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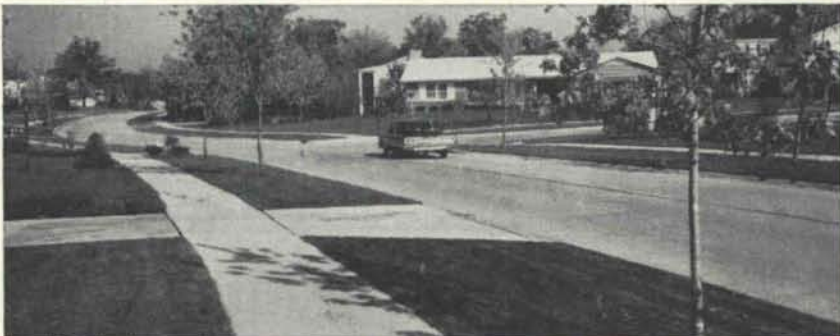
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The San Felipe de Neri Affair 8

W. Miles Brittelle, Sr., A Member Emeritus 17

The Regional Conference 18

Alexander Girard to Receive Medal 19

Coming in New Mexico Architecture 23

(Cover—San Felipe de Neri Church, Old Town Plaza, Albuquerque—Joe Lavel)

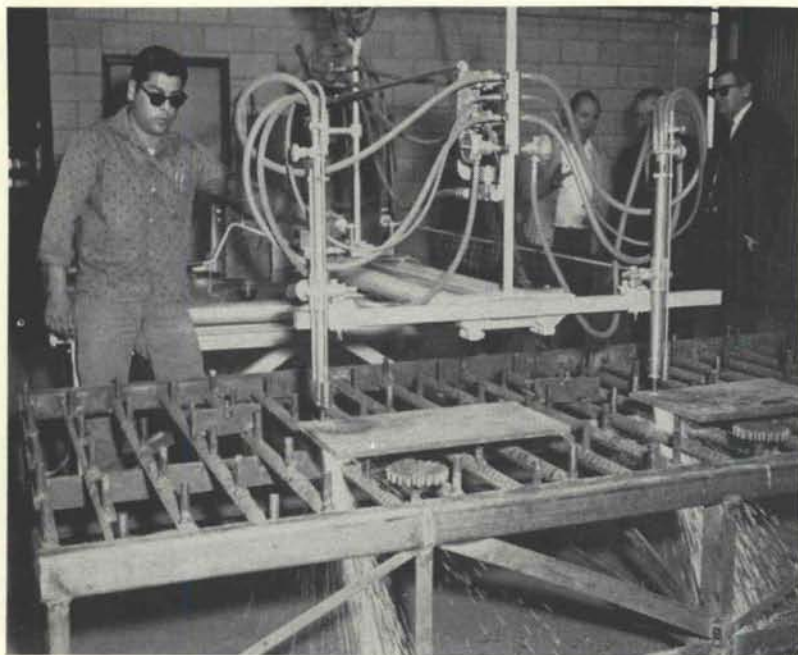
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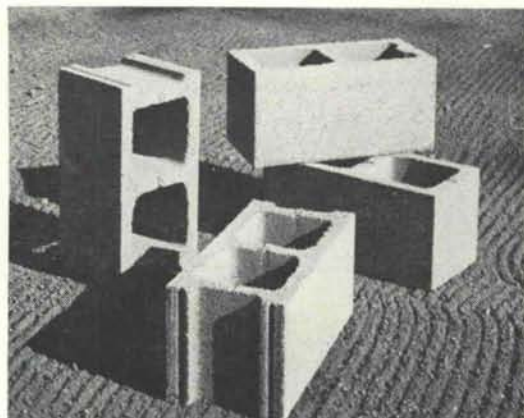
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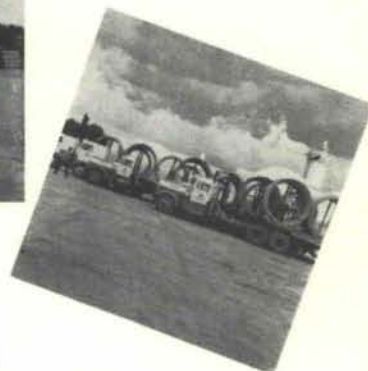
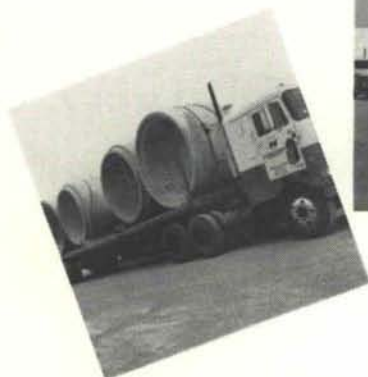
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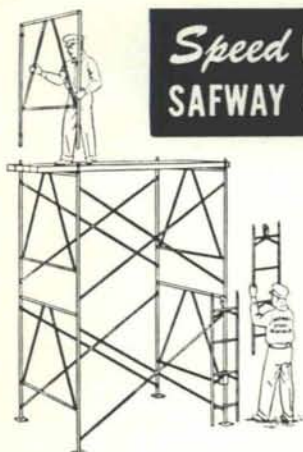
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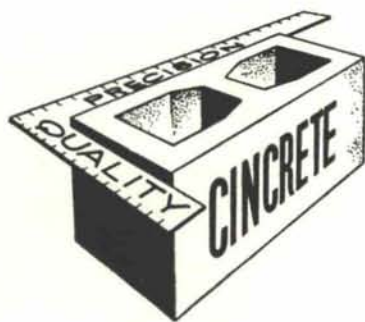


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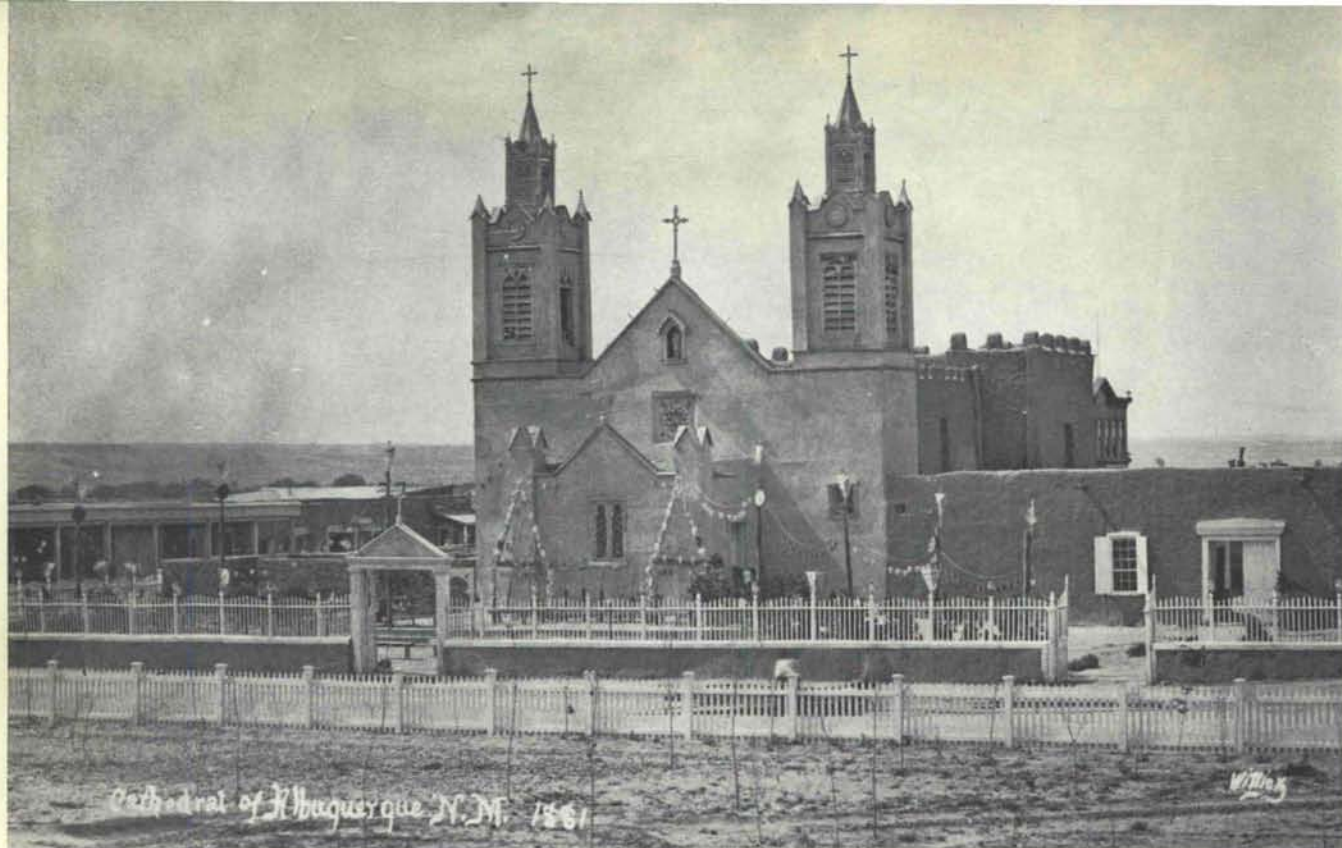
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— THE SAN FELIPE DE NERI AFFAIR —

A controversy rages, and San Felipe De Neri Church on Old Town Plaza in Albuquerque is the center. An architect has been engaged by the Pastor to increase the seating capacity and to bring the interior into conformity with the new requirements for religious services as specified by the recent Ecumenical Council which met in Rome. The proposed changes met with church and, at least, some of the parishioners approval. But the merchants of Old Town feared the loss of tourist traffic; historians and many architects feared the loss of a piece of Pueblo-Victorian history, and many others, parishioners and laymen, simply did not want the church changed in any way. The church was picketed by a local enthusiast who threatened a hunger strike. A member of the State Legislature threatened to wreck the New Mexico Arts Commission if the architect persisted with the remodeling. (The architect is Chairman of the New Mexico Arts Commission, and, while the Legislator did oppose the Arts Commission appropriation, the legislature passed the Commission money bill.) The Governor was asked to intercede on behalf of the preservationists. As I understand it, the Governor did not interfere in any way.

An application for a preliminary permit has been made at City Hall; however, action by the Board of Adjustment has been deferred so that a solution could be found which would be acceptable to all parties, including the city.

But the storm rages on.

Two statements are presented. One was prepared by the architect for the remodeling, John McHugh.

The other was prepared by the leading architectural historian in our area, Bainbridge Bunting.

Along with his statement, Mr. McHugh, presented us with a short impression of San Felipe Church, when he first saw it, as a visitor a few years before his firm was engaged as architect for remodeling. The description stands in sharp contrast to the one presented by Dr. Bunting.

Both viewers are sincerely interested in the historical past and the unfolding future of our state. Both are deeply concerned with the way by which the past is being smothered by the present, but they seem to differ as to the degree to which the past is to be left un-touched. Shall San Felipe move into the future with a new look, inside and out — or shall it remain as a valuable piece of frozen history.

—J. P. C.

John W. McHugh, AIA, is a partner in the firm of McHugh, Kidder and Plettenberg, Architects. Mr. McHugh is also Secretary of the New Mexico Board of Examiners For Architects, and Chairman of the New Mexico Arts Commission.

Dr. Bainbridge Bunting, an honorary member of the Albuquerque Chapter, AIA, and Co-Editor of NMA., is Professor of Art History at the University of New Mexico. Author of "Taos Adobes", he has also written on Victorian architecture. A book on Boston architecture will be published this autumn.

The history of San Felipe de Neri and its architectural character.

- - - - prepared by Bainbrige Bunting

Soon after the foundation of Albuquerque in 1706 a church with appended priest's quarters was built to serve a parish which numbered some 232 members. This church was described in detail by Fray Dominguez, the indefatigable Franciscan friar who had been sent to New Mexico in 1776 by the head of the order in Mexico City to report on the state of the missions in the area. He described a church facing east with its altar at the west and with the conventual buildings lying along the south side of the church. Later, when members of the parish moved away from the small settlement onto outlying farms, the old church fell into decay, and in 1793 the Indians of Valencia and Tomé were again required to aid the Spanish in reconstructing or in completely rebuilding the church just as they had done in 1706.

As the location of the present church, which runs north-south, does not agree with the placement or dimensions of the church report by Fray Dominguez, it is evident that it does not go back to the founding of Albuquerque. In the absence of references to church building activity in Albuquerque during the early years of the nineteenth century, one can assume that the main outlines of the present structure date from 1793.

Inasmuch as adobe buildings are in a perpetual state of disintegration because of the very nature of the materials of which they are built, San Felipe church must certainly have been subjected to several campaigns of repair and remodeling, but these are difficult to separate from one another because early architectural style and building technology changed but little. During the entire Spanish and Mexican periods there was so little impetus to change that a New Mexican church built as late as 1816 (Chimayo) does not vary in essentials from one built in 1620 at Zia or about 1629 at Acoma. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the situation was different because of radical changes in church administration and in the economic outlook of New Mexico. Instead of being appended to a remote bishopric in Mexico, the church in New Mexico was constituted as an independent diocese under a French bishop who had conventional European tastes. At the same time the building technology of the area was radically modified by the ready importation across the Santa Fe Trail of Yankee tools and supplies.

The new church administration brought many secular and regular clergy to New Mexico who had been trained in the Midwest or in Europe, and they in turn had little sympathy for the native architecture which they found here. At the same time tools, materials, craftsmen, and settlers arrived from the Midwest in numbers, and this stream grew in size after the extension of the railroad to the Rio Grande

Valley in 1881. Changes of this kind, which took place over a thirty-year period, are reflected in a new architecture expressing a gradual fusion of the old and new traditions. The delightful and rather unique thing about New Mexico building of the latter third of the century is the way in which new architectural features designed in new architectural styles, constructed of old materials that were now worked with new tools — the way in which these features were grafted on to the existing adobe structures. The resultant architecture may sometimes seem naive, but it is as sincere as it is possible to be, and it belongs to a specific time and place. The same particular combination of circumstances that coalesce in the Rio Grande Valley at this time were not repeated anywhere else in the world in quite the same way. This is one thing that so endears the architecture of the area to New Mexicans and to persons interested in architectural history.

The present church of San Felipe de Neri is a splendid example — probably the best one remaining — of that fusion of cultures in a time of transition in New Mexico. In proper Spanish Colonial tradition it faces the town plaza and dominates it, giving life to the plaza when work-a-day pursuits are at an end, preserving a serene life of its own when surrounded by the activities and distractions of daily existence. The Old Town Plaza would be unthinkable without its church and almost meaningless. It would be disastrous both for the parish and for the plaza if the church were transferred elsewhere.

The basic plan, massing, and construction of the church conform to colonial procedure. The single nave plan with the polygonal apse is found in almost every early New Mexican church and its usage reaches back to the churches built in old Mexico in the sixteenth century by the Franciscan friars. The projecting transepts, which give the church the shape of a cross, were usual in New Mexican churches built in Spanish if not in Pueblo communities. The greater ceiling height of the crossing, transepts, and apse is another regional feature. In early days when church windows were few and small and roofs were flat, a large clearstory window running the full width of the nave was provided in the space between the nave and sanctuary roofs. This opening provided a flood of light in the area near the altar where it effectively contrasted with the relatively dark church nave. Later, when a pitched roof was added to San Felipe, this clearstory window was blocked up. The position of the choir loft in the gallery over the main entrance is still another usage of the region, while the paired towers of the facade are not uncommon. Enormously thick adobe walls are a final Rio Grande characteristic.

Starting from these fundamental elements later builders added numerous features in the way of structural improvements or decorative embellishments. The facade was substantially changed. Vaguely aware that churches were "supposed to be

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Gothic" and encouraged in this by the example of their bishop in Santa Fe who was just then attempting to construct a Medieval cathedral, the parishioners of San Felipe added two wooden towers atop of the old lower towers of adobe. By no stretch of the imagination are the details of these towers really Gothic, but they represent the best the people of Albuquerque could then do, and the lavish use of sawed boards and elaborately cut designs for crosses and crockets, finials and tracery show the relish with which the local carpenter availed himself of sharp metal tools and the unlimited supply of finished timber. Thinking back on the few clumsy tools to which he had previously been limited and of the back-breaking labor once required to shape a single beam or surface a wooden panel, the native carpenter's excesses can both be appreciated and excused. Nor was his intuitive sense of design far off, for the light wooden towers effectively contrast with the solid adobe facade, a contrast which we can better appreciate in old photographs before the lacy decoration in the gables had been stripped off and the surface stuccoed over. The exact date of this remodeling is not known, but it likely took place in the early seventies. The exterior changes were complete when the accompanying photograph was taken in the spring of 1881.

Something of the light charm of this nineteenth century decoration can still be seen in the little

tabernacle set in the upper gable, and there is a pleasant repetition of forms in the vertical, box-like shapes of the towers' upper story which contrast with the larger masses of the story below and the small corner buttresses. All of these rectangular shapes are capped with pyramidal or octagonal spires of the same silhouette, a detail which was originally repeated on the gable of the vestibule below.

The interior of San Felipe is more remarkable than the exterior in the way it combines the old and new traditions of New Mexico. The organization of the interior space is clearly traditional. Starting with the low choir loft above the main entrance and ending with the high ceiling of the sanctuary, one's attention is unmistakably drawn to the main altar. But when window glass became available in larger quantities, the windows of the nave were enlarged to their present size (see old photograph), and it is likely that at that time or when the pitched roof was added the original transverse clearstory was blocked up. This loss of the clearstory was unfortunate, but it could not be restored without sacrificing the practical advantage of the modern metal roof.

What makes the interior unique is the "skin" of late nineteenth century fabrication laid over the old interior: a wood floor to replace the traditional hard-packed earth; walls covered with tongue and

The interior as it exists today



groove wainscoting carried to shoulder height while above that a coat of smooth plaster is painted to suggest a marble ashlar wall with architectural recesses; a stamped metal ceiling; and three elaborate altars embellished with jig-saw work and painted to resemble marble. Such changes could have occurred any time between 1880 and 1900.

In order to overcome the low horizontality of the traditional mission church, the nineteenth century craftsman in charge of the remodeling divided the nave into four bays by the introduction of vertical columns placed against each wall of the nave and connected across the ceiling by ribs which followed the slightly arched contour of the ceiling. Polygonal in shape and made by nailing five boards together, these columns are hollow and completely non-structural, but visually they do exactly what the designer wanted — they introduce an element of verticality into the interior and they provide a plausible "support" for elaborate ceiling ribs.

These wooden ribs take the form of a simple but non-structural truss. The center line of the ceiling is marked by a ridge pole of the same shape as the ribs, and their intersections are marked by elaborate pendants. The pendants as well as certain moldings of the ribs are finished with a lustrous gold surface. From the pendants once hung oil lamps or chandeliers which, unfortunately, have been removed. Although the transverse ribs appear to be parallel, they are not actually at right angles with the wall because the spacing of the nave windows is irregular. The joining of the wooden members of these trusses is so tight that one supposes that they were assembled in a wood working shop, perhaps in some distant place like St. Louis, and shipped to Albuquerque for erection. If this is true, railroad transportation, of course, would have been prerequisite.

Ingeniously the builder used the irregular levels of the old ceiling to suggest a slight vaulted roof. In early New Mexico buildings vigas were traditionally set upon one or two tiers of carved corbels which projected beyond the wall surface. Large-size vigas and corbels, though probably not the original ones, appear still to be in place in San Felipe, but they have been masked by a cornice of pressed metal which is almost curved and deep enough to give the feeling of a vault. The pressed metal ceiling, a feature known in the region by the middle eighties but not fully popular here until the nineties, is contemporaneous with the metal cornice. The importance of the cornice is underlined by a curious sawtooth dentil course placed below it. Made of wood in contrast to the cornice's pressed metal, this dentil course is ingeniously contrived by fitting together small triangles cut from wood moulding and enlivened with the familiar gold luster used in the ribs. These dentils follow no historical precedent, and it is hardly the sort of thing we would choose to do today, but it perfectly illustrates the efforts of a provincial carpenter to enhance his church. And it

symbolizes the aspirations and limitations of a craftsman working in the isolation of the Southwest some eighty years ago.

In the apse and transepts the three big altars are embellished with cutout designs and their pastel colors imitate marble work harmonious with the rest of the interior. For once the tepid polychromy of plaster saints seems appropriate. If the invoice for these statues could be found, it would almost certainly indicate St. Louis as the source of supply of these pieces although the ultimate point of origin was undoubtedly some forgotten European plaster works. The Gothic pulpit on the Epistle side of the nave could have been made by the same carpenter who constructed the facade towers. Only the bulky confessionals of simulated cherry wood are slightly out of keeping and rather crowd the transepts.

Placed as always immediately above the entrance, the choir loft has one of the fanciest wooden railings left in New Mexico. Made from three-quarter-inch milled lumber, such complicated jig-saw balustrades used to abound in New Mexico before the First World War. The lyre design employed here imitates the cast iron work popular in St. Louis and elsewhere just before the Civil War. In New Mexico such wooden imitations were once found on the front porches of wealthier homes or on the charming fences that enclosed individual graves in country cemeteries. Today the choir loft railing of San Felipe is almost unique.

Adjacent to the church on the east is a file of interesting rooms which contains the sacristy and several store rooms. These rooms have fine vigas and Territorial windows filled with old glass which seems to date from a refurbishment in perhaps the middle sixties. An interesting wood spiral stair of the same type rediscovered in the old church at Acoma rises inside the east tower to the level of the coro. Beyond these rooms is a delightful patio which has great potential for restoration.

NO! *It must not be altered.*

Since the beginning of the year Albuquerque has been involved in a controversy over plans to rebuild the old church of San Felipe de Neri in Old Town. Local papers have carried accounts of pickets and meetings and still more acrid controversy has remained unreported. What is needed now is not more heat and invective but a clarification of just what preservation is and what it entails. It is not the purpose of the present article to argue the value of preservation since that matter has been gone over many times and the city of Albuquerque has already accepted the principle by establishing in 1956 the H-1 Zone of the Old Town district. What is apparently needed is a reminder that preservation costs a certain amount of money and effort and that there

are many problems involved in a program of preservation.

Some people seem to have the notion that a historic building is a relic of a bygone-age and useless except as a monument to be looked at or possibly to serve as a museum. In a few cases this is so, but there is a limit to the number of museums or idle monuments which a community can support. If anything like a reasonable proportion of buildings and neighborhoods which are worthy of historic preservation are to be kept and protected, a practical use must be found to which a large proportion of them can be put. Most historic buildings, therefore, have a dual role to play.

This means that to achieve a sound and valid preservation program, a method must be found to harmonize practical use with the demands of preservation. This is not so hard to do in the case of most old houses which can be adapted to offices, apartments, or to certain kinds of shops. Here interior modifications or minor external additions can be made without compromising the building. The solution is harder in the case of a church or theatre designed for a specific purpose and composed of large inflexible volumes.

In the business of preservation one must also distinguish between key monuments which must be more or less strictly maintained and minor monuments whose importance to preservation in part is to provide a congenial context in which more important and conspicuous monuments can be displayed. Furthermore, preservation requirements in different parts of the country will vary depending upon the community's background. A structure of the late nineteenth century might be of considerable interest in one region of America while the same structure in another area will go unnoticed. The important thing is to select judiciously examples that bear a meaningful relation to the area in which they stand.

As a third point, preservationists, property owners, and the public must recognize the fact that the maintenance of an old building or the stabilization of a whole neighborhood involves a certain sacrifice. This sacrifice may be monetary, involving the maintenance of a historic edifice on a site which might return its owner more money as a gas station or a supermarket. The sacrifice, on the other hand, can come from restrictions on changes which might render the property more convenient. Occasionally it requires that an owner or architect forego certain schemes which he might have preferred to follow. Although the sacrifices demanded for preservation are substantially less than those generally required for street widening or highway construction, still the inconvenience and expense which are involved in preservation must be faced squarely. Not every old structure can be saved. The practical disadvantages must somehow be balanced against the cultural and aesthetic values inherent in preservation and a realistic equilibrium of interests arrived at. As this in-

volves unlike quantities, this may be difficult to do, just as it is sometimes difficult to decide between guns and butter. But only when such a balance has been established is a preservation program viable.

Once a decision for preservation has been made it means that a certain amount of expense or inconvenience will hereafter be accepted as a part of the program. It also means that regulations relevant to preservation must be taken seriously by public administrators, architects, and owners of buildings in historic zones. Setting aside historic restrictions must not be as easily obtained as a zoning variance. Nor can the question of preservation be left to the discretion of the individual architect when his solution runs counter to the law. To do so simply means that the concept of preservation has been abandoned.

We now turn our attention to the old church of San Felipe de Neri. Within the Old Town historic district only the church-owned buildings are of real historical and architectural importance. The church was erected about 1793 and most likely remodeled about 1870 and again in the latter part of the century. The convent and the school building were constructed and the rectory was rebuilt soon after 1881. Remove these edifices, particularly the church, and there is little left in Old Town that couldn't be duplicated in Disneyland. Given preservation of San Felipe church and a competent restoration of the convent and rectory, the rest of the Old Town Plaza area becomes a sympathetic backdrop against which the old buildings can be enjoyed. One additional consideration is that although Albuquerque was founded more than 250 years ago and today has a population of more than a quarter of a million, the Old Town group is the only thing the city possesses which has any claim to preservation.

As for the present changes proposed for San Felipe, it should be clear that changes of the facade are entirely inadmissible — no matter what takes place on the inside. The present proposal would utterly obliterate the old facade in total disregard of the principle of preservation. It would eliminate both towers, remove the nineteenth century "Gothick" trim, and create still more Disneyland by continuing the fake masonry arches of the rectory porch — arches which date from a disastrous facelifting that took place in 1950. Our quarrel is not with the architect's design but that he proposes to tamper with a facade that the community has already decided to save as a historic monument. It is quite true that the east tower is leaning and requires repair, but this is hardly a structural problem that an architect could not solve with ease. Indeed, over-emphasis upon an edifice's structural defects is the time-honored way in which architects have prepared the way to destroy the building they hoped to replace with a design of their own. At the very least, San Felipe's facade must be preserved.

An equally strong case can be made for the preservation of the interior. The architect's proposal

to remove one wall of the nave in order to double the seating capacity constitutes a change so drastic as to utterly destroy the historic value and feeling of the old church interior. What shreds of the old fabric might be salvaged from such wholesale change would hardly merit the trouble and expense involved. Proposals of this sort do nothing more than confuse the issue by paying lip service to the idea of preservation.

It is true that the parish of San Felipe has grown considerably in recent years and that a substantial increase in seating capacity must be provided. One alternative, a purely organizational one, would be to redraw the parish limits and transfer peripheral sections to an adjacent parish or to a new one. The northwest section of Albuquerque is growing so very rapidly right now that new parishes will most probably have to be created. It would seem that this could possibly be related to the overcrowded condition at San Felipe if the church fathers so decided.

Another alternative is one which would care for the present congregation in the old location. This would add the needed seating capacity in the form of a new auditorium or an enlargement of the east transept of the present building. Such an addition would preserve the integrity of the present church and possibly link it to the new auditorium in such a way as to accommodate overflow attendance. But the limits and decoration of the old church should be scrupulously preserved and used for smaller functions like weddings, funerals and daily masses. The end result of such a linking of two self-sufficient spaces might not represent an ideal solution for accommodating large groups of worshipers for the new church liturgy, but it would by no means be unusable. And a great deal might be said for providing a space that was less empty and cavernous for services that were less well attended than the 10 and 11 o'clock masses on Sunday. If he were designing a church from scratch on an unencumbered lot, an architect could undoubtedly manage to get more people closely grouped about the altar. On the other hand, a brand new church in Bel Aire or Princess Jeanne Park would totally lack the mellowness, associations and history which are possessed by the present church in Old Town.

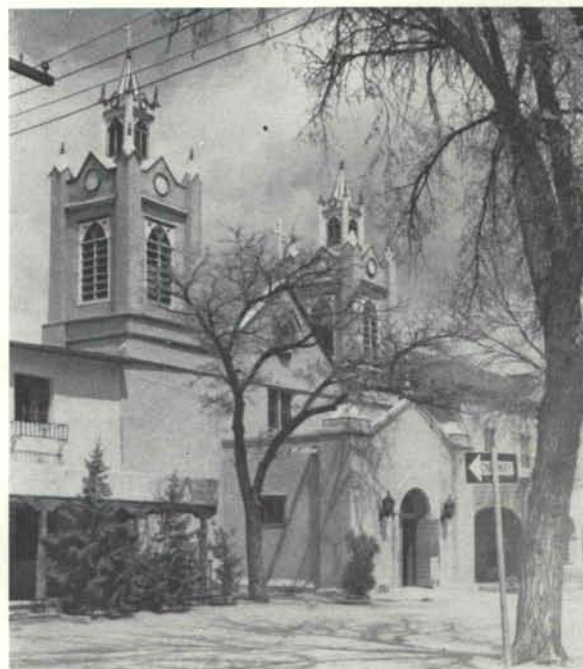
The interior of San Felipe church is in a remarkable state of preservation and will require a minimum expenditure of money to make it a comfortable place to worship and an architectural showplace. The matter of electric illumination needs to be restudied as does the ceiling air conditioning vents, but it would be an artistic crime to make drastic changes — an act that would no sooner be done than regretted. Nor would the facade be difficult to restore. All of the wood embellishments will have to be replaced, but old photographs and surviving fragments would make an authentic renovation easy. The upper levels of the east tower are leaning and would have to be replaced, but any architect with

an ounce of interest in preservation could handle such a stabilization.

Victorian art and architecture stand on the very verge of rediscovery. Within another generation even the philistine will acknowledge them. This rediscovery is already occurring in our eastern cities while Albuquerque, always a bit behind the times, seriously thinks of junking its finest historical monument — indeed its only one now that Huning Castle has been demolished. Posterity will clearly condemn the decision if the church is destroyed, but a reversal of opinion, most unfortunately, would not reconstruct a destroyed building.

San Felipe church is a unique building — something that could only have been produced in New Mexico during a period of transition. It is clearly a work which will never be duplicated. It is a unique heritage — exactly the kind of monument a historical advisory committee and a historical zoning ordinance are intended to protect.

The point, I think, is this: historic preservation is worth a few concessions. —B. Bunting



San Felipe as it looks today.

John McHugh looks at San Felipe de Neri

San Felipe De Neri presented the appearance of having had a rather poor bit of Ohio, Neo-Gothic stuck onto a more than usually ordinary adobe church. The front door was banging occasionally in the wind, the tumbleweeds were stirring restlessly in a corner by the porch, and a scrawny cat took advantage of a momentary opening of the door to dash in out of the cold.

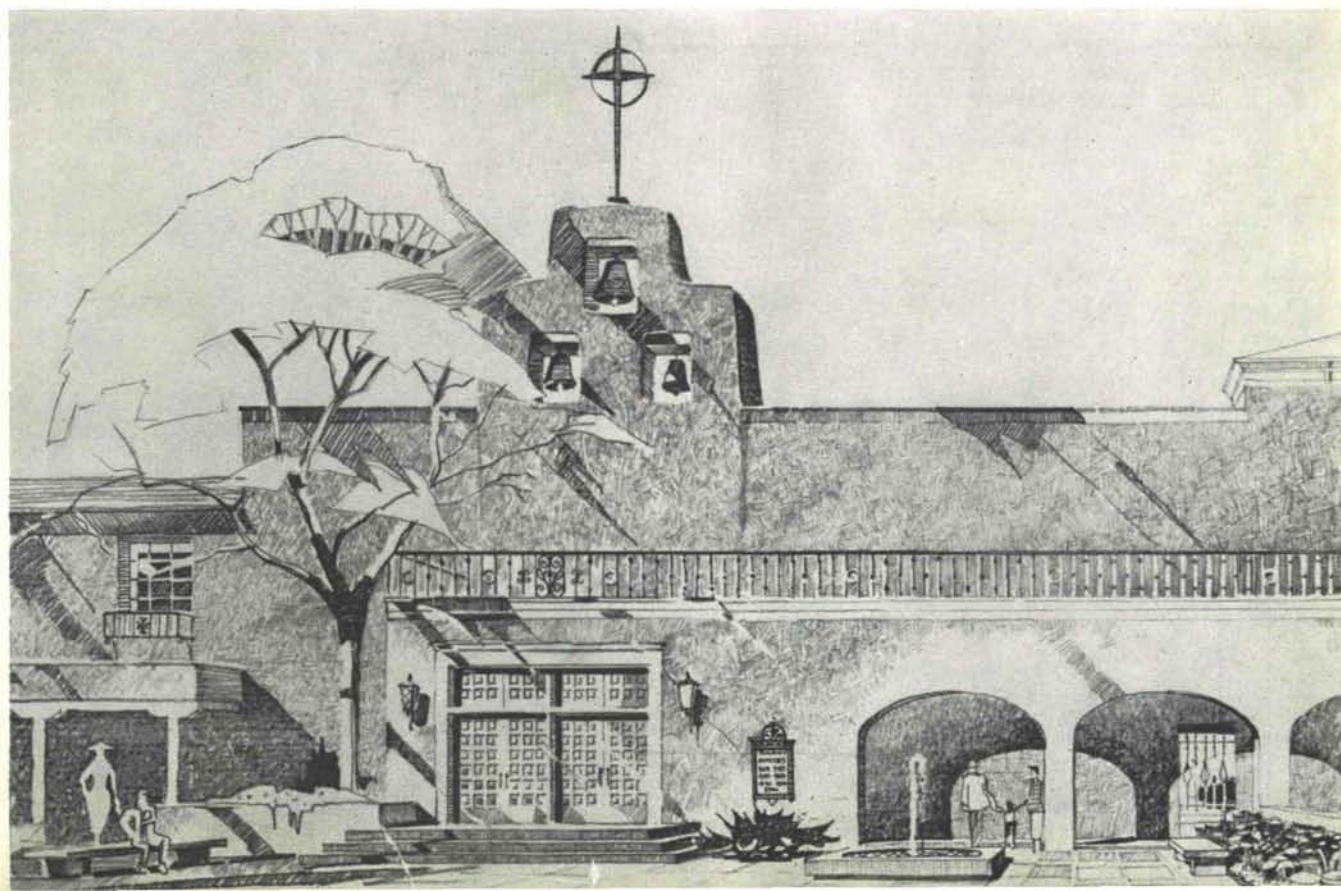
The sloping brown linoleum floor of the vestibule led me to some Pease Woodwork Co. four-panel doors (warped) which had been grained with

a potato to look like something they weren't. Where the doors had been handled, of course, the graining had worn off exposing the Raw Sienna undercoating. The interior of the church seemed as dark as the inside of a cow, or perhaps an unlighted cabin of a liner. The effect of being in a ship during a storm at sea was caused by the general darkness, the multitudinous creaking and groaning of the wood superstructure, and the occasional murmuring of one of the great bells as the wind blew a loose piece of hardware cloth and lath against it.

There is no point in recording the physical aspects of the interior; as they were substantially as Dr. Bunting has described them in his report. I remember, however, being disappointed at not finding one bit of Spanish Colonial artwork anywhere in the building. The dirty colours and Steamboat Gothic character of the exterior were also in evidence inside; but the whole was leavened by the sculptural hand-made unevenness of the adobe walls.

After my eyes became accustomed to the dim light, I could see that the simple clarity of the 18th century design had been largely obliterated by late nineteenth and early twentieth century efforts. The positive statement of honest beams and corbels had been blurred by the addition of a pressed tin ceiling, which had to be sloped at the side walls to cover the corbels. The long, wavy expanse of tin evidently had to be broken up somewhat; so several false beams or groins were spaced down the length of the nave, and under each of these are slender engaged colonnets running down the walls from the ceiling to the floor. The loss of the structural ceiling is lamentable, but the closing of the clerestory is perhaps the least fortunate of the "improvements."

The proposed new look.



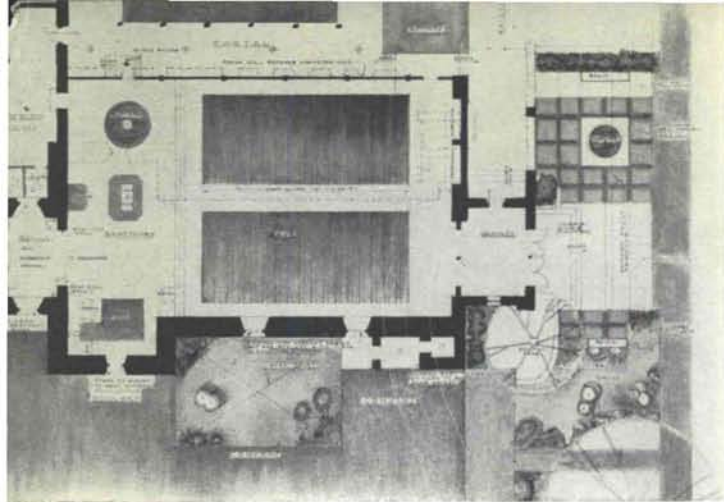
YES! *It can, and should be changed.*

We have reasons for all of our actions — even though we often "think them up" after the fact. We accepted the commission for the architectural work in connection with the remodeling of San Felipe de Neri Church because it seemed like an interesting and challenging job and because we felt that we could do it well — perhaps even better than some others. I like to design Catholic churches and generally bring a great deal of enthusiasm to the task.

We were asked to devise a scheme which would increase the size of the church to accommodate more people and to accommodate them in a graceful manner — not just jammed in as they are now; our second charge was to design a space which would be in sympathy with the new liturgy. Feeling that it is an architect's duty to accommodate the program of his client, we have attempted to do these things. Feeling, further, that it is the architect's civic duty as a professional man to respect both the history of a building he is remodeling and the architectural character of the surroundings, we have attempted to do this as well.

Now, there seem to be four reasons for the proposed remodeling of San Felipe de Neri church:

1. By far the most important reason for the existence of this building is that it is a Catholic church, serving a vital, growing parish. In an emotional situation like the present one it is easy to become confused with side issues and with sentimental attachments; it is nevertheless vital to keep in mind the basic truth that buildings are made to serve people — rather than the reverse.



Proposed plan.

2. The building is presently too small to serve the parish of 1200 families. These people live there, and moving the church somewhere else will not help — unless the families are also moved!
3. The building is in an advancing stage of dilapidation.
4. Most importantly, the building — by its size, shapes, and spaces — is extremely ill-suited to the present day needs of the Catholic Church. As set forth by the Ecumenical Council under the direction of Popes John Twenty-third and Paul Sixth, the Sacred Liturgy is far removed from Medieval gloom and secrecy. No longer should there be a stage and auditorium, or active “performers” and a passive “audience.” The Mass is a social celebration in which there is complete participation of the congregation — including the people, the choir, the altar boys, and the priest.

Now, we are all aware that there are two kinds of buildings: those whose size and shape predispose people to a social relationship, and those whose size and shape do not encourage an interpersonal experience. The new, enlightened lit-

urgy requires a social, community type relationship — not the shoulder to shoulder type found in a crowd.

It is certainly apparent to anyone visiting the building that the present church of San Felipe fails miserably in this regard, and is indeed the opposite of what is needed to serve and to express the wonderful, simple, and outgoing character of the Liturgical Renewal.

In the proposed design three factors have received serious consideration:

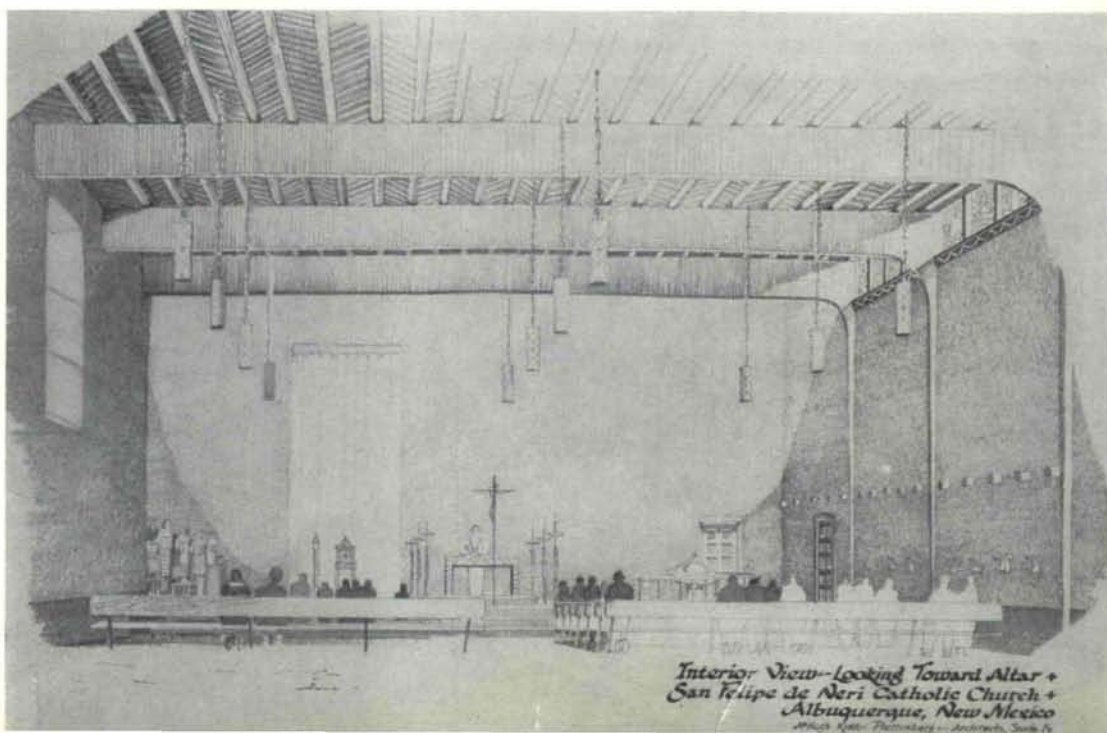
- a) the physical needs of the people of the parish;
- b) the need to respect the history of the building and its surroundings;
- c) the need to accomplish all of the above without placing too heavy a load of debt on this rather poor parish.

For the above reasons it was decided to keep as much of the existing structure as possible, and to keep the new work as simple as possible. Since the towers now stand outside the nave, and since we are widening the nave in an easterly direction, then the present east tower must be removed — as it would occur *inside* the church! Reconstructing this tower would not be feasible either economically or artistically; since the much greater width of the church — and therefore the much greater separation of the towers — would result in a radically changed appearance altogether out of character with the Victorian Gothic. Therefore it was decided to make an extremely simple facade by tying the buildings together through the extension of the arcaded porch of the Rectory, and the re-use and exposure of the handsome bells. Certainly no architect can honestly say that the new design does not conform to the zoning requirements for “Territorial, Spanish Colonial, or Western Victorian” styles, as indeed it reflects all three!

Objections to the proposal are included in three general categories:

- a) Objection to the changing of a structure which

An enlarged interior.



records the tastes and social conditions of a certain period in the city's history;

- b) a normal human reluctance to change a familiar part of our landscape;
- c) the commercial objection which fears a reduction in the drawing power of this magnet for attracting tourists to the shops, stores, restaurants, etc. of Old Town.

To answer these in reverse order: Is commerce more important than religion? Is our moral disintegration so advanced that we are willing openly to put the dollar sign above the cross?

There is perhaps no answer to the sentimental, human attachment for relics of times past. An ox-cart is more picturesque and safer than an automobile; yet I see none tied to the parking meters of Albuquerque. The same can be said for fireplaces instead of central heat and air conditioning, or for candlelight instead of electric light. It might be interesting to note, though, from the history of this building that changes have been made which have altered the interior or exterior appearance or both at intervals which average thirty-five years. It has been *traditional* that over the years when needs changed and improvements were called for they were made.

As concerns the alteration of an historic "monument" to serve present needs: this has been done many times before. Indeed, the most sacred and venerable church in all Christendom was pulled down to make way for a new one. From the time of the Emperor Constantine until the fifteenth century there stood in the city of Rome a basilica dedicated to St. Peter. It was an ornate and sumptuous building, encrusted with porphyry, mosaics, having an almost Byzantine richness and mystery. Pope Nicholas V decided to tear down this building — said to be built by Constantine himself — and replace it with a new church suited to and expressing the emergence from the Dark Ages and the glory of the Christian Church. Imagine, if there had been an "Old Vatican Advisory Committee" and if they had prevailed Western civilization would have been deprived of one of its greatest monuments.

I am not comparing our plans with those of Michelangelo, but the principle is the same and it is just as important here, in 1966, as it was in Rome in 1505. The people of Rome had faith in their clergy, artists, and architects. We are asking the people of Albuquerque to show the same faith.

John W. McHugh, AIA



W. Miles Brittelle, Sr. is named a MEMBER EMERITUS

The Secretary of the American Institute of Architects has informed W. Miles Brittelle, Sr. of his election to the status of *MEMBER EMERITUS* of the Institute. Mr. Brittelle has been active in the AIA for many years. He has served on national committees as well as having been elected to vari-

ous chapter offices. He served as president of the state chapter when this magazine was first published in 1958. For the past six years he has been the advertising director of NMA, and he continues faithfully in that position.



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THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

In Santa Fe this October two conferences are being held concurrently. Headquartered at La Fonda Hotel will be the 15th annual conference of the Western Mountain Region, American Institute of Architects. The Inn of the Governors will be the meeting place of the 1st annual conference of the newly formed Mountain States Region, American Institute of Interior Designers.

Most of the panel discussions and several of the social events will be joint affairs. It is hoped that a better understanding of the problems and an awareness of the thinking of these design professions can result from such meetings as are planned for Santa Fe.

Several speakers have agreed to participate in the program, among them: Peter Blake, AIA, Editor of *Architectural Forum*, Paul Spreiregen, AIA, author of the book, *Urban Design: The Architecture of Towns and Cities*; Garrett Ekbo, ASLA, partner in the firm of Ekbo, Dean, Austin, and Williams, Chairman, Department of Landscape Architecture, Univ. of California at Berkeley; and Grady Clay, Editor of *Landscape Quarterly* and Urban Affairs Editor of the Louisville Journal Courier.

The President-Elect of the AIA, Mr. Charles M. Nes, Jr., FAIA will be the principal speaker at the banquet.

So, you-all come, and

plan to enter:

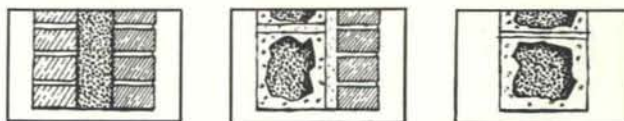
1. The New Mexico Architecture Annual Photography Contest.

RULES—

- a) The competition is open to all: architects, interior designers, professional and amateur photographers, adults, children.
- b) The subject matter must concern itself with man-made structures and buildings constructed within the boundaries of the Western Mountain Region. All structures are eligible: bridges, homes, barns, sheds, office buildings, hotels, hospitals, irrigation structures, dams, powerhouses, patios, building pieces or details — in short, any man-made structure from pre-history to the not-yet finished. In keeping with the Conference theme, however, emphasis should be on DESIGN FOR PEOPLE.
- c) Color or black and white photographs are acceptable, but prints must be a minimum of 5" x 7". Larger sizes or other proportions are acceptable and even solicited. All prints must be mounted on stiff board.
- d) All photographs must be identified as to location and must have the name of the photographer and date the picture was taken placed upon the back.

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- e) No submissions can be returned.
- f) NEW MEXICO ARCHITECTURE reserves the right to exhibit any or all submissions in its publication. Full credit will always be given the photographer.
- g) Deadline for submissions is October 1, 1966.
- h) Send all entries to John Conron, P. O. Box 935, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

2. The Fine Arts Contest.

- a) Open to Architects and Interior Designers for work in oils, water color, drawings, graphics, or sculpture. Note, however, that renderings of projects are not eligible.
- Suitable trophies and awards will be presented at the banquet to all winners.

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THE TIME:

OCTOBER 12, THROUGH 15, 1966



Santa Fe Architect To Receive Medal

Alexander Girard, AIA, a member of the Santa Fe Chapter, AIA, will be presented with the Allied Professions Medal at the 1966 annual convention of the American Institute of Architects in Denver, June 26-July 1.

Alexander Girard is an architect who specializes in the design of interior spaces and their furnishings, he is known best for his shops, showrooms, restaurants and residences. He is noted particularly for a bold, exciting use of color in fabrics and interiors. His work has been published, exhibited and honored internationally. Recent awards have gone to Girard for his fabric collection for Herman Miller and for the design of LaFonda del Sol restaurant in New York City.

Among Girard's most recent work is the redesign of many visual aspects for Braniff International Airlines and several projects in collaboration with architects Eero Saarinen and Associates. He designed the wood mosaic on the free standing wall in the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque, as well as the interiors at St. John's College in Santa Fe. He is a registered architect in four states, and he has been design director of the Herman Miller Textiles Division since 1952. Six years ago, he established the Girard Foundation in Santa Fe, and international Collection of toys and related objects for public exhibition.

The editors join with all the members of the New Mexico Society of Architects in congratulating Alexander Girard.



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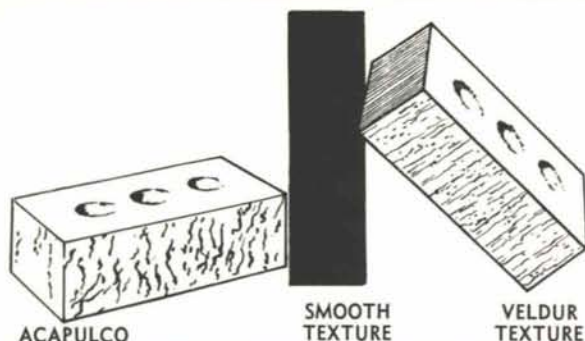
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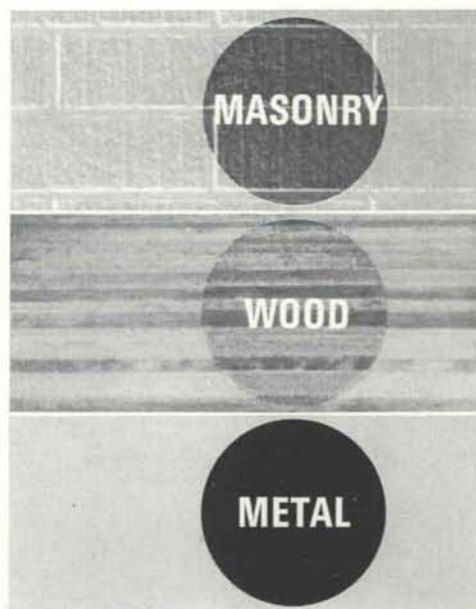
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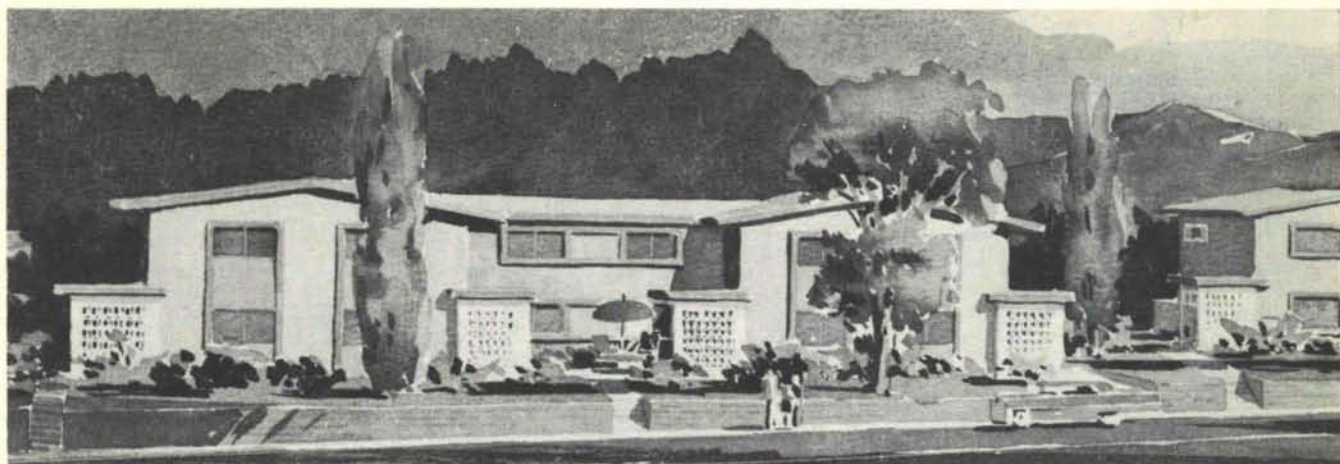
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Albuquerque Blueprint Company	20
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Coming In New Mexico Architecture

It is expected that the JULY-AUGUST issue of NMA will contain the remaining two Albuquerque Chapter, AIA Merit Award Winners which have not yet been published in NMA. They had been scheduled for this issue but the San Felipe de Neri Church affair has forced a delay in the publication of those two fine buildings.

The Magazine Commission is planning to publish a special issue for September-October. This issue will contain a study of the architectural heritage of Santa Fe and the nearby mountain villages including — Truchas, Trampas, Chimayo, and Penasco. This issue will be mailed to subscribers prior to the October meetings in Santa Fe of the Western Mountain Region, American Institute of Architects, and the Mountain States Region, American Institute of Interior Designers. Additional copies of the magazine will be available at the conference hotels. The NMA staff will work closely with the editor of Mountain States Architecture magazine; the two can then give full coverage to the conference program and to the area in which the meetings will take place.

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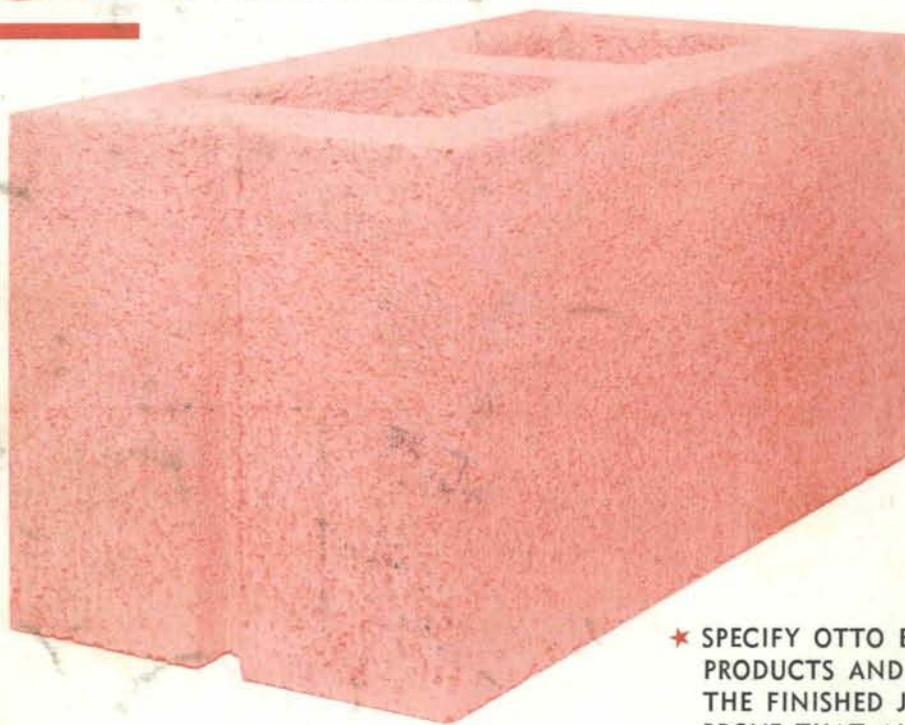
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