



A Swimming Pool Enclosure

Robert E. Plettenberg, A.I.A., Architect



Looking towards the pool enclosure from the patio.

The house was first designed and built by an out-of-state architect at his Santa Fe residence. The theme of the design was determined by the owner's interest in Japanese art and architecture as well as his collection of oriental wall hangings, paintings, statuary, etc. This theme was interpreted in design by a 12 ft. ceiling, controlled sunlight patterns on interior wall surfaces where tapestries were hung and a Japanese feeling in the patio landscape design, including one most successful trimming and training of a pinon that would look completely at home in the grounds of the Katsura Palace in Kyoto, Japan.

Dr. Payne S. Harris, M.D., and his wife were attracted to this house when it appeared in the real estate market. They liked particularly the oriental feeling of the building and the very high wall that completely enclosed the house, swimming pool and landscaped patio. This high patio wall afforded complete privacy,

as well as some wind protection for the exterior living areas. They soon learned that even the privacy of a high patio wall did not protect them from the cold Santa Fe nights, strong springtime winds, nor the cooling effect of the high evaporation rate of the dry climate.

Architect Robert E. Plettenberg was commissioned to design a pool enclosure that would complete their privacy and extend the swimming season, as well as afford the proper ecological environment for the considerable tropical planting intended by Mrs. Harris. Design points considered pertinent were: maximum sunlight penetration into this area (there is little sunlight admitted into the existing house); maximum retention of humidity from the pool was to be made available into the house itself to offset the abnormally dry climate, and an aesthetic quality that would complement both the existing house and the clients' desires, as well as their possessions, which also had an oriental origin or design quality.



The walled-in patio can be seen through the sliding doors.

Structural systems were explored that would support a light-admitting roof, enclose the pool so as to give the proper climate control and completely tie the guest house to the pool and main house so that the enclosed and controlled climate would be the same for all areas. Light aluminum trusses and other similar metal systems were abandoned as not being compatible with the existing character of construction, and eventually a very simple direct (and possibly "oriental") system of posts and beams was decided upon. The roof configuration was to be gabled to give proper moisture run-off control which was necessary due to the fibre-glass type of roofing.

The resulting pool enclosure satisfied the architect, and the owners are enjoying an architectural experience possibly unknown in Santa Fe. They are able to sit in light weight clothing at a poolside which is bathed in warm sunshine and surrounded by tropical planting. An ever-so-occasional drop of con-

densation drips onto the mirror surface of a quiet pool and forms ever-widening circles. From this warm and comfortable environment they look out through large glass doors into a high walled garden with a heavy blanket of fresh snow piled onto shrubbery and onto the branches of an exquisitely pruned pinon tree which is flanked by flagstone steps and planting tubs. This is an exciting experience — beautiful and serene to contemplate.

The structure is equally exciting at night when the negative becomes the positive. The light source of the day is absent and the normally black silhouetted beams against a bright roof shell become lighted by artificial means hidden below. The light-transmitting ceiling is then black and it is quietly and deeply reflected in the pool below. A full moon rises above a nearby mountain and the roof canopy turns to a radiant silver web.

—Robert E. Plettenberg

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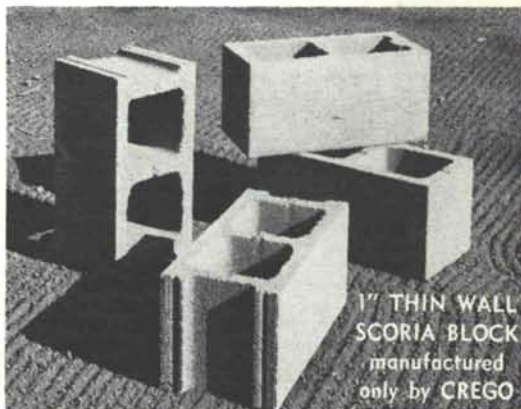
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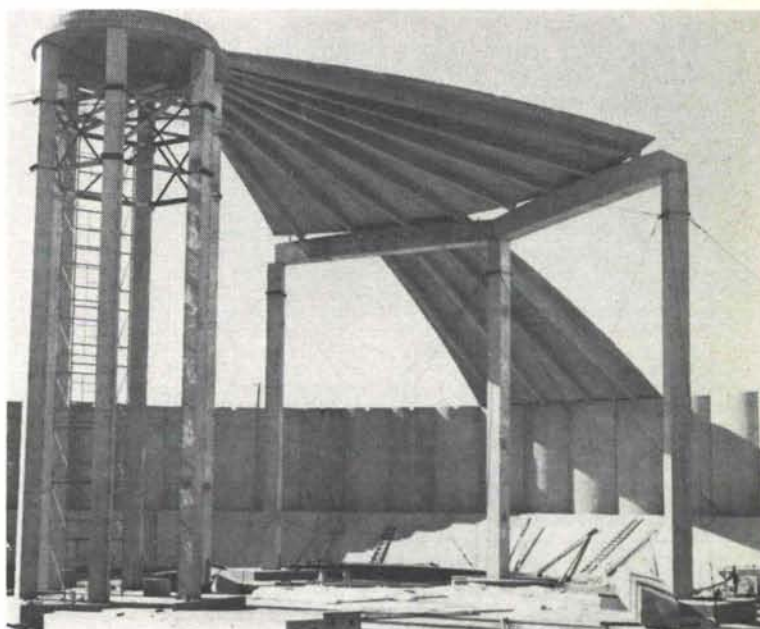
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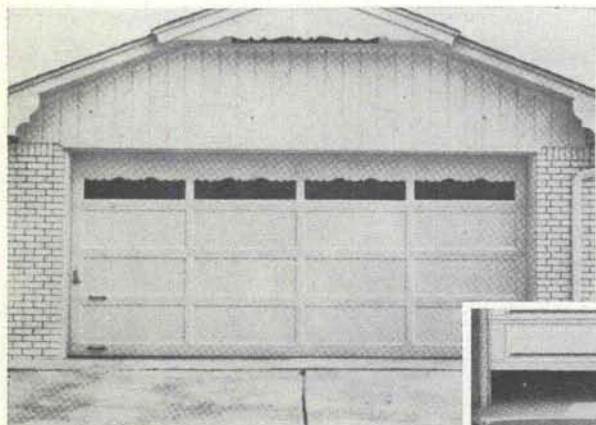
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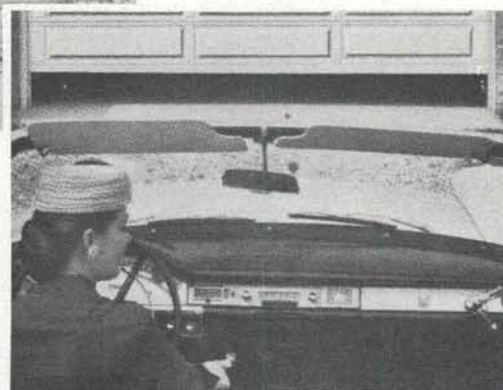
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