



LAS TRAMPAS, NEW MEXICO — A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The northern New Mexico village of Las Trampas (The Traps) has been designated a National Historic Landmark by Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall.

Las Trampas possesses historical and architectural values of national significance. The village is one of the finest examples of a Spanish-American agricultural community surviving in the United States.

A committee of the New Mexico Society of Architects participated with National Park service planners, historians and photographers in preparing the necessary documents which were presented to the Nation Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments. The recommendations of the Board resulted in Secretary Udall's designation.

The Las Trampas Foundation has been formed to aid in the preservation and development of the small New Mexico community. The five founding members of the Foundation include two members of the New Mexico Society of Architects, John W. McHugh and John P. Conron. Other founding members are Tranquilino Lopez and Bernadino Armijo, both of Las Trampas, and David J. Jones, formerly of the National Park Service regional office in Santa Fe.

The first task of the Las Trampas Foundation has been to work closely with the New Mexico Highway Department in the re-design of State Route 76 as it passes through the valley and village of Las Trampas.

Details of the original design were questioned by members of

the Foundation. An appeal was made to Highway Department officials and to then governor, Jack M. Campbell. Negotiations have proceeded and full agreement has now been reached between the Foundation, the National Park Service, Bureau of Public Roads and the New Mexico Highway Department. The plans call for a scaled down, but completely adequate, highway. The pavement has been narrowed to 20 feet wide with 8 foot wide stabilized gravel shoulders. There is to be no ditch along the sides. The shoulders are to blend into the existing landscape. The aggregate in the pavement surface will be designed to blend with the surroundings. A timber bridge with masonry rubble abutments will span Las Trampas River. Masonry headwalls will be provided for all culverts.

A 19th Century school building which forms part of the plaza facade, and which would have been demolished under the earlier Highway Department plans, will now be left undisturbed as an "authorized encroachment within the right-of-way".



The Santa Fe office of the National Park Service has assigned

landscape architect Urban Rogers to serve as coordinator and field inspector. He will work out details with State Highway Department personnel.

The Highway Department has been most helpful in finding solutions to the problems presented by the earlier designs. The state of New Mexico, and the people of Las Trampas will be the true benefactors of the Las Trampas project.

Las Trampas is an exciting challenge in terms of architectural preservation and human needs. Las Trampas must not be made into a Williamsburg type of dead village museum. The real task is the preservation of history, the continuation of valid human cultural values, and the integration of twentieth century knowledge. It is a community of families, not just



buildings. It is a community with a need for economic uplift. The challenge lies in meeting the needs of the people in an historic, but evolving, community.

The New Mexico Society of Architects has been fortunate to have been able to contribute the time and talents of some of its members.

The September-October, 1966 issue of NEW MEXICO ARCHITECTURE magazine devoted several pages and photographs to this most important example of the Spanish American cultural heritage. Early in 1968 the editors of NMA expect to publish a detailed article outlining the proposals which the Foundation and the people of Las Trampas are now in the process of developing.