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A Convent for Santa Fe

Larry Titman

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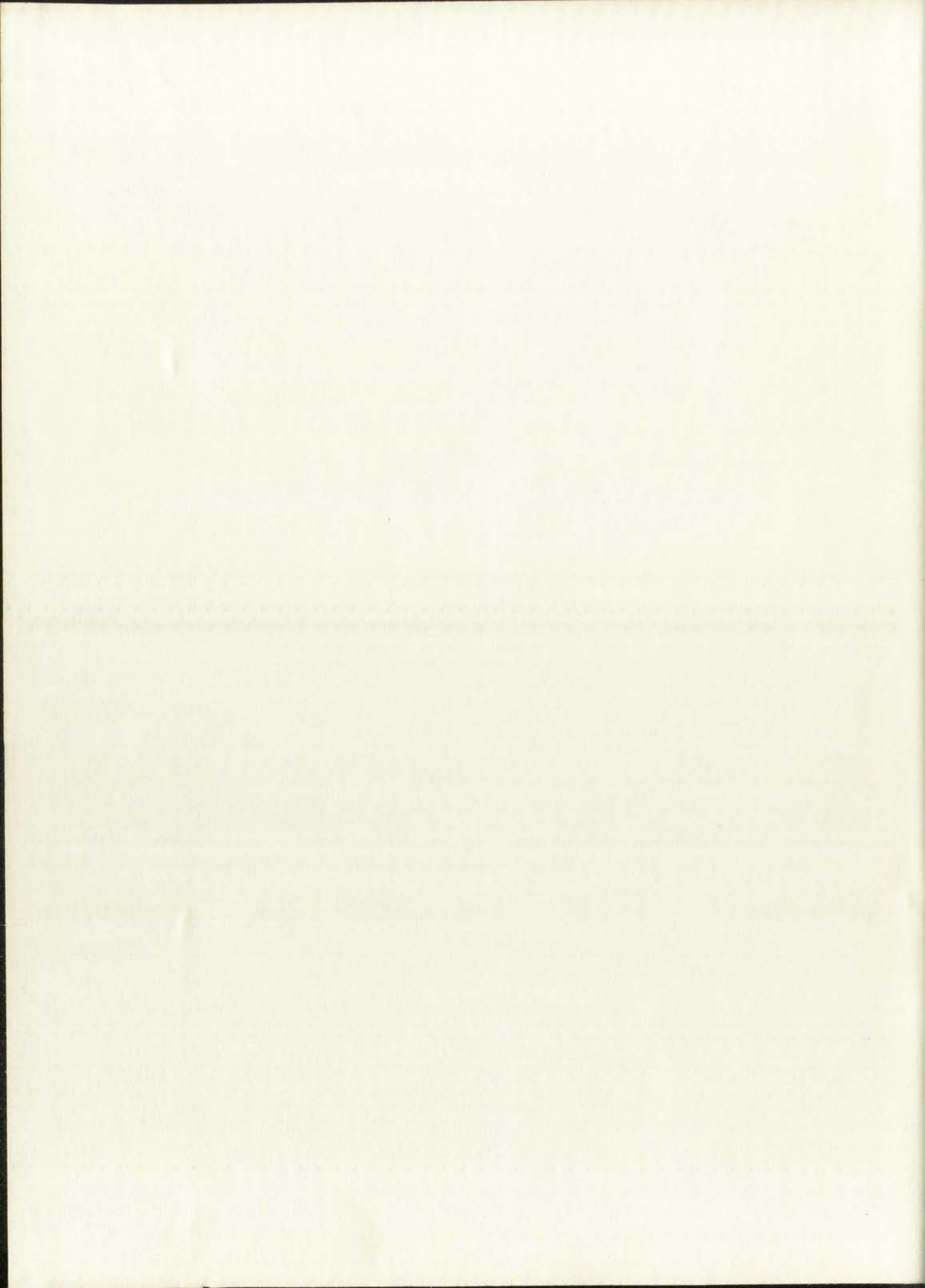
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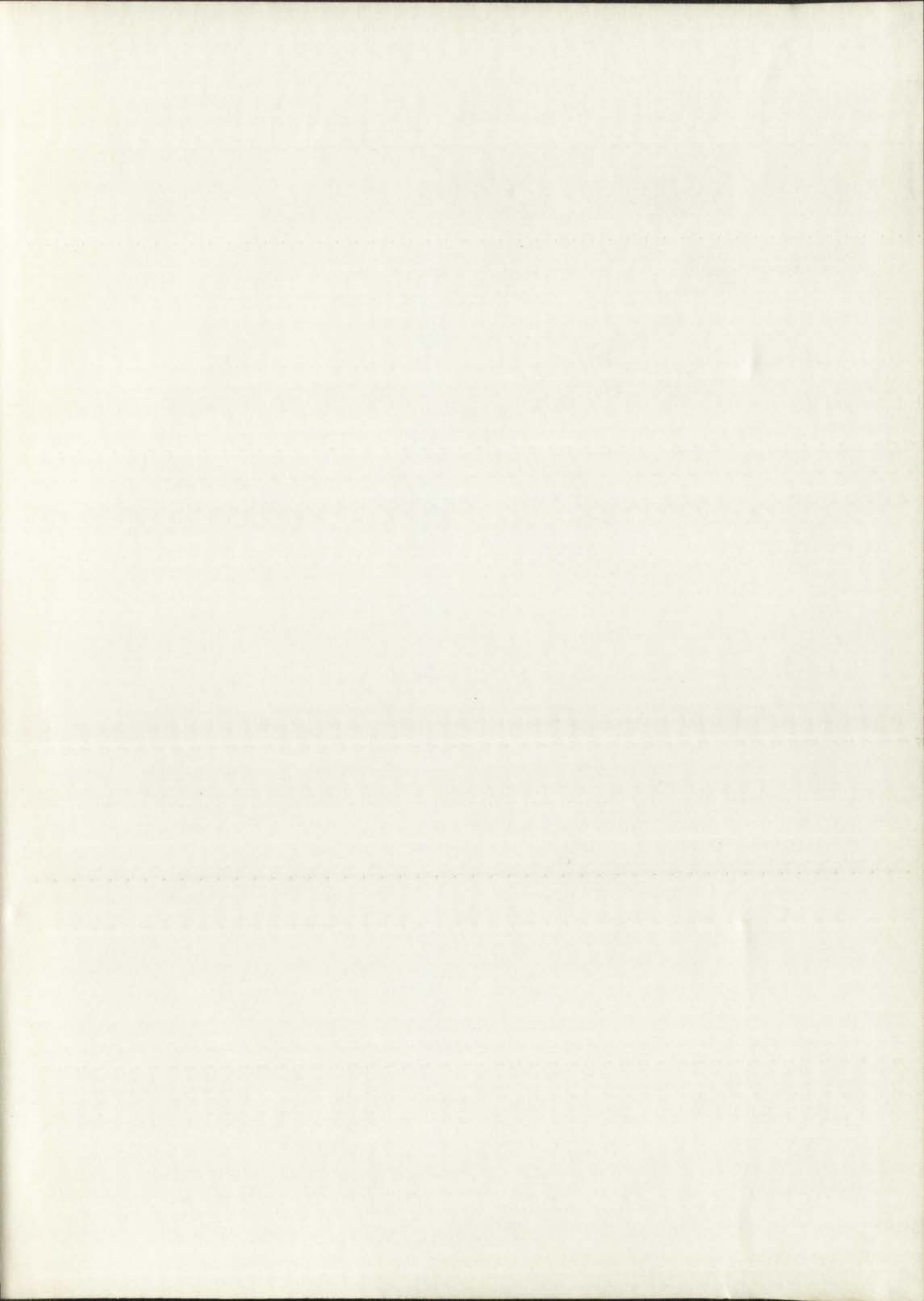
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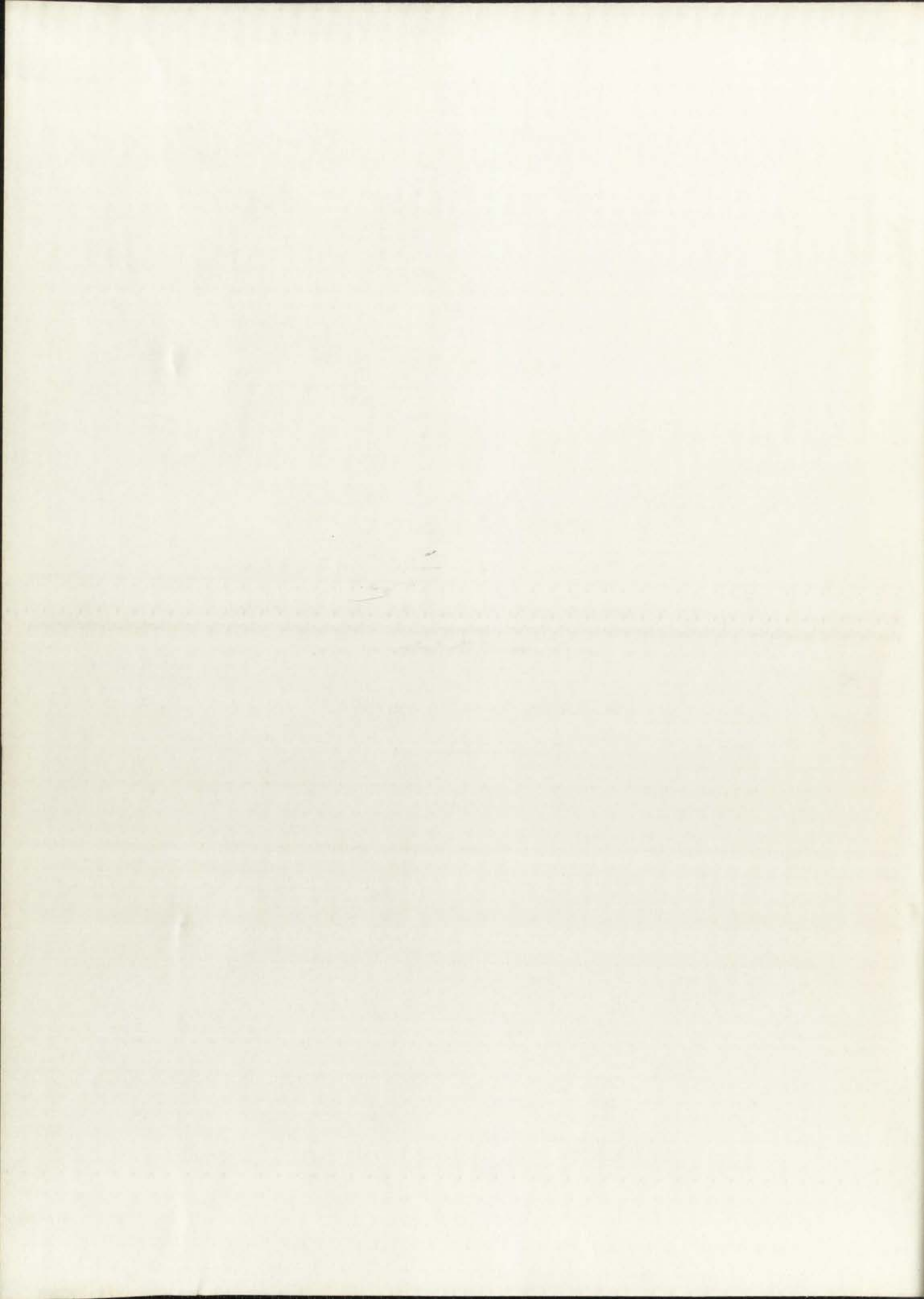
IMPORTANT!

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A C O N V E N T

for

Santa Fe

by

Larry Titman

BACHELOR'S THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Division of Architecture,
University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Architecture.

The University of New Mexico

May 29, 1961

THESIS COMMITTEE

John J. Heimerl
George S. Wright
Lawrence Cantel

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

A REPORT

FOR

THE

BOARD OF REGENTS

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

Presented to the Board of Regents of the University of Texas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Architecture.

The University of Texas

May 22, 1924

THIS REPORT

PROPOSAL

Many people are under the impression that only the Roman Catholic Church has religious orders for men and women. Such is not the case. The Anglican or Episcopal Church has had religious orders for over a hundred years. They are constantly growing in numbers and this, of course, necessitates the building of more convents and monasteries. It is my desire to design a convent for Santa Fe, New Mexico for the nuns known as the Poor Clares. I chose Santa Fe because I want this to be a problem in regionalism. I chose the Poor Clares because they are a completely enclosed order and there are not enough Episcopalians in Santa Fe to warrant having teaching or nursing sisters.

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the poor clares

One hundred and twenty years ago there were no religious orders or communities in the Anglican Communion. Today there are some eighty religious communities, some with as many as thirty-five branch houses, in the Anglican Church. These communities follow a variety of vocations ranging from parish work and teaching to conducting retreats and running hospitals. Unique among religious communities in the United States is the Order of the Poor Clares. They are the only cloistered order in the American Church. By this is meant that once they enter their convent they never again leave it except for hospital care and in the event that a new convent of the order is to be started.

The Poor Clares live by the rule set down by Saint Clare of Assisi during the Middle Ages. The rule is Franciscan and the Poor Clares make up one of three branches of the American Congregation of Franciscans. Although the original rule forbids the sisters owning anything, even a prayerbook, today this has been modified to allow the sisters to own a few bare essentials. Individually they own a breviary and a sewing box. Why a sewing box? Once a Poor Clare receives her habit she must keep it until it literally falls off of her back (this has been known to happen). Their habits are not the finely starched type which

one generally acquaints with nuns. Rather their habit is a direct expression of their vow to poverty. The habit is of coarse grey material and serves not only as daytime clothing but also suffices as a nightgown at night. This eliminates the need of closets altogether in the cells. Originally their vow of poverty sent those Poor Clares known as externs (externs are sisters who keep the convent in touch with the outside and do the shopping and public relations work) out into the towns and countryside daily to beg food for themselves and their sisters at the convent. Since those times the rule has been modified and the nuns depend on the generosity of church members, retreatants and storeowners.

One aspect of convent life which has not changed one bit since the founding of the order is their fervent attitude towards the efficacy of prayer. Their whole life is centered about prayer, not only as found in the prayer offices but also as found in private intercession on behalf of the whole church. It is to concentrate on prayer that the Poor Clares have shut themselves away from the distractions of the secular world. This also accounts for the bareness of their dwellings. It was for the above mentioned reason that Saint Clare insisted on poverty. It was not just a matter of poverty for poverty's sake.

and finally the... almost... comes very... but also... the need of... view of... turn and... side and... the power... and their... has been... chosen...

One aspect of... hit above... towards the... about... no found in... It is so... themselves... This also... was for... on poverty... same.

All Poor Clare convents are joined by the common bond provided by Saint Clare's Rule. At the head of each house is a Reverend Mother. She is in complete charge of all sisters both choir and extern. Each convent has its own postulants and novices who are not housed separately but are housed right in with the sisters.

ALL POWER AND AUTHORITY ARE HEREBY DELEGATED

provided by the Board of Directors to the President and

a General Manager. The Board of Directors shall have

both civil and criminal jurisdiction over the

and members who are not members of the Board of Directors

rights in with the members.

a poor clare's day

A Poor Clare's day begins at midnite when she is summoned to the chapel by the sister sacristan's bell ringing for the office of Matins. Although she has been sleeping Sister Perpetua is ready for chapel as she sleeps with her habit on; she needs only put on her veil. When she arrives at the chapel the postulants are busy dusting the choir stalls, one of their daily duties. After the singing of Matins she returns to her cell and sleeps until the bell rings calling her to the offices of Lauds and Prime. They remain in the chapel for the daily celebration of Mass or Holy Communion. Since the Clares are cloistered, Perpetua and her sisters receive their Communion through slots in the grill dividing the sanctuary and chancel from the choir. After Mass they file silently to breakfast in the refectory. Breakfast is eaten in complete silence. This silence started the night before and lasts until the chapter meeting after breakfast. At the chapter meeting the tasks of the day are assigned by the Reverend Mother. Following the chapter meeting the nuns are given a half hour to tidy their cells and take care of other personal duties. During this time they may visit with their sisters. After this half hour they pursue their duties as assigned at the chapter. This could

A Poor Slave's Day

to the church by the street door, and the first thing
office of Justice. The first thing I saw when I entered
the room was a poor slave, who was sitting on the floor
the pavement was very cold, and the poor slave was
daily duties. After the first thing I saw when I entered
cell and always until the poor slave was sitting on the floor
of lands and trees. The poor slave was sitting on the floor
celebration of the poor slave, and the poor slave was
celebrated, the poor slave was sitting on the floor
through the door in the middle of the room, and the poor slave
from the choir. After the first thing I saw when I entered
the room, the poor slave was sitting on the floor
always started the first thing I saw when I entered
meeting after breakfast. At the first thing I saw when I entered
the day was assigned by the poor slave, and the poor slave
chapter meeting the poor slave was sitting on the floor
cells and the poor slave was sitting on the floor
they say that the poor slave was sitting on the floor
poor slave's day was assigned by the poor slave, and the poor slave

include work in the kitchen, gardening, repairing furniture, working in the laundry room, canning fruit or vegetables, working in the sacristy, taking infirmary duty or scrubbing floors. This work continues until noon time at which time the sisters have a period of self examination at which time they confess openly before their sisters and are assigned appropriate penances. Following this period comes the offices of Terce, Sext, and None. These offices completed the sisters file to the refectory for dinner. As with all meals in a Poor Clare Convent there is no meat. The afternoon sees refectory work, silent meditations and spiritual reading, interrupted only by the recreation hour which consists only of talking. This is really a treat when you haven't been allowed to all day, or at least since the half hour after breakfast. There is a late afternoon visit to the Blessed Sacrament followed by the office of Vespers and then to a perennially meatless supper. After refectory duties are over there is a short period of recreation and then study. At 9:30 P.M. the sisters return to the chapel for the final office of the day, Compline. From there they return to their cells where they may study and read until lights out at 10:30 P.M.

It should be pointed out that there is always at

business work in the kitchen, and in the morning
working in the laundry room, and in the afternoon
in the evening, and in the morning, and in the afternoon
This work continues until a new class of students
have a period of self-education, and then they
openly before their classes and are admitted to the
penitentiary. Following this period, the students
Gent, and Nurse. These classes are held in the
the refectory for dinner, and in the morning
Government there is no work. The students
attend meditation and spiritual exercises, and
by the refectory house, and in the morning
is really a great thing, and in the morning
or at least since the refectory house, and in the morning
late afternoon visit to the refectory house, and in the morning
the office of Vespers and in the morning
get. After refectory dinner, the students
of recreation and then study. The students
to the chapel for the Mass, and in the morning
there they return to their studies, and in the morning
until lights out at night. The students
It should be pointed out that the students

least one sister in the chapel for the continuous vigil before the Reserved Sacrament.

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concept

Of all the philosophies of architecture which have been buffeted about on the seas of discussion, perhaps none has received more of a beating than regionalism.

In my estimation there are two distinct approaches to regionalism. The first approach considers the problem purely from an objective angle. In this approach we rationalize that the early Spanish and Indian inhabitants created an indigenous architecture by incorporating materials and labor which were available and also by satisfying the need for protection against hostile peoples and an inclement climate. Therefore, the Spaniard or Indian made use of the adobe where it was available. The great wall thicknesses not only helped in warding off attackers, but also in maintaining comfortable climatic conditions inside. If stone was readily available it was used. If one is to adhere to this type of reasoning he will soon find that an air-conditioned glass and steel box is as indigenous to New Mexico in the twentieth century as adobe was in the sixteenth century. Why is this true? Mechanical climate control can be readily ordered from any number of distributors in this area; one need only look in Sweets files to select your steel and glass and if it is not already in town it can be delivered in a short time by railroad.

It is readily available as is the labor to put it in place and we have then solved objective regionalism.

The second approach to regionalism is more emotional and depends upon a sympathy for the legacy, formwise, left to us by generations past. The legacy which we have inherited from the Spanish and Indians of New Mexico is composed of massive structure as well as readable structure, simple geometric composition, and the quality of additive space. This approach in no way calls for the trite emulation of historical detail but rather is concerned with a truthful twentieth century expression of architecture sympathetic to a local culture. For this reason I have chosen concrete as a sympathetic, twentieth century material. It lends itself equally well to thin-shell or bulky massive construction. Its rough, natural texture is in keeping with the ruggedness of the Santa Fe terrain. At the same time its bareness will express the simplicity of the function within: a life practically bare of creature comforts. The simple post and lintel architecture will recall the structural procedures used here many years ago. The vigas are now of concrete in harmony with our present technology. What mechanical equipment there is will not be hidden but will be exposed as its function demands. Patios have been incorporated into the scheme to act as sheltered areas to grow altar flowers, fruit trees, and vegetables.



It is possibly still to be found in some of the
and we have shown that it is not a simple matter
The subject of the present paper is the
and the same is true of the other two, the
us by comparison with the other two, the
from the present, and it is not to be expected
also attempts at a comparison with the other two
consequently, and it is not to be expected
in no way call for the attention of the
but rather is a study of the present, and
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or only a study of the present, and it is not to be expected
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the same time, and it is not to be expected
function within, and it is not to be expected
The single note and the single note, and it is not to be expected
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of course in the present, and it is not to be expected
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scheme to be a study of the present, and it is not to be expected
view, and it is not to be expected

location

The location for the convent is Santa Fe, New Mexico, The site on which it is located is in the hills near the south-east part of the city. There were several important reasons for locating it here. First of all the site is in a sparsely populated area and is, thus, more conducive to the maintenance of the privacy which this type of life demands. Nor is it likely that there will be much building activity in the area, thanks to the presence of goodsized, well established estates in the neighborhood. Secondly, the convent is just south of the residence of the Bishop of New Mexico and Southwest Texas. The bishop could easily serve as the episcopal visitor as well as helping with the celebration of daily Mass, i.e. if the regular chaplain couldn't come the bishop could easily be called upon to celebrate. Lastly, the beauty of the site and its elevated, dominant location provide a handsome stage on which to place the building. The site has a slope to it which lends itself to the creation of interest by use of varying levels in the buildings themselves. There is a driveway which would lead from a side road into the small convent parking lot. All who came to the convent would come to the parking lot first, of course.

parking

Whereas most architectural problems today have as one of their chief criteria the availability of close and ample parking, the problem of a cloistered convent is diametrically opposite. To have a drive going to a porte-cochere on the front of the convent would rather defeat the building's statement which should be a statement expressing its being apart from the world around it. Likewise, there will be no ribbon of concrete or flagstone to lead guests to the public lobby. When retreatants come to the convent it is to be assumed that they will be coming with the idea of being apart from their everyday existence; therefore, this type of transitory element (i.e. natural vs. man-made) will immediately ready them for their retreat. Signs or architectural means of guiding the guests to the building will be non essential as every group that comes will have to let the convent know ahead of time and they will always be met and guided by extern sisters. Deliveries will be accepted by externs in the office regardless of the commodity. Delivery trucks will park in the parking lot and the extra work required to thus bring in goods, though appalling to twentieth century, industrially minded efficiency experts, is still what the rule of this way of life demands. Another thing that must be

parking

between the two sides of the road, and the
of the district, but the main reason for the
the, the number of cars parked along the
points. To give a better idea of the
of the system, we have taken the following
should be a complete one, and the
around it. However, the system is not
flagstone to form the main body. The
come to the center, and the
the with the main body, and the
therefore, this way of parking is not
made) all immediate parking spaces are
architectural point of view, the
be not considered as a parking space, but
convenient for the cars to park, and the
ed by extra effort. The system is
in the office buildings of the district, and
park in the parking lot, and the
bring in cars, and the
basically similar system, and the
this way of parking.

remembered is that during Lent the parking lot probably won't be used at all except for an occasional food delivery and the daily visit of the priest who says Mass for the nuns. From Ash Wednesday until Easter no members of the public enter the convent unless some crisis takes place, and even if it's a mechanical failure there is generally a sister or two that can take care of practically anything that goes wrong.

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chapel building

Those who come to visit the convent, whether for a weekend retreat or a few hour visit, will first of all go to the office and lobby located beneath the chapel. Here there is always an extern sister on duty during the day. From here retreatants will be ushered to their rooms by an extern sister and in this lobby those who have relatives in the convent may visit with them. A screen or grille separates the nun from her visitor as another means of guarding the isolation which this life demands. Also in this area are located the public restrooms which would be used mostly just by those people visiting a relative in the order or guests who might just be there to see the place.

Adjoining the office and lobby and on the same floor is located the library. This is a room of silence and study. From the store of books in this room will come the reading material which is audibly read daily in the refectory. The larger part of the collection will be books of a religious nature: theological treatises, biographies of saints, etc. The south wall is solid because of the public court which adjoins it. The north wall, on the other hand, is all glass,

not only because of the desireability of having a north light to read and study by, but also because it permits them to enjoy the view of the north courtyards with their lawns, flowers, and trees.

In the same building, but on the second floor, is located the room which is the heart of convent life: the chapel. The chapel was placed at the second floor level to once again indicate its isolation from the outside world. It is barren and stark inside and outside in keeping with the attitude towards poverty held by the order. The only accents of warmth and color would be those provided by the altar which would have a decorative tryptich and also votive candles, vesper lamps, sanctuary lamps, statues and paintings.

The chancel is divided into three distinct parts: the chancel at the east end, the nave in the middle and the choir at the west end.

The chancel is where the altar is located and is where the priest assisted by his server says Mass for the nuns and any guests. The chancel is located right off of the little room known as the sacristy which is where the priest and server vest themselves, the altar flowers are prepared and where all of the altar equipment is kept.

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The nave is used by the public congregation which might be composed of retreatants and any guests who might have come only for the service. This part of the church contains votive lights, stations of the cross, and any statuary. These are all externals for use in the private devotions of the people. Access to the nave is via a bridge which connects the chapel to the retreat house. Each part of the chapel provides admittance according to its function. The priest enters from below by climbing the stairway to the sacristy, the externs and public enter by a bridge from the retreat house and the third section, the choir is entered by means of a ramp from the nuns' quarters.

The chancel and nave are considered out of cloister and therefore must be completely cared for by the externs. The third part is the choir and is cloistered and no one outside of the order is permitted in there. Not even the bishop is allowed in the choir. At the investiture of new nuns he must sit out in the nave which is separated from the choir by a grille. When the priest administers Communion to the nuns it is through a slot in the grille that he place the Host on the nun's tongue. Whereas the seats of the nave face the altar the seats in the choir are located perpendicular to the altar planwise and are organized so that one half of the sisters face the other half.

The nave is...
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to the nave is via a...
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The channel and...
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in the choir...
in the nave which is...
the great...
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whereas the...
choir are...
organised so that...

This is dictated by the antiphonal singing in all of the daily offices. At the west end of the choir are located the altar used for offices and the pipe organ.

This is a list of the names of the persons who have been

admitted to the office of the Secretary of the State

used for the purpose of the office.

1870

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

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1878

1879

1880

the ramp

Between the chapel and the nuns' dormitory is located a ramp. The ramp is a means of creating interest spacially in the convent complex as well as functioning as a means of getting in and out of the chapel. To enhance the spacial experience the walls have been perforated with windows of varied sizes so that light and shadow as well as the sculptural effect of the ramp itself can be used to create interest. Not only does the exterior of the ramp create interest but so does the interior. It expresses its function of changing levels as well as providing an interesting three dimensional screen when viewing the courtyards from the west.

dormitory

The cloistered nuns live in the dormitory. The first floor contains the refectory, recreation room and kitchen.

The refectory is the dining room for the nuns, postulants and novices. In this case the refectory has been located at the north end of the building and contains a glass north wall to permit enjoying the splendid view which one gets from the refectory. Again the walls have been perforated with varying size windows to lend to the spacial interest in the building. The refectory is used for the three daily meals and the chapter meeting, at which time the daily work is assigned, after breakfast.

Refectory, retreat house and the infirmary all have their meals served from the dormitory kitchen. The kitchen is a hub of daily activity because not only are the meals prepared there but canning and baking for the future is constantly in progress.

The recreation room is actually just a sitting room where the sisters meet every afternoon for their free period when they can talk. To add to the hominess a fireplace has been put in this room and the large east window provides a pleasant view of the patio.

dormitory

The classroom runs live in the dormitory. The floor contains the refectory, refectory room and kitchen. The refectory is the dining room for the male, female, and children. In this room the refectory has been located at the north end of the building and contains a glass north wall to permit enjoying the extensive view which the room from the refectory. Again the walls have been painted with varying high windows to lead to the general interest in the building. The refectory is used for the three daily meals and the chapter meeting, at which time the daily work is assigned, after breakfast.

Refectory, refectory house and the refectory all have their meals served from the refectory kitchen. The kitchen is a two of daily activity because not only are the meals prepared there but canning and baking for the future is constantly in progress.

The refectory room is centrally located in the room where the sisters meet every afternoon for their three periods when they can talk. To add to the refectory a fireplace has been put in this room and the large west window provides a pleasant view of the garden.

The sisters' cells are located on the two upper floors. The cells are all identical and are just large enough to house a desk and a low frame for the nun's straw mattress. On one of the walls is a crucifix. The small windows provide sufficient light for study. Windows of this size here are only for light as time spent in the cell is not for viewing the scenery but is rather used for study, prayer and sleep. When a nun is in her cell she is busy. On the exterior the small windows add to the feeling of the building's being apart from the world.

The stairs at the ends of the buildings are in compliance with the fire codes. The restrooms are located near the exterior stairs. In case a plumber should have to come he could use these stairs and thus go into the convent as short a distance as possible.

The stairs' cells are fastened on the two upper floors. The cells are all identical and are just large enough to house a desk and a few frames for the man's school pictures. On one of the walls is a window. The small window provides sufficient light for study. Windows of this size are not only for light as time spent in the cell is not for studying the scenery but is rather used for study, prayer and sleep. When a man is in his cell he is busy. On the exterior the small windows add to the feeling of the building's being apart from the world.

The stairs at the end of the building are in close proximity with the fire exits. The restrooms are located near the exterior stairs. In case a disaster should have to come he could use these stairs and then go into the convent as short a distance as possible.

the retreat house

At the south end of the convent is the retreat house. Not only does it provide accomodations for a few retreatants but also is the home of the extern sisters. Like the dormitory it contains a refectory for dining and a kitchen on the first floor. The kitchen in the retreat house is just a warming kitchen and is not used for the preparation of meals. What was said about cells in the dormitory applies to cells in the retreat house.

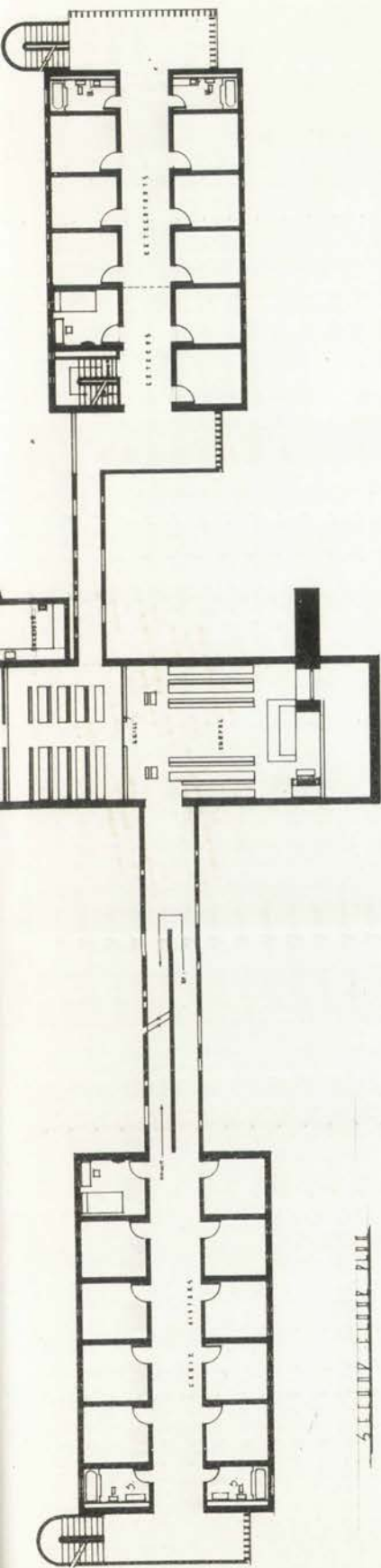
patio

In keeping with New Mexico tradition, open courtyards have been incorporated into the scheme of the convent. They contain no desert plants but rather form a complete contrast to the exterior and vegetation and weather. It would appear senseless to go to the trouble of building a patio and filling it with desert plants when the purpose of the patio is to provide an oasis in the midst of the desert. In these courts will be the vegetable garden, fruit trees and altar flowers as well as pleasant areas for meditating. The rooms looking into the patio will be those in which the work of the convent are carried on. Since the cells are used so seldom, for such short periods of time there is really no sense in having the cells face into the courtyards.

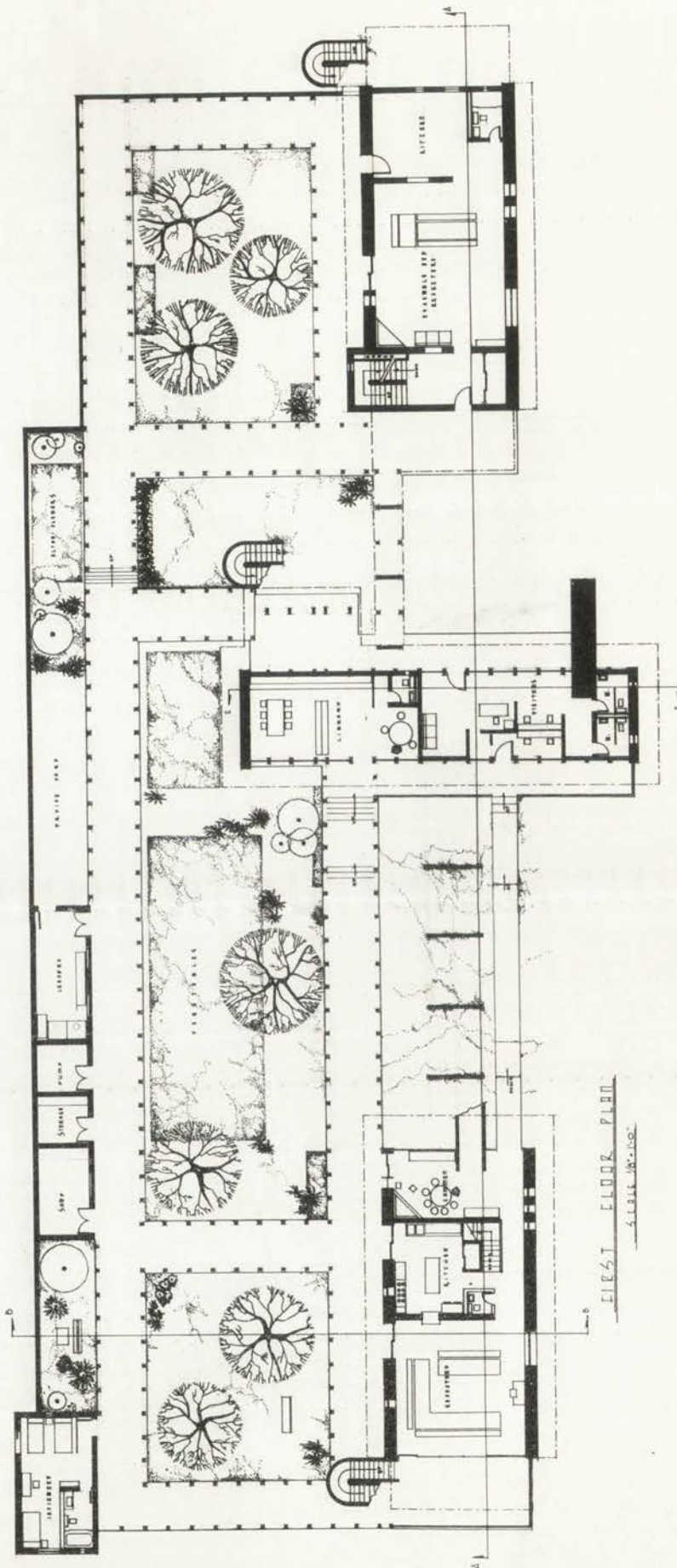
CONCLUSION

I feel that there is a need for regional expressions in architecture today. New Mexico is extremely fortunate to have such a colorful historical heritage to draw upon. Though it would be incorrect were we to merely resort to facadism and applied archeology as a regional expression, I still feel that our local history, geography, and climatic conditions can aid us in finding a worthy regionalism. It should definitely reflect the twentieth century to serve as our architectural legacy to the future. It's uniqueness we can derive only by a resorting to emotionalism and a feeling and appreciation for our legacy from the past. The convent which has been described in the foregoing pages is exemplary of what I feel New Mexico regionalism should strive for: a sympathy for historic forms and a harmonious union with our geography.

I feel that there is a need for regional organizations in architecture today. New Mexico is extremely fortunate to have such a colorful historical heritage to draw upon. Though it would be incorrect were we to merely resort to localities and applied technology as a regional expression, I still feel that our local history, geography, and climatic conditions can aid us in finding a worthy tradition. It should definitely reflect the twentieth century to serve as our architectural legacy to the future. It's unfortunate we can derive only by a resorting to emotionalism and a feeling and speculation for our legacy from the past. The answer which has been described in the foregoing pages is a synthesis of what I feel New Mexico regionalism should strive for: a sympathy for historic forms and a harmonious union with our geography.

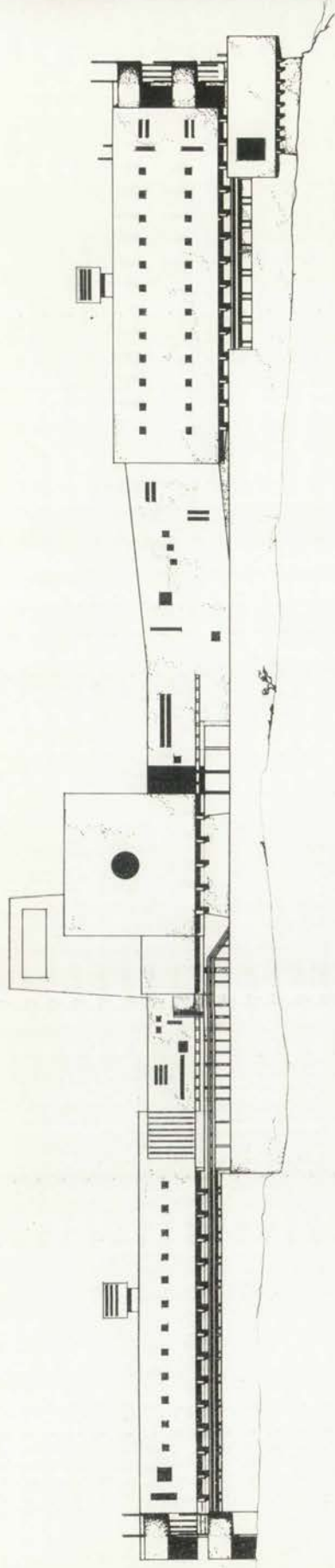


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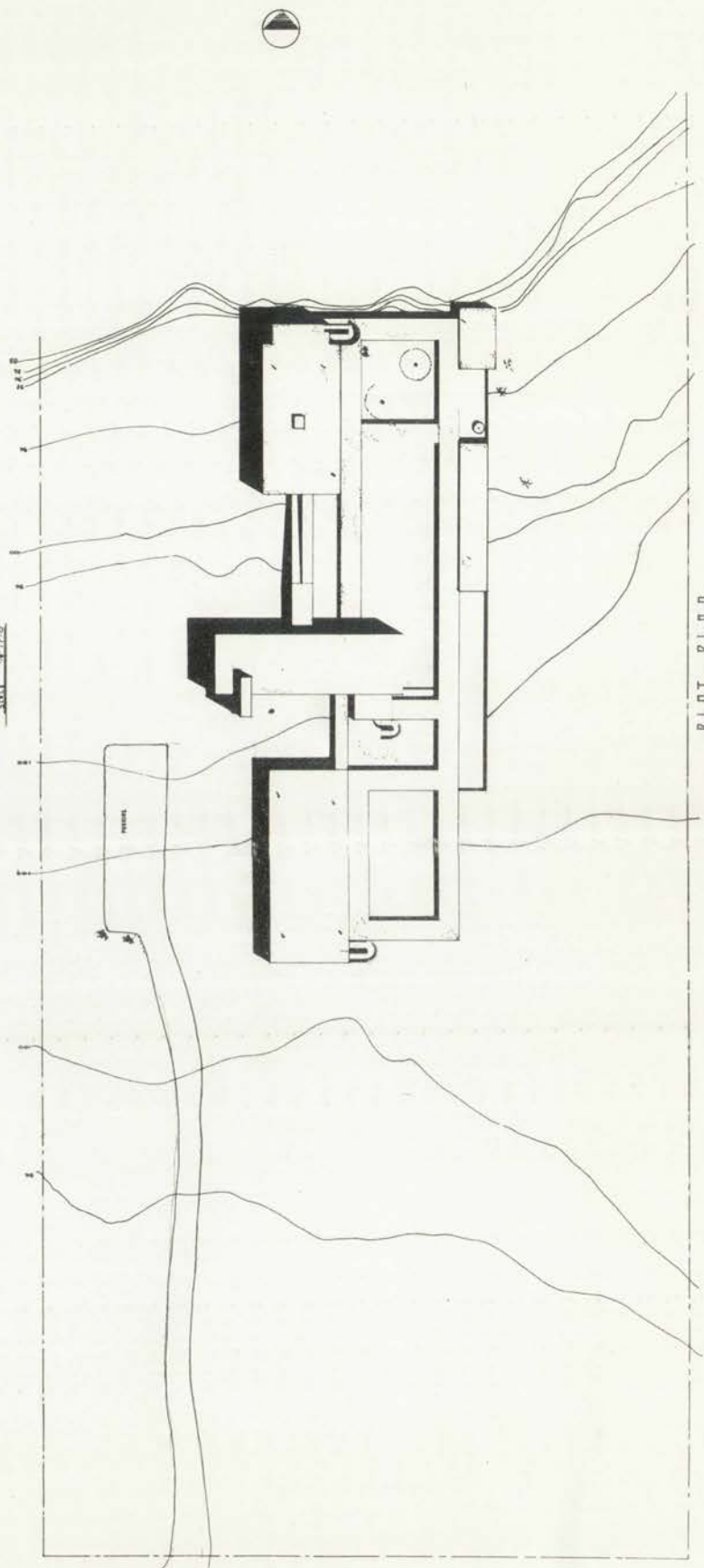
SECOND FLOOR PLAN





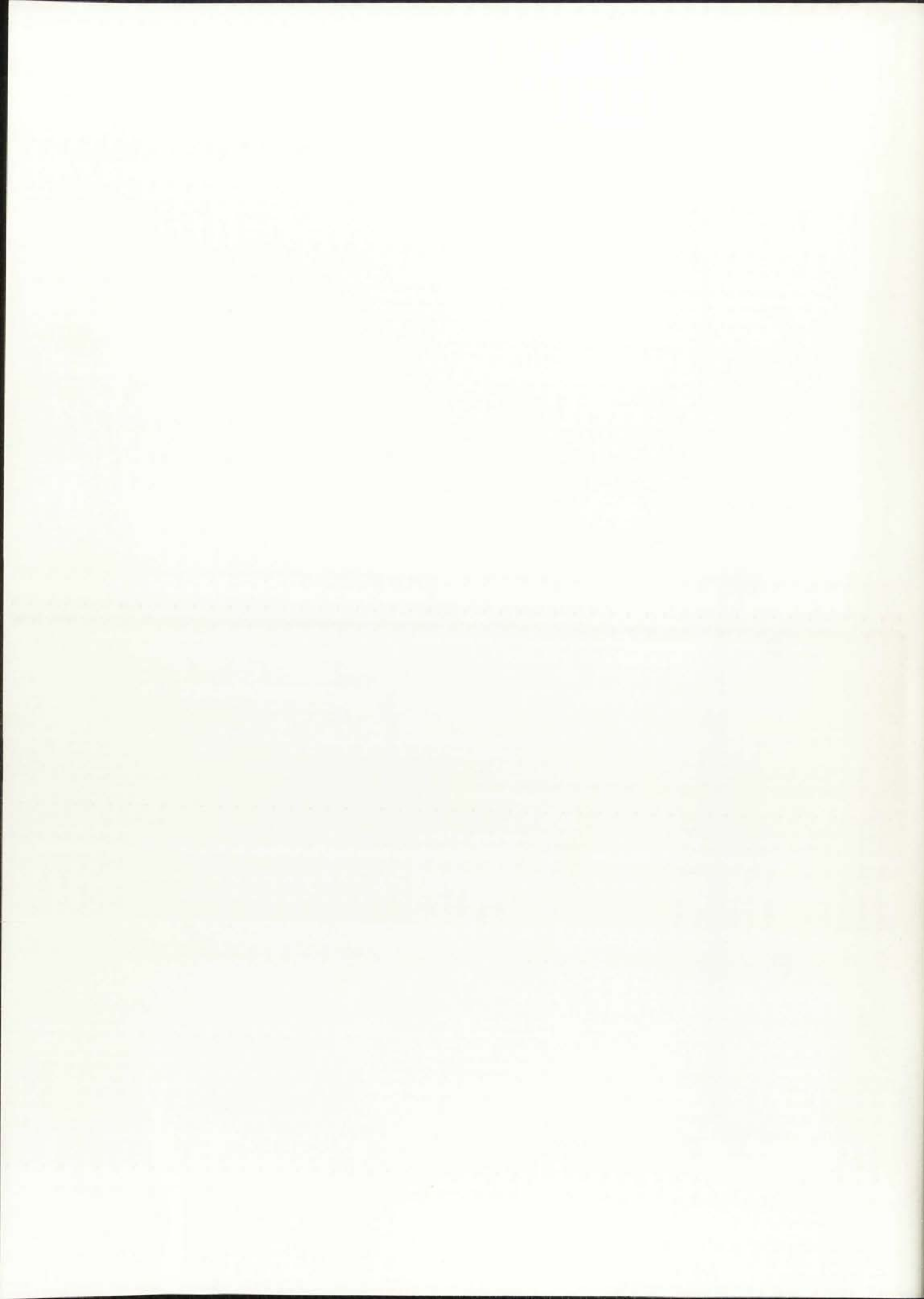
EAST ELEVATION

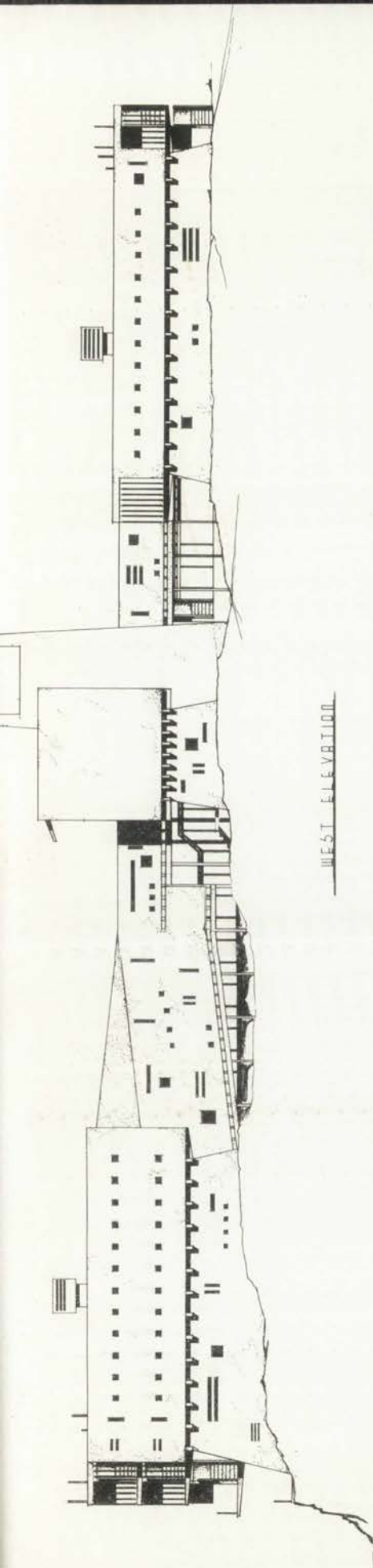
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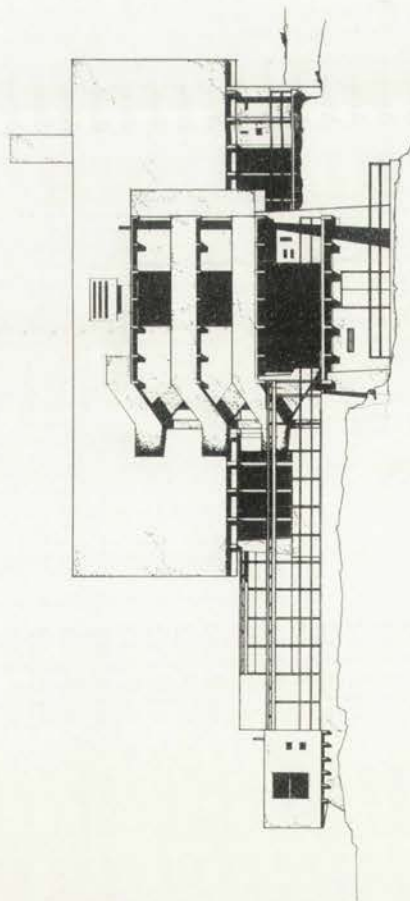
FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1"=20'-0"

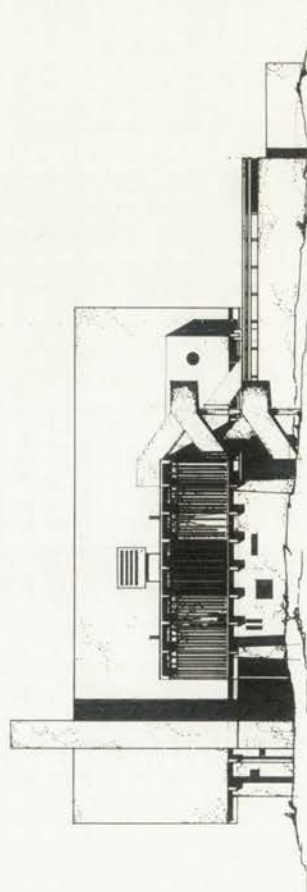




WEST ELEVATION

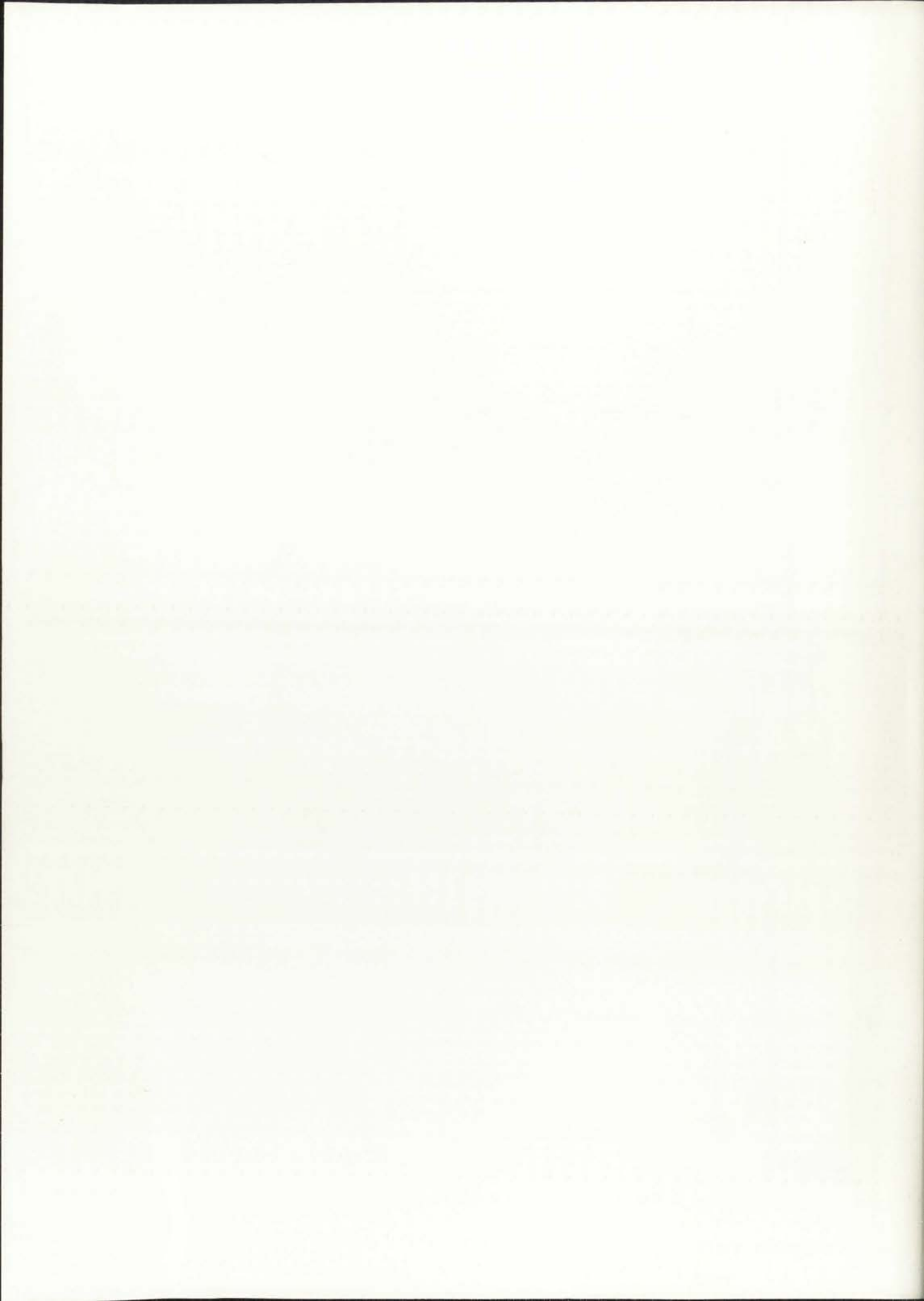


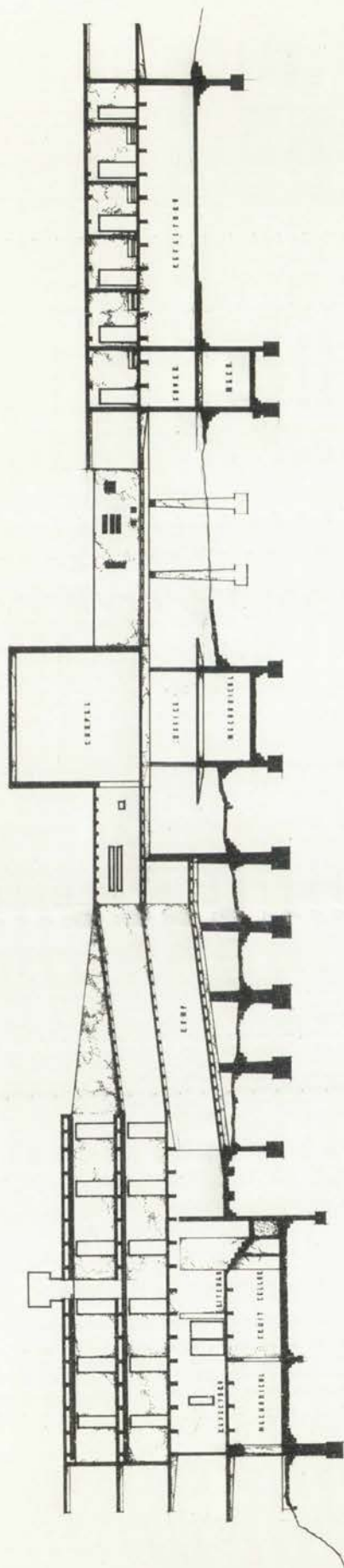
NORTH ELEVATION



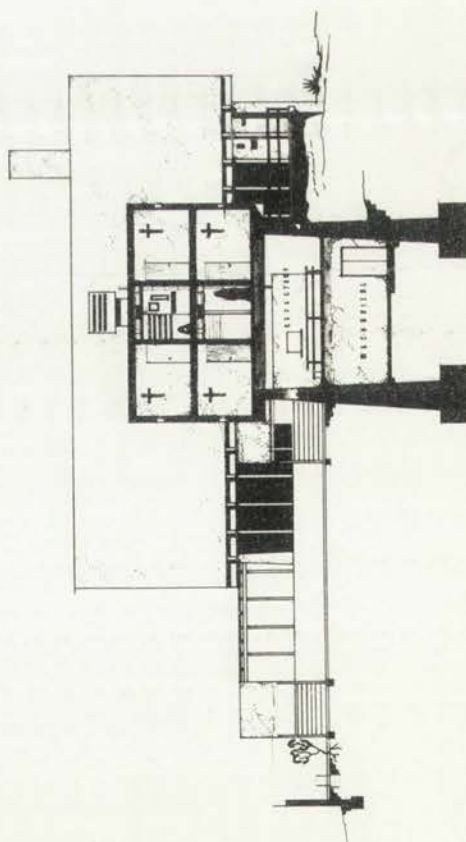
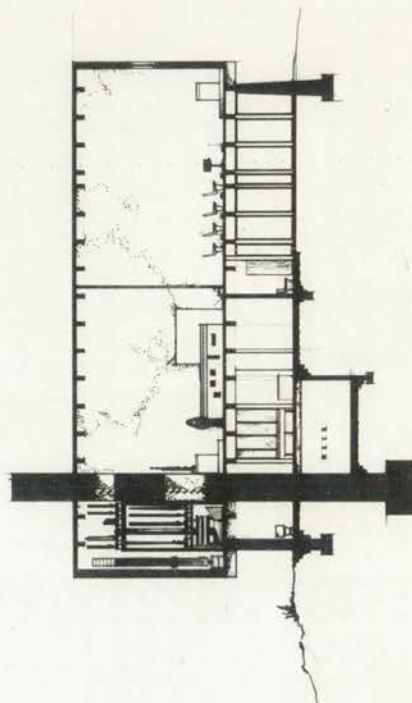
SOUTH ELEVATION

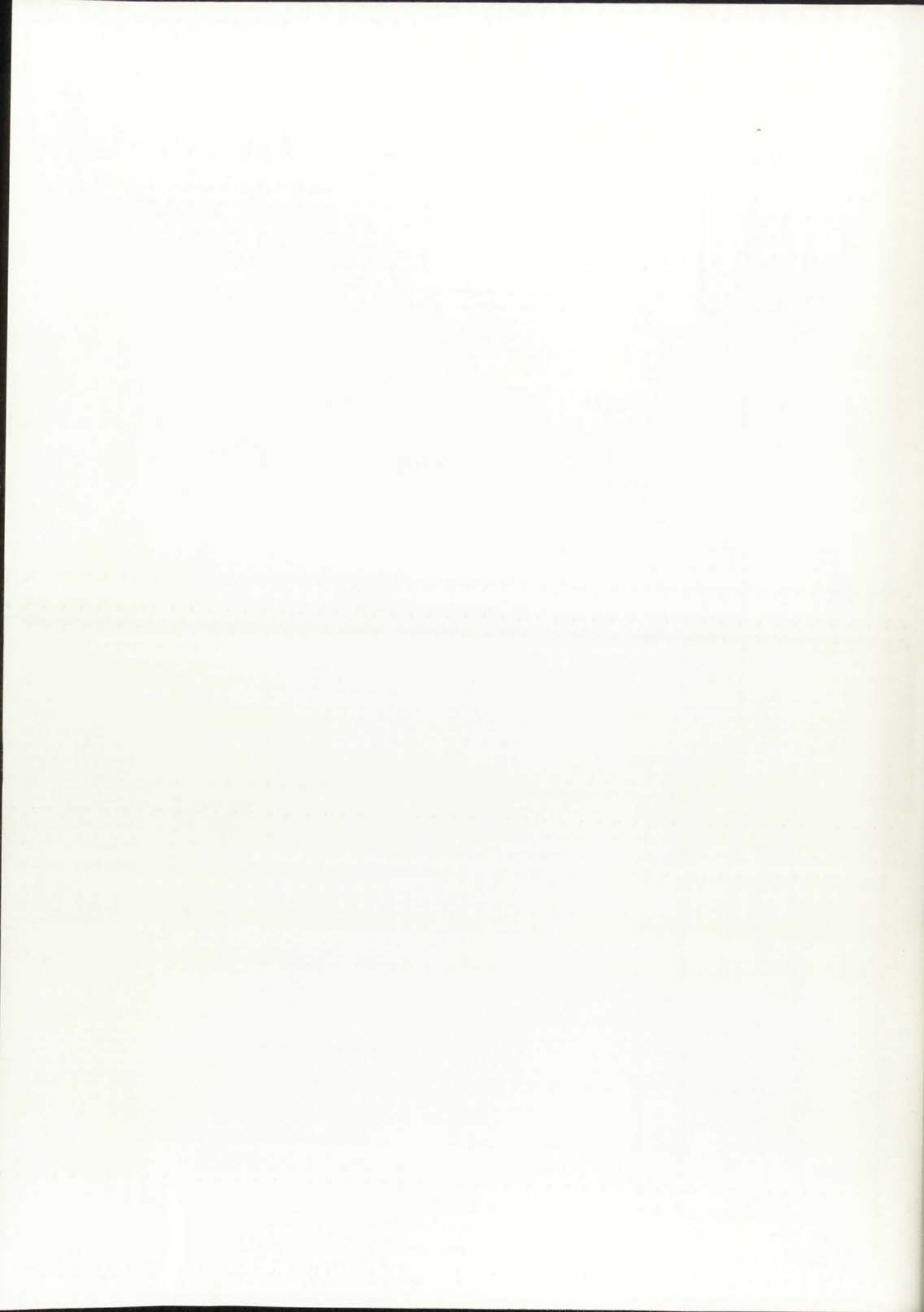
1/4" = 1' - 0"

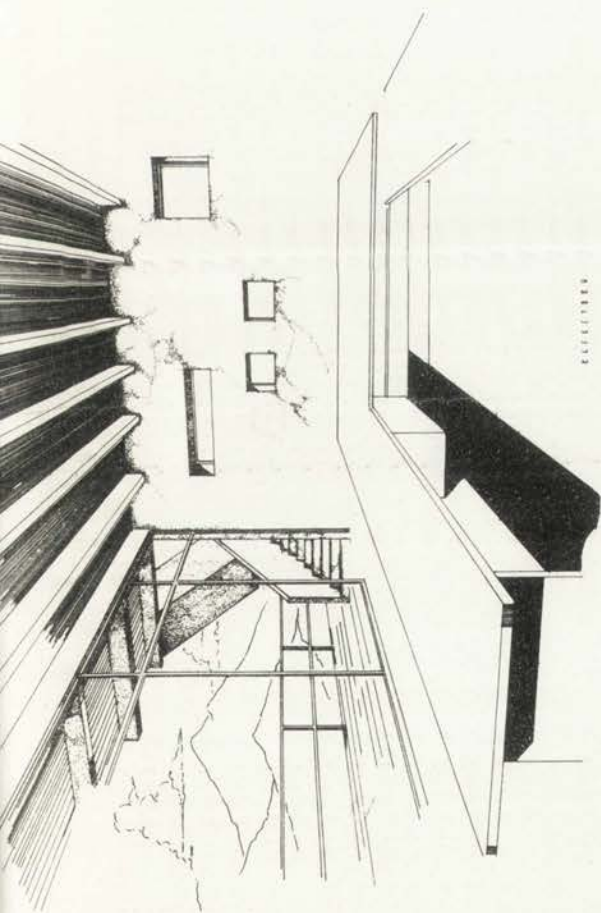
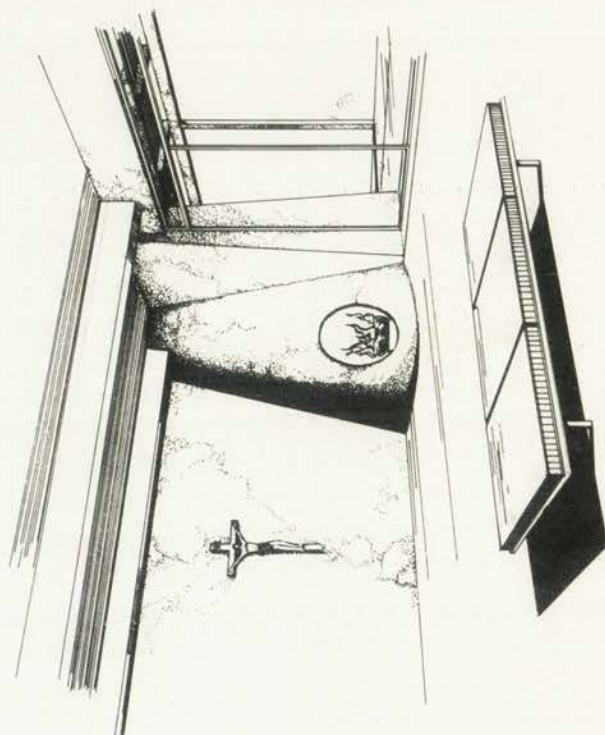




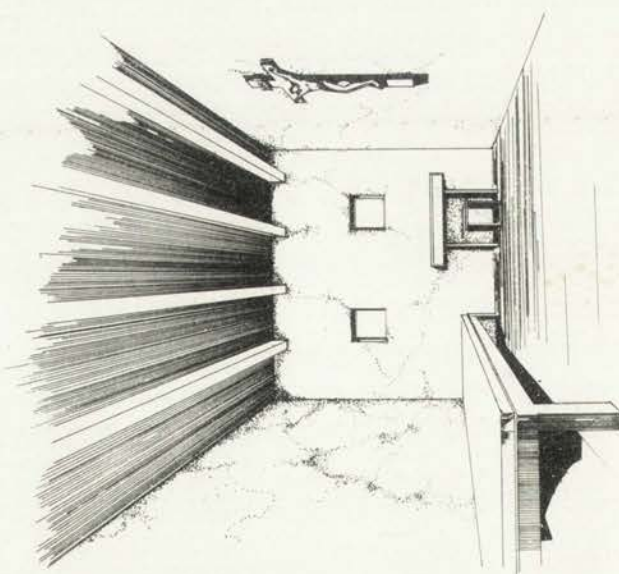
61111 1/2" x 1.0"







SECRETARY - 1000



TOPPER - 1000

