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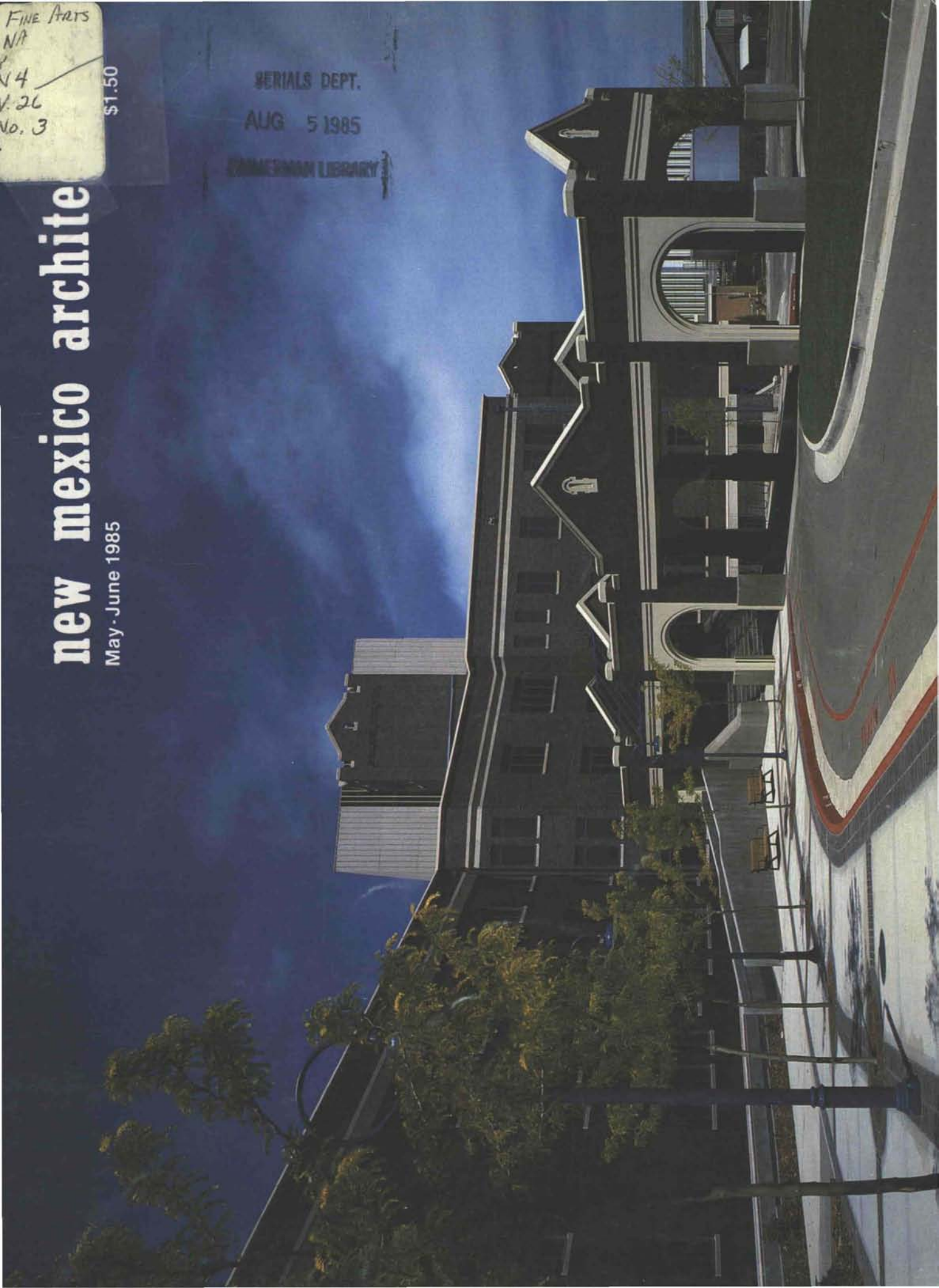
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RIVER OVERLOOK

• vol. 26 no 3 •

may-june 1985 • new mexico architecture

In this issue:

We complete the two part story of R/UDAT in New Mexico with a report on the R/UDAT team's visit to Carlsbad.

In addition this issue details the past history of St. Joseph Hospital in Albuquerque and reports on the new life that the old building has been renovated to serve. The 1930 building remains a vital part of the St. Joseph Hospital complex.

□ □ □

Coming in the July/August issue of *New Mexico Architecture* is a story on the work completed last year at the Rio Grande Zoo in Albuquerque.

□ □ □

The color cover photograph of St. Joseph Hospital, taken by photographer Dick Kent, has been donated by Flatow, Moore, Bryan & Associates, Architects and the Jaynes Corporation, General Contractors.

□ □ □

And lastly a correction. The telephone number for Kirk Gittings, the photographer for the cover of the March/April issue of *NMA*, listed in his advertisement is wrong!! It correctly is: (505) 344-5436.

JPC

nma

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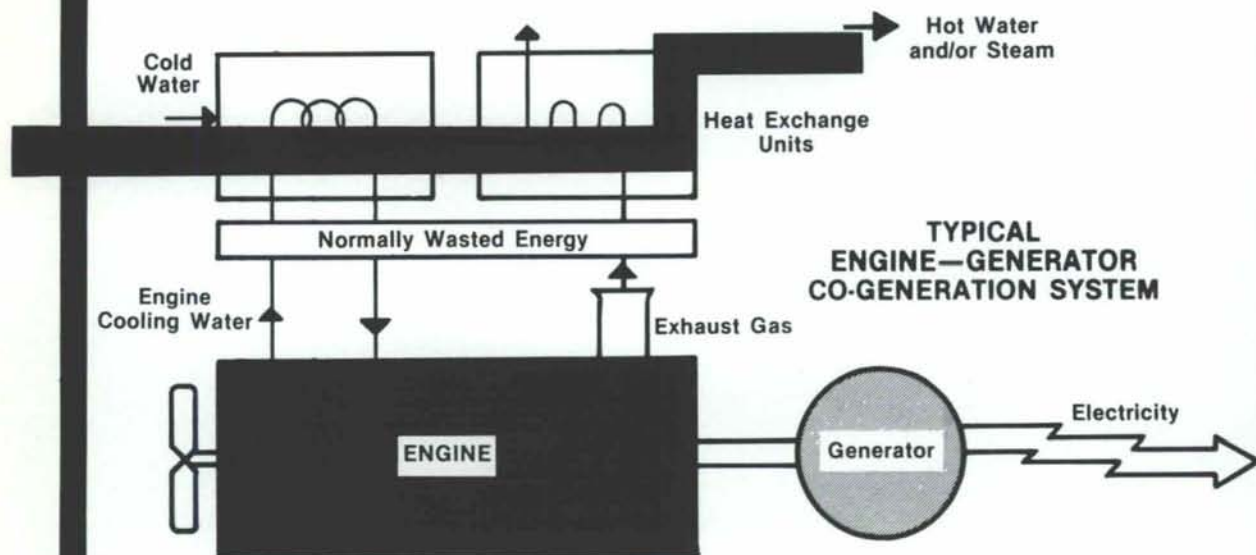
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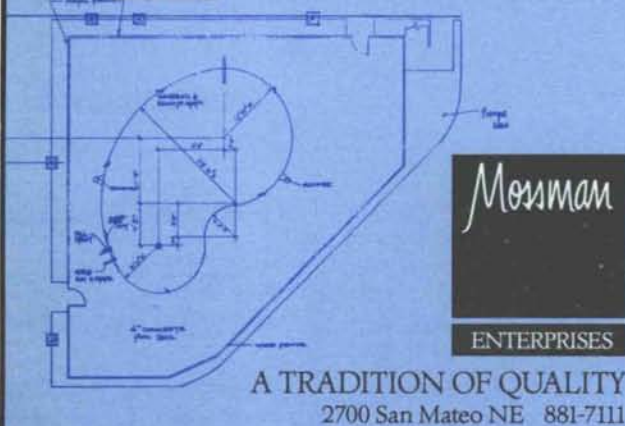
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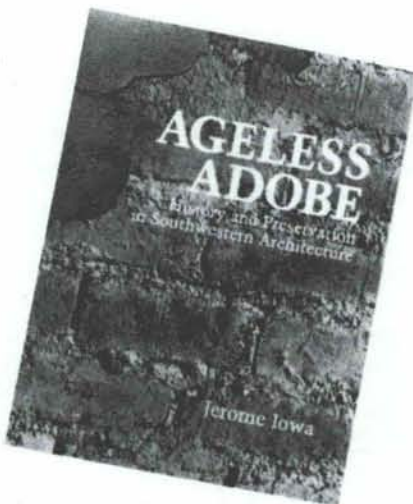
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PUEBLO DECO - THE ART DECO ARCHITECTURE OF THE SOUTHWEST

Marcus Whiffen and Carla Breeze

Photographs by Carla Breeze

University of New Mexico Press

Albuquerque, 1984

Reviewed by John P. Conron, FAIA

A small, but well researched, written and printed book addresses the southwest's unique contribution to the Art Deco architecture of early twentieth century America. Marcus Whiffen and Carla Breeze have given us a concise look at a short but important era in the ever changing, onrushing history of architecture. Originally termed Modernistic, the Art Deco style was popular throughout the United States in the 1920's and 1930's. Unlike its contemporary movement, the unadorned International Style, Art Deco was most emphatically a style making much use of ornament.

The architects of the southwest localized the style by the use of Pueblo Indian building forms and massing, and embellished their designs with the use of Indian design motifs taken from pottery, jewelry, textiles and baskets. Their successes have become known as Pueblo Deco, an apt title.

The book describes and illustrates with drawings and fine color photography twenty-seven buildings located in Arizona, New Mexico and west Texas. While not intended as a comprehensive catalogue of Pueblo and Art Deco buildings, it does emphasize the historic importance of the style and these buildings to our architectural heritage. It points out the need for their preservation as a part of our too fast disappearing historic architectural patrimony.

If there is a fault with the book, and it has nothing to do with Pueblo Deco, it is the broad use of a narrow term. Adobe, as I understand it, is a word derived from the Arabic meaning sun dried brick, a mud brick. The Indians of the southwest did not know the technique of making adobes; the Spanish introduced the adobe to the southwest. Thus the pre-conquest Indian villages could not have been "...built of stone and mass adobe...". To be sure many Indian Pueblos were of a massive mud construction, but not of bricks dried in the the sun, not of adobe.

In a brief description of the early Spanish churches of the southwest the authors make no distinction between those in New Mexico and those in Arizona and Texas, but rather, suggest, by that omission, a sameness. And they state that "they were like no other churches in the Spanish dominions...". I thought that the Spanish mission churches of Texas and Arizona were directly related in design and form to the late Baroque or Churrigueresque Churches of old Mexico. The New Mexico churches, simple, massive style predates the churches in its neighboring states by some 100 to 150 years. Bainbridge Bunting, New Mexico's eminent architectural historian, claimed that, although simplified and compromised by poverty, local material and unskilled workmen, they have their heritage in the massive fortress-like churches of northern Mexico.

Be that as it may, dear reader, buy the book. Go out, find and enjoy the buildings described in this book and discover other Pueblo Deco buildings that, so far, have survived the wrecking ball.

JPC

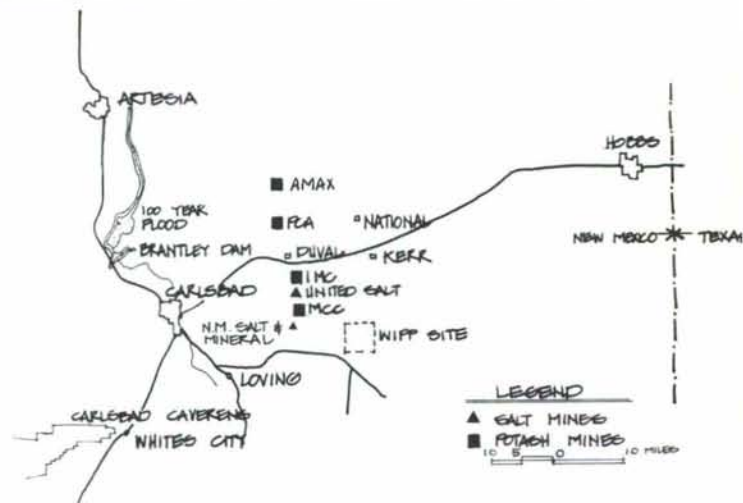
R/UDAT - Carlsbad

Report prepared by Beryl Durham, AIA

In early 1984 Ron Nims, AIA, had to prepare a program for the Carlsbad Rotary Club. He obtained the film about the Regional Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) from the headquarters offices of the American Institute of Architects. This film aroused the interest of several young businessmen, who were very concerned about the economic situation in Carlsbad and its uncertain future. A few months later Nims showed the film again at a meeting in one of the local banks. As a result the businessmen decided to try to bring a R/UDAT to Carlsbad.

A steering committee of fifteen Carlsbad citizens was formed; local businessman, Homer Freeman was chosen Chairman. The New Mexico Southern Chapter of the American Institute of Architects submitted an application to the AIA for a R/UDAT project in Carlsbad. In two weeks the steering committee had raised \$10,000, but by the time the team arrived in Carlsbad a total of \$26,000 had been contributed, about \$4,000 of which was in-kind donations.

Charles Davis, AIA of San Francisco was asked to review the application. He spent three days in Carlsbad meeting with the steering committee and surveying the area. His report to the American Institute of Architects was very positive and reflected the broad based support for a R/UDAT within the community. On the basis of the report, Charles Redmon, AIA of Boston, chairman of the R/UDAT program for AIA committed a team to visit Carlsbad. James W. Christopher, FAIA from Salt Lake City came to Carlsbad to assist the local steering committee with final preparations. Finally team members, representing specific disciplines were selected in response to the identified issues. The members of the team were James E. Bock, AICP, a real estate consultant and architect from Houston, Texas; Alice Gray, Governor's Office of Economic Development in Boston, Massachusetts; Charles Harper, AIA, an architect in private practice in Wichita Falls, Texas; James M. O'Neal, president of an architectural/planning firm in Denver, Colorado; Joe Stubblefield, AIA, an architect in private practice in San Antonio, Texas; Joel M. Sachs, Attorney, White Plains, New York and Avis C. Vidal, Professor of City and Regional Planning, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. In addition there were nine students of architecture from Texas Technological University, Lubbock, Texas, who prepared sketches



and drawings and otherwise assisted the R/UDAT members.

A vacant office building near downtown was offered as a place to work and drafting equipment, copy machines, food and lodging were all donated. The only costs incurred were for supplies and transportation. The team met with community leaders, concerned citizens, and resource groups over a four day period. Local architectural firms offered input: Beryl Durham of Durham & Associates provided information relating to planning & zoning and assisted in team tours; Art Gorrell of Gorrell & Associates provided information on the downtown area; Ron Nims of Nims-Calvani assisted the student team and worked with committees for planning; Don Seba of Seba & Associates also provided information and assistance.

The team was asked to address several main issues: the diminishing economic base, inadequate transportation, deterioration of the downtown and older residential areas, lack of agri-business development, and the need for a new long range community plan. The public forum process identified many community assets such as a high quality of life, a good water supply, while WIPP and Brantley Dam offer existing and future spinoff opportunities. The tourist attraction of Carlsbad Caverns, and the potential of Carlsbad to attract more retired people are also assets.

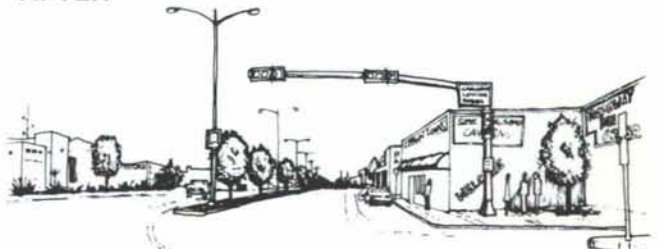
The R/UDAT response was divided into five parts which addressed economic development, tourism, the quality of life, physical planning, and the implementation of their recommendations.

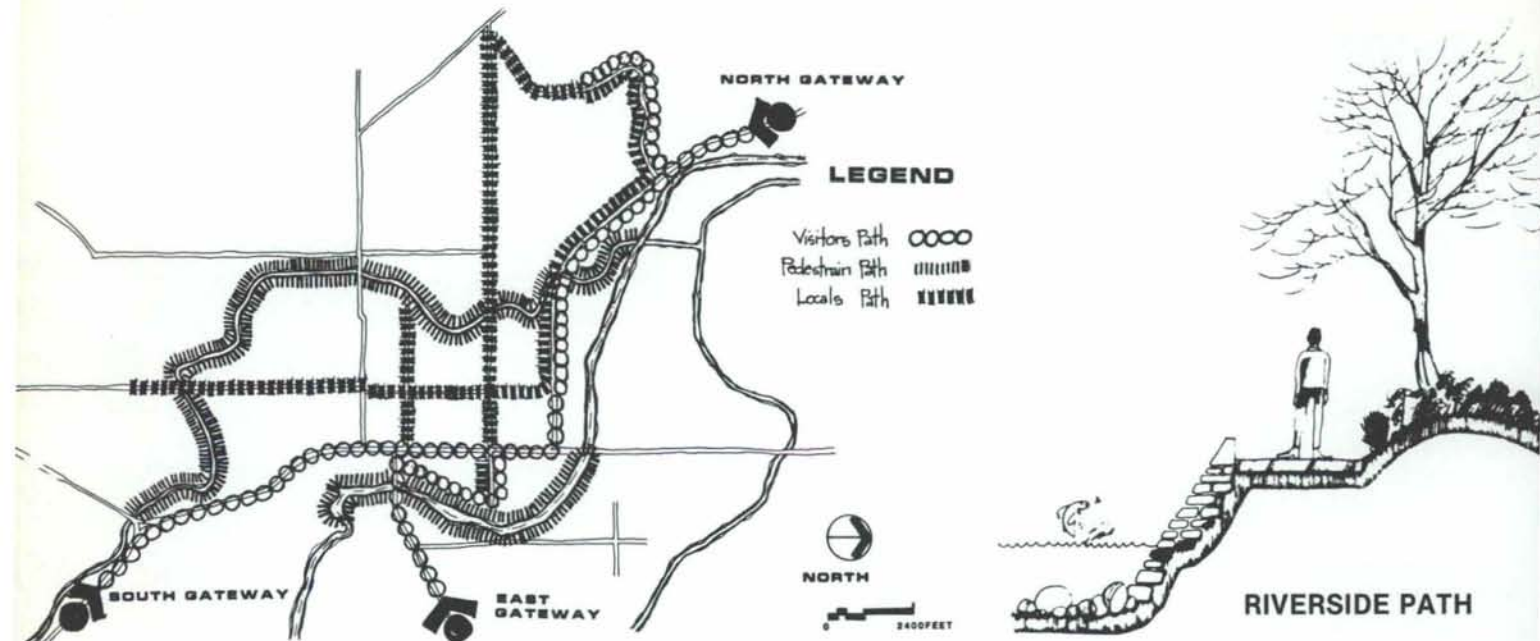
The team recommended that Carlsbad diversify its economic base so that the extractive industries, oil,

BEFORE



AFTER





gas, potash, would be only one of several types of industries upon which the base is built. The city should issue industrial revenue bonds to establish an agricultural industrial park to aid the agri-business. They offered several suggestions for improving the downtown such as linking it to the riverfront, encouraging tourists to shop downtown, improving the visual image, and trying to get more businesses to locate downtown. R/UDAT suggested an intensive effort to promote Carlsbad as a place for retirees to live both in single family houses and in retirement centers.

Tourism was cited as the one business that has the potential to do the most for the community and the team made several suggestions on how to improve it. They said to try to make each tourist spend one more day in the area by improving air transportation, getting more and better restaurants, hotels and motels, by providing better information service, establishing a convention center located downtown, and by advertising more effectively. Several ideas were put forward to improve the city's image as a place to live such as increasing the effort in housing rehabilitation, making more entertainment available for the young people, and making more use of existing facilities such as the Planetarium, Carlsbad Museum, Living Desert State Park, and by converting Cavern Theater into a performing arts center.

Possibly the most important recommendation made by the team was that the city develop a new comprehensive plan and adopt a new zoning ordinance and zoning plan. Several specific changes were suggested to the existing zoning ordinance to allow greater flexibility which in turn would encourage development. They suggested a new, more restrictive sign ordinance, site plan review authority, the adoption of a landscaping and planting maintenance law, and the acquisition of additional riverfront property.

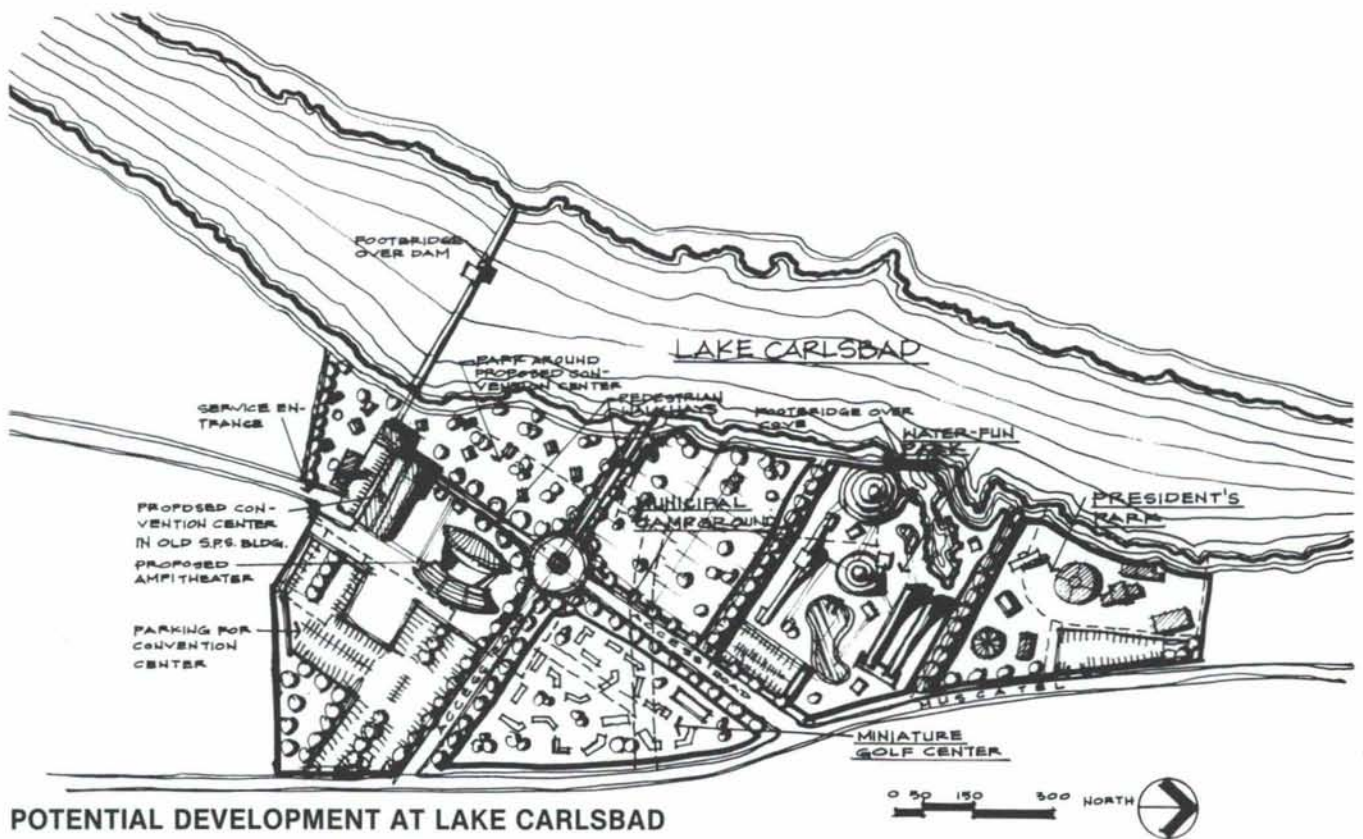
The R/UDAT made its final report to over 250 people in the City Library meeting room. For the implementation of their proposals the team urged that all

Carlsbad become involved in a well organized Goals Program. A leadership training program should be set up by civic organizations. A development corporation to promote Carlsbad must be established. In addition several boards and committees should be appointed to help the city to act quickly and responsively to the needs of the citizens.

Already implementation committees have been formed; they have defined their objectives and meet on a regular schedule, with both committee members and community leaders in attendance. The committees are: Central Business District Development, Economic Development, Tourism Task Force, Retirement and Health Care, Education, Communications, Community Organizing and Long Range Physical Planning and Liaison.

A meeting was held recently with Mayor Walter Gerrells to determine the best methods of working with the City Government and the Department of Development. The meeting was very positive with Mayor Gerrells responding to some fifteen key issue questions which were put together by the different implementation committees. A bit of past history was pointed out in that the 1960 Census of Carlsbad showed a population of 25,000. Now 20 years later, the population by the 1980 Census shows it to be 27,500 people, only a growth of 2,500 since 1960. The last comprehensive master plan for the city was done in 1960 by Harland Bartholomew and Associates, Inc., of St. Louis, Missouri. There have been four or five updates since 1960 and master planning on city water, sewer and streets are in good shape. There is a need to look into planning and new zoning for the five-mile extraterritorial area surrounding the city, along with updates in sign ordinances, zoning language for multi-family residences, condominiums, and townhouses at this time.

Along with long range updating of master plans and zoning ordinances the major thrust of the R/UDAT implementation committees will be to tie the water-



The R/UDAT Team listens to the concerns of the citizens.

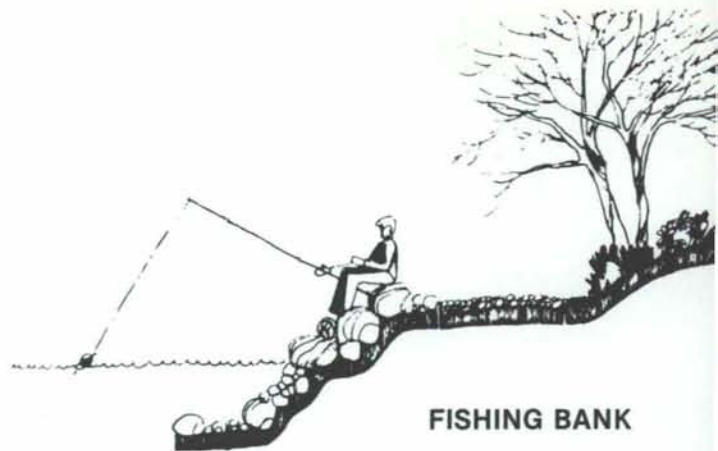
front areas and recreation areas along the Pecos River together and to draw tourists into these areas, as well as to the central business district. However the problem here is the location of railway tracks which form a major barrier separating the river from downtown. Other areas that will continue to receive attention will be the central business district, health and retirement, tourism and expanding educational facilities to meet the needs of new elements to the makeup of the community. Brantley Dam and the Waste Isolation Project and the spin-offs will have a definite impact on the community's growth and economic base.

Although few of the ideas are really "New," in the sense that master planning as well as many of the suggestions made by the R/UDAT have been around for a number of years in Carlsbad, people of the community, both experienced and "new blood," are working together to improve the city and its service to the people.

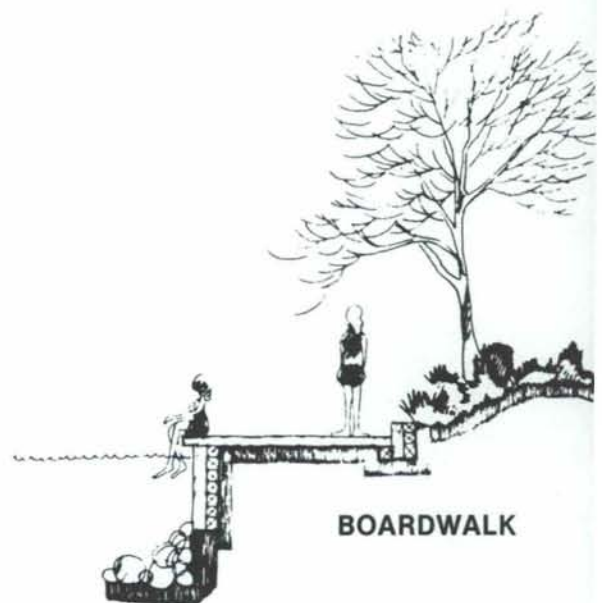
Members of the steering committee worked hard to raise a total of \$26,000, largely from small businesses and individuals, to pay expenses of the R/UDAT members and have roughly \$10,000 in hand for implementation expenses. With some of the remaining funds, the steering committee brought James Christopher and Charles Harper back to Carlsbad in early March, 1985. The two consultants met with the several committees; they reviewed the planning already done and made suggestions for further planning and implementation.

One of the most positive results of the R/UDAT study is that members of the community are now working together to revitalize the master plan and to improve their city. The implementation of the R/UDAT recommendations is important for Carlsbad since so many interested citizens are willing to spend their time, energy and money to make it happen.

B.D.

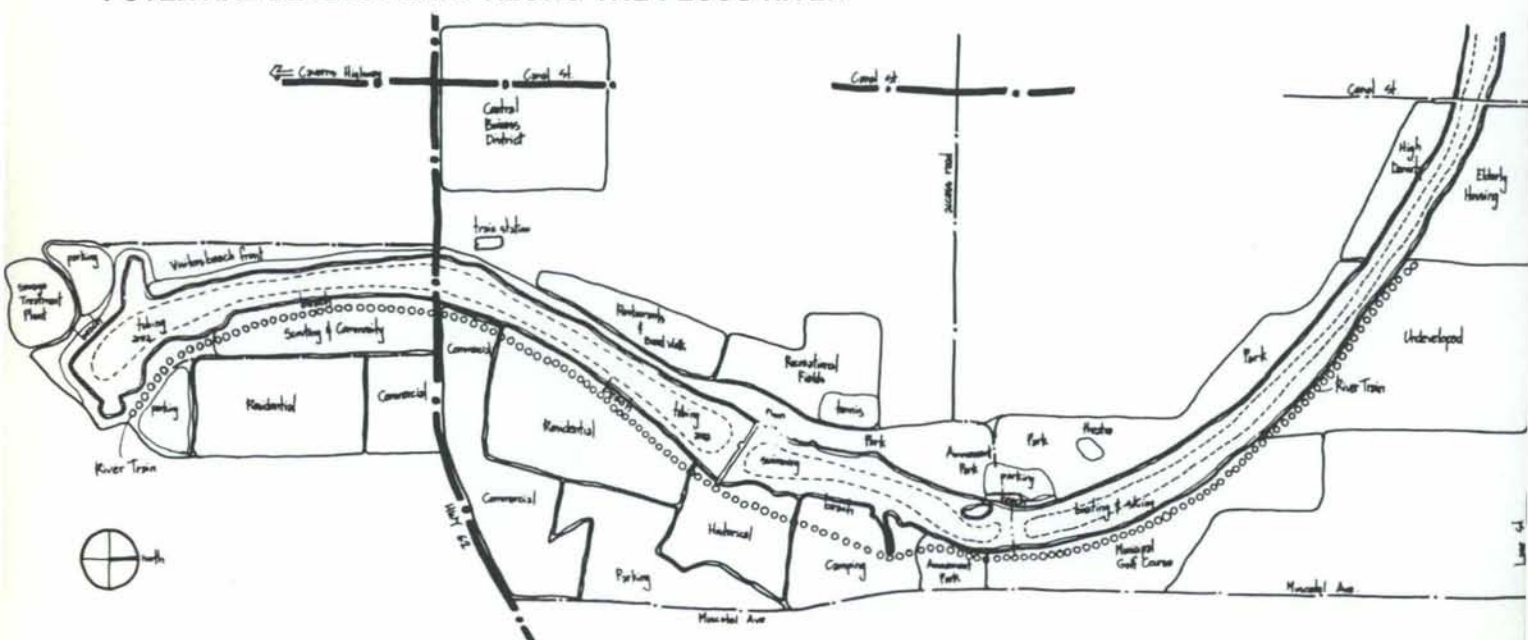


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St. Joseph Square

A Historical Landmark in Albuquerque's Health Care Past

by David Weatherman, AIA

The town of Albuquerque entered the twentieth century with the establishment of its first hospital facility. At the invitation of Archbishop J.B. Lamy, The Sisters of Charity of Mount St. Joseph, Ohio came to New Mexico in the early 1860's. By 1865 St. Vincent Hospital and Orphanage had been founded in Santa Fe by the Sisters. The Sisters of Charity contributed greatly to the establishment of the Albuquerque Public School system and to the development of Albuquerque as a health center for the southwest.

Albuquerque's need for a hospital became apparent at the turn of the century. With its rarefied air Albuquerque had become a mecca for respiratory ailment victims. The Sisters of Charity, always known for their dedication in caring for the sick, were offered a tract of land at the intersection of Tijeras Road (now Grand Avenue) and Walter street by the Jesuit Fathers. Upon that tract of land the Sisters founded and constructed Albuquerque's first hospital facility in 1902. That hospital facility was named St. Joseph Sanatorium and Sister Zita Denman was the hospital's first administrator.

In 1916 the Sisters acquired the remaining tracts of land around the hospital anticipating the time when further expansion of the hospital facilities would be needed. Later on in 1944 the Sisters purchased the building located on the south side of Grand Avenue that had housed a children's home. Regina School of Nursing and Sisters Convent occupied the building until 1966. Recently Regina Hall has been renovated into doctors offices.

By 1928 the first hospital facility had outgrown its usefulness and the need for a new facility was felt. The Sisters of Charity retained George Williamson as the architect for the new hospital facility. At that time, W. Miles Brittelle worked for George Williamson and was assigned the job of designing the new hospital. Sister Mary Lawrence was the Hospital Administrator at the time of the design and construction of St. Joseph Hospital. On Saturday, March 29, 1930, the new hospital opened for public viewing. The 152 bed hospital was constructed at the cost of \$500,000.00 and included the latest devices such as sterilizing equipment, operating room tables and even a baby incubator, making it the most modern facility in the southwest.

W. Miles Brittelle's design of the 1930 St. Joseph Hospital building is a classic Romanesque Revival style. It was unusual at the time of the construction of this facility to rigidly adhere to a certain style with its details. The four story inverted Y-shaped plan with wings springing from the central axis uses an elevator shaft for a focal point of the building. The wings face south toward Grand avenue with intricately detailed bays terminating the wings at each end. The main



Original main entrance bay.

facade is punctuated with a central bay that exhibits an ornate entrance. The entrance consists of a concrete arch surrounding double glass doors and a fanlight tympanum. To each side of the glass doors sets a window with a fanlight tympanum. The pyramidal line of the entry roof is repeated at the roof line of the bays and the elevator shaft.

The bays that terminate the wings are especially important because they contain the greatest concentration of the Romanesque detailing designed into the building by Mr. Brittelle. The round arched windows, low balconets, arched corbel tables, brick pilasters and pyramid parapeted roof line are some of the Romanesque details expressed in these bays. The extravagantly textured brick walls add the finishing touch to the bays. The interior space plan used large spacious lobbies located at the central axis with wide corridors branching from the lobby down the wings. The elevators serviced the building at all levels and act as a focal point for the public lobbies. Polished terrazzo



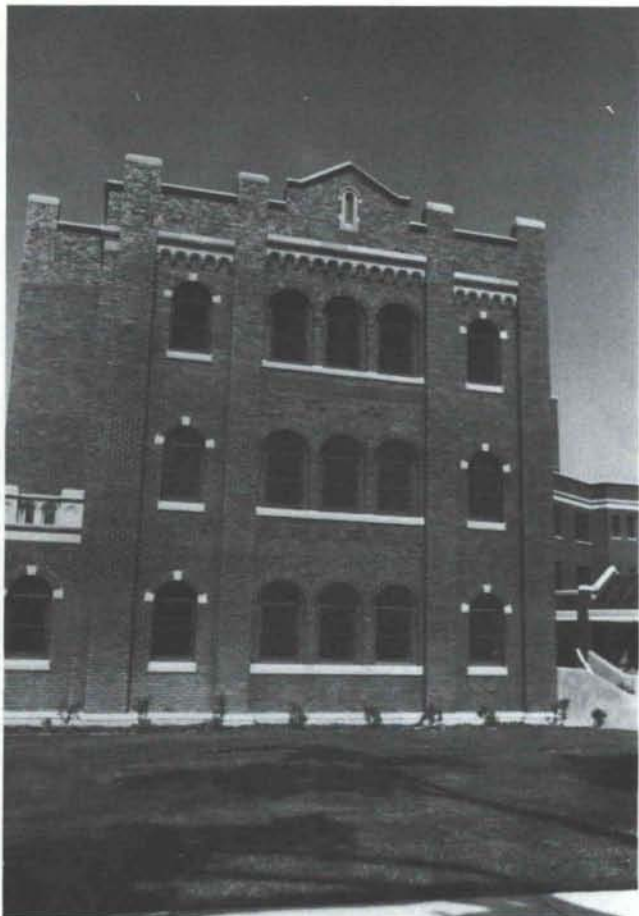
*Grand Avenue elevation
looking from Regina Hall.*



*New entrance at northeast
elevation with skylight.*



*Remodeled pedestrian walkway
that ties St. Joseph Square
to St. Joseph Hospital.*



East elevation of bay showing Romanesque detailing.

Clients:

Old Hospital Group Limited

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was used as the typical flooring material with medallion accents set in the terrazzo floor at the center of the lobby. These medallion accents have been restored in the renovation of the hospital building.

Only one major interior remodeling took place during the life of the hospital. In 1952 the east wing on the top floor was remodeled into a 30 crib maternity wing. Delivery rooms, labor units and a nursery off the main lobby were highlights of this remodel which opened on October 18, 1952. The cooling units that spoiled the south facade of the building were recent additions and have been removed to restore the original elevation.

The 1930 hospital building is the oldest of the structures presently existing on the campus of this historically significant institution. The building sets on the southeast corner of the St. Joseph Hospital campus. The primary entrance to the campus at Elm Street creates a focal point for this historically significant building. The building sets at the edge of the Huning Highland Historic District and is one of the group of institutional buildings that demarcate the break from the smaller scale residential and commercial buildings of this Victorian era district to the newer districts of Albuquerque.

Many of the original design concepts used in the existing building are reused in the creation of St. Joseph Square. The new entrance is attached to the north east side of the building creating a new focal point from the Grand Avenue and Elm Street intersection. This new entrance also allows direct access to the main lobby, elevators and the pedestrian walkway that connects to the newer St. Joseph Hospital facility built in 1968. The new fire exit stair is located at the termination of the leg of the Y-shaped plan and uses brick and concrete detailing similar to the existing elevator tower.

The new canopy and entrance elements express the formal entrance into the existing building and allows for the drop off of patients at the entrance. A skylight ties the entrance and canopy elements together and allows light to fall upon steps at this new entry to the building.

The detailing used in the existing building is reused in the new elements to express the historical value present in the existing building. The use of contemporary building materials in recreating these details deserves mentioning. Summit Brick Company of Pueblo, Colorado supplied both the original brick used in the existing building and the new brick used in renovation. Cementitious coating over shaped beadboard is used in the new trim elements to imitate the existing concrete parapet caps, string course and other trim elements.

The existing steel casement and wood windows have been restored using new glazing materials for energy conservation purposes. The new glazing and framing materials used in the new structures are color coordinated with the paint applied to the restored windows. The design concept of using color in these elements allowed the building to have an accent color at the windows and doors, and still meet the historical requirements of not using the standard bronze anodized framing typically used in contemporary buildings.

The existing pedestrian walkway connecting St. Joseph Square and St. Joseph Hospital has been

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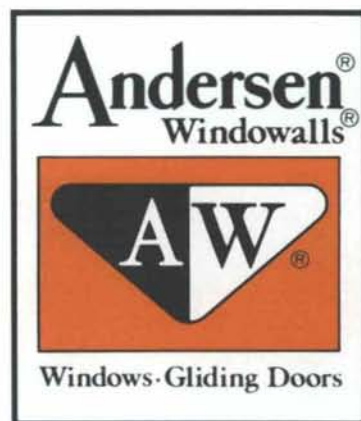
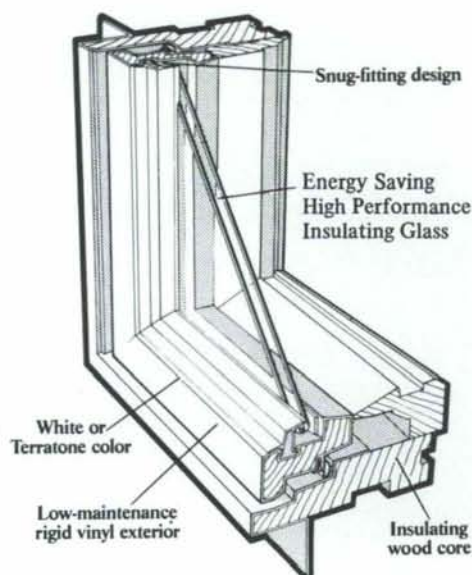
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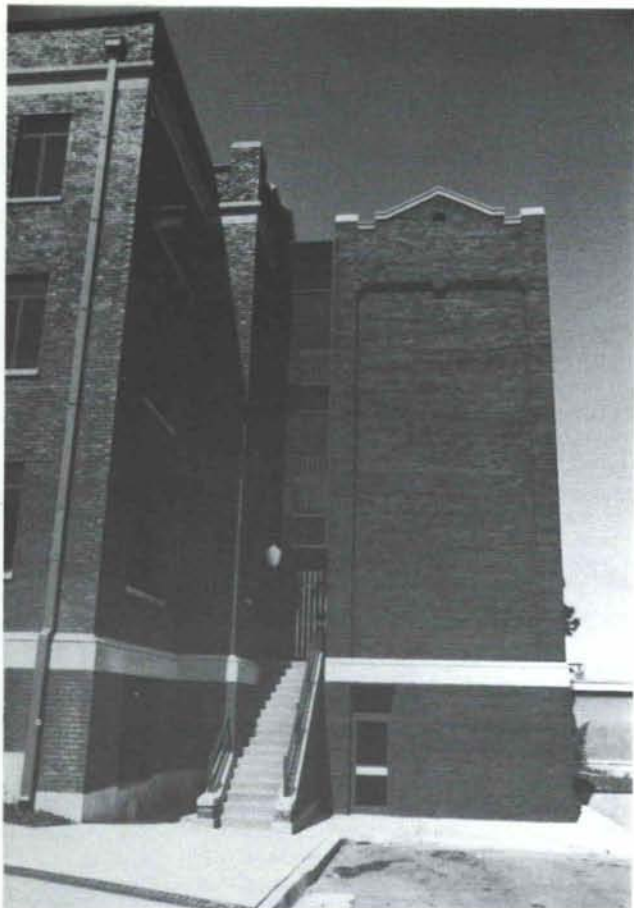
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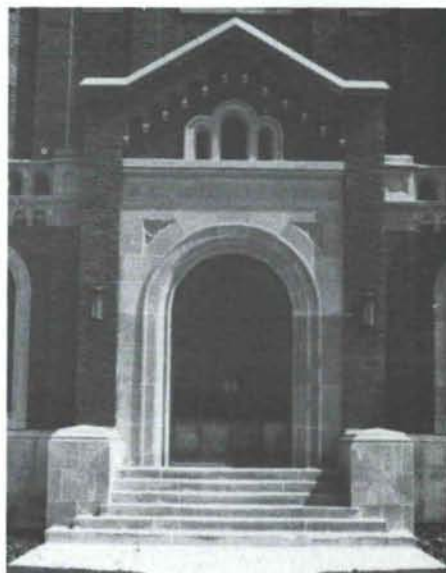


New fire exit stair enclosure.

remodeled with new finish materials on the interior and paint on the exterior. Access to a future public space between the walkway and the building has been provided from both the ground and first floor lobby areas.

When totally complete, St. Joseph Square will house doctors offices and related facilities such as a pharmacy, food services area and laboratory spaces. Completion of the historically significant exterior of St. Joseph Square and landscaping of the grounds with landscaping materials of that era, contributes greatly to the built environment already established along Grand Avenue. Further enhancement of this area will be achieved with the completion of the renovation of the old Albuquerque High School Campus and implementation of the Master Plan presently developed for the St. Joseph Hospital Campus.

D.W.



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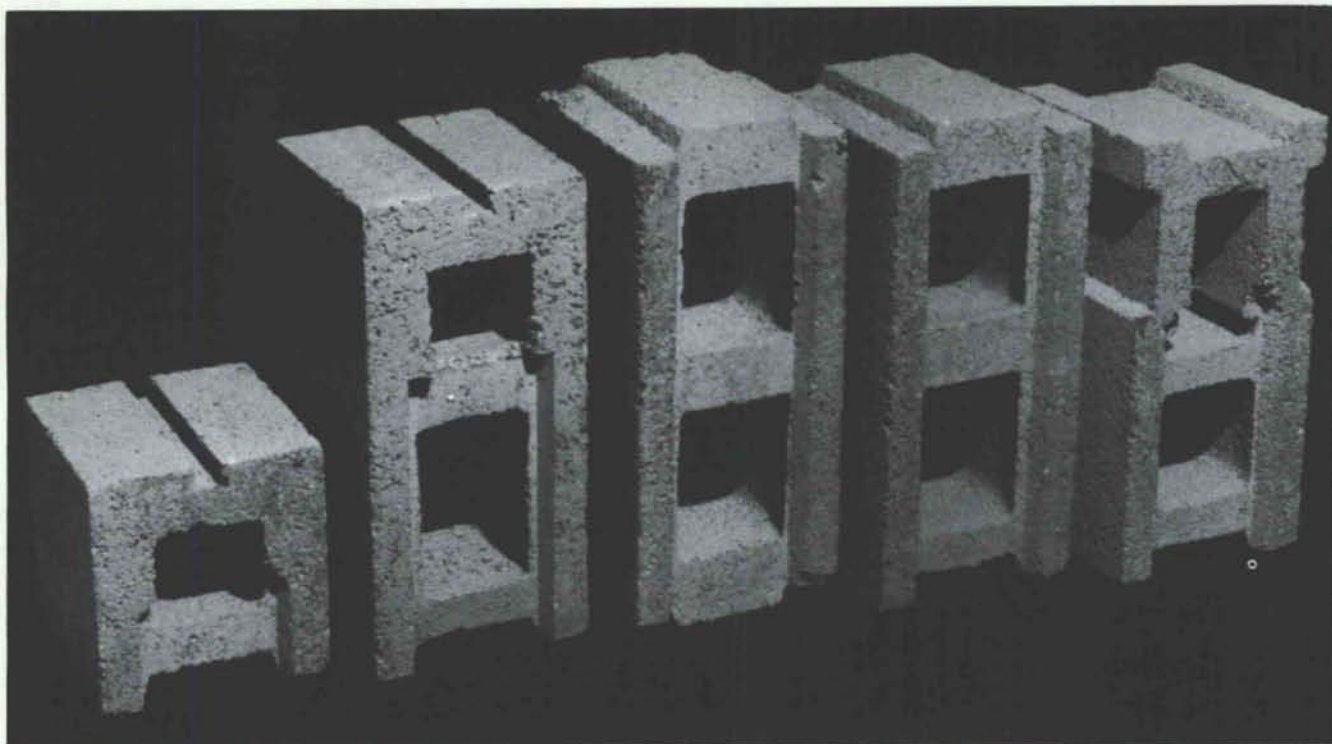
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JOHN GAW MEEM SOUTHWESTERN ARCHITECT BAINBRIDGE BUNTING

Foreword by Paul Horgan, University of New Mexico Press (A School of American Research Book), 1983, 178 pp., illus., \$29.95.

Reviewed by John P. Conron

This book details the long and prolific career of Santa Fe's most prominent architect. It is hard to fault, but then it was researched by Bainbridge Bunting, and written in his competent and always readable prose.

Like so many other citizens of New Mexico, the young John Meem was brought by tuberculosis to the Sunmount Sanatorium, where he fell under the spell of old Santa Fe. Trained at Virginia Military Institute as a civil engineer, his interest, during the long months of recovery, turned toward architecture. Encouraged by his doctor, Frank Mera, he began his career in architecture while still a resident at Sunmount, producing the designs for the renovation and enlargement of a small Santa Fe house for fellow-patient Hubert Galt. By 1959, when he retired from the firm of Meem, Holien and Buckley, some 650 projects had been listed in the office files.

The revival of the Spanish/Pueblo and the Territorial styles began at the University of New Mexico in 1905-1906, and was spurred by the so-called restoration of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe (1909-1914). John Meem became the most eminent practitioner and defender of the revival, and only rarely in his long career did he step outside its vocabulary. One of those rare instances is the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (completed in 1936), which, Bunting and I agree, is Meem's most outstanding building. The exposed concrete-walled structure is certainly Meem's boldest and most modern-styled building, as Bunting says, it

is "an expression of technical expertise and functionalism." Bunting also points out that the building, in its massing and in "its sense of tranquility and equilibrium," has roots in classical forms. The interior "is also one of restrained Classicism, though the ornamental vocabulary is clearly Art Deco." One wonders what would have happened to John Meem as a designer, if he had grown from this work instead of returning to the battered walled romance of New Mexico's past. Even as late as 1951 and 1953, when new ecclesiastical forms were being explored and dramatic new churches built, throughout the nation, Meem chose historic styles for churches built, in Albuquerque and Gallup—Gothic for Albuquerque, a simplified Lombard Romanesque for Gallup.

Meem was well aware of the Modern Movement in the 1920s and 1930s, and felt that functionalism, combined with the traditional forms of the Southwest, would produce architecture compatible with the times. In the favorable economic conditions before World War II, these traditional forms could be achieved by modulated facades and massive battered walls. As construction became increasingly expensive after the war, Meem relied upon the application of Indian and Spanish symbols to his buildings to evoke the past.

Bunting emphasizes Meem's work as a preservationist. To be sure, John Meem was a leading force on the Committee for the Preservation and Renovation of New Mexico Mission Churches in the 1920s and 1930s, before preservation was popular. The committee was responsible for repairs on ancient and significant New Mexico churches, and for the purchase (for donation to the archdiocese of Santa Fe) of the historic Santuario de Nuestro Señor de Esquipula

near Chimayo in northern New Mexico. (Although popularly called the Santuario at Chimayo, even by Bunting, the Santuario is actually located in El Potrero, one mile south of Chimayo.) In later years John Meem and his wife, Faith, made possible the saving of important Territorial period buildings in Santa Fe, which are now owned by the Historic Santa Fe Foundation. However, Meem's preservation efforts focused on the Spanish/Pueblo and Territorial-style historic buildings. Other styles of the late Victorian era and early 20th century he happily destroyed by covering them in Santa Fe-style stucco, and adding fake vigas or corbels.

I find a few petty flaws in the book, which Bunting might have corrected if he had lived to review the galley proofs. Paul Horgan in his foreword lists "brick copings of roof lines" and "the importance of ample fenestration" as details of the Spanish Colonial style. They are not, of course. Brick coping is an Anglo and therefore Territorial style detail, while "ample fenestration" was unheard of in Colonial days. Latias are defined in the book as "small beams"; that does not sound like Bunting. Latias are wood saplings which are laid atop the roof beams to support the roof covering—dirt in the early days, insulation and rolled roofing today. A bit misleading are Bunting's occasional references to Meem's work on the La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, which suggest that Meem designed the hotel. For example, Bunting describes him as "planning an even more splendid tourist attraction for the same railroad [the AT & SF] in the form of La Fonda Hotel." Not until much later does the reader discover that Meem planned only the first major addition; the hotel itself had been built in 1920 from designs by Rapp, Rapp and Hendrickson.

I take issue with such statements as the one on the dust jacket (for-

tunately not attributed to Bunting) that Meem "is unquestionably the most important architect ever to have worked in New Mexico." Meem entered the New Mexico architectural scene not to innovate, but to continue forces already in motion. Archaeologists such as Edgar Lee Hewett, architects such as Rapp and Rapp, and the many artists working in Santa Fe in the first decades of the 20th century gave him the vocabulary he used so fluently. Certainly his designs are generally graceful and friendly, while in the hands of others the revival styles could become coarse, even dull.

I was surprised to learn that the elaborate mill work used in residential and public buildings, particularly in the early work, was

not done by New Mexico craftsmen. Rather it was executed by Colorado firms and shipped to the New Mexico building site. Bunting tells us of one occasion when New Mexico Indians happened, by coincidence, to be in the employ of the Pueblo, Colorado, firm producing the mill work for the Zimmerman Library at the University of New Mexico.

When one reads of the length of time taken for the design of the Colorado Fine Arts Center, or of the completion of the Zimmerman Library being delayed for three months to await the delivery of specially sized, adzed boards to conceal concrete beams, it is apparent the John Meem lived in a state of architectural luxury enjoyed, even then, by few other ar-

chitects.

The book is profusely illustrated with sketches, plans, and photographs — many taken shortly after completion of the buildings by such prominent photographers as Tyler Dingee, Laura Gilpin, and Ansel Adams. However, the quality of the photographic reproduction is poor, which is truly unfortunate in so important a book.

Bunting takes the reader on a detailed tour of many of Meem's outstanding buildings, public and private; he catalogs a significant career, and reminds us of the generosity and humanity of this architect. JPC

This review also appears in the winter 1985 issue of Design Book Review, published in Berkeley, California.

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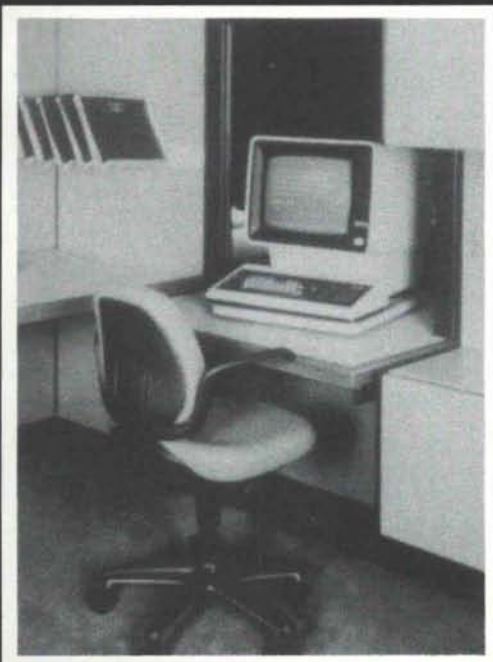


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