DESIGN FOR A SORORITY HOUSE

BY

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THESIS

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

LOUISE JOSEPHINE PELLENS

ENTITLED

DESIGN FOR A SORORITY HOUSE

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Bachelor of Science in Architectural Decoration

Newton A. Wells
Instructor in Charge

APPROVED:

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF Architecture
DESIGN FOR A SORORITY HOUSE.

It is desired to build a chapter house for a sorority at a State University which is located in the central northwest.

Accommodations for twenty-two members and a chaperone is required. The house must be of moderate cost, as it is built and maintained by the members of the organization; but it must be durable and well constructed.

Description and Discussion of Plans.

The chief problem in a sorority house is to get a first floor plan which is ordinarily divided into several small reception rooms, but may occasionally be thrown into one large room suitable for dancing. Less privacy is demanded than in a private residence, but considerably more than in a club house or other building of a semi-public nature.

Three stories and a basement are used to obtain the requisite number of reception and private rooms, such as studies and sleeping rooms. The chapter and initiation room, which is the only necessarily secret part of the building, is placed in the front portion of the basement. This is separated from the rear or utilitarian part by a heavy masonry wall and may be reached only by stairs which descend under the main staircase. While the chapter room is an important part of the plan, it is only used occasionally and
should not take up any of the more important space of the upper stories. No daylight is required and for the short space of time that it is used, sufficient ventilation may be obtained by vent flues. In the rear of the basement are located the furnace room, fuel room, vegetable room, and laundry, which are accessible either from the kitchen or from the outside by a ground level entrance. (See first floor plan).

On the ground floor are located, the reception and living rooms, dining room and kitchen with pantries, and the servants apartments. To the first group, belong the living room, music room, reception hall and den. The living room has also somewhat the nature of a library, with long book cases on either side of the fireplace. This room has a southern exposure, which makes it always a pleasant, light room. It is separated from the reception hall only by a colonnade, and as large doorways lead from the dining room, living room, and hall into the anteroom, these four may be conveniently thrown together for dancing.

The music room also has a south exposure and as it faces the west too, the room is especially cheerful in the late afternoon.

There are two entrances from outside into the reception hall; one from the front terrace, through a small vestibule, and the other a carriage entrance, which is under the stair case landing.
A flight of three steps leads from the hall level to the entrance level. The stair-case itself with its broad landing is a very ornamental feature of the design. A wide flight of steps ascends to this landing and then divides into two branches the rest of the way.

A small den completes this group of rooms and is of a rather more private character than the other. The rest of the rooms all have window seats or ingle nooks to help remove the barren appearance due to their size.

The dining room with its ante-room might well be placed in this group of rooms; for a large ingle nook and a fire place at the end of the former, give it the appearance of a living room, while the ante-room has naturally the character of a reception room. Only a very wide arch stands between these two and at times of dinner parties or other functions, they may be thrown into one large banquet hall. As the dining room has an eastern exposure, it will always be light and cheerful in the morning. By placing the fire place back in an alcove, the objection to dining room grates - that they make part of the room uncomfortably warm - is overcome. The windows are placed high in the walls, so that sufficient light is obtained, privacy from outside is also obtained.

Behind the den is a telephone room, which also serves as a coat room and lavatory. A door leads from this room into the dining room, for convenience at meal times.
As freshmen answer the telephone, as a rule, it is not necessary to have it near the servants quarters. However, a door opens into the pantry, so that there is direct communication between the kitchen and the front door, without going through the dining room.

Joined to the kitchen, is a large butlers pantry and a store room. Cupboards, shelves, and sink occupy the space along the wall of the pantry, so that ample room is provided for serving a large number of people. A refrigerator is built into the store room, with access for ice from the back porch; and as the walls of this room are packed with sawdust, making it impervious to heat, the place is practically a cold storage room. By means of this, provisions may be bought in wholesale quantities and preserved here.

In the kitchen, the stove is placed in a recess under a hood. A pipe from this connecting with the chimney carries off all odors of cooking. Cabinets for pans, kettles, and kitchen crockery, are conveniently located near the stove. The rest of the space on the first floor is used for servants apartments. Two bed rooms, connecting with a common bath and a living room are provided. (See plan of first floor).

On the second floor is a living room, guest room, chaperone’s room, study and sleeping rooms, linen closet and trunk room. The upstairs living room is a very essential
feature of the sorority house plan. In the evenings the first floor is usually given up to callers, and it is almost necessary to have some place upstairs where the girls can congregate.

The chaperone's room has been placed at the head of the stairs so that she may have close observance over all affairs. Since this room is to be used both as a sitting room and a bed room, it is much larger than the other sleeping rooms. The guest room is very much smaller, as it is unnecessary to allow as much space for a room which is only used occasionally as for one which is in constant use. Both of these rooms have private baths.

Six suites of rooms are placed on this floor. Each of these is designed to accommodate two girls and consists of a study, a sleeping room, and one bath for each two suites. (See plan of second floor).

On the third floor are four more suites and two single rooms, for girls who do not care to have room-mates. (See plan of third floor).

Style of Exterior.

The general style of the exterior of this building is modern English Gothic. The shape of the plan and the design is very simple. Two bays on the front of the building and the third story are timbered, while the rest of the
house is plain plaster. The half timber work is very severe and simple, omitting all carving and ornament. The plaster is tinted a faint yellow which harmonizes with the dark red-brown of the wood. This material of construction is especially suited to the climate where the house is located; for the plaster is excellent in keeping out both heat and cold and is very durable, needing but few repairs. The only decoration occurs in the balustrades above the porches where some Gothic designs have been carved. (For details of treatment of exterior trim, gables and chimneys, see perspective drawing of exterior).

Style of Interior.

The interior is modern Gothic also, shown in the Tudor arches and beam ceilings, but having a feeling of the mission style in the simple lines of the furniture and woodwork.

Treatment of Grounds.

The site selected for the location of this building is a north-east corner lot, two hundred feet wide by two hundred feet deep. The house faces the principal thoroughfare, but is placed well back from both streets, thus giving more privacy. The grounds are treated very naturalisticly,
with large lawn areas set off by masses of shrubbery and bushes. From the side door, a path leads to the tennis court, which is located in the north-east corner of the lot. This is nearly concealed by a plantation of shrubs and small trees. The laundry yard is inclosed in the same way, these trees and bushes forming a good back-ground for the house. A driveway enters the grounds at the south west corner and passes under the porte cochere to a small stable and garage standing on the rear of the lot. Small shrubs clipped to a pyramidal shape and planted in tubs are placed about the terrace and steps, giving a very picturesque effect.

Interior Treatment.

The same style of woodwork is used throughout the lower floor; fumed oak, waxed and rubbed to a polished finish. In the dinning room, the walls are panelled to a height of five feet and a half, while in the living and music rooms, the wainscoting is only carried up four feet, three inches. All of the floors over the house are of quartered oak, with the exception of the kitchen and pantry; these being covered with rubber tiling. In the reception hall, a parquetry border about a foot wide runs around the edges.

All of the windows are casement and are filled with diamond shaped panes of glass. On the landing between the first and second stories, the windows, five in number, con-
tain shields bearing the sorority emblem. Unbleached linen, stencilled to match the color scheme of each room, is used through out for window draperies. This material has many advantages, as it is soft and silky in appearance, launder well, does not soil easily, and is inexpensive. The dining room, ante-room, and living room have beamed ceilings, while in the rest of the house they are plain coved ceilings.

All hardware and light fixtures are of satin finish yellow brass. The lines of these are very severe, and they are decorated only with the simplest of geometrical patterns. All of the electric light shades are square in shape and made of plain frosted glass.

The living room is finished in green, with plain frescoed walls. The mantle piece is of fumed oak to match the wood work and has a facing of plaster, in which are embedded two shields. All of the furniture is plain and massive, with no curved lines whatever. The main articles of furniture are a davenport, chairs, and a large library table in the middle of the room. The predominant color of the rug which covers the floor is green. (See perspective of living room).

The dining room is finished in shades of brown and yellow. A geometrical pattern is stencilled on the walls which are tinted a rich yellow. The fire place is of red brick, with wide joints filled with black mortar. The mantle shelf is a flat slab of stone, supported by brick work,
corbelled out to the requisite projection. The dining room tables, four in number, are five feet square in size. They are not extensible, but either one or two persons may be conveniently placed on the side so that from sixteen to thirty-two people may be accommodated without giving the tables an appearance either of barreness or of being overcrowded. (See perspective view of dinning room).

The color scheme of the den is dull blue and ivory, shading from deep tones to very pale ones. The predominant color of the rug in this room is blue to match the walls; but tones of red, green and warm yellow occur which give color and relieve the monotony of the blue. Touches of yellow are also used in hangings, curtains, and pillows.

The den is decorated in red which adds to the cosiness of the room. The rug is a mixture of dull reds and blues, relieved by lines of white.

The reception hall and ante-room are done in very quiet tones of green, since they must stand as back grounds for the more decisive color schemes in the other rooms. Oriental rugs are used in these two rooms, rich in coloring and design, but unobstrusive.

In the upstairs living room, browns and yellows are chosen, as this room should be the brightest and most cheerful in the house. While the draperies, rugs and other furnishings are not as expensive as those of the lower floor, they are very attractive and comfortable. The hangings and cushions
are of tan monkscloth, stencilled in brown and yellow.

All of the studies and sleeping rooms are decorated in pale shades of tan, yellow, blue or green. White iron bedsteads are used through-out. Single beds have been designated; but ample space has been provided for double beds. The latter arrangement is more convenient as in this way, as many guests as members may be accommodated. All of the woodwork is light fumed oak, with furniture to match. In this way the rooms are light and dainty, which is the chief requisite of a girl's room. Grass mats in soft tones are used for rugs.

All bath-rooms have blue and white tile flooring and white tile wainscoting to a height of five feet. The rest of the wall surface is covered with oil cloth in a delf blue and white pattern. All of the fittings are in porcelain, no marble being used. All exposed plumbing fixtures to be nickle-plated.

Drawings Required.
1. Perspective of exterior.
2. First floor plan.
4. Third floor plan.
5. Perspective of living room.
6. Perspective of dining room.