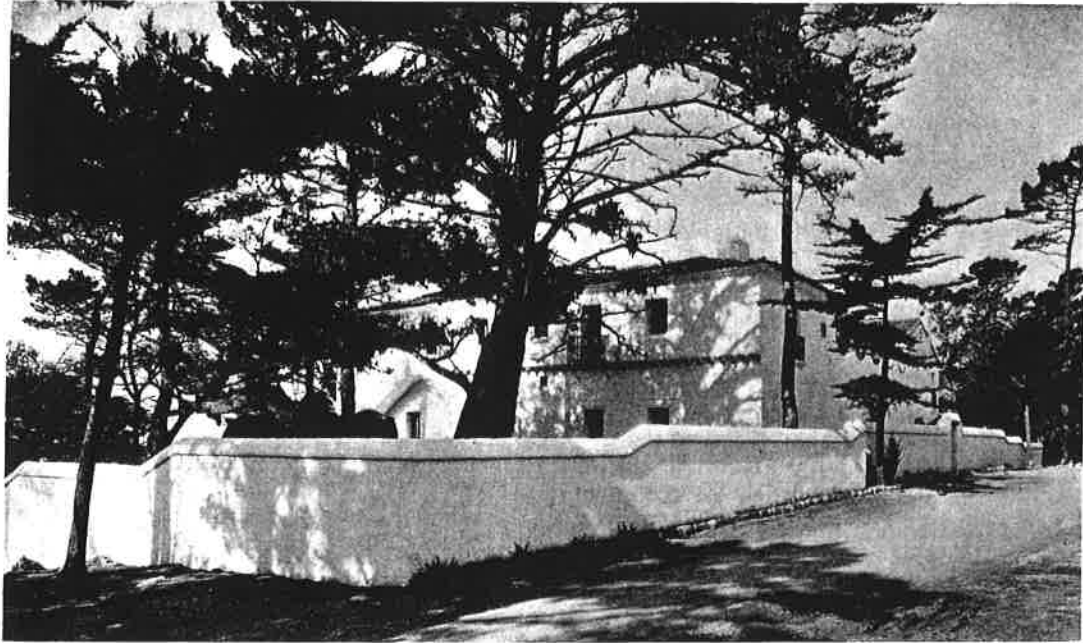


PACIFIC · COAST · ARCHITECT

WITH · WHICH · IS · INCORPORATED · THE · BUILDING · REVIEW

VOLUME XXIX · SAN FRANCISCO AND LOS ANGELES · MAY 1926 · NUMBER FIVE



RESIDENCE OF MRS. ARTHUR ROSE VINCENT, PEBBLE BEACH, CALIF. GEORGE WASHINGTON SMITH, ARCHITECT

SPANISH ATMOSPHERE

[[BY HARRIS ALLEN, A. I. A.]]

THE traditions of California have developed very largely from memories of its early Spanish settlers and life on the great ranches of those days, feudal in character, picturesque to the Anglo-Saxon eye, alluring in its combination of placid indolence and gay fiesta.

As a setting for this "dolce far niente" existence, the ranch houses were well adapted. Simple, almost primitive, from force of local circumstances, there was yet a rather lordly air of spaciousness, of hospitality to the guest, of privacy for intimate family life, of security against marauders. Farm houses as they were, the influence of inherited customs dictated certain forms of arrangement and construction. The balmy climate, the luxuriant growth of trees and plants, the gently rolling contours of the country, all affected the general scheme of plantation architecture, while time mellowed the

ensemble and helped to produce that charm which has now become so familiar by the means of photograph and highway.

It is not strange, therefore, that when the era of unprecedented, almost incredible growth began in Southern California, these early traditions should have been seized upon and welded into the architecture of the day. Modified of necessity to suit modern requirements, exaggerated and adorned and abused at first (and, alas! even yet, in commercial housing operations), we have been coming closer and closer to the achievement of that Spanish atmosphere which was the glory of early California.

No one has approached more closely to the ideal than Mr. George Washington Smith, of Santa Barbara, some of whose recent buildings are shown in this issue. The "ideal" differs according to the individual viewpoint; but it may be broadly defined as a dwelling which might have been built by one of the Spanish colonists



Patio, Residence of Mrs. Arthur Rose Vincent

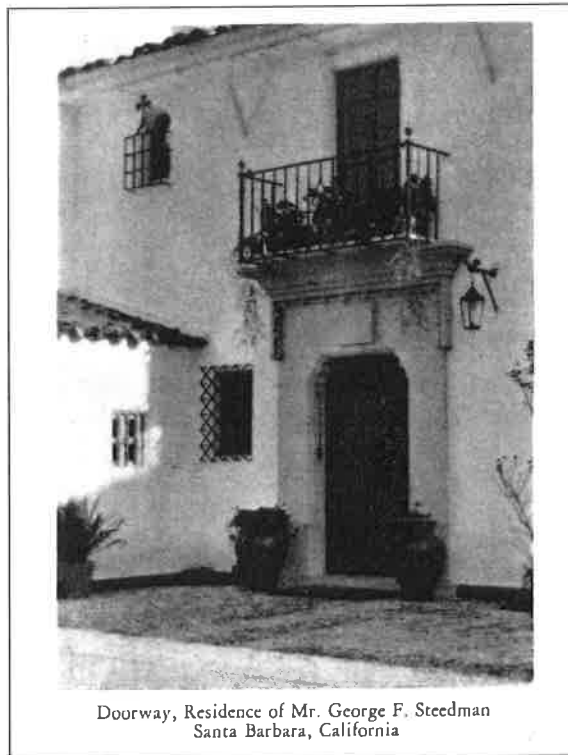
in California. Such accessories as iron, tile, modeled ornament, need not destroy the California character of the place so long as their use is not forced. Size has nothing to do with it; substance does; but it must have that intangible quality we call "atmosphere," and to create atmosphere one must be an artist.



Patio, Residence of Mrs. Arthur Rose Vincent

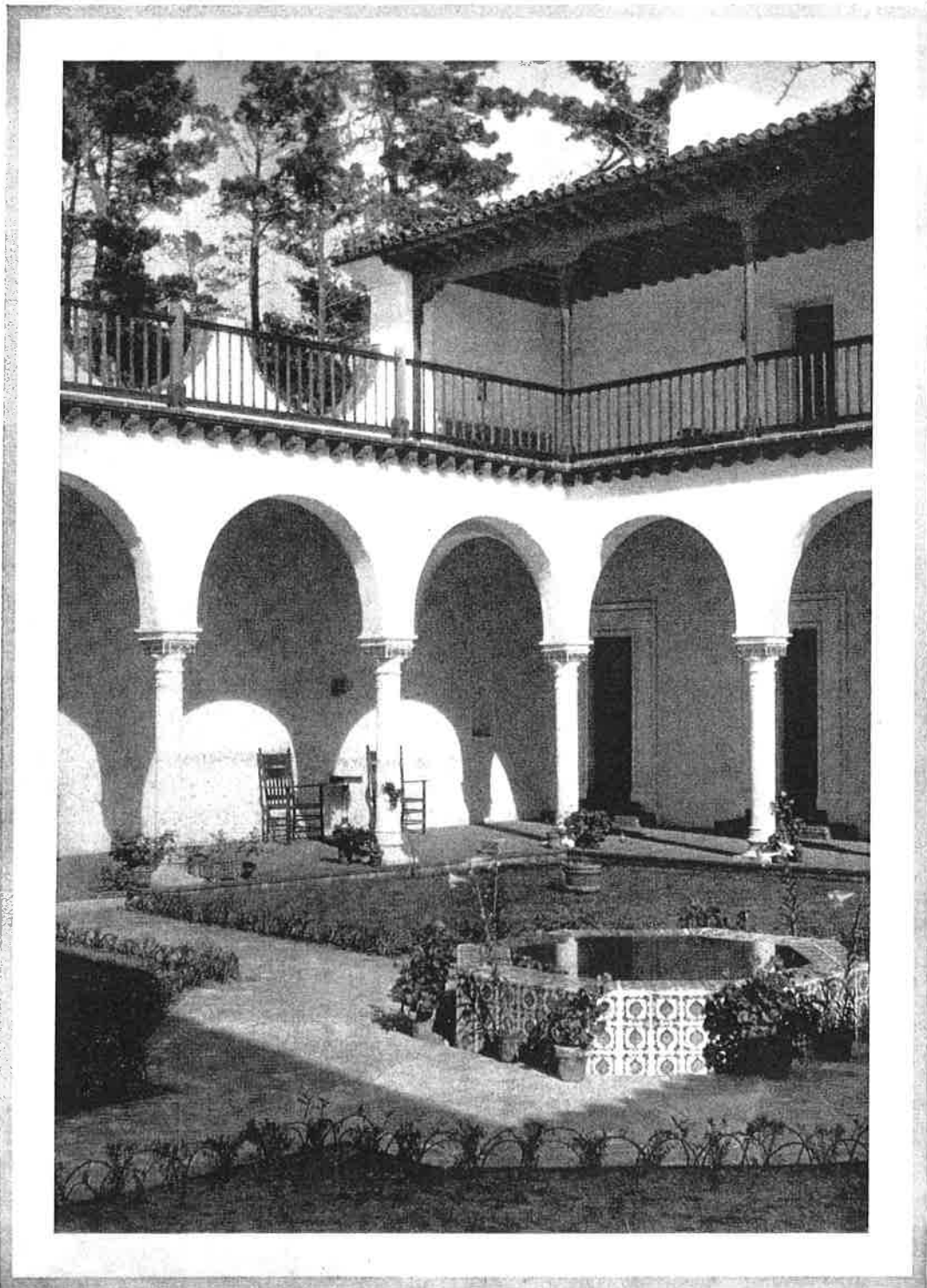
Mr. Smith is an artist. It is useless to try to analyze his compositions in cold blood, to call attention to the proportions of wall and window, the sense of informal balance, the vistas in house and garden. I suspect much of this is intuitive rather than intentional; not that his plans are not well studied, for it is obvious from the happy relations his houses bear to their sites, and from the easy sequence of interior apartments, that observation and thought have been used with discretion. But there is no effort of effect; indeed, there is a naiveté which is consummate art in itself.

Photographs of these houses convey but a meager impression of their delightful and virile quality. Mass and detail—yes, and the effect of

Doorway, Residence of Mr. George F. Steedman
Santa Barbara, California

sunshine and shadow; but of color, of texture, of the values of materials, and reveals, and craftsmanship, it is difficult to judge without actually seeing the buildings themselves.

The beauty and traditional quality of Mr. Smith's work has, of course, set a style of which there are now hosts of examples. For this we may well be thankful. Copies of good things are better than poor originals; and our quick growth of foliage makes most of these more than just acceptable. You may be quite sure, however, that Mr. Smith's own work is unmistakable. Vary it as he may, there is always a quality, an atmosphere about it which speaks the language of traditional California as no one else has yet been able to do.



George Washington Smith, Architect

Pátio in the home of Mrs. Arthur Rose Vincent at Pebble Beach, California, showing the fountain of Persian design, the dark red tiled floor and cloisters which are a series of beautiful arches