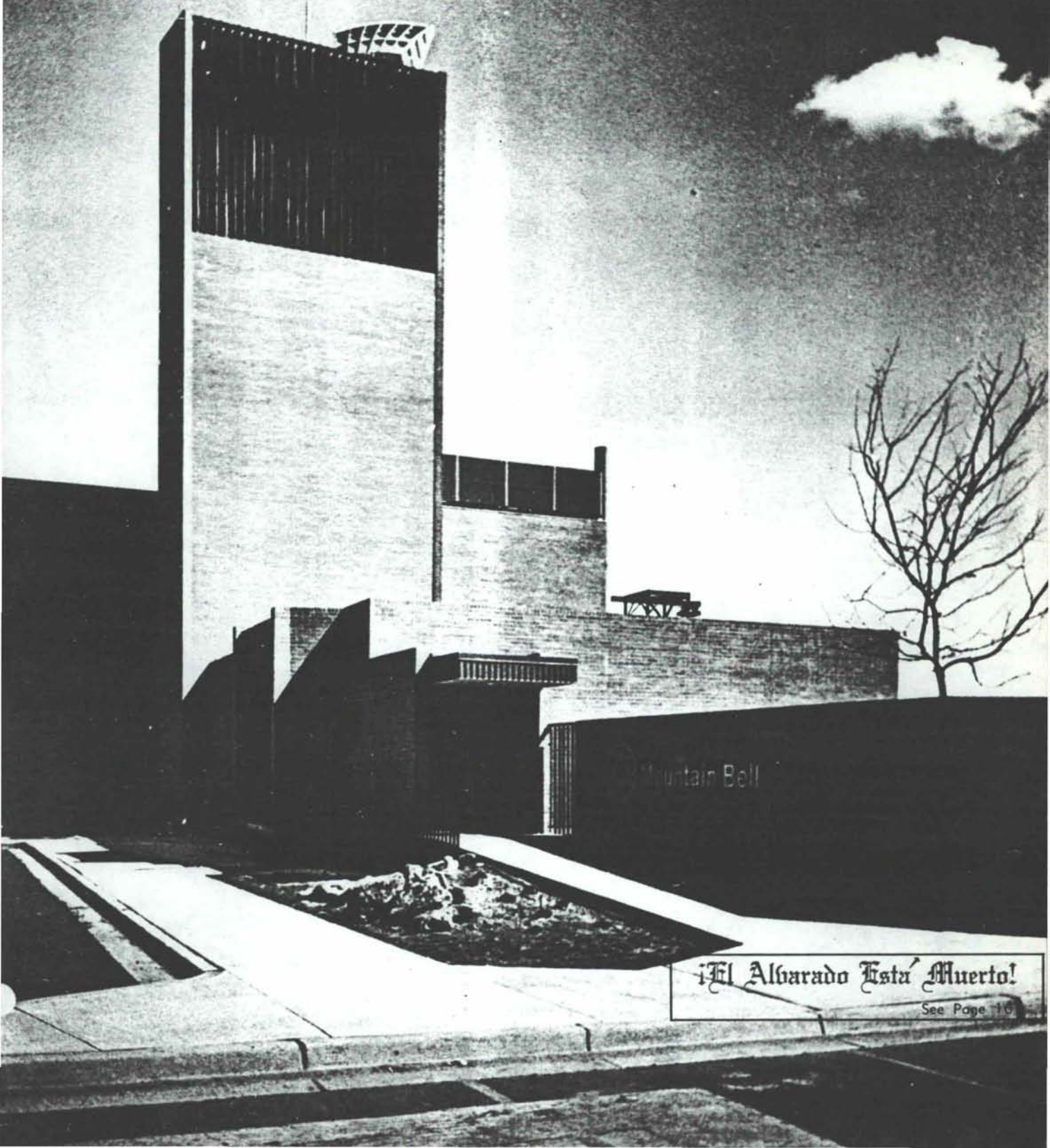


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¡El Alvarado Está Muerto!

See Page 10

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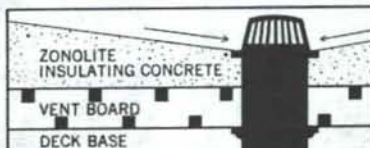
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(Cover—Mountain Bell—Los Alamos, N. M.—Photographer—Gordon Ferguson)

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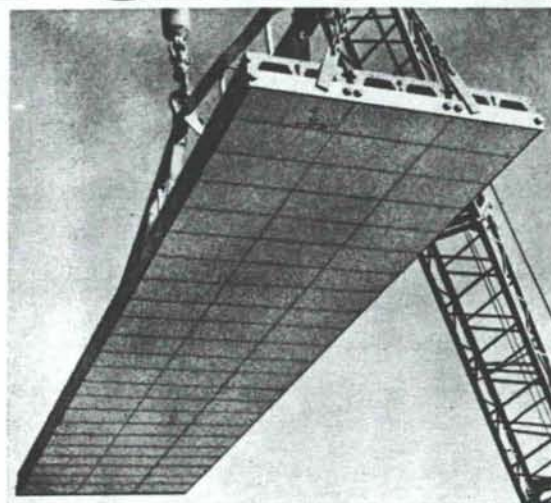
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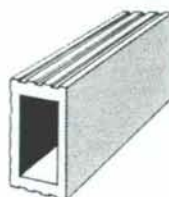


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The architects, owners, and contractors of five New Mexico buildings were honored at the recent awards banquet of the Albuquerque Chapter, AIA. The jury selected the winners from more than twenty-five entries submitted by members of the Albuquerque Chapter. Jurors were: John P. Conron, AIA/AID, Santa Fe; Van Deren Coke, Chairman, Dept. of Art, UNM; and William Brubaker, AIA, partner in the Perkins and Will Partnership, Chicago, Illinois.

MERIT AWARD

WILSON PARK SWIMMING POOL **Albuquerque, New Mexico**

ARCHITECT: Jess Holmes

OWNER: City of Albuquerque

CONTRACTOR:

Thomas, Sanders, and Stright

The Wilson Park Swimming Pool was designed as a neighborhood swimming facility. While the primary function is for instructional purposes, limited time is scheduled for recreational swimming. Bathhouse facilities are minimal, as most swimmers will come dressed for swimming. There are no diving facilities provided as the pool's depth ranges only from three to five feet.

(See *NEW MEXICO ARCHITECTURE*, January-February, 1970.)



MERIT AWARD

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

ARCHITECT: W. C. Kruger and Associates

OWNER: Public Service Co. of New Mexico

CONTRACTOR: Brennand, Levell
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MERIT AWARD

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES

Albuquerque, New Mexico

ARCHITECT: John Reed

OWNER: University of New Mexico

CONTRACTOR: Lembke Construction Company

This building complex houses two separate but related components of the university system. The program called for a simple solution to house these elements together—but with their own identity—thus, the two buildings, connected by a bridge at the upper level.

The School of Business and Administrative Sciences occupies the upper floor (administration and faculty offices) and the lower floor (classrooms) of the West building; and the lower floor (classrooms and library) of the East building. The In-

stitute for Social Research and Development occupies the upper floor of the East building.

This complex brought about an opportunity to develop the first building on the university campus which "expresses the structure," and at the same time relates properly to the other campus buildings which are essentially "pueblo style."

The concrete frame and prestressed T-beam system is, therefore, obvious. The exposed concrete and masonry are coated with a sprayed-on cement texture inside and out. Sun control is achieved for the upper floor glass areas by the use of sections of the T-beams mounted vertically.

The courtyards and mall-type access are desirable in the always sunny climate. The balconies provide outdoor areas for conversation, study, and informal group discussion. The building is on the periphery of the campus and future development to the north will emphasize the mall of this complex as somewhat a gateway.



CHEMISTRY BUILDING ADDITION **Albuquerque, New Mexico**

ARCHITECT: Ferguson, Stevens, Mallory and Pearl

OWNER: The University of New Mexico

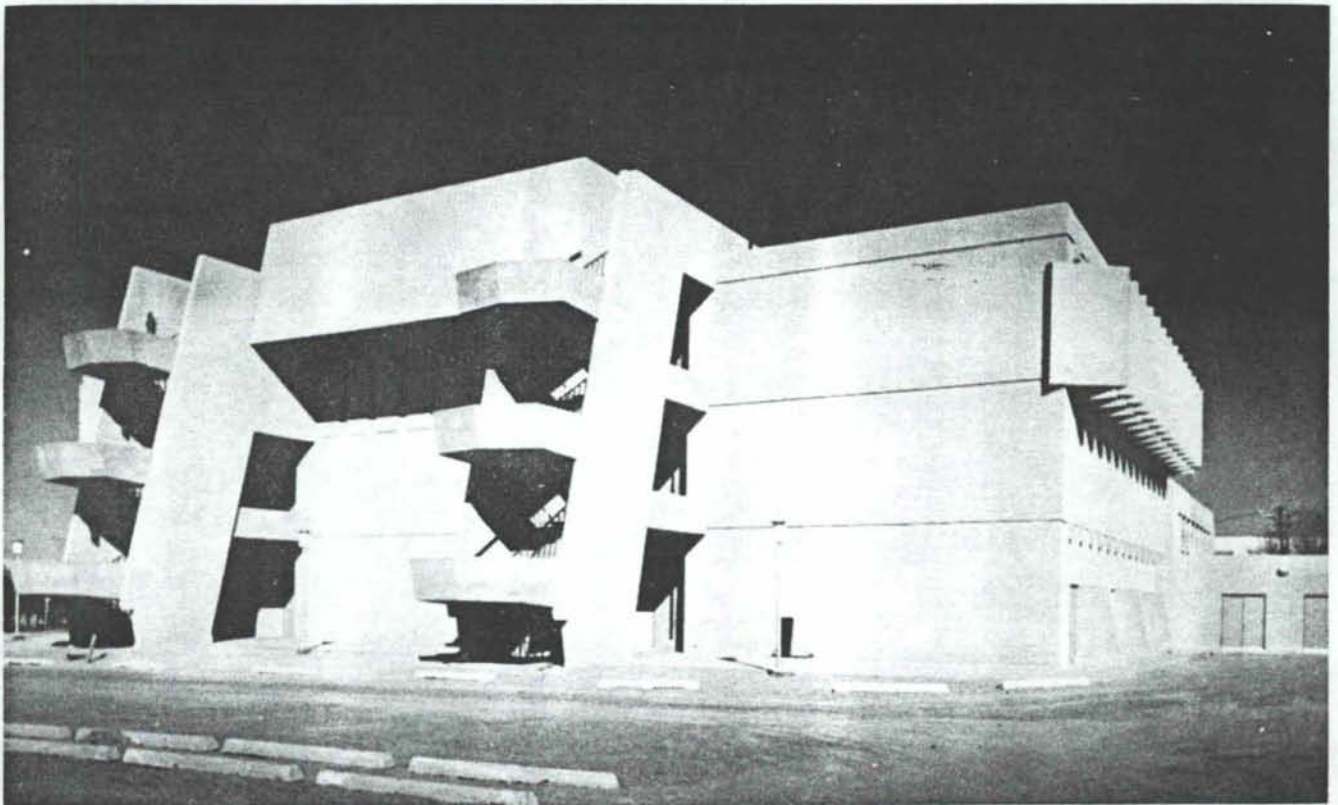
CONTRACTOR: Bradbury and Stamm

The addition to the Chemistry Building provides flexible teaching and research laboratories and offices for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty.

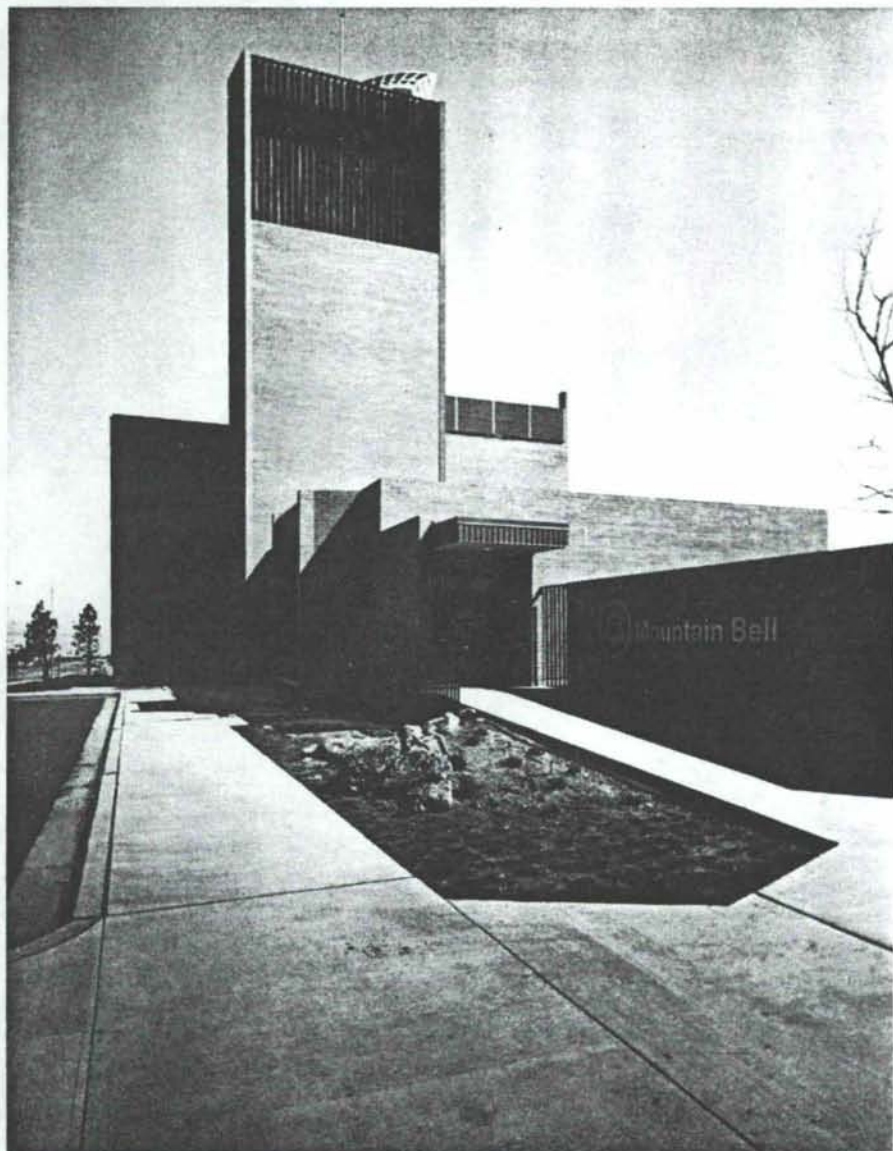
The addition adjoins the existing building on the south, and has three floors above ground and one below. Undergraduate teaching laboratories are located on the ground floor with direct access to the outside. Graduate research laboratories are placed on the top floor, and permanent work and study stations for graduate assistants project beyond the main mass of the building and have individual windows with views to northeast and northwest.

Most utilities are carried vertically and exposed through all levels. All heating and cooling equipment is placed on the roof and the equipment room is projected over the south wall of the main mass to provide fresh air supply as remote as possible from the fume hood exhausts on the north side of the building.

The stairways, which because of the connection to the existing building are used primarily for emergency exits, are projected beyond the building cube and left open. These stair towers are sloped outward toward the base to accommodate a major pedestrian walkway against the south side of the building.

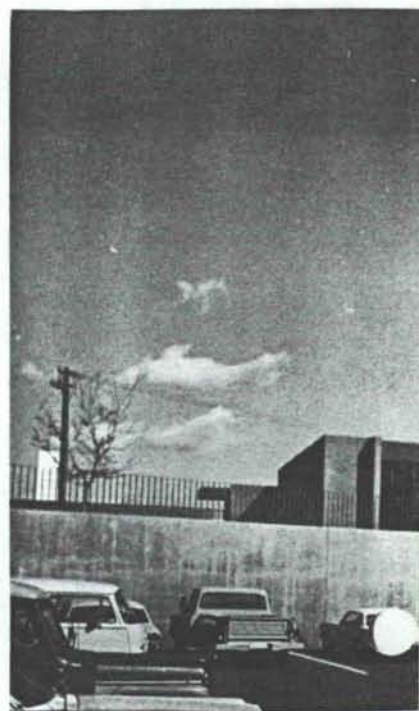


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Photographs by:
Gordon Ferguson



LOS ALAMOS MAIN EXCHANGE COMPLEX

Los Alamos, New Mexico

ARCHITECT: Ferguson, Stevens, Mallory and Pearl

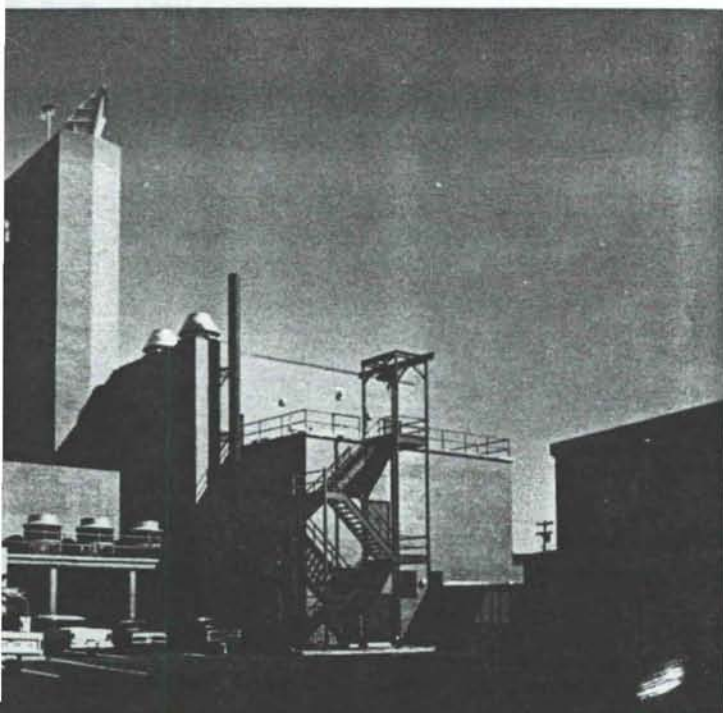
OWNER: Mountain Bell

CONTRACTOR: J. R. Brennand Construction Co., Inc.

The client wished its buildings to fit into, as well as compliment, the natural and cultural setting, and asked that special care be given to landscaping. The first studies of the functional volumes required by the program had something of the hardness and precipitousness of the mesa walls surrounding the area, and something of the precision of a mathematical formula. These traits were retained and developed. The dark buff brick was chosen because of its color relationship to the native rock, and because of the crispness of line and definition of form which it afforded.

The functions of the buildings are complex, and the volumes express these functions. The predominant vertical element contains the radio signal equipment, sixty feet above the main floor line and Trinity Drive. The primary elements of signal equipment are two cornucopia antennae, one of which is to be added later. Their tops must be entirely exposed, and they must be inspected and maintained from a work platform which is accessible by stairway. The tops of the brick end walls of the tower and the Cor-Ten steel screen cover some of the galvanized steel parts of the equipment, but an effort was made not to disguise but to clarify the function of sending and receiving radio signals as well as to architecturally contain the equipment.

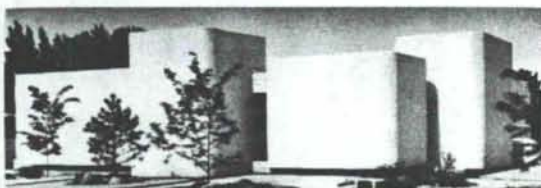
The major volume of the main building, on the east side of the tower, contains two floors of equipment to which the public has no direct relationship or access, including New Mexico's first telephone electronic switching center. As the equipment grows this portion of the building is required to expand, both horizontally and vertically. Mechanical and electrical equipment is housed in a floor below the main equipment volume which opens to the storage and maintenance yard on the south side of the main building, one full level below Trinity Drive.



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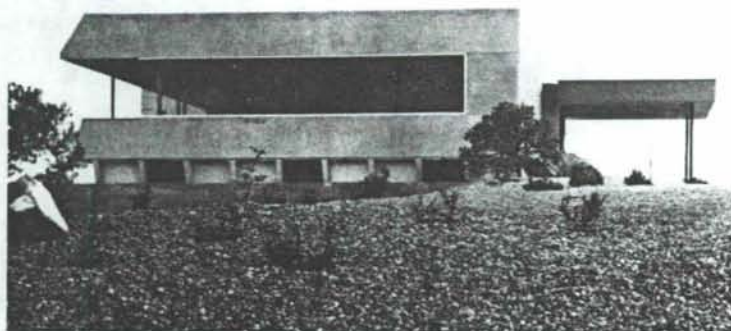
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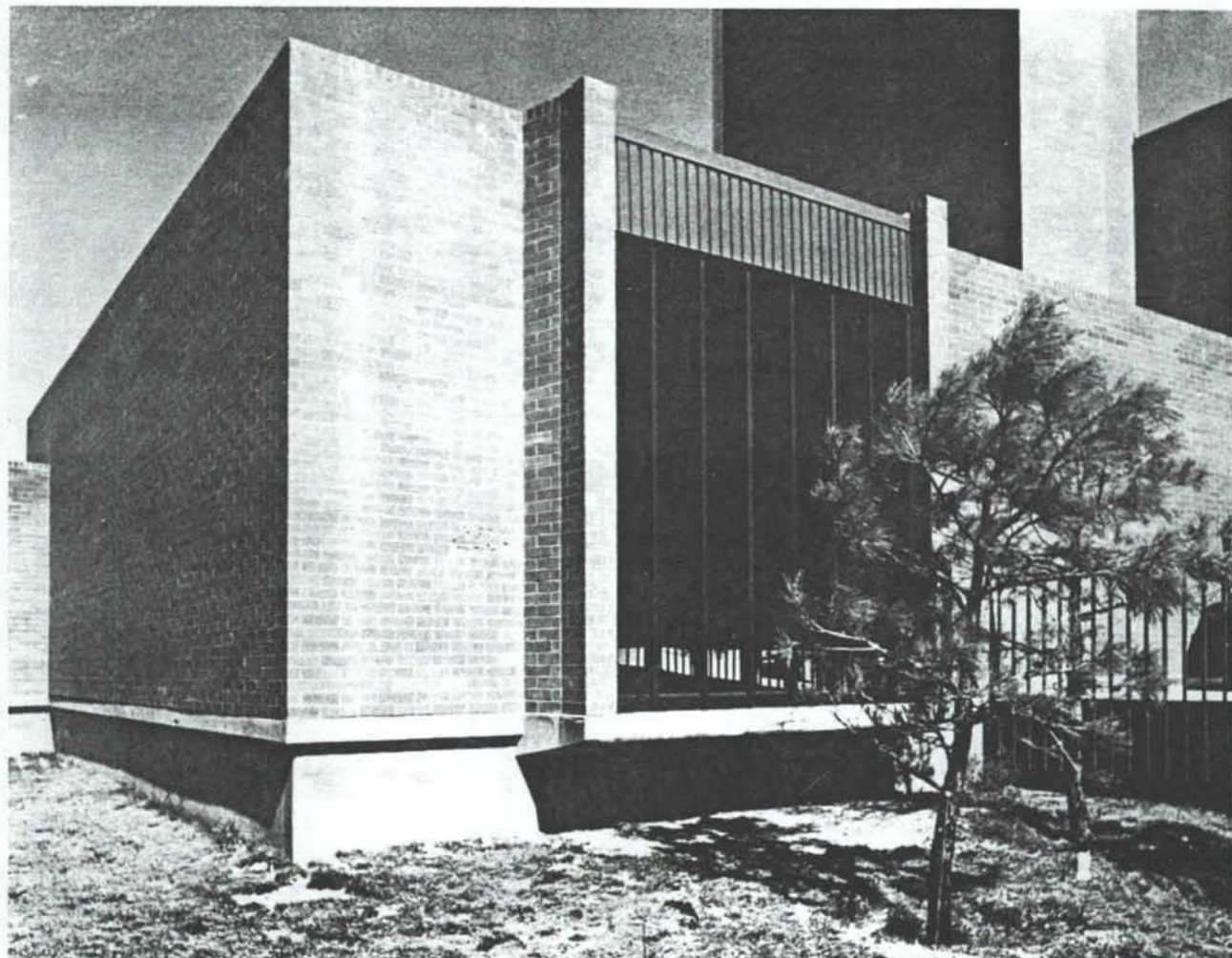
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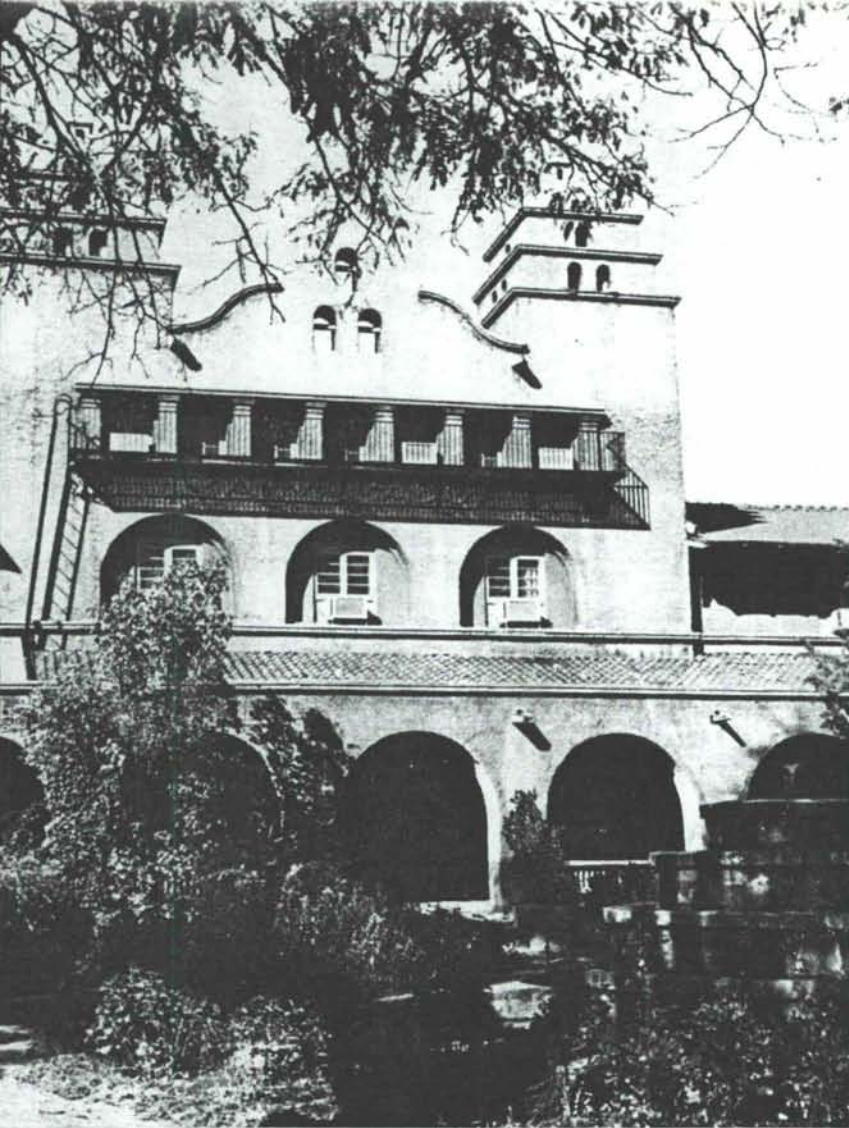
The Business Office is the only part of the building which is entered by the public. Because it is a small volume, subordinate to the tower and the equipment block, its prominence required emphasis. It is placed on the west side of the tower, with large windows in the north and south, and with the public entrance related directly to Trinity Drive and the customer parking area. The entrance is emphasized by the arrangement of walks and planting and by the long wall containing building identification.

A large vehicle storage and maintenance facility is housed in a separate structure on the south side of the main building, to which it is connected by an enclosed passage. Since this facility has no relation to the public and is visually dominated by vehicles and stored materials, it was

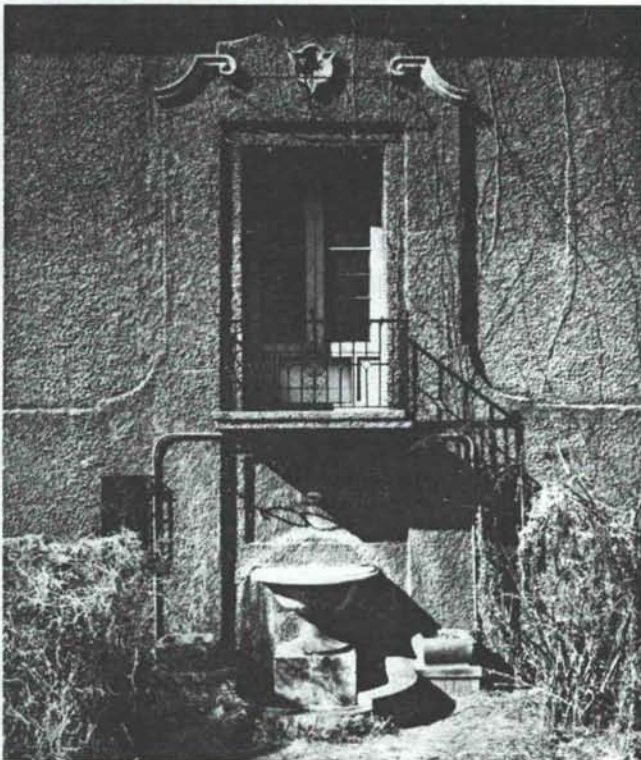
desirable to screen it from public view. Along with employee parking, it is located one full level below Trinity Drive. This change in elevation follows the natural fall of the land toward the canyon to the south. Walls, black iron railings, and planting complete the screening, and a visitor to the business office might be largely unaware of the complexity seen from the south.

A metal sculpture by John Tatschl covers a prominent wall in the business office opposite the main entrance. The sculpture is based upon the apparatus of modern communications technology, and is used to emphasize the kinship between the community of Los Alamos, renowned for its technological advancement, and this communication industry's most sophisticated entry into the electronic, computer-oriented world. —George Pearl





1) Photo: Jon Samuelson



2) National Park Service Photo By: Fred Mang, Jr.

The Alvarado Hotel

For well over a half century a traveler's first impression of the American Southwest was through one of the many Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad stations and the associated hotel and restaurant operated by the Fred Harvey organization. Here the eastern or midwestern traveler was drawn into the romantic world of the Spanish conquistador and equally unfamiliar world of the Pueblo and Navajo Indians. On alighting on the platform the visitor encountered not the usual neo-Roman or neo-Renaissance station so characteristic then of the eastern sections of the country, but instead he was faced with a low two or three story structure, almost domestic in character. He encountered no overpowering piers and columns, no dentils and wreaths, no putti or cupids, but rather he found before him a simple unpretentious stucco covered building, often enclosing small intimate gardens and court yards, with shaded loggias, textured brick and tile floors, broad fireplaces and wood beamed ceilings.

These structures seemed to fit so naturally and unostentatiously into their Southwestern environment that little conscious thought was given to them as rather remarkable examples of architecture — examples which not only personify our age, but which in many ways have made a notable contribution to the American architectural scene.

(NMA, July/August, 1962)

"In a burst of rhetoric, a flow of red carpet and the flow of myriad brilliant electric lights" the Alvarado Hotel opened on May 11, 1902. Local businessmen and civic leaders expected that the building of the hotel "would attract the wealthier classes to stop in Albuquerque on their travels to the West."¹

On January 2, 1970, the Alvarado Hotel closed its doors. On February 2, 1970 the wrecking crews began the removal of doors and windows as the first step toward final demolition. By March 15, 1970 the central section of the hotel crumbled under the relentless wreckers' ball. A small but valiant group of citizens staged a last ditch fight to save the Alvarado Hotel, but as too often happens, it was too late and too little supported.

Except for the valiant few it was apparent to this observer that the citizens of Albuquerque didn't really care. The City Commission itself appeared apathetic when on February 17, 1970 it deferred "indefinitely" a proposed historic zone ordinance for the Alvarado complex and

1. "Albuquerque Journal Democrat," May 11, 1902.

1902 - 1970

surrounding city blocks. On that date demolition had not drastically affected the central and most historically important section of the hotel structure. But the Commission was fearful that this ordinance might delay approval by the Federal government of the Urban Renewal Project, of which the blocks adjacent to the Alvarado and slated for inclusion within the proposed historic district, are a part.

Thus the Alvarado Hotel becomes a dusty memory.

Although the Alvarado Hotel and its adjacent railroad station have long been considered a vital part of any revitalization of downtown Albuquerque, no program to ensure the building's preservation was instituted. This inaction now seems incredible when one recalls the frequent "rumors"—always denied by railroad officials—that the hotel would be closed and the structure demolished. It should have been all too clear that time was running out and that the days of the building as a hotel were numbered. The structure was old and maintenance was high. The Alvarado was allowed to deteriorate. Highway motels were newer and flashier. Also the Santa Fe Railway and its hotel lessee, The Fred Harvey Company, have a long history of closing and then demolishing the chain of handsome railroad hotels and stations that once stretched across New Mexico and Arizona. After the 1968 sale of the La Fonda in Santa Fe, the Alvarado was the sole surviving active Fred Harvey hotel in New Mexico.

The final "rumor" began to circulate in early 1969. On February 3, 1969, the Albuquerque City Commission approved an application to transfer the Alvarado's liquor license to an indefinite Old Town site. Evidence was pointing toward the inevitable. Some few citizens became concerned, but the city fathers took no further action.

On May 23, 1969, the Alvarado Hotel and Railroad Station complex was placed on the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties and was nominated for inclusion on the National Registry of Historic Places.

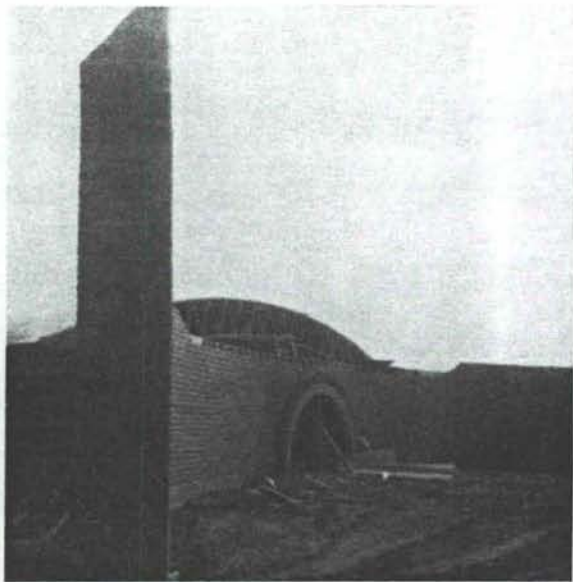
On June 3, 1969, the Alvarado management announced the closing of the coffee shop—more evidence, but no ad-



3) Photo: John P. Conron

4) Photo: John P. Conron





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mission from the Santa Fe Railway Company. The few citizens became alarmed and sought the involvement of the city officials, as it was evident that the city and railroad would, in the final analysis, have to be the ones to negotiate the transfer of the property to the city. Despite this, no effort was made by the city to initiate discussions with railroad officials. Indeed, concerned individuals were admonished not to rock the boat. The months passed.

Then came Friday, September 19, 1969. On that day John S. Reed, President of the Santa Fe Railway announced the closing of the hotel on January 1, 1970 and plans to remove the structure.

On the following Monday, Pete V. Domenici, Chairman of the Albuquerque City Commission, announced that the city would ask the railway to hold off the demolition of the hotel until it could be determined if the structure could fit into the downtown renewal plans. The Albuquerque Goals Committee had previously stressed the importance of preserving the Alvarado as "not only the heart and focus of railroad Albuquerque, but also an indispensable architectural source for the unique sense of place which Albuquerque has inherited."

On October 1st the State Planning Office addressed a letter to the President of the Santa Fe Railway Company in which it expressed concern for the future of the Alvarado Hotel. The letter pointed out the importance of the building to the historical heritage of New Mexico. In his reply, G. W. Cox, Vice President of the Railway stated:

"... that our engineers are firmly of the opinion that the building is too old to warrant remodelling or rehabilitation and while we plan to raze it, no time has been set for its demolition; neither have we decided what, if anything to do with the property after it has been cleared. We are open to suggestions, of course, and you may rest assured that future use of the property will be compatible with plans for redevelopment of downtown Albuquerque."

A detailed investigation of the hotel building by members of the Albuquerque Chapter, AIA, found the building to be structurally sound, although remodelling would be necessary to bring the building into conformance with present day fire codes.

From September through December members of independent and semi-official organizations including the Albuquerque Goals Committee, the Albuquerque Historical Society, the Albuquerque Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the New Mexico Chapter of the American Institute

of Interior Designers, worked to find ways of obtaining and preserving the Alvarado.

But it was not until December 29, 1969—just four days before the scheduled closing of the hotel—that the City Commission appointed the Alvarado Preservation Committee to attempt to save the building.

The Santa Fe Railway released its sale price to the City Committee, the price of \$1.5 million was a staggering blow, especially when an informal estimate a year before had valued the property at about \$600,000. This outrageous asking price was countered with a plea for more time and a suggestion that the railroad donate the hotel to the city.

A deadlock ensued. No money was immediately available for purchase; the railroad company refused to donate it.

In a last ditch effort to persuade the company to delay actual demolition of the structure, the Alvarado Preservation Committee called a public meeting, for the evening of February 4, 1970.

But from a city-wide population of over 350,000 people only 200 persons attended. The emotion-charged meeting culminated in a 10 p.m. march in front of the now windowless building. Petitions were signed, signs were painted and a few hearty survivors appeared for picketing duty the following morning—but too few, too late—too much apathy.

The Alvarado Hotel is now several piles of available used building material in a local wrecking yard.

John P. Conron

¡El Alvarado Esta Muerto!

5) Photo: Gordon Ferguson



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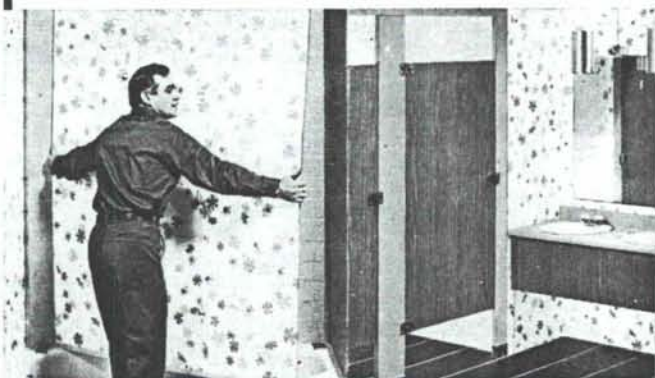


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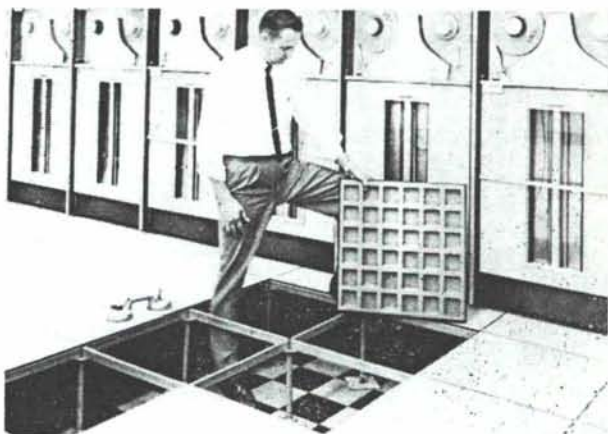
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