

HISTORIC RESOURCES WITHIN MUNICIPAL LIMITS

OF FAIRHOPE, AL.
(Multiple Resource)

Owner: John D. Manning
651 Johnson Avenue
Fairhope, Al. 36532

Historic name: Golf, Gun & Country Club
Common name: Manning House

Location: 651 Johnson Avenue

Verbal boundary description:

Begin at a point 184 feet west of the NW corner Johnson and Call Streets, thence 130 feet west to a point, thence 196 feet north to a point, thence 72 feet east and southeast to a point, thence south 158 feet to the point of beginning.

Acreage: Less than one

UTM: A-16/414/150/3376/860

Date of Construction: 1922

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Statement of Significance

Period of Significance: 1922-1938

Criterion C-Architecture:

The Country-Club Manning House is significant as an architectural reflection of the entertainment/recreation values prevalent in Fairhope during the 1920s. The spacious wrap-around porch and large interior space with fireplace encouraged social interaction while the full basement provided for equipment storage.

Criterion A-Entertainment/Recreation:

The Country Club/Manning House is significant for its role as a clubhouse and social gathering place from 1922 to 1938. Though dedicated as the clubhouse for a golf course, community groups employed the building for teas, dances and dinners as well.

Integrity:

The Country Club-Manning House retains its integrity of materials and design. Exterior integrity is good. The only modifications include: block glass in the SE foundation and NW wall added by the present owners (1985); the main entrance doors replaced by french doors; two doorway and window openings cut into the basement at the rear; and two garage openings on the SE side filled in with french doors.

Though the building does indeed remain on its original site, the surrounding golf course has been subdivided and developed into a residential neighborhood (this was done during the 1950s). Thus, the integrity of location has been somewhat compromised.

Interior integrity is good with original floors throughout and beaded board ceiling and wainscoting in the kitchen. Original plaster walls have been replaced with sheetrock. All cabinets and fixtures in the kitchen and bath date from the 1985 renovation. Interior six panel doors with transoms are replacements dating from 1985. The full basement which consists of bare, hollow clay tile walls, dirt floor and concrete pillars under the house is unchanged.

Description:

The Country Club-Manning House is oriented NE-SW on an uneven lot situated between Fairhope Avenue and Johnson Avenue. Marshall's Gully runs NW-SE through the property, though smaller and less precipitously than closer to the bay. The house is nearly obscured from view as modern brick apartments to the west and houses to the north and east hide it from travelers on Fairhope Avenue and Call Street to the east. A dirt driveway enters the property from Johnson Avenue on the south. The house is a one story, Craftsman style split-level with full basement, stucco on hollow tile structure. The rear wall and NW wall of the basement are bare clay tile, the SE wall is stuccoed. The building is sheltered by a low hip roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. The building mass resembles a fat letter T, with the vertical portion forming a center block surrounded by a wrap-around porch on three sides. The wooden porch is supported on square posts and has a beaded board ceiling. French doors and a pair of 6/1 windows on either side define the facade. The horizontal bar of the T is formed by the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. The porch meets this on each side. The kitchen has a set of french doors and casement windows around the outside. A pair of 6/1 windows is at the opposite side, counterbalancing the kitchen doors. There is a triple 6/1 set of windows rear center, and two smaller windows toward the NW side. The entire main story is rough stucco over clay tile with wood corner posts, wood framing top and bottom and wood door and window surrounds. There are two exterior chimneys, one on the SE side and one on the NW side, each on the vertical portion of the T mass. The NW chimney is stucco below the roof, and brick above while the SE chimney is entirely stucco.

The interior plan consists of a large living room in the southeast half of the center block and bedrooms in the other half. The kitchen, bathroom and children's bedroom occupy the top of the T mass. Hardwood floors, scarred by clete marks are throughout as are baseboards and wooden door and window surrounds. A large fireplace is in the SE wall and another, somewhat smaller, in the NW office/bedroom. The ceiling slopes in this room and exposed timber trussing is visible. The kitchen has beaded board ceiling and walls and was originally an enclosed porch.

Historical Summary:

Lacking the traditional agricultural or industrial sources of revenue, Fairhope depended heavily on vacationers from Mobile and the North. The town's beautiful natural setting, healthfulness and generally slower pace appealed to harried people everywhere. Local officials aggressively promoted Fairhope's attractions through brochures and magazine articles and constantly sought new ways to enhance the resort environment. By the teens many felt that a good golf course would prove a great attraction. The Courier editorialized, "People would like to come to Fairhope for the winter provided there is a golf course here." (Courier, 2/11/16) Others agreed and in 1916 a 9 hole golf course was laid on Single-Tax land, south of Fairhope Avenue and east of Marshall's Gully. The course was designed by Walter Fovargue of Chicago and plans were also made for a clubhouse. Actual construction on the clubhouse did not begin until 1922. By this time Fairhope was doing well with a population of over 800, city owned water works, light and power plant, telephone, street railway line with one and a half miles of track, bath houses, wharf and public library with four thousand volumes. On New Year's night 1923 the "beautiful new club house" was dedicated. (Courier, 1/5/23) Besides serving as a headquarters for golfers, the new building was the scene of local dances and teas. During the late 1950s the golf course was drawn off into

lots and soon covered with houses. The clubhouse was surrounded by apartments and houses and itself became a residential unit. The present owners renovated the building in 1985.

1"=120'

BLCKS 3, 8N, & 8S
GOLF COURSE SUBDIVI.
1973

