POTOMAC POLO CLUB
POTOMAC, MARYLAND

By

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INTRODUCTION

My thesis statement is: Cultural heritage and its positive reinforcement of regionalism. I believe that architecture should be an evolution of past works. The past provides a link between the land, its people, and its buildings. My project is a polo club just outside of the Washington D.C. It is my desire to establish my professional practice in this area.
The Project

PLAN TOUR

- Entering from the north-

The entry is an atrium space with a center strip fountain. Arranged in a square, the space filters the visitor in. From here you enter the under the dome. This is a gathering node, a focal point, and a statement. Designed to seem to float above the floor will be a mosaic map of the area with the location of the club at the center. To the west is the dining room, which seats 240 people. It overlooks the ballroom below. On each side of the entrance are two support spaces. The piano lounge and the breakfast room. The breakfast room is also used as a family lounge at dinner, or as a V.I.P. lounge on game day.

Behind the dining room are the kitchens. One hot, one cold, and all of the support spaces. To the east of the dome is the business wing. The hall of fame and tea room flank the entrance to the retail shop, jewelry shop, custom saddlery, travel shop, etc., and the
class room and offices for the Maryland Equine Education and Training. The library has a barrel vaulted ceiling. Behind the library are the business offices and the players' lounge. The south entry is a barrel vault with skylights to encourage movement through the space.

Below the west wing holds the Ballroom, storage and service. The east wing, the health club with pool, courts, practice rooms, and an exit to the covered way to the arena.
This diagram shows how the building works. The lower level contains the Ballroom and pool, the main floor contains retail, and the upper level contains the private rooms.
The Site
The site is located just outside of Washington about 1.5 miles from the small town of Potomac. The site is approximately 950 acres, 1.6 miles long and approximately 1 mile wide. The site peaks at the north at +373 feet and drops off steadily to the south to around +250 feet, then it drops off sharply into a stream and rock run. The main access to the site is to the south at Herzog Road.
The map shows the major starting restrictions of point and plains. The top diagram shows the approach with the field being the events and the layers of circulation. The lower program is the overall hierarchy with the club at the center, then guests, horses, and finally the staff.
The main access on to the site is to the south at Herzog Road. A second access point is at Brickyard Road. This point will mainly serve as horse entry. A third access point is located north at Persimmon Tree Road. Two large bodies of water were created on the site for irrigation and sewage treatment.
One of the key elements in the master plan are the polo fields. Their great size, 900 feet by 600 feet, made placement easy because the site contains two areas large and flat enough to accommodate one field each. The steeplechase course is placed so there is flat seating to the north nearest the parking, and horses can enter from event parking or the barns without crossing through the public.
Large flat open spaces are left for pasture. A ratio of pasture/horse will give maximum boarding ability. The paddock section of 1 square acre lot is provided near the main barn group for stallions to be separated.
The main club is located on a hill in the center of the site. The player village and farm manager's home are to the west, and the 3000 seat arena is to the east near parking. The model farm is placed between the main barns and the second polo field to create a public node. The barns are placed as to serve the pasture areas.
Parking is placed between the arena and model farm with the main barns in front. An area behind the club field will be used for overflow and event parking. Club members will be provided with underground parking. The service areas run along the back of the site.
The Game

Polo was developed by horsemen of the middle east around the ninth century to improve themselves for battle. Its spread was modest until the British found it being played in India. It then spread throughout the British Empire. Polo reached its peak in the 1920's and 1930's. However, in recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in the sport.
The Polo Mount

There is not the slightest doubt that the most important part of the polo game is the mount. Estimates in this consideration range from as high as 85% to never much less than 75%. It is appropriate here to include just a few quotes from recognized expert poloists:

“The horse is 80% of the game. Shoot the rider, but save the horse.”
(Baron Eugene Jasinski of Oak Brook Polo Club, 80-year-old former Polish diplomat.)

“A horse can make a two handicap difference when equal players are on the field. The polo pony should have the speed of a thoroughbred, must handle like a cutting horse, and have the sanity of a pleasure horse. It’s a complete beast. It has to do everything. It must have heart.” (John Kuhn, polo player and veterinarian.)

“The horse is 75% to 85% of the game. If the horse can’t get you there, you can’t make a play.” (Cecil Smith, one of the greatest polo players ever.)

“The pony is 75% of the game. If your horses are not good, you cannot win.” (Memo Gracida, 10 goaler.)

Ask such knowledgeable players or others thoroughly imbued in the game, “What is it that constitutes a good polo pony?” Their replies will be consistently the same! They will tell you that a good polo mount must have superior intelligence and be of such substance and quality to competently show the endurance and ability to carry up to perhaps 200 pounds at speeds above 25 miles per hour. Also, they must be well-coordinated, energetic, responsive in quick stops and starts and able to take and give hard bumps in the ride-offs.

And that’s not all! Of critical significance to the pony’s mouth. It must be a “soft” mouth to be quickly responsive to the slightest guidance of the reins. The importance of a soft mouth becomes more evident when it is appreciated that the mouth is a sensor which gives instructions to stop (the brakes) and turn (the steering wheel). Without a good mouth, the rider may have less than instant response to his commands.

Another frequently asked question, which usually finishes in three parts, is “Where do these obviously special horses come from?” and “How old are they when they begin playing?” and, finally, “As polo is played in various parts of the world, do the ponies travel?”

Providing he is sound of wind and limb, and can see well, a thoroughbred whose racing days are over—at about age 5 or 6—can well be a likely candidate for the demanding game of polo. As most polo ponies are thoroughbreds from the racetracks or the specialized breeding farms in Oklahoma, Texas and California, we can also look for some being shipped in from the polo-playing countries such as Argentina, New Zealand and England. There are instances of some horses starting play at age 3, and a few have been known to be still playing at 15.

Before they have begun training, it is not easy to spot the animal which will become a great polo pony. Poloists are alert for those who, in the arena, can quickly learn the rapid stops and turns, as well as demonstrate the stamina necessary to go the distance. Of course, the ideal is that distinctive pony who is a “natural.”

And, for the third part of the most-asked question, “The ponies do travel.” Each player is responsible for transportation of his ponies to the various games and tournaments. Most players transport their horses in goose-neck trailers. Under certain circumstances, the ponies do not travel. For example, in the National Polo League, headquartered at Griffith Park in California, the animals remain there. For the assignment of mounts, the NPL has judged the fairest method to be the Argentine split-string method. In this system, one team captain splits the pool (24 head) into two strings, and the other team captain gets first pick of the strings. This assures that the captain who splits the strings will do so fairly, because he does not get first pick of the final split.

Players usually arrive early so they can prepare their mounts and discuss team line ups and game strategy. Strategies in the game are a real test of the player’s judgment as to the manner in which he uses his horses. There are those who go early with their best mounts, while others save these to make sure of a strong finish. As in many sports, there are certain psychological advantages to either selection. In this regard, also, consideration must be given as to when horses will be changed, for no player will continue on a mount he thinks is getting tired. Like every other athlete, the polo pony must work out daily to maintain his skills and be ready for that one game a week. The cost of an animal trained to play polo can be anywhere from $1,500 to $20,000, and the yearly board will tally over $3,000. Extra costs are for the services of farriers and veterinarians, plus the transportation to local tournaments.

All polo players have high regard for their ponies and respect the clever ways in which they respond in the arena or on the field. This respect is to the real hero of the game—the polo pony.
The Equipment

REGULAR LEATHER RIDING GLOVE—Protects the player's hand and affords better grip on mallet handle.

HELMET—Hard surface, fixed and strapped. The helmet protects its wearer from swinging mallets and balls traveling at speeds of nearly 100 miles per hour.

BRIDLE—This series of snappings and supports gives the player steering control of the pony.

POLO BALL—Three and one half inches in diameter and weighing about 4.4 1/2 ounces. The ball is hand carved of willow or bamboo root.

NALLET—Made of cane or bamboo shaft with hardwood head. Head riveted on one end to allow for full swing. Ball is carved. Nallet shaft is highly flexible and can make a complete arc under the pony's tail or neck when swinging hand. Nallets come in different lengths to accomodate player's swing and size of pony.

RECOMMENDED WHITE POLO BREECHES—Molded and functional for polo.

SADDLE—Leather construction with stirrup. Helps from jumping saddle, which has extra pads and form of bronco saddle's horn mounded.

NAPPADES—Protective wrapping for pony's legs against contact with polo ball.

BRAIDED BELL—Alters less interfering once with swinging mallet in execution of back and tail shots.
PROGRAMMING

THE CLUB

GATEHOUSE
RESTAURANT 9500 SQ. FT
interior seating for 240
exterior seating for 60.
BALLROOM
HOT & COLD KITCHENS
FOOD STORAGE
BANQUET STORAGE
MECHANICAL ROOM
BREAKFAST ROOM
PIANO LOUNGE
TEA ROOM
HALL OF FAME
PRO SHOP
RETAIL SHOP
MARYLAND EQUINE EDUCATION &
TRAINING OFFICE AND CLASSROOM
LIBRARY
CLUB OFFICES & CONFERENCE
GRAND HALL
PLAYERS’ LOUNGE
25 METER WORKOUT POOL
SPORT COURTS
LOCKER ROOMS men & women
SOAP BOX ROOMS
PRACTICE ROOMS
ARENA with seating for 3000
PLAYERS’ VILLAGE & FARM
MANAGER HOME
SUPERINTENDENT’S RESIDENCE
CLUB MANAGER’S RESIDENCE
20-26 DELUXE SUITES
REST ROOMS & EMPLOYEE LOUNGE
AND SERVICES
THE FARM

2 POLO FIELDS
RIDING & PONY STABLE 40 stalls
MEET STABLES
BARNS 200 horses
100 TEMPORARY STALLS FOR
SPECIAL EVENTS
STEEPLECHASE COURSE 1mile
600 feet
CRAFT & GIFT SHOP
LEATHER SHOP
BLACKSMITH SHOP
HARNESS MAKER’S SHOP
FARRIER’S SHOP
FENCING

There are three proposed types:

1. The standard four-board wood fence to be used along drives, and in other locations where visually important;

2. The standard woven wire fence with wood top rail and wood posts to be used generally on the pasture or paddock side of double fence lines for the prevention of injury to the horses;

3. A special four-board wood fence with an extra top rail and special reinforcement to be used in areas where extensive visitor contact with the fence is expected.

Double fence lines, with 15 foot wide alleyways in between are to be extensively used throughout the Model Farm. Horses can be extremely dangerous, and people sometimes abusive. The double fences, therefore, are not only for visual interest but more specifically for the protection of the horses and Club visitors.
MAINTENANCE

BUILDING MAINTENANCE
1. Sewage Treatment
2. Garbage & Trash Removal
3. General Building Maintenance - interior & exterior

CLUB & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE
1. Tractors
2. Mowers, Spreaders, Plows, Harrows, Sprayers, etc.
3. Trucks
4. Wagons
5. Irrigation Pumps & Pipes
6. Post Driver
7. Tree Maintenance Equipment
8. Horse Maintenance Equipment
9. Temporary Stalls
10. Shop & Vehicle Maintenance Equipment
11. Livestock Watering & Feeding Equipment
12. Hand & Power Tools
The beautiful dining room fountains and sculpture by J.G. Edwards.
Thesis

Thesis is our explanation of what is architecture. To understand my architecture is to understand myself. Who I am and how I perceive the world. I tend to look at things from a historical point of view. History is a hobby of mine, and I try to view things as to how they may be remembered in the big picture of being. To do this I must first give a brief outline on my perception of the historical development of architecture. This is an explanation of the history of architecture. There are four basic times into which architecture falls. There is the architecture of the antiquities. This includes Egyptian, Greek, and Roman architecture. This is the time of the growth of man. I call it the age of Empire. Architecture was for the most part confined to the individual empires. The fall of Rome marks the end of this period. It was at this time that the first great development of man occurred. The planet became crowded. No longer could one simply move
tro escape the enemy, or move to better soil or weather because someone had claim to that land. This combined with the fact that you now had to deal with hierarchy in architecture set off the next age of man, the age of Church.

There became a need for a overlaying system to provide for people to deal with each other, and the church filled this role. Early Christian, Romanesque, and Gothic architecture are included in this age. Church architecture transcended the empire, country, or kingdom. The Church became the common link in society. The Church age would end when time and science would disprove many of the religious dogma and doctrine.

With the birth of the age of Science, came Renaissance, Mannerist, and Baroque architecture. The age of Science brought art and exploration to the rich and powerful. The most powerful were the kings. The
architecture of the king became that of the Beaux-Arts school. This period would last until the fall of the kings that came in 1918 with World War I, and the rise of the age of Democracy.

The age of Democracy marks the beginning of modern architecture. While this is a simple run down, it is provided to give the essence of history and its relationship to architecture. Through history, we know where we now are. What makes good architecture? I believe there is a close tie between culture and architecture. But how does this work?

Architecture is a evolutionary process. The two elements which shape architecture the most are cultural heritage and regional precedents. It takes these two considerations, which are then translated into a modern language to produce good architecture.

In order to show this, I chose a project which would encompass this historical perspective while satisfying special needs. These special needs were largely site and function. Site was first chosen on a regional basis.
Hello,

My name is Greg Edwards and I am an architecture student at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. I am doing a survey on historical and cultural influence on architecture. If you would please respond to the following questions, it would help me discover the importance of these factors in architectural design.

Do you agree or disagree with the following definitions? (Check one)

- Space - the volume of area which is felt to enclose something
- Form - the size, shape, or arrangement of a structure
- Distance - the space between two structures
- Color - the appearance of a structure when light strikes it
- Detail - the small items that decorate a building
- Style - the ornamentation of a building which dates it historically
- Setting - the placement of buildings in context to its surroundings

Please circle one answer to each of the following questions.

1. Sex M F
2. What is your age group? under 25 26-35 36-55 56-65 over 65
3. What is the closest metropolitan area? Los Angeles San Francisco Washington, D.C. Other
4. Would you say your knowledge of architecture is: Very good Good Fair Poor None
5. Do you prefer architecture that is: Contemporary Traditional Do not know
6. Which traditional style of architecture do you prefer? Spanish Colonial Classical Victorian Do not know
7. Is your local metropolitan area architecture dominated by: Contemporary Traditional Do not know
8. Which factor contributes most in characterizing your area? Culture Environment Ethnic heritage Other
9. If you were to build a home, would it be: Traditional Contemporary Do not know
   Answer A or B as it pertains to question 9.
   A. If traditional, what style would it be? Spanish Colonial Classical Victorian Other
   B. If contemporary, what feature would you most important?
   Space Form Setting Details Other
10. Would the style of this home be consistent with the style in the area? Yes No Do not know

Washington, D.C. selected based on survey. This survey showed that certain styles of architecture are particularly associated with this region. People in this area tended to understand architectural elements of the area more readily. I believe this association is more historical.