

New York American

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My Dear Miss Morgan:

House A is very attractive and wholly satisfactory; front, side and rear elevations.

There is only one small point to be considered and that is whether the rear elevation, which is of course the main elevation in point of height, but nevertheless is least seen, is not a little too elaborate in its decoration?

I do not know that it is from an artistic point of view, but if this decoration is very expensive, you might possibly economize there with some advantage.

Regarding the blueprint floor plan of the lower loggia, I think the steps C are desirable, and better than the railing all around as indicated at D; as this would offer no outlet to the hill below in case any were wanted.

As regards the treatment of the porch opening out from the loggia, I think the plan B is better, with the seats around it.

Plan A offers another door into the closed portion, but that is not necessary, as the three doors in the middle are quite enough.

I think it would be better for the enclosed loggia to be enclosed, more after the manner of Plan B.

Finally, I think the steps E are a detriment and should be eliminated. They will make the lower loggia more or less unlivable, and they will also interfere with the lobby. If they are eliminated the entrance to the central living room on the upper floor can be in the middle of the south wall of the lobby right opposite the outside entrance to the lobby.

And this will give the most effective entrance, and the door can be made a feature of the lobby decoration. The lower loggia can be reached by the outside steps.

I suppose this is all clear, as you say you retained a duplicate of the blueprint.

I now come to the detail sketches. I do not like the gabled roofs that you suggest for the house B. I think they give too large an expanse of tile decoration. I think the roofs on house A are much better and should be kept on the other houses, both B and C.

Moreover the roofs on house A are more characteristically Spanish.

Therefore, I do not like the gabled end suggestion for house B but I am not averse to the double doors to the entrance lobby as indicated on that same sketch, if you desire this. It gives an opportunity for a central decorative feature other than the door.

But the entrance arrangement to house A is very effective and need not be departed from for the other houses unless you distinctly want to give a different appearance to them.

I do not know how expensive the decorative window frames and door frames are but if they are not too expensive, I would have them to a certain extent on houses B and C also, as they add richness to the appearance. //

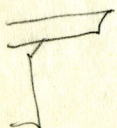
There is another sketch marked "Cornice for House A." I think that is in the main satisfactory except that I should think the decorative tile would more completely fill the frieze space. The tiles I sent you have escutcheons, and I think those escutcheons can be used in the center of the frieze space between the corbels, and the remaining space can be tile of a geometric pattern.

Of course the tiles I sent you are only motifs and can be enlarged or modified in any way you want when you are having modern tiles made after them.

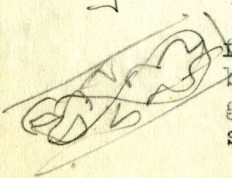
The carved corbels in this cornice sketch for house A are all right, although it might be desirable to introduce a figure in them as is so often the case in the Spanish cornices.

Inasmuch as they are going to be modelled and cast, there is no particular expense for a figure after the first model, and it might make the cornice a little more interesting.

The beams and cornice for house B seem all right, although you may want to change this somewhat when you get my tile motifs. Of the two tile alternatives in the sketches A and B, I prefer B. A seems rather stiff and set. B is more like the old tiles and more decorative.



The columns and capitals seem interesting to me and very much like some of the columns and capitals in the patios of Spain.



The type of window decoration for house A in the fourth sketch is all right. But I think it would be well to borrow abroad exactly some of the successful decoration on the good Spanish 16th Century houses, especially those in the southern part of Spain or Mallorca.

The effect in your general sketch of the front side and rear elevations is very good indeed, and in that sketch

on the rear elevation the garlands and putti are confined to the central window group, which I think is right.

In the front elevation the garlands and putti are confined to the space over the door. I imagine that is right, too, as otherwise you might have too much decoration.

The other general type of windows in these general sketches seem to be good, and I do not know that it would be wise to make them any more elaborate.

Moreover this type of window allows of an open, swinging casement window, which is the right kind. ✓

As I wrote you in a former letter, I think the grills should swing back as you show them and when brought together should lock, so that the house could not be entered anywhere when the doors and grills are all closed.

As it is necessary to lock these houses up a good part of the year, I think this is an important provision.

I like house A very much indeed, and do not see how it could possibly be improved and am unwilling to make any attempt to modify it further.

The question therefore before us is the decoration of houses B and C.

I would be disposed to make house B, which is the house opposite A, very similar to A in general appearance, and in detail decoration, with perhaps different motifs but the same general effect.

House C in the middle could be made reasonably different, and here it might be possible to use a little more definite Moorish treatment and give it a Moorish appearance as far as you can without interfering with the livability of it.

✓ If you do not think this is desirable or if you have advanced so far in the construction of this house to make it difficult, we can reserve this Moorish treatment for one of the small houses that we will build later.

In fact to the south of the main building a little way down the hill there is a sort of flat on which we could build a more Moorish house and have a swimming pool and other things which would harmonize well with the Moorish treatment.

Perhaps then it would be best to reserve this treatment for that house and have an interesting flight of steps up the hill to the main house.

I do not know that I have the topography quite right in my mind, but I think there is an opportunity for such construction.

Finally we come to the plumbing fixtures.

I like the bath and the wash basin and I imagine the shower would be satisfactory.

I do not think the dressing table is very good. I think a more elaborate dressing table with mirror and side mirrors and drawers and the fussy things that women like should be installed in one of the dressing rooms and a similar one without the fussy things in the other.

I do not like the water boxes for the toilets out in the room, although there may be a practical reason for this, on account of the ease of repairing these things when they get out of order.

I will send some other samples from here, however, and you will decide which are the most practical.

The general fittings are all right and if there is no great difference in expense, I think the same toilet furnishings and fittings should be in the bath rooms of all the three houses.

It is important to have these things nice.

Sincerely yours,

W R Hearst

P-S I do not think it would be wise to put a white coat over the Gothic virgin which we intend to use on the main building. I think the color should remain in that, and that it will be effective because of its color.

If the matter of the finish to the modellings on the small houses can remain in abeyance, I think it should until we can decide on some actual samples. Perhaps a sort of caenstone effect would be good. This would be almost the same tone as the walls, although not quite the same texture.

The carvings of these Spanish door and window frames were generally in stone, especially in the northern part of Spain. They could, however, be in a plaster effect, if you thought that was better.

I think it is a question of experimenting with models and I would like not to decide that now. Could you send me some textures if anything of that kind is durable?

W R Hearst

P-S--2 I think that tiles should be used generally for the flooring of the balconies and the outside loggia.

There are some big flags that are very effective, but they are not very smooth, and perhaps the brick tile you mention would be better, although I do not exactly understand what that is, and I would like to see a sample.

I do not like cement floorings. They are not very pretty and not very good. I am sure tiles of the proper quality would be better and well worth the additional expense.

Inside the rooms I suppose wood flooring is the best, with the exception of the lobby, where we might have marble flooring-- and if that is too expensive-- flooring of rather finer tiles.

How are the buildings getting on, and when will we be able to take up the matter of interior decoration?

Finally, there are a couple of details:

In the window frames shown on the front elevation of house A, there is one with a column or half-column down the middle of the window and the other without that middle column. Perhaps the one with the column would be more effective for the windows on the front elevation, while those without the column would be better on the rear elevation, as you have them.

The window frames on the small general plans for house A are sufficiently elaborate and the little separate individual window sketch that you submit might have too much elaboration.

I think we would better follow the general effect of the front, side and rear elevation of house A.

CORR Heard