



Figure 1.

View of old barn.

Form Follows Function ... Or Does It?

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IN COLONIAL America, Boston was selected as the capital city of New England. This choice was practically destined, for Boston really was, as she came to be called, the "Hub of New England." With a fine access to the Atlantic Ocean and the overland roadways that were developed for moving trade goods to and from the port, Boston was a natural choice as the center for commercial, governmental, social, educational, religious and, as it happened, even revolutionary activity.

Just as the communities of Colonial New England grew to be, in many ways, dependent upon the leadership, services, and resources available only in or through the city of Boston, the 18 holes of a golf course are controlled even more absolutely (for better or for

worse) by the knowledge, skills, energies, materials, and equipment gathered together and directed from its resources center — the maintenance complex.

Granted that this area may be commonly — and even with some affection — referred to as the barn, perhaps for the pastoral imagery that such a term implies of a time when life seemed more simple and relaxing. When, however, this barnyard imagery bears a rather close resemblance to reality (see Figure 1), there is little reason to expect that the golf course itself will have advanced much beyond the pasture stage.

It probably was quite normal that, for many older golf courses, the first maintenance area was developed around an existing building, which could well have been a barn. But, in a new age

when it is not uncommon for a fairway mowing machine to be as costly as a Rolls Royce, it is at least incongruous, if not demoralizing and downright silly, to house and care for valuable and sophisticated equipment in such inadequate facilities.

That, at any rate, was the conclusion we reached at the Tedesco Country Club. We wanted in particular to make it convenient to properly service even our largest pieces of equipment — our tractors, dump truck, and backhoe. Inadvertently, the care of these machines was being neglected because our service building could not accommodate them.

There was also a problem with staff morale, which can be a very big deal, indeed. Maybe in some fantasy world one could be superhuman enough to go

it alone. In the real world we have no choice but to rely on the staff for most of the work that must be done if we are to achieve our objectives. Beyond the present-day difficulties with finding reliable people, training and developing their skills, and keeping them with us in spite of competition from workplaces with inflated labor budgets, there is the further realization that each crew member is an individual, with his own private life and, consequently, his own good days and bad. Standards and discipline we must have, but also it must be the aim of good management to provide the facilities and work arrangements that will make it possible for the crew to perform smoothly and productively. Just as we do not *make* grass grow, we do not *make* people work, but rather we are concerned with setting up the conditions that will permit the right things to happen.

While this is true for all our crew members, it is especially important with the mechanic. We simply must have each and every piece of equipment working perfectly when it is needed. We cannot, then, have the mechanic constantly harrassed by the inadequacies of our facilities, frustrated by missing tools or lack of parts, exasperated from groping about in a dark and dingy barn.

IT WAS THESE kinds of arguments and considerations which led us at Tedesco, well over a year ago, into a project to make whatever improvements a somewhat restrained budget would accommodate. We had been working with a maintenance area developed around two buildings. The first, an unheated storage building, also contained a heated section for office space where on one wall the central controllers for our irrigation system were mounted. Adjacent to this cement block structure was a centrally heated wooden building (see Figure 1) which we were forced to use as a service shop, with tool and parts storage, employee racks, bathroom facilities, etc., such as they were. This building had become so obviously inadequate that there was nothing to do but put it (and us) out of its (and our) misery by blowing it up. (Simple demolition was actually done, but this was really being too kind.)

Naturally, we had plans worked out for constructing a new shop and service structure as an addition to our basically sound storage and office facilities. The first decision in the evolution of this



(Above) View of maintenance shop's new interior.

Figure 2.

(Right) Overall view of new building (foreground) attached to previously existing storage and office building (small building with superintendent's house in background).

Figure 4.

plan, and possibly the most significant, was to charge me, the golf course superintendent, with producing a basic line drawing to show our needed dimensions and the categories and layout of desirable facilities.

The first step was to conduct a thorough space requirement study. We used, for instance, the size of our largest piece of equipment in determining the needed building depth and doorway dimensions, and we also made allowances for equipment and facility needs that could be anticipated in the future.

Having completed this first planning phase, the drawings and notes were taken to the green committee chairman for review. This review, the necessity for which is obvious to a certain degree, proved most fruitful for us, because our chairman is a keenly perceptive





Figure 3.

(Above) View of new, well-equipped employee lunch area (air-conditioning, music, bulletin board, good light, sink, stove, refrigerator, space for hanging garments, etc.).



individual who added a number of important new suggestions to the project. In any event, a review process is definitely needed, for we all tend to see with tunnel vision on projects particularly near and dear to us.

THE NEXT MOVE was to bring in another club member, a man with considerable construction experience and knowledge. He spotted several potential construction problems and explained various structural standards to which our new building must conform. Furthermore, he recommended that the facility be built on a turn-key basis.

Under this procedure, contractors are invited to submit project bids on the basis of desired dimensions and supplied line drawings. Upon being awarded the contract, the winning firm is obligated to provide an engineer's plan of the building drawn to scale and in compliance with applicable building codes.

The advantages of the turn-key procedure are that a custom design can be achieved without spending a good deal extra on architectural fees, and also without recklessly moving ahead in the absence of necessary engineering services and construction drawings.

Although the turn-key procedure has many qualities to recommend it, an enormous amount of careful thought must go into the preliminary plans presented to the contractors interested in bidding on the project. For instance, a number of what might be termed accessory features may easily be overlooked. To avoid this, we tried to visualize what the entire complex should be like. Such items as landscaping, paving and needed interior equipment we knew must be a part of this vision, otherwise, the project might never truly be completed. We found it extremely desirable, too, to solicit suggestions from the people who would ultimately work in and from our new service center. Not only did they contribute directly to the final design, but also for them to be sincerely consulted made them more aware of their importance in the success of this project and in all aspects of our golf course program. In other words, we used this project as another means for developing a kind of team spirit which we were confident would have a positive impact upon the attitudes and productivity of the entire crew. In giving this due consideration to our most important assets — our employees — we incorporated such facilities as a lunch room with a stove, cabinets and a refrigerator (Figure 3). The total cost of this sort of customizing? — a mere 1.5 percent of the total construction bill.

The bottom line on all of this may be impossible to measure, but having worked in this building for only four months, I am positively convinced that it was all worthwhile and that the morale of the crew and the quality of their work has already vastly improved. So, for those who believe that they cannot afford a new maintenance complex, I would say that, on the basis of our experiences in bringing in a new 32 foot by 94 foot service center for \$68,000, it just may be that you cannot afford to remain shackled to your outdated one. It is inspiring to become involved in this kind of project, to see others involved, and to see that tired old barn transformed into the sort of facility (Figures 2 & 4) that really can function as the hub of the golf course.