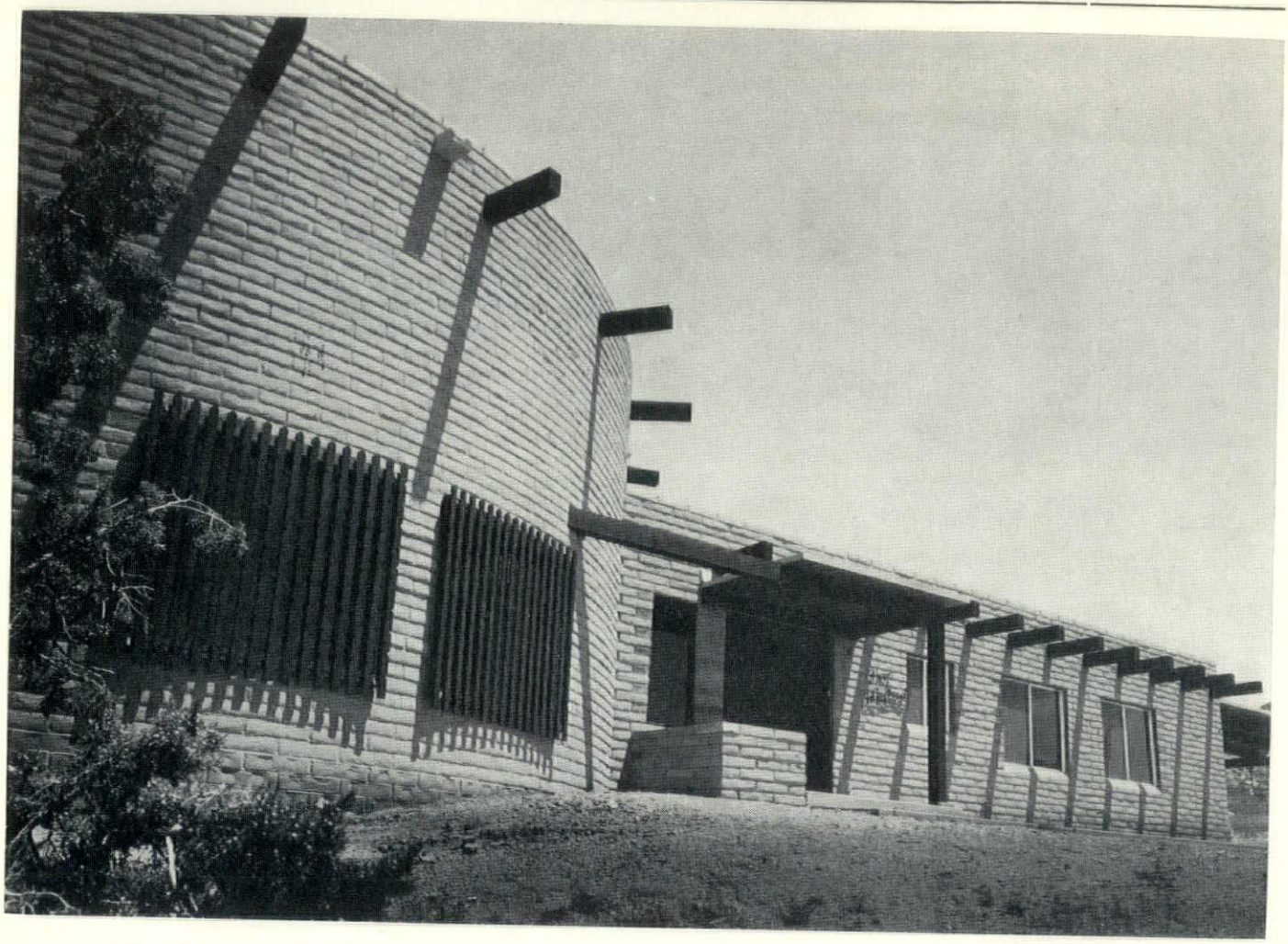
new mexico architecture

july-august 1969 50¢



Residence of Dr. & Mrs. Steven H. Feagler, (in Four Hills) Albuquerque, N. M.

nma

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(Cover—La Luz, Albuquerque, by Jerry Goffe)

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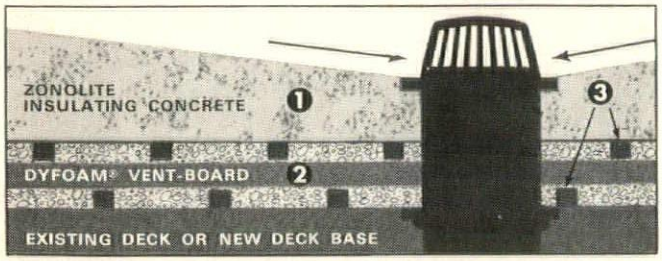

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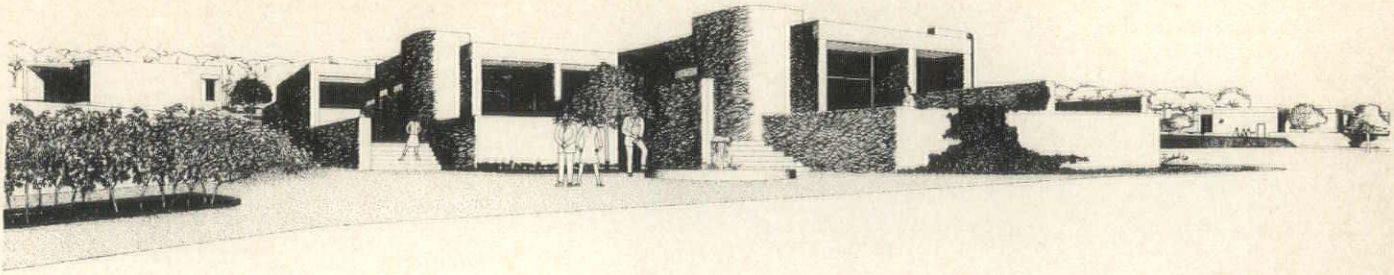

La Luz Albuquerque, New Mexico

ANTOINE PREDOCK, ARCHITECT

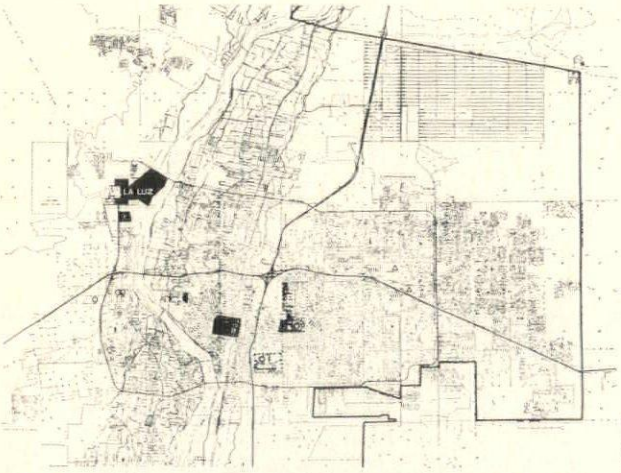

Fig. 2

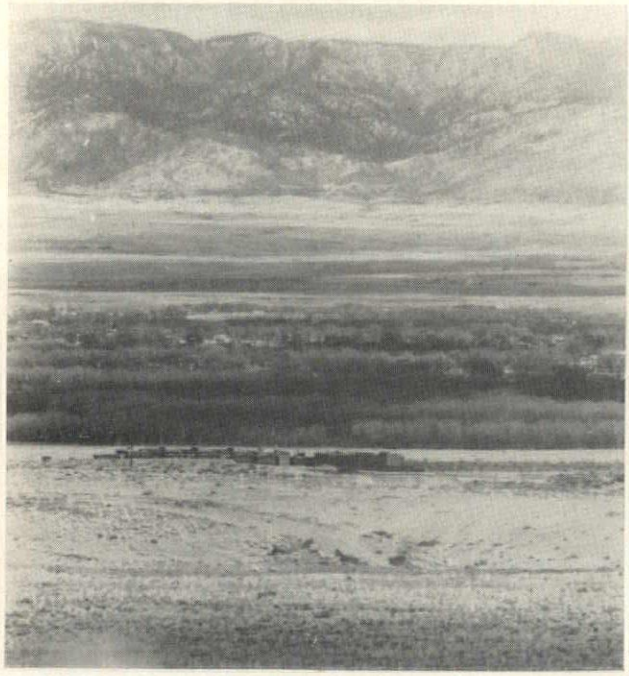

Fig. 3

The concept of La Luz involves a basic attitude toward the land: An urban environment and large open natural areas should exist together—especially in New Mexico. Existing natural patterns should be recognized and reinforced rather than eliminated. The delicate balance of plant and wild life need not be destroyed by development.

In acquiring the 500 acres for the La Luz project, the owners sought a large unspoiled natural area with convenient access to Albuquerque *(fig. 2)*. The chosen site is northwest of downtown Albuquerque, with a mile of Rio Grande frontage, 1½ miles of State Highway 448 frontage and quick access to Interstate 40. Great extremes in topography and plant and animal life exist on the site. The flood plain bosque, due to the absence of ditch roads, has not fallen prey to litter and general despoilation as have many other stretches of bosque around Albuquerque *(fig. 3)*. Migratory wildfowl, muskrat and beaver abound in the lowland zone along with cattails, giant cottonwoods and the many other familiar river plants.

Abutting and contrasting this lush greenbelt is the harsh semi-arid mesa, climbing gradually to a height of 100 feet above the river at the southwest corner of the property. The grey-greens of chamizo, rice grass, rabbit brush, and smoke bush of the mesa effectively compliment the almost alien greenery of the bosque zone.

The higher ground of the La Luz site commands an incredible panorama of the distant Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the north, the nearer west face of the Sandias and the Manzanos disappearing to the south. The green line of the Rio Grande Valley undulates through these powerful landforms. Spectacular views of the city add to the panorama, especially at night with the black void of the undeveloped mesa and river valley forming

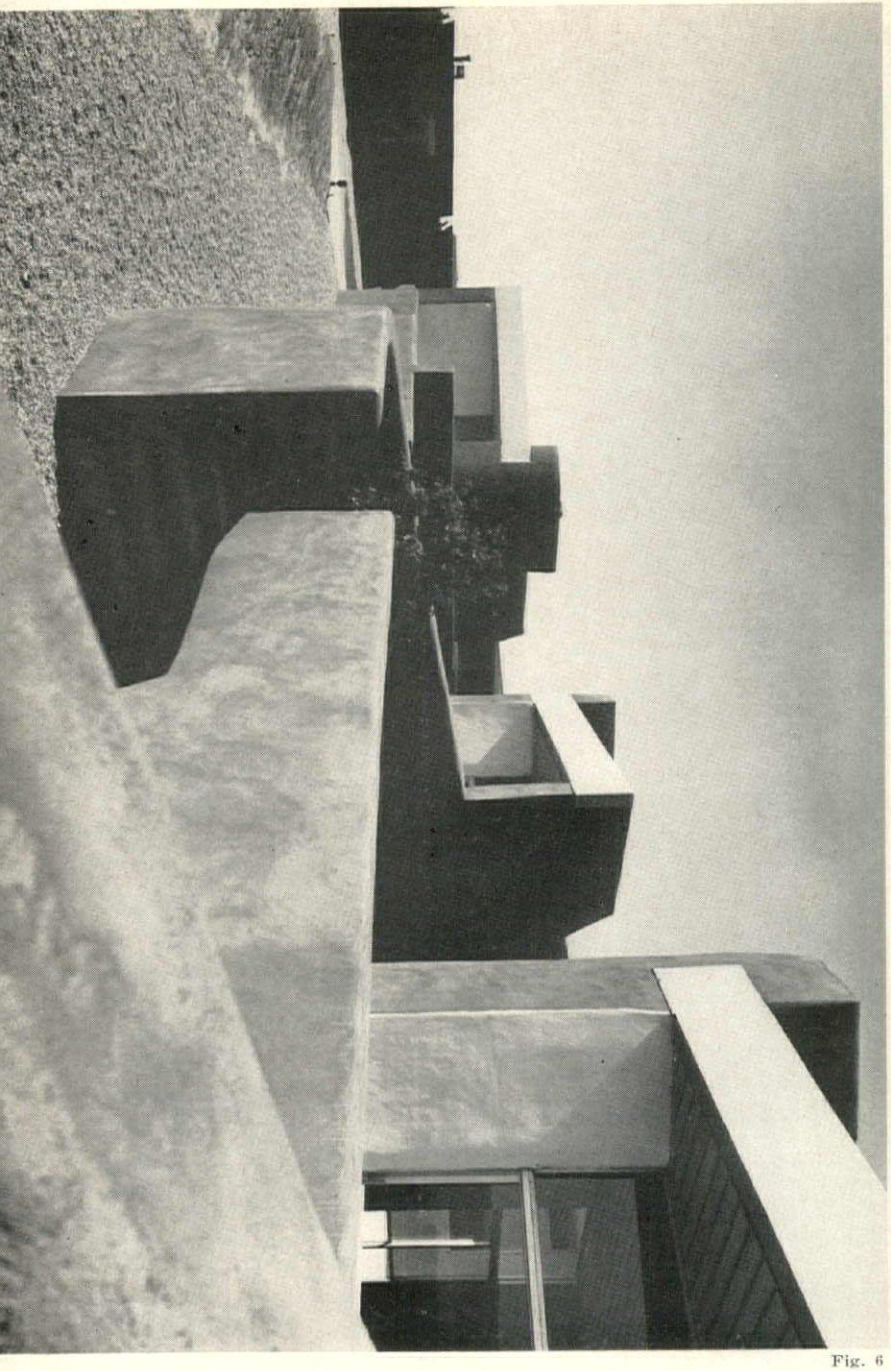

Fig. 6

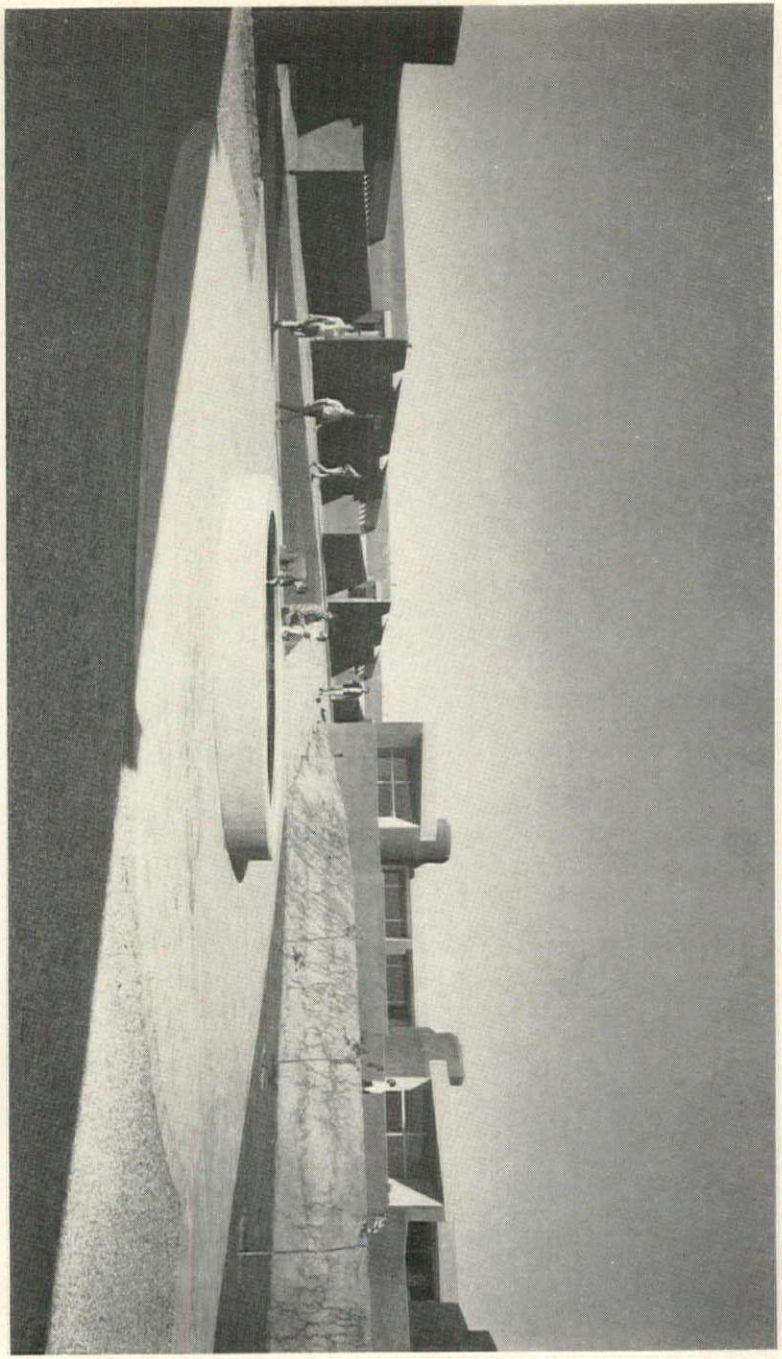

Fig. 5

Fig. 4

the foreground for the brilliant lighting display of the city.

Thinking of the inevitable West Side expansion to the Rio Puerco, it appears obvious that one day the La Luz site will lie geographically in the center of Albuquerque. The resultant land values and uncontrolled west side growth could ravage this beautiful but vulnerable site unless the entire acreage were committed to a plan. To avoid the proliferation of Polynesian-Swiss chalet suburbia, the decision was made immediately to build a community of mixed uses with controlled planning, rather than simply wholesale lots with token architectural controls.

Visually, the essence of the site seemed to lie in its open sweep to the river with the sense of being part of a great valley. Ecologically, the river valley seemed to be most vulnerable to development—the aquifer resources and their recharge zones must be protected. Viewed in the context of probable leapfrog urbanization of the West Side, provision for a significant large open space on the site seemed necessary. With vehicular access already present at the high western edge of the site at a substantial distance from the river, and in the light of the three aforementioned considerations, the structure of the development plan was evolved.

Development will occur in concentrations on the higher ground of the site *(fig. 4)*. Concentrations of connected buildings will avoid the mistake of building a patchwork-gridiron of houses at a density where neither buildings nor landscape have visual dominance. Rather, concentrated buildings will recognize particular landscape and view nuances and will generate a strong man-made landscape "event" analogous to a butte or mountain. Concentrated development can then economically justify the provision of large natural open spaces on the site, which will occupy approximately 200 of the 500-acre tract. Through the close yet private placement of housing units sharing smaller enclaves of open space in the form of plazas and patios, a greater sense of community will be evoked than generally exists in suburbia *(fig. 5)*. The large central open area between the buildings and the river will remain natural and will interconnect with the smaller open areas enclosed within the building cluster. A curvilinear pedestrian route separated from vehicular traffic will connect plaza and courtyard spaces to form a sequence of "places." This pedestrian system will also connect with a major existing arroyo which runs west to east from the high ground west of the project. Landscaping and paths will reinforce this natural drainage pattern to create a meandering pedestrian path to the Bosque. The Bosque will be maintained as a wild life area with occasional trails and clearings for hiking and picnicking.

Street alignments will follow the topography in gently curving loops. The depth of street intrusions eastward from State Highway 448 will be

Fig. 7

Development plan legend

1. *Houses on large lots (landscape dominates)*
2. *Medium density connected housing (black band)*
3. *Mixed commercial uses and high density housing*
4. *Regional shopping center*
5. *Community recreation* 6. *Elementary school*
7. *Natural open space* 8. *Undeveloped bosque*

Fig. 8

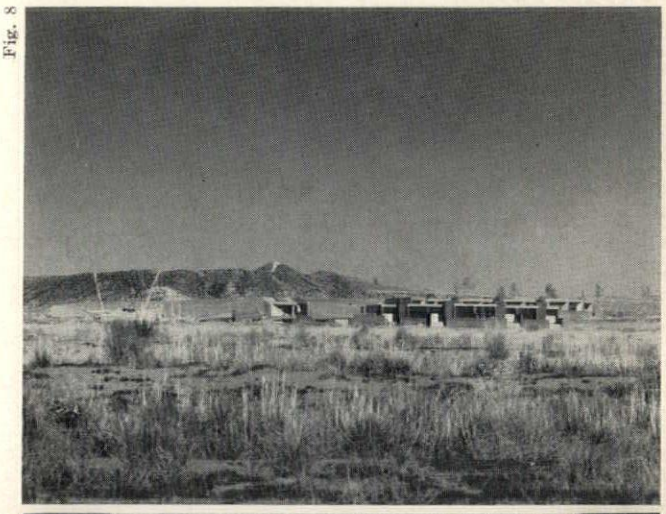

Fig. 9

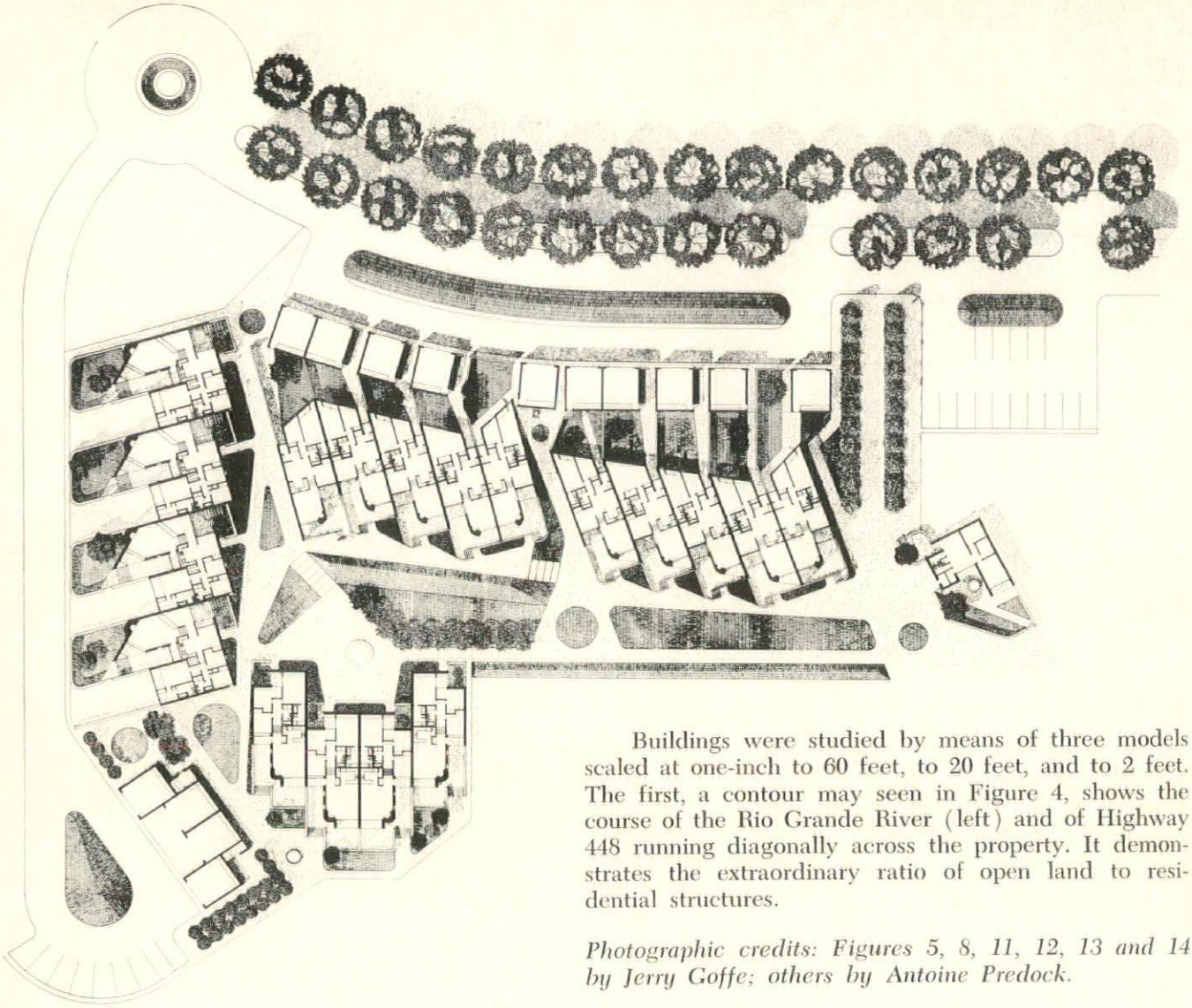

Fig. 10

Buildings were studied by means of three models scaled at one-inch to 60 feet, to 20 feet, and to 2 feet. The first, a contour may seen in Figure 4, shows the course of the Rio Grande River (left) and of Highway 448 running diagonally across the property. It demonstrates the extraordinary ratio of open land to residential structures.

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Fig. 11

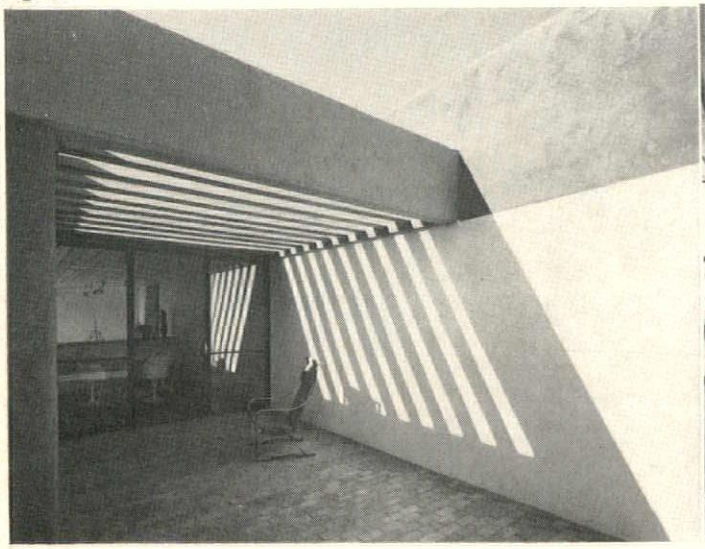
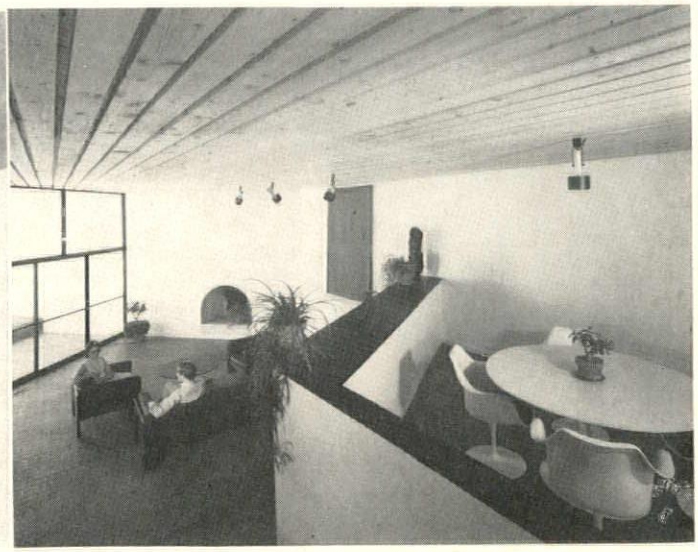


Fig. 12



minimized. The clustered housing will be served from the eastern edge of the vehicular loop system, while contained within the loops will be apartments and commercial enclaves relating to the highway scale of the State Highway 448 "strip" *(fig. 7)*. While an exciting mixture of commercial, institutional and residential uses is planned for La Luz, it will by no means be a self-sufficient "new town." The outer loop freeway system will bind La Luz to Albuquerque and a projected major shopping center at Montaño Road and State Highway 448 should have area-wide response.

The Albuquerque City Planning Department was extremely receptive to the plan for La Luz. The mixture of dwelling types, commercial activities and recreational uses made possible by their special-use zoning will avoid the monotony of many suburbs. A variety of choices as to way of life will be offered the homebuyer, rather than merely a choice of "model homes." In La Luz the choices will range from the urban apartment to the single-family detached house on a large lot. The large lot houses will respect the opposite threshhold of density from the concentrated housing—the lots will be large enough so that the landscape will dominate the buildings.

The project will be progressively annexed to Albuquerque—the master plan defining the zoning under the Special Use Zoning program *(fig. 7)*. A mixture of economic levels is planned including low income housing, but because of initial cash flow the more expensive housing has been started first—$15/s. f. construction cost with $29-40,000 sales price. The housing constructed thus far at La Luz is for sale under a landowners' association legal framework. This means that by owning a house the family owns a share in the open common land and a multitude of recreational opportunities—including swimming, specially designed play sculpture and riding trails. Maintenance of roads and common areas is shared by the landowners' association.

In many ways the cluster planning of La Luz and the buildings themselves are very traditional, but not by assembling superficial trappings in the name of pueblo architecture (i.e.: fake vigas, elaborately contrived parapet erosion, etc.). In similar ways to the response of the indigenous builder, the buildings at La Luz respond to the climate and landscape of New Mexico. The west side of the constructed buildings offers an essentially blank wall to the violence of the low afternoon summer sun and is closed to dust laden spring winds *(fig. 9)*. But caught within the fabric of the buildings, the plazas and patios offer shelter from the cold winter wind and act as receptors for trapping solar radiation *(fig. 5)*. The eastern facade of the connected, continuous buildings opens wide to the spectacular views, yet the glass lines are recessed beneath deep concrete fascias which have the effect of a shady portal *(fig. 6)*. Because they are recessed deeply into the adobe walls, only small window openings are without overhangs. Summer cross ventilation is assured by the geometry of the building sections. Built on a hillside, the houses have inductive air drainage back to front because of the level change. Fountains within the patio areas will have psychological and, to some extent, evaporative cooling effect. Unlike traditional New Mexico buildings there is visual continuity of interior and exterior space through the use of large sliding glass doors.

The massive adobe walls serve as heat reservoirs, storing the solar heat during the day then transmitting it to the interior of the house during the cool night. The massive, blank, earth-colored walls bind the buildings to the landscape. The deeply cut windows and overhangs in shadow interrupt the blank wall areas. Some walls are stuccoed white to bounce light into a patio or room *(fig. 11)*. Some patios have louvered roofs that are calculated to admit winter sunlight but exclude the summer sun. High walls protect outdoor yard areas and patios from wind and assure privacy between units *(fig. 14)*. All exterior walls are stuccoed adobe with sandblasted concrete lintels spanning openings. Some of the adobes were manufactured on the La Luz site with material dug direct-

Fig. 13

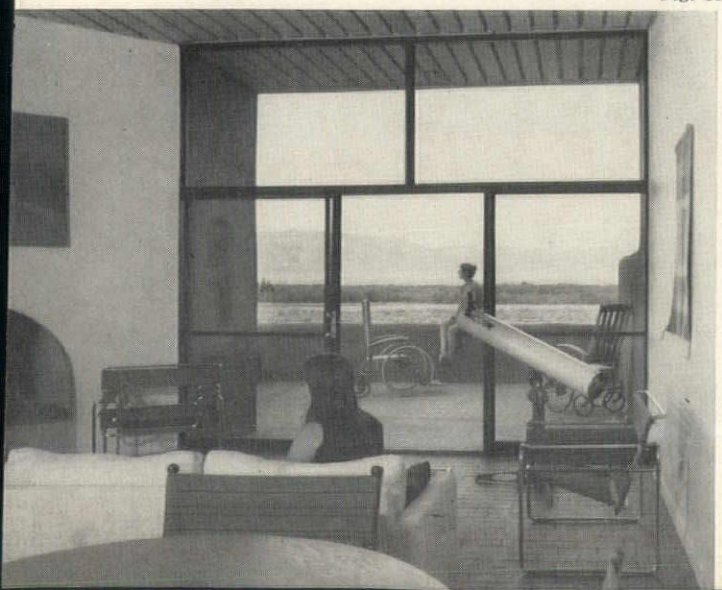
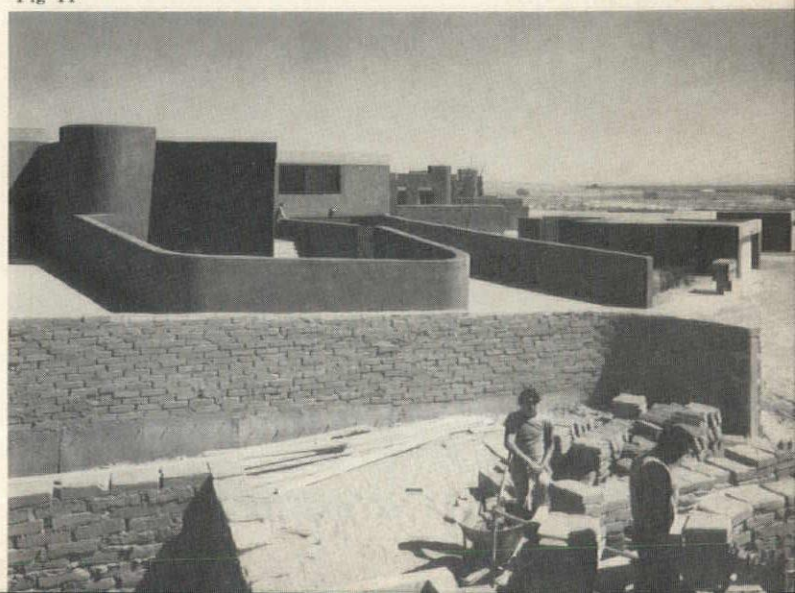


Fig 14

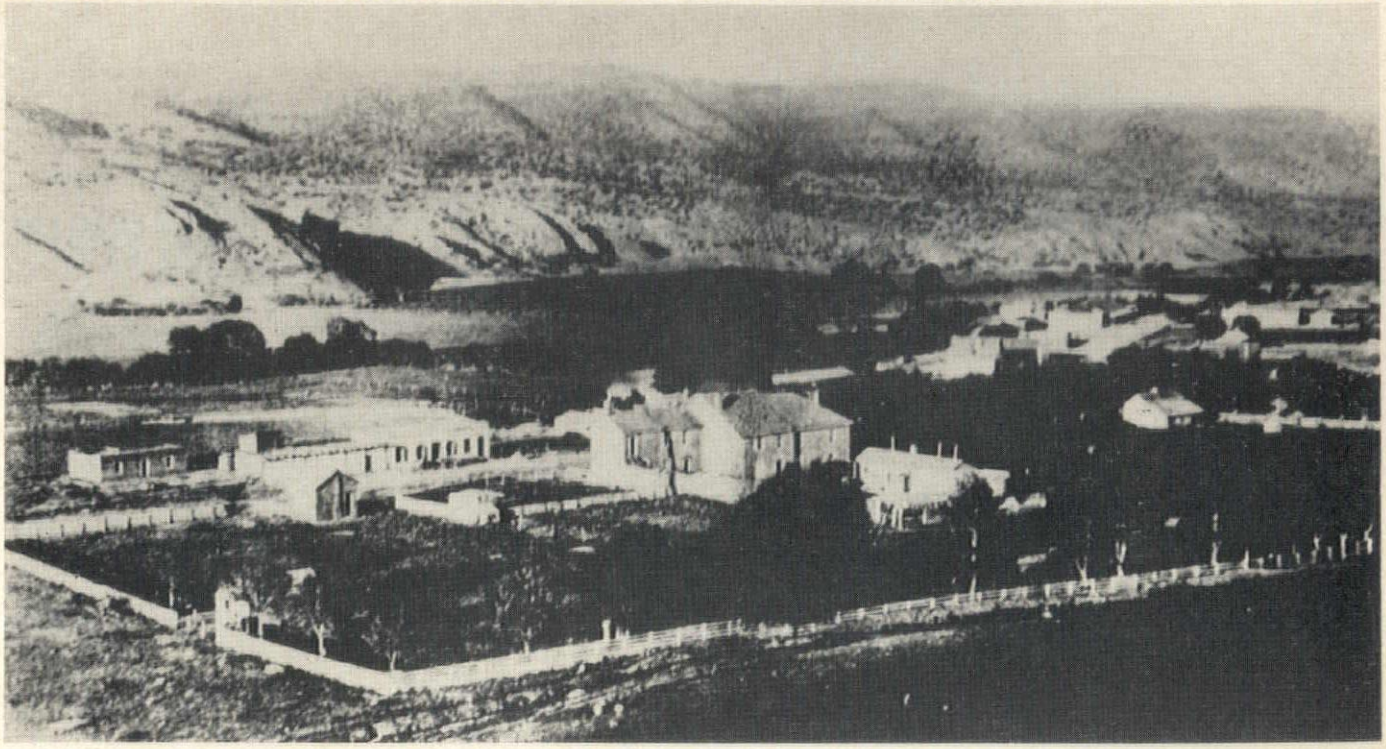


ly from the ground. Adobe, a material that does not require skilled masons for laying, has greater application today than in the past. Besides being a good structural and climatic solution, adobe provides excellent acoustical separation for the common wall houses at La Luz. Also, jobs are created since no special skills are required. The much discussed self-help projects are natural for adobe. Horizontal roof framing is wood with 6" batt insulation. Living area ceilings are gapped local white fir planks. Interior partitions are gypsum board on wood studs. Windows and sliding doors are anodized aluminum. Flooring is brick or hardwood. All interior walls are white *(figs. 12 and 13)*.

Since the houses are built on hillsides, internal spatial arrangements are varied *(fig. 10)*. There are three basic plans constructed thus far which angle toward selected views *(fig. 12)*. The areas of the houses range from 1500 to 2150 sq. ft. Living, dining and kitchen areas always orient directly to the primary view and generally connect spatially with patios or terraces. The bedroom zone of the houses is separated from the living zone by a privacy lock. Master bedrooms have patios or balconies. Living room terraces or patios open onto common plazas with fountains and landscaping. Plazas are multi-level following the natural topography, and they are landscaped with types of grass and trees that contrast with surrounding mesa ground cover. Earthen berms are used to deflect sound and wind and serve as a visual screen around parking areas. A wind break of trees will line the loop roads and provide shade. As development progresses west the buildings will grow successively higher to create an ascending barrier to the wind and low sun, yet looking over structures to the east at the same time.

—Antoine Predock

LINCOLN, NEW MEXICO FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF 1886 IN THE LINCOLN CO. HISTORICAL MUSEUM



The James J. Dolan House

Lincoln, New Mexico

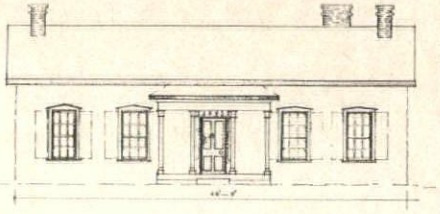
R. Thomas Slates

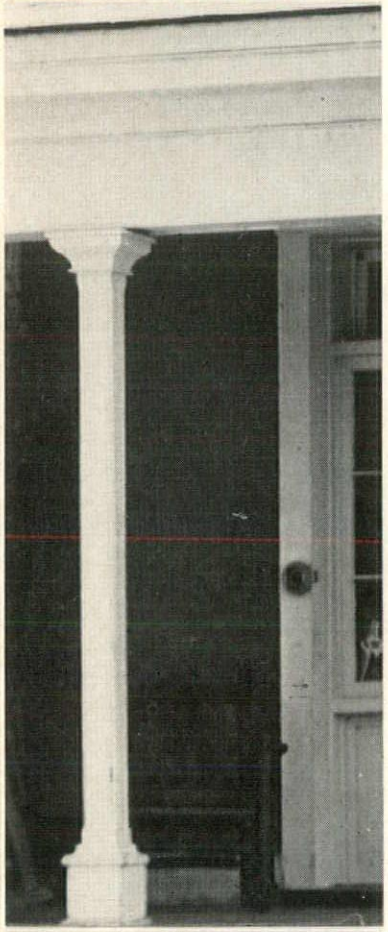
Background and Chronology

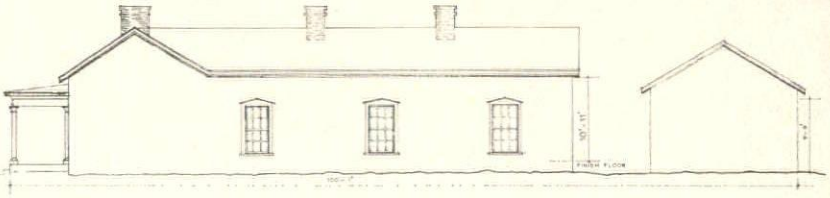
James Joseph Dolan was born in Loughrea County, Galway, Ireland on May 22, 1848. His parents emigrated to New York where the son worked for a few years in a store prior to enlistment in 1863 in the New York Zouaves. Discharged in 1865, Dolan re-enlisted in the 37th Regiment and served in several stations prior to his discharge at Fort Stanton in 1869. There he joined the L. G. Murphy Company as clerk and literally worked his way to the top. When Murphy formally withdrew from the company in 1877, Dolan formed a partnership with John H. Riley which lasted until 1880. On July 13, 1879, Dolan married Caroline Fitz, a niece of his former employer.

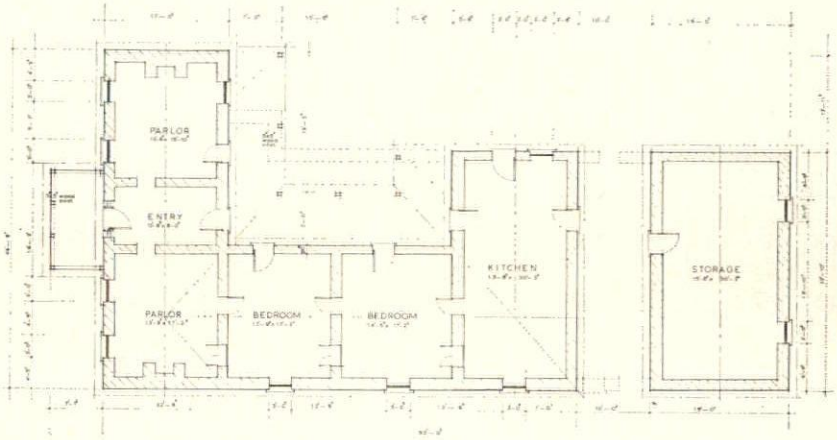
By the time the Lincoln County War subsided in August 1877, "the firm of J. J. Dolan and Company was in deep financial waters. Indebted to the Fitz estate to the tune of $48,000 and to the Lincoln County Bank for a further sum of $1,000, Dolan was forced to request of banker Thomas B. Catron of Santa Fe a mortgage on the store (the old Murphy-Dolan Store), forty acres of land adjoining it, and a herd of cattle at Seven Rivers to secure the firm against claims of Spiegelberg Brothers of Santa Fe, to whom the business was indebted for supplies. In June 1878, Dolan executed a shirt-tail mortgage on everything owned by the business which resulted, when the trouble was over, in Thomas Catron's taking over the store, land, cattle, and all other properties, lock, stock, and barrel."

Following this financial debacle, James Dolan staged a rapid comeback. His "shrewd investments and personal capabilities brought about financial recovery, and in 1883 he was elected Lincoln County treasurer, serving in that capacity until 1888 when elected to the Territorial Senate. In 1889 he became receiver of the United States Land Office, Las Cruces, and was prominent in cattle ranching in and around Lincoln County. Dolan died in Roswell on February 26, 1898, a perfect example of the old adage about a bad young man sometimes making a good old man."





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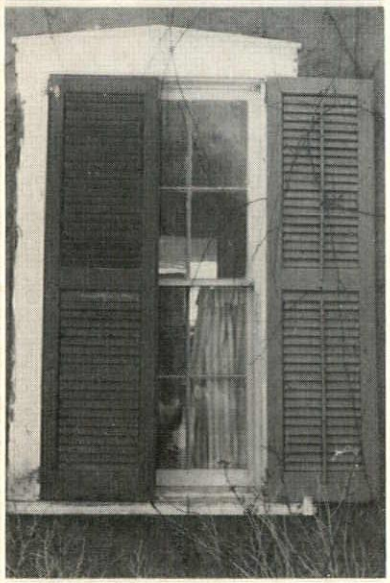

The date of the erection of the Dolan house cannot be proved by existing documents. Mr. Edward Penfield of Lincoln believes it was constructed in 1882 by a soldier from Ft. Stanton named Bailey who also built several other houses in the area. To judge from Dolan's precarious financial position in the late 70's, coupled with the lack of necessity of owning a large family type house before his marriage, I find it very difficult to believe the residence was constructed before 1880. No mention of a house is made in the mortgage foreclosure by Catron, and as fine a house as this would surely have figured in mortgage or foreclosure procedures.

An early reference to the Dolan house comes from George Curry, who was later to play an important role in New Mexico's bid for statehood: "It was late in 1885 when I started back to Lincoln County, going by way of Socorro . . . I went to Lincoln Town where I found a job with the J. J. Dolan Company. Jack Thornton was chief clerk in the big store (the old Tunstall and McSween Store) which carried a stock of general merchandise usually inventorying upwards of $100,000. Mr. and Mrs. Dolan had built a fine home opposite the store. I had a room in the back of the store and took my meals with the Dolans."

In the Lincoln County Historical Museum, there is a photograph of Lincoln in 1886. The Dolan house (far right) is identifiable because of its unusual roof line and detached rear wing. There are no trees or shrubs near the building whereas landscaping of other houses along the main street is heavy. This would seem to indicate the recent construction of the residence.

Mrs. Dolan lived in the house until 1902 when, in settling the estate, the property was sold to Dr. Woods, a physician in Lincoln. After major remodeling, he opened the Bonito Inn, a combination hotel and hospital. When dining facilities were needed, the southeast *portal* was removed and replaced by a large dining room. This was accomplished by means of a shed roof constructed so as to join the two original wings and six new windows with 6/6 panes. Carbide lights were also installed. It is interesting to note that in the 1960's in replacing these later windows with larger ones, Bill Schrecengost found two columns from the original portal embedded in the wall. He also discovered gas lines for the carbide lights.

Dr. Woods apparently looked after tuberculosis patients for there are still two very small frame cottages on the premises. Early in this century the treatment for tuberculosis was fresh air. The cottages are only six by eight-feet with a seven-foot ceiling, but three sides were designed so that the upper part of the walls could be opened outward and propped up. These openings were screened for protection, but the feeling is one of confinement rather than of cure.

Subsequently the property changed hands several times. In 1917 it was bought by Lena Morgan who retained the Bonito Inn name for her hotel and boarding house. According to Mr. Penfield, the house was purchased in 1927 by Mrs. Julian (also known as Mrs. Wells) an intermediator for the Southern Pacific Railroad. The railroad was then interested in watershed rights so it could construct a dam across the Hondo Valley. In 1953, when the railroad had no further interest in watershed rights, the property was sold at auction to Mr. Bert Phingsten who deeded it to his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. William Schrecengost under whom the house has been restored. Though the title was recorded in Lincoln Colunty Court House in 1959, the original abstract remains in San Francisco with other papers of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Architectural Analysis

The construction period of the Dolan house sometime between 1882-85 places the house some twenty-five years after the last vestages of the Greek Revival style had faded in the eastern part of the United States. Greek Revival houses were being built in centers like Baltimore and Philadelphia by the middle 1820's though the style had largely faded from that architectural scene by the early fifties. In the South, Midwest and far West the Greek manner held on until the Civil War, and stock window and door units were sometimes shipped around the Cape to San Francisco or prosperous mining areas of California. In New Mexico, however, the Greek fashion, known locally as the Territorial style, did not come into prominence until after the Civil War. Such a time lag is not surprising in light of the area's isolation; the railroad did not reach the Rio Grande Valley until 1880.

The hallmark of Greek Revival architecture would seem to be a pure classicism with plain surfaces and bold composition while its most obvious characteristic is the temple front. But such sophistication and discipline were not present in all buildings erected by ingenious Yankee craftsmen. In New Mexico the "Greek" element is often confined to isolated bits of ornamentation superimposed on an otherwise traditional adobe building.

The symmetrical facade and center hall plan of the front part of the Dolan residence, however, differentiate it from rank and file building in the Territory, and the front porch with its square columns and the entrance composition are unusually "correct" for New Mexico. Indeed this house constructed in wood or brick would be quite at home in rural areas of the Midwest from Michigan to Kentucky of an earlier generation. Windows throughout the house are the same size, and the balanced window placement on the facade, plus the symmetrical chimneys give the house a formal air. The brick chimney caps are another nice bit of Greek Revival detail.

The plan is shaped in a "U," opening around a porch on the southeast side. None of the rear rooms communicate with the front central hall; instead one can only get to the rear kitchen by going outdoors along the *portal* or passing through two intermediate bedrooms. In this respect the plan follows the arrangement long prevalent in Spanish houses in New Mexico. The relative consistency of dimensions, however, and the fact that angles are uniformly square, departs from earlier building practices. The adobe walls are covered by a shale plaster with a rough texture. As evidenced by many layers of shingles visible at the eave line, the roof has always been sheathed with wooden shingles.

The Greek Revival appearance of the Dolan house would appear to be the result of Mr. Dolan's travels and also the influence of buildings at nearby Fort Stanton. Dolan would surely have been familiar with Greek Revival buildings in the east, and his military duties had taken him to other parts of the country. After purchasing the store his role as merchant must have necessitated visits to Santa Fe and perhaps even to St. Louis.

The influence exerted by military construction on the architecture of the Hondo Valley is indicated by the following exerpt from F. Stanley's *Fort Stanton New Mexico* (Pampa, Texas, 1964): "This post (Fort Gibson, Indian Territory), started in 1824, was one of the most popular on the frontier. The barracks building looks so much like the building Murphy was later to erect in Lincoln, New Mexico (later the Lincoln County Court House) that one wonders if perhaps the inspiration did not come from some soldiers previously stationed at Fort Gibson. The Murphy building was of adobe but the two-story frontage, the stairway and windows treatment seemed to be patterned after Fort Gibson." It is further interesting to recall that local tradition in Lincoln says that the builder of the Dolan house was a soldier from Fort Stanton.

R. Thomas Slates

LATH & PLASTERING AWARD

The New Mexico Lathing and Plastering Contractors' Association is privileged to announce the establishment of a scholarship fund for architectural students at the University of New Mexico.

The scholarship fund is to be administered by the Architectural Department of the University on a semester basis. The recipient of the ward will be chosen by personnel designated by the University to handle scholarships, and no limiting qualifications are attached to this award.

The New Mexico Lathing and Plastering Contractors' Association establishes this scholarship in the interest of promoting better construction industry practices, and appreciates the opportunity to show its support of the activities of the Architectural Department of the University of New Mexico.

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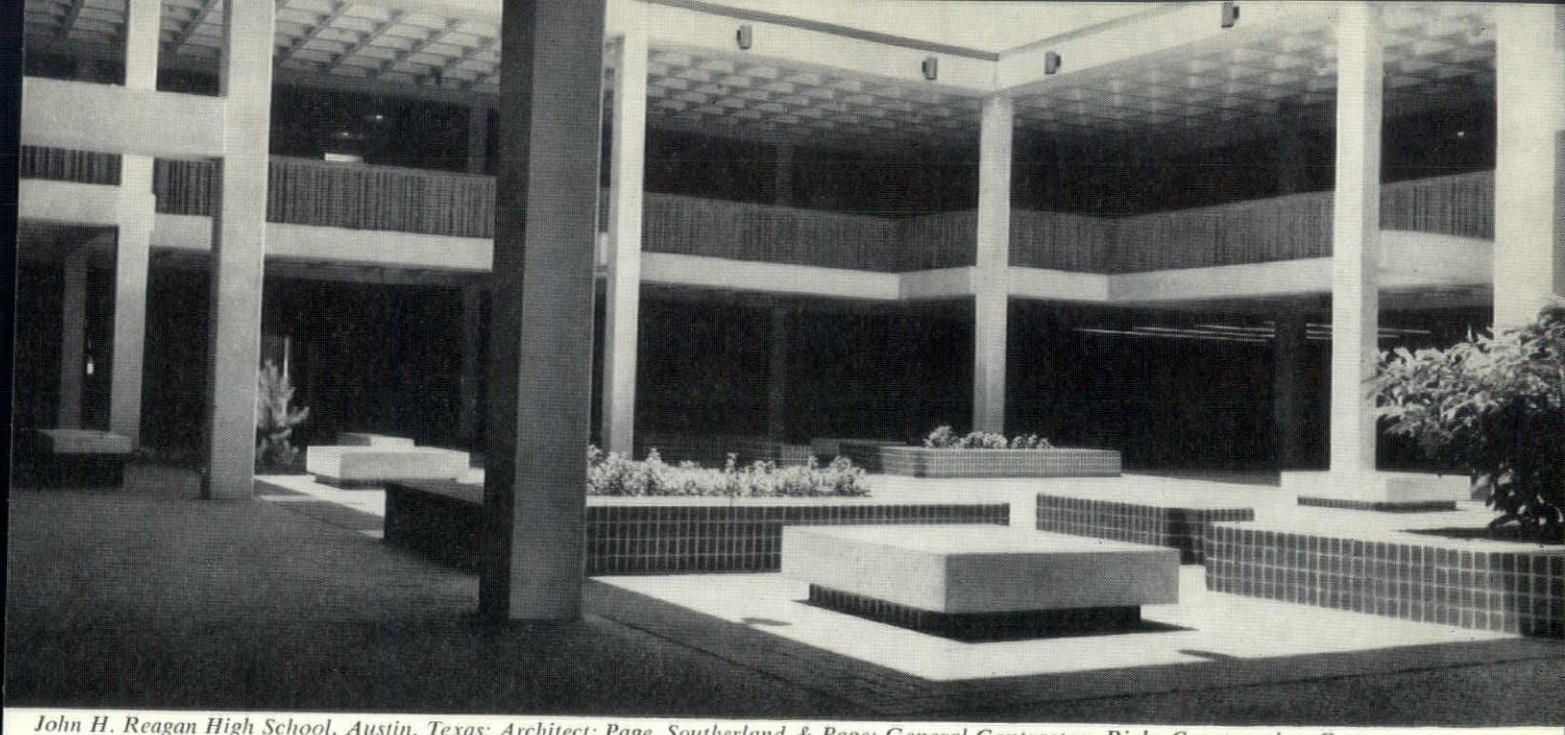

John H. Reagan High School, Austin, Texas; Architect: Page, Southerland & Page; General Contractor: Ricks Construction Company

Finish and waterproof concrete surfaces at the same time with THOROSEAL PLASTER MIX, a cement-base coating that made dramatic savings in the construction of this new school. 8,000 square yards of concrete were completely waterproofed with THOROSEAL PLASTER MIX, applied by spray, floated, and then re-sprayed for a durable, uniform texture which was contrasted with rough "exposed aggregate" panels.

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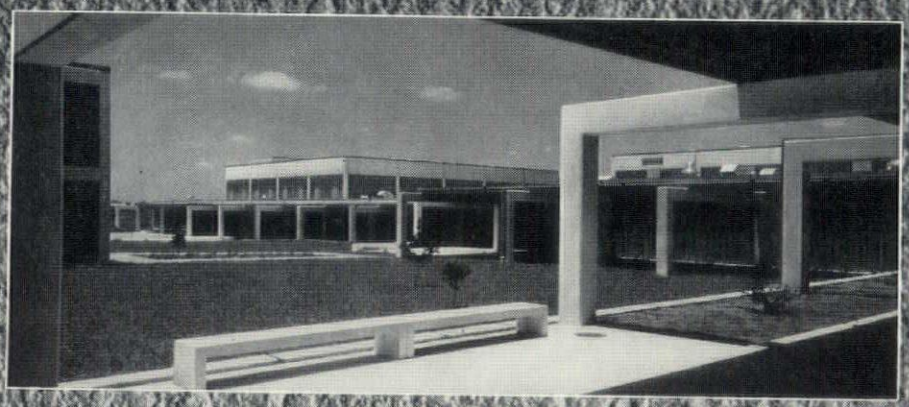

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