A special celebration was undertaken to officially open the new Design Center in Denver last October. In addition to panel discussions scheduled by the Center's administrative office, time was set aside for presentations in the several showrooms located throughout the Center. The major topic for the Center's celebration days addressed the idea: should there be a Rocky Mountain Style of architecture and design. I was asked to present my views on this intriguing idea in the Lynn Ledford Showroom. If the reader is interested in my views, please read on.

When I was asked by Lynn Ledford to express my views on the subject of today's program, I cringed! The idea of discussing the creation of a style of architecture unique to such a vast area of our continent seemed to ask for a knowledge of design beyond my capabilities. In addition the thought seemed to me to call for an ego and arrogance that my well known humble being was unable to handle. However, it appears obvious that I said yes, even though my first thought was: a Rocky Mountain Style, my God! Why? As I prepared this a few days before the program had begun, I did not have the benefit of what was to be said, and which now has been said by other speakers, on this subject.

In any case, as I thought about the subject, two fundamental questions arose in my mind.

Question one is why should we have a Rocky Mountain Style? And the second question seems to me to be: is there something unique to the Rocky Mountain area from which a "Style" could be derived, if, indeed, an area wide style should be derived?

Is the weather, in spite of, or even because of, the high Rocky Mountains, truly unique to the area encompassed by these mountains. Perhaps, you might say. But is not the weather of middle New Mexico just below Santa Fe, where the Rocky Mountain chain reaches its southern tip, different than the weather in Northern Montana and Idaho, where the Rocky Mountains cross into Canada? Which begs another question: is the Rocky Mountain Style to encompass the Canadian Rockies as well?

Weather, to be sure, should be a strong factor in determining architectural solutions. Of course we know, however, that it seldom is anymore. Double and triple glazing, thick insulation and mechanically operated air conditioning systems let most architectural solutions forget that Denver summers are hot and its winters cold. Weather, therefore, doesn't appear to have a uniqueness, nor a unity, throughout the region.

Is history a unifying force upon which to concoct a Rocky Mountain Style? History often wields a strong influence on past and current architectural styles and fashions. Without the classic architectural styles developed by the Greeks and the Romans, the Neo-Classical Revival Idiom of architectural expression of the late 19th and early 20th centuries could not have happened. Nor could the current fashion called post-modern have found its inspiration. (Although I suspect that famous exponents of the Neo-Classic Style, such as architects McKim, Mead and White, might now be spinning in their graves if they could see what is being wrought within the post-modern stylistic fashion.)

But is the architectural heritage of the vast Rocky Mountain area unique, or, perhaps more significantly, uniform in historical expression from Canada to Arizona and New Mexico? It most certainly is not.

I am not a historian, and I am certainly not fully aware of the many historical events and forces that influenced or developed the Rocky Mountains from Colorado to Canada. But as I understand it, the original Indian tribes that inhabited the vast area of mountains and plain north of Arizona and New Mexico left little or no architectural heritage for the later invaders from the east to assimilate. The Anglo explorers, hunters and trappers roamed the mountains without leaving architectural traces. A few traders did build forts, most of which have long since disappeared. (To be sure, Bent's old fort on the Arkansas River has been reconstructed by the National Park Service. A reconstruction many, including myself, believe was an ill-conceived venture and a drastic waste of our tax dollars. It is not, thankfully, a subject pertinent to our discussions today.)

It was not until the coming of eastern settlers and the formation of towns that the vast majority of the Rocky Mountain area first began its architectural heritage. (To be sure, the architectural history of New Mexico and, later, Arizona predates by centuries that of their northern neighbors, but more on that later.)

The architecture that sprang up throughout the mountains and on the plains to the east of the Rocky Mountain wall was imported from the towns and cities from which the settlers came, although, at first, it may have been built of easily accessible lumber, rather than brick. The coming of the railroad brought even more eastern fashions and the architecture of the west reflected these fashions. Of those reflections that survive the developer's wrecking ball, it is now the fashion to save. Our efforts in their behalf have sometimes been grand. In the Denver area you have such examples. But sometimes the conflict between owners supposed needs and their historical carelessness, coupled with unsympathetic and unimaginitive architects has occasionally resulted in an architectural sham. Such a sham, in my view, is the ZCMI Department Store, once a three dimensional cast-iron building, which has become a massive block behind a bare, windowless false mask.

Does architectural history alone, then, provide the inspiration for a Rocky Mountain Style? Except for the structures built for the mining industry in the early days, which gave rise to what has
been termed the "Mineshaft School of Architecture", wherein buildings reflecting the silhouette of mine shafts can be seen in many Colorado Mountain Valleys. Architectural history, therefore, may be a questionable inspiration by itself for the Central and Northern areas of The Rocky Mountains.

However architectural history is a real - now imposed-by-law in some communities - possible basis for a regional stylistic expression in the Southern regions of the Rocky Mountains. Arizona has a similar ethnic and cultural heritage to that found in New Mexico, albeit some one hundred years younger. But for our purposes here, and because it is more familiar to me, I shall speak of New Mexico's legacy from the past and how I see its potential for the future.

As most of you know, New Mexico's architectural record goes back a long way. Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon was by no means the oldest Anasazi Indian town, but it is the most elaborate of the early Pueblos. Built around 950 A.D. of stone laid-up in mud mortar, the enclosed city rose up to five stories and contained 800 rooms. The adobe Pueblos along the Rio Grande and its tributaries, several of which remain today, date from the late 1200's. Taos Pueblo, of course, is the most famous. Its walls are constructed of mud.

Following several decades and several exploratory expeditions, the first Spanish settlers arrived at San Juan Pueblo to found the first European settlement in the Southwestern United States; the year was 1598. Twelve years later the Spanish moved thirty miles to found Santa Fe in 1610.

It is important to remember that the Pueblos which the Spanish saw were not completely foreign to their eyes. The Moors, invading Spain from Morocco, had occupied much of the Iberian Peninsula for some four hundred years and had introduced the Spanish to the art of making and building with adobes. Accordingly, it was of adobes that the Spanish first constructed their homes and villages in New Mexico. Both Indian and Spanish cultures used round pealed logs for roof beams and mud plaster to cover their walls. While the Indian had no metal tools, the Spanish had precious few. For the Spanish to run to the hardware store to buy tools and supplies was not easy or quick; the nearest store was some 1500 miles south in Durango, Mexico. It was not until the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821 that the store came to New Mexico in the back of a Conestoga wagon.

For over two hundred years the Spanish lived in relative isolation along with their Indian neighbors in a remote province of New Spain. During those many decades the architecture remained virtually unaltered, but it formed the basis for the architectural revival that swept northern New Mexico at the beginning of the twentieth century, and which continues, even by enforced city ordinance in Santa Fe, today.

The invasion of the southwest by the United States Army in 1846 brought the first change to the architectural scene in New Mexico. The army built forts and compounds. They were constructed of adobe walls, but the Army used milled lumber, previously unavailable in New Mexico, for trim, ceiling beams and window frames. Fired clay bricks were imported or fired at the building site. This slide illustrates this important architectural change. A new style of architecture was begun, which is referred to as the Territorial style. This Territorial style has been joined with the earlier Pueblo/Spanish heritage in ordinances such as the one mentioned before that is in force in Santa Fe.

As happened in Colorado a few short years earlier, the coming of the railroad to New Mexico in 1879, made a plethora of architectural styles, fashions and materials available and New Mexico began to "American-ize" itself. Onto adobes walled new buildings, and even onto existing older buildings, manufactured store fronts, mansard roofs and terne-plate metal roofs were applied. New Mexico wanted to look like and become a part of contemporary America; it even painted the bricks on, as this slide shows. It tried to forget its architectural past.

At the turn of the twentieth century, however, New Mexicans began to take a new look at their earlier heritage and they consciously created the Pueblo/Spanish revival with the Territorial style attached for good measure. The revival syndrome also saw the attempt to cover over the late 19th century with Pueblo/Spanish stucco frosting, as illustrated by these three slides.

You have been to Santa Fe and Taos; you have seen the result: a visually unique, but rather monotonous, environment, which is now ordained by law. It is pleasant to live in; it even guarantees a lively and prosperous tourist trade. But it is architecturally stagnant. Even the latest buildings in Santa Fe are, to my mind, architecturally dead, except for one or two exemptions. I have said many times that there has not been a truly good piece of architecture built in Santa Fe in thirty years.

All is not lost, however. In the area around Santa Fe and Albuquerque primarily in residential architecture, as well as throughout northern New Mexico, some advancements have been tried and successes or failures have occurred. I am speaking of those architects who are looking at our historical past as a foundation or spring board from which to seek a continuation and growth of a heritage, rather than simply hiding within the stylistic framework of the Revival Era. You have heard from one of those seekers earlier today; Antoine Predock has sought to bring forward the heritage and to use that heritage as a foundation rather than a self imposed straight jacket, another example is Harold Benson formerly of Taos, whose design for the Taos County Court House recognizes it place, its past, and, equally important, its present.

In addition to the local weather and historical heritage, yet another potential source, or feature, into which designers can look is pleasant to live in; it even guarantees a

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San Miguel Church and College. Note the mansard roof and the painted on simulated stone masonry.
for local inspirational forms is the shape and slope of our landscapes. Much of our natural landscape is dramatic, sharp, massive - and suggestive. It may vary from north to south; it can be close in to your site, or far away on the horizon. But it can be observed and studied for its suggestive form and massing. The natural mesa forms of New Mexico were a proposed ingredient in the search for architectural form in an expanding New Mexico State Capitol complex by a group of architects back in 1962, when a master plan for the State Capitol Complex was proposed. Of course, our suggestions were ignored. As a result we have a massive, round edifice adorned with territorial detailing. It is un-affectionally known throughout New Mexico as the "Round House."

In downtown Santa Fe, hampered by legal restraints, but grossly out of scale with its surroundings, is the new, visually thin Eldorado Hotel. La Fonda, originally built in 1920 had more architectural vitality and excitement, it was also much smaller. From 1910 to 1940, the revival had a vitality and creativity lacking in too much of today's work. Part of that lessening of quality is financial, of course; land, materials and labor are far more costly. Developers say that they need more income producing space in order to make a sound return on their investment. I must admit that this is true to a major degree, but it is not the full reason for the decline in visual quality. Some architects and clients have tried, while others seem to have simply opped-out. Still others have given us laughable buildings, but at the same time perhaps, they have presented us with a tragic insult. Even the nationally famous among our profession makes us laugh first, but then cry over their efforts. This brand new house set in the hills of Santa Fe has been Called "New Mexico Territorial" by its designer!

Throughout architectural history styles begin, flourish, decline and fade away - hopefully, only to be repeated by Walt Disney and other so-called theme park builders or for movie sets such as "Old Tucson".

Architectural design must be allowed to grow, to change, to respond to new needs, to embody new technology. At the same time, to be significant. I feel that it must recognize the reality of those questions I asked earlier in this talk. To my mind architecture must consider the past as a potential foundation for new expressions without aping history. It must realize, that in spite of mechanical achievements, the southern facing facade has a different weather condition than does the northern facing facade; that our southern deserts reflect the sun, while the northern forests absorb the sun. Snow is deeper in Vail than in Tucson. It must be expressive of the needs - yes, the function - it is to house. To steal a phrase, or title, from a recent TV program, it should express a "Pride of Place". (I might suggest that the title of the program was better than the substance of the show.)

In discussing the creation of a Rocky Mountain Style, I must remind you that architectural styles have a habit of not lasting for a very long period of time. Are we asking, here today, that we set the stage for the short or long run? Can we impose upon ourselves a style, a Rocky Mountain Style, that will continue for a millennium? That thought suggests an arrogance that I/we cannot assume.

I may be too young, and therefore naive, but I would like to postulate that a solid philosophical foundation for thinking of creating an architectural style must embody the historical foundations of the place and those elements of nature that affect the im-

A recently completed house, located a few miles north of Santa Fe. Rather than "New Mexico Territorial" in style, to my mind it more accurately recalls a western false front movie set. However, I may learn to love it!

mediate environment, such as the weather — the climate of winter, the climate of summer; the angle of the sun as it moves across the sky (I know, the earth is the object doing the actual moving); the topography of the site and the shape of the landscape features that surround it; the neighboring architecture, and mankind, itself, who, after all, has to use the finished architectural product.

In addition products, building materials will change; some good ones will come along, others will pass into history. Life styles will change, life styles will evolve. The architecture that we produce, the architecture that the next generation will produce must reflect an on going current of history, with, it is hoped - a "Pride of Place".