for maintaining the elaborate landscaping that adorns the main access road to the real estate development more than a mile from the maintenance building. He was able to chop his crew from 33 to 13 when that responsibility was transferred.

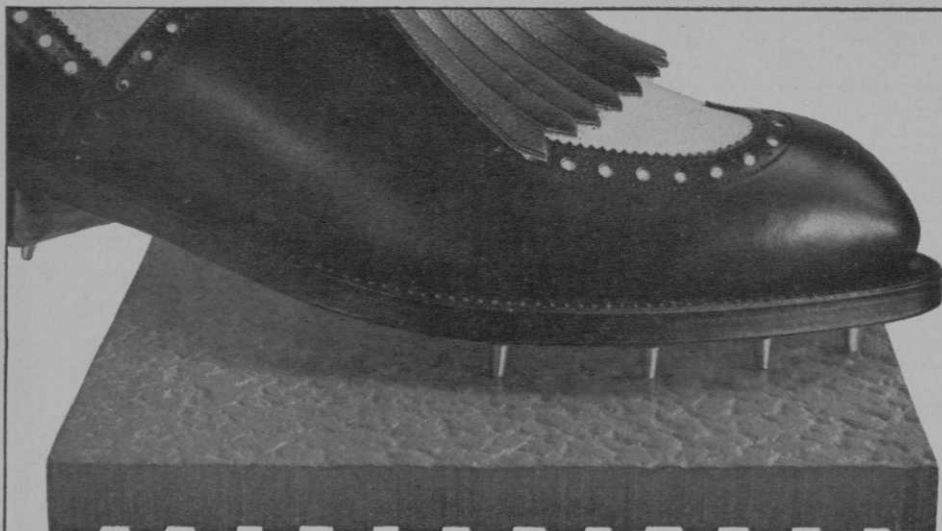
Perhaps nature's toughest obstacle for Uhland to overcome is the soil, mostly decomposed granite. Water penetration is almost impossible, and the two evils between which Uhland has to choose are dried out or drowned out spots on his fairways. Supts. who have been blessed with good soil would hesitate to trade places with Uhland because of this.

"Ten or 15 years ago," Brinkworth says, "if I had seen the soil where Sunset Oaks now stands I would have condemned it for golf course use." But as Gordon points out there has been a forced swing to construction on poor soil, and the need to use inferior water supplies — in some cases sewer effluent.

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Bob Uhland holds handle of mower while a maintenance department employee makes a minor adjustment.



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Front Yard Maintenance

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Water is not one of Sunset Oaks' headaches, except when it refuses to go into the ground. The development owns a lake that holds 3½ million gallons and has free flowing wells to replenish it. On a long summer day, the course may use as much as 1.7 million gallons on the fairways, applied through a quick-coupler system. Sprinklers at the greens are operated automatically.

Sun and Wind Hurt

The climate is nearly as devilish for Umland as the soil. The incessant sun bakes the shallow soil throughout the long summer days, often with assistance from stiff winds. Frost nips the tender grasses in the winter when heavy cloud layers often last for weeks.

Fairways were seeded to a 40-60 Highland bent and red fescue mix in December, 1962. Six months later the course was playable. In October of 1963 the first major tournament, the Porky Oliver Open, was held. A year later the Camellia

Open was held.

Greens are Seaside bent over 14 inches of washed sand. They average 10,000 square feet. In spite of obstacles, Sunset Oaks management was able to reduce its maintenance budget for 1965 to \$85,000 from the \$100,000 allotted last year.

3-Phase Junior Program

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ment (Medal) play of 4 holes on each date to determine the Junior champions.

An entrance fee of \$2.00 will be charged for each person enrolling in the program. Money collected will be returned to the participants in the form of prizes and refreshments at the end of the tournament.

Parents who desire to enroll their children in the program should submit their names and ages to the professional as soon as possible and no later than June 18.

Junior Golf Committee