

# Design for fee-course living

*Functional, spatial and aesthetic plans offered to meet challenge faced by both architects and owners.*

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The planning and design of clubhouses for fee golf courses is a challenge for both architects and owners. It is well to keep in mind that in fee courses, as well as private clubs, monies made on the course are often lost in the clubhouse. For a private club this means large, annoying assessments; for a fee course it is the difference between profit and loss. Fee course clubhouse problems are very similar to those of the private club and also similar to the public course, although there are few public courses which at present have extensive ancillary facilities.

There are three significant aspects of the architectural design of a clubhouse: function, spatial organization, and the visual aesthetic.

In attempting to set down the functional requirements, it is clear that despite the best efforts of the client there will be omissions and some errors. Any operation is affected and limited by its existing facility and any attempt to project it into a new physical plant will be prejudiced by the existing limitations. Although the client determines function, the architect can aid in bringing to the problem the skill and experience of architectural programming. Given the general and specific functional requirements, the architect can begin to develop the spatial organization.

The relating of space, both as a matter of size and type, into a spatial pattern set against the background of the known and unknown functional requirements presents the architect his most difficult challenge. The primary consid-

eration is utmost flexibility. This is the architect's way of contending with the unknown. Thus planning, as it develops into a spatial pattern, is the provision for the multi use of all areas.

The visual aesthetic of the clubhouse is an area in which some strange and often ludicrous decisions have been made. In the past, for various reasons, clubhouses were designed to give the superficial appearance of manor houses and chateaux. Fortunately this has begun to change and here and there one can see really elegant clubhouses using contemporary materials and designed with reference to site and need—instead of being poor imitations of Elizabethan buildings which even in the original weren't very comfortable. A clubhouse set in a golf course should be part of that environment, an environment often of great beauty, and relate closely to functional requirements. A building should provide for man an environment suitable for his activities and an atmosphere relating to the setting.

Examining the more specific clubhouse requirements, we have, in our office, adopted an approach to planning best described as "EBB" design. After having set out what the client feels are the needs of his operation—needs which invariably are for maximum occupancy—the proposed spatial organization is tested against the EBB condition.

How would this scheme work at 10 per cent occupancy? How will it work at the odd hours? In effect, this means that having determined maximum use, what are the consequences of less than



*Old Orchard's new clubhouse (Mount Prospect, Ill.), is practical example of good design.*

full and continued use? This has particular meaning in golf, which is, in most cases, a seasonal activity.

The EBB design view raises questions. How many service people are required to be present at 6:00 a.m. and still provide full service? How many would be needed at 5 p.m. and still provide service in April and October?

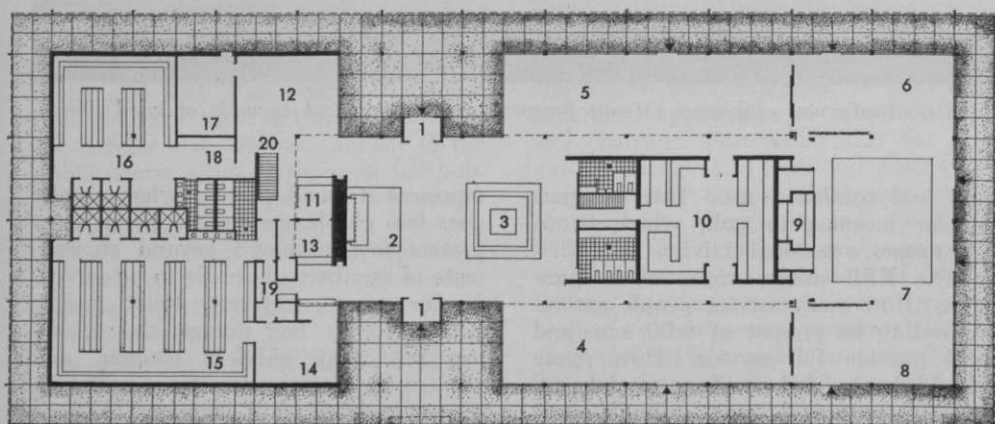
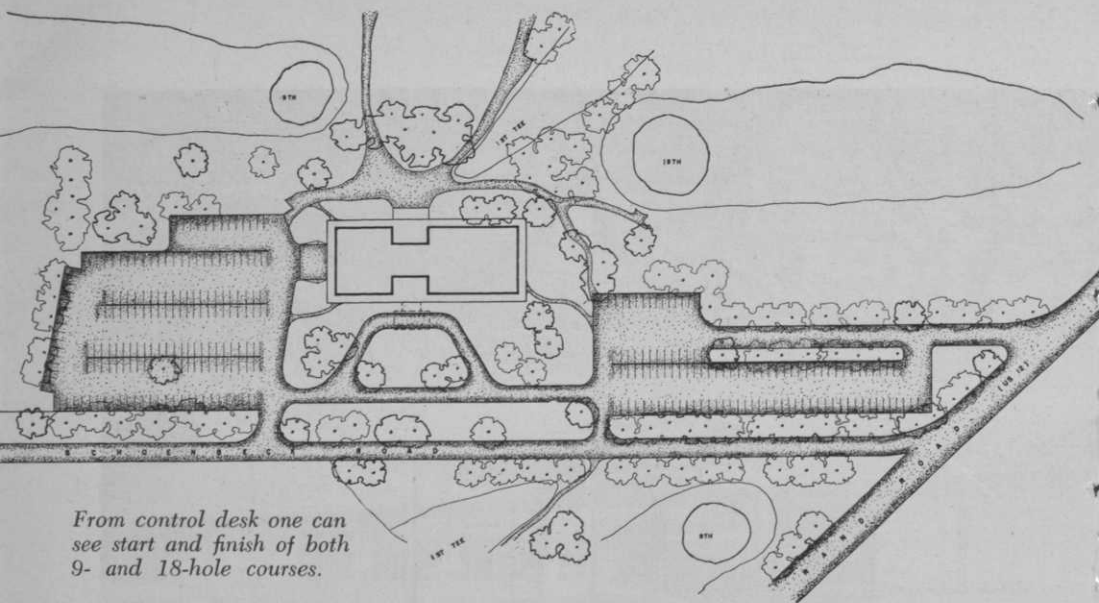
An efficient design would make it possible to operate with as few as five service employees in the clubhouse—one man at a check-in-counter who can also watch the first tee, one bartender to serve the golfing and non-golfing public, one waitress, one short order cook and one porter. A very large clubhouse can open and maintain an EBB operation with more employees put into service as the traffic flow increases. EBB concept makes it possible to open early and still offer all services; it also makes possible the continuing operation during off-hour periods and when seasonal rains or bad weather cut clubhouse use.

It is well to keep in mind that those facilities which relate directly to golf

represent a small part of what usually goes into clubhouse design. These areas present few problems beyond an estimate of numbers of people to be served. Locker rooms, showers, toilet rooms, powder rooms, bag storage, shoe cleaning, pro shop, check-in counter, and offices comprise the facilities needed by the majority of golf courses. There is always a serious question as to how many lockers should be assigned to men and how many to women. A possible solution lies in the provision of smaller locker rooms which could, by means of interconnecting doors, be made part of the men's or women's locker room depending on the demand as it develops.

Beyond the possible addition of a small golfer's grill, all other areas usually included in clubhouses are not directly connected with golf. Because of the highly seasonal character of golf in northern communities most clubhouses contain other facilities whose major purpose is to make the clubhouse usable 12 months of the year. Restaurants, cock-

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*Kitchen set at center of building to service golfers' grill, formal dining room and the banquet areas of new clubhouse.*

## DESIGN

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tail lounges, banquet facilities, driving ranges, theatres, etc., are often included to provide a more diversified clubhouse. Now the fly gets into the ointment.

Once having made a decision to enter the restaurant and banquet business, the clubhouse is called upon to house a number of functions which are not related to golf as such. For most clubhouses the banquet business, with its predictable costs and minimum over-

## KEY

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. ENTRY          | 11. CHECK IN DESK     |
| 2. FIREPLACE      | 12. PRO SHOP          |
| 3. BAR            | 13. OFFICE            |
| 4. FORMAL DINING  | 14. CHECK ROOM-LOUNGE |
| 5. GOLFERS GRILL  | 15. MENS LOCKER       |
| 6. BANQUET ROOM 1 | 16. WOMENS LOCKER     |
| 7. BANQUET ROOM 2 | 17. GOLF CLUB STORAGE |
| 8. BANQUET ROOM 3 | 18. POWER ROOM        |
| 9. BANQUET BAR    | 19. LOCKER ATTEND     |
| 10. KITCHEN       | 20. TO THEATRE        |

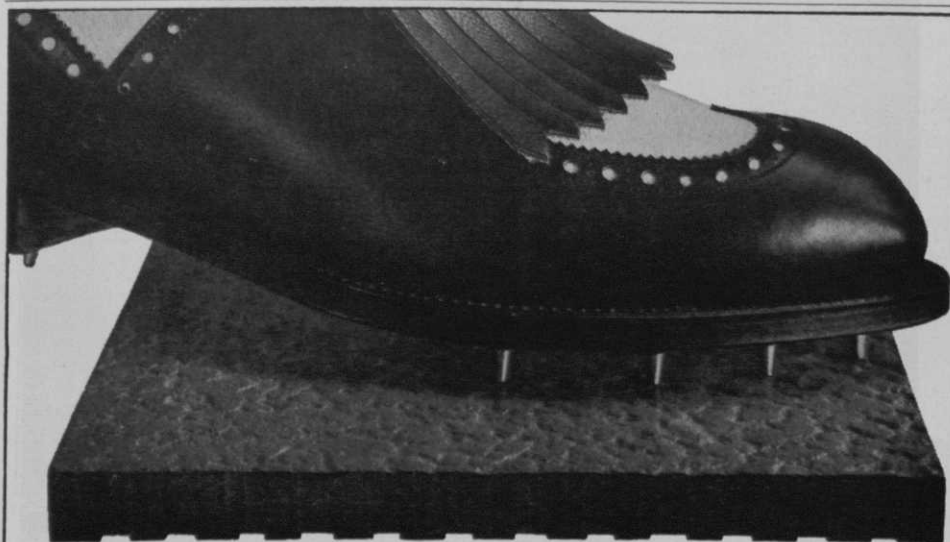
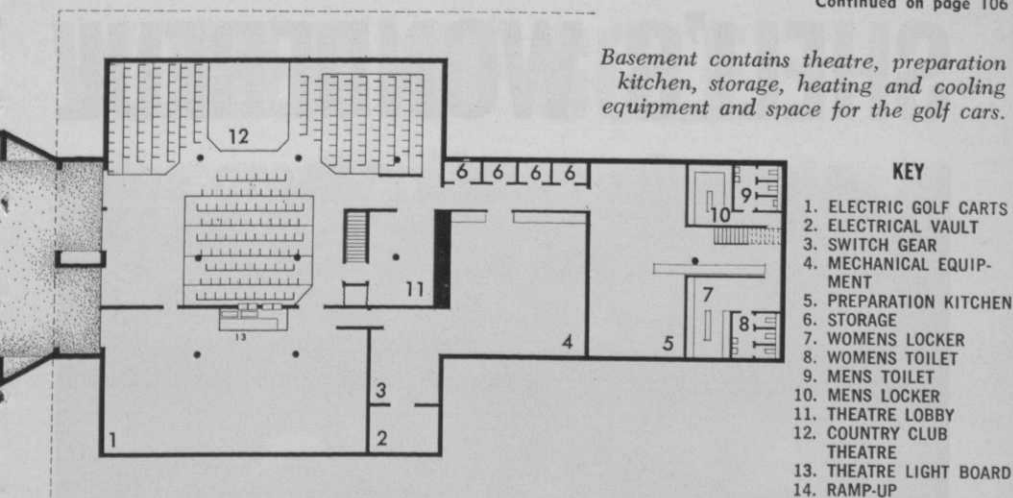
head, is the most profitable. However, since a golfer's grill is already in the program and the banquet facility requires a large kitchen, why not go further and include a full-scale restaurant? Why not indeed! From the viewpoint of planning it raises some interesting possibilities and many problems.

Our view of this problem is to relate all dining facilities to a central kitchen.

Plan for a coffee shop for golfers and non-golfers separate from a more formal dining room (a non-spike area). A center bar will serve golfer, non-golfer and day time banquets and meetings, avoiding the need for double facilities.

By providing the possibility of opening the dining areas to the banquet areas it is possible to utilize the banquet areas as an overflow for the restaurant and golf-

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ers' grill (a summer situation) and to conversely utilize the restaurant areas as an overflow for banquets and meetings (a winter situation). The central kitchen serves all areas and is thus capable of providing service, regardless of the type, at any given moment. The restaurant spaces are uniquely suited to serve as the reception areas so often required for banquet and meeting activities.

Now for clubhouse construction. Golf courses are most often located in areas which are far removed from adequate fire protection. Volunteer fire departments and wells with limited water supplies make clubhouses unusually prone to disastrous fires. Fire resistant construction is an important consideration in reducing the costs of insurance and in protecting the structure from the ravages of fire. Fire detection systems can be helpful, but the limitations of local departments obviates some of the advantages of such systems. Sprinklers and other on-the-spot fire fighting equipment should be considered.

Old Orchard Country Club, a fee course in Mount Prospect, Ill., illustrates how the outlined concepts were utilized in the design of a particular clubhouse. After a fire completely destroyed the old clubhouse, Alper and Alper, architects, were commissioned to design a new one.

The architectural program included locker facilities, pro shop, bar, golfers' grill, formal dining room and banquet facilities. The structure was to be built with at least a two-hour U.L. fire resistance classification. The interior design was included in the program.

Old Orchard Country Club is a 27-hole fee course, on which approximately 60,000 rounds of golf are played yearly. It is located in an area largely built up with residential communities and some commercial and industrial concentrations. The course is about 15 minutes from O'Hare Airport and about forty minutes driving time from Chicago's Loop.

In designing the building a new site

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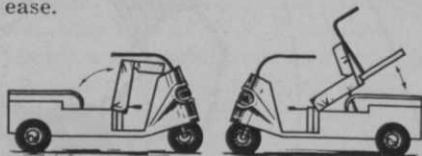
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## DESIGN

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was chosen adjacent to the first tee (clearly visible from the control desk), the 18th green, the ninth green and the first tee and ninth green of the nine-hole course. The structure is an independent steel frame. The exterior walls are glass set in aluminum frames and common brick painted white. Functionally the building is designed so that golfers enter it from the golf course side and the non-golfing public from the covered driveway. The golfers' grill overlooks the course and specifically the first tee.

The kitchen set at the center of the building services the golfers' grill, the formal dining room and the banquet areas.

A center area with a 15 foot ceiling height contains a bar. This center lounge is the point of entry for both golfers and non-golfers. Thus what is the entry area is also a bar and a lounge. The dining room, the golfers' grill and the banquet rooms all interconnect for multi use. The basement contains a theater, preparation kitchen, storage, and heating and cooling equipment.

Although the plan and design of Old Orchard were the result of the particular needs of the club and the site, they illustrate in a concrete instance the concepts of EBB design. This clubhouse has proved highly efficient and successful. The food and liquor sales have approached close to a million dollars annually and the green fees charged are the highest in the Chicago area. The success of this clubhouse is clearly the result of good management having a physical plant which can be adapted to changing needs.

The architect can make a significant contribution not only in providing an aesthetic environment but in planning for efficient utilization of space. •

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