

New York American

February 12, 1922.

Dear Miss Morgan :

There are two things to be done in connection with the English house on the Hill. One is to get a half-timbered house and transport it. This would be very expensive, as the best kind of a half-timbered house would cost from forty to fifty thousand dollars in England. They seem to be in demand.

However, it can be done and there are two or three very good ones offered.

The other thing is to get a stone house and transport the stone mullions, etc., and build a house of cement as the Spanish houses are built, using the stone mullions, corners, etc., from the original. This would be less expensive. And while we would not actually have an old house throughout, we would have just the kind of a house that fitted the location-- because we would make it to fit-- and we would perhaps have a style of house that went more harmoniously with the other buildings on the Hill.

Will you give me your ideas about this-- which you think is the better plan? Meanwhile I will tell you just what can be secured.

I am enclosing pictures of a stone house, 17th Century. It has very good mullion windows, as you will observe. It has a good door and a fair stone fireplace, and a stone roof-- which is interesting-- and it has also some stone corner ornaments, and I believe an interior plaster frieze of interest if we could ever demount it.

We could build just the house we wanted with these original stone features, I think, and then we could easily get panelling, fireplaces, etc., for the interior-- and have a better lot of interior furnishings than we could ever hope to buy in one house.

This is by far, then, the easiest thing to do, in my opinion. If, however, you think the genuine old, timbered house would be better, there is one at Hyam which is available. I am sending you the plans of that. It is very well adapted to the location. It has a good entrance hall, two stories high, a fine large drawingroom, and a dining room which could be made much larger and better by combining it with the so-called smoking room.

It has a pantry and a kitchen and a small shallow rear court. On the second floor there could be easily two bedrooms with a bathroom between over the drawingroom, and doubtless a similar arrangement over the dining room and kitchen. There would be very little modification necessary to do this.

The exterior is interesting but the interior woodwork is

pretty crude. Of course it is a Tudor house, early and interesting, and we could probably put it where the wind would not blow it into the next county. It should be built on a terrace, I suppose.

These are two examples of the different ways of handling the proposition. I will await an answer from you before deciding.

2. I telegraphed you about the storms on the Hill. Very probably this is an unusual winter, but we have got to prepare for unusual winters. Otherwise whenever one comes we will have to rebuild the houses.

I have always felt from the first that we ought to make the roofs hurricane-proof, and I think that now, with the experience we have had, we should promptly proceed to do this even though there is considerable expense attached to re-roofing the houses.

I think we should prepare everything now, and as soon as the rains cease demount the roofs and put in a flat tin roof, absolutely waterproof, immediately above the ceiling, as we did in House A. If we can do it better than we did it in House A, let us do it that much better.

Then I think we should add additional supports to bear the extra weight and lay the tile roof in concrete, so that it will not only be absolutely an utterly waterproof roof, but will be wind-proof as well.

I will not feel satisfied until this is done, because we will be likely to have a storm any winter that will destroy some of our interiors and do considerable damage.

And after we once get the Hill Top completed, I do not want to have to rebuild and redecorate.

I do not know whether all of the stormdoors and stormwindows have been put on or not, but we can now see plainly the necessity for having stormdoors and stormwindows of the most perfect character.

I hope everything has been made of sufficient strength and watertightness and if it has not been please have it re-made so that it will be perfect in these respects.

3. There is one more matter that we had not expected, and that was the blowing in of the big plateglass windows. I imagine this can be prevented by getting a heavier plateglass. I am quite sure that windows of that size will not shatter from wind pressure if the glass is sufficiently heavy.

4. We have deferred our departure until the first of March because it seems to me from accounts of what happened on the Hill that it would be an unpleasant place to live until the month had passed and the damage had been repaired and the houses made habitable again.

Furthermore, I imagine all your work will be rather delayed on account of the hard winter and will be no further advanced in the

first week of March than we expected it to be in the first week of February.

5. Finally, regarding Mr. Hazzard-- that young man has his good qualities, but he is very erratic.

I do not think he should countermand orders that I had given, unless there were very exceptional reasons for doing so, and in such cases I think he should inform me of the facts and get my approval.

If he cannot do this I think we will have to get a little more stable person in charge of the gardening.

Some of the things from the Niles Nurseries I really wanted, particularly the sequoia, sempervivons and gigantia.

Moreover, they ought to be planted this time of the year. I hope the orchard has all been put in. Will you kindly let me know how things are getting along, both architecturally and horticulturally; and will you kindly let me have any plans or elevations to be decided upon if there is time enough for them to reach me before I leave.

Sincerely,

W R Hearst
JR