

NOTES ON READING

Leonard G. Haeger, AIA, *HOUSING DESIGN FOR PRODUCTION*, Lumber Dealers Research Council, Washington, D. C., \$1.50.

The hope of this recently published paper-bound book, as stated by its author, is: "That many builder readers will be encouraged to produce well designed houses, not only because the builder can expect them to sell more readily and thus return more dollars quickly to the pockets of the builders, but also because builders have an obligation to improve our neighborhoods and the inventory of housing in America."

The author states that he has no intention of making designers of his readers, but rather, he wishes to make the reader more discriminating in his choice of design. Certainly, the need for improved house design is evident to any observer of the current housing developments which have been constructed throughout New Mexico. However, I doubt that this book is either forceful enough or convincing enough to materially affect these builders.

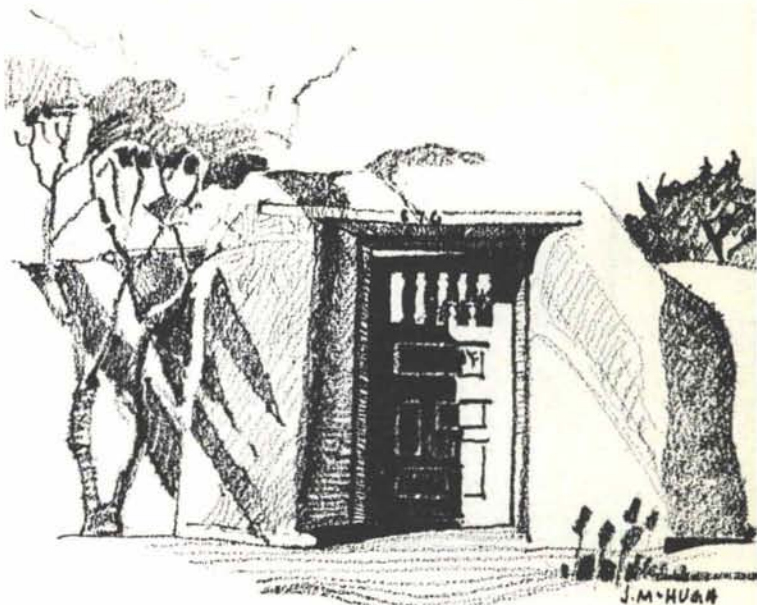
The book contains a "very modest history" of the evolution of the wood framed house from the heavy timber construction of the American colonist through the invention of the balloon frame to current housing construction practices. Mr. Haeger discusses "style" as opposed to "stylism", and illustrates their differences by examples in dresses and automobiles, as well as in houses. The author discusses some very important points and principles; in simple terms he demonstrates how to achieve some balance and harmony in the exterior design of houses. He expresses the wish that builders will exercise more restraint in the choice of siding materials, and that they will consider all elevations of equal importance in the overall design concept. As the author points out, all elevations are visible to the outside world.

In Chapter Seven, the author illustrates some of the mistakes most frequently seen in builders designs and explains how to avoid them. The final pages of this too short book, (just 36 pages), picture several houses which the author considers to have been well designed. Unfortunately, the book does not discuss the interior plans of houses, and only mentions the interior functions.

Some improvement in the overall housing scene could be realized if the readers will bear Mr. Haeger's points in mind. But the real problem of housing a vastly expanding population with new dynamic land use and housing techniques is not mentioned. It is my opinion that these problems cannot be solved by simply improving the facades of the individual houses which are then set upon the land according to the generally accepted sub-division site plan.

The entire sub-division concept which has spread thousands of boxes over thousands of acres of land, must be reconsidered in the light of population needs. Higher densities and increased individual privacy are needed; and research councils such as the one which commissioned this book might do better to expend their efforts towards entirely new housing concepts.

—J. Conron



a sketch by John McHugh, A.I.A.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editor:

The article, "Low-Rise Apartments," which appeared in the July-August issue of NMA is worse than ridiculous.

IF El Castillo Apartments are "SLUMS" then it is high time we have MORE such "SLUMS" in old Santa Fe.

El Castillo Apartments are a "dream come true" to many who have experienced a deplorable rental situation in Santa Fe. In some areas HIP boots are necessary due to no "ASPHALT."

Jealousy and criticism seem to be the rage of the age but perhaps if our hearts contained more "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR" and less animosity world peace would not be at stake.

Sincerely,

Ruth Holmes
El Castillo Apartments
Santa Fe, N. M.

The Editor:

I have just completed the July-August issue of N.M.A. and wish to take a moment to compliment Bainbridge Bunting for the most interesting presentation of *Low-Rise Apartments*.

Sincerely,

HARRY WUGALTER, Chief
Public School Finance Division,
Department of Finance and Administration,
State of New Mexico