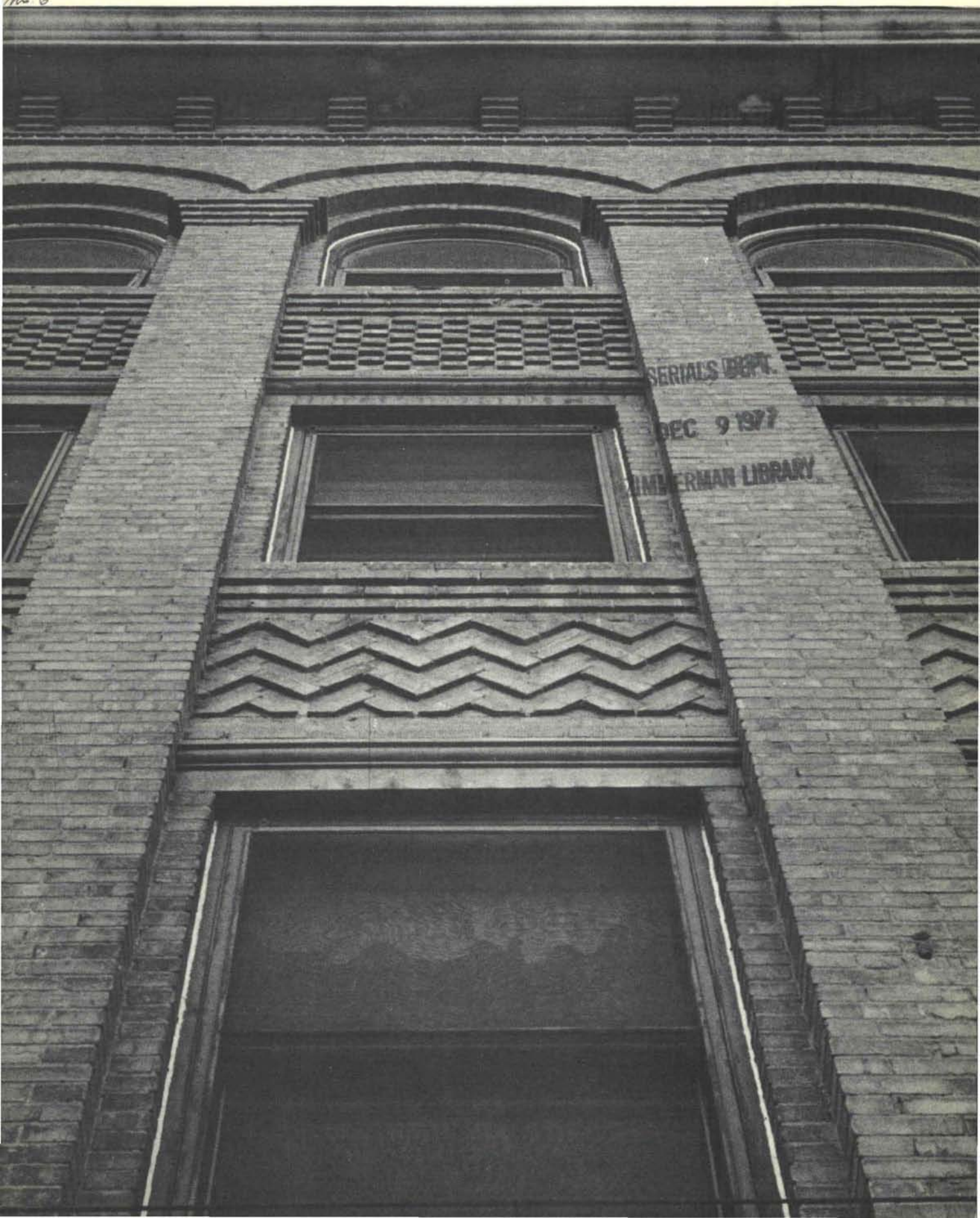


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# new mexico architecture

November-December 1977

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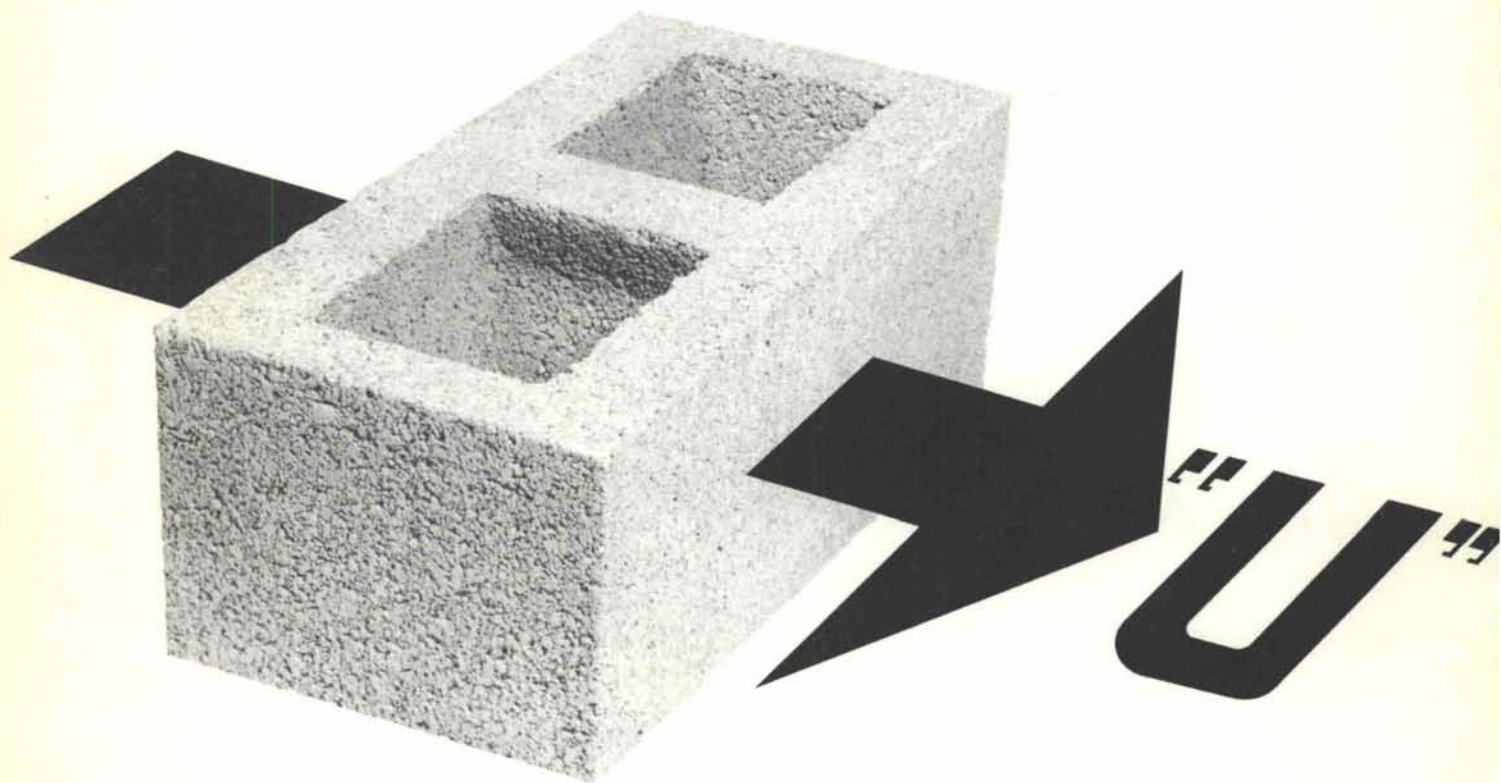
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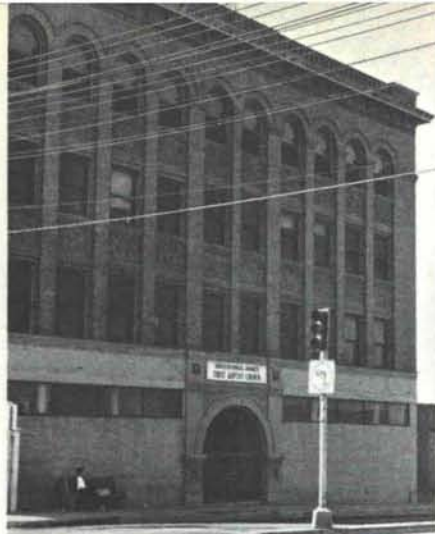
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## vol. 19 no. 6

### ON THE COVER:

Albuquerque's old Occidental Life Insurance Company Building, above and cover, at Central and Broadway, dates back to 1905, when the property was deeded to Joshua Reynolds, president of the First National Banks of Albuquerque and El Paso, and of the Occidental Life Insurance Company. While no building permits are on record, the structure was probably constructed shortly after the purchase. On completion of the panelled brick building, Occidental Life Insurance occupied offices on the third floor, leasing the remaining upper floors as office space and the ground store as a grocery and pharmacy. The building changed hands four times, with the same uses being maintained, before being purchased by the present owner, the First Baptist Church, in 1954, for use as an educational annex. At this time the ground floor was altered considerably.

The building has a striking sense of combined warmth and simplicity, especially compared to the sign-cluttered Venturian strip onto which it fronts. The structure is unique in Albuquerque as the only reflection of the Chicago Styles "elevator building" which became popular in the late 1800's. Initiated with the advent of the elevator, the "elevator building," forerunner of the modern skyscraper, was characterized by a simple masonry facade freed from the historical details that were governing much of the architecture of the period and by an increased height varying from five to ten stories (depending on the speed and safety of the elevator.)

The First Baptist Church is currently completing a new educational facility, adjoining their church building across the street from the Occidental building. The future of the Old Occidental Building after it's no longer needed for classrooms has not yet been decided, but demolition of the building to make way for a parking lot has been mentioned by church officials as a real possibility.

—Harriett Hall

# nma

nov-dec 1977 • new mexico architecture

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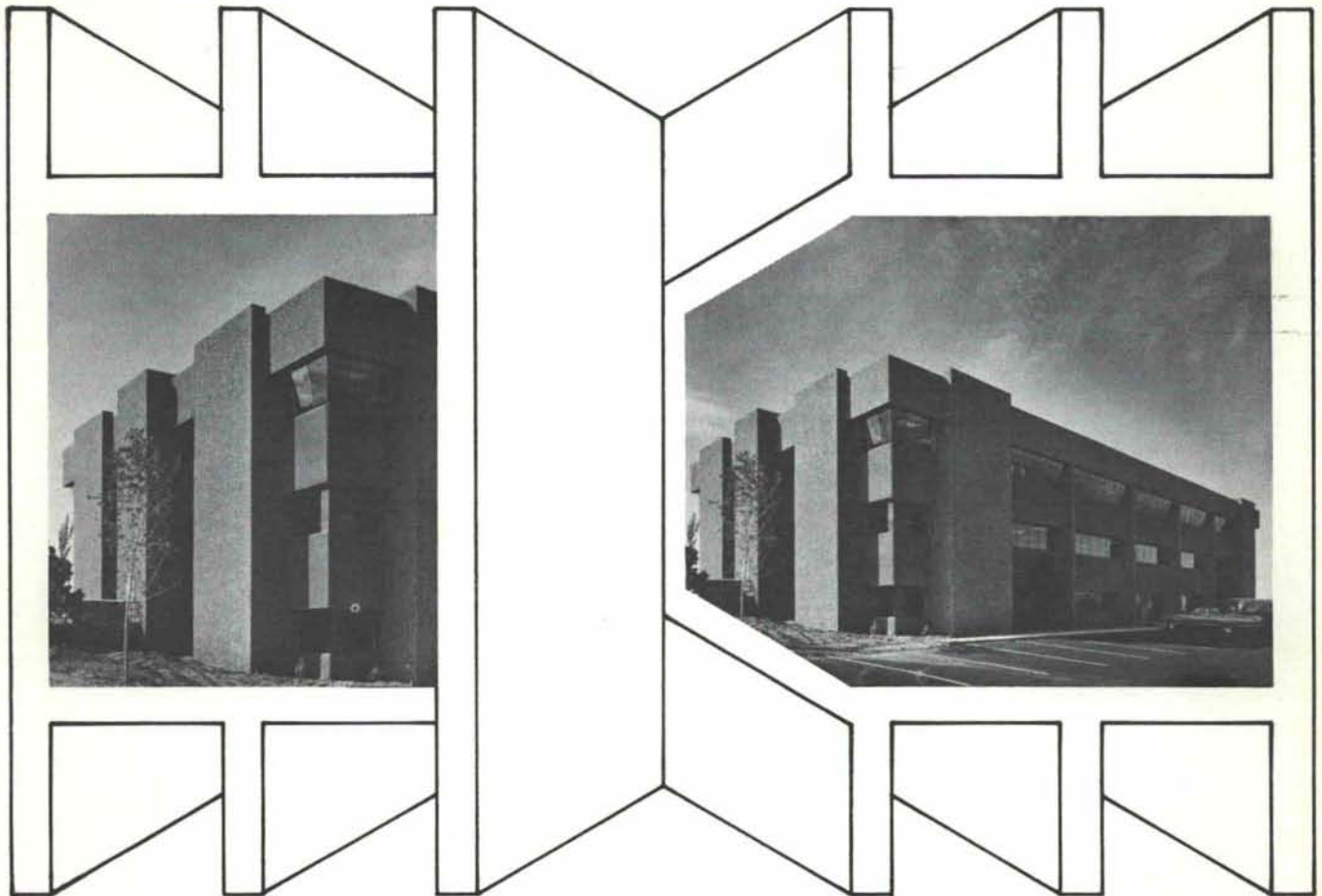
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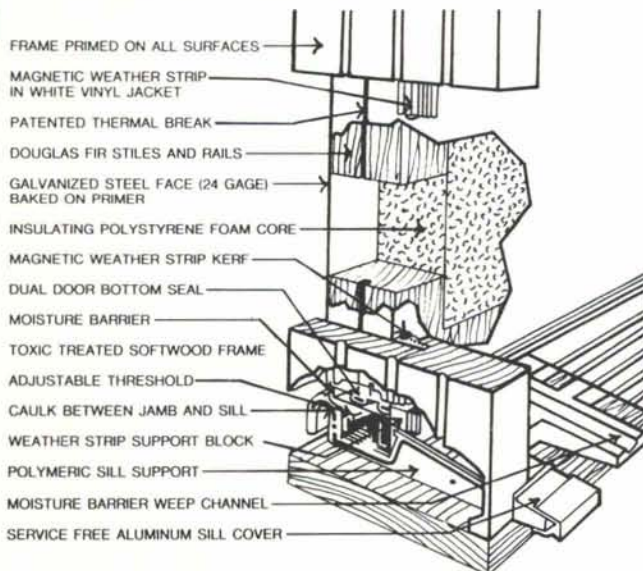
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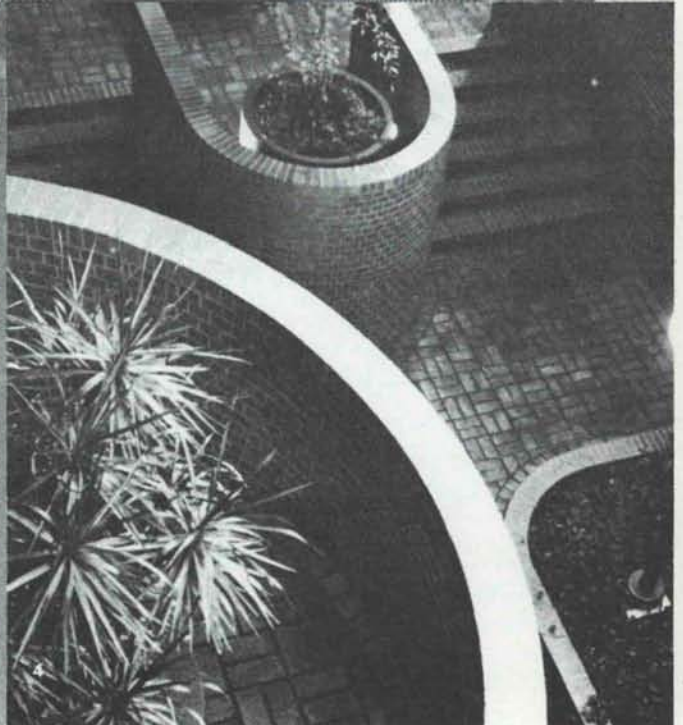
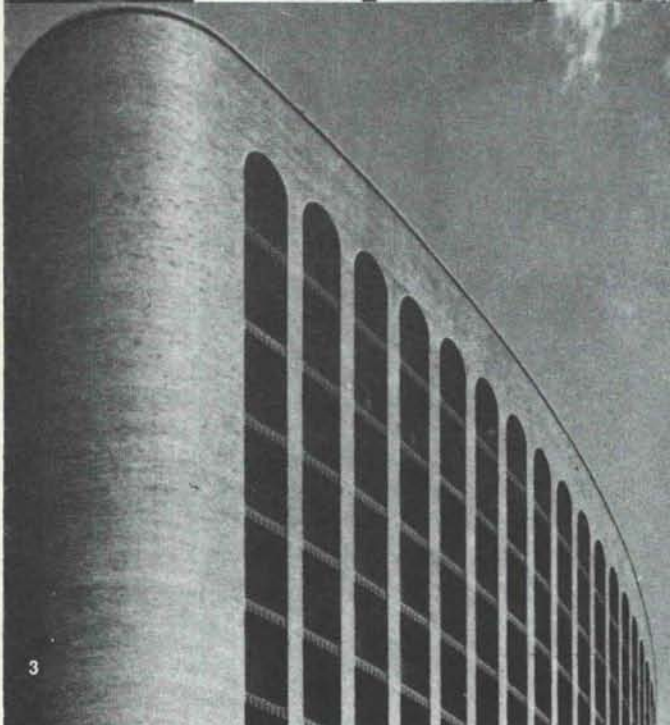
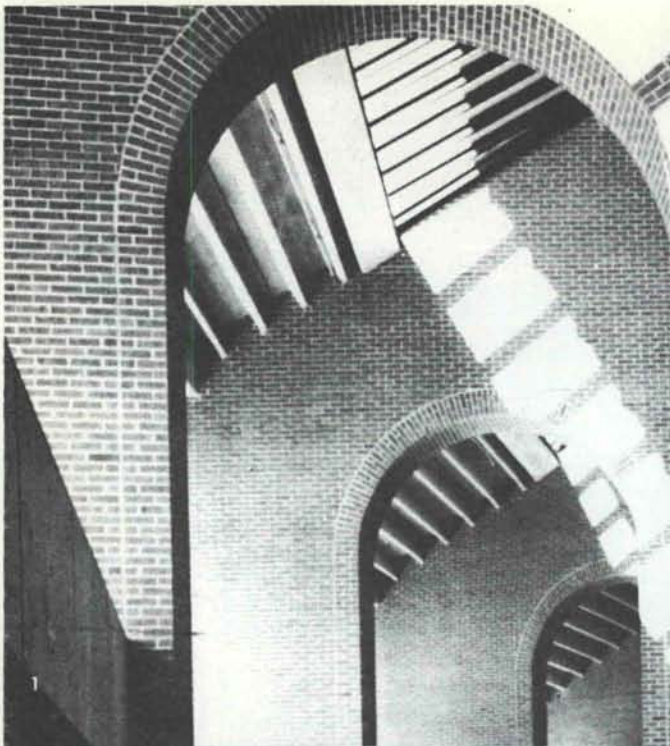
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1. Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia. Architects: Vincent G. Kling & Partners. Photo courtesy Brick Institute of America. 2. Southeastern Massachusetts University, Arts and Humanities Building, North Dartmouth. Associated Architects: Desmond & Lord, Inc., and Paul Rudolph. FAIA. Interior Consultant: Bill Bagnall Associates, Inc. 3. Public Service Alliance of Canada Building, Ottawa. Architects: Schoeler Heaton Harvor Menendez Associated Architects. Photo courtesy Brick Institute of America. 4. Executive Headquarters and Nassau Center Office, Hempstead Bank, Garden City, Long Island. Architects: Bentel & Bentel, AIA.

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## A GUIDE TO ARCHITECTURE IN LOS ANGELES AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

In this new publication David Gebhard and Robert Winter have vastly expanded their 1965 *Guide to the Architecture of Southern California*. The book is a guide "to the man-made structures, gardens, parks and spaces that compose the physical structure of the towns, cities and countryside of Southern California." The guide begins with the earliest Spanish mission and continues through to the projects "that will be substantially completed in 1976."

Preceded by a fine, concise 19 page introduction to the man-made physical environment of the

area, the guide documents hundreds of structures from Fresno on the north to the Mexican border on the south. The big, the little, the elegant, the quaint, the bizarre and the urbane are catalogued and occasionally pictured in this 728 page book.

It is certainly a must for the architectural student and historian; it is recommended for anyone with an interest in the development of our present environment. JPC

**A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California** by David Gebhard and Robert Winter. Published by Peregrine Smith, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah.

## FEDERAL DESIGN POLICY URGED

A new, six-point approach on the design of federal buildings was urged by the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

Leading its list, AIA proposed creation of a position in the President's office or a Presidential board for design quality in all federal architecture.

The proposed approach was developed by a special AIA task force on design quality in federal architecture and approved by the AIA board of directors.

"The benefits of a successful effort will be improved public access and utilization of government buildings, energy savings, and a legacy of design excellence," said John McGinty, president of the AIA.

AIA is in touch with the White House and other administration officials to work out such a plan.

"The Institute feels deeply that federal construction should exemplify both technological and architectural excellence," McGinty said. "I have written President Carter, asking for his support in meeting this challenge."

Along with the Presidential attention, the five other specific points in the AIA-proposed policy include:

—Procedures for selecting the

architect for each government facility should be given more careful attention. Agency regulations on architect/engineer selection should be stronger and public advisory panels' scope on such selections should be broadened.

—Seminars and educational programs should be provided for federal officials charged with architectural selection and implementation of construction programs.

"Our buildings—federal and federally subsidized—present an opportunity to speak to America," McGinty said. "They can encourage and reflect new social and technical values now emerging. They can symbolize conservation of energy and other resources of our nation. They can help the government keep in touch with the people."

To fulfill its big architecture responsibility, the federal government needs a new design emphasis at high governmental decision-making levels, AIA argues. "This emphasis should be establishment of a strong on-going commitment to good design of the facilities which house our nation's business," McGinty said.

**EDITORS NOTE:** For further information, contact John Heritage, American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Telephone 202-785-7263.

## TWO PUBLICATIONS FROM EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES LABORATORIES

We take for granted that the supply of 5-year-olds is diminishing and that elementary and secondary schools will have surplus classrooms, but not everyone has realized that in a few years from now the colleges will face a shortage of 18-year-old students. If the current decline in the birthrate continues, the U. S. Bureau of the Census predicts that the prime student age group (18 to 24) will increase from 27.7 million in 1975 to 29.3 million in 1980 and then plummet throughout the 1980s to a low of 23.6 million in 1995.

To avert the crisis of empty college halls, administrators are searching for new types of students and providing facilities to suit their needs. Two new publications from EFL record some of these activities and suggest broad principles for others to follow.

*The Neglected Majority: Facilities for Commuting Students* deals with students who do not live in college residences.

*Housing for New Types of Students* illustrates how the new constituencies living on campus require different arrangements of accommodations than traditional students.

Hundreds of examples are offered in both books, and most of them can be used without heavy capital costs. In fact many of the suggestions for improving life on campus can be effected with little or no cost.

Both books were developed from a project on facilities for higher education supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. *The Neglected Majority: Facilities for Commuting Students* and *Housing for New Types of Students* are \$4.00 each prepaid, 5½ x 8½, 76 pages. They are available from EFL, 850 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022.



# 1977 NEW MEXICO ARTS COMMISSION AWARDS

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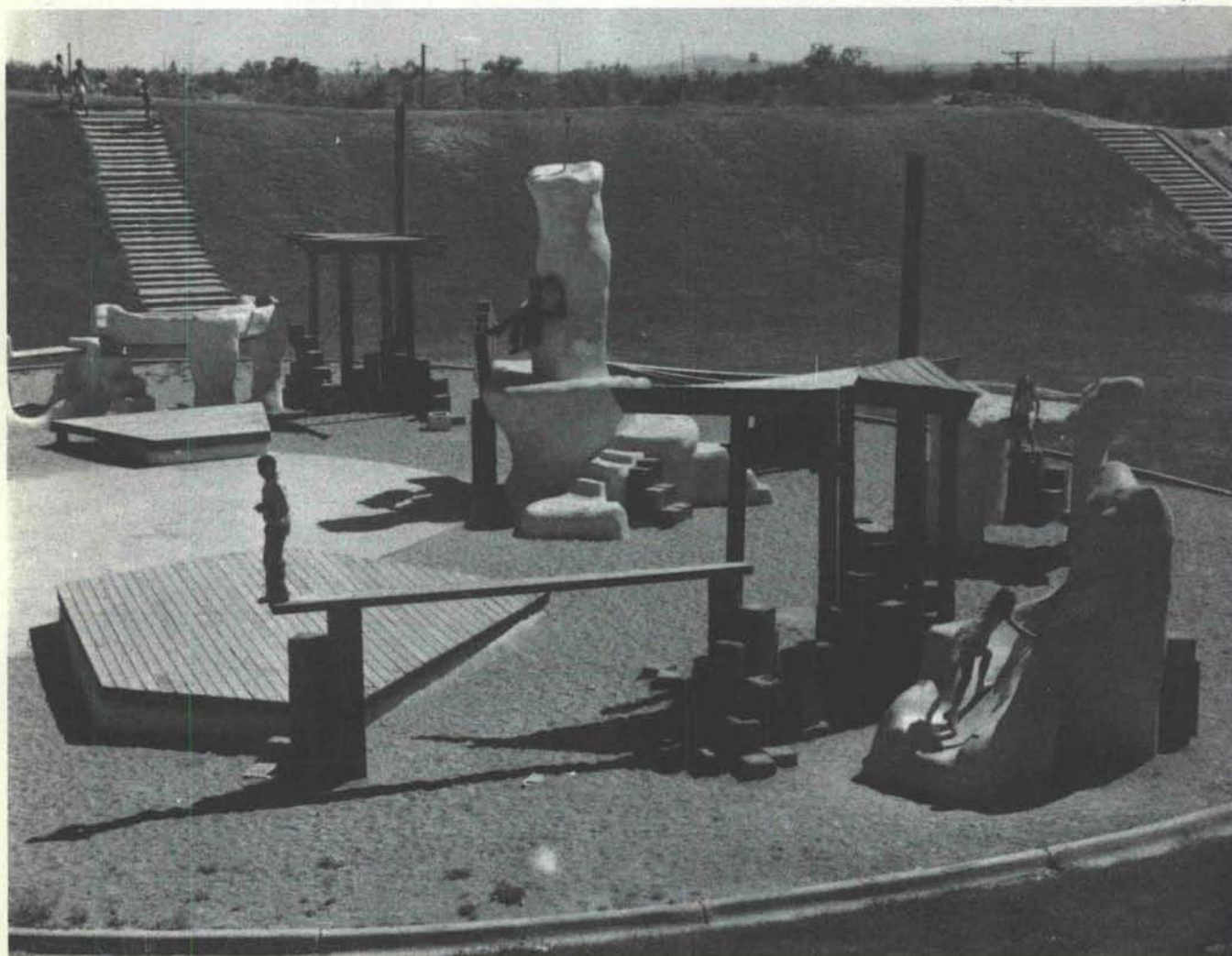
for her dedication to the Preservation and Documentation of Historic Buildings and Districts.

**For Excellence in the field of New Construction.**

**to: Julie Graham**

for her imaginative and inventive Play Environments for Children

*The Dennis Chavez Park Play Environment designed by Julie Graham (See also July-August 1977 NMA).*





# New & Old—a city mix

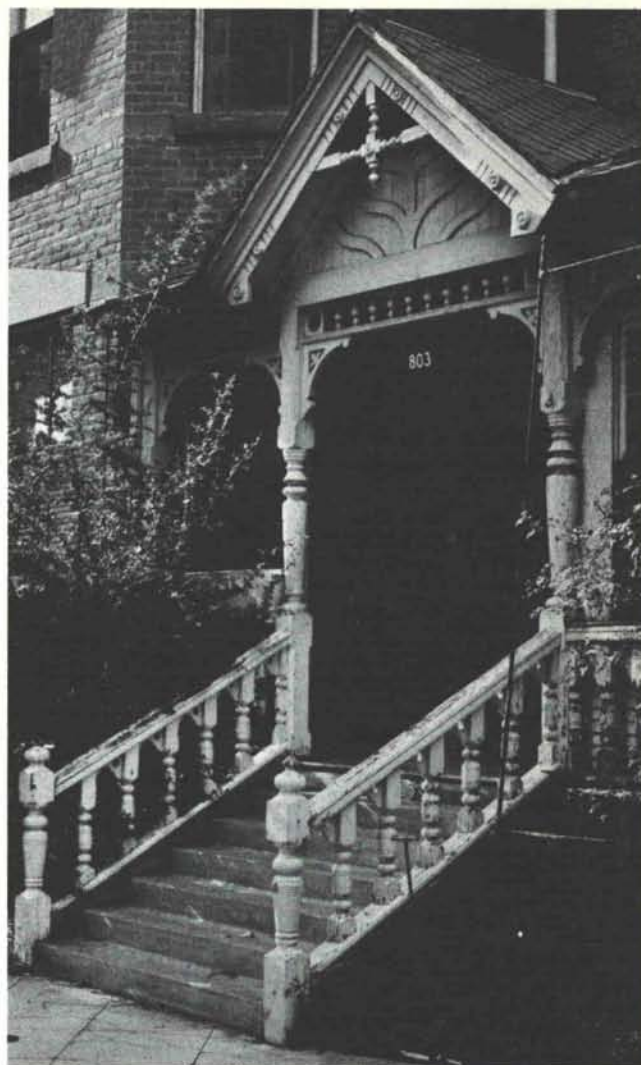
—by Susan Dewitt

A few weeks ago Ann McLelland, new president of the Huning Highland Neighborhood Association, and I were talking over a cup of downtown coffee about the needs of Huning Highland, Albuquerque's best Victorian Neighborhood. Our waitress listened for a while, then announced that we should just tear all those shabby old buildings down, because "they're no good, and no one would want to live in them." We argued a little, through rising blood pressure, and left grumpily, being glad that she will never want to live in our favorite houses.

There's more to it than that; though she works downtown, she will probably never want to live there. Downtown is, by its very nature, a mixture of new and old, of homes and offices and industry, of ethnic groups and income levels, all, at best, happily jumbled together with surprises possible at the turning of every corner. Good downtowns thrive on people, noise, excitement, turn-of-the-century storefronts and modern steel towers. They're not the place for everyone to live, but even our waitress would probably find herself spending more time there if Albuquerque's downtown came closer to fulfilling that urban promise.

Albuquerque's downtown is currently a most unpromising place. In spite of the impressive number of new buildings which have gone up there in the last few years, particularly in the area north of Central, almost all the major stores have now moved to shopping centers in the Heights. The area has a brief flurry of activity at noon, some life throughout office hours, and almost none after closing time. In the evenings, and on weekends, downtown is given over almost entirely to street people, who are a necessary and important part of the urban mix, but frightening to many people when their numbers aren't diluted by larger crowds. In urban living, people look for and enjoy the anonymity of crowds, the pleasures of watching other people without being identified and singled out, the liveliness and complexity of busy shops and offices and streets. In Albuquerque now, of course, as in many other cities, this liveliness is much more often found in the shopping centers than in the historic downtown, and the question that faces planners and builders is whether that movement away from the center can be reversed, and how.

The developers, planners, and architects who keep working to bring life back to downtown—and who should be thanked for not giving up on a difficult and complex job—know very well that we need more residents in the city center, and in the inner-city neighborhoods, to stop downtown from closing at 5:00 p.m. They know we need more night places, restaurants, theaters, more attractive shops, and a larger live-in population to bring life to the streets and restaurants.



*The old Lee House at 803 Copper, NW, was destroyed c. 1973, to make room for a parking lot!*

Those are goals everyone can agree on. But too often the planners and developers who shape the changes of downtown act as though they are trying to lure our waitress and others like her to live in downtown replicas of Montgomery Boulevard. People who like cities and choose to live in their centers know, by instinct, that we need the juxtapositions of new and old, of multiple uses, that make cities fun, exciting alternatives to the quieter life of towns or country. We don't need what we're too often offered: plans to tear down all the buildings in a block or a twelve-block area, and to replace them with all-of-a-kind, all-of-one-time buildings.

This is what has happened in the downtown area north of Central, and it's development of this sort that's proposed for the Alvarado Renewal District south of Central, and for various medium-density, two or three block apartment complexes in the inner city. Much of what has gone up, and will go up, is needed, important, sometimes exciting new space (First Plaza with its Galeria, for an example) that

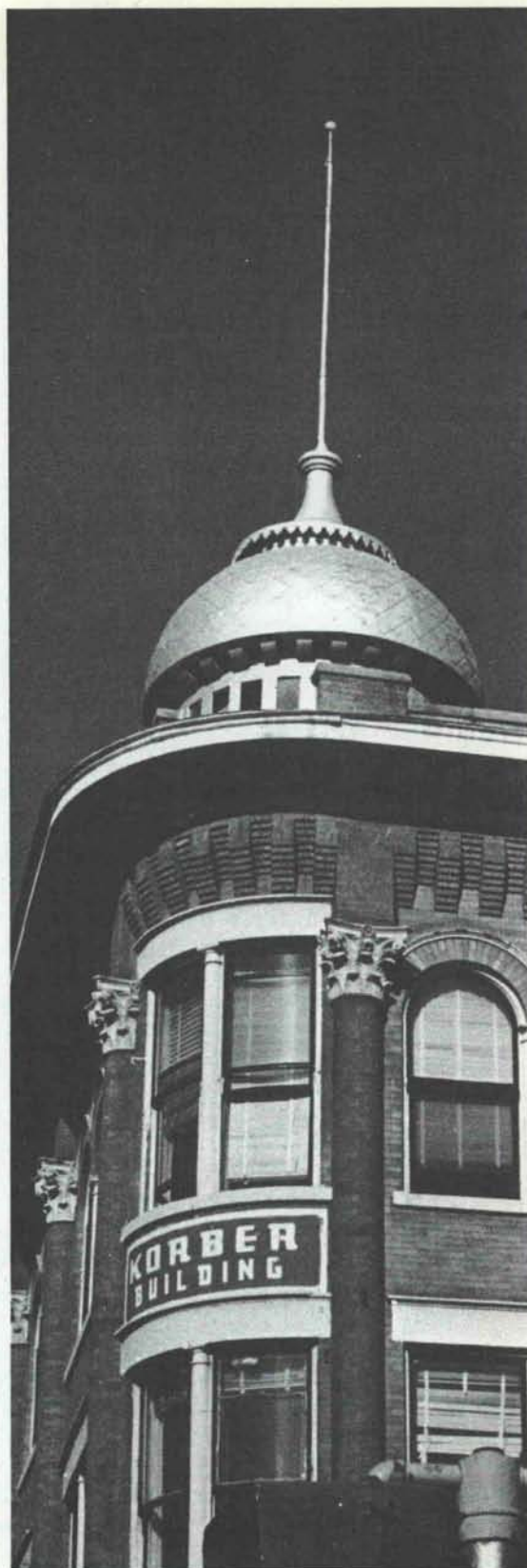


adds to our potential urbanity. But the effect of too much of it in the same place, too much of it built at the same time, can be the kind of deadness that's all too easy to find north of Central between 2nd and 6th. Huge buildings with blank walls and little relation to pedestrian scale follow one upon another; the sidewalks, with little eye-level relief, are hostile and uncomfortable. Parking lots between and around the buildings create more dead space, useful, but unbeautiful.

Blank facades, like those of the Mountain Bell building, the Convention Center, Albuquerque Inn suggest a siege mentality in the planners, a fear of street people and broken windows; they generate feelings of hostility, distance, even danger in passers-by. People who walk by these buildings walk by with their eyes straight ahead, or to the ground. Nothing tempts them to stray, sample, look around. And the open spaces, plazas or parking lots, can be equally uncomfortable if they are too open. The plaza of First Plaza is a good example; the building itself is very well liked, and well used, good to walk around. But the plaza, in spite of its elegant fountain, is a too large and threatening open space. All the trees in planters are grouped at one end. No shaded benches invite sitters and watchers. And pedestrians faced with this emptiness almost invariably hug the walls of the buildings as they pass through. Monumental scale, unless it's tempered with a sympathy and understanding for the way people move, look, react, is all too likely to keep people away from the streets, to have a deadening effect on everything around.

There are reasons why this has been the pattern of downtown development, and why this pattern continues to be proposed. Architects, planners, and developers like to work with large-scale sites. It's easier to raise big money than lots of parcels of small money. It's easier to design when you have two or three blocks—one at least—to spread your concept in, when you can develop your plan to stand by itself in splendid isolation. It's easier to persuade citizens to get involved with grand plans than with small ones: the results promise to be impressive. Monumental scale and design is part of our 20th century heritage. And surely, the thinking must go, with this much money and steel and intelligence and energy invested in downtown, surely people will want to move into the new apartment complexes, shop in the new shops, work in the new buildings.

Not necessarily. Our waitress, I suspect, will want to live and shop in a new and streamline neighborhood, far from the chaos and traffic and street people of the downtown she works in unless the nature of downtown is changed more fundamentally than new buildings and apartments and parks can change it. And the many people who have begun to move back into the old neighborhoods that surround the center, who have moved because they like the old buildings, the sense of human scale, the neighborhood intimacy of areas like Huning Highlands and the Downtown Neighborhood are likely to do their shopping and eat-



*The Korber Building, torn down in February, 1975.*

*Preservation can be a key and focus to the development of urban potential.....*





*The white terra cotta "Doge's Palace" was originally built for the Occidental Insurance Company in 1924 and rebuilt after a fire in 1933. Located on the corner of Coal and 3rd Streets, it has so far eluded the developers' wrecking whims.*

ing out and walking elsewhere, unless downtown becomes a more hospitable, more urban, environment.

The experience of cities like Seattle, San Francisco, Denver, show that it's possible to find people who choose to live downtown, and to lure people from the suburbs into downtown. In these cities, the lively downtown areas have been kept lively by mixes of old and new buildings, low income housing and luxury apartments, shops, and banks, and entertainment, and restaurants. Almost always, where an area has been given over to monolithic new buildings, where the new buildings have not been carefully mixed in with what's there already, the area has gone dead after the offices close, as Albuquerque's center does now.

Albuquerque's problem is a little different from that of those larger cities, but in a way which could offer more creative, easier solutions than they have found. Because historically Albuquerque was until recently a very small city, with a population of only 30,000 before World War II, its historic downtown is small scale and intimate, suited to a city of that size. Most of the older buildings are two, or at most

three, stories in height, cover a modest amount of acreage. The area of urban concentration is similarly small, a few blocks on each side of Central from 2nd to 6th streets. To populate a business district of this size, and keep it alive at off hours, you don't require huge numbers. Small numbers will do, and they could easily be attracted if downtown began to offer possibilities and atmosphere that the shopping centers and apartment complexes and new neighborhoods can't provide.

Preservation and creative use of downtown's older buildings can be a key and focus to the development of urban potential, because these buildings can teach architects, developers, planners, to think small and build small. Instead of isolating older buildings among new monuments built to the grand scale, builders could extend the intimate scale of old buildings in modest and imaginative new structures. Nothing wrong, of course, with the occasional necessary grand building. But it should have windows and displays and trees to attract pedestrians and give them something interesting to look at. And it should be surrounded by smaller street-scale shops and busi-





*Friendship Hall, First Methodist Episcopal Church built in 1904 on the corner of 3rd and Lead Streets . . . .*

*. . . . the KiMo Theater constructed 1926-27 on Central Avenue.*





nesses, the older ones that are already there. Instead of development money going to a single, mammoth 250-unit apartment complex, it could be channeled into the building of 25 small 10-unit apartment buildings, scattered among the rehabilitated Victorian houses and house-apartments, built at that comfortable scale.

Preservation can be the key to a change in downtown strategy because the older buildings, as well as suggesting a human scale, do offer something that no shopping center or apartment complex can: variety of time and texture, the sense of history, space easily convertible to any number of uses. Downtown has the buildings best known and loved in the city for their beauty, familiarity, scale: the KiMo Theater, the Doge's Palace of the Production Credit Building, the old Methodist and Episcopal Church buildings, the Plaza Hotel, the old Public Service Building at 5th and Central. No one proposes currently to tear down any of these focal landmarks for the city, but very few people have seen them as indicators of the kind of new buildings that could help downtown come alive.

They are useful indicators, I think. They are good to walk by and look at. They are lively and unintimidating buildings at the street level. They are often monuments to a person, or business, or ideal, but monuments on a small scale. They're eclectic, funny, sometimes beautiful, fun. So, potentially, are the many less well-known small buildings that house the small businesses which bring variety and life to downtown, like Maisel's wonderfully decorative store on Central, or the building at 3rd and Gold that houses such diverse enterprises as a watchmaker, the Back Street Restaurant, General Office Supply, and the Frank Hubbell Sheep and Cattle Co.

The interest that old buildings can generate for downtown is best shown by the recent passage of capital improvement bonds for the purchase, preservation, and remodeling of the KiMo Theater to serve as a performing arts center for the city. Despite the newness to Albuquerque of the idea of city support for the arts, the bond issue was voted in, largely, probably, because of the general fondness for the theater, and grandly decorated "Hopi Revival" picture palace that's the best expression of essential Albuquerque left after the destruction of the Alvarado and the Franciscan Hotel. Preservation of the KiMo could become a key to new vitality on Central Avenue, not only because the theater should draw people downtown at night, but also since it may encourage planners and developers to take a new look at Central, at the often attractive older buildings hidden behind modern storefronts and the chaotic sidewalk blight of signs.

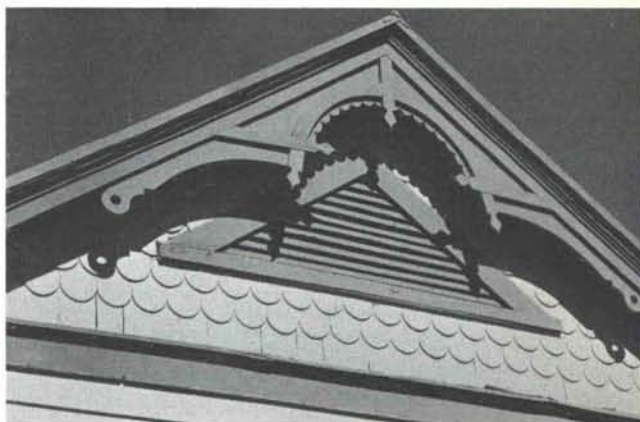
Much recent preservation energy in other towns and cities has gone into the revitalization and rediscovery of Main Streets by restoring the dignity of the older buildings, stripping away their modern false fronts, creating unified and appropriate signage, adding such amenities as brick sidewalks, street trees,

and benches. It could work in Albuquerque as well, to recover for downtown the variety of texture and scale that it once had, to attract new small businesses to the now almost deserted second stories of Central buildings, to give pedestrians something to look at, enjoy, stop in, and ultimately to attract enough people to give us all the pleasure of downtown people watching once again.

New buildings and modern architecture belong among these old and friendly downtown structures as they do in the old residential neighborhoods around downtown. Historic preservation of any of these areas as districts where old buildings couldn't be touched, and new buildings had to be Victorian, wouldn't make sense, would be as deadening in its effect as the destruction of our downtown scale north of Central has been.

What's needed is inventive new buildings, and sources of money to give old buildings a new lease on life, to restore grace to the often shabby facades of Central Avenue, to bring back trees and benches and windows and the human scale. Planning is too often a humorless affair, thriving on the grandiose, on newness as a solution. But a sense of perspective, another name for a sense of humor, could work in small ways to restore to downtown and its neighborhoods the fun, openness, and vitality that can come in creative mixes of new and old, home and store and apartment and business, young and old, rich and poor. That kind of downtown would be a real alternative to the shopping centers of the Heights; it might even be so much fun that our waitress, who saw no use in old buildings, would begin to find out what they're good for.

—Susan DeWitt



*Susan Dewitt, recipient of the 1977 N. M. Arts Commission Award, is the administrative coordinator, Historic Landmark Survey of Albuquerque and co-editor of La Confluencia, a quarterly magazine focusing on southwest life and culture. Susan received her PhD in English Literature from the University of the West, Seattle; she taught at UNM for eight years.*



# Cosmetic Aspects of Historic Preservation

— by James Marston Fitch

Chapter from a forthcoming book, *The Past in the Future: Retrieval and Recycling of the Historical Environment*, by James Marston Fitch. The book, published by Oxford University Press, is due in the spring.

## *Conservation of Architectural Polychromy*

All buildings, like all material objects, have color. But the term architectural polychromy applies to that cosmetic aspect of the building in which colors are manipulated according to preconceived systems, for specific esthetic ends. Such polychromy is achieved by two means: (1) the physical structure and integral pigmentation of the building materials themselves—e.g., the grain and color of wood, the veining of marble, the monochrome of slate or cast iron; (2) the colors, patterns and textures of applied membranes—e.g., wallpapers, frescoes, paints and stuccoes. Polychromies based on integral pigmentation are usually thought of as being more durable than applied membranes like paints. In a sense this is true, since the characteristic cellular structure of wood or crystalline structure of marble is three dimensionally continuous. But from a cosmetic point of view, the exposed surface of an integrally-colored material is quite as vulnerable to attrition as any applied membrane. Thus coal smoke with a high sulfur content is quite as hostile to marble or limestone as to painted metal or stucco. The principle difference is that the process of attrition is more easily reversed in three-dimensional pigmentation than two-dimensional membranes. Tarnished metal can be burnished, marble polished, wood sanded to restore its original: applied membranes ordinarily have to be replaced.

In any case, all surfaces everywhere are subject to attack from the same environmental forces—physical, chemical, mechanical. Heat and cold; moisture and dryness; sunlight and darkness; gravity, wind pressure and vibration—all are constantly at work. These forces, in turn, determine the nature and scope of biological attrition from animals, insects, plants and fungi. Thus the ammoniac feces of Venetian pigeons combine with salts and gases of the Venetian atmosphere to produce acute degradation of Venetian marbles. Thus, too, it has been found that the deterioration of old stained glass in English churches is a function of the microclimate generated by its orientation. Glasses in north-facing windows will have mosses, lichens and fungi which cannot survive on the south; but southern and western glass will be subjected to much greater thermal and photo-chemical stress than those in the shade. Thus the condition of different windows in the same church may be radically different, demanding radically different therapies.

In architectural terms, this environmental attrition is expressed in terms of soiling, fading, rusting and discoloration; cracking, flaking and erosion; efflorescence and incrustation from precipitated salts. These

forces interact to cause a bewildering array of pathologies which cannot be diagnosed, much less treated, without a fundamental knowledge of the processes involved. This is a field in historic preservation which is just beginning to be placed on a scientific basis. Ironically, the conservation of works of art—i.e., of movable artifacts displayed in the controlled climate of the museum—is much more advanced than architectural conservation. Preservation architects have much to learn from this allied field of activity, as is clear in the published proceedings of Williamsburg Conference of 1972.

There are philosophical as well as methodological problems to be faced in the restoration of old polychromatic systems. The very concept is much more high structured in upper class, urbane and monumental architecture than in folk or vernacular buildings. Either extrinsically (as in Gothic wall paintings and stained glass) or intrinsically (as in Renaissance use of exotic veneers in marble and wood), color plays a decisive role in the iconographic and symbolic function of the building. Across time, these polychromatic systems have become dimmed, soiled or faded, acquiring patinas from burning incense, candles and fireplaces. Thus by slow and imperceptible degrees, the Gothic church was converted from a glowing, light-filled vessel of pinkish-beige Caen stone or pearly white limestone, ablaze with gilt and color, into the dark cavernous voids we know today. By the same token, taste accommodated itself to these altered chromatic values so that today the average tourist assumes that these churches were "always that way." One needs only to see the recently cleaned interiors of York Minster or Westminster Abbey to realize how dazzling different were the esthetic ambitions of the original architects and prelates who built them.

In the light of current archaeological and laboratory research, it is now apparent that we have consistently underestimated the brilliance, even stridency, of the coloration of the architecture and decoration of the past. The Renaissance assumed that Greek architecture and sculpture had always been a pure chaste white. Even as late as the 1850's sculptors like Hiram Powers were astonished at the growing evidence that, on the contrary, they had been consistently polychromed. Recent archaeology has unearthed evidence that Periclean taste in color was actually garish. There are sculptures in the Acropolis Museum in Athens whose painted surfaces are very close to the painted figures on a circus carousel: chalmys in emerald, mammary glands tinted pink, mustaches and pubic hair painted jet black.

We know that Eighteenth and Nineteenth century polychromy, especially of interiors, was much more brilliant than had been universally assumed. The first basic research into American paint colors was carried on at Colonial Williamsburg. This led to



the formulation c. 1940 of a palette of colors which were accepted for decades as objectively valid for Eighteenth Century architecture. Subsequent research, employing much more sophisticated methods of chemical and optical analysis, has shown this palette to be fundamentally inaccurate. The original colors were brighter, harsher, more intense; the decorative color schemes much less bland and muted than had been assumed. (The recently restored polychromy of the great Adams rooms at Syon House near London and the reception rooms of the Otis House in Boston are both based on these new research techniques. The results are startlingly different from what would have been assumed only a decade ago to have been an accurate restoration.

### *Polychromatic Consequences of Structural Intervention*

It can well be argued that in polychromy, as in other areas of preservation, the wisest policy is the most conservative—i.e., the least done, the better. That intervention which is most easily reversed is not to intervene in the first place. This has been the experience of art conservators, especially in the past few decades, because of the rapid evolution of scientific methods of research, analysis and treatment. Unfortunately, however, it is often not possible to leave the polychromed architectural surface undisturbed. Any of a number of situations might compel therapeutic intervention. If the subject is a wall painting or fresco, it might be threatened either by processes at work in the structural fabric behind it or by destructive environmental factors attacking from the outside or—most commonly—a mix of both. This is the case with many of the frescoes in Italy where the only way to save the work of art is to detach it from its base and remount it on a new, free-standing backing which is chemically inert and dimensionally stable. In such cases, cleaning the fresco will be an essential prelude to diagnosis and treatment.

If orthodox restoration to some fixed historical date is called for, then later decorative surfaces will certainly be disturbed. Very often, as in archaeology, one layer will have to be peeled away to discover what lies beneath it. In old buildings this can lead to very important discoveries. Thus, in the process of restoration of the royal palace of Wilanov near Warsaw, some of the state rooms were found to have as many as seven complete wall paintings superimposed on one another. Again, in what seemed to be a routine investigation of floor and ceiling construction in the palace in Prague, some exploratory probes were made in the baroque plaster ceilings. (These ceilings had been installed in the Eighteenth Century as a fire-deterrent in accordance with the decree of Maria Theresa). Behind these plaster surfaces were discovered some twenty handsome Renaissance ceilings consisting of stencilled beams which in turn carried some 2100 painted wooden panels, no two of them alike. The plaster had, ironically, kept them in perfect condition. Thus, what had begun as

a routine structural probe led to a discovery of such magnitude that plans for the adaptive use of the palace had to be radically revised. A similar discovery, though of smaller scale, occurred in a house in Newport, R. I. There in the process of cleaning the wood-panelled walls of the dining room, an extraordinary painting in the Chinese style was discovered on the plaster walls behind the panels. Since both panelling and paintings were original and excellent examples of their kind it was decided to hinge the panels accordion fashion, so that both surfaces are accessible for inspection and display.

Finally, in old and complex buildings, the very first step in preparing a long-range program of preservation will be a detailed visual examination of the entire fabric, indoors and out. Such an examination will require the removal of soot, efflorescence and rust as well as clinging vines and mosses. This will require the erection of scaffolding, in itself an expensive operation, and dictates that corollary operations such as cleaning should take place at the same time. Thus, even if no signs of structural failure are uncovered, there will be a perceptible alteration of the cosmetic aspect. If, on the contrary, serious structural weaknesses are discovered, then the visual traces of intervention will be correspondingly severe. Examination of the huge tower over the Crossing at

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### **The intervention which is most easily reversed is not to intervene in the first place.**

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York Minster revealed that the entire masonry mass had to be consolidated. This meant drilling of hundreds of holes on 3 ft. centers and the injection of gallons of grout. Decayed stones had to be replaced, traces of drilling and injection had to be removed, all mortar joints had to be repointed. Under circumstances such as these, the architect had no choice but to leave the entire massive tower as clean as the day it was finished. The results are astonishing—never have the original intentions of the Gothic architect been more splendidly displayed.

There are specialized cases of preservation in the fields of science and technology where immaculate cleanliness and/or perfect maintenance would be a *sine qua non* of the curatorial function. Under such a heading would fall scientific exhibits such as the observatory at Greenwich in London, recently reconstructed and re-equipped with great care to recreate the Seventeenth Century conditions of its founding. To replicate such an atmosphere, the old equipment is carefully maintained: lenses are polished, metal parts kept rust-free and shining, all moving parts oiled. An example of what happens if such curatorial standards are *not* observed is to be found in the Edison Laboratories in East Orange, N.J. This complex, now under the care of the National Park Service, purports to maintain Edison's personal laboratory in exactly the condition it was on the last day that Edison used it in 1932. Unfortunately, it falls



far short of this goal. Not only is the housekeeping routine; even more importantly, the scientific equipment then in use is dusty and tarnished. Retorts and beakers are full of anonymous dessicated materials which contradict the idea of Edison's carefully controlled scientific experiments. (He was actually working on developing new sources of rubber at the time of his death). In its present state, the laboratory fails in its central purpose—that of giving a vivid picture of this careful and methodical researcher at work. In preserving for posterity a record of this sort of activity we are obviously only beginning to understand that a whole new level of curatorial expertise is required.

All the above suggests the complexity, philosophical as well as methodological, of intervention in polychromatic systems. It also suggests the hazards of subjective esthetically-based decisions before all the facts are in.

J. M. F.



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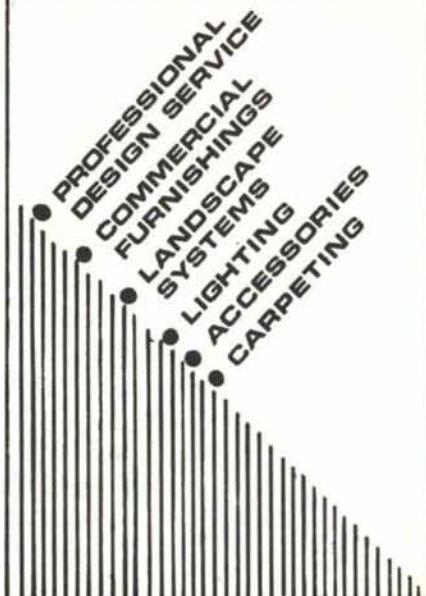
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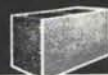
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