EXPLORING THE COALESCEENCE OF THE MAN-MADE
& NATURAL WORLDS:
A CLUBHOUSE FOR MARQUETTE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

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The thesis issue that I have explored is extent to which the man-made and natural landscape can work to transform and complement one another to the point of dissolving the boundary between the two. Too many times, design leaves behind the idea of working together with the existing context. The physical and cultural context can and should play a substantial role in any design.

The design of a Clubhouse for Marquette Golf and Country Club’s new 18-hole course, Grey Walls, is a perfect opportunity to create a facility blending in with the beautiful landscape of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The physical context is home to rugged rock outcroppings, vast hardwood and evergreen forests, and the gorgeous Lake Superior as the back-drop of some of the course’s best views. The cultural context is that of the down-to-earth people of the Upper Peninsula, who take great pride in the natural beauty of their region and the simple lifestyle of which they are part.

The main objectives for my design were not only driven by the balance of man and nature, but also by research into the roots of the game of golf. The rich history of golf, and the complexity of the game itself, was beneficial in bringing forth design ideas, either literally or metaphorically, into the concepts and details of the design. The Clubhouse is a state-of-the-art facility including all of the necessary amenities. The pro-shop, offices, men’s and women’s locker rooms, banquet hall, and bar areas are all of the highest quality. The support spaces, including but not limited to, cart storage, bag room, kitchen, and stock rooms, are all of adequate space and efficient adjacencies to run a successful operation, for the benefit of the employees and club members.
The addition of the new 18-hole course, Grey Walls, at Marquette Golf and Country Club, makes the need for a new clubhouse evident for an efficient establishment. The clubhouse is one of the main focal points of any country club. Set aside from the signature holes of the course, the clubhouse is the place of gathering for the members and employees of the course. It is here that the members stop for cocktails at the terminus of a round of golf, the location for many banquets and special events, and also the place that they can call their own during conversation with members of other courses. For these reasons the clubhouse needs to be of such quality as to give all people involved the right to boast and brag about being part of such a prestigious group of people.

Traditionally, clubhouses around the country and even the world are designed to outdo the others. With structures more lavish and dominant than the others, they normally give no consideration to the surrounding landscape. For what reason does this occur? The answer may never be clear. To design a building that overwhelms the land for an establishment where the users are so fond of the land makes little sense.

With the idea of contextual sensitivity in the forefront, the design for the new clubhouse at Grey Walls focusses on this concept of meshing the built environment with the existing natural environment as the basis for the clubhouse design. To explore the extent to which this border can be dissolved is the starting point for this design project. The challenge comes first from this problem of creating the coalescence of the man-made and natural landscape, and continues into the creation of a still prestigious and powerful establishment for the owners and members of the course. The balance of design solutions solving these problems will result in a one-of-a-kind clubhouse for all outsiders to envy, and for all users to embrace as their own.
So many design projects seem to ignore the context of which they are a part. Throughout the country it seems to me that contextually insensitive buildings are designed and built before anyone realizes what is being constructed in their community. And, perhaps most tragically, the importance of contextual sensitivity is not understood by most people in our communities.

It is the idea of contextually sensitive architecture that I have explored, going beyond the issue of simply being sensitive toward the context, but striving to push it to erase the boundaries between the man-made and natural worlds. The concept of dissolving this border has resulted in a Clubhouse that would create a sense of unity and pride of the users with their strong passion and respect for the natural landscape of the Upper Peninsula.

The motivation for my inquiry into this topic stems from my strong ties to my home. Growing up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, I was brought up with a strong respect and love for the natural landscape. The lack of quality architecture in the Upper Peninsula has frustrated me as I grew in my design career. It is an important issue to educate any community about.

My qualifications for undertaking this project are evident in my personal experience of the physical and cultural context of the Upper Peninsula. From a design point of view, I have always had a strong drive to challenge myself with new and exciting ideas, and my love for the game of golf was also a factor in my choice of a thesis topic issue and design project.
Marquette Golf and Country Club has been one of the premier country clubs in the region for several years. The Heritage course opened for business in 1960 and has continued to grow in membership numbers throughout the years. A semi-private course, with membership numbers increasing, it has been a long time coming for the introduction of the new 18-hole course. Grey Walls is scheduled to open in the summer of 2004, and it will need a new clubhouse facility, due to the fact that the Heritage course and current clubhouse are located approximately a quarter-mile away.

With the classy reputation that Marquette Golf and Country Club holds at the current time, it is imperative that the new clubhouse design upholds this reputation. With the new course being set in a gorgeous landscape, the possibility of being ranked as one of the top courses in the state is clear. With several signature holes on the course, the new clubhouse needs to be a signature in itself.

The physical context of Grey Walls at Marquette Golf and Country Club in Marquette, Michigan is home to some of the most beautiful landscape in the country. There is no arguing the potential for success this site holds for a project that intends to tie the clubhouse to the site. With jagged rock outcroppings off of the eighteenth-hole, dense hardwood and evergreen forests, rolling hills, and views to the beautiful Lake Superior, the location for the new clubhouse is perfect to introduce a design that all but erases the border between the natural and man-made.

From a cultural point-of-view, meshing the structure with the existing landscape will be accepted with open arms. The respect that the society has for nature is unlike any other. The citizens of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan hold nature as the greatest and most important aspect of the region. It is for this reason that many of them live there, and wish to see it preserved.
- Pro Shop/ Merchandise Shop 1,000 s.f.
- Banquet Hall 1,400 s.f.
- Bar/ Lounge 750 s.f.
- Dining Room 750 s.f.
- Kitchen 500 s.f.
- Men's and Women's Locker Rooms each @ 750 s.f.
- Bag Room 500 s.f.
- Cart Storage 3,000 s.f.
- Stock room(s) 400 s.f.
- Member's Lounge 600 s.f.
- Conference Room 400 s.f.
- Office's 1,100 s.f.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>250 s.f.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Professional</td>
<td>250 s.f.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food and Bev. Director</td>
<td>200 s.f.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>200 s.f.</td>
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<tr>
<td>General/ Secretary</td>
<td>200 s.f.</td>
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Total Net Area 11,200 s.f.

- Grossage (50% of net area) 5,600 s.f.
- Mechanical Room (5% of Grossage) 280 s.f.

TOTAL AREA 17,080 SQ. FT.
The organization of the users of this facility are a major driving force of the adjacencies. It is the users that create the spaces on the interior and exterior.

The roots of this organizational hierarchy are stemmed with the General Manager. From him/her, the head professional and his/her assistants, pro shop crew and outside crew, and the food and beverage employees are tied together as a single entity. Many other employees of the course keep the organization running smoothly.

Beyond the people employed by the course, and perhaps the most important in keeping the course together, are the members and visitors. They are the people that keep the country club thriving, and the users with the most pride for the place in which they can call their own.

For all of the reasons mentioned above, design is ruled by space planning for the users, and not just filling up the square footages listed on the previous page.
As stated in the project summary, traditionally clubhouses are merely an icon displaying the wealth of any given country club. No considerations are normally taken in order to tie the building to its site and surroundings. It seems odd for an establishment centered around the natural world to ignore the possibility of creating a unified establishment between the built and unbuilt environs. The idea of a clubhouse that all but erases the boundary between the natural and built entities lends itself to not only becoming an icon for the golf community, but to the entire design profession.
The oakland museum, by Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo and Associates, was a great precedent study into the concept of erasing the border between the natural and man-made worlds. This project was extremely successful in creating a public park and museum in what was once a mundane and typical city setting.
The original concept for the clubhouse was to build into the three mounds that are the backdrop for the fifteenth and eighteenth holes. To build into the hills seemed to be the most viable solution to create a structure that encompassed the sight. In further discussion and thought, this idea proved to be extremely intrusive on the site. Not only in form, but also in the destruction of the natural setting that the three mounds create.

Moving forward, the concept was driven towards closing the site with the clubhouse as the fourth mound, creating an artificial hill which creates a more private gathering space as players complete a round of golf. As seen to the right, this first evolution of the design is very rigid in form, but deals with a series of terraces to create this artificial hill.
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As the design progresses, the form becomes more organic in order to portray the idea of a false natural world. The building becomes two faced, with a traditional front that explodes through into the landscape as one passes through. The concept of terracing is still extremely dominant at this stage, but finds a different form.
The very organic form towards the golf course seems to create a fluid piece that blends well with the site. It begins to work well in section, creating the gradual stepping along the course side of the structure. The terraces also create ideal gallery platforms for the viewing of groups finishing the adjacent holes.
The clubhouse begins to take shape as the ideas continue to evolve. Materiality starts to show the idea of creating a very rustic feel for the facility. Even though the concept behind the organic form and terracing seems valid, it seems as though it is not strong enough. The structure needed something more to blend itself with the site. The organic form seems to be forcing itself to be something that it is not. The time to step back and look at the big picture had come full circle.
A new idea of going back to a more orthogonal form begins to progress in the later stages of design. Working with angled structural wing walls lended itself to the idea of creating the artificial hill in a more realizable form. Still creating a push and pull on the course side, this new shape proves to be a strong solution for the thesis issue.
The location of the facility on the site is ideal for the idea of erasing the border between the natural and man-made worlds. Being in such close proximity with the existing mounds creates a strong tie with the entire site. The wings of the building are engulfed by the mounds that create the natural setting, making the final design appear as though it erupts from the earth. The mounds create a natural visual barrier of the structure as well, giving only a glimpse as players come down the fairways of the flanking holes.

The clubhouse opens up to the course in such a way that the facility encompasses a very intimate gathering space within the building site off of the eighteenth green. The series of decks that reach out to the greens are now the galleries that used to be on the building itself. Bringing the crowd closer to the greens is ideal to create the exciting atmosphere golfers enjoy at the culmination of their round. The introduction of plantings engulfing the facility now ties the building to the site not only in form but also in material and feel. The use of the angled walls on the course side facades now create the true look of a building growing out of the earth.
Organizationally, the building is ideal for a smoothly run operation. As seen in the plans, the private entities are kept separate, and out of sight from the members of the club. Not only for safety and security, but also to keep the less desirable functions of the facility out of sight, and out of mind.

Below grade houses the cart and club storage, and also the mechanical and storage areas for the clubhouse. This area will be used solely by course employees, accessed by the cart ramp on the north or by the stairs from the pro shop. Sufficient space has been allotted for cart and club maintenance as well.

The first floor plan is where members and visitors will come before a round to access the locker rooms or the pro shop. The hallway to the locker rooms opens out into a lounge space for the players. With plenty of seating and a large screen television for the members to watch tournaments, this space will be used frequently by many people. The locker rooms are a more private space for members to sit and question their club selection on the 17th. The offices located on this level are set back for the sake of privacy and security, but close enough in proximity to everything else to be extremely efficient. The pro shop is similar to the player's lounge in that it opens out to the organic side of the building. This creates a very comfortable yet professional atmosphere for the users.

The second floor is home to the bar and dining halls. Large enough to house small formal parties, this space can be used year-round for awards ceremonies and wedding receptions. More importantly, this space creates a grand view out towards the golf course from either side, including an outdoor patio off of each the bar and the dining hall. The layout of the site also incorporates a unique design aspect that allows egress from the patios directly out to grade off of both ends.
Exploring the Coalescence of the Man-made and Natural Worlds: A Clubhouse for Marquette Golf and Country Club
This clubhouse design for Marquette Golf and Country Clubs new 18-hole course is one that creates interest in the minds of the public, and pride for the members of the course. The coalescence of the man-made and natural worlds is a concept that fits perfectly with the pride that golfers hold for the natural environment.

As seen in the model photos, the structure is truly engulfed by the land. Although it is ultimately its own entity, it works with the site in such a way that it becomes one with the land, and the land embraces the facility with open arms.
As with any design project the opportunity for improvement is never ending. When I look back on the project I feel that I have grown in my design capabilities, and also as a professional. It is the nature of the design field to feel as though a project is never complete, and this is no exception.

The form of the building has come a long way from the initial concepts, but I feel that it could still be stronger. The idea of the terraces could be brought further to create a usable space on the roof top. The development of this space would take careful consideration to keep from disrupting the pattern that has been created, but could be done in such a way to make the concept even stronger.

More time would also lead to considerations of very intricate design details both in form and materiality. I believe that such detailing could make or break the project, continuing to tie it to the site and surrounding context. The further development of the interior spaces could create a unified experience from the inside out.

In closing, I believe the project is successful, but needs to be brought to a higher level of detail to truly be considered a complete architectural piece.


The Oakland Museum. Architectural Record. April 1970

www.marquettegolf.org