

# 5th Annual Conference New Mexico Society of Architects

Members of the New Mexico Southern Chapter, AIA, were hosts for the Fifth Annual Conference of the New Mexico Society of Architects in Hobbs on May 6 and 7.

Mack Easley, Lt. Governor of New Mexico, presented the opening address. He outlined the growth of New Mexico and expressed the need for quality in architecture. He suggested that architects, as they get "away from the old colonial or territorial styles," look to the "color and flamboyance of the new architectural work which has been done in Puerto Rico and Mexico for a possible direction for the new work of tourist orientated New Mexico."

Mr. Easley pointed out that New Mexico will grow at a faster pace than the national average. Accordingly, a great amount of work will have to be done by the architectural profession in order to accommodate these new people and their needs.

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## Panel 1. "Architecture for the Elderly."

Richard Snow, Administrator of the Retirement Ranch, Clovis, New Mexico, and president of the New Mexico Association of Nursing Homes.

Rex Quigley, M.D., Hobbs

Rev. Jack London, Minister, First Presbyterian Church, Hobbs.

R. E. Richards, Attorney, Hobbs.

Mr. Snow, the principal speaker on panel one, was pleased to see that there has been an increasing awareness for the need for study and research into the problems of "architecture for the elderly." Mr. Snow outlined the basic types of construction and design for the elderly. These include: retirement communities consisting of homes or apartments, occasionally a hotel for the elderly, and sheltered care or nursing homes.

Mr. Snow believes that "any real housing designed for the elderly should contain facilities at all levels of care. My thinking for this is that today the elderly are in one condition—physically or mentally—tomorrow they may be in an entirely different situation and the third day they may be in still another condition. When elderly persons decide to leave their own home, they are pulling up roots which are very deep. This is a somewhat shaking situation emotionally, and it seems bad to me to think in terms of their maybe having to change again." Therefore, a facility which provides a combination of "several different levels of care" is going to provide "a far greater service for the senior citizens." Mr. Snow pointed out, however, that these differing services should be located in separate areas. "It is not a good thing to mix the reasonably well with

the very sick." Mr. Snow outlined the needs and requirements which he felt should be considered in the designing of Nursing Homes, or, as they are now being called: Extended Care Facilities.

Dr. Quigley expanded upon Mr. Snow's list of construction and design details, which he felt should be considered for a home for the elderly. He asked that architects design these facilities to give the "feeling of a home, rather than an institution."

Rev. London stressed the emotional and spiritual problems which the elderly must face. Often the elderly must accept financial help for the first time in their lives, because of the high cost of nursing homes; this becomes an emotional problem. The elderly are very often isolated from their families and, as Rev. London pointed out, the grandparents are often no longer part of their families.

Rev. London stressed the need for the elderly to share religious experiences with other members of the community, and the equal need for the provision of areas for individual devotions.

Mr. Richards discussed the very real and increasing problems of liability which architects confront. He pointed out that the architect does have a real responsibility to the nursing home client. The architect must consider all the possible safety devices which might be used, thereby lessening the possibility of unnecessary exposure to liability by the client.

During the discussion period which followed, Mr. Jason Moore, AIA, stated that he felt that "there is a great deal wrong with the geriatrics program in this country. We are attempting to segregate the elderly. In my opinion this is the worst kind of segregation. We have retirement communities where old people are supposed to go. Many old people do not want to be put out to pasture." Mr. Moore also questioned the present orientation of the medical profession; he challenged the profession to deal considerably more with preventative medicine.

Mr. Snow agreed that "most alert elderly people do not want to feel that they are only with elderly people, but, at the same time, most of them appreciate being with elderly people most of the time. So it behooves the home to organize such a program that will keep these people in the mainstream of life."

Dr. Quigley took issue with Mr. Moore's challenge and pointed out the great amount of time spent by doctors in preventing disease. He called the charge "fallacious."

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## Panel 2. A Design Seminar

Friday afternoon and Saturday morning were devoted to a presentation of the workings of a single



architectural firm, Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott, Architects, Planners, Engineers, Houston, Texas. In the introduction, Hugh Rowland, President of the New Mexico Society of Architects, explained the purpose of the forthcoming two sessions. "They are here to show us the results, approaches, and techniques by which their firm has produced such outstanding designs."

Representing Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott were two associates of the firm: Mr. David C. Bullen and Mr. Michael H. Trower.

Mr. Bullen began by showing slides of the offices of Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott, which are located within a building designed by the firm. He then outlined the philosophy of the firm. "The Caudill, Rowlett, Scott (CRS) tree symbolizes the beliefs of a firm which designs everything from tables to buildings to cities." The firm has currently some two hundred million dollars worth of projects in various stages of progress.



*the CRS tree*

#### *The seed.*

The CRS firm believes in "building a better architecture. Quality is a must. Function, cost and environment—these are the three great factors involved in planning, whether it be a large city or a small building. To achieve a successful project, there must be a tri-lateral balance of these three. . . . Competent, experienced designers attempt to balance these three factors, and when they do, they come up with a truly economical building. This we believe."

#### *The roots.*

"CRS believes that analysis is the prelude to a better architecture. This is the era of team cooperation. Architecture must reflect the needs of the people. The problem solving approach is our deepest root. The pioneering work of CRS has come about largely through its problem solving approach.

"We believe that everyone of our clients has a different set of building problems. Our first job is to determine exactly what these problems are. Analysis is the key to understanding these problems. We work as a team. We have deep convictions; when creative specialists work together, they produce a successful architecture. The client is an integral part of our team. Without the client our team would be incomplete . . .

"The client and the architect must understand each other. Very often, the difference between good and bad communications is the difference between a good and a bad building . . .

"Architectural humanism is our doctrine. We believe that through the spirit and humanism of a great architecture man can be motivated to live a better and more worthwhile life. We know that there must be a fulfillment of an emotional need as well as a physical one."

#### *The trunk.*

"CRS believes that research, plus imagination, plus technical competence, plus practical direction is equal to a better architecture. Good roots produce a sturdy tree trunk. From our three root convictions: analysis, the team, and human values grows the trunk of the CRS tree. The trunk symbolizes straightforward, economical solutions."

#### *The limbs.*

"How is a CRS building recognized? Although there are definite characteristics in CRS buildings, the non-professional may have some difficulty in recognizing them. Our firm does not confine its thinking to any one specific school of architectural thought. We will not allow ourselves to get on any one bandwagon, although, admittedly, we do like to listen to the music.

"One CRS limb is the individualized solution. We believe that a building must start with a concept. This stems from the CRS roots. When a building has a strong concept, when it knows its purpose, the concept is reflected in the plan. This is why one can see such a variety of plans and structures from CRS.

"Creative use of environmental controls characterize another limb of the CRS tree. CRS architecture has been influenced greatly by research, particularly in the areas of light, air, and sound.

"Structural order is another limb. The use of space which has a fluid quality is another characteristic of CRS architecture. Interior space is generally not chopped up like an egg crate; there are few confining cell-like rooms.

"The building should have a regional character; CRS designers make a deliberate attempt to reflect the region in which the building is to be located.

"There are many other limbs, none by itself signifies a better architecture, but, together, the limbs characterize the well-balanced CRS tree."

Mr. Trower:

The CRS method of operation, the "squatters," is a team of specialists. The team involves a partner-in-charge, a project manager, a designer, and a job captain. Often engineers or other specific specialists are included. Of course, the client is considered to be a member of this team. This team goes to the job site, after the design program has been previously prepared. However, no designing has been done



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prior to "squatters." In effect CRS sends "Mohammed to the Mountain."

"The squatters method is an intensive design effort aimed at completion and approval of schematic design." This method developed because of the far flung practice of CRS; building projects have been undertaken for some 28 states and 8 foreign countries. The method brings the principals of the firm, who are directly involved with a specific project, to the actual site for schematic design. This also allows for the team to be conveniently available to the client, his principal assistant, or a school faculty. As a result, they become active and participating members of the team and they are asked to be on call day or night during the squatters period. Necessary discussions and decisions can thus be made as the need arises. This period will last some four days, after which a presentation is made to the client, or to the school board, or whoever must approve the schematic designs.

"A developing concept may or may not be valid. This can only be determined in discussions with the client. The client knows why decisions are made as they are made, because he is involved in making them. Also, he has a greater appreciation of the services of the architect, since he is intimately involved in the architect's process; he sees the work going on."

The schematic designs are prepared during the squatters visit on 5" x 8" cards and are shown to the client by means of an opaque projector. Simple felt-tipped pens and pencils are used as the drafting instruments, drawings are free-hand but always prepared to a convenient scale. Colored inks and colored tissue paper are used to prepare sketch renderings and for graphic clarity.

A further advantage of the squatters method is the relief from the telephone and the usual problems of home-office routine. Only in extreme emergencies can a member of a squatters team be interrupted. A programming squatters team will often precede the design squatters on large projects.

The squatters are followed by concept development, and preparation of the construction documents back at the CRS office. The basic squatters method has proven equally suitable for city planning projects, interior design, and even feasibility studies, as well as for architecture.

A great deal of programming preparation must take place before a squatters team is sent out to the site. The programming process defines the problems while the squatters solves these problems.

Mr. Bullen explained how the firm is putting the computer to the task of solving actual problems of modular relationships, or to retain, and later give back to another designer, information relative to a specific problem of detail design.

The methods of architectural practice are changing, and Caudill, Rowlett and Scott are developing some of these new methods. The look of architecture is changing, and CRS is providing much of the design direction.

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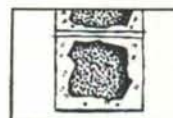
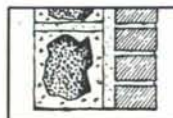
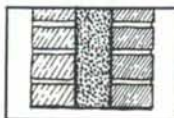
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