

HISTORIC SANTA FE

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation Monthly Journal **MAY 2018**



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eZine cover: Melanie McWhorter, Cornerstones' intern Georgina Cantisano making adobe bricks, May 12, 2018. [Instagram/historicsantafefoundation](https://www.instagram.com/historicsantafefoundation)

Image above: Pressing Adobe into the molds at Adobe Brick-Making Community Days with HSFF and Cornerstones. More info in the two upcoming Saturday events at [historicsantafe.org/events](https://www.historicsantafe.org/events)

Inside Historic Santa Fe

In 2018, Historic Santa Fe Foundation will present its long-range plan in the Spring Newsletter. This award-winning printed publication will mail to all members by the end of May. We hope that all members will read this exciting forward-looking, and education-oriented plan that will guide HSFF into familiar and new directions in the future. We will remain true to our mission *to preserve, protect and promote the historic properties and diverse cultural heritage of the Santa Fe area, and to educate the public about Santa Fe's history and the importance of preservation while fostering new dialogue, having fun, and presenting the varied aspects that make Santa Fe what it is – its architectural style, diverse heritage, and artistic community.* We will engage long-time supporters and connect with new members including those who have not connected with Santa Fe, historically, architecturally or archaeologically in the past. Please read this upcoming issue of the printed newsletter. This publication is mailed to members on triannual basis in the spring, summer and fall/winter. Sign up for membership online at [historicsantafe.org/join-give](https://www.historicsantafe.org/join-give) or call us at 505-983-2567 to find out about member rates and benefits.

We are very excited about this issue of the eZine where we offer some details about the City of Santa Fe's Historic Preservation Division in an interview with its manager David Rasch. Rasch's name may be familiar to many in Santa Fe and for this unaware of his specific role, we are happy to offer some details for our community and beyond.

We also offer a review of the new book of essays on the Southwest by Joshua Wheeler titled *Acid West* by HSFF Executive Director Pete Warzel. Finally, finishing up this issue is a long piece from the Bulletin Archives on Carlos Vierra House. The Vierra House is the location for the June Stewards Members gathering. For more information on the Stewards, contact Melanie McWhorter at 505-983-2567 or melanie@historicsantafe.org and visit [historicsantafe.org/stewards](https://www.historicsantafe.org/stewards).

Please enjoy this issue, and this pleasant weather while hoping for the early summer rains.

INTERVIEW

DAVID RASCH, MANAGER OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION FOR CITY OF SANTA FE

Interviewed by Melanie McWhorter, HSFF
Development Coordinator



Portrait, courtesy David Rasch

David, I am relatively new to the process that occurs in Santa Fe in relation to the Historic Districts. With that, I think my greenness makes me an ideal candidate to represent the newcomer to Santa Fe, those who are relatively unaware of the process of making changes to a home in the historic district(s) and those simply

curious about Santa Fe's preservation of style in the downtown and surrounding areas. I am delighted to speak with you to get to know what you do in your day job, to get a bit more clarity about the process, and, finally, to get to know the person and professional who would take on such a great responsibility in his community with all its many and varied trials and difficulties and rare accolades and appreciation.

At Historic Santa Fe Foundation, we often get calls from private homeowners attempting to get permits and approvals for some aspect of remodel, addition, etc. to their home in the historic district. Will you tell me a bit about the city's historic preservation division, what you govern and how a homeowner can easily navigate the process of applying to make changes or additions to their home?

Melanie McWhorter: *What is your role in the process?*

David Rasch: As the manager of the Historic Preservation Division, I oversee the administration of the historic and archaeological overlay zoning ordinances with four staff members. We assist property owners in balancing private property rights with the greater public good. I am the liaison to the Historic Districts Review Board (H-Board) and, along with other planners, make recommendations for action on historic status and exterior alterations. I also work with Land Use Department staff and other City employees in writing and interpreting ordinances.

MM: *What does the City HPD do versus the state's HPD?*

DR: From a property owner's point of view, the two divisions are independent. Both have different laws and different approval processes. In general, the City has more comprehensive and specific jurisdiction over private property.

MM: *How far do the historic districts extend? Are there also codes for outside the City of Santa Fe?*

DR: The five historic districts cover approximately 18% of Santa Fe, centered around the Plaza and extending to the eastside City limit. Beyond the historic districts, underlying zoning standards use an architectural point system that somewhat controls architectural design.

MM: *Are there specific suggestions you have for potential homeowners who are thinking of buying a home in the historic district? Where can they find the codes/regulations? Is there a cheat sheet of sorts that breaks down the rules?*

DR: Proper due diligence that should be examined before purchasing property in the historic districts or a landmark outside of the historic districts is to gain an understanding of what design and preservation standards apply to each structure and how a proposed construction project may impose unforeseen costs upon a financial pro forma. The preservation community recognizes that required preservation techniques and methodologies can be more expensive than not following them. Owners

of historically-listed structures should consider themselves as temporary caretakers of a community resource and they should try not to inappropriately “beautify” the existing architectural character. The historic districts ordinances can be found in the Chapter 14 Land Development code on the City website (santafenm.gov). But, the precise and complicated standards can be overwhelming to the general public. Therefore, we require a site visit or office visit to discuss how a proposal may or not follow the intent of the law before someone performs work on the property.

MM: *In the system of approvals, a homeowner or representative may have to appear before a Board to make the decision about approval or amendments. Who makes up the Board(s) and how are they appointed?*

DR: Projects that go beyond maintenance and repair, which are administratively approved by staff, must be brought before a public hearing with the H-Board for action. The H-Board is composed of seven volunteer members who must be City residents with interest and/or experience in historic preservation. The H-Board seats are: 1 architect; 1 historian; 1 Old Santa Fe Foundation member; 1 business owner within a historic district; 1 construction industries representative; and 2 members-at-large. Citizens are nominated to vacant seats by the Mayor and the Governing Body must approve potential members by vote.

MM: *When does a homeowner or representative appear in front of the HPD Board?*

DR: Most exterior alterations that change the existing character of the built environment must gain approval by the H-Board before the project can be permitted. This includes construction, demolition, and remodeling of residential, non-residential, and accessory structures like garages, carports, and sheds, along with walls, fences, gates, hardscaping, and other permanent furnishings like bancos, fireplaces, and fountains. The H-Board process takes at least two months from application to permit issuance.

MM: *What prompted the existing approval system? Do changes often occur to these codes and rules? Who approves the changes?*

DR: The original Historic Districts Overlay Zoning ordinance was adopted by the Governing Body in 1957, making it one of the oldest in the country. The definition and development of Santa Fe Style after 1912 along with several inappropriate or disharmonious developments caused our community to create a historic design styles law for the core historic district, now known as the Downtown & Eastside Historic District. The ordinance has been amended from time to time by the Governing Body to update, clarify, and enhance intentions with some of the most significant changes being the 1984 expansion into four additional historic districts, the 1992 preservation standards and designations of historic status, the 1996 maximum allowable height calculation procedures, and business signage regulations.

MM: *When deciding about approval or rejections of a proposed plan, what are some of the most common considerations? What are some of the common changes made to the initial proposal?*

DR: New construction or remodeling of non-historic structures must be harmonious to the surrounding streetscape or the historic district. If a proposed project is not harmonious or an applicant hasn't proven why a requested exception to the standards has not been demonstrated, then the H-Board may postpone for redesign or deny disharmonious proposals. Alterations to a listed-historic structure must be sensitive to preserving the character and distinguished from the historic material. Often, lowered heights, retention of historic materials, or relocation of additions are changes that the H-Board conditionally imposes upon a project approval.

MM: *What is the process if HPD finds that a homeowner, or their represented agent/builder, has not done their due diligence? Do they receive warnings? Have you had to start court proceedings in the past?*

DR: Unapproved alterations are caught by our historic districts inspector who can issue a stop work order (red tag) if activity is in progress or a notice of violation if the activity has been completed. After this happens, the property owner is required to bring the violation into compliance by gaining approval of staff or the H-Board and then applying for a permit. If the homeowner does not take action to correct the violation, then the inspector will cite the homeowner to court. This often achieves the necessary results through a prehearing settlement or a judge's ruling.

MM: *What are some of the most egregious rule-breaking that you have witnessed?*

DR: I really dislike when a property owner intentionally removes historic windows or restuccoes a historic adobe structure using plastic material without approval when they have already been informed of the prohibition. Each one of these illegal alterations slowly erodes the historic integrity of the historic districts and threatens to change what we love the most about Santa Fe, the authentic and true sense of place.

MM: *Now, let's talk about you a bit, where did you grow up, where have you lived, and what in your education or background led you to what you do today?*

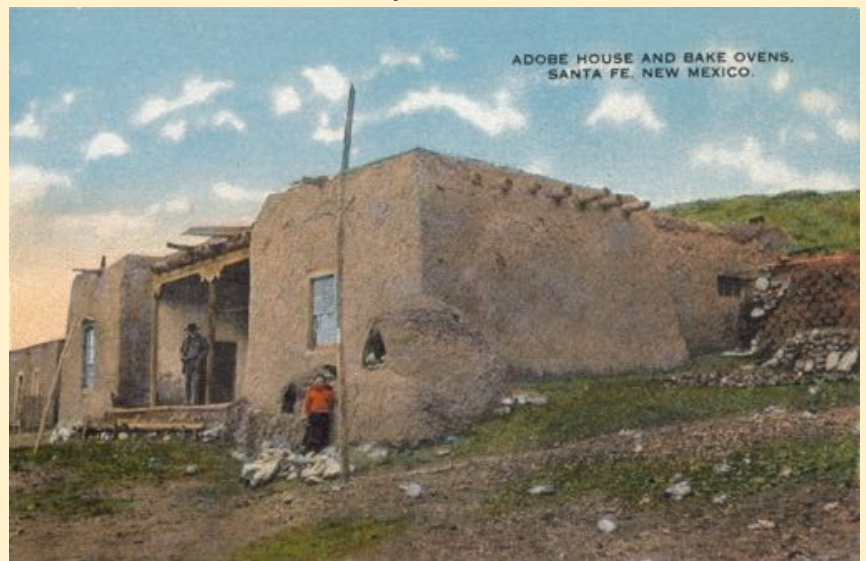
DR: I was born and raised in Connecticut. My academic training commenced in New Haven at the University of Southern Connecticut by means of a triple-major B.A. in studio art and color theory, history of art and architecture, and chemistry and materials sciences, with an eye toward conservation of art. Then in 1984, I moved to Los Angeles to pursue an M.A. in art history at the University of Southern California where I completed a museum studies certificate; but did not complete my thesis on Aegean mural paintings. Finally, I received an M.S. in objects conservation from the University of Delaware - Winterthur Museum Program with a second museum studies certificate.

Following a professional career in conservation of museum collections, I worked at the J. Paul Getty Museum and the L.A. County Museum of Art in Los Angeles and the Field Museum in Chicago before moving to Santa Fe in 1992 to work in the Museum of New Mexico. My experience with Santa Fe's architecture began in 1999 with the planning and design of the new Museum of Spanish Colonial Art at a historic house designed by John Gaw Meem and as a HSFF board member. I started working as a historic preservation planner with the City of Santa Fe in 2003, where I remain today. I see structures in the historic districts as the collection that I am charged with to preserve. (Please see my attached CV for other or additional inspiration.)

MM: *You conducted a tour of some of the historic homes and buildings in Santa Fe in the past with Friends of Architecture. What was your focus of the tour?*

DR: I got involved with Friends of Architecture Santa Fe (FoASF) as an educational outreach to inform the community and visitors about Santa Fe Style and our unique architectural history. I developed a popular PowerPoint presentation and two architectural walking tours that focus on architectural design and vocabulary. So many tours are about stories, people, and politics. Mine fulfill the mission of FoASF, which is to bring architecture to the people.

MM: *Will you be doing the tours in 2018? If so, how do would one find out about it?*



DR: I hope to develop another architectural walking tour this year, advertised through FoASF and on our website (architecturesantafe.org). But, I often get requests to perform the downtown tour, which can be scheduled through FoASF with enough advanced notice.

MM: How do you think Santa Fe can further capitalize on the preservation and architectural style of the city? What more can the City, or its respective economic or tourism departments do to use what you do to help foster more tourist-related economic development?

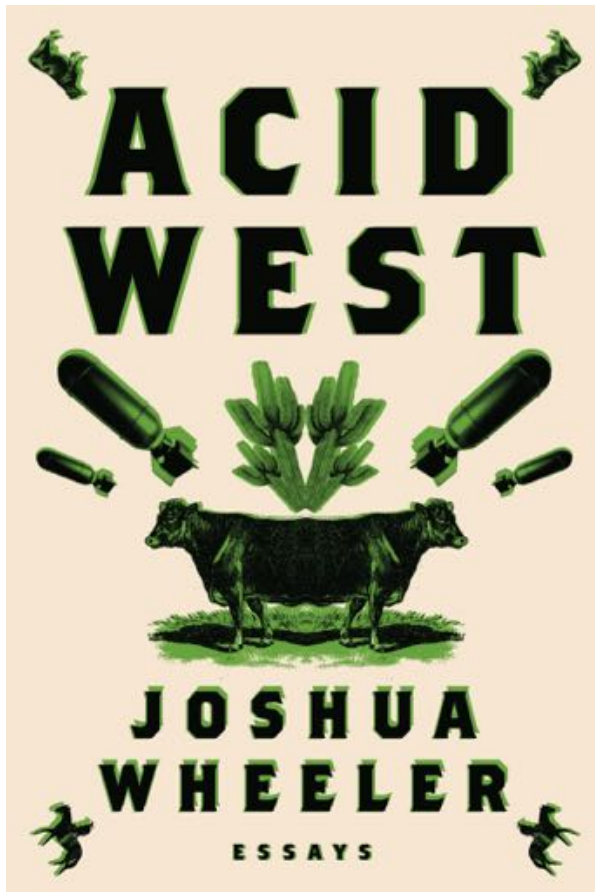
DR: Any tradition that stagnates will die. We need to discuss and adopt a vision for Santa Fe Style in the 21st century. I strongly believe that we can allow for innovation within the tradition, in partnership with sustainability initiatives, to achieve our goal in the preservation of historic Santa Fe. The architectural vocabulary of Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial design along with the winding dirt roads, the low adobe structures, and distant views of the Sangre de Cristo and Jemez mountains are the fragile qualities that we hold dear to our City Different!

BOOK REVIEW

ACID WEST: ESSAYS

BY JOSHUA WHEELER

Reviewed by Pete Warzel



Acid West. The title jumps at you.

Recently published in April 2018, this collection of essays is about the other New Mexico – the one south of Santa Fe, below the 34th parallel. Joshua Wheeler writes about his home ground in these pieces.

Raised in Alamogordo, a graduate of USC, New Mexico State University, and Iowa State with a Master of Fine Arts in non-fiction writing, he now teaches creative writing at Louisiana State University. His resumé is all about writing, all the time, and smacks of the academic. But the title grabbed me.

Joshua Wheeler is a ferocious writer. He is dead smart, does serious research, and writes in a style that is poetic and edgy at once, taking on some hard-core political issues unapologetically and creating a rhythm that at times resembles magical realism. He knows how to tell a story and combined with his style, the essays become something like reading extraordinary fiction. This book is the real deal. It is so nice to see a New Mexican swing for the bleachers.

Acid West is a play on Acid Western, a movie subgenre that was influenced by the counterculture of the 1960's. Dennis Hopper would be included in the pantheon of its proponents, *Two Lane Blacktop* and *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*

examples of the type, with Bob Dylan amusing us all as the character Alias in the latter.

The first essay in this wonderful collection, “SNM”, is really an introduction to the geography and social topography addressed, while the second “The Light of God”, sets the tone for the rest of the book. It is modern warfare in the air above Alamogordo as drone pilots hone their skills over desert landscape, against the background of a minor league baseball game unfolding below. In the third, “Children of the Gadget”, he centers the book, echoing throughout the rest of the essays, at Trinity Site, in a reverse time-lapse from the annual protest vigil of the inordinate cancer rates that have occurred in the area since the bomb test, back to the immediacy of the Trinity blast on July 16, 1945. He takes you to a ranch at Hot Canyon where one day after the blast a snowfall of ash covers roof, ground and livestock. And then he takes you to the Alien Festival in Roswell. This is SNM, Southern New Mexico – its history, its quirkiness, and its current concerns and complaints, and Wheeler does not pull any punches. “Most of us SNM’ans feel some pride or gratification in the way our half of the state is robbed or abused or forgotten entirely... We are just the bottom.”

Linear time becomes irrelevant in this work as he travels back and forth on a continuum. He also doses his stories with detail from related subjects, in the narrative itself or, at times, in meticulous footnotes that tell something of a parallel story. It all adds a richness to the uneasy premise(s) of the work.

The bomb, the Gadget, grounds the book, and sets a tone of distrust of government in SNM, federal and state. In “The Children of the Gadget” Wheeler writes, “*It was probably a mistake to do so much*

picnicking out at the Trinity Site, Tina says. For up to five years after the blast, locals would drive out to the site for lunch, spend the afternoon eating from baskets and filling those baskets with souvenirs of trinitite.” Trinitite is of course the stuff of melted desert sand, also called Alamogordo glass. This is hard country and the folks who inhabit it are tough, straight forward, and by necessity resilient. They do not suffer fools. They also are, including the author, very quirky individuals.

The final essay, “A Million Tiny Daggers” details the violence and death perpetrated by the Mexican government and drug cartels in Juarez, just across the border from SNM. There are business shakedowns, army shakedowns, a city living in perpetual fear, but also people who work to help the impoverished, sick, and mentally ill within that war zone on the border. There is hope here, as there always is north in SNM. “A Million Tiny Daggers” is an interesting bookend to the rest of the essays here. It details violence and government corruption in Mexico; a not so subtle reflection on Wheeler’s take on life above the border and below the 34th parallel.

Joshua Wheeler has delivered an intense first book with clear vision and purpose – to define the world he grew up with and in, and to understand “All the ranchers and illegal immigrants and atomic bomb downwinders and veterans and UFOlogists: all people whose love for America is outstripped only by their distrust of government.” It is, in the end, a very personal collection of essays.

Acid West: Essays by Joshua Wheeler
MCD X FSG Originals: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux
Paperback
416 pages
\$17.00



HISTORIC SANTA FE FOUNDATION

OUR MISSION is to preserve, protect and promote the historic properties and diverse cultural heritage of the Santa Fe area, and to educate the public about Santa Fe's history and the importance of preservation.

historicsantafe.org

2018 SUMMER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 5 • Adobe brick making with Cornerstones, Palace of the Governors
- May 12 • Adobe brick making with Cornerstones, Palace of the Governors
- May 17 • Heritage Preservation Awards, San Miguel Chapel with after-reception at El Zaguán
- May 18 • Exhibition opening: Portraits of Chimayosos by Don Usner, from the Chimayó Museum Collection
- May 19 • Adobe brick making with Cornerstones, San Miguel Chapel
- May 20 • Stewards Membership Event at Plaza Balentine (historicsantafe.org/stewards)
- May 21 • Salon El Zaguán talk, Frank Graziano: Native Catholicism at the Pueblos & Mescalero Apache Nation
- May 26 • Adobe brick making with Cornerstones, San Miguel Chapel
- June 14 • Salon El Zaguán talk by Don Usner: Chimayó and Plaza Cerro
- June 25 • Stewards Membership Event at Carlos Vierra House (historicsantafe.org/stewards)
- June 28 • Annual Garden Party and Member's Meeting with guest speaker (TBA)
- July 12 • Salon El Zaguán talk by Nancy Owen Lewis: El Delirio and Dogs for Defense
- August 4 • Exhibition opening: Acequia Show

Salon El Zaguán talks are free for general members with \$5 admission for non-members. Stewards group is a special membership. For more info, see historicsantafe.org/stewards. For all events & to sign up for our newsletters, visit historicsantafe.org/events.

MEMBER BENEFITS

- Free admission to monthly Salon El Zaguán talks
- Special invitation to Annual Garden Party and Member's Meeting
- Three complimentary printed newsletters annually
- Priority access to Foundation special tours and events
- Contribute to preservation of & education about Santa Fe and its historic properties

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(Please inquire about the Steward membership that includes a year's opportunity to tour four homes or historic properties.)

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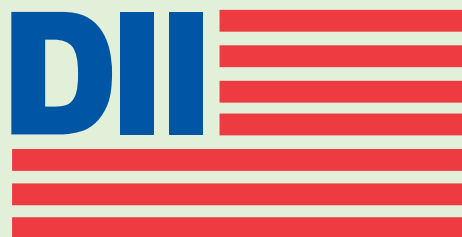
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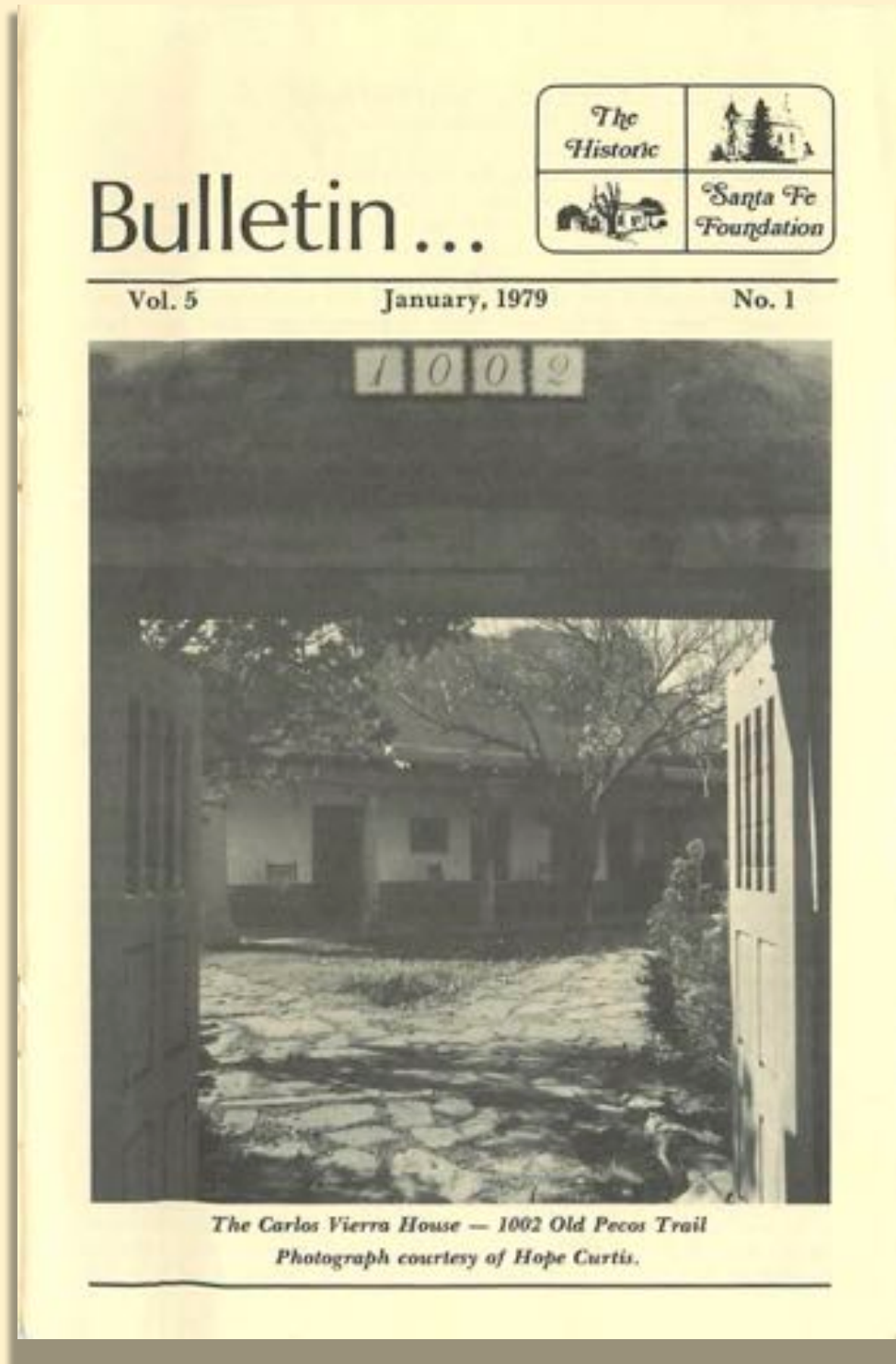
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From the Bulletin Archives

1979 HSFF Bulletin Vol. 5 No.1
Carlos Vierra House



The Carlos Vierra House 1002 Old Pecos Trail

A major spokesman for reviving the Spanish-Pueblo style of architecture in Santa Fe, Carlos Vierra best demonstrated his architectural preferences in the residence he constructed at 1002 Old Pecos Trail. In many small New Mexican towns and Indian pueblos the traditional Spanish-Pueblo style of architecture had been the accepted building form well into the 20th century. However, following the arrival of the railroad in 1879 this style was quickly being replaced with more "modern" architectural styles, in Santa Fe and other large New Mexico cities, and the older buildings were systematically razed or extensively altered to conform to the changing tastes of their owners. The prevalent mood was best characterized by the *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* on October 8, 1889 when in "selling" Santa Fe the paper snubbed the earlier style of architecture by noting, "Occasionally, groves of cottonwoods with darker hues, and shade trees in the streets more completely each year hide the shapeless adobe houses that must give way gradually to modern buildings." If it were not for Vierra and sensitive individuals like him reversing this "modernizing" trend, the architectural character of Santa Fe would be much different today.

Born on October, 3, 1876 at Moss Landing, California, Carlos Vierra was the son of Portuguese sailor Cato Vierra and his wife, Maria de Fratas. Young Vierra attended school in Monterey, California and was torn between art and a life at sea. He studied art under Gittardo Piazzoni at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art in San Francisco until the age of twenty-five, when he could no longer resist the call of the sea. Vierra sailed in the wooden ship "Roanoke" around Cape Horn and eventually settled in New York. For about two years he resided in New York City and worked as a marine illustrator and cartoonist. However, by 1904 his health began to fail and doctors advised him to relocate in a dryer climate. For some unknown reason, Vierra selected a remote area along the Pecos River as his new home. Living in a small cabin his health did not improve and Vierra was forced to seek medical attention at St. Vincent's Sanitorium in Santa Fe. His arrival in Santa Fe was the start of a love affair with the town which was to last until his death in 1957.

Recuperating under the care of the Sisters of Charity, Vierra soon regained his health and launched forth on a new career. On November 27, 1905, he purchased for the grand sum of \$280.00 an entire photographic studio from J. B. Aylsworth and set up his own studio on the west side of the Plaza. Soon established as a professional photographer Vierra continued his painting, becoming Santa Fe's first resident artist. In 1907 the School of American Archaeology (an affiliate of the Archaeological Institute of America) was founded in Santa Fe. Two years later the Territory of New Mexico entered into a compact with Archaeological Institute of America which among other things resulted in the creation of the Museum of New Mexico and placed both it and the Santa Fe-based School of American Archaeology under the same director. Edgar Lee Hewett held this dual directorship from 1909 until his death in 1946. Because of Vierra's great interest in anything and everything New Mexican, he soon became associated with Hewett, artist-archeologist Kenneth Chapman and most significantly, attorney Frank Springer, a member of the Board of Regents of the Museum of New Mexico and president of the Managing Board of the School of



Carlos Vierra painting a Mayan courtyard while an employee of the School of American Archaeology. School of American Research Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

American Archaeology. Springer had come to New Mexico in 1875 settling in Cimarron where he published *The Cimarron News* and was attorney for the Maxwell Land Grant Company. In 1885 he moved to Las Vegas and maintained his residence there until his death in 1927. Elected to the Territorial Councils of 1880-1881 and 1901-1902 Springer was also President of the Normal School



*Carlos Vierra studying the architecture of an early Santa Fe home.
Photograph courtesy of Mrs. Betty Toulouse.*



*Painting by Trent Thomas which served as the basis for the Vierra House.
Photograph courtesy of Mrs. Betty Toulouse.*

(New Mexico Highlands University) for five years. Springer became Vierra's patron and helped him not only indirectly by exerting his influence on his behalf but also directly with his financial support.

By 1912 Vierra was a staff member of both the Museum of New Mexico and the School of American Archaeology. He began by producing glass photographic negatives for the Museum but his involvement soon included working on the "restoration" of the Palace of the Governors under the supervision of archaeologist Jesse L. Nusbaum. Although not a true restoration, the project can better be described as an attempt at "earlying up" the historic building. This undertaking completed in 1915 launched the Spanish-Pueblo architectural style revival in Santa Fe. Often incorrectly referred to as "the Santa Fe Style" the revival in New Mexico had actually started much earlier in 1905. In that year, the central heating plant at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque was constructed in that style incorporating a flat roof, a stepped-up profile, corner buttresses and second-story porticoes. For this innovative approach, university president William George Tight was summarily dismissed in 1909 by UNM's Board of Regents.

In 1912 of the eighteen or twenty homes built in Santa Fe, only two were constructed in the traditional style. In reaction to this increased unpopularity of traditional architecture the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce sponsored a contest offering cash prizes for the best design in "New-Old Santa Fe style." Kenneth Chapman won first prize, while Vierra captured second, third and fourth places. During this time, Vierra continued to paint New Mexico scenes and was especially intrigued with the architecture he found within the Indian Pueblos. Later in 1924 Vierra would serve as a member of the Committee for the Preservation and Restoration of New Mexico Mission Churches. His great interest in Pueblo mission churches is best demonstrated by a series of paintings of extant churches and speculative renditions of demolished structures. As an employee of the School of American Archaeology Vierra studied the architecture of the Mayan ruins in Guatemala, Honduras and southern Mexico. The result of this research was several large murals depicting the artist's impression of how the Mayan cities appeared while inhabited. These murals, along with other paintings by Vierra, were exhibited in the New Mexico Building at the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. The murals presently hang in the Hall of Man at Balboa Park in San Diego. One positive benefit of the Exposition was that the Second New Mexico State Legislature in 1915 authorized the construction of the Museum of Fine Arts building noting:

Whereas, the building constructed for the Panama-California Exposition at San Diego, by and for the State of New Mexico pursuant to the act of the legislature approved March 15th, 1915, and now generally known as the "New Mexico Building," at said Exposition, has attracted much attention and admiration as the representative of a type of architecture unique in its class and specially peculiar to New Mexico . . . That the construction of a building which shall be substantially a replica of the building known as the "New Mexico Building," of the Panama-California Exposition at San Diego, in permanent fire-proof material, to be located within the city of Santa Fe, to be constructed under the direction of the board of regents of

the New Mexico Museum . . . is hereby authorized. . . (Laws of New Mexico, Chap. 95, 1915)

Construction of the Museum of Fine Arts building commenced on April 17, 1916 under the direction of Nusbaum. The architects for the project were I. H. and W. M. Rapp who had designed the earlier New Mexico Building in San Diego. Oliver La Farge, in *Santa Fe, the Autobiography of a Southwestern Town*, claimed that Vierra was, in fact, the creative force for the design of the new building stating: "The State Art Museum is unique in many respects. Built under the influence of Carlos Vierra, it is an architectural curiosity. Made of cement, hollow tile, and plaster, it attempts unsuccessfully to imitate true adobe." The degree of influence exerted by Vierra on the architectural firm is not known. What is definite is that three large panels in the St. Francis Auditorium of the Art Museum were painted by him. Following the death of artist Donald Beauregard, the designer of the panels, Vierra and Chapman did the actual painting, with Vierra receiving this commission at the suggestion of Frank Springer. Edna Robertson and Sarah Nestor in *Artists of the Canyon and Caminos* state:

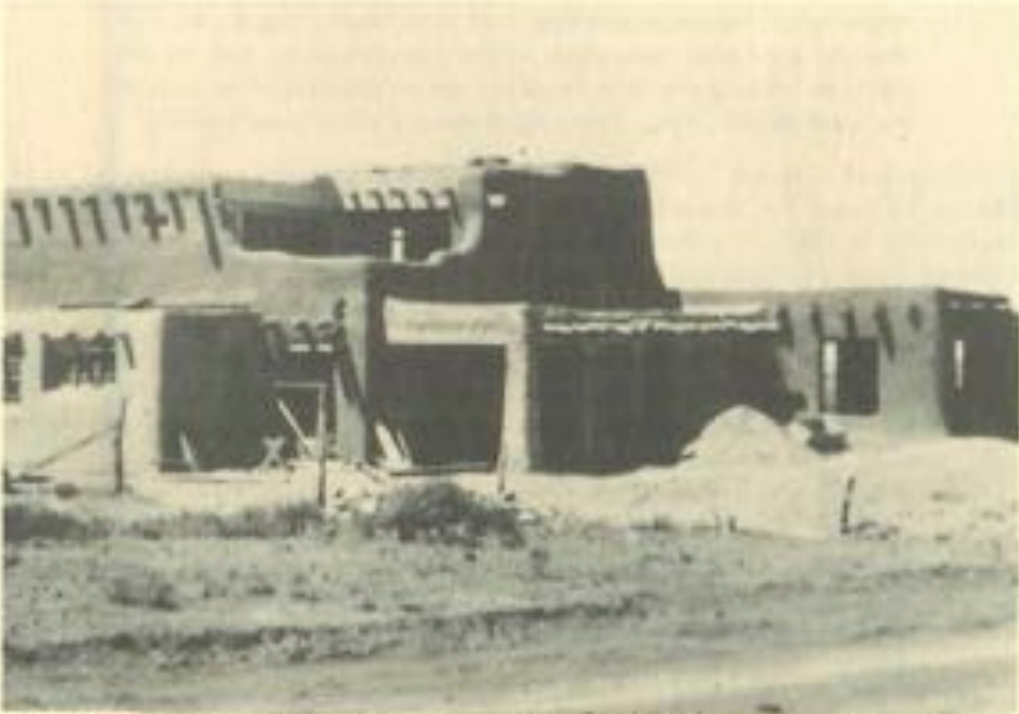
The three panels by Vierra show Columbus at the Franciscan monastery of Rabat in Portugal, with a vision of great ships in the sky; the Franciscans pleading for the Mayas with the Spanish soldiers; and the building of the New Mexican missions. (The figure of Columbus, by the way, is a self-portrait of Carlos Vierra).

Earlier, in 1906, Vierra had enlisted in Company F, 1st Regiment of the New Mexico National Guard. He qualified as an expert rifleman during his first year of enlistment and held the Guard record in military rifle marksmanship for a four-year period. While the Museum of Fine Arts was being constructed World War I was looming on the horizon and tension was present along the Mexican Border. The *Santa Fe New Mexican* on May 10, 1916 noted: "The calling out of the National Guard decimates the Museum force. Lieutenant Carlos Vierra, one of the crack shots of the Guard, is just putting the finishing touches on one of the St. Francis murals which he will have to abandon for the time being." Sent to Columbus, New Mexico as an instructor in the use of small arms, Vierra was also in charge of a detail of ten men assigned the task of assembling the army's crated airplanes! The planes, which were used in an unsuccessful attempt to locate Pancho Villa's forces, gave Columbus the distinction of having the country's first combat airfield. By July of 1916 Vierra had returned to Santa Fe and civilian pursuits.

In 1917 Vierra formalized his ideas concerning the architectural revival he was helping to foster and strongly voiced them in an article entitled, "Our Native Architecture in Its Relation to Santa Fe." Vierra identified the problem thus: "We have been slow to realize the value or to appreciate the beauty of the original architecture of the Southwest and the tendency has been blindly to destroy the finest things we have rather than to preserve or rebuild in appreciation of them." Vierra was cognizant of the difficulties encountered in trying to create an adobe-appearing building using modern material and workmen not trained in adobe construction. Anticipating La Farge's criticism of the Fine Arts Museum long before it was offered, Vierra wrote, "It is hard for workmen whose



West side of the Carlos Vierra House during construction. Nancy Quintana Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Northeast corner of the Carlos Vierra House during construction. Nancy Quintana Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

training had held them down to accuracy and rigid mathematical lines to accept the freedom of what might be described as a free-hand architecture." In commenting on flat roofs and their desirability, Vierra noted:

Flat roofs are practical the world over, but though not any more expensive in material, they require more skilful [sic] workmanship. A steep roof simply means that less intelligence is required in its construction to insure dryness — and the cost increases with the height. A flat roof carefully made of the right material is cheaper after all. Why allow poor workmanship to have such a destructive effect on our architecture and such a retarding influence on the progress? Must we accept bungalows and change our excellent adobe houses and beautiful old missions into the awful barn-like things that most of them become simply because we have had discouraging experience with workmen who did not have the intelligence required in the construction of a good flat roof?

Finally, in presenting a case for the revival of Santa Fe's traditional architectural style, Vierra pleaded:

It is not until we have begun to realize the loss our indifference and mistaken efforts of "improvement" have gradually brought about that we see the advantages in the development of our own native and Indian architecture and begin to take an interest in it . . . We had a fine individuality in architecture to begin with, but in neglecting and even destroying it, we find that we are being overtaken by the commonplace and we are likely to become one of a hundred towns, all struggling to hold our own against each other since we are all so much alike.

Vierra had decided by 1918 upon establishing his own architectural mini-district in Santa Fe, something the city government would not attempt until much later in 1957. *The Santa Fe New Mexican* of April 27, 1918 elaborated on Vierra's ambitious program with the following story:

The Santa Fe style of architecture — the kind that is so much admired by the artists and people of artistic temperament who come here, will get a big boost in a plan which is to be carried out under the direction of Carlos Vierra, artist and well known resident of this city.

In order to see a group of Santa Fe style cottages built, with no discordant architectural note struck nearby, Mr. Vierra has purchased, through H. H. Dorman, real estate dealer, property along Buena Vista Loma, opposite the Wiley property, and he has decided to sell lots only to those builders who will erect cottages in this style.

The year 1918 was an active one for Vierra. During that same year, he started construction of a home for himself and his wife of eight years, Ada Talbert Ogle. Knowing that the Vierra's lacked sufficient buildings funds, Frank Springer came to the couple's assistance and sold a lot on the corner of Old Pecos Trail

and Coronado Road to them for \$1.00. The deed, dated June 7, 1918, stipulated that the Vierras would hold title to the property until their deaths. At that time ownership would be vested in the Museum of New Mexico under the direction of its Board of Regents for encouraging and facilitating the work of local artists. Springer, who had purchased the property on August 3, 1916 from the Santa Fe Realty Company, reserved for himself, his wife Josephine and daughter Eva unrestricted use of two bedrooms, bathroom facilities and the art studio in any house constructed on the land! Later on December 12, 1922, the Museum of New Mexico deeded its interest in the property back to Springer in return for \$1,000 which he had advanced to the Museum for purchase of the Heister Collection of prehistoric pottery.

Prior to starting construction on his house, Vierra renewed his acquaintance with Trent Thomas whom he had met at the Panama-California Exposition three years earlier. Architect Thomas moved to Santa Fe in February of 1918 to work for the architectural firm of Rapp, Rapp and Hendrickson on the design of La Fonda. Vierra and Thomas exchanged ideas on the subject of the revival of Spanish-Pueblo architecture. One result of these many exchanges was a painting Thomas did for Vierra which captured both of their thoughts concerning the appearance of the ideal Spanish-Pueblo revival style residence. The design with only slight modifications was the basis for the adobe house constructed over a period of three years by Vierra. Trent Thomas was born in 1889 in Muskogee, Oklahoma and died in Santa Fe in 1951. A resident of Santa Fe for thirty years Thomas collaborated with Vierra on the construction of several buildings employing the revival style. One building which Thomas designed and which demonstrates Vierra's influence is the Eddy County Courthouse in Carlsbad.

Vierra started construction of his house in 1918, and as soon as a roof was erected the couple occupied the structure, moving from one room to another as the finishing work was completed. Long before the installation of windows and doors Vierra knew he was achieving his objective when travelers referred to the



The northwest corner of the Carlos Vierra House shortly after construction was completed. Photograph courtesy of Mrs. Betty Toulouse.



The home of Carlos Vierra as it dominated the area in the summer of 1924. Karl Belser Collection, State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

new construction as "the ruins near Cutting's." The home of Bronson Cutting on Old Santa Fe Trail was a more acceptable and "modern" home. On April 2, 1919, fearful that his view to the north would be obstructed, Vierra purchased a parcel of land across Coronado Road from Nathan and Pathra Salmon and Moses and Adpa Abouseleman. The *Santa Fe New Mexican* on July 30 of that year reported on Vierra's progress:

One of the largest and in many ways most artistic houses is that which Carlos Vierra, the artist, is building south of Don Gaspar Avenue, [Sic, east?] with a superb view of the Sandia Mountains. In fact, all of the surrounding mountains can be seen from the Vierra home. The construction of his home began many months ago but this spring and summer it has made a mark on the landscape and is much admired. It is two stories high, in the Santa Fe style of which Mr Vierra is an apostle, and is of adobe with various layers of brick. It promises to be "the last word" on original Santa Fe style houses with several sleeping porches. There are charming vigas and quaint fireplaces.

One individual who viewed the final phases of building, and who would be a student of Vierra's, was John Gaw Meem who had come to Santa Fe for his health in 1920. He quickly became acquainted with Vierra and was to learn a

great deal about construction and style from him. In fact, Vierra served as a consultant for Meem well into the thirties. John C. McNary in his thesis "John Gaw Meem: His Style Development and Residential Architecture Between 1924 and 1940" states:

In the construction of a house [in Nambe] for Cyrus McCormick especially, Vierra played a prominent role. In a letter to Cyrus McCormick dated December 1931 concerning the new house, Meem writes "Carlos Vierra has exerted every bit of his knowledge of this architecture and his sensitivity to it in producing the lovely lines that it has."

Shortly after Vierra completed his residence, he met Spanish scholar Joaquin Ortega at La Fonda and offered to give him a tour of his masterpiece. Dr. Ortega, then director of the School of Inter-American Affairs at the University of New Mexico, recounted his impressions of his introduction to New Mexico in a paper read at a joint meeting of the Historical Society of New Mexico and the Archaeological Society of New Mexico on November 15, 1944:

... I did go with the painter Carlos Vierra to see his house. And what a house! After he had brought — appropriately enough — a good sherry wine, we began commenting on the exquisite abode. The delicate lines of the adobe so solid and yet indecisive; his fireplace with *poyos* so irregular, yet so softly and pliantly blending into each other. "Why, don Carlos, you have played your music into that mud." "Exactly!" he beamed. "Confidentially to you, I have built those *poyos* half a dozen times, until I think they are right."



The Carlos Vierra House as it appears today. Photograph courtesy of Hope Curtis.



An interior view of the Carlos Vierra House showing the elaborate woodwork. Photograph courtesy of Hope Curtis.

Glad you like them. You know, adobe is like building with water: the shapes are there, but some escape from you."

They were *right*, with the spiritual rightness of individual expression and higher uses.

I sat facing the windows.

"The shapes; you said the shapes; how about those windows, you rascal! One little window, another medium sized window, another large window, with the edges avoiding the harsh line. Why, those are not windows, ordinary windows; those are frames for the landscapes you see from your living room! Your architecture has not been conceived from the outside, but from the inside out."

"Exactly, my friend. And how few people notice it! Please observe how, according to the point of vantage" — and he took me by the arm to various spots in the room — "now the slender

trees of my patio, now the *portada*, make the foreground for successive pictures of the mountains beyond."

And so we went on. In the dining room he had wisely interspersed Chinese and Japanese objects, which blend perfectly with our *santos*, our Spanish motifs, and our Indian wares, for the Orient is the common denominator of Indians and much that is Spanish.

Thus I was introduced in New Mexico from the inside, at the hearth of an artist appreciative of beauty and meaning.

Carlos Vierra developed pneumonia and died in Santa Fe on December 20, 1937. His wife continued to live in the house until the early 1940's when she moved to Kansas. Ownership of the property reverted to the Springer family and was recently purchased by Larry D. Hays and C. Eugene Law. The first floor of the house is occupied by Charles-David Interiors and the second floor serves as a residence.

Santa Feans are indebted to Carlos Vierra, as Paul A. F. Walter observed in an editorial published the day after Vierra's death:

Up to 25 years ago, Santa Fe prided itself in its two and three story brick buildings and an occasional California bungalow. It was Vierra's insistence upon purity of style that saved Santa Fe from many an architectural monstrosity which sought actuality under false pretenses. Up to the time of his death he guarded the integrity of the Pueblo and the Spanish colonial architecture with a zeal often leading to heated controversy. That Santa Fe is not only a "City Different" but also a "City Beautiful" is more largely owing to him, perhaps, than to any other one individual.

James H. Purdy
December 6, 1978

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