



General view of the front exterior, showing its Segovian tower surmounted by a revolving sign.

A STUDY IN ADAPTATION

WHATEVER theoretical fault the critic may reasonably find with the Fox West Coast circuit's new Arlington theatre in Santa Barbara, Cal., it has the great merit of being a building authentic and beautiful. The critic observes that it is truly Spanish and he questions the propriety of this type of structure to the purposes of motion picture exhibition, particularly in America.

In the first place, the issue is never clean-cut when one argues the propriety of Spanish architecture, especially its New World outgrowth, in Southern California, the soil of which became as native to Spanish culture as was that of Spain itself. And California has fostered, rather than discouraged, these early Spanish influences. It has, indeed, persisted in remaining, in terrain and climate, and also to an appreciable extent, in population, akin to the land that is more truly its mother country than any nation of the North. Whether the Arlington is to be adjudged beautiful

Describing the Arlington, a new Fox theatre in Santa Barbara, Cal., that carries the Spanish villa architecture to an extreme

as a motion picture theatre or not, it yet has been designed to take advantage of every charming characteristic of Old Spanish structures, and beautiful almost all its beholders will surely call it.

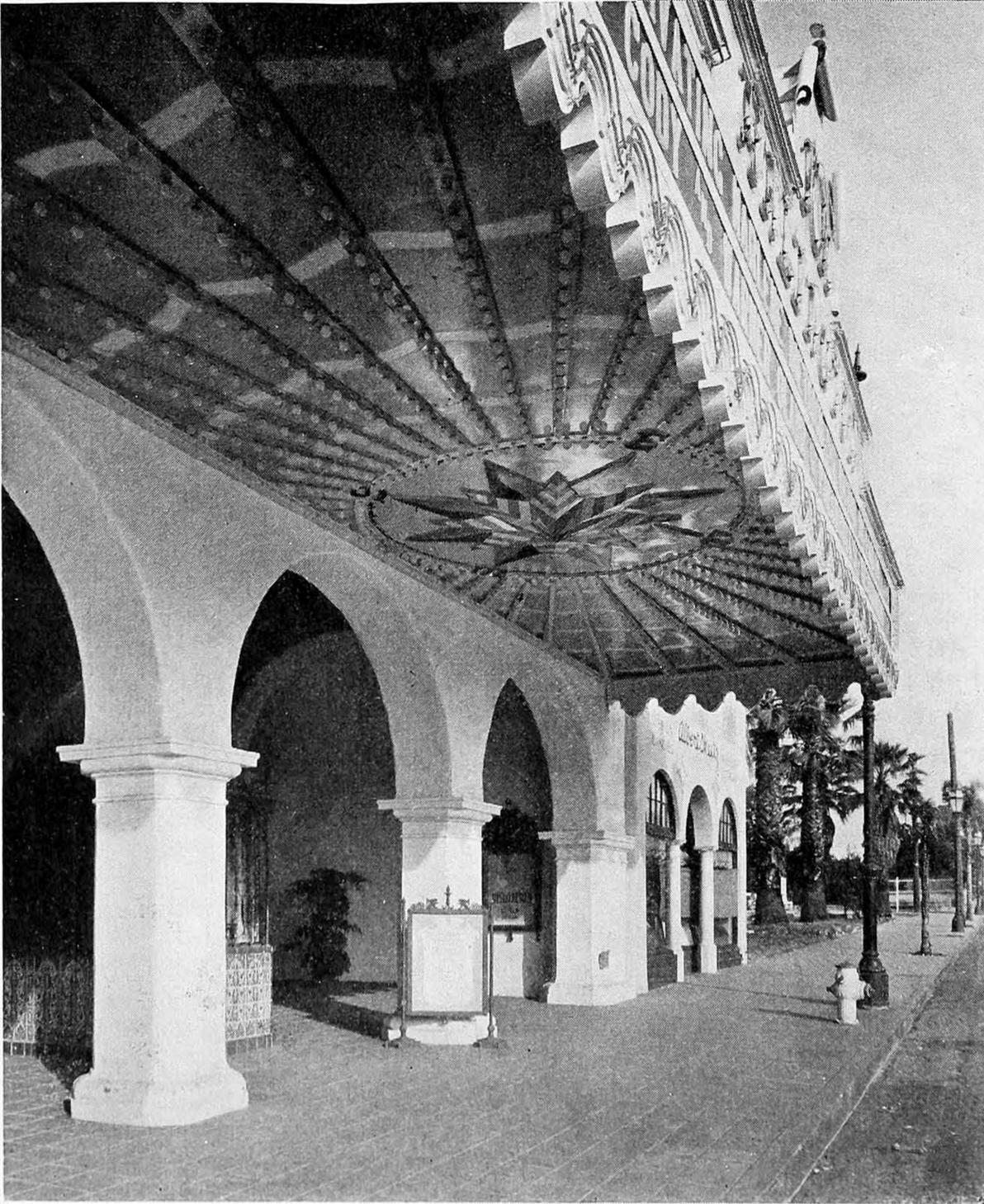
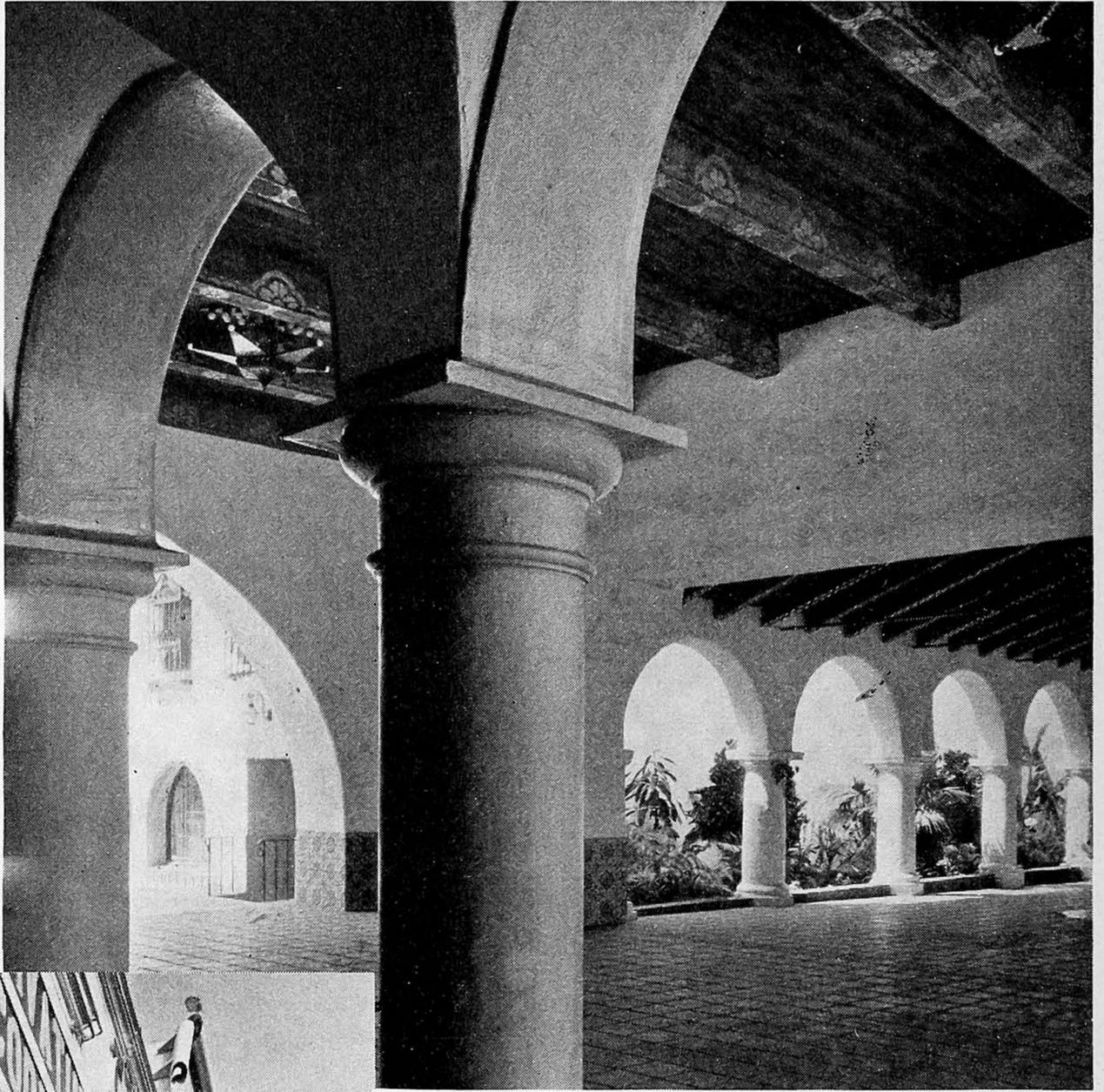
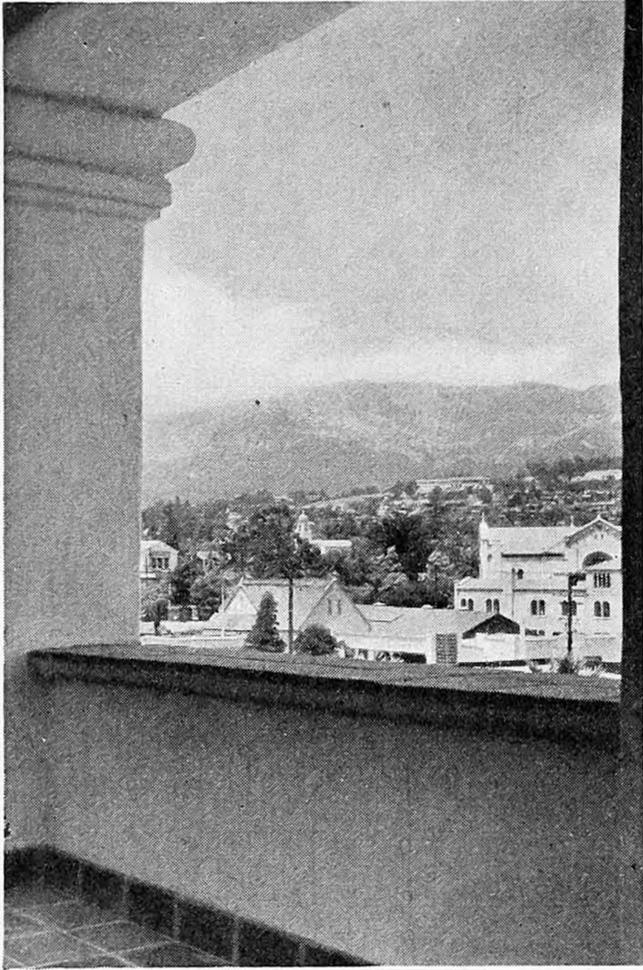
The very adaptation, then, of this architectural style, so sincerely and authentically, to the business of vending motion picture entertainment to a modern American public, must be interesting to the showman as well as the architect.

THE APPROACH is precisely that of those Spanish buildings—missions and villas—that have been native to the extreme Southwest and Mexico for several centuries. They came originally from

Spain. The Arlington likewise. Its tower has its prototype in those of the famous El Alcazar de Segovia. This, indeed, presents the first study in adaptation. The pinnacle is a sign carrying the name of Fox, and it revolves!

The marquee is an adaptation of a Spanish canopy with a valance in metal running around the lower edge. It is painted to match the whiteness of the building. Metal too is used to embellish the building itself. The facade is surmounted by a Spanish cresting of wrought iron scroll work with a wrought iron cartouche at the center.

The box office is located at the front of the vestibule—an elaborate little "chapel" of faience tile and hand-wrought iron, the lower portion being in blue and gold tiles irregularly placed, while the canopy portion is of iron with bars opened into an old Sevillian pattern and extending to an iron frieze surmounted by a shield supporting figures executed in repoussé iron.



Upper left: In "El Club Chico," refreshment room having vision of the auditorium, where parties may see the show in privacy.

Upper right: In the Paseo, or lobby, an arcaded approach to the theatre proper typical of the theatre's Spanish character.

Lower view: Detail of the entrance and marquee. The latter is an adaptation of a Spanish canopy, edged with a metal valance.

Souls have been shrived within lesser compartments, even in Spain. Here something rather different by way of surcease may be purchased across a counter of brightly colored tile.

This vestibule, extending into a lobby, is really something more than either. Called the Paseo, it extends along a goodly portion of the building, shielded from the outside by a series of massive Spanish arches. Midway within it is a shallow tiled fountain of the type found in the smaller villas. The Paseo leads to the entrance loggia.

A gay colorful note, redolent of both Spain and the theatre, occurs at the entrance loggia, across which, above the arches, are murals of Spanish figures doing the dances popular in those distant days when Santa Barbara itself was Spanish. They are the work of Samuel Armstrong. The ceilings in the entrance loggia are constructed of reinforced concrete so cast as to represent rough beams and planking. The floor here resembles the tile paving used in Spanish courtyards.

The main foyer is spacious and vaulted. From its ceiling hang three hand-wrought chandeliers, each over six feet in diameter. These fixtures are augmented by wall lanterns, similarly of Spanish pattern. The floor is carpeted in powder blue, with a design in antique gold based on the interlocking D found in the decorations of the Davanzati palace in Florence. Floor borders and wainscoting are in colored tile. At both ends of the foyer are staircases leading to the upper levels of the

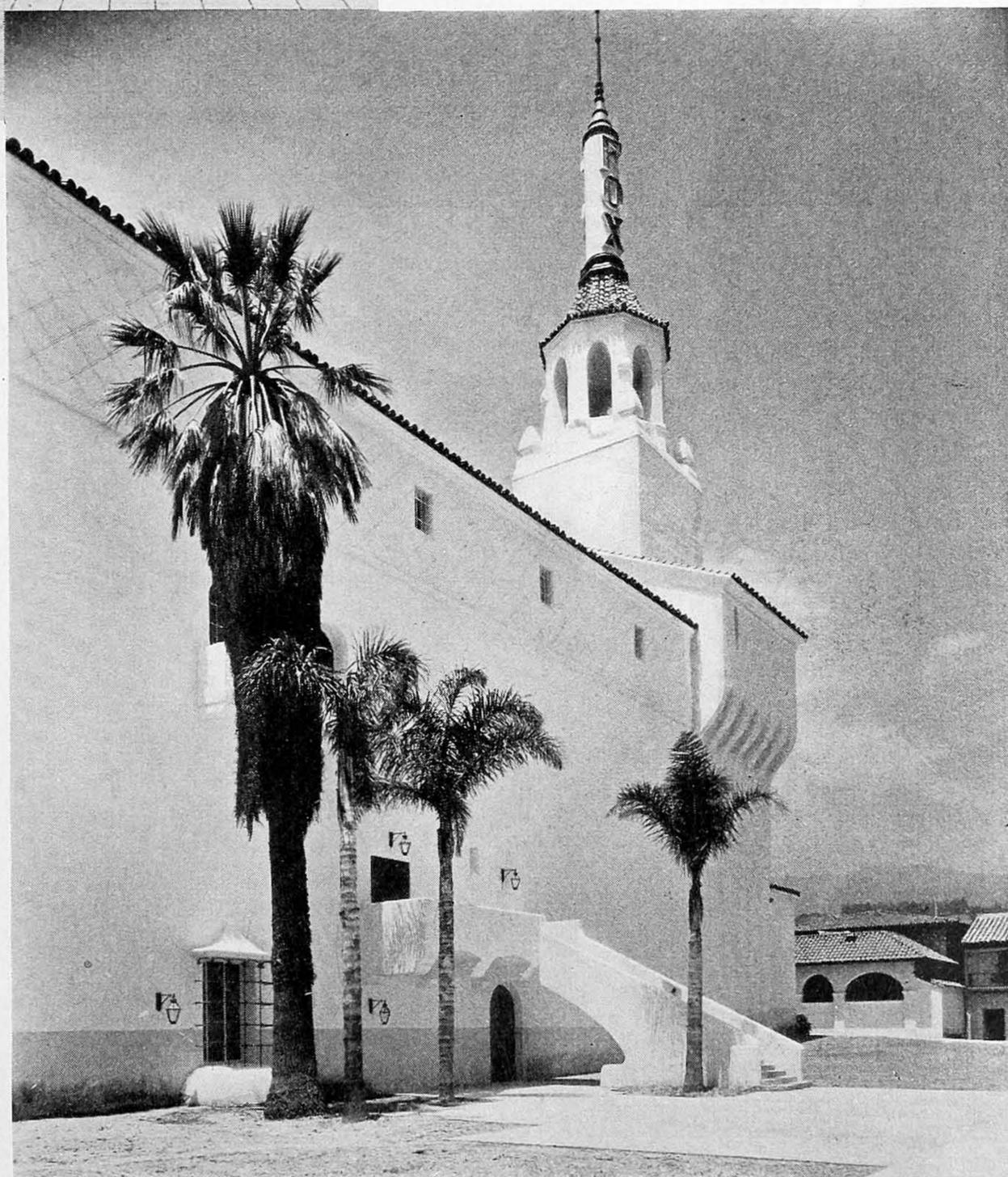


theatre, with steps bordered by a tile strip and carpeted in antique gold.

ENTERING, from this foyer, the auditorium, the patron beholds a detailed representation of an early Spanish village. The treatment is vigorously atmospheric, an exotic outdoor panorama with a vaulting, star-studded sky overhead.

At the front of the auditorium, really the proscenium arch, is a bridge, through the span of which is a river narrowing into distant hills, painted upon the stage curtain, the work of John M. Gamble. Outlined against the sky and mountains are groups of Spanish buildings. To speak of utilitarian matters for a moment, this bridge, or proscenium arch, has a "span" of 50 feet, and a rise of 30 feet, with accommodations for wide screen. A novel adaptation looking toward the possibility of striking stage presentations, is the provision of steps from the stage to the top of the proscenium arch, across which a performer may pass high above the audience, from one side of the stage to the other.

The walls of the auditorium, done entirely in relief, of course, are a representation of outer walls of Spanish buildings, balconied and windowed above, arched below. They are patterned after structures in various parts of Spain, and also (it should be noted) after buildings in early Santa Barbara. Where grilles, weathervanes or other ironwork occur, all are handmade according to the period to which the building involved belongs. Illumi-



Upper left: The loggia, leading into the theatre proper, striking a theatrical note with murals depicting various Spanish dances.

Upper right: The fountain of the Paseo. The border is mosaic, the rim of red tiles in pattern on edge. The basin is also of tile.

Lower view: Another exterior view, this one showing the substitution of typical Spanish doorsteps for unsightly fire escapes.



Above: View of the auditorium along the left wall, looking toward the rear, representing the outer walls of dwellings and shop buildings in a Spanish village of varying architectural periods.



Left: The main foyer. The chandeliers are of hand-wrought iron and measure over six feet in diameter. The carpet is of powder blue, the floor borders of tile, as is the wainscoting.

nation is from lanterns along the walls and suspended from the ceilings of the "buildings," have been made from measured drawings of 14th, 15th and 16th Century Catalonian street lamps.

The ceiling sweeps in an elliptical vault over 100 feet in width, and 150 feet in length. Its construction is of light fabricated metal secured to steel trusses over 75 feet above the lowest point in the auditorium floor. Quake-proof methods were used in this construction, with over 5,000 anchors. It is treated over its entire surface with acoustic plaster.

Details of the general treatment offer further studies in adaptation. The design of the seat frames at the row ends follows that of benches used in about the 15th Century in Segovia. There is a unique refreshment room—"El Club Chico"—high above the balcony floor, yet allowing with complete privacy a view through plate glass of the entire auditorium—this has been adapted from old Monterey architec-

ture, with overhanging balconies and a low sloping ceiling. Even the poster display panels are based on panel patterns culled from Ronda, Segovia, Toledo and Granada.

And a most shrewd adaptation is that which permits the elimination of unsightly fire-escapes. On each side of the main portion of the structure, staircases lead out into two patios, which measure approximately 50x80 feet. Instead of the usual fire escapes, there are broad flights of steps leading to the exterior like those to be found in many a humbler dwelling in villages of Spain.

The architects of the Arlington were Edwards & Plunkett of Santa Barbara, while the decorating was executed by the Robert E. Power Studios of Los Angeles. Walter Kofeldt has been appointed managing director.

The Arlington operates on a continuous policy at popular prices, with programs including both stage and screen performances.

Right: One of the two staircases that are located at either end of the main foyer. The steps are carpeted in antique gold and bordered by tile strips. The railing is of wrought iron.

Below: View of the auditorium as darkened at performance time. The "bridge" forming the proscenium arch can actually be crossed, an arrangement in anticipation of novel stage acts.

