NOTES ON PALMER CHAPEL

The Edward Albert Palmer Memorial Chapel constitutes the principal building in a group of three buildings planned by the Protestant Episcopal Church Corporation for student activities near the Rice Institute campus, the two remaining buildings being the community building, Autry House, already completed, and the residential hall for women which is to be built in the future.

All of these buildings are planned in simple material, stucco with stone trimmings and tile roofs, reflecting the simpler character of Italian architecture.

The Chapel is designed with rigid simplicity to conform with the group, and is characterized on the exterior principally by an Italian campanile, or bell tower, of the early Romanesque type. The interest in the chapel has been intentionally confined to its internal development in plan, form and color. In general proportions the interior reflects the quality of a Venetian chapel, and to some degree the general arrangement of the charming S. M. della Miracoli. The treatment, however, is in all respects, both exterior and interior, of modern design and particularly so on the inside where the treatment is of artificial stone of soft lavender color, modern, hand-finished plaster, deeply glazed in successive colors to a golden neutral value; the floor of Zenotherm and ceiling of Celotex material, chosen for their value in acoustics and treated, particularly the ceiling, with full color and in rich stencil design.

The round, arched windows are glazed with gray leaded glass, enriched with heraldic devices, the rose windows bearing the arms of York and Canterbury and the north-windows the arms of English universities, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Trinity College, King's College, Sidney Sussex College, Clare College and St. Peter's College, while the south windows bear the arms of six American universities, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Texas and Rice.

The furnishing and woodwork are in oak, carefully finished to a soft, warm, gray hue, the altar being a richly paneled treatment in the same material, and behind it there is hung a dossal of dull green brocade. The desire in producing the interior has been to effect a relatively small college chapel sufficiently large for all of the necessary activities and yet one which would serve quite normally relatively small attendance at frequent services. To this end the warmth and color rather than coldness and austerity have been the controlling elements in its design and decoration.

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[Text:長川章吉 Architect 1927]