A HOUSE OF FINE DETAIL THAT CONFORMS TO THE HILLSIDE ON WHICH IT IS BUILT: BY UNA NIXSON HOPKINS

The house shows marked originality, toward which all western architecture is tending. It faces northward and is fashioned on a hill side, built "up and down and carved like an apple tart." There is a veritable congress of roof lines and they seem to respond as subtly to the angles of the house as do the pines behind to the winds that blow. Neither is the general outline of the house against the trees unlike that made by the trees against the sky. Not so much as a mole hill on the lot was smoothed down; the house simply accommodated itself to the lot without protest. At the rear, two steps are all that is necessary to bring the house to the ground while the front has the picturesque elevation of a Swiss chalet, with Japanese detail showing in the finish.

Japanese influence is becoming very marked in the domestic architecture of the Pacific Coast, which exhibits a cosmopolitanism not to be found in any other part of the country. This is fortunate, since the simplicity of detail makes it so adaptable to houses of moderate cost—or to more expensive ones for that matter, but elaborate detail has ever been the bête noire of the smaller dwellings. The Japanese characteristics in the case of this house are, perhaps, more evident in the interior, which is entirely of wood; but it carries with it everywhere a hundred and one little suggestions that would add charm to any home, whether situated on the Pacific or on the Atlantic Coast.

The foundation of the house is seen as a high wall on the east—or along the road—and practically constitutes the basement story on the northeast, seeking a lower level on the north to keep in unison with the irregularities of the ground, rising again, and merging into a garden wall that extends some distance, though it is interrupted once by steps at the corner of the house, leading to the rear and thence to the kitchen. The wall along the garden is a series of stone posts, connected by two heavy timbers running horizontally. This combination of wall and foundation is of cobblestone, very large ones being used at the base and on the corners, put together with a sand cement that in some places shows in large patches, practically covering some of the small stones and giving them a mossy, lichen appearance.

The upper part of the house and the roof are of split shakes, which have a rough, rustic effect, and are perfectly practicable, while the ventilators in the peaks of the roof are of inch and a half boards, running up and down and across, so that they give a basket-like detail. The wall spaces are broken effectively by well-placed casement windows, opening out, and on windows where it is desirable to exclude the sun in summer are heavy blinds, cleverly designed.

The huge chimney at the back is a striking example of the originality of design everywhere evident; it is of sand cement, virtually thrown on, with a few small cobblestones here and there that look as if they might accidentally have been dropped into the mortar, and the top is capped by a row of brick, put on endwise. The walks are of dark red brick, the same as are used in constructing the entrance steps that appear to have forced their way through the eastern wall. The wall here takes on the same gradation as the steps, affording a resting place for some interesting Mexican jars, made in the vicinity a
few years ago, and some miniature trees of Monterey cypress. The steps lead to a little corner porch, also paved with brick, from which you enter the door into the reception hall. Brick, too, finishes the top of the wall and it is further used, laid flat, for the sills of the basement windows, as it wears better than wood so near the ground, and does not show the dust. The eaves are very wide, projecting far enough to hide deep shadows, and are supported on the corners by heavy timbers.

Plain redwood boards, arranged perpendicularly about two inches apart and finished at the top and bottom with a heavy horizontal line of wood, constitute the porch railing and that of the third story balcony—a very good, simple bit of detail.

Entering the basement, you go through the north door standing flush with the ground, and may go into the laundry or mount the staircase leading to the first story proper; its terminus is the sun parlor in the center of the house, which is a point from which you may radiate in any direction. It may be that you will continue into a long hall, out of which opens four bedrooms and a bath; or discover a door from this same hall, opening on a stairway that takes you to an immense room above with four French windows along the front, through which you enter the wide balcony. This is a boy’s room and the most delightful one in the house. There is a pantry and kitchen in this same wing. The hall leads also into the reception hall which runs through from east to west. The living room to the left of the reception hall is large, low, beamed and paneled with wood, and the dining room to the right is also finished in wood, and is of Japanese execution. The living room is fortunate in having three exposures—east, south and west. With so many windows it gives a pleasant out-of-door feeling to the room, and relieves any sense of oppressiveness that might come from the use of so much wood. Looking from the windows of this lofty station to the east, a landscape of delight meets the eye, and to the south and west are the majestic pine trees, throwing a “tangle of light and shade below, on roof and doors and window sills.”

The paneling of the living room is unique, as shown in the illustration. Above the very narrow strips of wood that cover the edges of the wide boards where they come together is a strap of wood, fastened with small wooden pegs. The beams over the fireplace, too, give an effect of strong individuality. The wood of the room is stained a tone not unlike that of new fresh-sawed mahogany, and the chimneypiece is of dark brick, with a very wide opening for the fire. A projection of bricks on either side above forms a shelf for flower jugs, and the hearth is of large square brick of the same color. On either side are tiny windows, not more than four inches wide, swinging in to admit a breath of fresh air, and on the outside are screens that serve to bar intruding gnats or flies. These little windows are quite an innovation and fill a long-felt need, that of admitting a little fresh air near the fire, without a draught.

The built-in bookcases do not extend quite to the door, thereby saving the books from dirt, especially on sweeping day; this, too, is quite a new idea and might be copied to advantage in almost any house. The electric lights here hang pendant from the ceiling, the center fixture being a Japanese lantern. The curtain poles are of wood and the hangings are a light buff East Indian cotton, showing a pattern in dull, old pink. The coloring of the Oriental rugs is primarily old rose, and this color is
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"THE DINING ROOM IS ENTIRELY FINISHED IN PINE, STAINED GRAY: THE MANTEL IS OF DULL PINK ROUGH TILING: IN THE RUG, GRAY, PINK AND DULL BLUE PREDOMINATE."
“THE STONE FOUNDATION OF THE HOUSE IS SEEN AS A HIGH WALL TO THE EAST; MERGING INTO A GARDEN WALL AT THE NORTH.”
BEAUTY FOR THE CITY HOUSE

pre-eminent in pillows in the seat flanking the fire and in one or two chair cushions. The library table was made for the room and most of the chairs are East Indian, fitting admirably into the general scheme.

The woodwork of the dining room is pine stained gray and is quite differently designed from the living room. Where the wide boards of the paneling meet in the upper half of the room a small design has been cut out, showing lighter wood behind with a wooden strap at the top and bottom. Above this is a shelf that extends along the four sides of the room, on which are a few pieces of blue china, and there is blue ware on the sideboard. The sideboard, stained like the room, was designed by the architect, as were a pretty seat and a linen cabinet on the opposite side of the room. The mantel is of dull pink rough tiling that looks almost like glazed brick, and the hangings at the windows are of a loosely woven gray linen. A rug of the same color with a little old pink and a trifle of blue in the pattern completes this simple but delightful room.

No charge of monotony could be laid to the doors of this house, for there are three or four different kinds. The front door is of eight-inch panes of glass—to make the hall as light as possible—those of the west side of living room and hall are of French extraction, and the one opening into the dining room is of wood panels, while those in the bedrooms are of wood and glass. The latter are designed very much after the manner of the dining room wall, only the cut-out design is wider and more elaborate, and where wood shows in the wall, yellow opaque glass has been inserted in the doors, giving a glint of sunshine to the bedrooms that does not come from the sun. In the doors of the pantry and kitchen, which are fashioned likewise, green opaque glass has been used, suggesting cleanliness and freshness.

There has been but little attempt at ornamentation anywhere. Some potted plants and a few plain vases for flowers are about all. The charm of the house is that everything is in keeping. No dark corners allure dust, any more than unnecessary trifles make blemishes in this restful interior. It is homelike without being “cluttered,” and simple without being bare.

POSSIBILITIES OF BEAUTY IN THE CITY HOUSE

WRITING with delightful whimsicality of the impressions made on him abroad by the buildings, Washington Irving said that the characteristics of a people are apparent in their houses. Arguing from such premises, one wonders what the logical conclusion might be to one who, for the first time, beholds examples of our city domestic architecture. While he would probably not exclaim before them as did the fox before the mask in Æsop’s fable “It is a pity you have not got any brains,” he would more likely declare, “What a pity you do not use your brains.”

The fact that a city house must occupy an exact area of ground of very small proportions, usually no more than twenty-five feet front, is discouraging at the outset, and demands a greater amount of thought, twice over than the country house, that may ramble at will, and need in no wise conform to its neighbors’ opinions or rights.

Great improvement has been made in the city apartment house during the past few years, but this has little to do