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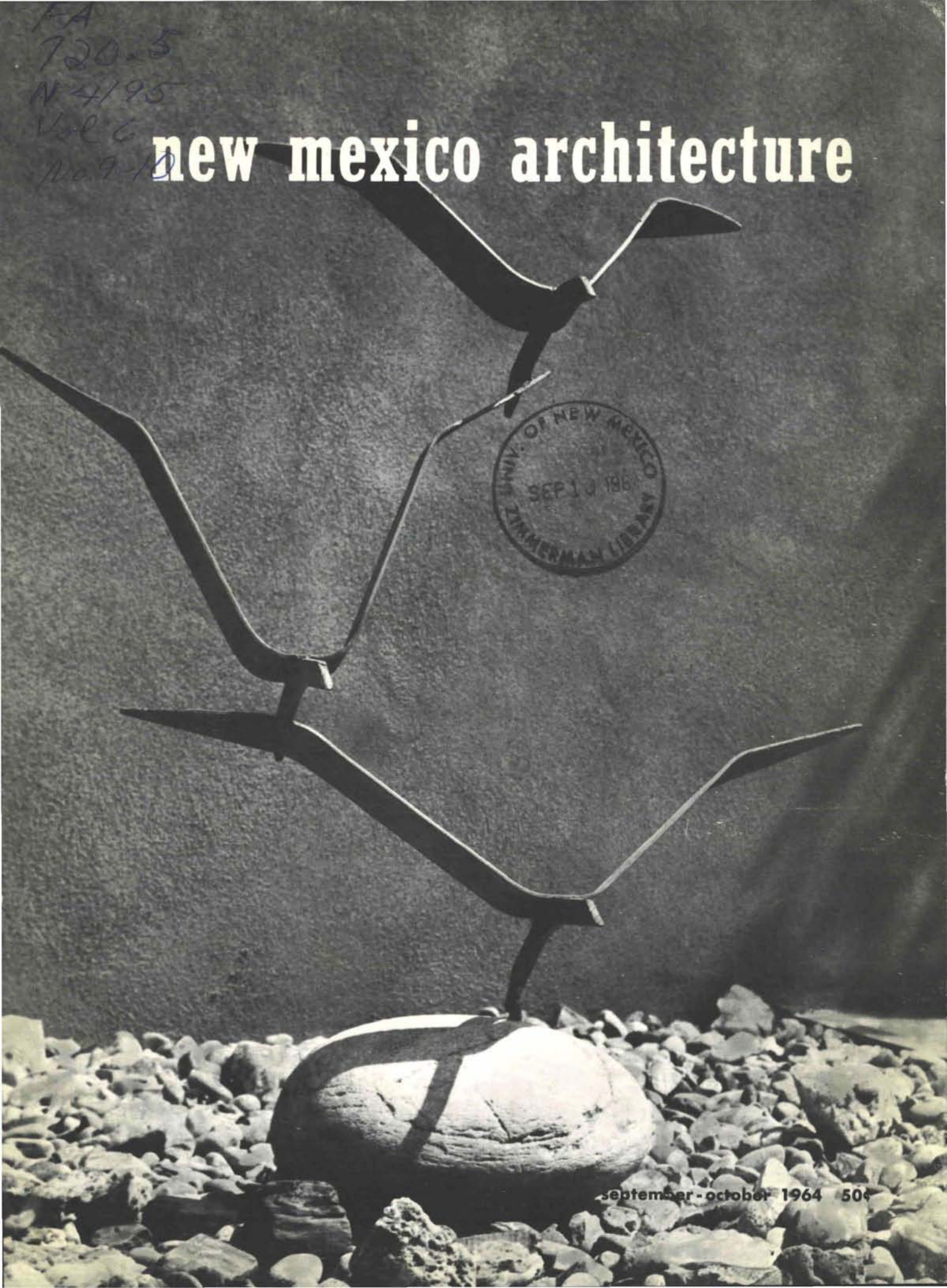
new mexico architecture



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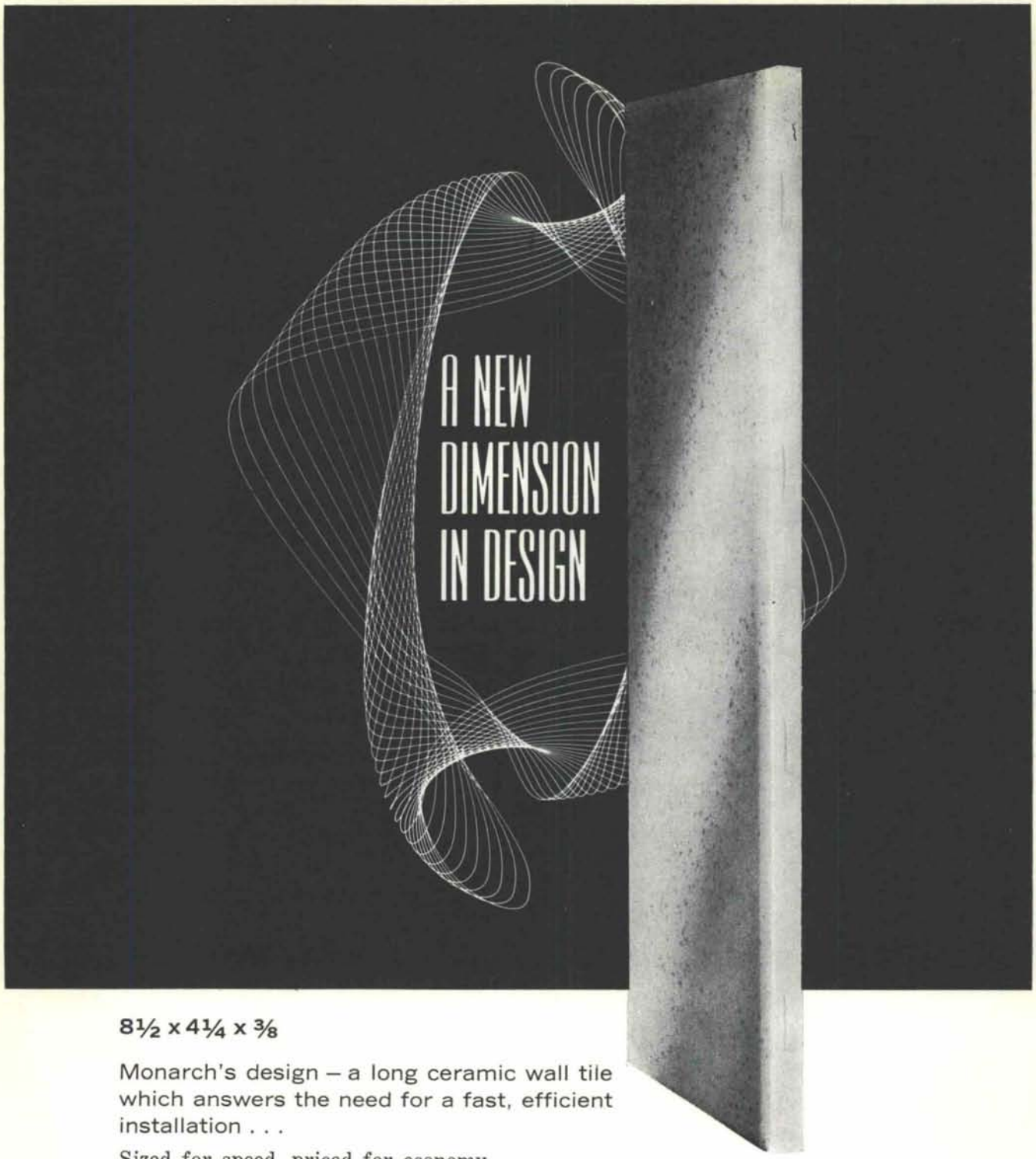

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Jean Rodgers Oliver, Photographer)

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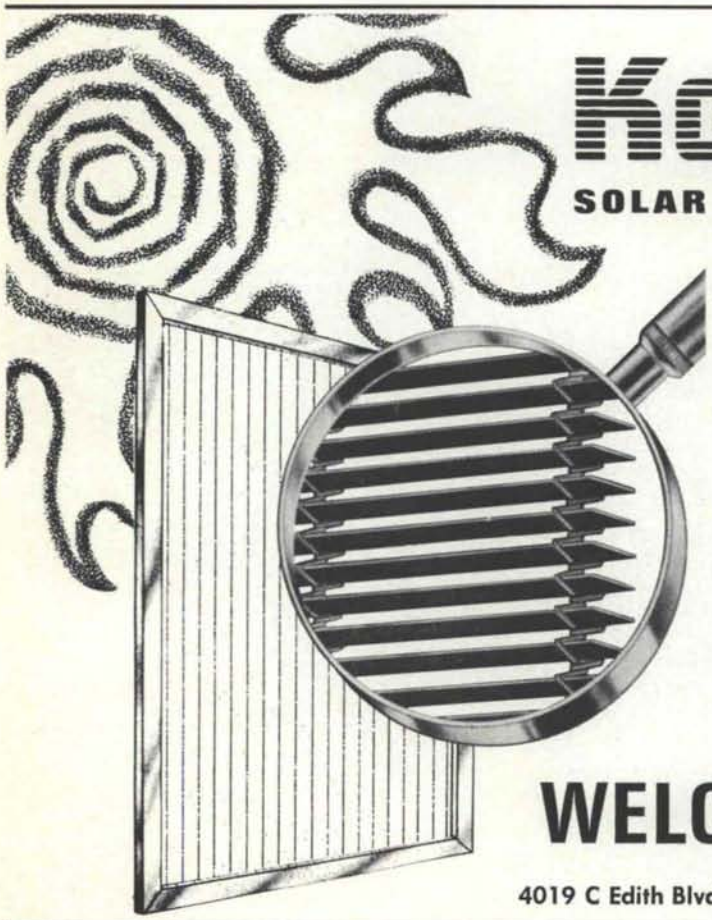

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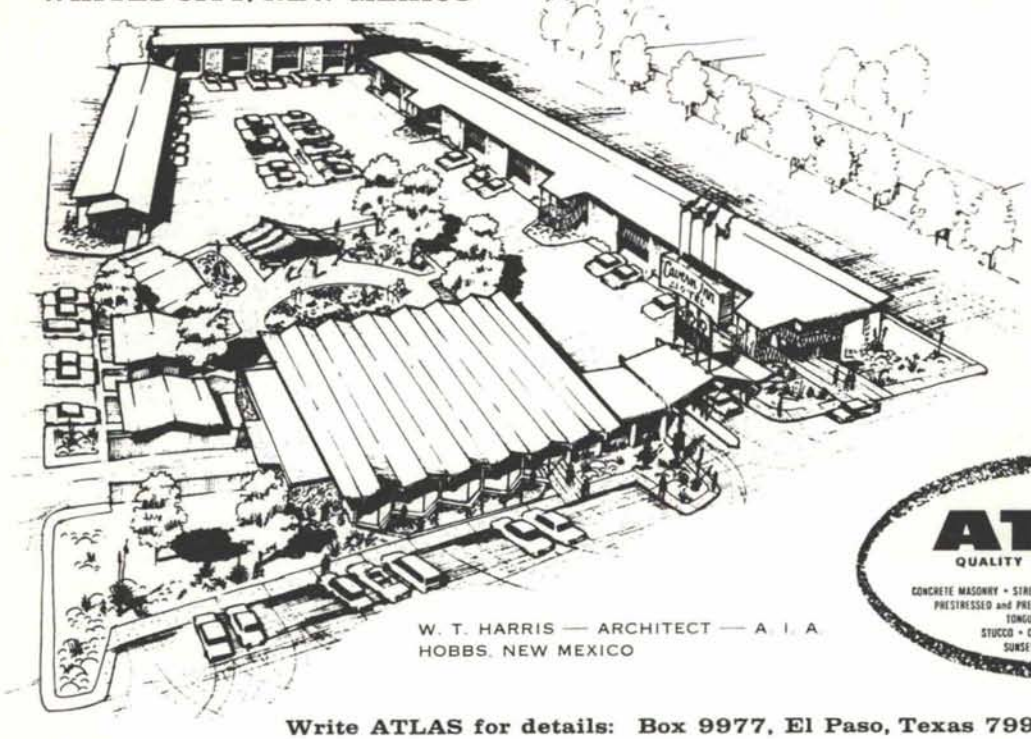

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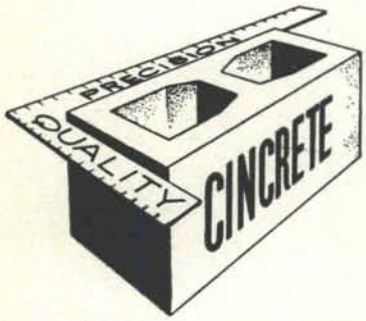

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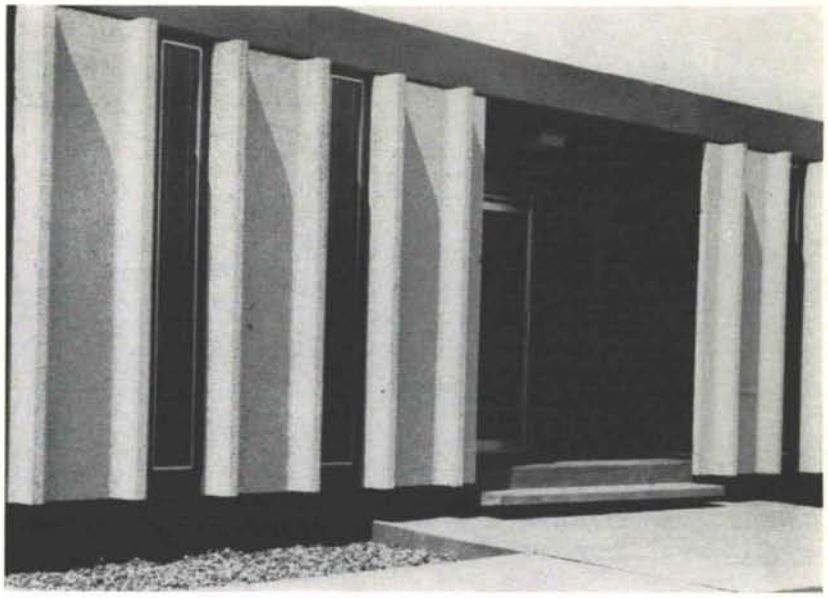

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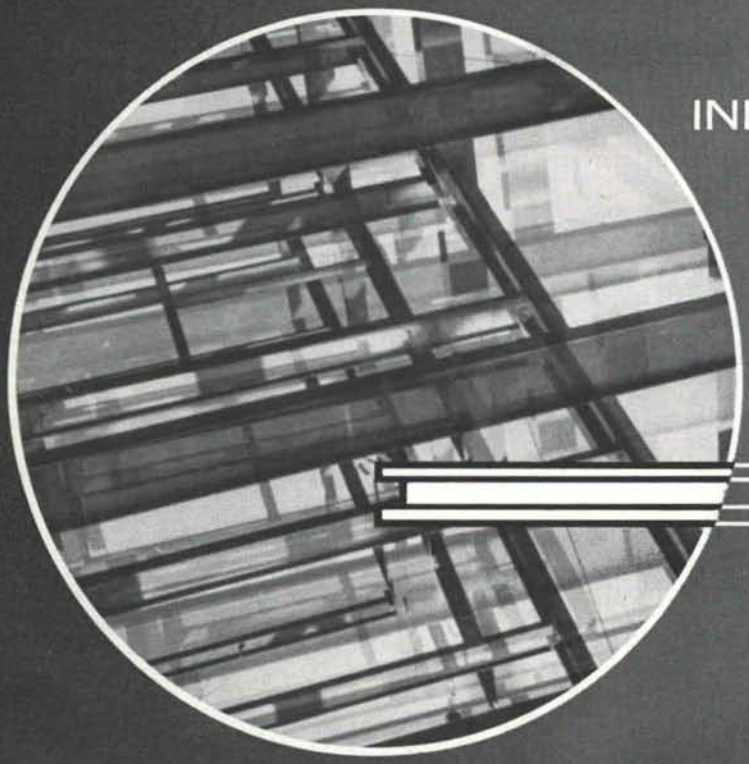

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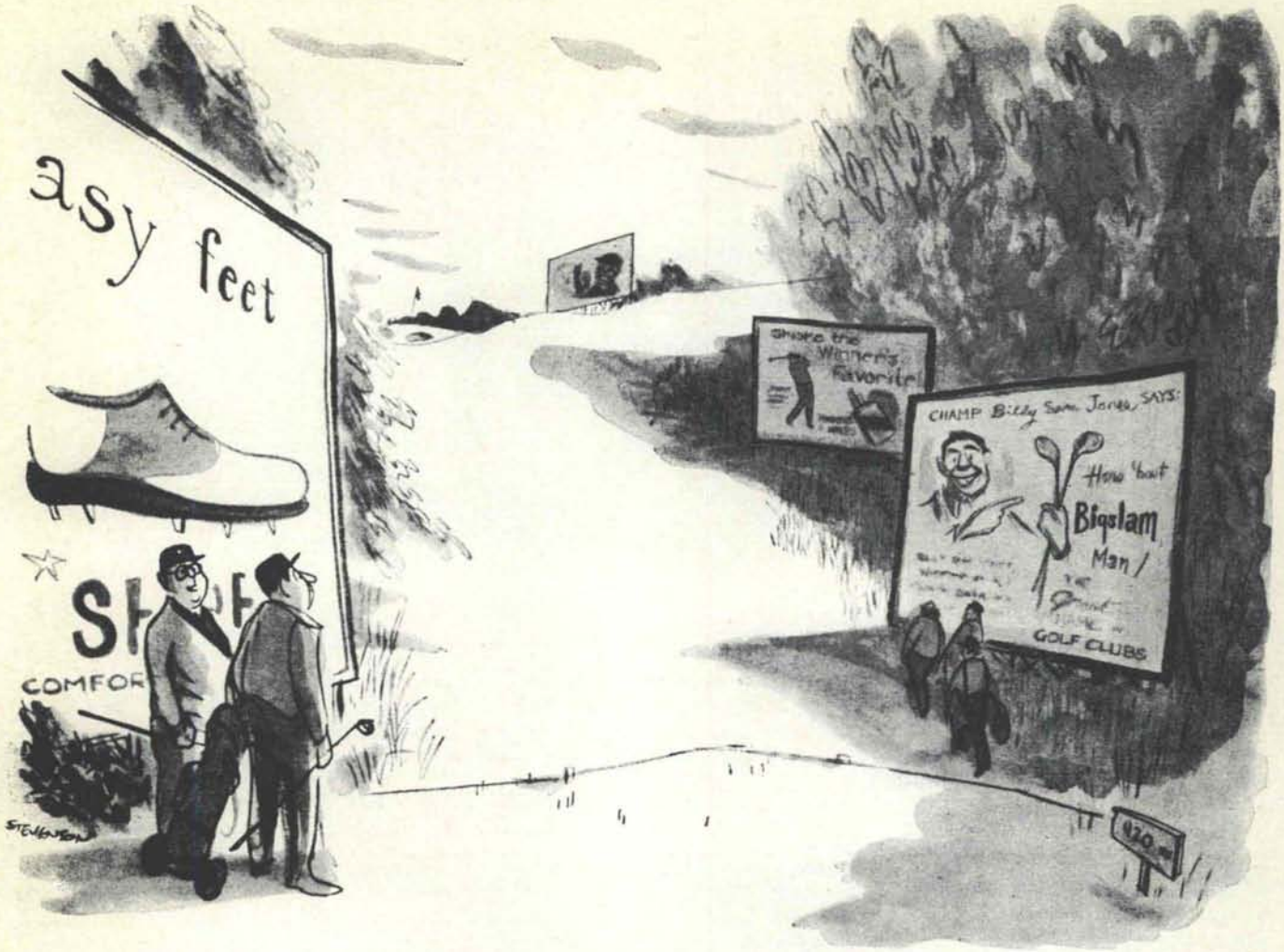


"The squawks died out plenty fast when everybody saw the club bounce into the black."
Drawing by Stevenson; Copyright The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

THE UGLINESS AROUND US

. . . BILLBOARD DEPARTMENT

The obliteration of our "Land of Enchantment" continues. More and still more highway billboards sprout with each new season. Yet no improvement in visually appealing or even acceptable graphics is evident. The stark beauty of our arid lowlands is less and less visible to the tourist; soon billboards will obscure even the highest mountains. This wanton desecration must be stopped.

We have not changed our opinion that billboards do serve a function for the stranger in our state. They do inform the traveler of the services which the forthcoming town has to offer—but they perform this service at the expense of the tourist's visual sensibilities.

It seems to us that a reasonable substitute must be offered. We suggest a well-planned and well-designed booklet which offers the billboard advertiser space to present his wares or services to a prospective tourist. This booklet might be sponsored by the state Department of Development and contracted out to a private advertising agency for promotion and publication. It

would then be distributed free at our ports of entry, by the national automobile clubs, and at restaurants and motels within the state. Such a booklet could give information to tourists on topics like scenic routes, historical landmarks, campgrounds, dates and locations of fiestas, Indian dances and rodeos. The cost of the publication would be covered by the space sold to the present buyers of billboard space. The tourist, on the other hand, would be able to refer to this booklet frequently as he passed through the state and he would also be able actually to see our enchanting landscape. Furthermore, the new knowledge of interesting places and events within New Mexico might persuade him to spend an extra day or two here.

We believe that the end result of the blighting spread of billboards eventually will be the public's violent reaction. This may well result in the complete banning of billboards, first on new inter-state highways and finally on all state roads. But we may have to wait for this until the billboard mess has become so blatant as to obscure the landscape completely. A more positive and a more immediate solution might be the substitute which we have just suggested.

We realize that the billboard owners will oppose any restrictions upon their industry. They have always resisted attempts to zone billboards or control their size or format. It seems obvious that the industry will not improve itself but will instead attempt to gain its ends by continued influencing of the legislature. But does an industry serve the needs of humanity when it imposes itself upon us in such loud, garish and ugly ways?

The time is fast approaching when any defense that providers of billboards might make to perpetuate themselves will fall upon the deafest of ears. The lobby will ultimately be defeated.

In the past we have defended the need for some of the information which the billboard does present. On occasion we have found a motel or a cafe as a result of a billboard outside of a community. We do not mind a few billboards as we approach a town but we do not like an entire landscape marred and scarred by garish billboard graphics. Nor is there any place at all for the ubiquitous boor; the liquor, cigarette or automobile ads that desecrate our highways from coast to coast. A well-designed booklet would provide all of the information about local establishments that is necessary and in a more convenient form.

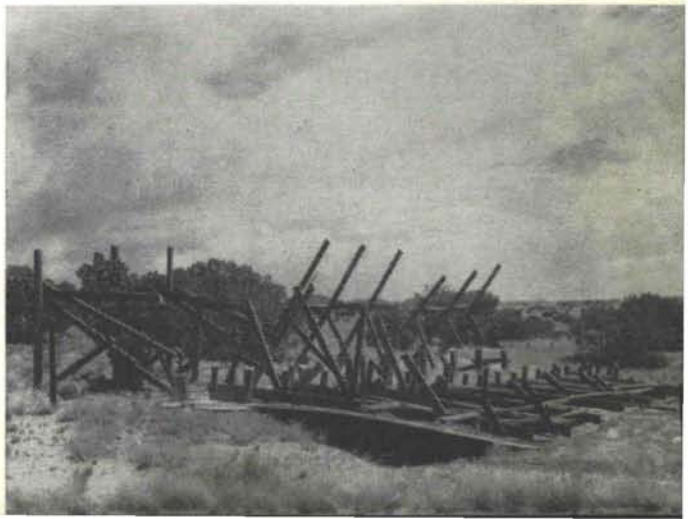
It must also be stressed that an improved port-of-entry system would be a necessary part of this idea. But this in itself (an improved port-of-entry system) could be of immense benefit to the state in any case. Tourists could be welcomed with a cup of coffee at a comfortable spot just inside the state line. They could be warned of the effects of high altitudes upon their sea level reactions before they proceeded along our highways. The booklet described above would also be a part of this welcome. And just think of the reaction of an American tourist when he is informed that he is about to experience a state whose great natural beauty is not impaired by intrusive billboards.

—J. Conron/B. Bunting

Loud fronts and ugly backs line both sides of Route 66 just East of Albuquerque.

There were three billboards within this view, but the "Vigilantes" rode again.

Through the night they rode with saw and axe. A billboard lies dead in their wake.



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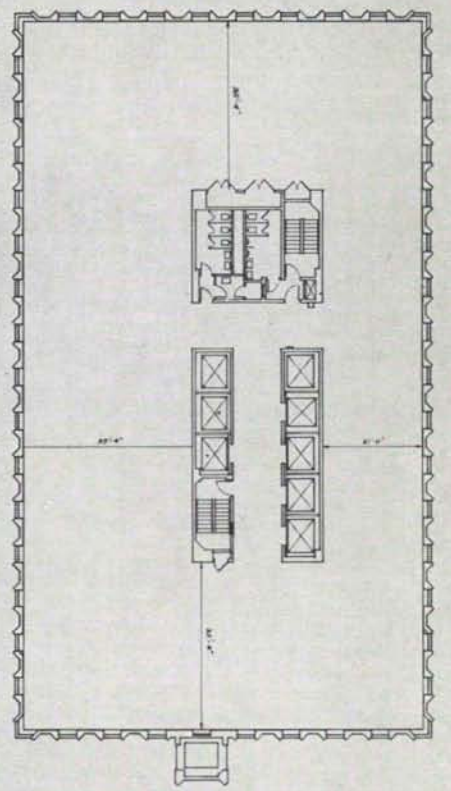

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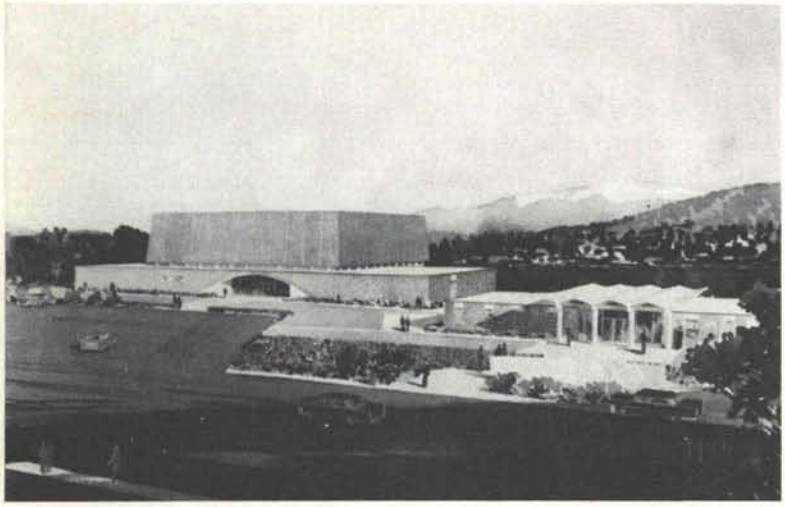


The Administration Building is shown to the right of the new Liberal Arts Center.

A LIBERAL ARTS CENTER

Saint Michael's College, Santa Fe

Philippe Register, Architect

The Liberal Arts Center is the latest addition to the expanding campus. Previous buildings constructed, in accordance with the long-range development plan include the Administration Building, two dormitories, and a classroom building. The master plan was also prepared by Philippe Register.

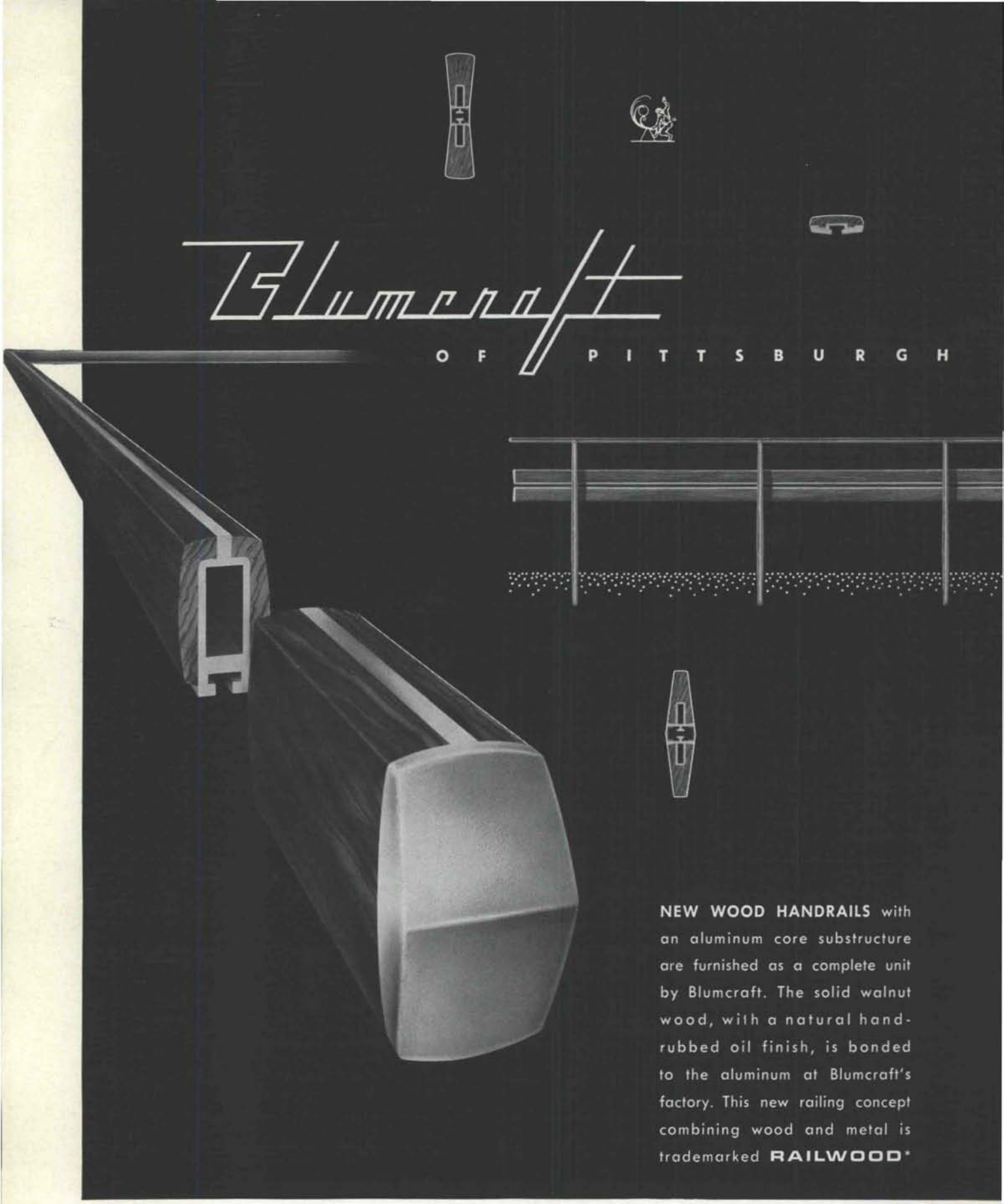
The Liberal Arts Center includes two theaters, one of which will seat 508 persons, while the other will seat 119. The larger theater is designed to accommodate full-scale plays and musicals, and will also serve as a teaching facility for large classes. The upholstered seats will be equipped with folding tablet arms. The theater lobby, with its 24-foot high ceiling, has been designed with special lighting to allow for exhibitions of paintings and sculpture.

An ensemble room and a recording room have been included in the design. A large clear plastic bubble will be set into the wall which separates these two rooms and which will allow the music director to view the musicians or chorus while a recording session is in progress. The ensemble room has been designed to control all extraneous noises. A curtain will be provided which can be set at any position in the room to establish the conditions of reverberation that might be desired.

The Center will also contain piano practice rooms, a language laboratory, art rooms, and three general purpose classrooms.

The building has two main elements; the large core area will be 45 feet high and will contain the two theaters, the stage, and the lobby. The lower element, which surrounds the core, will contain the classrooms, music department, art rooms, language laboratory, and the ensemble room.

The lower element will be brick veneer to match the other permanent campus buildings. The high core is a steel structure sheathed in precast concrete "T" beams. The "T" beams will lean inward to form a truncated pyramid. The corners where these beams meet at the top will be faced with brilliantly colored ceramic tile from Mexico. A flat arch frames the entrance to the outer lobby. The building is scheduled for completion in September 1965.



Complete 1964 catalogue available from Blumcraft of Pittsburgh, 460 Melwood St., Pittsburgh 13, Pa.

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LIMA, PERU . . . . . A townscape for pedestrians and sidewalk cafe lovers.

. . . . . by: Albert Solnit

Old timers from Santiago to Santa Fe always agree that theirs is a mighty fine town, but oh for the good old days! In Lima the good old days usually mean the period of the 1700's when the city lorded it over the rest of the continent as the seat of the Spanish viceroys. However, at the height of this vanished glory, the city was a small one by present day standards; the population was less than 100,000. Even though Lima is known as the City of Kings, it has seen one about as often as it has a real rainstorm. In fact, the climate here has had far more to do with the character of the place than the presence or absence of monarchs. Only 12 degrees south of the equator, one would expect a tropical climate, but the temperature does not rise above 80°. The site of the city is actually an oasis in the midst of dessicated wasteland, but it's usually covered with what loyal Limenians refer to as "la perla perlada"—the pearly haze. Humidity rarely falls below 80% and the desert soil when watered will permit gardens of almost tropical luxuriance. Although this haze prevents the parching and the need for shade found in other arid zones, it gives the light a soft diffused quality, which in turn mutes colors and suppresses shadow contrasts. Thus the recessed Andalusian windows and doorways that appear as black maws in the sparkling sunlight of Spain or the highland cities of Peru such as Cuzco, are penetrated by the glance of the passerby because of the absence of a curtain of strong reflected light and deep shadow in this overcast city. Even though building details and colors are flatted here in the manner of London or Edinburgh, Spanish detailing and styles have always been a part of Lima's architectural tradition. Even today the folklore that Lima is a Seville on the Pacific persists. Talavera tiles that sing in the bright light of the mountain towns, merely look like a bit of cosmetic business in Lima, yet they are used in profusion to this day by local architects whose sense of place may have been lost while trying to evoke the days of gold and grandees for a client who made his fortune in fishmeal or guaño. It all simply proves that builders and buyers of new antiques are not limited to consciously "different" places like Carmel and Santa Fe, but can occur anywhere architects and clients are fixated by a rosy vision of the past.

Another effect on the townscape induced by the rainless climate is the general flatness of the city's roofs. Not only is pitch in a roof unnecessary, but as the barriada builders have amply demonstrated, it's possible to gain shelter with merely four walls and *no* roof at all. Without visible roofs, eaves, overhangs, or rainspouts, many of the building groups resolve themselves into a cubistic composition. This plastic quality is best seen in the streetscape of the old colonial city. In the City of the Viceroys the building facades form a solid wall on each side of the narrow rectilinear streets. The only projection from the wall-planes is an occasional row of shuttered balconies known as "*miradors.*" As Sacheverell Sitwell says in "*Golden Door and Mirador*" . . . "Such wooden balconies are *the* architectural feature of Lima, . . . It is odd indeed to look out through those pierced jalousies that have their only parallel in the grilles of nun's choirs in Spain, Portugal, and Southern Italy."

The traditional uniformity of building heights (two stories) gave the streets of Old Lima a corridor-like intimacy. At regular intervals this condition was beautifully relieved by a number of church plazas. These ranged in size from the block square Plaza de Armas, cited by many as the finest square in Latin America, to the small plazuelas which sometimes were no more than a thirty or forty foot setback for a church. The churches themselves offer a contrast in volume and scale to the rigidly rectangular blocks of private buildings in that they are composed of cylinders, cones, arches, hemispheres, and soaring bell towers. These churches also added punctuation to the field of vision by their vertical dominance over the other building masses. (see sketch page 15.)

The harmonious urban composition that was Lima in its "golden age" had still another dimension to its human scale. Depth and penetration of the walled passages that were Lima's pedestrian trafficways were provided by the arched town house entrances. The entrances often opened onto patios and balconies of great charm. Many are still so compelling that they seem to issue a command of "eyes right" to the pedestrian, thus rescuing him from the tunnel vision that the unbroken vertical planes of the straight ahead vista would inflict. All this adds up to a visual rhythm of voids observed from their framed points of penetration on the sides of parallel flat planes until the whole sequence is culminated or broken by a plazuela. The tight streets of Lima teem with traffic, vendors, sidewalk stands, and pedestrians even today and the historians assure us that the bustle was even greater in the days when there was more of a resident population in the center. Then as now, the plazuelas functioned as foils to the busyness of the streets by offering a quiet enclosure or outdoor room to come into out of the streets' surge and noise. Enclosure, amenity, and focus were three essentials of a successful cityscape that they

The miradors of Lima.

and the patios contributed. Perhaps the best description of these qualities is found in "*Townscape*," where author Gordon Cullen defines enclosure as "the polarity of legs and wheels. It is the basic unit of the precintual pattern; outside the noise and speed of impersonal communication which comes and goes but is not of any place. Inside are the quietness and human scale of the square, quad, or courtyard. This is the end product of traffic; this is the place to which traffic brings you. Without enclosure, traffic becomes nonsense."

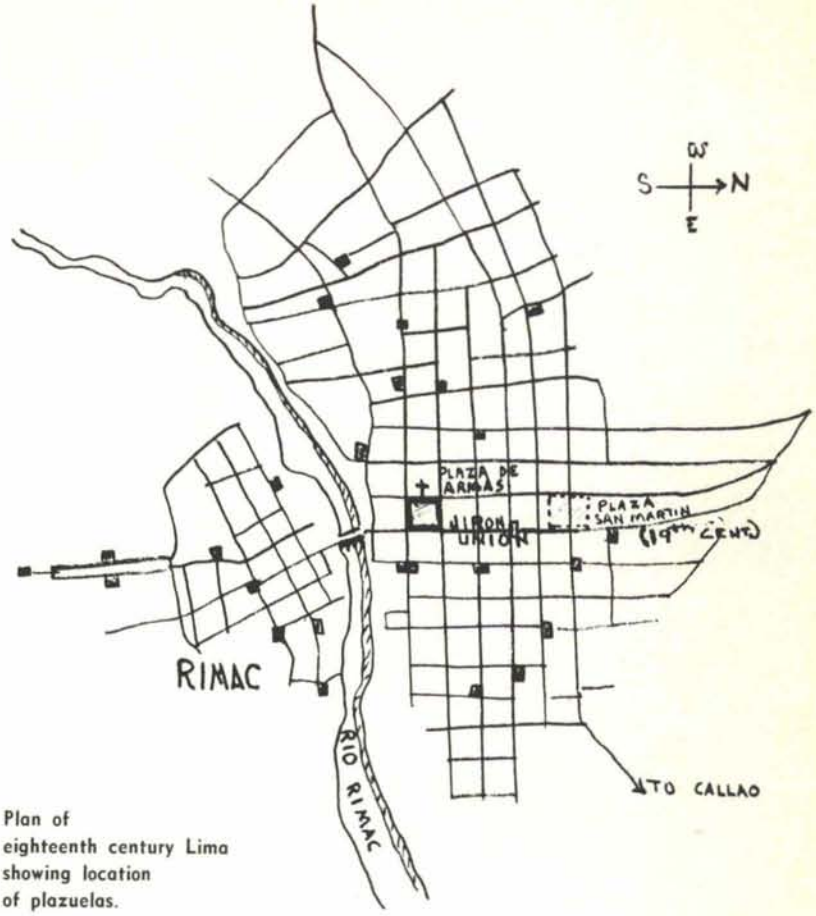
The continued erosion of these urban qualities by the imposition of ever increasing volumes of motor vehicles on the old narrow streets has of course long since passed the point of becoming nonsensical—it's downright unlivable. Official thinking on this mess, however, is becoming *still* more nonsensical. As evidence there is the recent proposal by a gaggle of experts from the Transport Department which would remove *public transportation* from the streets of the center but continue to permit private cars and trucks!

However, Lima has not yet forsaken the pedestrian entirely for it has the Jiron Union, one of the world's great urban avenues still preserved from the inroads of heavy motor traffic. Running through the center of the old city, it's a shoppers street on the order of the Kalverstradt in Amsterdam, the Calle Florida in Buenos Aires, or perhaps even a larger and livelier version of San Francisco's Maiden Lane. The Jiron Union is not a unified mall designed for beauty, its architecture is undistinguished, (even Sears is frowzy here) and if amenities are desired they're best found in the Plaza de Armas or the Plaza San Martin at either end of the street. The real attraction of the street is its openness to humanity. Here both beggars and beldames stroll, stare, chat, eat ice cream cones at 4 cents each, and can buy anything from Inca cups to American deodorant sticks without hazard or nuisance from the internal combustion engine which is relegated to other streets during the principal shopping hours.

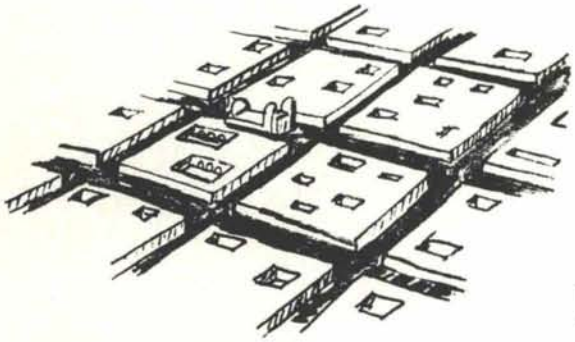
In this writer's opinion it's far superior to a color schemed, air conditioned, shiny, new suburban shopping center in that it *is* part of the great central precinct. It doesn't huddle in the center of a parking lot, but is within easy walking distance of many other interesting places. It's unashamedly urban; there are no potted shrubs, muzak, or friendly announcements on the public address system about this week's special bargains. It's commercial, but not crass; interesting, but not contrived, cosmopolitan, but still very, very Peruvian. Jiron Union is where traditional Lima has put on twentieth century dress, but left her car in the garage.

Prescott wrote that Lima was "the fairest gem on the shores of the Pacific." Like other former centers of empire, Lima may no longer be as fair, but let's hope that she hangs on to her inheritance of graciousness and habitability a bit longer.

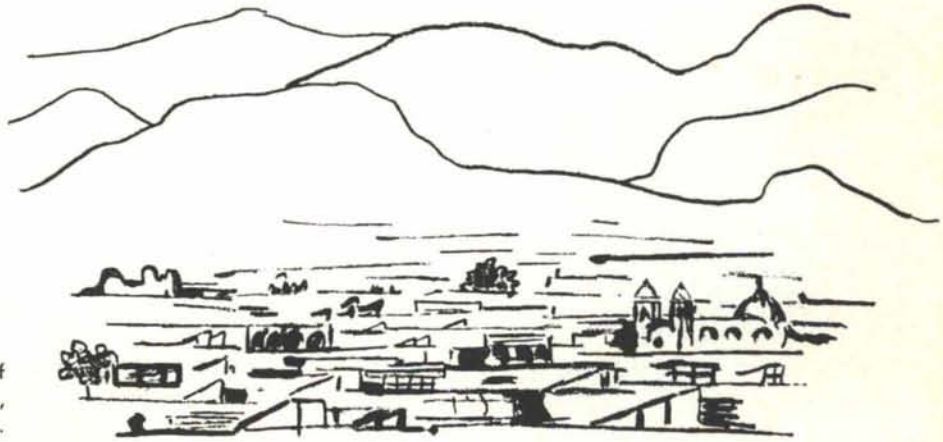
—Albert Solnit
Lima, March 1964



Plan of eighteenth century Lima showing location of plazuelas.



The volumetric composition of colonial Lima.



The skyline of central Lima, circa 1750.

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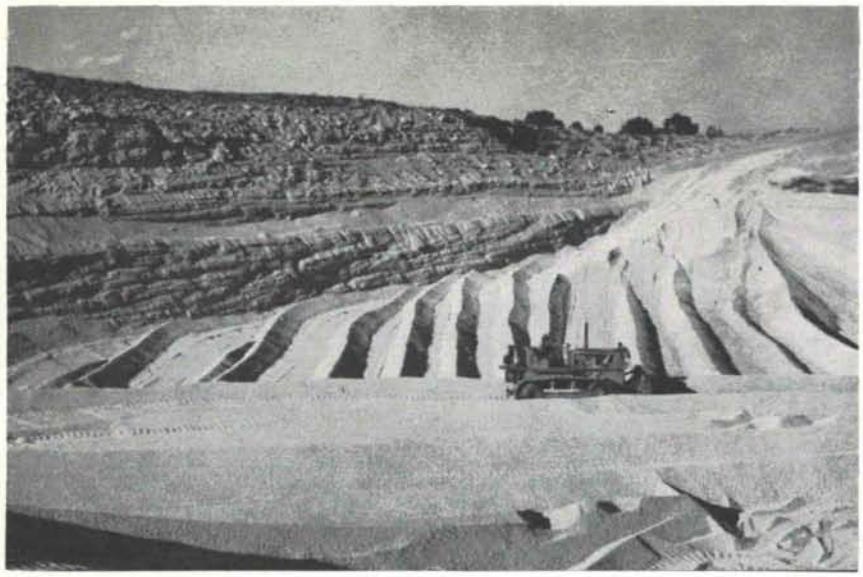

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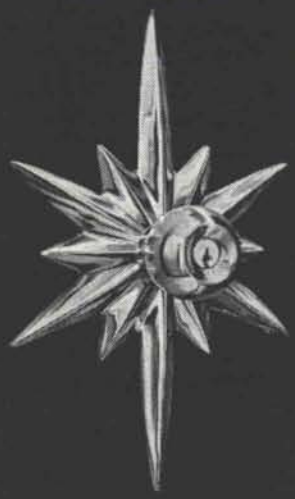

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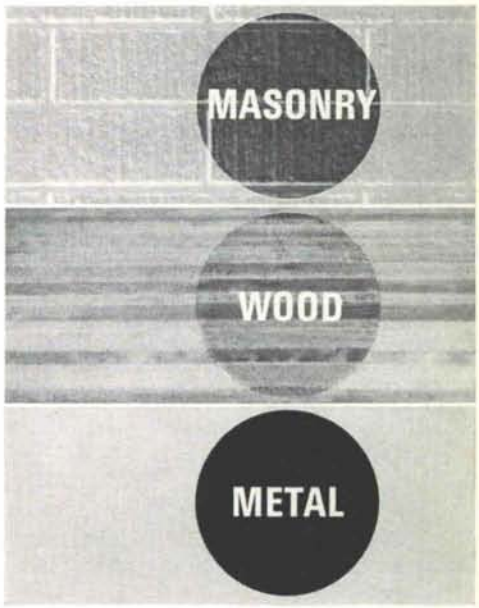

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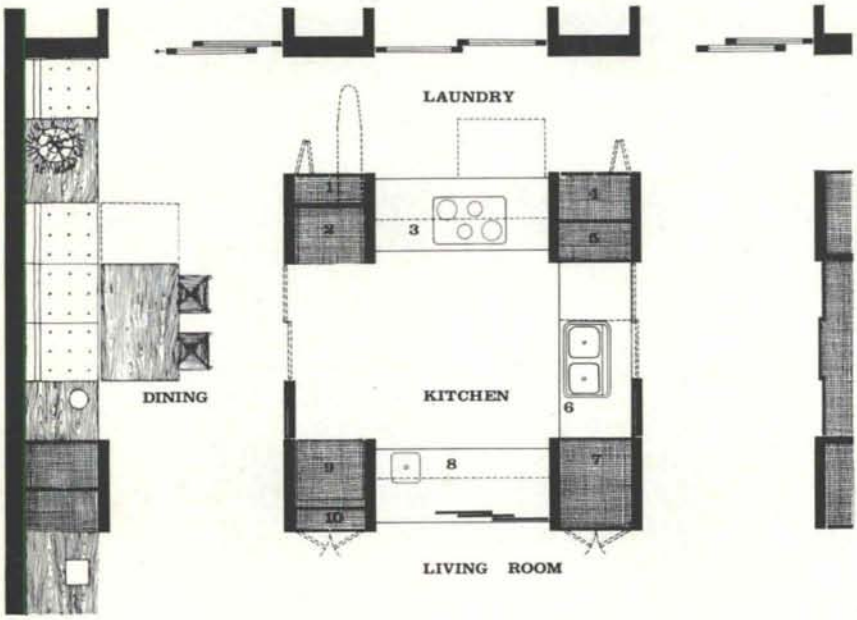
A Prize Winning Kitchen

designed by: Robert Kitchen



PLAN OF KITCHEN AREA

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 FT.

1 Broom closet
2 Oven
3 Counter - Range
4 Washer - dryer
5 Storage
6 Counter - sink, Dishwasher
7 Storage
8 Counter
9 Refrigerator
10 Bar

A handsome and efficient kitchen has been named winner of General Electric's national kitchen design competition.

The prize winning kitchen is a square shape with three of the sides tailored for specific functions which are food preparation and storage, cooking, and clean-up.

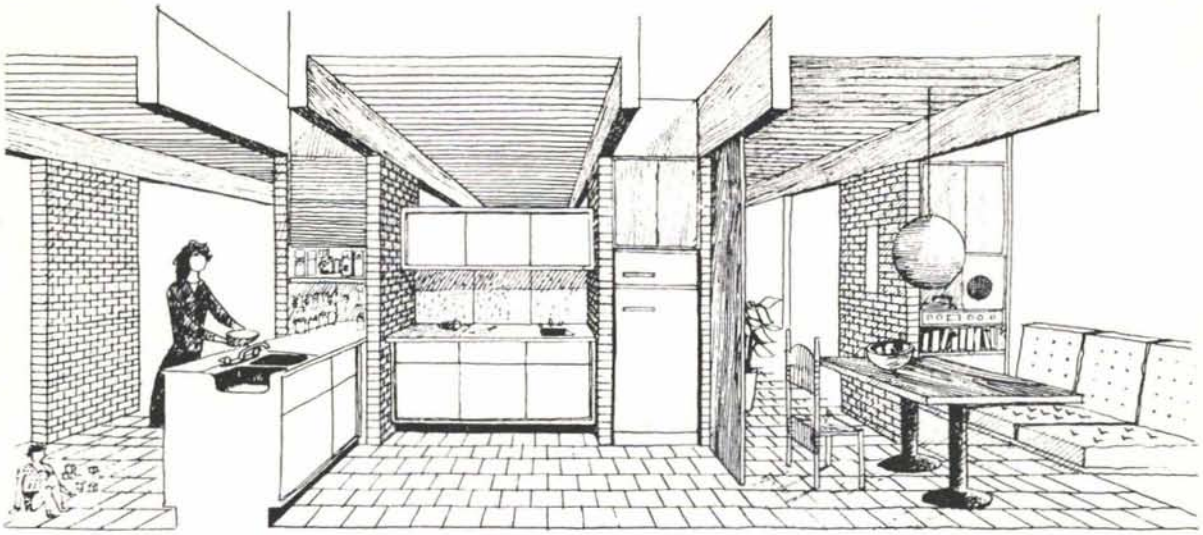
Each of the sides opens above work centers onto other areas and the kitchen is integrated into the house so that it is adjacent to laundry area, living room, dining room and very near the dining patio.

The kitchen was designed by an architectural designer with the coincidental name of Robert Kitchen of Santa Fe, New Mexico. His entry was named best by a panel of judges who analyzed entries from all parts of the country.

The judges complimented the design for its compactness and its relationship to other living areas of the house in "an unusual and interesting way," and for the fact that a housewife could take one step from any position in the kitchen and be in front of any appliance or work area. They pointed out that it offered unusually good traffic patterns and could be contracted or expanded to meet various architectural designs for a variety of types of houses.

The judges were:

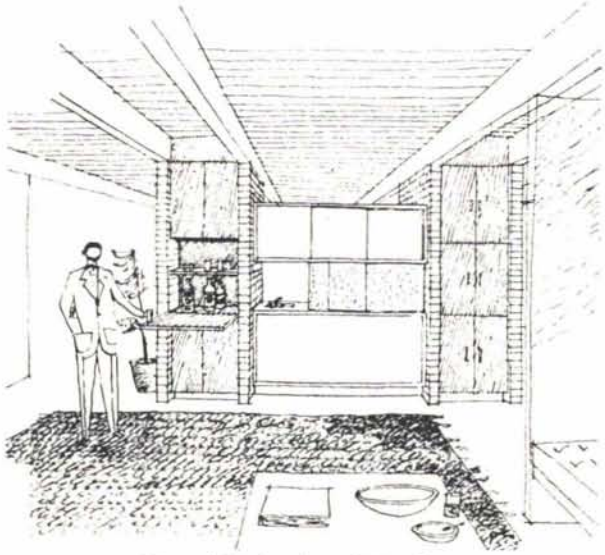
Ward Buzzell, NAHB Journal; Robert Martin Engelbrecht, A.I.A.; Milton Gralla, Kitchen Business Magazine; Olindo Grossi, F.A.I.A., Dean of the School of Architecture, Pratt Institute; Robert Hamill, Practical Builder; Joseph Hazen, House & Home; Joseph Mason, American Builder; Herbert Smith, Architectural Record; Irving Saunders, President of the Long Island Chapter of the A.I.A.



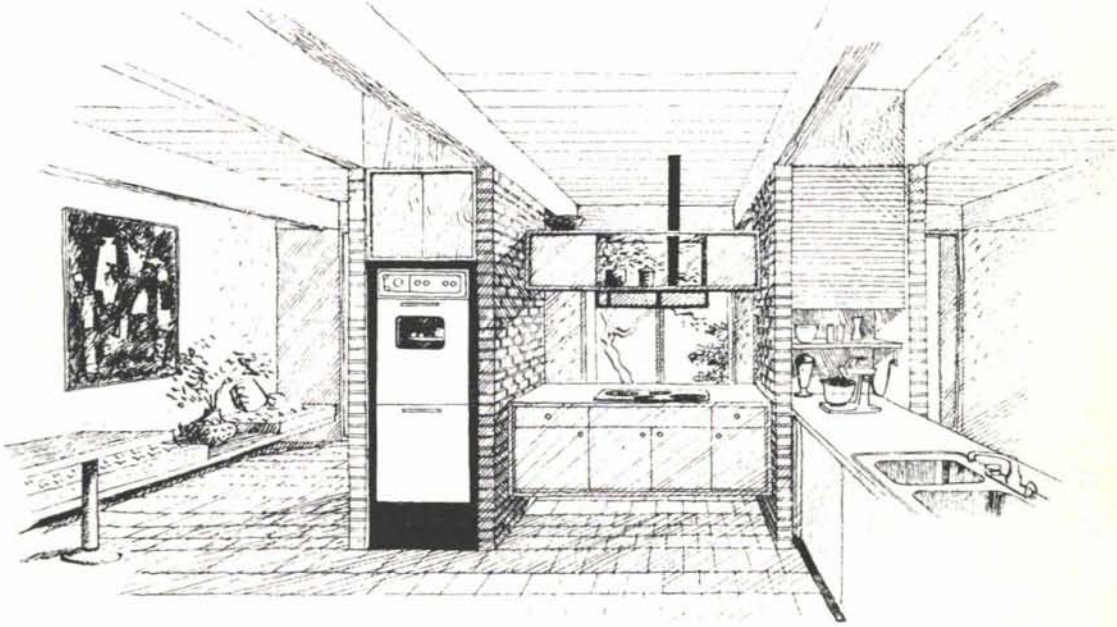
Area for children's play

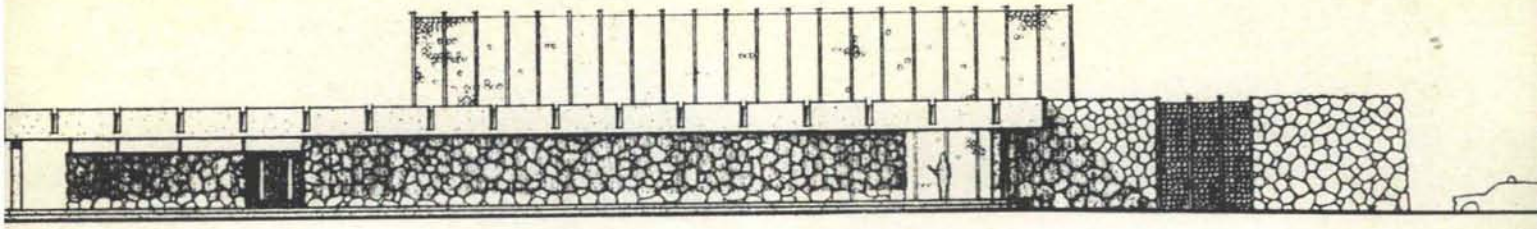
Kitchen

Dining



View of Kitchen from Living Room





Northeast Elevation

LINCOLN COUNTY COURT HOUSE

CARRIZOZO NEW MEXICO

Voll, Buffington and Nolan, Architects - Roswell

The design of the new Lincoln County Courthouse involved the razing of the original structure, the remodeling of an annex built in 1940, and the construction of new facilities. The work is to be realized in such sequence that no temporary offices will be required. When the new building is finished, offices formerly in the annex will be transferred to it; when the annex has been remodeled, offices from the old courthouse will be moved into it. Then the original building will be demolished. The site occupied by the old structure will become a public park until it is needed for possible future expansion. Such flexibility of plan and movement was necessarily accomplished by an asymmetrical grouping of one-story elements around the remodeled two-story annex. It is expected that any future additions will enhance the importance of the central vertical core.

The existing Courthouse Annex is to be enveloped by a metal screen with strong vertical elements of design. In addition to emphasizing its vertical mass and to frankly hiding the original elevations, this screen will offer an interesting contrast to the stone masonry of the new construction. The screen is also to be repeated in certain other areas of the new building.

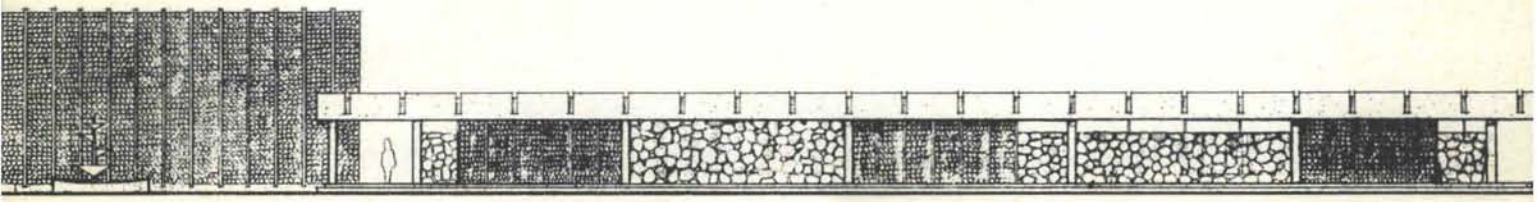
Except for the fountain on the highway side of the building, no attempt was made to establish a "front" elevation. There is no one main entrance as entry is readily gained from any street.

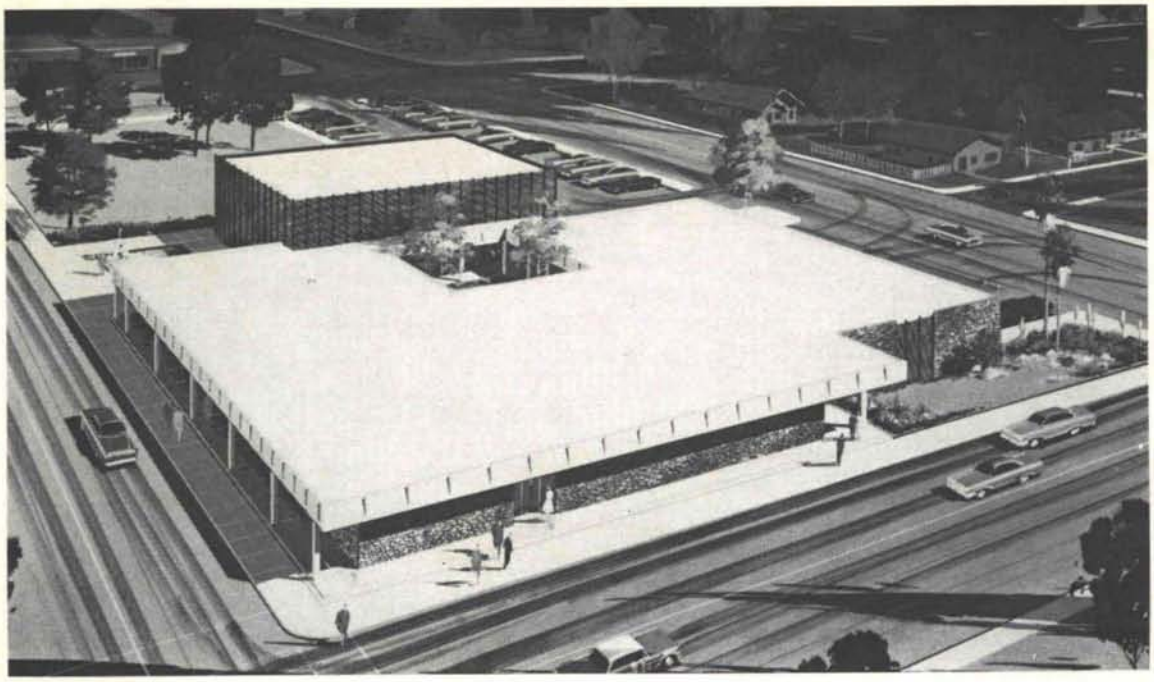
In designing the new courthouse, the architects attempted to create a building which would reflect the architectural and physical character of the area. Carrizozo is a small, relatively new, frontier-type community set on the edge of a vast and spectacularly beautiful desert valley. Therefore, neither the ancient pueblo nor a glass cube seemed to meet the demands of the location.

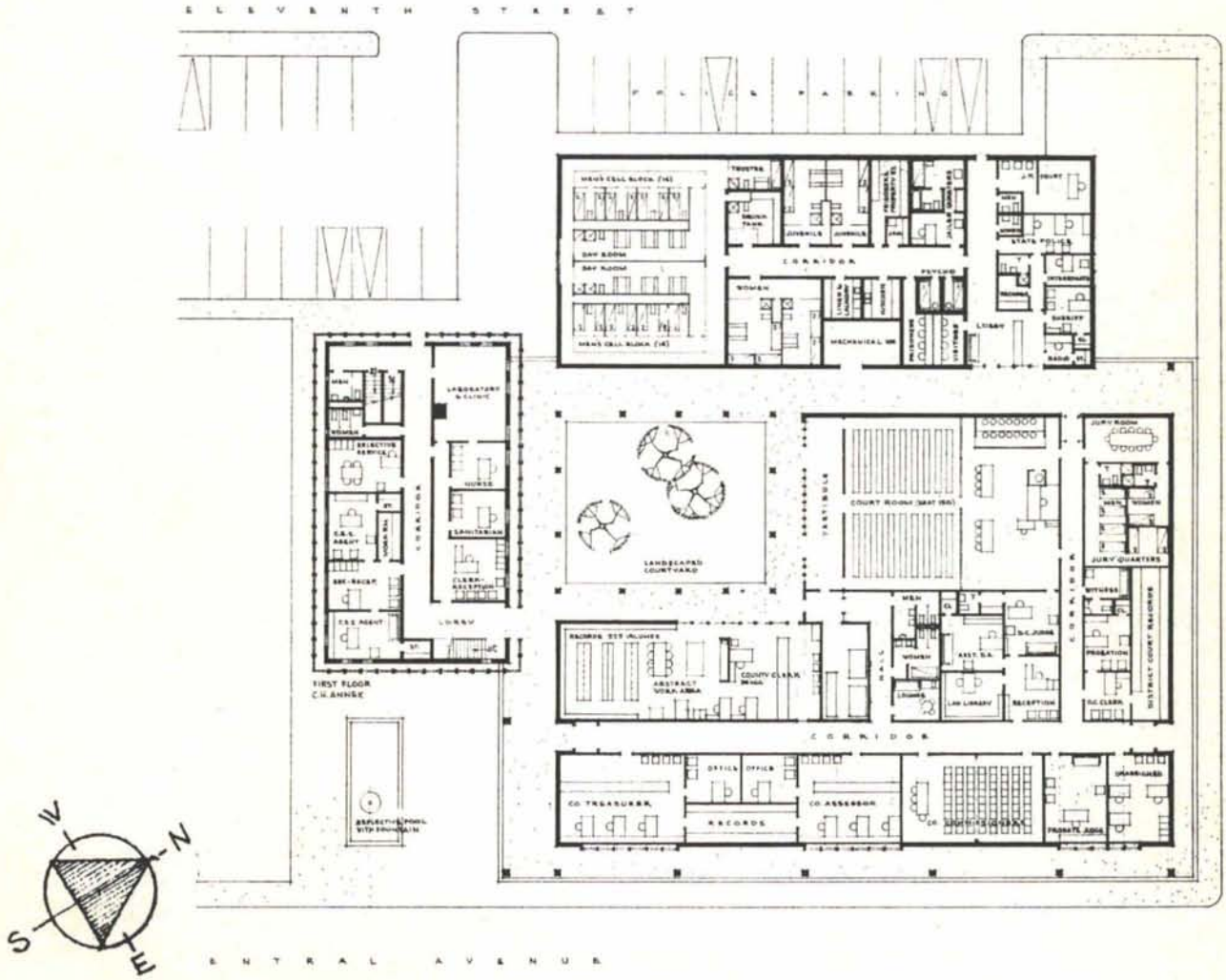
The columns and the waffle roof slabs of the new concrete structure will be cast in place. Exterior walls will be veneered with Corona stone, and the facia will be precast aggregate panels. The waffle roof slab will be exposed on the interior. Floors will be terrazzo or concrete, and the building will be conditioned by hot or chilled water.

Contractor: Cee-Bee Construction Company, Carlsbad.

Southeast Elevation



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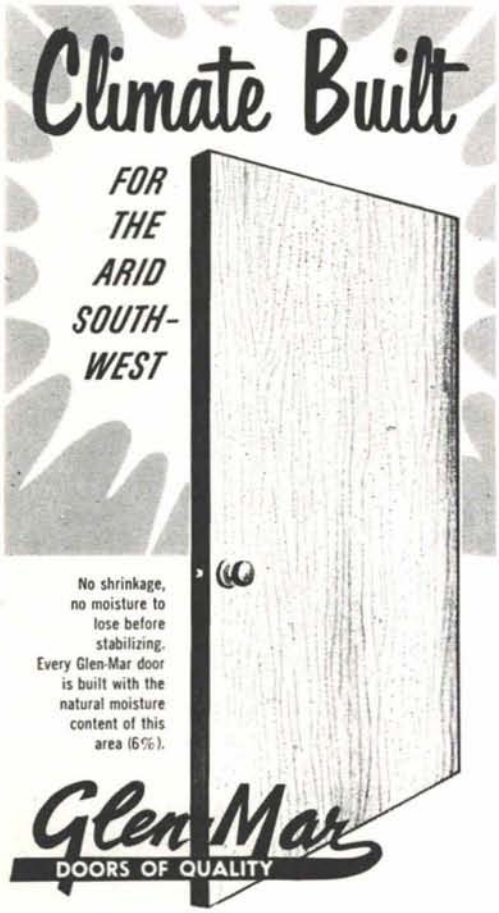

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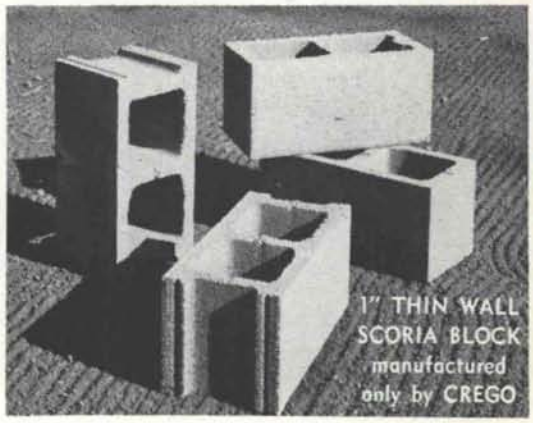


NOTES ON READING

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.

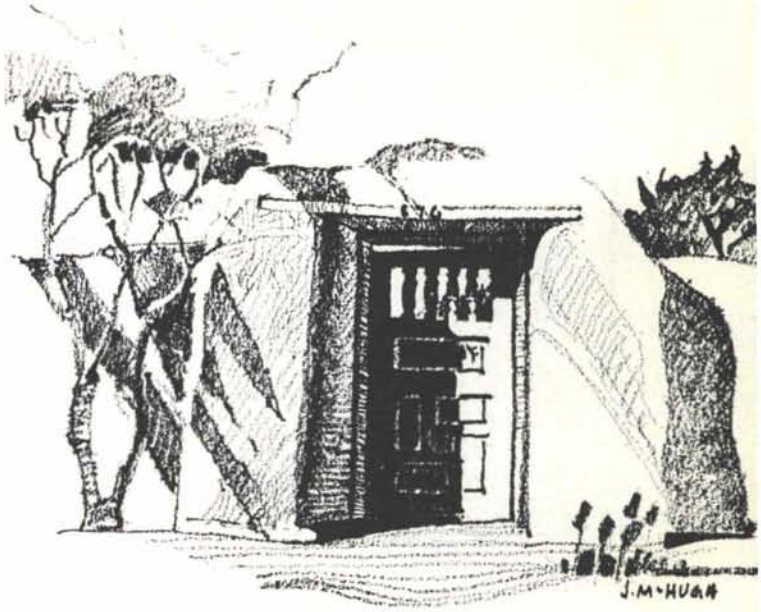
The book contains a "very modest history" of the evolution of the wood framed house from the heavy timber construction of the American colonist through the invention of the balloon frame to current housing construction practices. Mr. Haeger discusses "style" as opposed to "stylism", and illustrates their 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.

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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

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CONTRIBUTOR TO THIS ISSUE

Albert Solnit is visiting professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the Universidad Nacional de Ingenieria, Instituto de Planeamiento de Lima, in Lima, Peru. The program with which Mr. Solnit is associated is sponsored by The Organization of American States, and is directed by Yale University. Mr. Solnit was formerly Chief Planner with the New Mexico State Planning Office.

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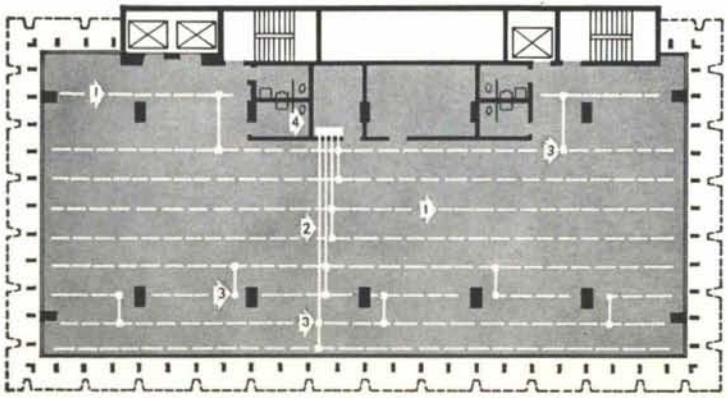

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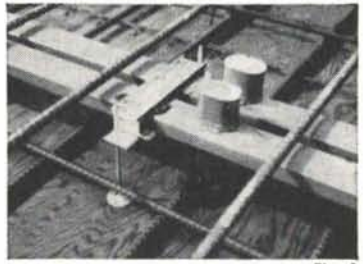

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Today, raceways under concrete floors can be readily designed for maximum versatility. One method, a pyramidal feed system, that provides adequate capacity for future utility requirements as well as changing plant or office layouts is shown at left.

Fig. 1 shows the distribution ducts and the floor inserts. All inserts for the service fittings will be flush with the finished concrete floor. One duct is for power, one for telephone wiring. Fig. 2 shows the installation in progress. The two-level system allows feeder ducts to pass under distribution ducts. Fig. 3 shows the placing of concrete after reinforcement and ducts have been carefully set. Fig. 4 shows a typical completed installation.

In addition to the basic power and telephone services, many modern buildings may require additional raceways for other uses. These include, for example, panelboard feeders with voltages up to 600V, low potential signal services, intercoms, T.V. and programming. Designers should estimate future requirements as generously as possible.

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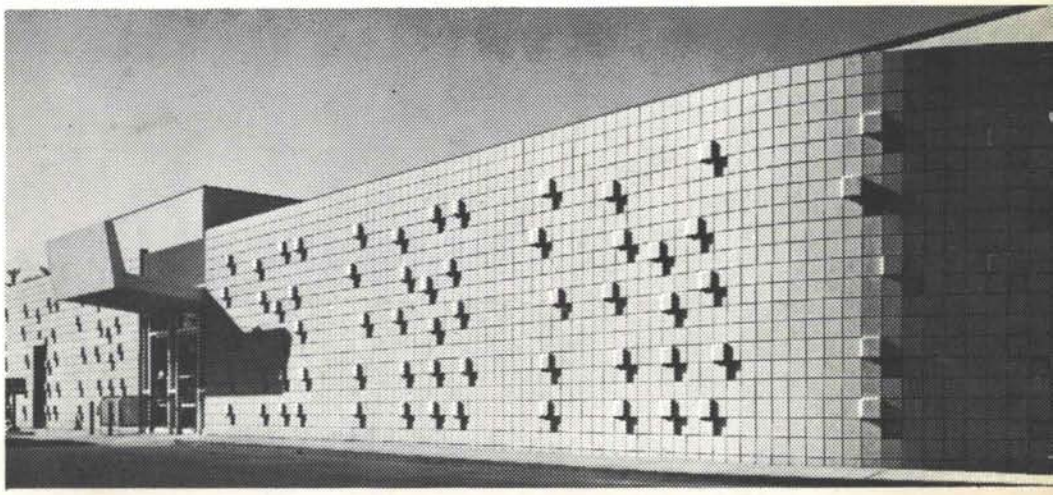

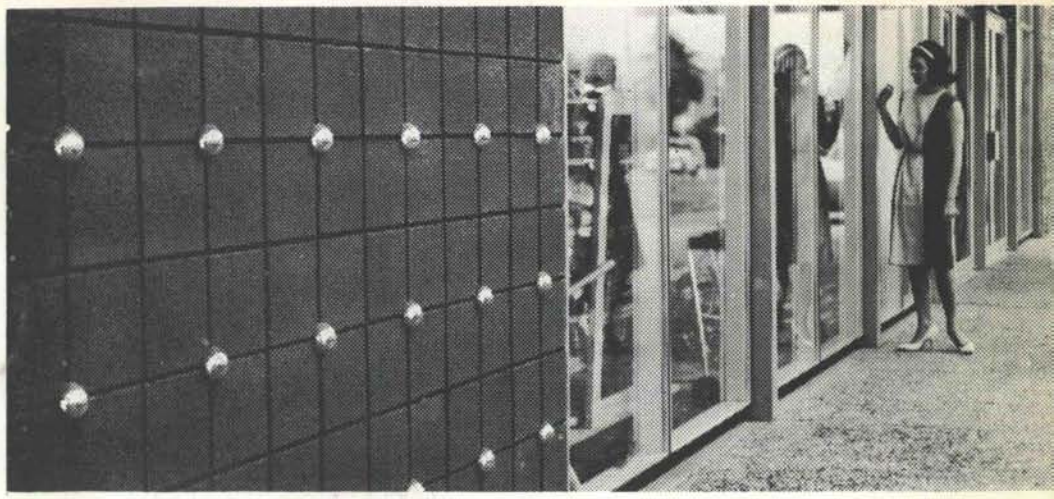

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