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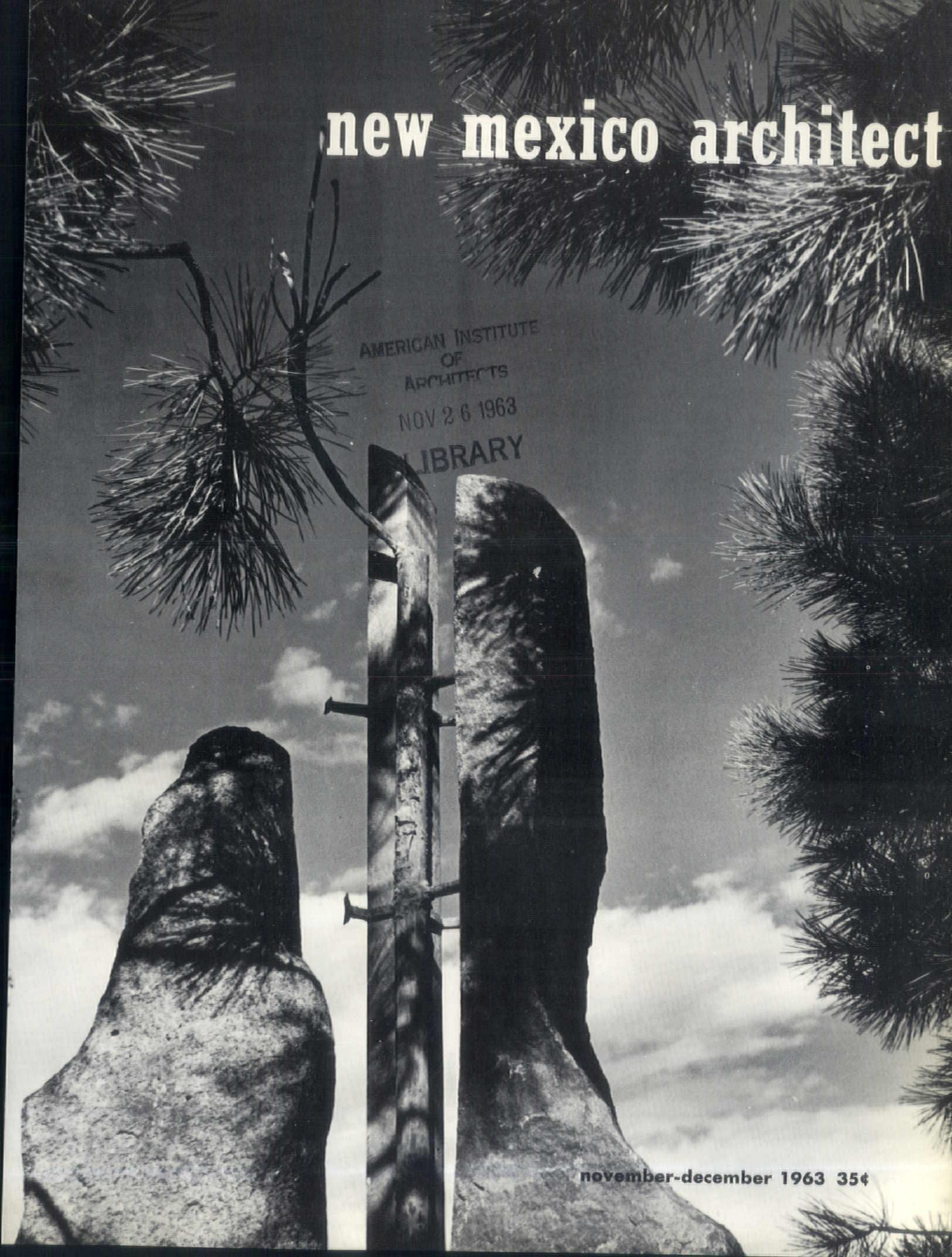

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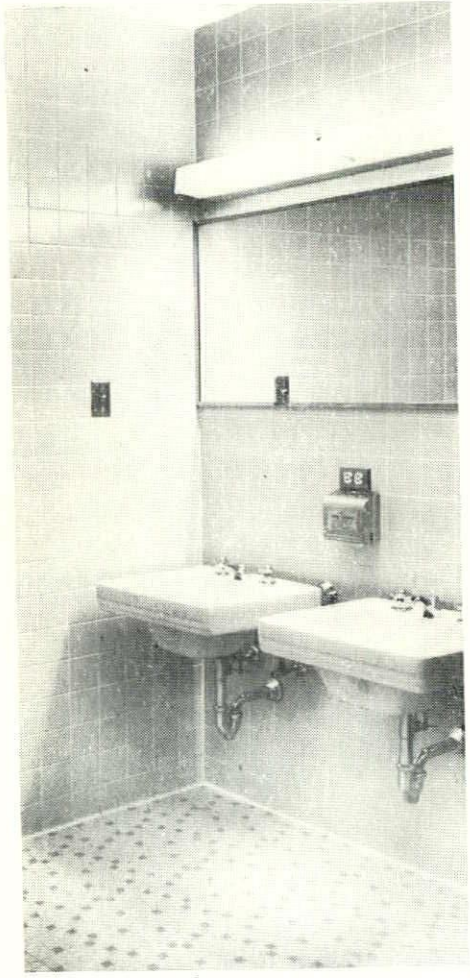

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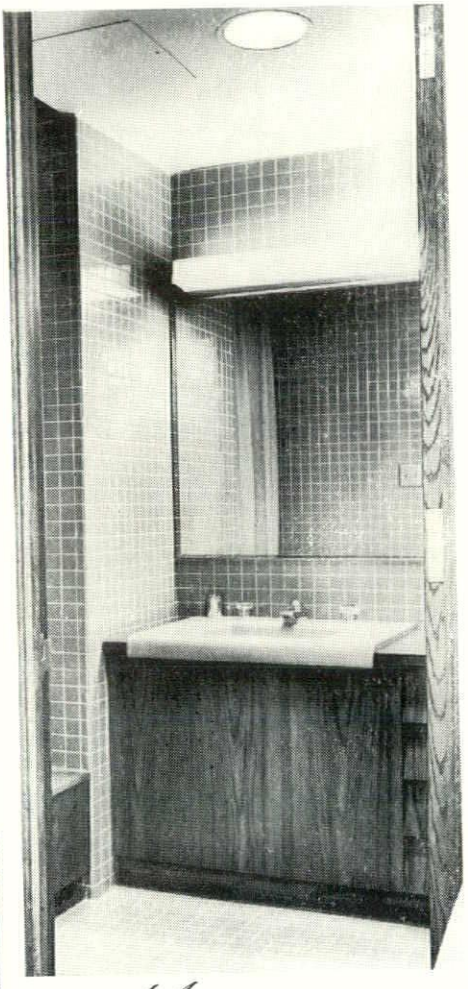

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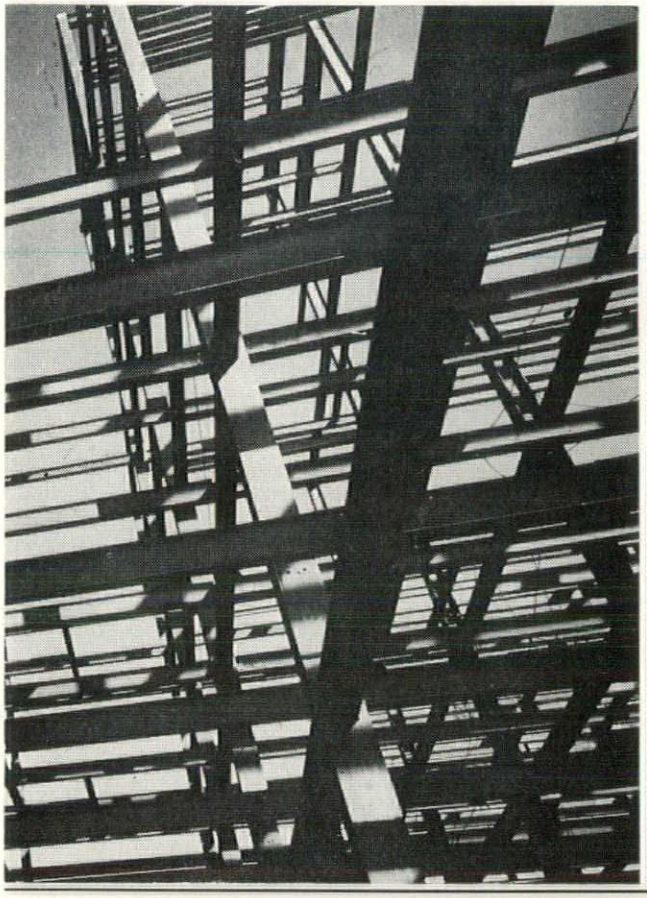

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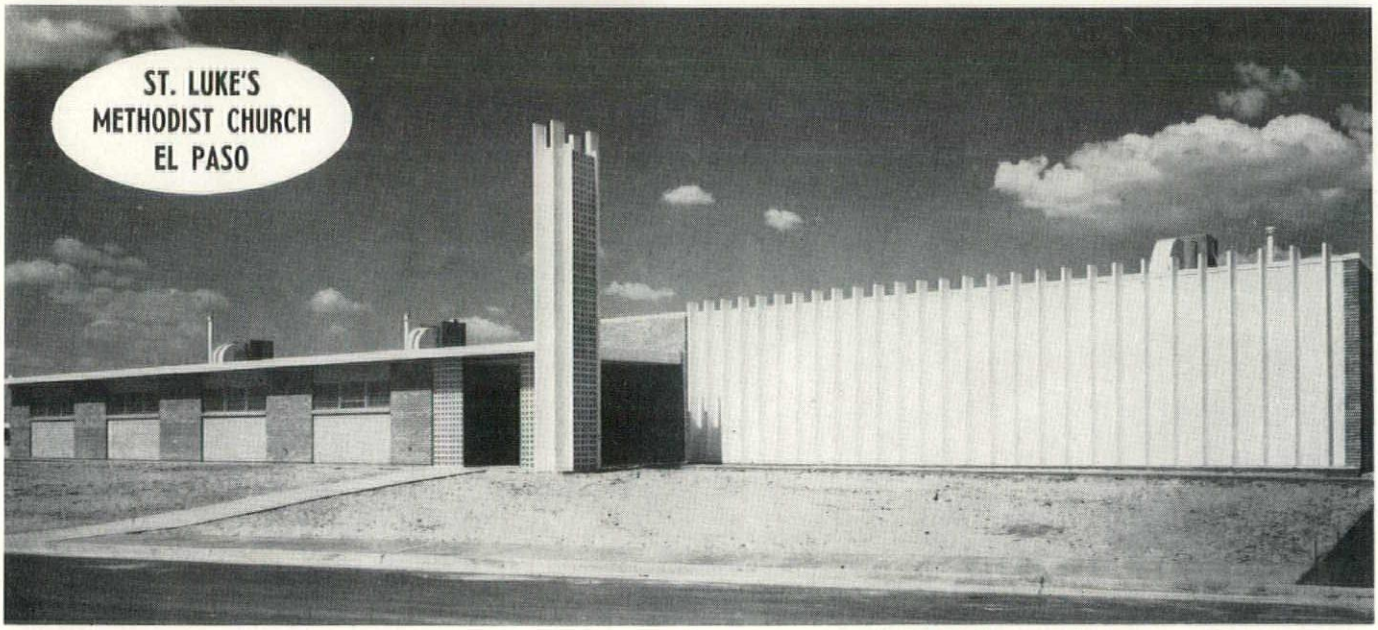

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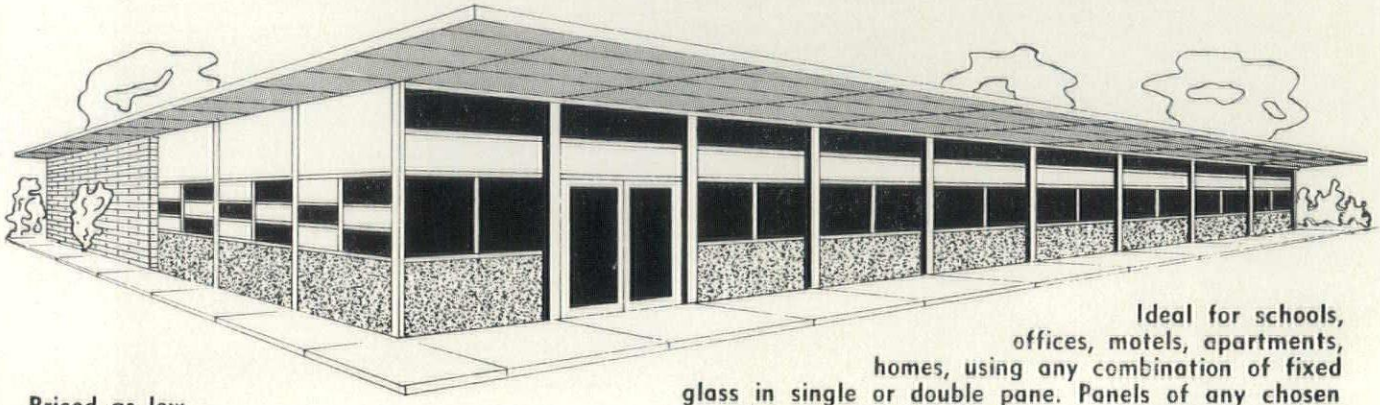

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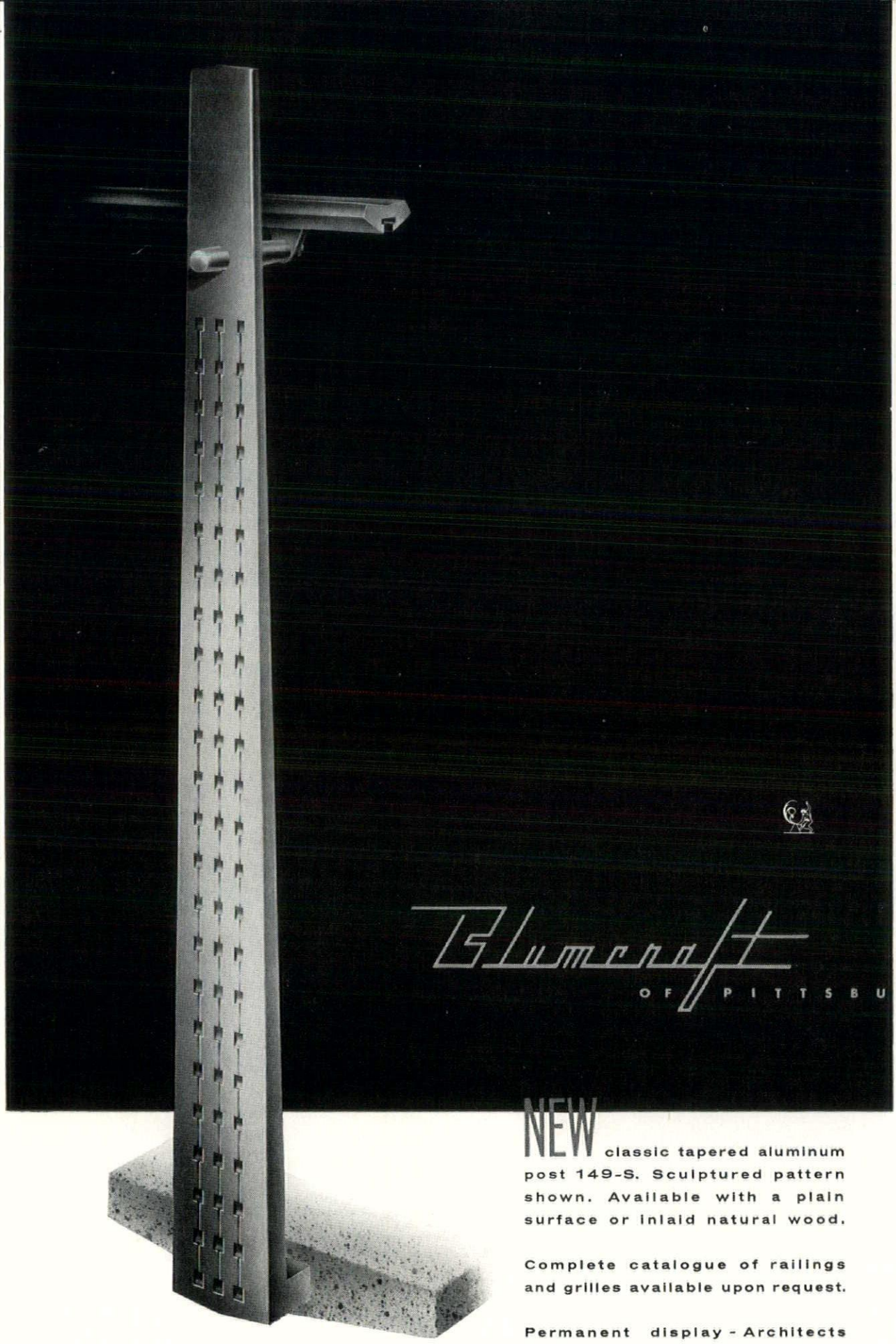

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Two Controversial Issues

Two issues closely related to architecture have recently come under discussion in architectural and planning circles. As the editors of the NEW MEXICO ARCHITECT feel that a principle function of a regional publication is to stimulate discussion, they here print several opinions — some quite opposed. Further statements on these issues from AIA members or readers are solicited.

The Proposed School Building Code

The New Mexico Department of Education has prepared a draft of a proposed School Building Code. The department has requested the reaction of the architectural profession. Within recent weeks the code has been discussed at AIA chapter meetings and in informal meetings of architects. Everywhere it has been soundly criticized as childish and unnecessary! Those sections of the code which have actual health and safety guarding features are repetitions of other existing state and local codes and are, therefore, unnecessary. The remaining recommendations and restrictions are overburdening and overlimiting.

John McHugh, president of the New Mexico Chapter, AIA, has addressed a letter to the State Department of Education. His letter and the statement of Max Flatow, AIA member from Albuquerque, sum up the reaction of the architectural profession. Excerpts from Mr. McHugh's letter follow. The italics refer to quotations or summaries from the article of the Code to which Mr. McHugh refers.

THE PRESIDENT'S OPINION

Dr. W. O. Wilson
School Plant Consultant
State Department of Education
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Bill:

To date I have not had a reply to the letter I sent you several weeks ago in which I said I would be glad to discuss the proposed School Building Code with you — in my capacity as President of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Yesterday I received a draft of the proposed code from Frank Standhardt, A.I.A., and in his accompanying letter he asked that I let you have my comments before the seventeenth of this month. I will try to do my best, very briefly, by going over it item by item.

ARTICLE I. requires that plans for all new buildings, additions or alterations for school purposes will have to be submitted for approval to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, to the State Department of Health, and to the State Fire Marshal. In addition to all this, the local School Board will have to acquire a "permit to build" from the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Further, the State Agency will join in the supervision and it demands that any changes in the plans and specifications during construction must also go through the various state agencies for their approval.

This article it seems to me, is the crux of the matter — the dictation of architectural design by a state agency. I object most strongly to any beaurocratic control over architectural design. Wherever this has occurred, in any field, the resulting buildings have been afflicted with the Great Blight of Dullness. Before the State of New Mexico gives a man a license to practice architecture, it assures itself by actual written and oral examination that this man is capable of designing and supervising the construction of practical and functional buildings — buildings which will conform to the various codes regulating public health and safety. The control of the design must be left in the hands of the architects. If the Superintendent of Public Instruction wished to review the plans for conformity to the various applicable codes, this might be a helpful service. But if control over design were to be given to a state agency the next step would be a state architectural office. This has been tried with disastrous results in California and has recently been abandoned.

This article could conceivably delay the issuance of a building permit for months — particularly if we were to have a clerk in the Health Department who had a personal dislike for a clerk in the Department of the Fire Marshal. This seems a needless scattering of responsibility. Surely, the review of the S.P.I. should be enough. No matter how you slice it, no matter how many stamps or signatures are on the drawings, the ultimate responsibility — in actual fact — rests with the architect.

The job of ascertaining whether the construction is in accordance with the plans and specifications is, *and must remain,* the responsibility of the architect!!

ARTICLE III, recommends that sizes for school sites be determined by an acre-plus-pupil ratio. For example, an elementary school will have a minimum of 5 acres plus one additional acre for each 100 pupils. This Article further suggests that the site be higher than the surrounding terrain, and that the building be on the "high spot of the site." It also requires that no encircling driveways will be permitted, nor shall any child walk further than three-fourths of a mile on not less than a 66 inch wide walk.

Even with Ebenezer Howard's sixty-year-old "Garden City" idea, these site sizes seem more than usually unrealistic. When you place a school building in the middle of such a large piece of land you remove it from the casual supervision of neighbors and thus invite vandalism, and you make necessary longer walks in the rain or mud. Even back east where it would be possible to have lovely, grassy campuses dotted with trees (which is not feasible in New Mexico), such a scheme might be considered of less than dubious value. It is an established fact that children will give very little use to these play areas after school hours — and after dark they invite muggings, rape, or even worse. Particularly in the higher grades the proposed sites

would militate against good city planning. Schools would simply be forced to the perimeter of cities, with all the inefficiencies which that would entail. Schools are supposed to prepare young people for integration with the community — they should not begin by isolating them from it!

Even with its golf course, the University of New Mexico hasn't nearly such a low density of student per acre — and it is a spacious campus!

ARTICLE V, Section 500: No elementary classroom shall be less than 900 square feet, unless an exception is given by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designated agent.

This rule seems unnecessarily arbitrary. It is easily conceivable that in certain instances a classroom for just ten students might be desirable.

ARTICLE V, Section 501: Rooms shall be decorated in such a manner so as to give proper reflectance factors to walls and ceilings.

If this is intended to imply something like the Harmon System, I'm opposed to it. Oculists tell us that there are many, many, inter-related factors other than brightness which effect seeing.

ARTICLE V — Sections 502 through 510 detail the required room lighting, number of water closets, lavatories, et cetera, for Elementary Schools.

These items are covered in existing codes.

ARTICLE V, Section 511: It is recommended that the first three grades be in self-contained classrooms. Self-contained classrooms should serve six functions: (1) Individual-formal work; (2) Group formal work, (3) Individual informal work, (4) Group informal activity, (5) Clothing care, and (6) Toilets.

Shouldn't this be left up to individual superintendents and principals?

ARTICLE VI which prescribes minimum room sizes, number of plumbing fixtures, et cetera, for Secondary Schools, is also adequately covered in other existing state and local codes.

Well, Bill, it looks as though I've just about decimated the proposed code, doesn't it? I think I feel basically that so much authority based in a "vertical" agency cannot work well in an area as extensive and as diversified as New Mexico. By his very remoteness — physically and spiritually — no central official can possibly be as aware of local needs and conditions as the man on the spot. If you doubt this, just visit Los Alamos where you will see hundreds of houses with picture windows facing *each other*, and with blank walls toward the magnificent mountain views! I believe that central authority should do for local areas only those few things which the local people cannot do for themselves. Even if the local people sometimes do not do as well as the State might do, it is better that they be allowed to try. Every man has the right to make his own mistakes!

If this proposed code were to become law I can see at best a tangled maze of red tape and bureaucracy, and at worst arbitrary decisions made by remote officials against the wishes and better judgment of the people who are better informed, and who actually are paying for the project. The bottom, of course, would be a state architectural office working at great cost and inefficiency to cover the state with buildings of uniform dullness — and don't think this wouldn't happen; it would!

At this particular time we are fortunate in our Superintendent for Public Instruction, but we have no assurance that this will always be so. It might one day well be the man who made the biggest contribution to the political party then in power — or even his brother-in-law.

No, the thing we must do is to drop this proposed code and work to incorporate its best features into other applicable codes.

Now, please let me have your counter-comments.

Sincerely,
/S/ John
John W. McHugh, A.I.A.

AN ARCHITECT'S OPINION

The following statement by Max Flatow, A.I.A., covers somewhat the same points, but expresses his criticism in different terms. It is printed here to emphasize the need for the complete abandonment of the proposed code. Mr. Flatow touches upon another proposed law: the recently prepared zoning ordinance for the County of Bernalillo. See page 9 of this issue of the NEW MEXICO ARCHITECT for a discussion of this other current controversy.

Two additional central documents are now proposed to be adopted: one at state level on school design, another at county level, the Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance. These two documents have many things in common.

1. They can be put into law by action of boards or commissions and do not require legislative action to become binding.
2. They place rigid controls and regulations on the architectural and planning professions.
3. They will both be negative factors in environmental design, as they will place a premium on the so-called "standard" and a hardship on imagination and ingenuity.
4. They are both children of the "Protectitus" mentality, the committee worshippers, who believe everything good must come out of a rule book.
5. Both will probably be passed into law.

Our National A.I.A. organization urges us to take a more active part in government and the passage of such acts by governmental boards as the ones here considered emphasize this necessity. Our entire professional worth to society is undermined in large part by the number and strength of restrictive regulations such as these.

Proponents of the PROPOSED SCHOOL BUILDING CODE justify its need on the supposition that:

1. School people are not preparing adequate educational specifications to guide the design of schools.
2. Long-range site planning and master-planning are not receiving proper consideration.
3. Poor designs are being accepted.
4. Poor contract documents continue to be produced by the architects.

Probably all of these allegations are true to some extent, *but* the proposed code *will not* and *cannot* improve the situation. The greatest deficiency lies in the

poor preparation of educational specifications. There are a few educators who understand this and fewer yet who know what the specifications should be or how to prepare them. The proposed code does not define these specifications or attempt to set a standard for them. The only way to get better site planning, designs, and contract documents is by selection of competent architectural firms and payment of sufficient fees to allow these firms to spend necessary time and talent. The architectural profession in New Mexico has not organized to demand sufficient fees; neither has it been bold enough to call a spade a spade, in the area of design.

The proposed school code will require many more reviews of plans by state agencies. This added work in time will cost the architects. Will the school boards pay higher fees for this added effort which cannot be expended in more design time? The architect will need at least 1% increase in fee structure, he already needs about 1½% increase to produce the kind of planning needed.

All architects should read a copy of this proposed code. It can be obtained from Mr. W. O. Wilson, School Plant Consultant, State Department of Education, Santa Fe. It is a very poor rehash of the Uniform Building Code, particularly in those areas which apply to schools. It contains many "suggestions" and "recommendations" that have no place whatever in a code. It would require that all schools be built on hills. It would place extravagant requirements in some areas for accoustical treatment, access lighting, corridor widths, stairs, et cetera.

If the Committee and Department of Education absolutely must have a special code for school buildings, then it should be much more carefully and skillfully written than it now stands. The proposed code is full of ambiguous and controversial statements. *Max Flatow*

The Proposed Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance

Zoning for Bernalillo County has been under study for several years. Matters came to a head in September when the proposed zoning ordinance was given a series of public readings. Some observers criticize the ordinance itself; others, the zoning commissioners for their too easy concessions to private interest.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE ALBUQUERQUE DIVISION OF THE NEW MEXICO CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS TO ASSIST BERNALILLO COUNTY COMMISSION ON PLANNING AND ZONING MATTERS

Whereas, the County of Bernalillo is considering passage of a zoning ordinance and is soliciting constructive criticism of said ordinance;

And Whereas, the Albuquerque Division of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Institute of Architects was formed primarily to aid and assist public officials by recommendations on decisions which relate to the physical beauty of this community;

And Whereas, a review of the application of zoning in the Albuquerque area points conclusively to the fact that zoning alone cannot be depended upon to give the protection that is needed, either for the established community or to insure desirable conditions in the expanded community;

And Whereas, it is recognized that intelligence and ingenuity are more desirable, in the public interest, than a restrictive rule book — such as this proposed ordinance;

And Whereas, the application of zoning without planning has resulted in enormous tax burdens that could have been materially lessened through good planning;

And Whereas, the public has been misled into believing that zoning is, in effect, planning; and has thereby been robbed of many of the benefits that could have resulted from good planning;

And Whereas, there are still vast areas in the City and County that can be planned into better living and working areas in which to live and raise our children;

And Whereas, the adoption of the proposed zoning ordinance will devalue vast real estate holdings resulting in a decrease in the tax base;

And Whereas, the restrictive nature of the proposed zoning ordinance will encourage monotony and the commonplace and put penalties and hardships on imaginative solutions to environmental planning;

And Whereas, the proposal to adopt such an ordinance indicates a lack of basic understanding of these problems.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED,

That the Albuquerque Division of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Institute of Architects pledges its support to the County Commissioners in their efforts to solve the complicated problem of putting into operation procedures and regulations that will, in truth, result in a better community in which to live and raise our children;

That pursuant to this pledge the Albuquerque Division of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Institute of Architects recommends that the County Commission set aside the proposed ordinance as it is premature and will be a deterrent in accomplishing the goal for which it was prepared;

That continued efforts be made by the Commission for planning and regulations to enforce planned goals;

That The Commission adopt procedures for accomplishing planning and regulation consistent with recommendations by the American Institute of Architects and the American Institute of Planners;

That the Albuquerque Division of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Institute of Architects offers assistance to the County Commission by supplying information and technical advice in this effort.

THE CHAIRMAN'S OPINION

September 24, 1963

To: All Members of the Albuquerque Division New Mexico Chapter, American Institute of Architects

From: Lawrence A. Garcia, AIA Chairman, Bernalillo County Planning and Zoning Commission

We were recent recipients of a letter dated September 20, 1963 from the Secretary-Treasurer of this Division of the AIA which circulated a Proposed Resolution of this organization to "Assist Bernalillo County Commission on Planning and Zoning Matters" and which requested a deadline vote by telephone on said resolution not later than Thursday, September 26, 1963.

First of all let me say that I do not believe that the method by which this proposed resolution is being presented and vote requested is in keeping with the constitution and by-laws of this organization. Secondly, it is not my belief that "the Albuquerque Division of the New Mexico Chapter of the American Institute of Architects was formed primarily to aid and assist public officials by recommendations on decisions which relate to the *physical beauty* of this community." It was my belief that above all the AIA was a professional organization. The proposed resolution would indicate that we were hardly that and that we place little confidence in any other profession. If accepted it would further indicate that we have a complete lack of understanding of the intent and purpose of planning and zoning and their inter-relationship as well as the progress that has been made in planning in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County in the past few years.

Even though this memorandum may be circulated too late to keep some members from voting by telephone, it is hoped that it may change their formal vote at a regular meeting. In as much as no opportunity is being presented for discussion of the proposed resolution at a meeting prior to voting on the matter, and in as much as, I personally have been very closely connected with planning and the development of the proposed Zoning Ordinance for Bernalillo County, I am taking this liberty to circulate my comments on this matter.

Although the proposed resolution pretends to be constructive, it would be very destructive in recommending that this ordinance be set aside. A great deal of time, effort and money has been expended by the public, elected officials, advisory bodies and individuals in developing the zoning ordinance. The professional firm retained to assist us was selected by a large panel of responsible individuals, and it has had over forty years of experience in developing zoning ordinances and working with them after they are developed. Their thorough studies and experience when coupled with the large amount of time they spent in working with the city and county planning commissions and others would seem to indicate no "lack of basic understanding of these (local) problems."

No attempt has been made by either the city or county planning agencies to confuse planning with zoning, and I believe that we all clearly understand that zoning is only one of several tools used to affectuate planning. Zoning is further used to protect property values, enhance the tax base, eliminate unnecessary and uneconomical public expenditures, rather than "devalue vast real estate holdings resulting in a decrease in the tax base," as claimed by the proposed resolution.

The proposed Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance has definitely been based upon planning. This planning has been developing over a long period of time. Over ten years ago the city formalized planning by appointing a Planning Commission, and setting up a planning staff. Based upon land use surveys and plans developed at that time, the city subsequently adopted its first zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. Since then the city ordinance has been rewritten and refined on many occasions to assist in effectuating better planning. Similarly, the county has had a planning commission for several years, and the county has been contracting with the city for qualified planning staff assistance. It has been realized for several years that a reasonable plan could not be carried out for the entire metropolitan area without the county having the necessary zoning tool, and only by effective zoning would it be possible to guide development and alleviate the growing public tax burden.

The city and county jointly have cooperated in developing the plans which have gone to make up the primary parts of a comprehensive plan upon which the county could base its zoning proposals. Within the past two years the following major studies and plans have been accomplished by the local public planning staff and a number of competent professional consulting firms:

1. The Thorough-fare Plan was reviewed and readopted. This report and plan provides much of the background for the more detailed transportation plan studies that are now in process.
2. Public Facilities were studied and mapped to assist in determination of future requirements to be planned for.
3. Historic Background was written to assist in making future planning decisions.
4. Economic Analysis and Population Projections was accomplished to the year 1980, upon which dependent elements of the comprehensive plan could be based.
5. Preliminary Land Use Study was made which developed a General Land Use Plan for the metropolitan area for 1980, upon which the following more detailed elements of the comprehensive plan could be based.
6. A Park and Recreation Study and Plan was developed in detail to take care of projected needs of the entire county area for the next two decades.
7. A more detailed Land Use and Zoning Study was developed based upon the preceding studies and its own detailed studies. This particular study as well fully coordinated with the following studies that took place at the same time. It provided recommended changes for the city zoning ordinance as well as recommended text and maps for a county zoning ordinance.
8. A Master Plan for Drainage has been developed for the urban area, which is not only partially dependent upon other phases of the master plan, but it also guided their development.
9. A Master Plan for Water Supply was developed which has a great effect upon development of the future land use plan and required zoning.
10. Development of a detailed transportation plan has been in progress for over a year and it will greatly refine the Comprehensive Plan when completed early next year. Its success is highly dependent upon the preceding plans and recommended zoning ordinances.
11. A Detailed Land Use Plan and Poulation Distribution for 1985 is now being developed through utilization of all of the recently completed studies and

plans. This will not only more closely integrate all elements of the comprehensive plan, but it will further refine them and also provide for other more detailed elements. One of these elements of course is the Central Business District Study and Plan now in process. Others will be public schools and other public buildings.

I think that the above clearly illustrates that the proposed Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance has been based upon planning and that the planning would be greatly limited in value without the Zoning. Naturally it is understood by everyone that neither the planning nor the zoning is going to remain without change and both will be perfected further with use. The AIA and many other organizations and individuals can then be very constructive in assisting. The ordinance is actually very liberal in allowing individual planning and architectural treatment. There are special provisions in the ordinance which even are intended to promote good individual planning and design, such as large scale residential developments, planned shopping centers and planned industrial subdivisions.

It is sincerely hoped that all of the members of the local organization will cooperate by giving the proposed AIA resolution a dissenting vote and then by cooperating with the Bernalillo County Planning and Zoning Commission to further perfect planning and zoning in this area. In this way we can all be constructive to reach a common goal, but to throw away all the effort, time and money that has been expended thus far would be a grave mistake. *—Lawrence A. Garcia*

AN ARCHITECT'S OPINION

Zoning in the city of Albuquerque was passed in 1955 without developing a master plan as a panacea for all planning problems. We do not have a better city because of it, and probably we have a poorer one because those who should have devoted effort to planning are spending all of their time on zoning matters. We really do not have a planning commission—only a zoning board. And the city employees in the planning department for the past eight years have spent all their time on zoning problems. *Max Flatow*

A CITIZEN'S OPINION

A heated and at this point still unresolved controversy is agitating sections of Albuquerque citizens who have a serious interest in an orderly growth and development for their city. This discussion centers about the proposed zoning ordinance for Bernalillo County. The present article is an attempt to present a point of view that differs from the AIA statement which is printed on page 9 of this issue or from news items that have appeared in the public press.

With the defeat in 1960 of the proposed merger of the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, which made the planning of the two political entities under a single authority impossible, the County Commission proceeded to consider an independent means of securing an orderly pattern of development for the county which surrounds the fast-growing city. Taking advantage of the 1959 state law which enabled counties to undertake planning and zoning, the Commissioners for Bernalillo County appointed a five man planning board — later to be enlarged and designated the Bernalillo County Planning and Zoning Commission.

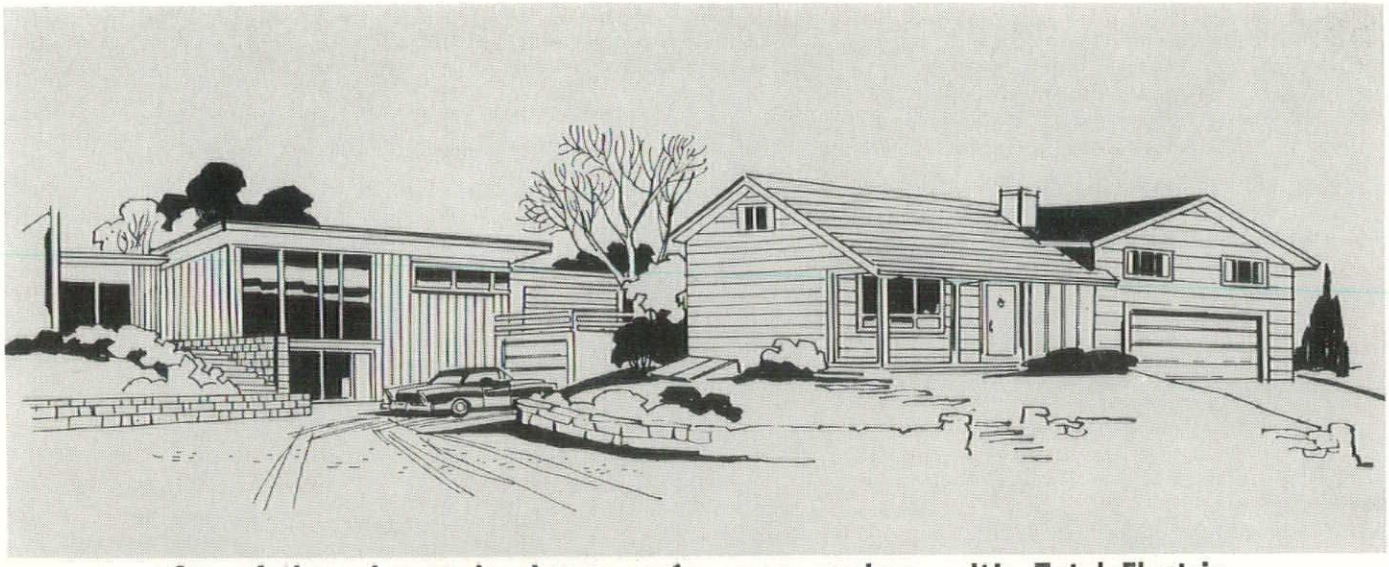
One of the first jobs of this group was the selection of a firm of professional planners to study and prepare a scheme of zoning for the county. Despite the legal separation of city and county, it was clear to the officials of both entities that their planning efforts must be cooperative and integrated if the final plans were to make sense. To this end the same firm of planners, Harland Bartholomew and Associates, were retained for the county as had already been engaged by the city. The selection of this firm was made by a committee of eight officials holding parallel appointments in the county and city governments. Financed by joint city-county-federal funds, the research and planning operations of the Bartholomew firm were carried out in conformity with the provisions of the federal Housing Act of 1954, Section 701: Urban Planning Assistance Program.

As certain criticism of the final zoning ordinance has insinuated that its proposed land use classifications were arrived at haphazardly, it is interesting to note the number and kinds of documents that were prepared for or in some part incorporated into the final findings. These are listed in Mr. Garcia's letter which appears on page 10 of this magazine.

In the course of their work of gathering pertinent data and arriving at a considered zoning law, the planners were also attentive to the views and opinions of citizens. The final ordinance submitted by Bartholomew and Associates was preceded by two preliminary proposals. Each of these earlier documents was discussed with joint meetings of the city and county planning boards and with any person or group who sought an interview to present an opinion. As proof of the extent to which citizen opinion influenced the final ordinance, one has only to compare it with the first and much more restrictive one suggested by the planners. Emphatically, the final ordinance was not a superficial or routine matter. And more important than the $50,000 professional fee paid the planners for their survey are the hundreds of hours of time and patient work which citizens contributed to the deliberations.

By early spring of 1963 the Bartholomew group had completed its work and was ready to present the zoning ordinance. Although state law does not require a public referendum on such matters, it does specify a public hearing to acquaint citizens with the provisions of the proposed ordinance. The Planning and Zoning Commissioners decided to hold three such readings. There was no thought of changing the specific zoning recommendations of the proposed ordinance at this time as the ordinance itself set up the machinery and procedure for requesting zoning changes. The intent was to get the principle of zoning approved by ratification of the ordinance and then to review requests for variances in an orderly manner. Certainly no zoning law can expect to perpetuate the status quo for ever; the acceptance of a zoning philosophy, however, does impose a certain method or philosophy of growth and change. These public readings were held in the late summer in Tiejeras Canyon and in both North and South valleys.

At the September reading of the ordinance in the North Valley the Commission was surprised by a request of a drastic zoning change for a plot owned by the Rio Grande Steel Company. This company owns



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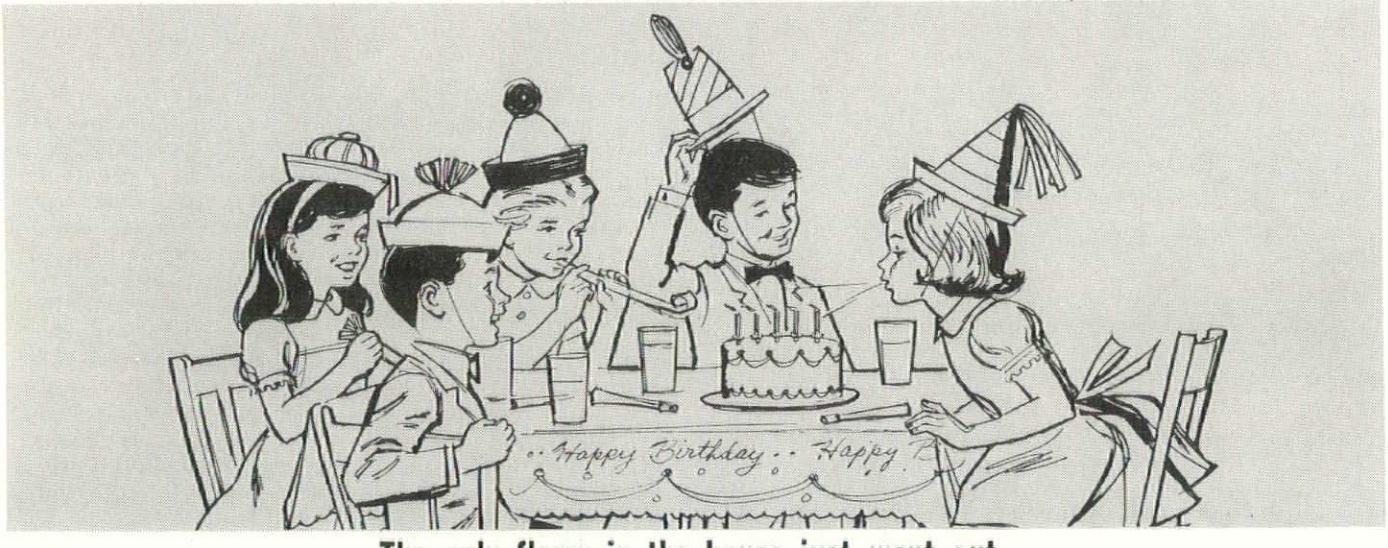

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30 acres of North Valley land which Bartholomew and Associates had zoned for one-half acre residential use. The company, represented by Mr. Otto Miller, executive vice-president, requested that use be changed to light industry.

Faced with this unanticipated move the Zoning Commission wavered. Three of the commissioners favored deferral of the changes of individual property classification until after the ordinance had been accepted and the machinery established to receive and review requests for changes in zoning. Three other commissioners opposing this view were joined by Mr. Garcia, the chairman, and the change was granted.

In thus proceeding, the way was opened for an endless number of other appeals for variances from a *proposed* zoning ordinance with the result that the Commission is now bogged down in doing work that it is unequipped to do and it is prevented from getting down to its main job — a recommendation of acceptance of the zoning ordinance to the Bernalillo County Commission.

To make the plight of the Zoning Commission even more desperate, just at this point they were deprived of necessary technical planning advice as the Bartholomew organization, having completed its contract with the county, closed its Albuquerque office. Now the commissioners, laymen all except for one architect, are attempting to make technical decisions that effect the future physical development of the county.

As the Planning and Zoning Commission wavered and then lost its way a sudden wave of public interest and discussion developed and several new groups entered the controversy. An unorganized but indignant group of north valley residents met to consider and protest the almost certain adverse effects that the building of an industrial plant would have on residential neighborhoods. The Albuquerque Division, New Mexico Chapter AIA, after two years of silence on the issue suddenly issued its statement which is printed herein. This in turn was met by Mr. Garcia's letter of protest written to chapter members, see page 10.

Perhaps the assault which the Rio Grande Steel made on the proposed zoning ordinance and the Commissioners was too aggressive and beligerent to be ignored while the Commissioners attempted to focus on larger principles of zoning. The company sent employees into the area near its proposed factory site to assure owners of residential property of the advantage of the plant's location there. In certain instances the attitudes of company representatives were bullying if not threatening. One has the uncomfortable feeling of a hard-fisted, well-organized business group that was determined to have its way no matter what it might cost the community in terms of an orderly pattern of future growth. Indeed at one public meeting in the County Commissioners' offices, one representative of industry even opined that industry should be above mere zoning. The high-pressured, bullish tactics of the steel company in forcing through its request in its own time and on its own terms has certainly damaged the image of that company within the very few months that it has been under a new management.

* * * *

So much for a summary of events. They are obviously written by a partisan who feels that what he has to say needs to be said. Now for several final observations: *One.* The Albuquerque Division, New Mexico Chapter of AIA simply cannot argue that the proposed Bernalillo County Zoning Ordinance is not based on some kind of planning concept. Members may quarrel with the plan, feel that it should be more detailed — or less detailed — should include certain factors that were overlooked, should be written within another frame of reference. But planning of a kind it is — a scheme of growth and development based on a considered view of an ordered environment. And one that is integrated with an even more detailed concept for the growth of Albuquerque.

Now the Albuquerque Division has a clear responsibility to take an interest in the problems of the community's environment. It is never too late to undertake this responsibility just as it is never too late to state what one believes are the weaknesses of the present plan. But to drop the Bartholomew proposals now would be to leave the already seriously threatened suburban environment of Albuquerque undefended for yet another two or three years. This author feels that it is untimely and presumptuous of the AIA group to suggest now that the present ordinance be merely junked.

A continued absence of zoning beyond the city limits can only result in a disasterous epidemic of visual small pox — scars created by uncontrolled location of industry, commerce, trailer courts over the whole country side. And no amount of later planning, however skillful, will be able to obliterate the deleterious effects of such unguided expansion.

The county would be in a much stronger position to adopt whatever plans the AIA group may propose in two or three years time if it has been guarded in the interum by a zoning ordinance.

Two. There is no other course for the present County Planning and Zoning Commission but to go on with its work, no matter how discouraged the individual members may feel. But as soon as possible the Commission must get out of the business of granting zoning variances and return to the main responsibility of approving and recommending the present proposed ordinance to the County Commissioners. The present course of attempting to pass on zoning variances — a job for which it has neither the technical competence nor the clerical assistance — can only affect the future development of the county adversely.

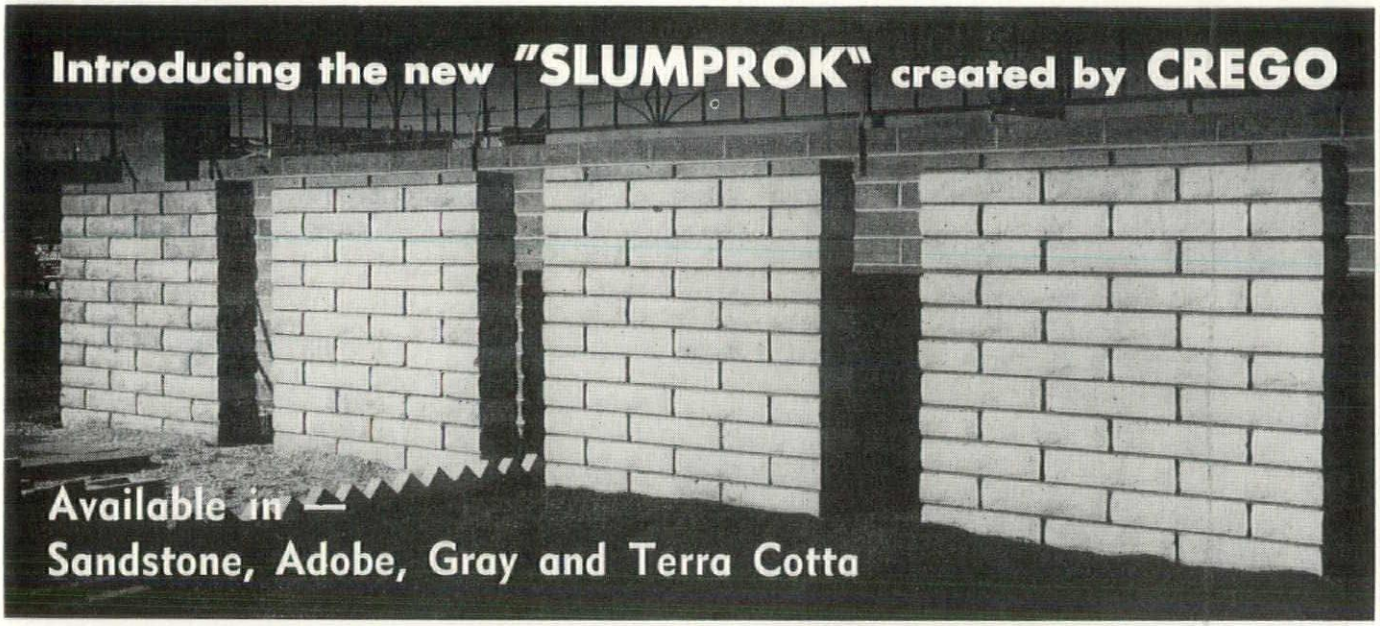
Three. Independent citizens — and a much greater proportion of them — must take an interest in planning concerns. Groups or individuals who have a point to make must take the trouble to be heard.

In the present *imbroglio* with the steel company, those property owners who oppose the situation of an iron factory in an area that is still agricultural and residential should oppose the move by whatever methods are left now that they have been abandoned by the county zoning commission. Discouraging as it is, one must still try to maintain faith in the democratic processes.

Property owners near the plant who support the plant's location there should take a good look at the neighborhoods adjacent to the Santa Fe railroad shops in south Albuquerque or in any other industrial area for that matter.

Four. The Rio Grande Steel Company could reexamine its position and attempt to exchange its present site in the north valley for other land in an area already zoned for industry in the south valley. It could discover that the good will and respect that a new management could incur by such an act of cooperation would be worth the monetary costs.

—Bainbridge Bunting



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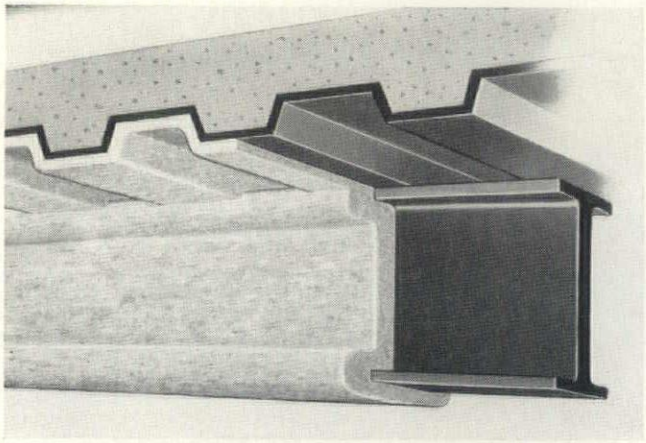

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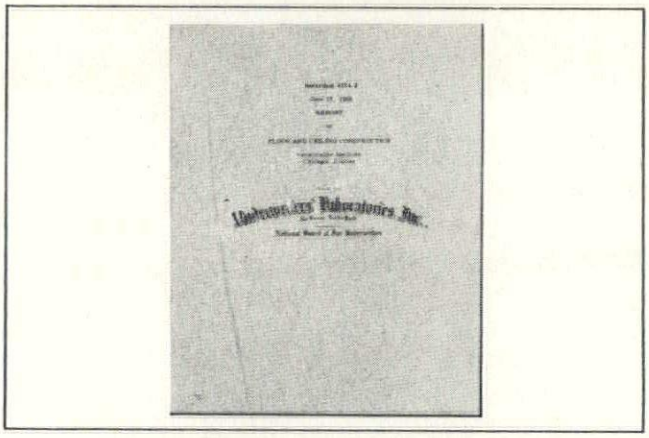

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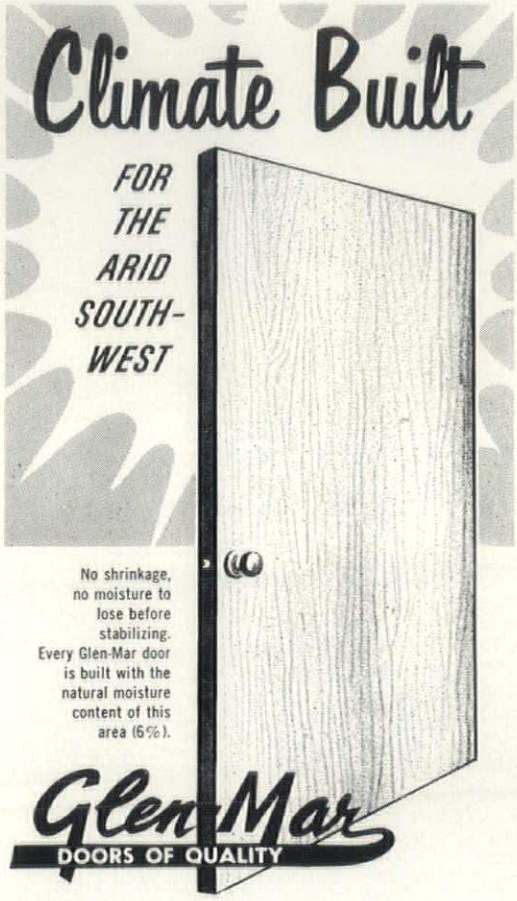

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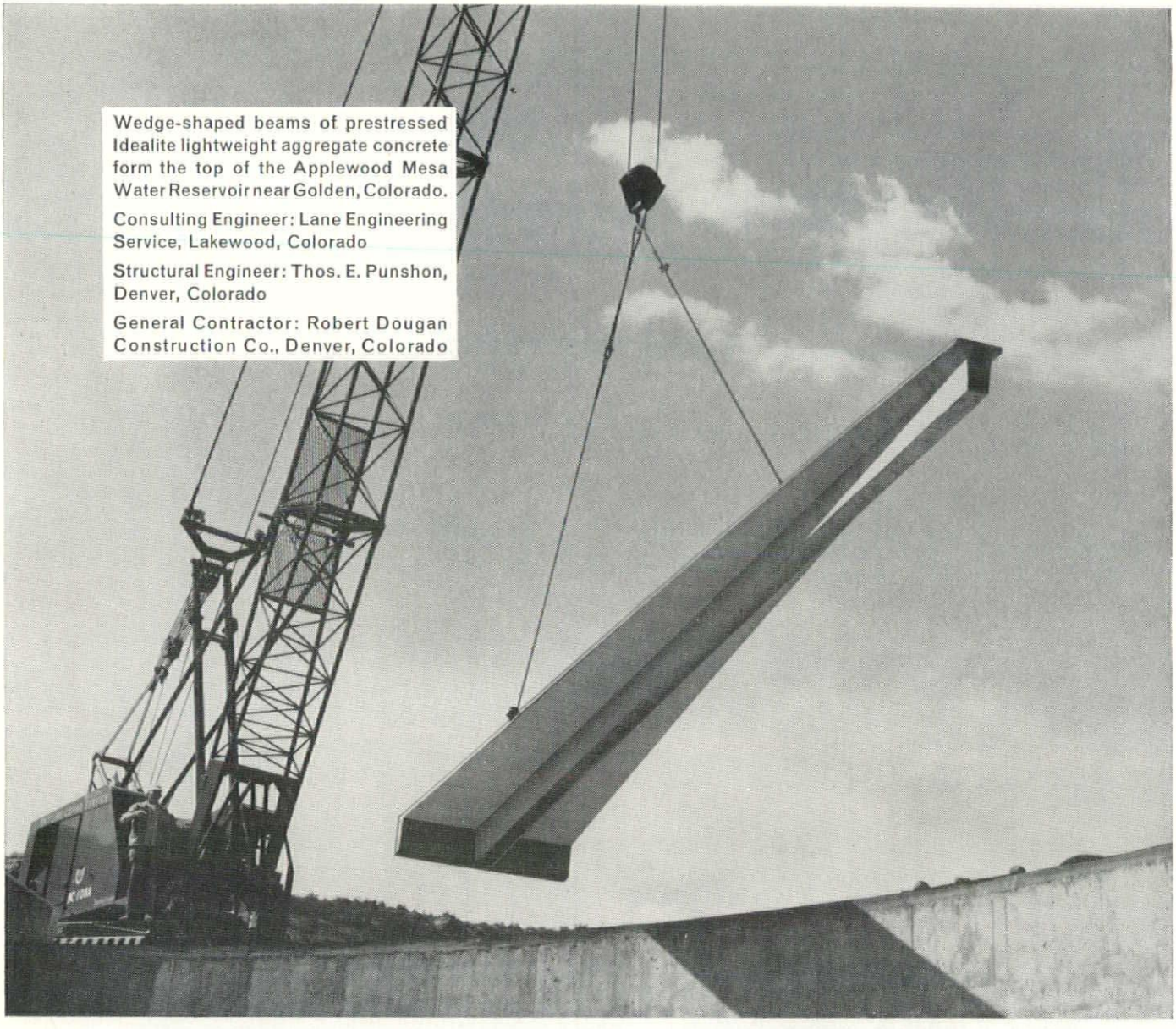

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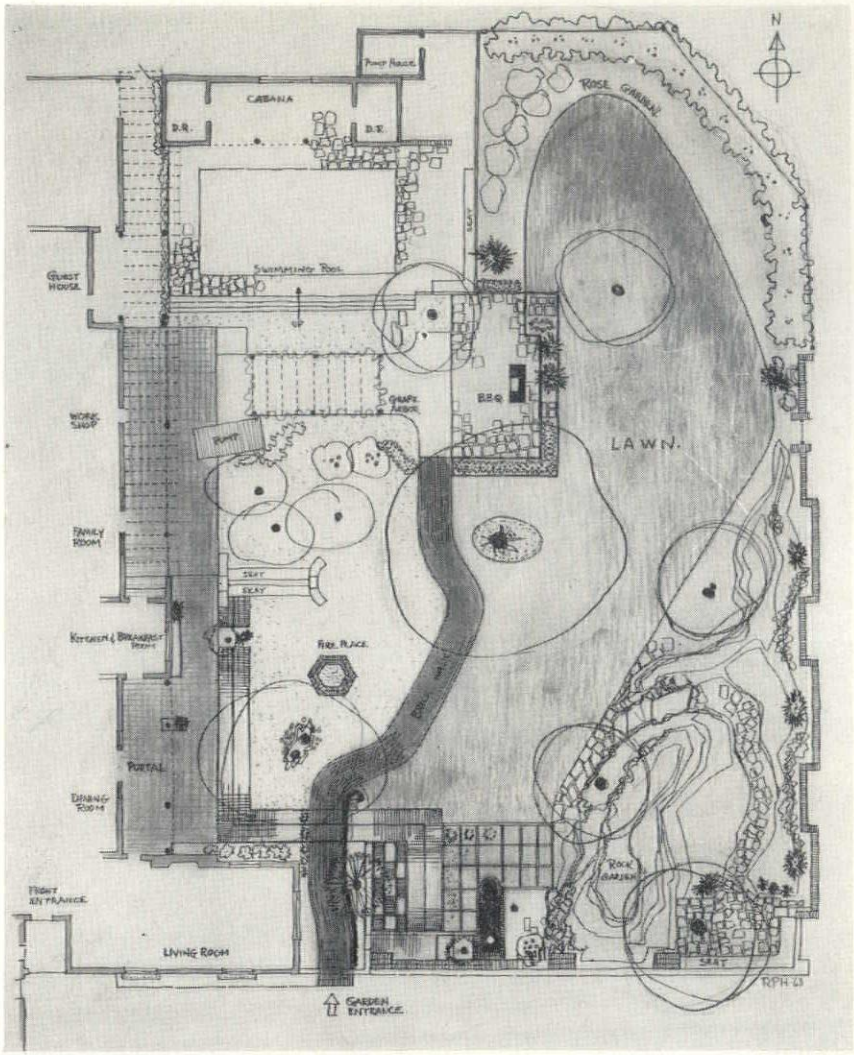


A New Mexico Garden

by Robert Hooton

for Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Rust

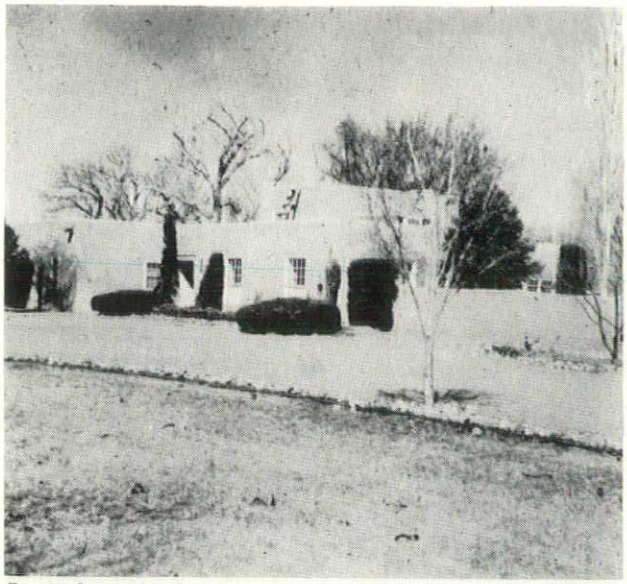
There is nothing like a remodeling job to tax the designer's ingenuity and talent. As a case in point we present the present project — the creation of a series of gardens surrounding a large, old, suburban residence. What the landscape architect and his clients achieved is described under three headings: what there was to start with, what the owners required, and what controlling principles the designer evolved to solve the problem.

Several years ago Mr. and Mrs. John L. Rust bought a large, twenty-five year old adobe residence situated comfortably on some ten acres of land. Although the setting is still rural, the area is threatened by urban development with the possibility that a major throughway may some day pass fairly close to the property. It was therefore desirable to screen off the house and garden with walls and banks of planting.

An extensive pasture had formerly assured a magnificent view of the Sandia Mountains. But in recent months the foreground had been obstructed by a shopping center which could only be shut out of view by the construction of a garden wall. (Figs. 10 and 11).

The architecture of the house, the result of several additions, was lacking in unity. Roof levels and fenestration were confused, and the service wing which faced on the main garden trailed off without definition. Furthermore the house was approached by a large and formless gravel driveway and parking area but the main entrance was lost in a corner area and obscured by planting.

Within the main garden area stood several trees— a fine cottonwood and a number of fruit trees, the remnants of a once large orchard. In addition there was a



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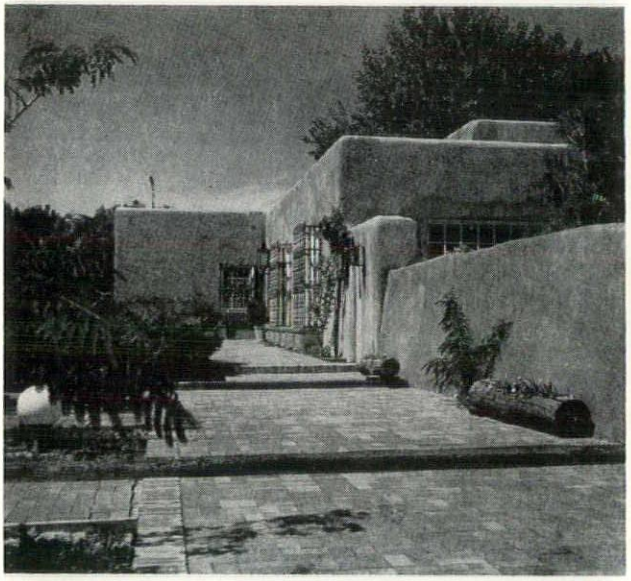

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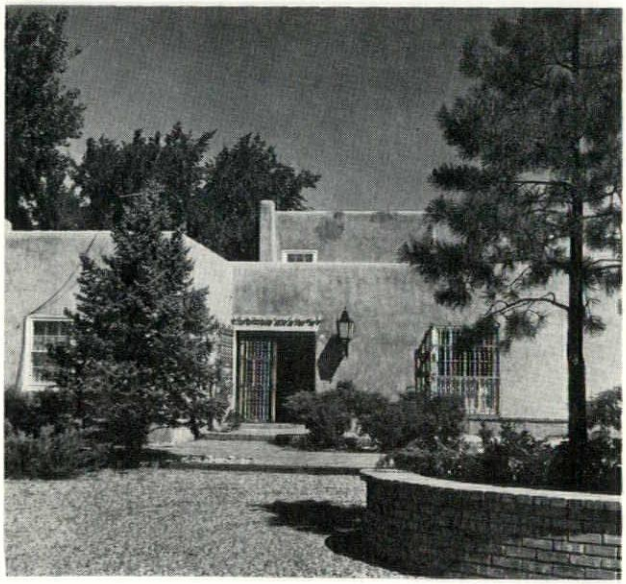


grape arbor, a swimming pool and underground installations of a well, pump and water pipes. All these elements of course, were to be retained.

To these basic features the owners added a number of requirements. They wanted a spacious lawn and play area for three young children, but above all a peaceful and ordered environment for outdoor living and for the enjoyment of nature. To insure a reposeful quality they specified a garden demanding but a minimum of maintenance. For who can relax in a garden that requires interminable care? In this main garden the family spends much of its waking hours—dining, reading, resting and playing.

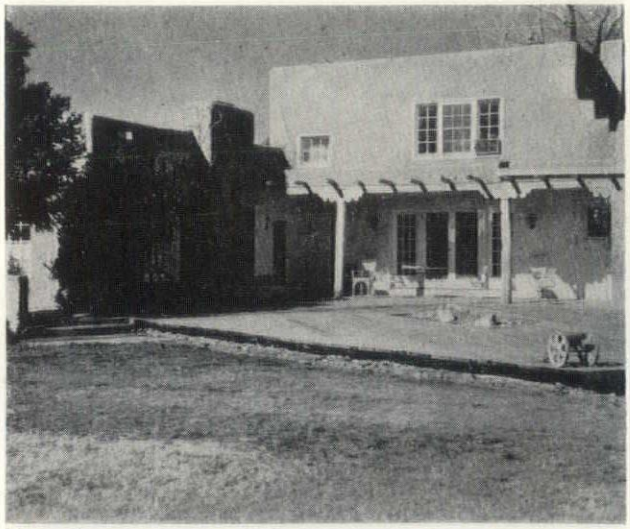
In addition to this family use, there should also be accommodations for entertaining. Generally this would be for small groups, but occasionally larger gatherings take place and often these are mixed groups of parents and children. In particular, the swimming pool should have a controlled but easy access for guests.

Lastly, the family is enthusiastic in its discovery and appreciation of the Southwest. They like adobe construction, and the red tile and pottery of Mexico, and the ceramic work and sculpture of New Mexican craftsmen. Several works of this kind were commissioned for the garden.

So the designer went to work. The main entrance was a problem. The ill-defined driveway was bordered on the side adjacent to the house by a brick terrace in which the brick were held in place by railroad ties. (Fig. 3). Thus the expanse of brick is broken by rectangular panels of wood and by big planters which were spaced to accommodate two magnificent clumps of Pfitzer juniper. A line of mimosa trees was planted parallel to the facade and garden wall and this will add shade and clarify the direction toward the entrance. Most interesting of all, the tie-enclosed brick panels gradually ascend from the level of the drive to the entrance vestibule (Fig. 3). The main entrance was further marked by an enormous iron-bracketed lantern brought from Mexico. The disparity of door and window forms of the old house was minimized by a series of turned redwood *rejas* which further emphasize the semi-public quality of the entrance area.

The sea of gravel that was the driveway then became the perfect setting for the important granite and copper sculpture placed in a raised planting area (cover photograph). Mrs. Rust commissioned this work from Jo Roper of Las Vegas. Situated so as to make an island turn-around for cars, the eight foot sculpture is raised on a three-foot high, car proof terrace. The planter is filled with three Ponderosa pines and an underplanting of junipers, Chinese holly and arbelia which create a woodland atmosphere. Fog jets at ground level add a further dimension when seen by either daylight or artificial light.

In the main garden the first decision was to wall in the two sides not already defined by the main house and *cabaña*. This wall would insure the desired privacy as well as the necessary control for the swimming



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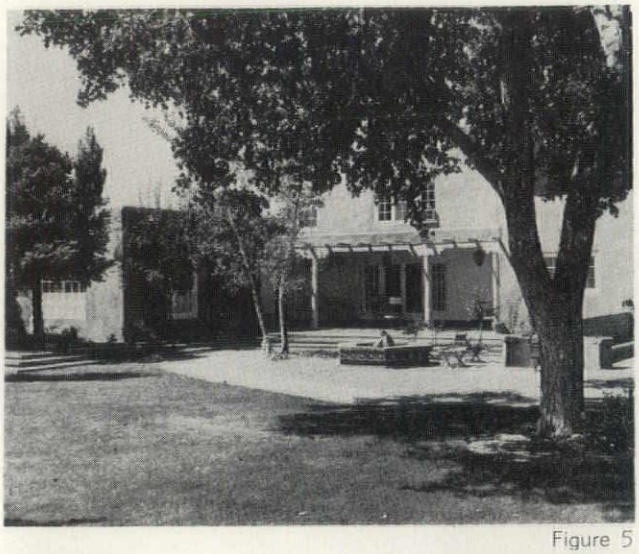

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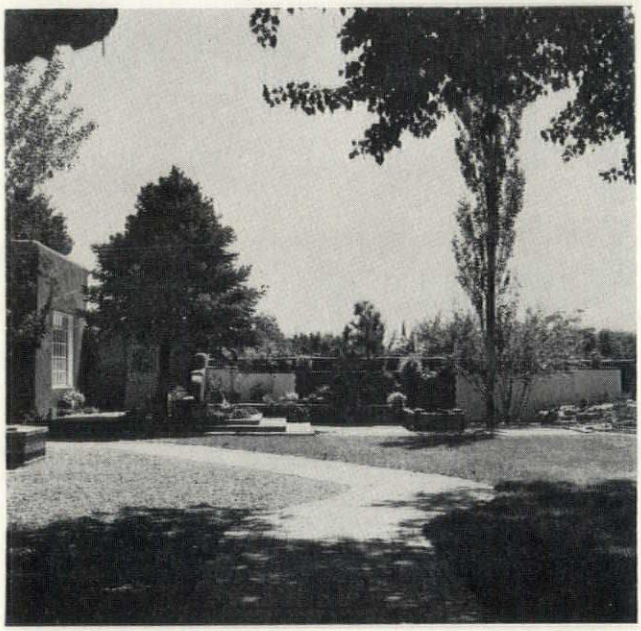

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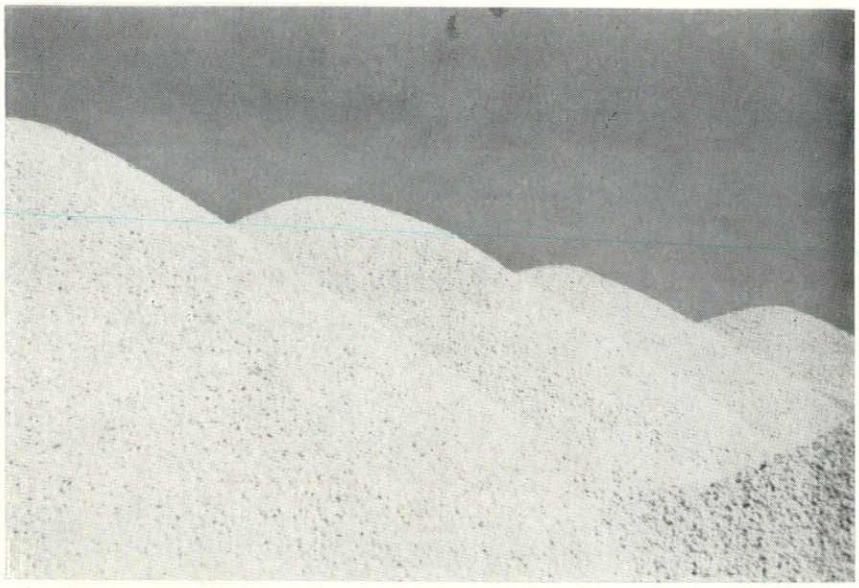

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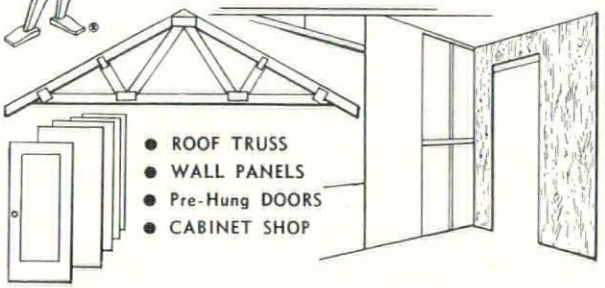

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pool. After doing this the old chain link fence, which surrounded the swimming pool and cut it off entirely from the garden, could be removed. The garden wall has an interesting form. Built of fired adobe brought from Mexico, the alternating eight and sixteen foot bays are staggered. This arrangement eliminates the need for buttresses and creates a fine background for planting. The height of this wall was carefully gauged to shield the unsightly view of the shopping center yet to reveal as much as possible of the mountains. Within this enclosure the 100 by 150 foot area has been developed into a veritable oasis.

Flexibility of use was another premise of this design. The garden adjacent to the house divides into four distinct areas: the *portál* terrace which opens off the living-dining-breakfast rooms, the children's terrace off the family room, the barbeque and picnicing area under the grape arbor, and the swimming pool with its *cabaña*. While all of these areas can be used separately since they are partially defined by walls, changes of level and different paving materials, there is enough flexibility in disposition to permit large gatherings to infiltrate the combined areas. In a mixed gathering of adults and children, a spirit of community could be maintained without confusion.

The generous path that winds through the garden from north to south provides the guests' access to the swimming pool and it also defines the limit of the living terrace where use is too heavy to permit a grass lawn to flourish (Fig. 8). Beyond the brick walk is the spacious lawn which was another requirement.

The owners well-formulated request was for a peaceful, orderly garden where the family could enjoy nature, maintain a feeling of family unity and privacy and yet experience a sense of tidy spaciousness. This concept was attained by providing the garden with comfortable limits and by keeping its lines simple. The planting is open and avoids crowding. Not essentially conceived as a flower garden, most of the planting is tree or shrubs. Aside from a few perennials, flowers are confined to flower pots which are massed along a display ledge against the south wall or on the steps leading up to the garden gate (Figs. 6 and 7). Color is obtained for the garden by the use of Mexican tile or adobe or in the variety of pavement materials employed. In contrast to the large gravelled living terrace and the spacious grass lawn is a secluded retreat in one corner of the garden. This area is partially masked by a burm treated as a rock garden and planted with shrubs of unusual coloration. Thus there are a wide variety of nature experiences to be found within this defined space.

The first thing that the visitor feels when he enters this garden is a sense of harmony; the design that emerges here is not a remote and academic thing, conceived at a drafting board and then turned over to underlings to be carried out according to specifications. This garden evolved through days of labor and thoughtful searching. Many of the best ideas came to the designer as he worked on location, solutions which were suggested by the very materials and plants he was using. And, equally felicitous, there was a strong understanding and trust between designer and client. These things one feels as soon as he steps through the garden gate.

—Bainbridge Bunting.

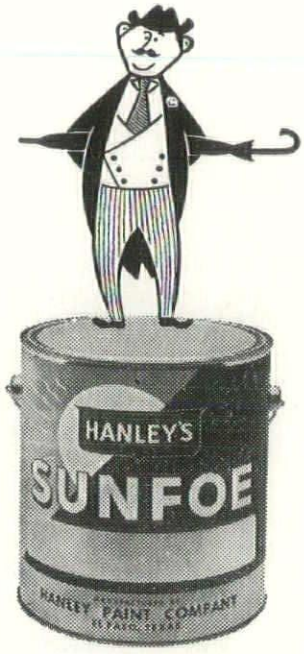
Photographs of completed garden, Jean Rodgers Oliver.

Sketch plan by Robert Hooton.

Figure 10

Figure 11

FOR OVER A QUARTER
OF A CENTURY



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NOTES ON READING

Van Deren Coke, TAOS AND SANTA FE, The Artist's Environment, 1882-1942, *University of New Mexico Press*, Albuquerque, 1963, $7.50.

The art gallery of the recently completed Fine Arts Center of the University of New Mexico was opened to the public on October tenth. The first exhibition, entitled "Taos and Santa Fe, The Artist's Environment," drew an attendance of more than 1000 persons on opening night. Devoted to the painting done in New Mexico between 1882 and 1942, the exhibit comprises 109 paintings, graphic works and pieces of sculpture which are handsomely mounted in the new gallery. The catalogue for the exhibit, which is written in book form and bound in hard cover, is the subject of this review.

Two-thirds of the 160 page catalogue is devoted to an historical account of the discovery and development of northern New Mexico as one of the major art colonies in the United States during the first third of the present century. Beginning with a consideration of the reasons for the selection of New Mexico as an art center (scenery, Indians, inexpensive living and the disposition of New Mexico communities to accept the artist), the author chronicles the arrivals and the visits of the many painters who soon made the colony famous. He also relates the formation of the various associations and groups of artists. Written without pedantry, the essay nevertheless firmly documents each step of the development. Drawing his information from personal interviews and local accounts as well as art periodicals and newspapers of national circulation, this history gives the facts and the flavor of the local developments but sets the movement within the framework of the total American art scene. One feels sure that the definitive history of the movement has finally been written.

The Taos and Santa Fe Schools were not "schools" in a stylistic sense as were the Fauves or the Ash Can School — groups of painters who shared certain points of aesthetic theory or artistic traits. Even the famous Taos Society of Artists was essentially a promotional association, formed for the purposes of publicity and the circulation of exhibitions of the members' paintings. Lacking a stylistic unanimity upon which to base the study, Mr. Coke found a common denominator, as the title of his book indicates, in the effect which environment exerted on the artists. In this way also, he was permitted to consider important artists who merely visited New Mexico along with those who made it their permanent home. This contrast of the work of resident and visitor serves to emphasize the role played by the New Mexican environment.

As one might guess, New Mexico did not affect all artists in the same way. Some painters like Stuart Davis or Kuniyoshi found the scene intimidating and managed to do very few pictures during their stays; others like Georgia O'Keefe responded to the *ambiente* wholeheartedly and flourished. Still other artists merely applied their characteristic ways of looking and painting to the new scene: John Marin painted Taos Mountain or a corn dance with the same force and jagged rhythm that he viewed the Main coast. Edward Hooper, on the other hand, searched the streets of Santa Fe for days before he found a sympathetic subject in St. Francis Cathedral or the D. and R. G. locomotive.

The story ends with the advent of World War II. Not only does the whole character of northern New Mexico begin to change with that event, but great numbers of new artists moved into the area. To have included these would either have expanded the physical proportions of the exhibit beyond the limits of practicality or have reduced the numbers of pictures by which the more prominent older artists could have been represented.

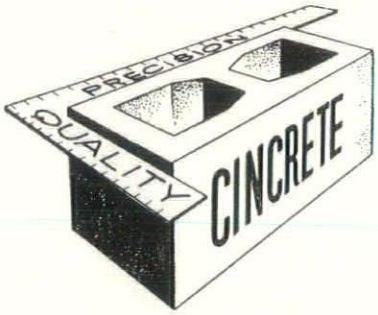
One great contribution which this study makes to our understanding of New Mexican painting is to place it in relationship to the larger movements that were under way in America. Previous accounts of Taos painting have too often tended to regard it as an isolated phenomenon whose artists were indiscriminately lauded. Here, however, the first Taos artists are seen as latter day painters of Indian subjects — a specialty which began in American painting in the 1830's — or as a western extension of the Hudson River School of landscape painting. Clarified also are the relationships of certain New Mexican pictures to Post-Impressionism, to the Ash Can School and to the Armory Show of 1913. Although key figures of the Armory Show like Marsden Hartley were undobutedly influential to later New Mexican painting, there is perhaps a tendency on the author's part to over-emphasize the importance of this particular milestone in the development of New Mexican painting. Another minor defect, it seems to this reviewer, might be a lack of mention of the growing impact of commercial art galleries on the work of local artists.

Along with its clarity and accuracy, the thing that strikes one most forcibly about the book is the soundness of the author's aesthetic judgments. He is not afraid to express a negative criticism any more than a positive one, but on feels assured that these judgments are not personal. Mr. Coke's treatment of Raymond Jonson is a case in point. ". . . He has, in more recent years, made wide use of a mechanical splatter machine to achieve a flat, granular color application that unfortunately recalls window display techniques. However, his autonomous forms, animated by vigorous color relationships, have depended less and less on mechanical devices and more on a build-up of various surfaces by the use of collage elements. Often, optical illusion is Jonson's intention, and when successfully carried out, his work can stand with the best painting in this vein.

"Some of his pictures are cast in the past tense. This dated look stems from Jonson's extended geographical isolation, but at his best — and he is a very prolific painter — they press upon us with force . . ."

The impressive thing about the catalogue is how much has been said in so short a space without sacrificing readability or grace of literary style. Mr. Coke is a master of succinct statement.

A native of Kentucky, the author was trained as a business executive and professional photographer before he turned to art history. Prior to his association with the UNM Department of Art, where he is acting Chairman as well as Director of the Art Gallery, he had served as gallery director and teacher at universities in Arizona and Florida. The variety of background and his recent arrival in New Mexico were undoubtedly helpful to him in arriving at his accurate appraisal and recountal of early painting in New Mexico. —*Bainbridge Bunting.*



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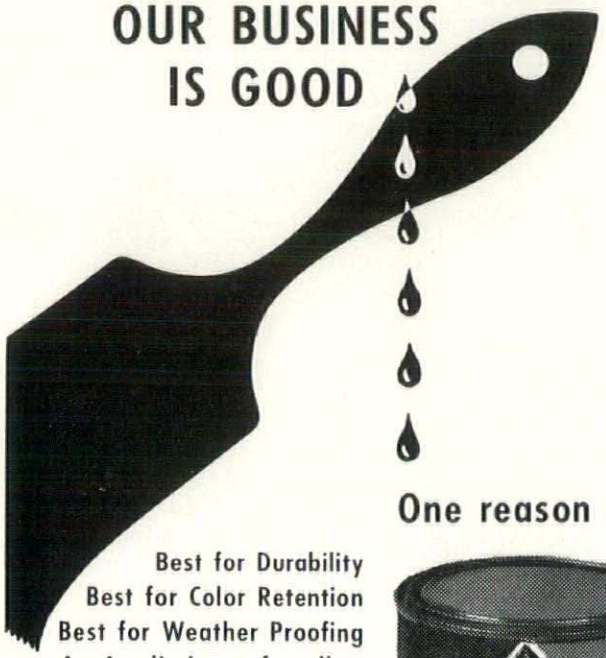

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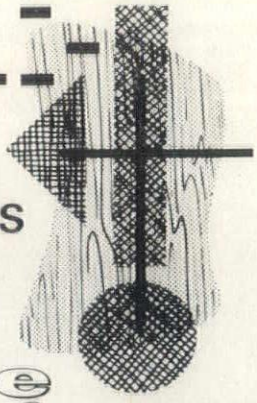

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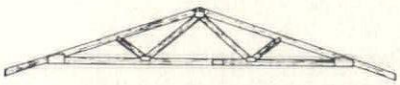

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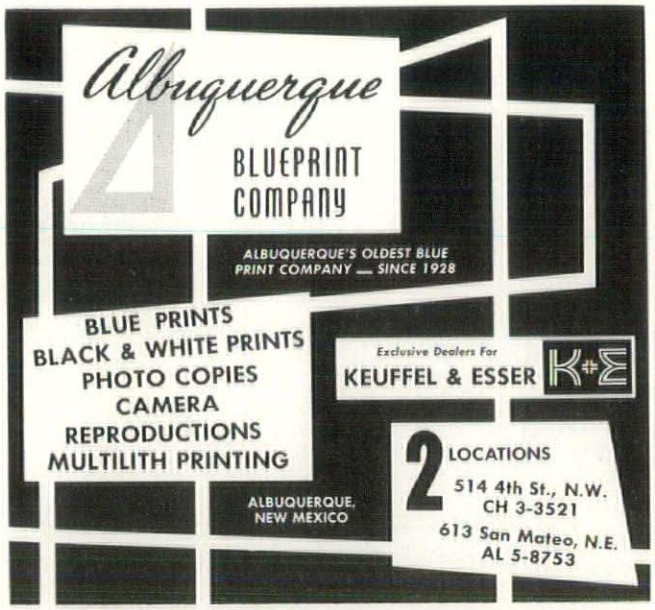

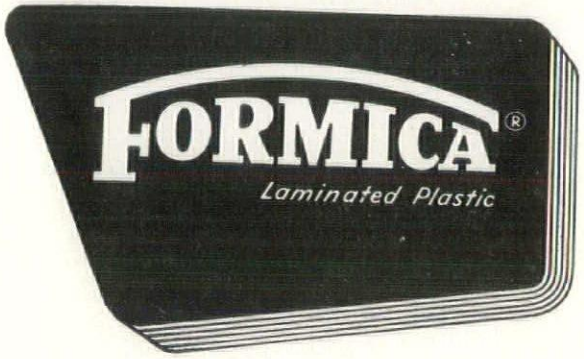

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the new mexico architect nma

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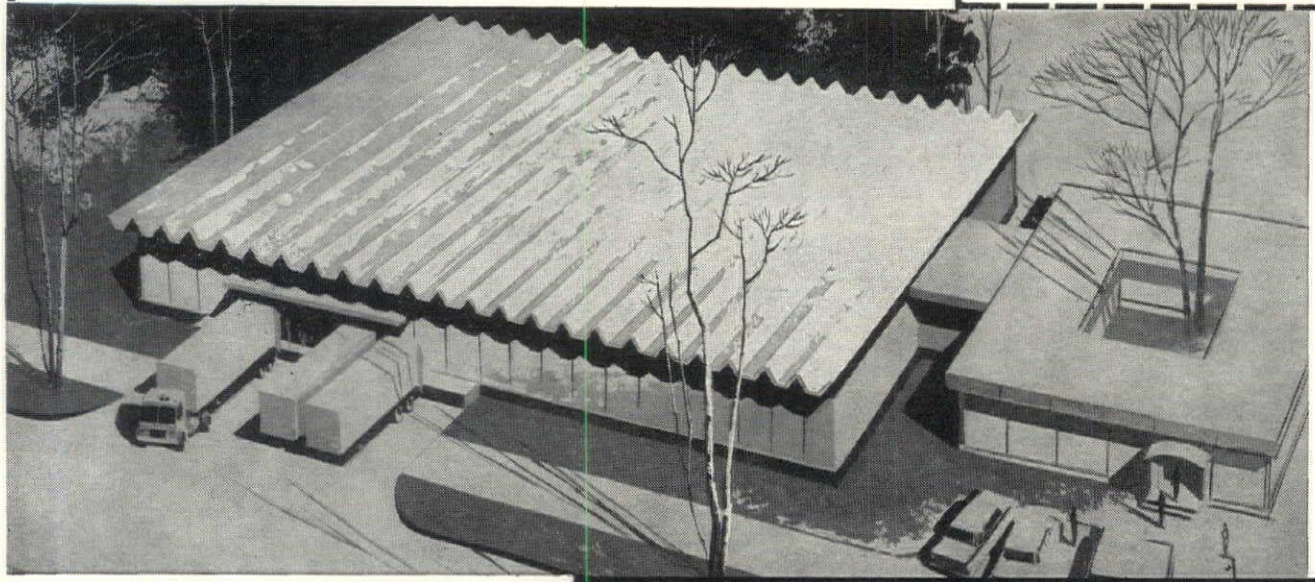

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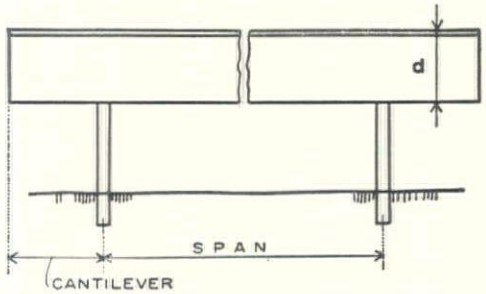

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Formula:

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h = ft.
t = in.
a = ft.

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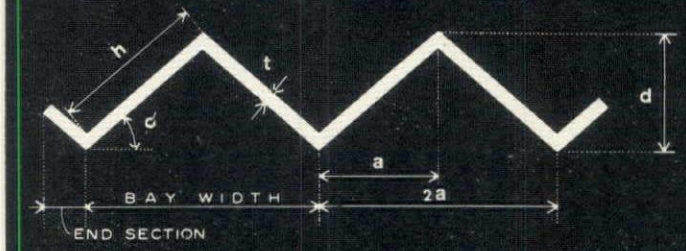

SPAN	ø* max.	ø* min.	d max.	d min.	2a (1)	t (2)	reinforcing (3)
40′	45°	25°	4′-0″	2′-9″	15′	4″	1.2-1.6
60′	45°	25°	6′-0″	4′-0″	20′	4″ 6″	1.9-2.7
75′	45°	25°	7′-6″	5′-0″	25′	4″ 6″	2.6-3.7
100′	45°	25°	10′-0″	6′-9″	30′	5″ 6″	4.0-5.2

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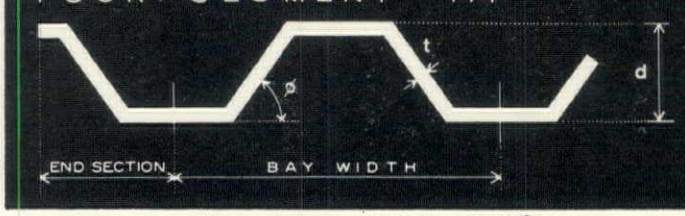

40′	45°	30°	5′	2′-6″	20′	3″	1.5-2.0
60′	45°	30°	6′	4′	25′	3″ 3½″	2.0-3.0
75′	45°	30°	7′-6″	5′	30′	3″ 4″	2.5-4.0
100′	45°	30°	10′	6′-6″	40′	4″ 5″	4.0-6.0

* max. recommended slope is 45°

(1) values shown may vary with architectural design

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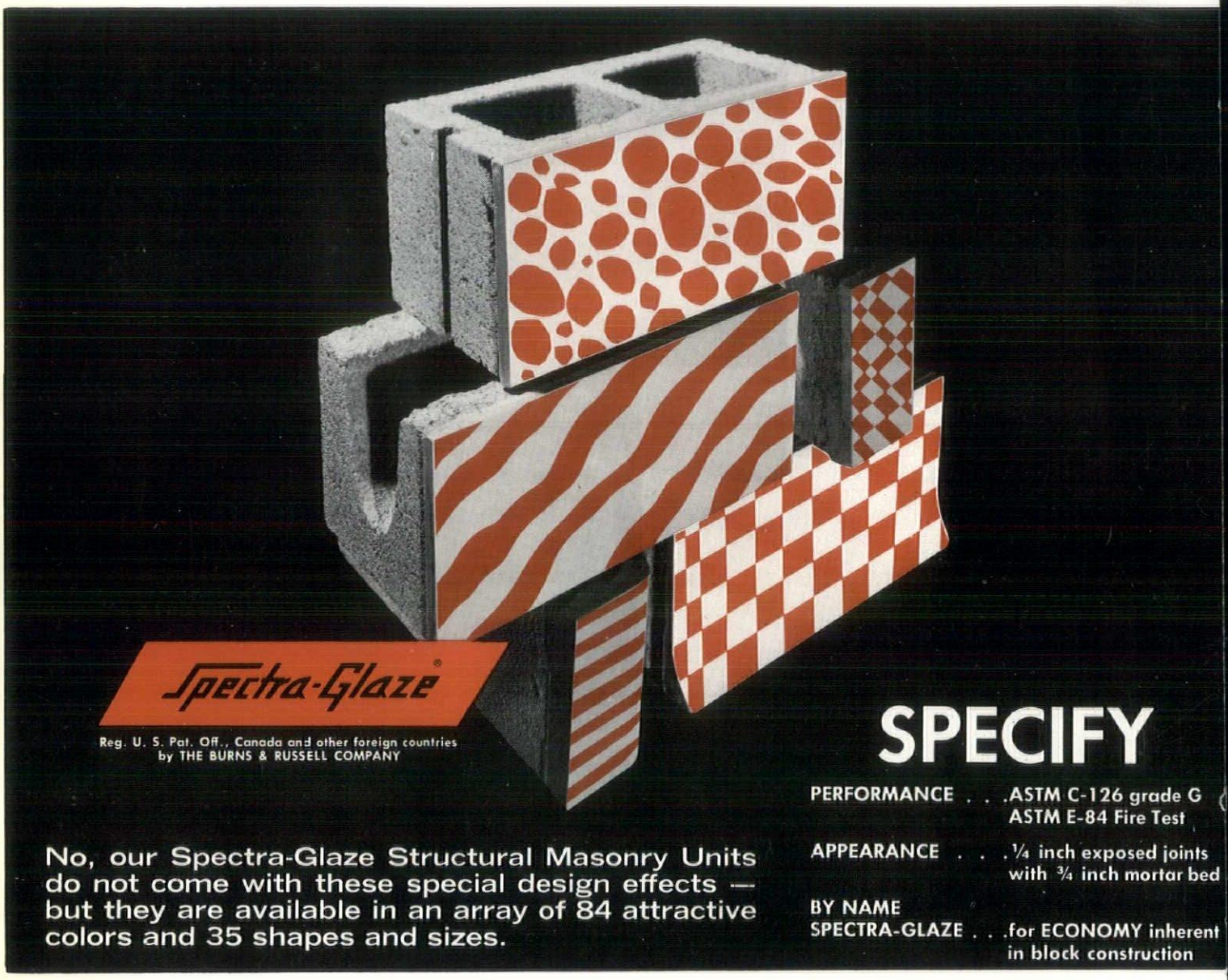

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