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# Richard Requa: Southern California Architect, 1881-1941

Mary Taschner

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University of San Diego

San Diego

Richard Requa

Southern California Architect

1881-1941

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in History

by

Mary Taschner

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1982

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## Introduction

The name of Richard Requa is relatively unknown today. Only a handful of San Diego history buffs can quickly recall his place in the development of the city and county. But even though his name may have been forgotten, a surprising percentage of the buildings he designed remain as a heritage for the people who use them daily. Over forty years after the death of Richard Requa, San Diego County is enriched by the homes and gardens and public buildings he created.

In addition to the contributions of Requa as an architect, he took part in many civic activities. A strong believer in planned development, he devoted many hours to projects which would improve the quality of life in Southern California. His many contributions, however, have never been chronicled or analyzed. This paper will address the scope of his achievements in an effort to determine what impact they have had on the Southern California lifestyle. In order to provide a complete picture, an attempt will be made to identify all of Requa's architectural and literary works.

In his book Old World Inspiration for American Architecture, Requa wrote:

The merit of an architectural style cannot be determined by its excellence per se; it must be studied and judged in <sup>1</sup> relation to its epoch and environment.

Requa did the bulk of his work in Southern California, however, the epoch of which he wrote is less easy to categorize. When Requa was born in a small Illinois town in 1881, no such style as "modern architecture" existed. When he died in 1941, catastrophic changes in society and technology had resulted in the emergence of the new style. World War II capped that transition.

Requa's career spanned thirty odd years between the death of classic architecture as taught by the Ecole des Beaux Arts and the establishment of modern architecture as the major style prevalent throughout the world. His home in San Diego at the most southwesterly corner of the United States left him curiously isolated from either of these great movements. He exemplified the last of a dying breed of architects who did not receive any formal training in an architectural school. As a result, Requa did not acquire any knowledge of the Beaux Arts "jargon" which had been the standard curriculum in any school of architecture. Instead Requa learned his profession by the time-honored method of the apprenticeship system.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard S. Requa, Old World Inspiration for American Architecture, Los Angeles: The Monolith Portland Cement Company, 1929, n.p.

As a result of the unusual training Requa received and the circumstance of living in San Diego, his work cannot be fairly judged by the entire epoch in which he lived. Instead, he must be considered in terms of events taking place in the American Southwest, rather than throughout the world.

When Requa arrived in San Diego in 1900, California architecture existed in the midst of the first Hispanic revival known as Mission Revival. Fifteen years later, the whole country felt electrified by the Churrigueresque buildings designed by Bertram Goodhue for San Diego's Panama California International Exposition. The immediate outcome was a second Hispanic revival known as Spanish Colonial Revival. This style continued to prevail in California throughout the twenties.<sup>2</sup> Finally, in the depressed thirties, California architecture began to resemble that of the rest of the country. The streamlined Modern styles took over as the most popular and fashionable styles of architecture.

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<sup>2</sup>David Gebhard discusses early 20th century California architecture in "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XXVI, May 1967, pp. 131-147. See also Harold Kirker's "California's Architecture and its Relation to Contemporary Trends in Europe and America," California Historical Quarterly, Vol. LI, Winter 1972, pp. 289-305. A contemporary viewpoint of the early period can be found in George Wharton James' "The Influence of the Mission Style Upon the Civic and Domestic Architecture of Modern California," The Craftsman, Vol. 5, No. 5, 1903, pp. 463-470, and also in Elmer Grey's "Architecture in Southern California," The Architectural Record, Vol. XVII, No. 1, January 1905, pp. 1-17.



Throughout the period of Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival, several avant garde or Secessionist movements manifested themselves in California.<sup>3</sup> The work of Richard Requa can be most properly placed in this category. His work became closely related to the major styles of the day, but in many ways had a relationship with the International style because of Requa's training in the office of Irving Gill.<sup>4</sup>

Requa's stylistic development cannot be clearly traced as one step to another with each step an expansion of earlier ideas. Much of his work was created while in partnership with another architect or with the assistance of his staff. The intent of this work, however, is to explore that development while examining his personal life and civic activities.

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<sup>3</sup>Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial...", p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>Helen McElfresh Ferris, "Irving John Gill: San Diego Architect, The Formation of an American Style of Architecture," Journal of San Diego History, Vol. XVII, No. 4, Fall 1971, p. 11.

## Chapter 1

### Personal Life

Richard S. Requa was born on March 27, 1881 in Rock Island, Illinois to Edward H. and Sarah Powers Requa.<sup>1</sup> His birth marked the eighth generation of his paternal line in America.<sup>2</sup> The Requa family had descended from Glode Requa, a French Huguenot who had emigrated to America in 1678 to escape religious persecution. The Requas had originally settled in Tarrytown, New York, but as the family grew, they eventually fanned out throughout the United States.<sup>3</sup>

After Richard's birth, his parents remained in Rock Island for a few years. Then his merchant father moved the family to Fremont, Nebraska, and in 1885, they migrated to Norfolk, Nebraska. There the family remained for the greater

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<sup>1</sup>Information on Richard Requa's birth is found on his Certificate of Death on file with the County of San Diego. Viola Requa supplied the information.

<sup>2</sup>Carl H. Heilbron (ed), History of San Diego County, San Diego: The San Diego Press Club, 1936, pp. 141-142.

<sup>3</sup>Justus Eugene Requa, II, in an interview at Del Mar, California in March 1981, provided information about the Requa family history.

part of Richard's youth.<sup>4</sup> Several more children were born to the Edward Requa's with Richard the oldest of three sons and three daughters.<sup>5</sup>

Richard's early life in Nebraska gave few hints of his future as an architect. He attended public schools and later studied electrical engineering at Norfolk College.<sup>6</sup> Although the exact length of his college career is not known, he probably did not attend for more than a year or two.

In 1900, Edward Requa made a decision to move his family to California. By that time, Richard had left school and begun working as an electrical engineer. But he decided to move with the rest of his family to San Diego, California. The Requas arrived at San Diego in July of 1900, and settled at 410 17th Street.<sup>7</sup>

The family chose a particularly poor time to move to

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<sup>4</sup>Samuel F. Black, San Diego County California, Vol. II, Chicago: The S.J. Publishing Company, 1913, p. 216. The same information is in Clarence Alan McGrew's City of San Diego and San Diego County, Vol. II, Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1922, pp. 31-32.

<sup>5</sup>The other five children born to the Edward Requa's were Lewis, Randall, Julia (Wright), Rhoda (Francis), and Harriet (Stetter). Lewis worked with his brother Richard several times, first as a draftsman and in 1934, as a foreman for the California Pacific International Exposition. Rhoda's husband, Wirt Francis, became Richard's attorney.

<sup>6</sup>McGrew, City of San Diego..., p. 32.

<sup>7</sup>San Diego City and County Directory, 1901, San Diego: San Diego Directory Company.

San Diego. The California land booms of the eighties had abruptly slumped in 1888 leaving San Diego, like other Southern California communities, without an economic base. Land speculators who had poured into the area, left as suddenly as they had come. By 1900, when the Requas arrived, San Diego had still not recovered from the devastating blow. The economy remained poor and jobs were hard to find.

Edward Requa did not find employment during his first two years in San Diego. Because of his training as an electrical engineer, Richard had better luck. The 1901 San Diego City Directory lists Richard Requa as an electrician working for Frank S. Hartwell, an electrical contractor. Requa continued at the job until 1904 when his independent spirit revealed itself for the first time in his adult life. With Fred L. Edwards, Richard opened his own electrical contracting business known as Edwards and Requa. By that time, Richard's father, Edward Requa, had become the proprietor of a rooming house called The Tourist, located at 2327 "H" Street in San Diego. Edwards and Requa rented a room from him for their business headquarters.<sup>8</sup>

The new venture proved something less than a success, for by 1905, Richard had returned to his old job with

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<sup>8</sup> San Diego Directory..., 1905.

Hartwell.<sup>9</sup> He worked as an electrician for another two years, but by 1907 had gone into the real estate business.<sup>10</sup> Why he changed occupations is not clear, but an anecdote which he told the architect Samuel Hamill years later indicates something of the working conditions at the Hartwell company.

Requa told Hamill that Frank Hartwell was an extremely strict employer with certain definite standards of behavior from his employees. While Requa worked for him, Hartwell fired another young man whom he caught smoking. This incident made a strong impression on Requa, who smoked, and he began a re-assessment of his aims in life.<sup>11</sup>

Whether or not Hartwell's views had any real impact on Requa's decision to change careers, he left Frank Hartwell. But, another change in his life at that same time had a more profound effect on the direction of his career.

On February 21, 1907, Richard Requa married Viola Hust, a native of Carmi, Illinois,<sup>12</sup> who was reared and educated in Spokane, Washington.<sup>13</sup> The young couple began their

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<sup>9</sup>San Diego Directory..., 1905.

<sup>10</sup>San Diego Directory..., 1907.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel Hamill, who later became Requa's partner, recounted this story during an interview in San Diego, 1981.

<sup>12</sup>The Marriage License and Certificate on file with the County of San Diego provided this information.

<sup>13</sup>McGrew, City of San Diego..., p. 32.

married life in a rented home in Pacific Beach. Richard worked for the Kirby Realty Company the next few months.<sup>14</sup>

Later that year, Requa again changed jobs, this time to enter the profession which he would follow for the rest of his life. He began his new career as a building superintendent for Irving Gill, one of the foremost San Diego architects of his time.<sup>15</sup> Although the job as superintendent appeared to Requa to be only an extension of his former job as an electrician, he did not realize that the job would offer him the chance of a lifetime to be trained as an architect.

Irving Gill ran his office as an atelier where all his employees became apprentices for professional positions.<sup>16</sup> In that atmosphere of learning, Richard not only acted as job superintendent for Gill's construction work, but he began to design buildings. The techniques and principles of design and construction which he learned from Gill would provide a basis for all of Requa's later independent work.

By 1910, Requa apparently felt his training and experience sufficient to enable him to start his own practice. In December, he opened his office at 441-442 McNeese Building

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<sup>14</sup>San Diego Directory..., 1907.

<sup>15</sup>San Diego Directory..., 1908.

<sup>16</sup>Samuel Hamill described Gill's office procedures.

in San Diego. His brother Lewis came to work with him as his draftsman.<sup>17</sup> During his first year, Requa designed a house for himself and another for his parents. By designing family dwellings, Requa followed a time-honored procedure for a fledgling architect. The work kept him busy during those first slow months while he waited for the first commission, but more importantly, the two houses gave him something to show prospective clients. Almost immediately, Requa received commissions to design homes for prominent San Diegans.<sup>18</sup>

Unlike his earlier venture as an independent businessman, this time Requa's gamble paid off. Black's History of San Diego County, a publication of the period, described Richard Requa as "a young man whose business prominence and success are established and assured."<sup>19</sup>

During 1912, a man who had been one of Requa's associates at Gill's office returned to San Diego after spending several years working on an Indian reservation.<sup>20</sup> Upon his return to the practice of architecture, Frank Mead and Requa

<sup>17</sup>San Diego Directory..., 1911.

<sup>18</sup>Requa's early work can be traced through his architectural drawings in the Samuel Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.

<sup>19</sup>Black, San Diego County..., p. 216.

<sup>20</sup>Timothy J. Anderson, Eudorah M. Moore, Robert W. Winter (eds), California Design 1910, United States of America: California Design Publications, 1974, p. 133.

formed a partnership which was known as Mead and Requa.<sup>21</sup> Mead brought to the firm a wealth of inspirations from his travel and study abroad. While benefiting from Mead's background, Requa realized that personal experience would be even more beneficial. Accordingly, in 1914, Requa toured Cuba, Panama and South America, returning with an increased awareness of architecture in countries with a Mediterranean climate. During the same period, Requa became an accomplished photographer. While on his tour, he took numerous slides which he used later to illustrate a series of lectures.<sup>22</sup>

During the eight years of the existence of the firm of Mead and Requa, they designed important projects which included the Nurses' Home at the County Hospital, the La Mesa Grammar School and the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Hollywood. In 1916, the firm received a major commission from E.D. Libbey, the "cut glass king", to redevelop the town of Ojai in Ventura County. This work continued for several years and eventually included many buildings.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Helen McElfresh Ferris, "Irving John Gill: San Diego Architect, The Formation of an American Style of Architecture," Journal of San Diego History, Vol. XVII, No. 4, Fall 1971, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup>McGrew, City of San Diego..., p. 32.

<sup>23</sup>The complete process of Ojai's redevelopment can be traced in The Ojai, a newspaper in Ojai, California. Plans for the buildings are in the Samuel Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.



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Meanwhile, the economy in San Diego had taken an upward swing with the opening of the 1915 Exposition causing increased building in the city. The Mead/Requa firm was kept very busy, especially after the United States entered World War I. The war, however, meant changes in San Diego. Most important to Requa was the expansion of facilities at Rockwell Field, the Army Air Force facility on North Island. On January 18, 1918, he was appointed San Diego associate for architect Albert Kahn of Detroit.<sup>24</sup> Requa's motives for seeking the appointment were probably a mixture of patriotism, desire for recognition and a need for money. By that time, at thirty-seven years of age, with a wife and young son, there was little likelihood of his being drafted. By serving as a government architect, Requa could be performing a service for his country, and have a chance to work with an eminent architect.

That Requa had grasped business acumen is evidenced by a letter from Albert Kahn to Colonel C.G. Edgar dated January 23, 1918:

Mr. Requa has brought up the matter of remuneration. He feels that since the work is to be carried on a part at a time and not all at once, and since the supervision necessary in connection with the house work and the hospital especially will require considerable time, he should

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<sup>24</sup>On January 18, 1918, Colonel C.G. Edgar of the Signal Corps sent a telegram to Albert Kahn informing him of the appointment. The telegram is on file at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

be paid one fee for this part of the work, and a lesser fee for the balance as it may be ordered. He asks two percent for looking after this first part of the work, and is willing to do the balance for three-quarters of one percent. Personally, I feel Mr. Requa's request is entirely fair, and recommend its acceptance.<sup>25</sup>

While overseeing the work at Rockwell Field and continuing his regular commissions, Requa found time to design a new type of hollow tile. For several years, he had been concerned about the problems encountered while using square hollow tile. While the tile could be laid horizontally or vertically with no problem, framing around doors, windows, and corners proved difficult and wasted tiles. Requa designed an interlocking hollow tile which allowed framing and corners to be laid easily with no waste. He filed an application for a patent on September 18, 1918 and his patent number 1,341,071 was granted on May 25, 1920.<sup>26</sup> For a number of years, the tile was manufactured by several companies.<sup>27</sup> Requa used the tiles almost exclusively on most of his buildings for many years.

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<sup>25</sup>The letter is on file at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>26</sup>Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office, Vol. CCLXXIV, Washington, D.C. : May 1920, p. 660.

<sup>27</sup>During an interview in March 1981, Samuel Hamill discussed Requa's reason for designing a new hollow tile. He also mentioned that Natco was one of the companies which manufactured the tile.

After the war, work slowed down in the firm of Mead and Requa and Frank Mead began to spend much of his time out of San Diego. In 1920, he left permanently and another former associate from Irving Gill's office, Herbert Jackson, became Requa's new partner.<sup>28</sup> As Requa had then been an architect for almost thirteen years, he became the senior member of the new firm. In May of 1920, Requa and Jackson opened their practice at 614 "B" Street in San Diego.<sup>29</sup>

After the formation of his new partnership, Requa began to get more involved in civic affairs which took him out of the office. He had been one of the eight founding members of the San Diego chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1910.<sup>30</sup> Ten years later, he expanded his interest in the AIA to include Southern California. He attended meetings of the Southern California chapter of the

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<sup>28</sup>The information is mentioned in McGrew, City of San Diego..., p. 32, and also in Anderson, Moore and Winter (eds) California Design 1910, p. 133.

<sup>29</sup>San Diego Directory..., 1921.

<sup>30</sup>On August 29, 1910, W.S. Hebbard, S.G. Kennedy, E.B. Weaver, R.S. Requa, Charles Quayle, Robert Hadley, D.W. Harris and Irving Gill attended a meeting to organize a San Diego chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The information was included in notes for a speech detailing the early history of the AIA written by Louis Gill. The notes are at the University of California, Santa Barbara library, Louis Gill files.

AIA in Los Angeles as an invited guest.<sup>31</sup> That led to his appointment as chairman of a committee to arrange for the entertainment of the chapter at a special meeting held in San Diego.<sup>32</sup> In November of 1920, Requa was elected as a San Diego member to the Southern California chapter.<sup>33</sup> Along with his membership in the AIA, Requa also held membership in the San Diego Arts Guild, the Archeological Institute of America, the Advertising Club and the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>34</sup>

Requa became very skilled in the art of making advantageous contacts. At some time during the twenties, he became acquainted with Coy Burnett, president of Monolith Portland Cement Company in Los Angeles.<sup>35</sup> Burnett, a new entry into the cement industry was trying to break the cement monopoly which existed in Southern California at the time. The acquaintanceship between Requa and Burnett ripened into

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<sup>31</sup>"Institute Architects Hear Address on Housing," Southwest Builder and Contractor, Vol. 55, No. 11, March 12, 1920, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup>"Round About the Southwest," Southwest Builder and Contractor, Vol. 55, No. 17, April 23, 1920, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup>"Architects Chapter Elects Officers," Southwest Builder and Contractor, Vol. 56, No. 25, pp. 11-12.

<sup>34</sup>McGrew, City of San Diego..., p. 32.

<sup>35</sup>Burnett was one of the founders of the cement company. He served as president and later became honorary Chairman of the Board. He died December 7, 1971.

a friendship which proved beneficial to each. As part of his scheme to break the cement monopoly, Burnett planned to publish books which would illustrate new ways to use cement. The books would then provide a reference for architects and builders and at the same time sell more cement.<sup>36</sup> Burnett's selection of Richard Requa to create the first book came as no surprise to anyone, since the work seemed tailor-made for him. His skill as a photographer plus his profession as an architect made him a natural choice. In addition to these attributes, Requa had published several articles.

After the details had been settled, Requa began a series of trips to Europe and Africa during the 1920s. The trips were underwritten by Monolith Portland Cement because Requa was making photographs for the company.<sup>37</sup> But at the same time, Requa was able to use the trips to search out antique building materials such as doors or grilles which he would then use in the houses he designed. As another side benefit, Requa also gained a great deal of architectural knowledge during the excursions. As a result, he was able to create what he called the "Southern California Style".

Requa's first book Architectural Details: Spain and the Mediterranean was published in 1926. Requa formulated for

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<sup>36</sup>Samuel Hamill provided information about Requa and his relationship with Monolith Portland.

<sup>37</sup>Hamill, interview, March 1981.

the first time his personal philosophy about the proper design elements for Southern California architecture. In addition, the book offered a beautiful series of photographs which Requa took in various parts of the Mediterranean. The pictures are divided into categories such as roofs, windows or doors which could then be used as a handy reference source by the architects and builders who read the book.<sup>38</sup> In spite of its original commercial application, the book stands today as an excellent series of artistic photographs.

In May, 1928, C.A. Low, vice-president and general manager of Monolith Portland Cement Company announced that Richard S. Requa, nationally known architect, had just embarked upon another old-world research tour. According to Low, Requa's first book had received such wide-spread favor that the first two editions had been quickly exhausted. He promised "further development of an architectural style distinctive of the West and particularly adaptable to concrete and cement plaster construction."

On his 1928 tour, Requa was accompanied by his wife, Viola; Milton P. Sessions, a San Diego landscape architect; the Misses Etta and Lydia Schweider and Mrs. Francis F. Law, friends from San Diego; and Miss Florence E. Ware, an artist

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<sup>38</sup>Richard S. Requa, Architectural Details: Spain and the Mediterranean, Los Angeles: The Monolith Portland Cement Company, 1926. Edgar N. Kierulff reviewed the book in The Architect and Engineer, Vol. 92, No.3, March 1928, p. 117. Kierulff considered the book beautiful, and distinctive.

from Salt Lake City. The group sailed from New York City and took an extended tour of northern Africa, Europe and the Mediterranean.<sup>39</sup>

Another pattern book, a result of the tour, was published by the Monolith Portland Cement Company entitled Old World Inspiration for American Architecture. Requa continued the same format which he had established in his first book. He arranged his beautiful photographs in categories with each section preceded by a brief essay explaining its proper usage in architecture.

Requa's two books depicting old world architecture proved to be so popular with architects that Monolith decided to publish a book showing new world adaptations. Accordingly, the Monolith Portland Midwest Company conducted a small house competition and architectural educational campaign, sponsored by several midwest chapters of the AIA. After the jury had selected the best designs and educational articles, Requa acted as editor to place them in his new book, Fifty-one Prize Winning Small Homes, published in 1930.<sup>40</sup> This book marked the last in Requa's series of pattern books for Monolith Portland.

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<sup>39</sup>The Architect and Engineer, Vol. 92, No.5, May 1928, p. 110.

<sup>40</sup>Mary Burnham(ed), The Cumulative Book Index 1928-1932, New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1933, p.1744. The only copy of Fifty-one Homes found through an inter-library search is in an out of state library and does not circulate.

While Requa had branched out into photography and writing, his practice continued to build. During the twenties, as the economy escalated at a rapid rate, the Requa/Jackson partnership designed many luxury homes and vacation cottages. In 1922, Requa received his second commission to design a town, this time for a completely new town to be known as Rancho Santa Fe.<sup>41</sup> As with the town of Ojai, the design work went on for years and eventually the firm put one of its staff architects, Lilian Rice, in charge of the whole project.<sup>42</sup>

The firm had come a long way from Requa's small office when his brother had been the only draftsman. Requa and Jackson always had at least four or five draftsmen employed and sometimes double that number. One of those draftsmen, a young man named Samuel Hamill, would achieve professional greatness in his own right. Hamill recalls the great degree of kindness which he always received from Requa, possibly because Hamill reminded Requa of his own son who had died in 1924. Hamill became the junior partner in the firm which was then renamed Requa, Jackson and Hamill.

Commissions continued to pour into the firm for another year after Hamill became a partner. In fact, the work load

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<sup>41</sup>L.G. Sinnard, "Rancho Santa Fe California--Yesterday--Today," pamphlet, San Diego Historical Society.

<sup>42</sup>S.W. Hamill explained Rice's function in a letter to the San Diego Historical Society.



became so heavy that Sam Hamill's brother Joseph joined the firm for a short while in 1929.<sup>43</sup> By 1930, however, commissions coming into the firm had practically ceased. Only the very wealthy could still afford the services of an architect. For that reason, every project, small or large, received special attention from the firm.

In September 1930, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce sent letters to all the architects who were Chamber members requesting them to bid on remodeling the Chamber building. The interested architects met and determined that because of the size of the job, they would simply request that the Chamber select one of them. Requa received the bid in view of his outstanding work for the Chamber of Commerce, particularly because he had gone on the annual goodwill tour to Mexico.<sup>44</sup>

Although the architects had considered the Chamber job too small on which to bid, Requa's successful remodeling of the building resulted in an AIA award for the firm in 1933. This was no small accomplishment for there were only seventy awards given for all the buildings designed in San Diego between 1909 and 1933. Requa and Jackson came out very well in the competition, receiving awards in six categories. The

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<sup>43</sup>Hamill, interview, March 1981.

<sup>44</sup>San Diego Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting, September 19, 1930.

List of Honor Awards included the following:

Single dwellings, 5 rooms and less--Angier house; Mrs. Harold Angier, Owen St., La Playa; Requa and Jackson, Arch.; "skill in planning for most unusual site, restricted and directly on beach".

Store building, one story--store front modernization--Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Stahel, 1500 block on Fifth Ave.; Requa and Jackson, Arch. "picturesque and varied treatment suited to civic center group of village".

Banks--First National Trust and Savings Bank; University Ave. and 30th St., "decorative arrangements of exterior", Requa and Jackson, Arch.

Industrial buildings--Substation, San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric Company, 4th Ave. and Ash St., Requa and Jackson, Arch., "monumental exterior treatment of public utility building".

Quasi-public buildings not otherwise grouped--remodeled building for San Diego Chamber of Commerce, Broadway and Columbia St., Requa and Jackson, Arch., "Useful interior and fitting facade of generous scale to make it a semi-public institution".

Memorials--Mount Helix Nature Theater, San Diego County, Requa and Jackson, Arch., "in this climate, such an outdoor meeting place is ideal, and the public spirit of its donors deserves great praise." 45

It may have been co-incidental, but the next year, 1934, Requa was elected to be one of the directors of the San Diego chapter of the AIA. He continued in that position in 1935. In 1936 and 1937, he acted as treasurer of the group and in

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<sup>45</sup>"Honor Awards on Seventy Buildings in San Diego County," Architect and Engineer, Vol. 114, No. 2, August 1933, pp. 49-50.

1940 and 1941, his peers elected him to the office of presidency. Requa's partner, Samuel Hamill, also received the honor of various offices in the AIA, but Herbert Jackson's name does not appear on the list of officers before 1941.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps because business had slowed, or maybe because of his uncanny ability to meet the right people and join the right groups, during the 1930s, Requa became increasingly involved in civic affairs. He could not have expected the benefit to himself which came as a result of his interest and work for the community. The major commission of Requa's career, the 1935 Exposition in Balboa Park, came about because of his membership in the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1933, city inspectors declared the buildings in Balboa Park unsafe for public use.<sup>47</sup> Because of the extent of deterioration, renovation seemed impossible. Instead, the inspectors recommended that the 1915 exhibit buildings be condemned and torn down.

Gertrude Gilbert, chairman for the music program at the

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<sup>46</sup>American Institute of Architects, San Diego Chapter, "List of Officers 1929-1941," Samuel Hamill served as secretary in 1936 and 1937; president in 1938 and 1939; director in 1940 and 1941.

<sup>47</sup>Florence Christman, in her book The Romance of Balboa Park, San Diego: The Committee of 100, 1977, pp. 53-54, relates that city inspectors began a rampage of inspection of all public buildings because a palm tree in Horton Plaza had fallen over and killed a child. No documentation of the incident could be found in newspapers of the period.

1915 Exposition, likened this plan to letting a loved one die because it was not convenient to pay a surgeon. She asked the Chamber of Commerce to help her find a way to save the park buildings.<sup>48</sup> The Chamber appointed a committee to consider ways and means of preserving the buildings. The committee consisted of Director Wynne Van Schaick as chairman, Miss Bess Gilbert, F.L. Annable, Wheeler Bailey, William Templeton Johnson, George F. Otto and Richard Requa. The group decided at their first meeting that a total rehabilitation of all the buildings would indeed be prohibitive. When the exposition buildings had been designed and constructed, the consensus of those involved had recommended that the buildings be of a temporary nature. The restoration committee, well aware of this, nonetheless felt that the total demolition of the park buildings would have a catastrophic impact on San Diego. Instead they recommended that the buildings along the Prado and plaza should be preserved. They felt, however, that the depth of the buildings should be reduced to cover a smaller area and that the salvaged material from the razed buildings be used for the reconstruction work. To this end, a sub-committee consisting of Requa, Johnson, Bailey and Trepte agreed to inspect the buildings

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<sup>48</sup>Christman, The Romance of..., pp. 53-57.

and determine what could be accomplished and what the task would cost.<sup>49</sup>

Requa acted as Chairman for the sub-committee. His report to the Chamber of Commerce on May 18, 1933 painted a dismal picture of the true state of the formerly grandiose Exposition buildings. He later recorded that he found:

Foundations of buildings and arcades were tilting forward drunkenly; and whole sections of cornices and parapets had broken away and dropped into the shrubbery at their base. Large areas of the stuccoed walls had fallen, exposing the skeletons of temporary construction behind. The danger to the public had become so apparent that spaces were roped off around the crumbling sections...<sup>50</sup>

In spite of appearances, however, Requa gave his professional opinion that the buildings along the Prado and plaza, except for the San Joaquin County Building, could be restored for \$70,494. The restoration would extend the life of the buildings for a period of five to ten years during which time a definite plan for the park could be made. Since razing the buildings would cost \$68,000, there seemed to be every reason to save them.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., May 11, 1933.

<sup>50</sup> Richard S. Requa, Inside Lights on the Building of San Diego's Exposition, 1935, San Diego: Frye and Smith, Ltd., 1937, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., May 18, 1933.

Accordingly, the Chamber of Commerce submitted their proposal, endorsed by the San Diego AIA, to the City Council on May 29, 1933. The Council remained reluctant to accept the report which specified a sum for restoration only one-quarter of the city inspector's estimate. They agreed, however, to put off demolition for thirty days in order to give the Chamber time to raise funds.

On June 7, 1933, the La Jolla Conservation Society held a dinner for the purpose of stimulating interest in the project. Richard Requa and Carleton Winslow were the principal speakers.<sup>52</sup>

Further efforts by the Chamber and other interested citizens raised \$77,000 and another \$300,000 came from SERA funds.<sup>53</sup> On August 3rd, the City Council appointed a committee to handle the funds and take charge of the restoration. Requa received the appointment as supervising architect.<sup>54</sup>

Work began on the Balboa Park project almost immediately. By September 15, wrecking crews had almost demolished Building #8. Meanwhile, restoration work had started on the American Legion Building, the Visual Education Building, and

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<sup>52</sup>Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., June 1, 1933.

<sup>53</sup>Christman, The Romance of ..., pp. 53-57.

<sup>54</sup>Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., August 3, 1933.

Buildings #4 and #5.<sup>55</sup>

On March 15, 1934, the County Assessor published a weekly report condemning Requa for the low estimate he had given for the restoration work. The report charged that Requa's original estimate had ballooned into three times that amount. The Chamber of Commerce discounted the report, considering the statement to be a distortion of the facts. They expressed their complete satisfaction with the work accomplished under Requa's supervision.<sup>56</sup>

Civic leaders of San Diego apparently felt the same way about the quality of Requa's work. In July, 1934, two hundred businessmen met for dinner at the U.S. Grant Hotel and voted unanimously to work for a 1935 Exposition in an effort to reverse the economic conditions in San Diego. After an initial slow start, the group raised \$687,061 by September nineteenth.<sup>57</sup> They appointed Richard Requa Chief Architect for the Fair.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., August 17, 1933-- September 15, 1933.

<sup>56</sup>Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., March 15, 1934.

<sup>57</sup>Oscar W. Cotton, The Good Old Days, New York: Exposition Press, 1962, pp. 230-240. Cotton, chairman of the fund raising campaign, describes the steps he took to raise the money in the chapter entitled "Our Second Exposition."

<sup>58</sup>"Requa is Named by Expo to Post on Architecture," San Diego Union, October 7, 1934, p. 4.

Requa's appointment came as a great delight to him, but the tremendous pressure took a great toll on his health. The 1935 Exposition also meant the end of the Requa/Jackson/Hamill partnership. The city of San Diego had established its own drafting room for the Fair, and had placed Requa in charge. He received a salary for this job, so the possibility did not exist for him to bring his own office staff with him. Although the breakup of the partnership could publically be attributed to the Exposition, that project merely hastened an inevitability. Requa and Jackson had not seen eye to eye for some time. After the breakup, Requa asked Hamill to go into partnership with him, but Hamill felt the more honorable step would be for him to remain with Jackson.<sup>59</sup>

Requa spent the rest of 1934 and much of 1935 working at breakneck speed to get the Exposition ready for opening day. After the Fair opened, he walked the buildings and grounds nearly everyday to study the general plan and arrangement of the buildings in order to formulate ideas for improvements. When the Expo proved to be tremendously successful, city fathers decided to extend the enterprise for another season in 1936. Requa presented the management with a complete document listing all his suggestions for improvement

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<sup>59</sup>Hamill, interview, 1981.



of the buildings and grounds.<sup>60</sup>

Requa also found time during this hectic period to record the buildings and grounds of the Expo with a series of photographs. He planned to use them in a new book. Breaking the pattern established in his earlier books, Requa wrote a complete text, and had published Inside Lights on the Building of San Diego's Exposition, 1935 in 1937. In a breezy, conversational style, Requa described the problems involved in building such a large undertaking in less than a year. Although not considered great literature, the San Diego Union gave the book full marks as a valuable contribution to San Diego history and as a souvenir of the Fair.<sup>61</sup>

After the successful completion of the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition, Requa returned to private practice. He opened a small office at 121 Broadway, probably similar to the first office he had in 1910.<sup>62</sup> Gone were the many draftsmen who had been a necessity in his pre-depression office. Instead Requa carried on his practice with only limited help while work remained scarce in San Diego. He had

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<sup>60</sup>Richard S. Requa, "Suggestions and Recommendations for the Improvement of the Buildings and Grounds in the Exposition Area of Balboa Park, San Diego, California for the 1936 Exposition," unpublished paper, San Diego Historical Society, File 23.

<sup>61</sup>Naomi Baker, "Story of Exposition," San Diego Union, October 31, 1937, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup>San Diego Directory..., 1936.

been fortunate to be selected as one of four architects in charge of the City and County Administration Building.<sup>63</sup>

Because of the magnitude of the project, this occupied his time for several years. Requa also received an appointment from the San Diego City Council to serve as the city-county member on the Labor Arbitration Board for the work being done on the building.<sup>64</sup>

In 1940, the sparcity of architectural work ended abruptly with the opening of several aircraft factories in San Diego. The flood of defense workers who arrived to man the factories caused an overwhelming shortage of housing. Requa became involved in one of the massive government housing projects to alleviate the shortage. He expanded his office to include an associate architect, Edward Morehead, one of the men who had worked with him at the Exposition.<sup>65</sup>

In spite of the sudden press of work, Requa still found time to continue his photography. In November, 1940, his studies of trees and architecture were displayed at the Photographic Arts Society in San Diego.<sup>66</sup>

Requa kept a proprietary eye on the remaining buildings

<sup>63</sup>San Diego Union, November 2, 1935, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup>Minutes of the San Diego City Council, December 22, 1936.

<sup>65</sup>Hamill, interview, 1981.

<sup>66</sup>San Diego Union, November 24, 1940, Sec. F, p. 1.

at Balboa Park. He discovered that the buildings he had restored in 1934 had again begun to deteriorate because of water leakage in the parapets and cornices. He wrote a letter to the Chamber of Commerce urging them to take immediate steps toward effecting repairs.<sup>67</sup>

Records delineating Requa's architectural activities during the years after the Exposition are sparse. He did not keep detailed records of his work. In fact, when he left the firm of Requa, Jackson and Hamill, he left behind all of his original working drawings from 1911 through 1935. He only took with him the firm's library.<sup>68</sup> Fortunately, Requa's major projects can be traced through magazine articles of the period.

Sometime in 1941, Requa and Morehead formed a partnership. The new firm was short-lived, however, for Richard Requa died suddenly on June 10, 1941 at 11:00 in the morning. Sixty years old, he had spent forty-one years of his life in San Diego, thirty-four of those years as an architect. An autopsy revealed the cause of death as a coronary thrombosis due to arteriosclerosis. Burial took place at Greenwood Memorial Park.<sup>69</sup> His wife Viola survived him by only

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<sup>67</sup>"Park Building Repairs Urged," San Diego Union, October 4, 1940, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup>Hamill, interview, 1981.

<sup>69</sup>Certificate of Death, filed June 12, 1941.

a little more than two months.<sup>70</sup>

Viola Requa had been her husband's sole heir. When she died, Richard's probate had just barely been started. Because Viola's only assets were those left by Richard, the Court ordered the two probates combined.<sup>71</sup>

When filing probate, Wirt Francis,<sup>72</sup> attorney and brother-in-law of Richard Requa, discovered that Richard's affairs stood in poor condition. The assets of the estate included only his house, his car, and a \$1,500 interest in a partnership with Edward Morehead; a total appraised value of only \$9,396.02. The assets of the partnership were valued at \$17,000. The liabilities against the firm, however, loomed large and the accounts of the partnership were in an extremely confused state. Morehead threatened litigation against the estate and so did certain other debtors and creditors of the partnership.

At one time, the partnership assets had threatened to

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<sup>70</sup>Viola Requa died of a heart ailment on August 21, 1941. She had been dead for two days when a neighbor noted her absence and found the body. Mrs. Requa's obituary appeared in the August 25th San Diego Union.

<sup>71</sup>Viola Requa probate documents, on file at the San Diego County Courthouse.

<sup>72</sup>Wirt Francis was married to Rhoda K. Requa. The History of Bench and Bar of California, San Francisco: Bench and Bar Publishing Company, 1912, listed Francis as a deputy district attorney and a deputy county clerk in San Diego. In 1941, Francis had an office at 1002 First National Bank Building in San Diego.

become a liability rather than an asset. Only Wirt Francis' efforts eventually collected \$3,496.26 for the interest of the decedent in the partnership. Francis, however, could only reduce the claims of Morehead by \$2,400 and of one engineer by \$1,000. After taking away fourteen loads of debris including trees, shrubs and vines, the Requa house was finally sold from the estate in April 1942 for \$6,000.

In spite of these efforts, after the fees for the attorney and administratrix had been paid, very little money remained in the estate. The few hundreds remaining became divided among Viola Requa's sister and her four nieces who lived in Los Angeles.<sup>73</sup> Nothing was left to Requa's own family. Scant traces of Richard Requa's personal life remained in the San Diego he had loved.

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<sup>73</sup>Richard Requa probate documents, on file at the San Diego County Courthouse.

## Chapter 2

### The Formative Years 1907-1912

When twenty-six year old Richard Requa became the building superintendent for the architectural firm of Gill and Mead, he entered the most unique office in San Diego. Under the leadership of Irving Gill, the office had become a laboratory for the development of new ideas and the use of modern technology.<sup>1</sup> Gill's employees received the benefits of his experimental approach in an unusual learning situation which could not have been duplicated elsewhere.

Probably Requa could not have found another office which would have been willing to accept him as a trainee. By 1907, when Requa started at the office of Gill and Mead, the apprenticeship method had largely become a tradition of the past. Even though architectural licenses had not yet become a requirement,<sup>2</sup> most budding architects had begun to

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Kirker, "California's Architecture and its Relation to Contemporary Trends in Europe and America," California Historical Quarterly, Vol. LI, No.4, Winter 1972, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup>The Board of Architectural Examiners has incomplete records of the period, but believes Richard Requa was first issued a license in 1933.

train in architectural schools.

But Irving Gill held an entirely different attitude because he himself had not had any formal architectural training and was indeed somewhat suspicious of a college education. He had learned the basics of his profession in the drafting room of Adler and Sullivan, in the center of Chicago architecture. Sullivan, one of the most innovative architects of his time, had not believed that formal training proved to be of any particular value. Instead, he taught his young draftsmen to free themselves from ties to European architectural traditions. He described his relationship to his draftsmen in a letter to Claude Bragdon, "I supply the yeast, so to speak, and allow the ferment to work in them."<sup>3</sup>

Gill embraced this philosophy as his own. When he opened his own office in San Diego, therefore, he was more than willing to hire young men and women who had not studied architecture in college.<sup>4</sup> In fact, that very lack may have prejudiced him in their favor.

When Richard Requa applied to the office of Gill and Mead in 1907, he had no knowledge of the various architectural styles in existence. He did not know that he should

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<sup>3</sup>Louis Sullivan, cited in Esther McCoy, Five California Architects, New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1960, p. 60; Bruce Pendleton, "Gill Masterpiece is La Jolla Jewel," La Jolla Light, June 7, 1979, p. E-15.

<sup>4</sup>McCoy, Five California..., p. 59.

owe any allegiance to European traditions. But he did have at least seven years experience as an electrical engineer. He had complete familiarity with the basic structural details of a building. In short, Requa had exactly the right qualifications for Irving Gill's office.

Gill operated his office very much like a studio class in a modern architectural college. He treated his employees as students, but at the same time, allowed them the freedom to make their own decisions. In addition, Gill encouraged his employees to discuss their work together.<sup>5</sup> As a result, each of Requa's associates in Gill's office would make some impact on his later work.

Because of Gill's genius and his strong personality, he would have a most profound impact on Requa's career. Gill's partner, Frank Mead, would also greatly influence Requa. Mead had begun his career as an architect in Philadelphia. He had left the United States to photograph Bedouin villages on the Sahara Desert as a commission for an American periodical. From there, Mead had gone on to study the architecture in North Africa, southern Italy, and the Mediterranean. Upon his return to the United States, he moved to San Diego and began working with Irving Gill. Mead brought to the office his deep interest in the primitive

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel Hamill, in a 1981 interview, discussed the learning atmosphere in Irving Gill's office.



architecture he had so recently studied.<sup>6</sup>

Requa's fellow employees also played a part in his early development as an architect. While in Gill's office, among others, Requa worked with Alberto O. Treganza,<sup>7</sup> Emmor Brooke Weaver<sup>8</sup> and Herbert Jackson.<sup>9</sup> In addition, he worked with Kate Sessions,<sup>10</sup> the San Diego landscape architect. Although not actually employed in the office, Miss Sessions worked a great deal with Gill. This collaboration would have an important influence on Requa's work in the future.

Requa entered the office of Gill and Mead at the most exciting time in Gill's career. For in 1907, Gill began his most innovative work. His new style grew out of his

<sup>6</sup> Timothy J. Anderson, Eudorah M. Moore, Robert W. Winter, (eds), California Design 1910, United States of America: California Design Publications, 1974, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> Treganza was a prominent architect and ornithologist. He practiced in Salt Lake City for a time, returning to San Diego in 1925. He died July 18, 1944.

<sup>8</sup> Weaver received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Illinois in 1903. He moved to San Diego for his health and worked several years for Gill. He was most noted for his redwood houses designed with angular shapes.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, who later became Requa's partner, was born in Cleveland, and originally worked as a structural engineer. He died November 11, 1948.

<sup>10</sup> Miss Sessions was called "the mother of Balboa Park" because of her contributions to the landscape. In addition to her position as Vice-principal of San Diego High, she also worked as an horticulturalist, and a botanist. She died March 24, 1940.

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observations of Southern California and the way life should be lived there.<sup>11</sup> During his first ten years in California, Gill had practiced in various orthodox eastern styles using the traditional brick, stone, and shingles for his building materials.<sup>12</sup> But in 1907, he abandoned tradition and began to design structures using the most advanced technology and materials. He turned to concrete and hollow tile and began to experiment with monolithic construction. He simplified his buildings by flattening roofs and eliminating projections and ornamentations. At the same time, in order to provide maximum sanitation with the least amount of labor, Gill simplified his interiors through the use of flush woodwork and concrete floors coved at the wall base.<sup>13</sup>

Along with Gill's passion for sanitary, labor-saving dwellings, he also believed that buildings should have a maximum of light. Upon entering a Gill building, therefore, one always walked toward a source of light.<sup>14</sup> For Gill, architecture was a broad subject which included more than the

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<sup>11</sup>McCoy, Five California..., p. 61.

<sup>12</sup>Kirker, "California's Architecture...", p. 303.

<sup>13</sup>McCoy, Five California..., pp. 68-69.

<sup>14</sup>Esther McCoy, "Irving Gill, Architect," Historic Preservation, April-June 1972, pp. 10-11; Bunny MacKenzie, "Irving Gill, California Architect Left His Mark on Coronado," Bridge and Bay, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1976, pp. 14-15.

basic structure. He provided a total design package which included the garden and the interior decoration, as well as the exterior design of the buildings.<sup>15</sup>

Requa, as Gill's building superintendent, had charge of overseeing construction of those innovative buildings. Along with the new construction techniques, Requa learned to respect the materials he used. He learned also that honesty and simplicity were necessary factors in modern architecture. With this background or "yeast" as Sullivan had called it, Requa had a basis for all his future work.

While acting as Gill's building superintendent, Requa almost immediately began to do some designing. Unfortunately, one of his first small projects turned out to be a failure. He had designed a simple Craftsmen-style communion table for the San Diego First Methodist-Episcopal Church. He planned to have a biblical phrase carved across the front of the table. Requa forgot to check his spelling and the table came back from the carver with the word remembrance spelled rememberance. When Gill saw the error he said: "Richard, you have just bought yourself a table!"<sup>16</sup>

Other small problems beset Requa during his first year

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<sup>15</sup>McCoy, Five California..., pp. 79,83.

<sup>16</sup>Samuel Hamill now has the table standing in his dining room. Hamill recarved the former communion table in his spare time, so that the incorrectly spelled word no longer exists.

in Gill's office. One of these was the enormous collection of unwieldy manufacturers' publications which he had to use frequently. In 1908, Requa wrote a short, humorous article for The Architect and Engineer telling how he had suffered from the problem of the catalogue nuisance.

I was usually affected with weakness of the heart or an attack of that tired feeling whenever I commenced operation on the pile to find some special article for specifications...But the storm has now subsided, the dark clouds have floated away and the sun shines peacefully on the calm, unruffled world, at least as far as the catalogue nuisance is concerned in this office. 17

As Requa had solved the small problem of the catalogues, he also gained enough confidence and experience to tackle a major project. In 1908, Gill received a commission to design the Holly Sefton Memorial Hospital in San Diego.<sup>18</sup> He designed the main structure in the complex, and then delegated the Boys' Building to Requa. In keeping with the rest of the complex, Requa created a small cubistic structure with a flat roof and linear geometric window openings. The building showed little evidence of independent thought, however, more importantly, it had been so well integrated with the rest of

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<sup>17</sup>Richard S. Requa, "More Anent the Catalogue Nuisance," The Architect and Engineer, September 1908, p. 44.

<sup>18</sup>McCoy, Five California..., p. 71.

the complex, that no difference in architects could be detected.<sup>19</sup>

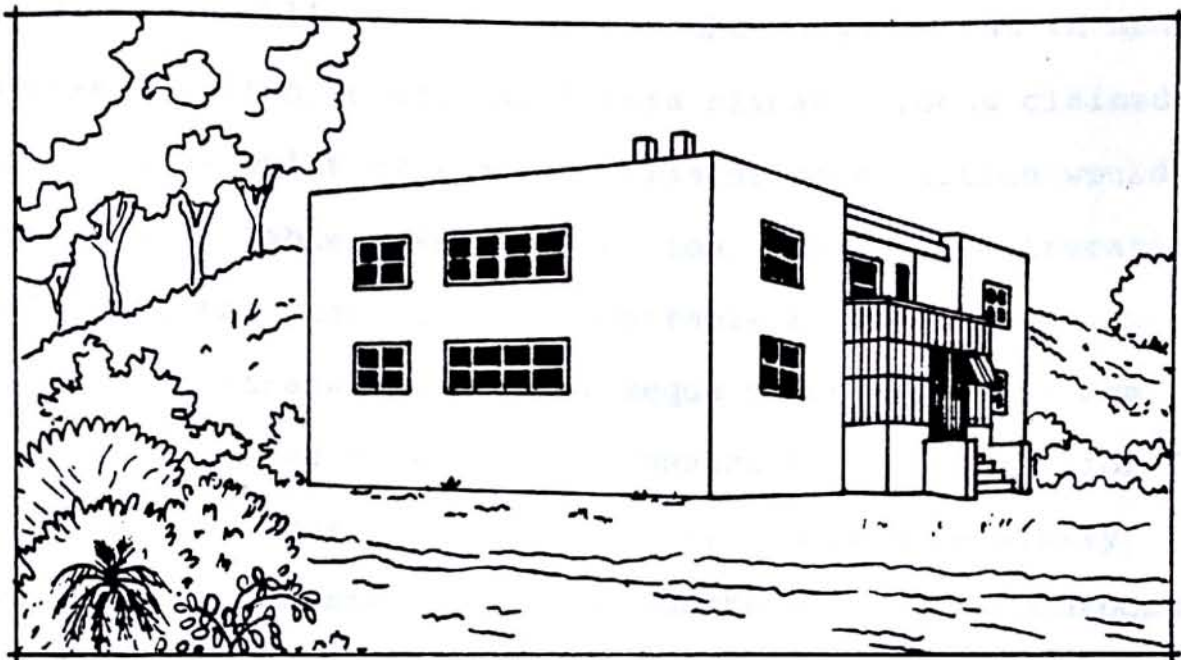


Figure 2. Boys' Building, Holly Sefton Memorial Hospital

(Drawn by the author from a photograph in the Journal of San Diego History, Vol. XXV, No. 2, Spring 1979, n.p.)

Requa followed Gill's example in other ways besides the technique of his design. Gill wrote magazine articles, particularly when he wanted to expound his own new ideas. Requa wrote his first article very soon after he went to work for Gill and followed the article with a second which appeared in the January 1909 issue of Good Housekeeping. Somewhat more ambitious than Requa's first writing attempt, the article

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<sup>19</sup>Bruce Kamerling, "Irving Gill the Artist as Architect," Journal of San Diego History, Vol. XXV, No. 2, Spring 1979, n.p.

included illustrations and a plan along with the writing.

Entitled "A California Cottage Home", the article offered readers an alternative to the bungalow which had been the major type of modest home readily available in California. While admitting that the bungalow was in many ways well suited to the California climate, Requa claimed that a house built of exterior plaster construction would be even more suitable. And in addition, only a few alterations would make the plaster house adaptable to any climate.

To illustrate his thesis, Requa concentrated on one cottage which had already been constructed with exterior plaster. The house, although small, had been carefully designed to separate the living quarters from the bedrooms. In addition, the rooms had been arranged to permit maximum sunshine in the living and dining rooms. Several screened porches allowed sheltered outdoor living as well as admitting ocean breezes.

Many bungalows, however, had those same features. The really unique feature in Requa's cottage came in the construction. Instead of being framed in the usual way with "2x4" studs set sixteen inches on center and perpendicular to the wall face; in the illustrated cottage, "1x4" studs were set flat only four inches apart. The exterior faces of the walls were then covered with building paper, latticed lath and finished with two coats of Portland cement and lime. The interior walls received a similar treatment. The resulting walls

had only a three inch thickness, instead of the normal five and one-half inches, and in addition, were practically solid and fireproof.

Requa ended his article by describing the interior innovations which made the cottage so comfortable. All the woodwork had been set flush with the walls to eliminate special cleaning. In addition, all the woodwork, as well as the walls in the kitchen, bathroom, closets and porches had been painted with enamel for easy care. In contrast, the bedrooms and living area had rough sand-finished walls.<sup>20</sup>

Requa made a very good case for the unique California cottage. At no time, however, did he reveal the name of the architect of the building. The construction details described sound very much like those Gill used in his experimental cottages built in the Robinson Mews/Albatross Street area of San Diego.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the cottage pictured in Requa's article is not located among Gill's cottages there. One can only surmise that Requa must have been actively involved in the construction of the cottage. In any event, the article gave Requa his first taste of nationwide exposure in a widely read magazine. Whether the earnestly written

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<sup>20</sup>R.S. Requa, "California Cottage Home," Good House-keeping, Vol. 48, January 1909, pp. 64-66.

<sup>21</sup>Helen McElfresh Ferris, "Irving John Gill: San Diego Architect, The Formation of an American Style of Architecture," Journal of San Diego History, Vol. XVII, Fall 1971, pp. 8-9. 12-13.

article had any real impact on national small-house construction is unknown.

In San Diego, the work of Irving Gill and his staff had a definite impact. At a time when contractors usually designed the buildings they constructed, Gill had convinced San Diegans that they needed an architect.<sup>22</sup> With that type of attitude prevailing, architects had a much easier time making a living, even though San Diego was still a relatively small town.

Perhaps because of the receptive attitude of San Diegans or simply because of his independent nature, in December, 1910 Requa left Gill's office to start his own practice.<sup>23</sup> The two and one-half year apprenticeship had introduced him to a new world of form and elemental shapes--the cube, the rectangle and the arch. In addition, Requa had learned the value of simplicity in both interior and exterior design. Even more importantly, Gill had trained Requa to consider first the Southern California climate before designing any building.

With that background, Requa began private practice by

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<sup>22</sup>McCoy, Five California..., p. 75.

<sup>23</sup>Samuel F. Black, San Diego County California, Vol. II, Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913, p. 216.



designing a home for himself and a home for his parents.<sup>24</sup> These houses were the first of many residences he designed for steep canyon sites. They were also the first of many designed for the Southern California climate with a strong interaction between the interior rooms and the exterior gardens and patios.

Richard Requa's house still stands as an excellent example of his early independent work. Few changes have been made, so that one may appreciate all the careful details. The house is set in a series of terraced gardens with an arched entrance porch acting as a transition between the indoors and outdoors. Although small, the house feels spacious and airy because of the many light sources and the well scaled interior.

In many ways, the structure is reminiscent of Gill's work. The simplicity of the house with its deep overhanging eaves and arched entrances are all Gill trademarks. The many large windows and double skylights remind us of Gill's passion for light. But the house also has Craftsmen influences shown in the beautifully detailed redwood beams and woodwork. As originally furnished, the house reflected

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<sup>24</sup>The Richard Requa house located at 4346 Valle Vista is currently owned by Eugene and Anna Price. The Edward Requa house was located at 3556 Valle Vista.

Requa's interest in primitive American culture as well.<sup>25</sup>  
 This combination of various influences resulted in a comfortable livable home which with only a few minor changes still functions in the same manner seventy years later.<sup>26</sup>



Figure 3. Richard Requa house, 4346 Valle Vista, San Diego  
 (Drawn by the author)

In 1911, after only a few months in practice, Requa received his first commission from a prominent San Diegan,

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<sup>25</sup>"Mission Hills Home and Walking Tour," Save Our Heritage Foundation, November 10, 1979, pamphlet on file at the San Diego Historical Society, pp. 13-14.

<sup>26</sup>The Prices have remodeled the kitchen, however, other changes have been mostly cosmetic.

John S. Hawley.<sup>27</sup> Located at 205 Laurel Street, like many Requa buildings, the house is still in use today.

As in Requa's own house, the Hawley house shows a strong Gill influence. Extraneous details have been stripped away so that the house is basically a cube with the familiar arched entrance which graces so many Gill buildings. The front facade of the house appears almost indistinguishable from Gill's own work. On the Laurel Street side of the house, however, Requa added a parapeted gable to the flat roofline. This device is very similar to one used on the house described in Requa's 1909 Good Housekeeping article, but is rarely seen on known Gill work. Perhaps because of this addition, the Hawley house lacks the finely chiseled distinction of Gill's buildings and becomes only a mediocre copy. Apparently the design of the Hawley house did not please Requa either, for in his next commissions, he returned to the mix of Craftsman and Mission which had proved successful in his own home.

Commissions continued to come in to Requa's office. In 1911, he began three more buildings, two of them domestic and the third his first commercial venture. For writer Owen Wister, Requa designed a shingled cottage which can be described as almost completely Craftsmen in style. The

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<sup>27</sup>A complete set of plans for the Hawley house is contained in the Samuel Hamill Collection, on file at the San Diego Historical Society.

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Mission or Gill influence is noticeable only in the wide sheltering eaves of the rustic structure. Requa's awareness of small unique details can be seen in the way he dated the Wister plans--11/11/11.<sup>28</sup>

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Requa's second domestic commission in 1911 required a more sophisticated solution than his earlier works. The prospective owner, Charles A. Martin, needed a house which would accommodate his wheelchair. He had chosen a rather difficult site, one of the steep canyon lots which abound in San Diego. Requa met the challenge by designing a two story stucco house perfectly suited to the needs of his client. He added a ramp entrance and made the halls and doorways extra wide to accommodate the wheelchair.<sup>29</sup> Although much larger, the Martin house is similar in style to Requa's own house with its wide eaves supported by heavy redwood beams. Similar also, are the many windows which take full advantage of the view site and at the same time provide maximum light.

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<sup>28</sup> Hamill Collection. The Wister house indicates Requa's already developing interest in the interaction between indoor and outdoor. For the small cottage, Requa provided two large sleeping porches, as well as an enormous porch opening off the living room.

<sup>29</sup> Joan Janney Easley, researcher, City of San Diego Historical Site Board Register, No. 118. The Martin house located at 3147 Front Street, was built of cement plaster over lath by contractor Charles A. Gaines. Requa provided outdoor living with a pergola and sunroom on the first floor and a deck on the second floor.

The Martin house was the first of three houses which Requa would design within a block of each other on Front Street in San Diego. He designed each house during a different period of his career so that today the three houses provide an interesting mini-view of the three most important phases of Requa's career.<sup>30</sup>

Looking back to Requa's work in 1911, one sees that the 3,890 square foot Martin house served as a transition between the Wister house and the Pine Hills Lodge in Julian, Requa's next project. As originally designed, the main building of the Lodge complex was only slightly larger than the Martin house. The building had many of the same design characteristics, including the wide eaves. Because of the rustic appearance, however, the Lodge also showed a definite relationship to the Wister cottage.

For the Pine Hills Lodge, Requa began a tradition which he would use many times in the future. Instead of importing construction materials, he utilized the natural materials of the region to build the Lodge. As the name implies, the Lodge site included many pine trees. For that reason, Requa designed a rustic structure to be built of the wood and fieldstones found nearby. He used the stones to

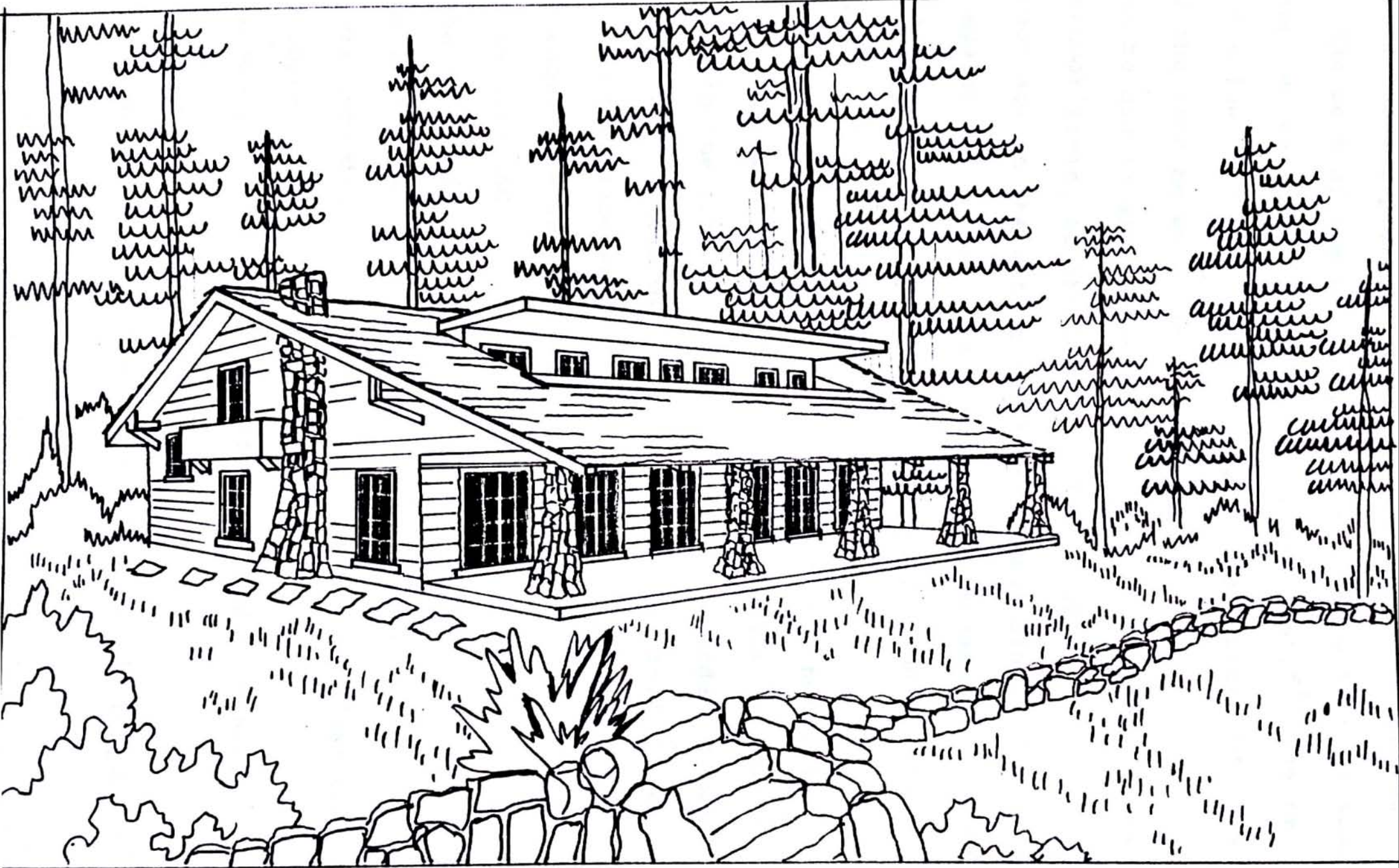
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<sup>30</sup>In addition to the Martin house designed during his independent practice, Requa also designed the Captain John F. Anderson house, 3136 Front Street in 1918 and the Lester Bradley house, 148 West Spruce Street, in 1923.

Figure 4

Pine Hills Lodge

(Drawn by the author from personal observation and also based on original elevations by the architect, Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.)



build the massive piers which support the wide sheltering roof. The rest of the Lodge is built of pine with bark slabs covering the walls and rough shakes on the roof.<sup>31</sup> The result is a low welcoming building which almost seems to grow out of the land on which it stands.

As he did in all his buildings, Requa made provisions for outdoor living at the Lodge. A long covered patio stretches across the entire front of the building. French doors spaced every three feet allowed easy access as well as views and light. For more sheltered living, Requa added a large second story patio nestled into the roof.

Requa's design of the Pine Hills Lodge did not stop with the exterior walls. As Gill had taught him, he concerned himself with the interior design as well. In order to continue the rustic theme of the exterior, he designed a huge fieldstone fireplace which dominates the lobby and adjoining dining room. The walls of peeled logs contrast with the beamed ceiling and supporting columns made of heavy logs with the bark left on. In order to maintain total design control in the public areas, Requa also designed some of the furniture including a built-in buffet and a lobby desk made out of unpeeled logs.

In May 1912, the hotel expanded by building several

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<sup>31</sup>Hamill collection, San Diego Historical Society.



small cabins which Requa designed to match the main building.<sup>32</sup> The entire complex became a popular spot for San Diegans to spend their vacations. Although the Lodge has been remodeled, the basic features still remain to be enjoyed by modern vacationers.<sup>33</sup>

Requa's last commission as an independent architect is probably the most sophisticated in terms of design. Considered by many to be one of the most successful examples of Requa's early work, the Jarvis L. Doyle house in San Diego exemplifies Mission style architecture.<sup>34</sup> The simplicity of the structure coupled with its many fine details are reminiscent of the work of Irving Gill.

Although the house today is somewhat obscured by the eucalyptus trees which surround it, many of its details are still visible. The building has a look of serene elegance caused by its plain walls and clean-cut rectilinear window openings. Because of the lack of ornamentation, the corbeled projection and flat arched window over the front door become very important features. The simplicity and crispness of

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<sup>32</sup>Originally the guest cabins included a number of tree houses which have since been razed.

<sup>33</sup>The rustic setting has become a popular spot for weddings. The Lodge also features a play series every season.

<sup>34</sup>Hamill Collection, The Doyle house, located at 1625 Plumosa Way, was remodelled in 1920. Requa and his partner, Frank Mead, designed the alterations which are undetectable today.

Figure 5

Jarvis L. Doyle house

(Drawn by the author from personal observation and also based on a perspective drawing by Richard Requa, Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.)



these details are all evocative of the work of Gill and yet they also begin to show Requa's own style.

In spite of the success he had enjoyed in his brief career as an independent architect, Requa's last project on his own was the Doyle house. In 1912, Requa's former employer, Frank Mead, returned to San Diego. The two joined forces, forming the partnership known as Mead and Requa.<sup>35</sup> Under that partnership, Requa began to expand his thinking and start to develop a style of his own. Gill's lessons in unadorned simplicity, however, and his total approach to design would always remain as a backbone for Requa's work in the future.

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<sup>35</sup> Mead and Requa began their practice in San Diego at 1332 "F" Street, Room 441.

## Chapter 3

### The Mead/Requa Partnership 1912-1920

Frank Mead's great enthusiasm for primitive architectural forms had led him far afield from the practice of architecture. During his sojourn as Irving Gill's partner, Mead had brought to that office his recent observations of the vernacular architecture of Northern Africa and the Mediterranean. As an offshoot of that knowledge, he had also become interested in the Indian buildings of the American Southwest.

In fact, he became so interested in Indian cultures while designing the Wheeler Bailey house in La Jolla, that he left Gill's office to tour the southwest. In 1909, Mead's fascination with Indian culture led him to visit Indian tribes in Arizona, and later to become Superintendent of the Lame Deer Reservation in Wyoming.<sup>1</sup> After a year there, he

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy J. Anderson, Eudorah M. Moore, Robert W. Winter (eds), California Design 1910, United States of America: California Design Publications, 1974, p. 133. In 1908, Mead became so enraged by the conditions of a particular Arizona Apache tribe, that he asked a client to arrange a meeting with President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt sympathized with Mead's story and appointed him a personal envoy to right the situation. Because of his success, Mead received the appointment at Lame Deer.

relocated to the Pala Reservation in San Diego County.<sup>2</sup> When he finally returned to San Diego and the practice of architecture, Mead brought with him a wealth of new influences.

Although he had been away from San Diego for several years, Mead still retained a certain following from his partnership with Gill. The new firm of Mead and Requa began its practice with an alteration for one of Mead's former clients.<sup>3</sup> Other commissions from prominent San Diegans followed in quick succession.<sup>4</sup>

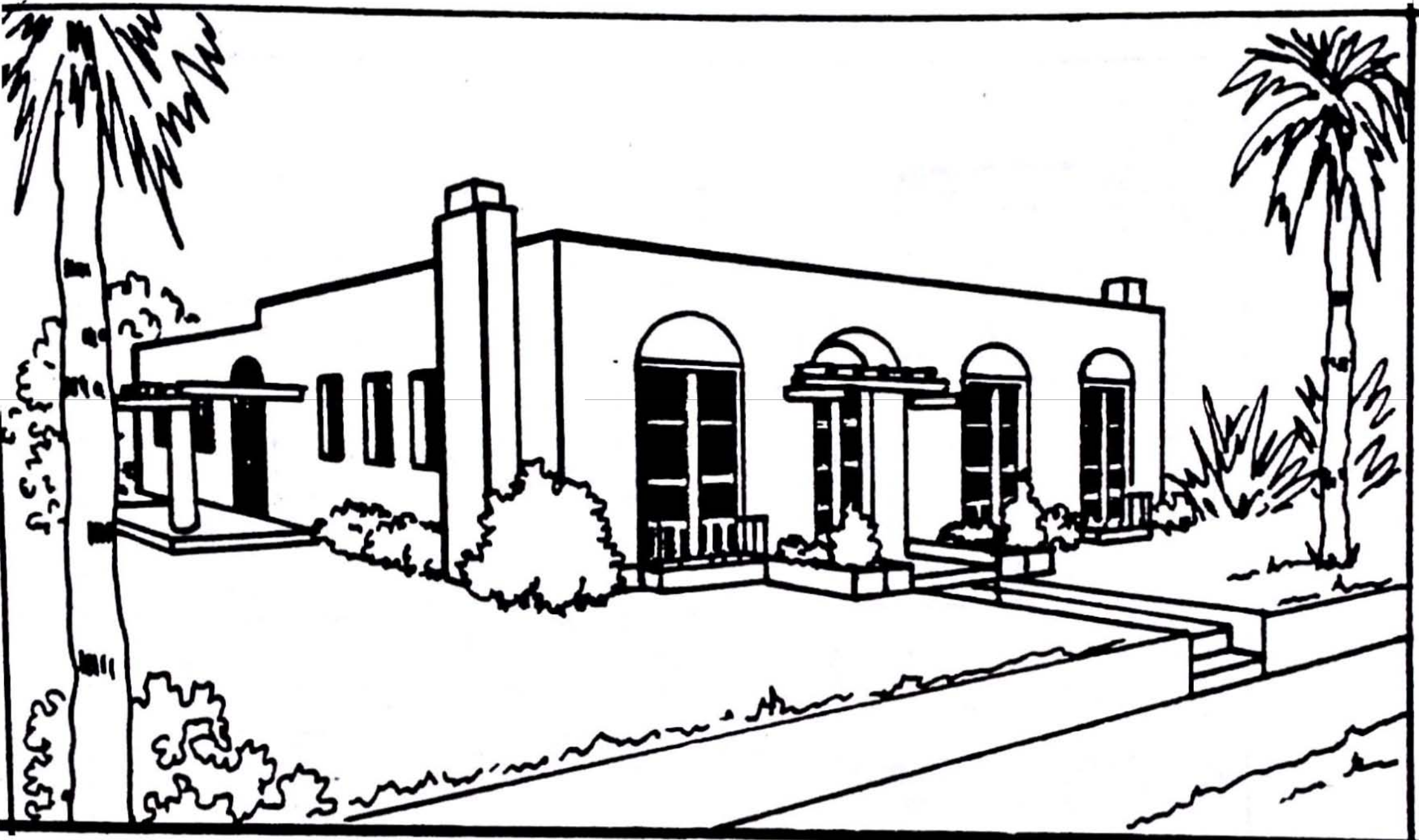
At first, buildings designed by the new firm continued, on the exterior at least, to resemble work done by Irving Gill. Typical of this type of building is the residence designed for Fred K. Webb in December 1912. The flat-roofed cubistic structure with its perfectly symmetrical front facade gave no indication of the interior details. Hidden within the boxy form, a skylight and beamed ceilings in several rooms changed the shape of the spaces. Even more unexpectedly, a central patio with a pool divided the house into separate

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<sup>2</sup>Federal Archives and Records Service, Laguna Niguel, California, office file. Mead began his service at Pala on August 16, 1910 and resigned December 20, 1911.

<sup>3</sup>Samuel Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society. Mead and Requa designed alterations and extensions for the Anna B. Darst residence, 2425 5th Avenue, San Diego.

<sup>4</sup>Commissions in 1912 included work for Miss Mary Richmond, Dr. Edwin Hallenbeck and several projects for George Marston.



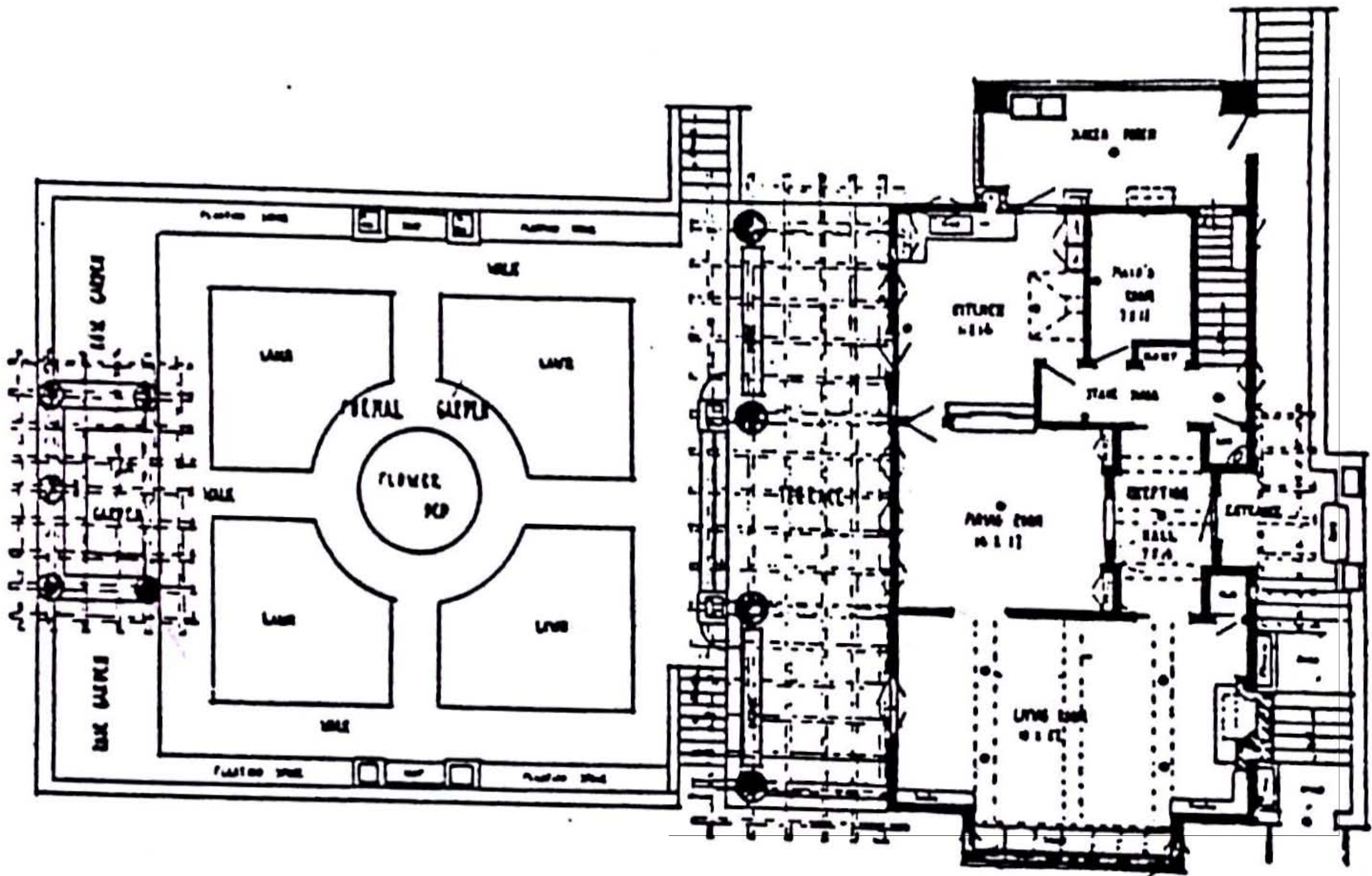
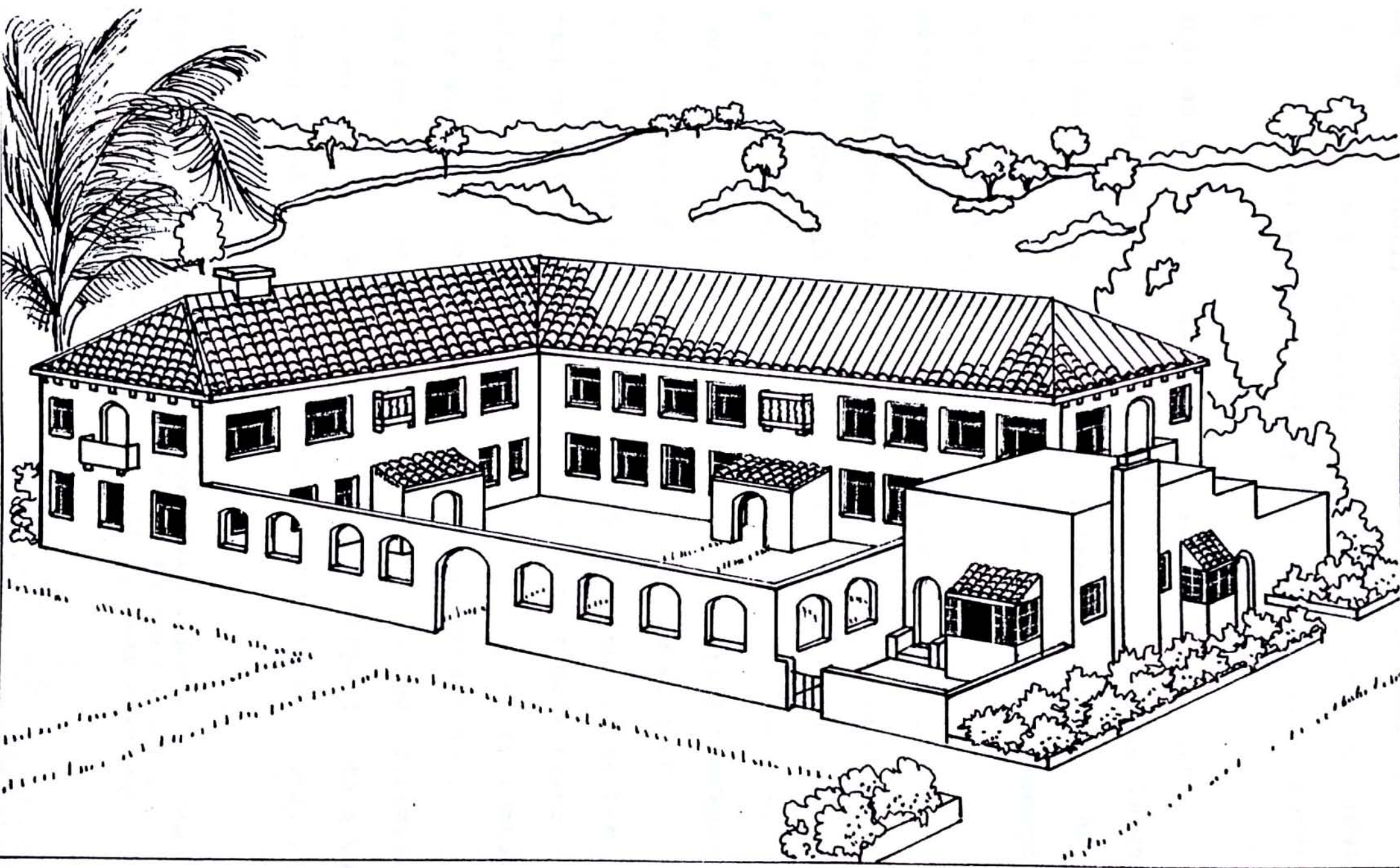




Figure 8

Nurses' Dormitory, San Diego County Hospital

(Drawn by the author from a perspective drawing by the architect, Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.)



building set in beautiful entrance gardens still showed a strong Gill influence. The plain walls, the arched openings and the rectangular windows without trim are all Gill trademarks.<sup>7</sup>

Later on in 1913, however, Mead and Requa left the stark Gill-inspired cubes and began to use more exotic imagery as part of their designs. During this period, Mead's observations in North Africa and the Mediterranean at last became a part of the firm's vocabulary.

Characteristic of the firm's work at the time is the five-story Palomar Apartments built for Mrs. Cornelia Chapin of New York. The building combines pure Mission style with Islamic influences to create an original solution for a moderate density residential dwelling. Although still somewhat cubistic, the random placement of the doors and windows dilutes the modular effect. The random placement is further emphasized by a variety of balconies and a penthouse tower which allows a view of nearby Balboa Park. The twenty rental units are somewhat small, but their large windows give a spacious feeling. Like the earlier Webb house, the apartments are grouped around a central glassed-over courtyard. To give the tenants a taste of outdoor living, the architects provided

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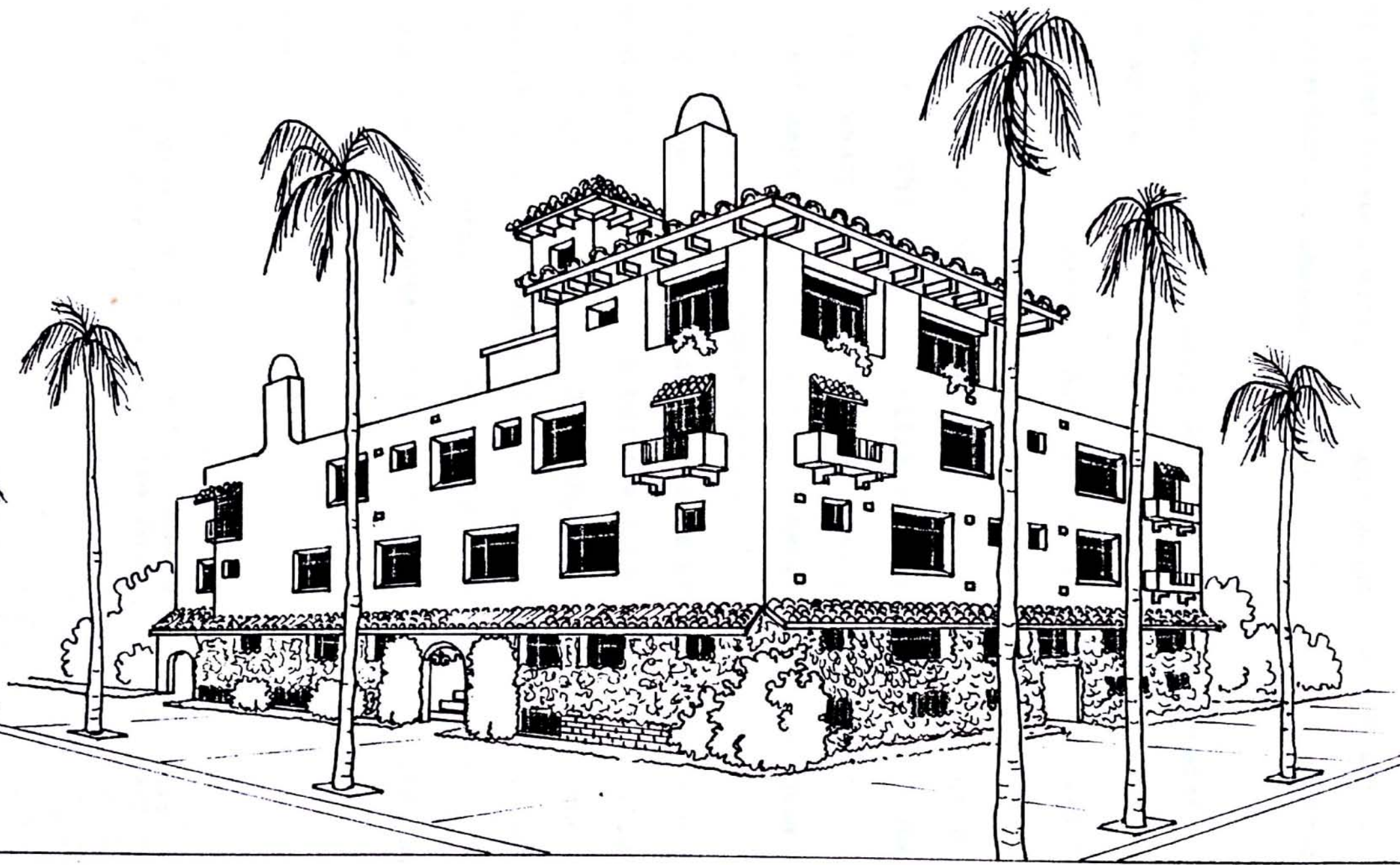
<sup>7</sup>Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society. One wing of the building has been demolished to make way for another building. The rest of the dormitory has been converted into medical offices.

Figure 9

Palomar Apartments

(Drawn by the author)

Generated by Casaparc from



a tea garden on the roof. Even in this situation, with a minimum of land to work with, Mead and Regua found a way to allow the residents a chance to relax outdoors in an inviting atmosphere.<sup>8</sup>

The new more exotic imagery of the Palomar Apartments brought in an important commission for Mead and Regua. Prominent San Diego attorney, A.H. Sweet, watched the rise of the new building, recalled the beautiful detailing of the earlier Doyle house and selected Mead and Regua to design a house for him.<sup>9</sup> The resulting villa is considered to be one of the finest examples of the firm's work. Because of the careful craftsmanship using the finest materials, the house took over a full year for construction.

Rising above massive retaining walls creating a series of terraced gardens, the house has the appearance of a villa in Tuscany of northern Spain. The simple lines of the stucco walls reflect styles of North Africa, while the arched garden gates and tiled fountain are definitely Moorish in origin. Mead is considered responsible for the North African details; Regua's work is visible in the deep arches of the driveway

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<sup>8</sup> Hamill Collection.

<sup>9</sup> Miss E. Sweet, daughter of A.H. Sweet, supplied this information during an interview in the house, May 11, 1981.

entrance and between the major rooms.<sup>10</sup> During the planning stage of the house, Requa's first idea was to put the main door to the house in the driveway entrance. He later changed that idea and created a totally separate main entrance because Mr. Sweet objected to the idea of callers and servicemen at the same entrance.<sup>11</sup>

The original site for the Sweet house consisted of a steep slope rising sharply from the street. In order to provide a flat space for the house and integrate the land with the building, the architects designed a series of retaining walls. Requa, with his construction background, took charge of preparing the building site. Because of the complications of the project, he could not find a sub-contractor who would give him a definite price for the job. As a result, Requa had to hire costly day laborers and supervise their work himself. He ran into a major problem after the job had been almost completed. When the earth fill was added, the retaining walls began to buckle. All the earth had to be dug out again and steel cables inserted. Miss Sweet, daughter of the original owner recalls, "Everyone held his breath, but the cables kept the walls from buckling again." She also remembers that the neighbors felt horrified

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<sup>10</sup>"Bankers Hill," San Diego Historical Society Women's Committee Publication, 1972, guidebook for the 3rd Annual Historical Homes Tour, p.3.

<sup>11</sup>Sweet, interview, May 11, 1981.

by the whole design because they thought the retaining walls resembled a fortress.<sup>12</sup>

No one, however, had any fault to find with the house itself. From the great square entrance hall with perfectly matched Phillipine mahogany walls, to the fire door between the house and garage, the house was a masterpiece of careful planning.<sup>13</sup> Fine woods abound throughout the building-- Australian bluegum in the study, mahogany in the living room and redwood in the sunporch. The hardwood floors have been planned so that the wood forms a design at each corner. The curving wooden staircase utilizes the balustrade to form a desk on the first floor and a storage bench upstairs.

Details in the kitchen and bathrooms<sup>14</sup> remind one of Gill with his passion for sanitation and labor-saving devices. Requa provided a built-in ice box which opens from the out-

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<sup>12</sup>Miss Sweet said that some of the neighbors called the house Sweet's Folly. After the planting went in, however, critical neighbors changed their minds.

<sup>13</sup>Many evidences of the careful planning are evident throughout the house, including closets, a sewing room, or such small details as a phone niche which can be used from both bedroom and hall. In the living room, the mantel has been designed with built-in lights to illuminate the painting. The architecture has been complimented by rugs and furniture from a San Francisco interior decorator, called in by Mrs. Sweet because San Diego was too small to have such a service.

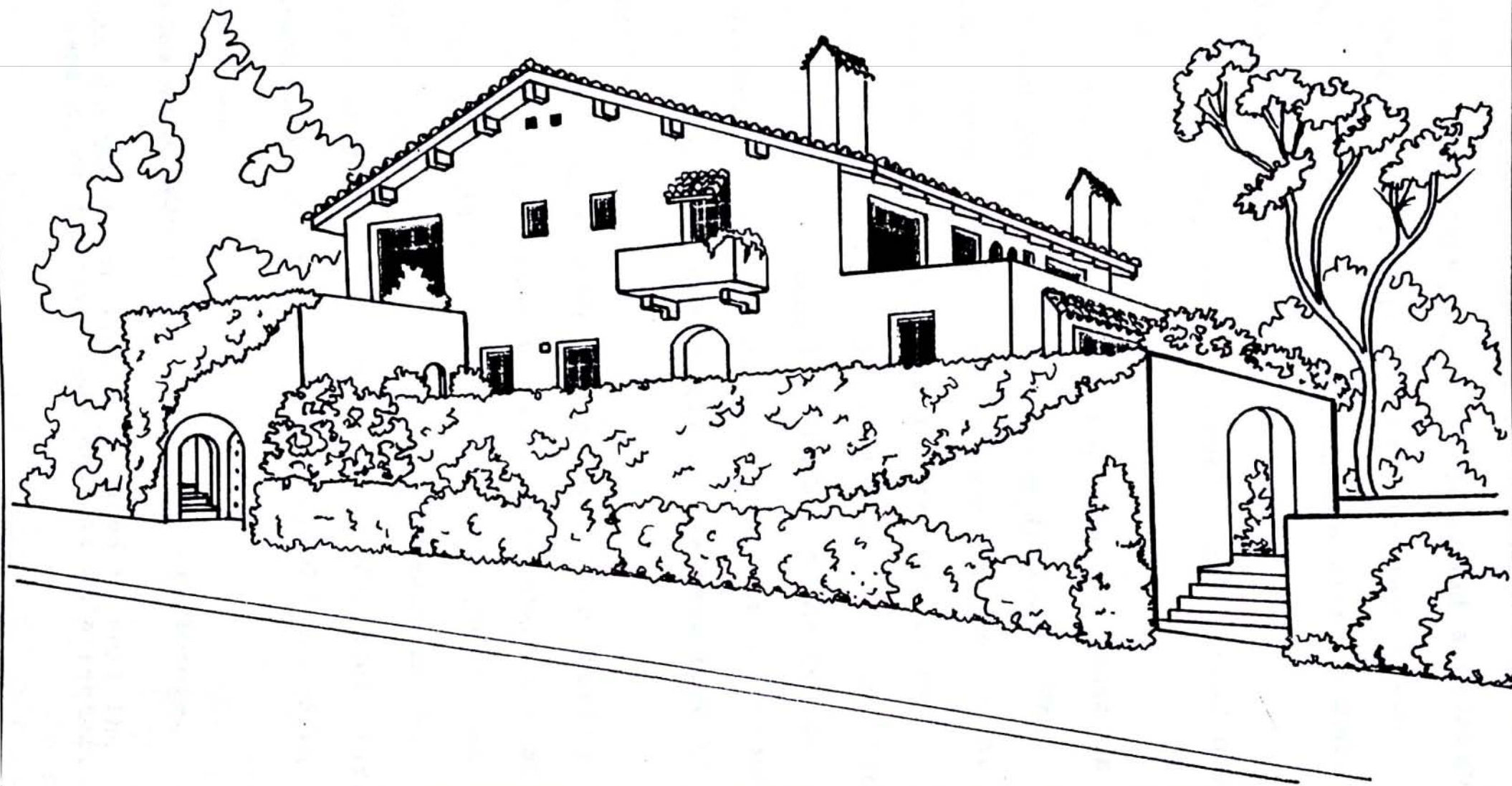
<sup>14</sup>Bathrooms are extra large and divided into compartments. In addition, two of the bedrooms are provided with built-in sinks.



Figure 10

A.H. Sweet house

(Drawn by the author)



side as well as the inside so the household need not be disturbed by the iceman. In addition, Requa designed a vegetable cooler with a window to let in air so that the vegetables would stay fresh. Terrazzo floors in both the kitchen and the bathrooms allow easy care. There is even a laundry chute so that soiled laundry does not have to be carried down to the first floor laundry room.

The careful planning by Mead and Requa in the house is also apparent in the garden and surrounding grounds. The main family garden opens off the living room and sun porch. With a blue tiled Moorish fountain as a focal point, two pergolas on either side provide sheltered seating. The blue decorative tile is echoed by blue hydrangeas on the terrace below.<sup>15</sup> The garden provides a connection between the Sweet house and another house next door built at the same time to be used as a rental.<sup>16</sup>

After the Sweet house, with its rather subtle Moorish details, Mead and Requa experimented with more obvious exotic imagery. Perhaps the building which can be considered the most dramatically reminiscent of the mystical east is the Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Hollywood. For their first out-of-town commission, Mead and Requa designed a building

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<sup>15</sup>The tiles were made in National City, California.

<sup>16</sup>Although the Sweets originally planned to sell the other house; because of the war, they kept it as a rental.

complete with an Islamic dome, horseshoe arches and several much-rah-beiahs to add the finishing touch.

From the exterior, the building did not appear to be radically different from other Mead/Requa buildings. The front facade had simple angular lines, symmetrically placed windows and an arched entrance--all standard features.<sup>17</sup> Once inside the entrance, however, a completely different scene emerged. The standard arched entrance opened onto a central brick courtyard where a pool dotted with lily pads and surrounded by columns gave the effect of a hidden Moorish garden. The feeling was intensified by the view of a domed chapel and two horseshoe arches, one set in a much-rah-beiah, which overlooked the patio. Brightly colored flowers and shrubs completed the picture and formed a perfect harmony between the building and grounds.<sup>18</sup>

Mead and Requa had used the open court plan several times before, most notably in the Palomar Apartments and the Webb house in San Diego. They had found that the plan provided an ideal opportunity for a sheltered open-air room. For that reason, Mead and Requa used the same concept again

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<sup>17</sup>Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.

<sup>18</sup>Goddard M. White, "Where the Garden is the Center of the House: Development of a Picturesque Architecture in Southern California," The Craftsman, Vol. 25, No. 6, March 1914, pp. 571-573.

for the Robert Winsor house in Bonita.<sup>19</sup>

The Winsor home and the Krotona Court gave Mead and Requa their first nationwide recognition. The March 1914 Craftsman featured the two structures as exemplifying a new way of designing a house and garden so that they became a unified whole. Mead and Requa received praise for their efforts in that direction, particularly for evolving a style peculiarly suited to the Southwest and at the same time closely akin to the spirit of the Mediterranean.<sup>20</sup>

The article emphasized the possibilities available for outdoor living as shown in the Winsor house and the Krotona Court. "The most distinctive and charming points about these buildings are the patio or court, the roof loggia and the pergola..."<sup>21</sup> By including such features in the home, the article continued, the building will have considerably more interest and may even have an element of real picturesqueness. "It is through means such as this--by creating homes that express the spirit of both the people and their land--that America may achieve the distinction of a national

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<sup>19</sup> Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society; White, "Where the Garden...", pp. 569-571. In addition to the central patio, the architects provided the Winsor house with a balcony, porch with pergola and two loggias for a complete variety of outdoor living spaces.

<sup>20</sup> White, "Where the Garden...", p. 568.

<sup>21</sup> White, "Where the Garden...", p. 569.

architectural type."<sup>22</sup> For such praise, Requa probably forgave the Craftsman for misspelling his name as Regan.

During the first few years of the Mead/Requa partnership, Mead, with his years of foreign travel, often provided many of the details while Requa concentrated on the engineering and construction of their buildings. This particular combination became never more apparent than in the La Jolla beach house for Wheeler Bailey.

For the Bailey cottage, Mead drew upon the knowledge he had gained while living and working with the Indians of the American Southwest. The result was a building of Hopi Indian architecture tucked into a hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The house integrated so perfectly with the site that it appeared to be a man-made part of the topography.<sup>23</sup>

Mead used all the traditional features of a Hopi house-- thick walls extending vertically as a horizontal parapet, a flat roof and rows of vigas projecting from the walls. But instead of using traditional materials, Requa used modern ingenuity to construct those features. The thick walls which appeared to be adobe were actually made of stucco. For the projecting vigas, traditionally made from tree trunks, Requa

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<sup>22</sup>White, "Where the Garden...", p. 573.

<sup>23</sup>David Gebhard, Robert Winter, A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, Santa Barbara, California: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1977, p. 468.

used old telegraph poles carved into the proper shapes.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the modern materials and methods they had devised, Mead and Requa employed Hopi Indians to assist them with suggestions and craftsmanship. The hand hewn beams and some of the interior furnishings showed evidences of Indian workmanship.<sup>25</sup> The plans even called for a Pala Indian to cover the top of the balcony with fine willows from Pala.<sup>26</sup> As a result, the house became a blend of two cultures, modern American and ancient Hopi.

The Craftsman called the house an original and fearless expression of personal taste and so cleverly built that it deserved to be brought to the attention of everyone interested in architecture.<sup>27</sup> In spite of the success of the Bailey cottage, Mead and Requa used the Hopi style architecture only twice during the term of their partnership.<sup>28</sup> Requa, however, designed several major projects as well as smaller buildings

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<sup>24</sup>Ethel Rose, "New Hopi Architecture on the Old Mesa Land," The Craftsman, Vol. 30, No. 4, July 1916, p. 375.

<sup>25</sup>"Beach Cottage in Hopi Indian Architecture for W.J. Bailey, La Jolla," Western Architect, Vol. XXX, June 1920, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Hamill Collection.

<sup>27</sup>Rose, "New Hopi...", p. 375.

<sup>28</sup>The other Hopi style house was the residence for Mrs. Edward M. Bruce in Altadena, California designed in 1919.

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using Hopi details during a later period in his career.<sup>29</sup>

In 1914, Requa began the first of a series of study trips which would give him some of the architectural knowledge and imagery he lacked. His first trip took him through Cuba, Panama and along the northern coast of South America.<sup>30</sup> Because of his belief that California architects should learn from other countries with a similar climate, Requa always concentrated his tours in such areas.

Requa came back from his first tour eager to use the new ideas he had gathered. The opportunity to use his knowledge came unexpectedly and in a much bigger way than he could have anticipated. Business in the Mead/Requa firm had slowed in 1914 and 1915. The firm did receive commissions for two schools,<sup>31</sup> but they designed only a handful of houses. One of those houses provided Requa with the chance to use his newly acquired foreign knowledge.

Somewhere during his travels, Requa had met Harry Sinclair, a wealthy businessman from Nordhoff, California. Sinclair commissioned Mead and Requa to design a new house

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<sup>29</sup> Among others, Requa designed the Torrey Pines Lodge, the Montezuma Mountain School, the Community Center in San Pasqual and a railroad station in Solana Beach.

<sup>30</sup> Clarence Alan McGrew, City of San Diego and San Diego County, Vol. II, Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1922, p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> The firm designed the La Mesa Grammar School and the Fallbrook High School.



for him in Nordhoff.<sup>32</sup> One of Sinclair's close friends was Edward D. Libbey, millionaire glass manufacturer from Toledo, Ohio. Upon Sinclair's recommendation, Libbey had come to spend a winter vacation in Nordhoff and become captivated by the natural beauty of the valley. Libbey returned again and again and gradually acquired a great deal of land in the valley. Because of his sincere interest, Libbey decided to take an active part in changing those features of Nordhoff which he considered a scar on the landscape.<sup>33</sup> With an attitude far ahead of his time, Libbey reasoned, "If clothes make the man, why wouldn't city planning make Nordhoff worthy of the wonderful climate it enjoys?"<sup>34</sup>

Harry Sinclair, pleased with his own new house, recommended Richard Requa from San Diego as the right man to undertake the task of redeveloping Nordhoff. Libbey again took his friend's advice and Requa was duly summoned to Nordhoff to offer his suggestions for ways to make a distinctive town. Requa found Nordhoff to be a typical small western town with an uneven row of ramshackle stores straggling

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<sup>32</sup>The Ojai, Nordhoff, California, May 12, 1916, p.1.

<sup>33</sup>Harriet Wenig, "The Story of the Man who Transformed Ojai," Ojai Valley News, 50th Anniversary Issue, August 1971, p.4.

<sup>34</sup>Jim Soldini, "The History of the Reconstruction of Downtown Ojai," unpublished paper, on file in the Ojai Public Library.

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along a dusty main street. Across from the stores, a tangle of underbrush and a magnificent stand of oak trees only partially hid a group of decaying buildings.<sup>35</sup>

In Requa's own words, he attacked the problem confronting him in the following way:

First of all, in order to produce a harmonious grouping and a consistent relation between the various elements of the scheme, it was pertinent to adopt some general architectural style for the work--a style which would be in perfect accord with the environment, not prohibitive in cost, and one that would be used for the design of all future buildings added to the scheme. 36

Considering that Requa had just returned from a study tour of South America, it is not surprising that he proposed to pattern Nordhoff after the villages established by the Spaniards in the New World. He suggested a mission arcade as the logical way to unify the business district and at the same time provide shelter from the elements.<sup>37</sup> When Requa's plans for the arcade had been drawn, Libbey offered to underwrite the cost of the arcade if each merchant would pay ten dollars a front foot for his portion. Libbey's offer met

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<sup>35</sup>Wenig, "The Story of the Man...", p. 4.

<sup>36</sup>"Architectural Significance of Ojai Civic Improvements," The Ojai, Nordhoff, California, May 11, 1917, pp.1,8.

<sup>37</sup>"Architectural Significance...", p. 1.

with prompt acceptance and work commenced on the arcade.<sup>38</sup>

Meanwhile, Libbey had acquired the land across the street from the stores and set about turning it into a natural park to be the recreation center of the community. Requa's job was to plan a treatment for the park that would separate it from the street and yet still allow public visibility. He suggested a combination of arched entrances and connecting pergolas and walls. In addition, in order to complete the architectural theme and provide a dominant note for the design, Requa planned a building with a tall Spanish tower for one end of the park.<sup>39</sup>

Upon completion of the plans, Requa took them to Toledo where he presented them to Libbey. Libbey was so pleased with the plans that he gave Requa free rein to carry out all his plans without counting the cost. A front page article in the November 3, 1916 The Ojai commented that no higher testimonial could be offered to Requa than that implied by the free rein he had received from Libbey.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Wenig, "The Story of the Man...", p.4.

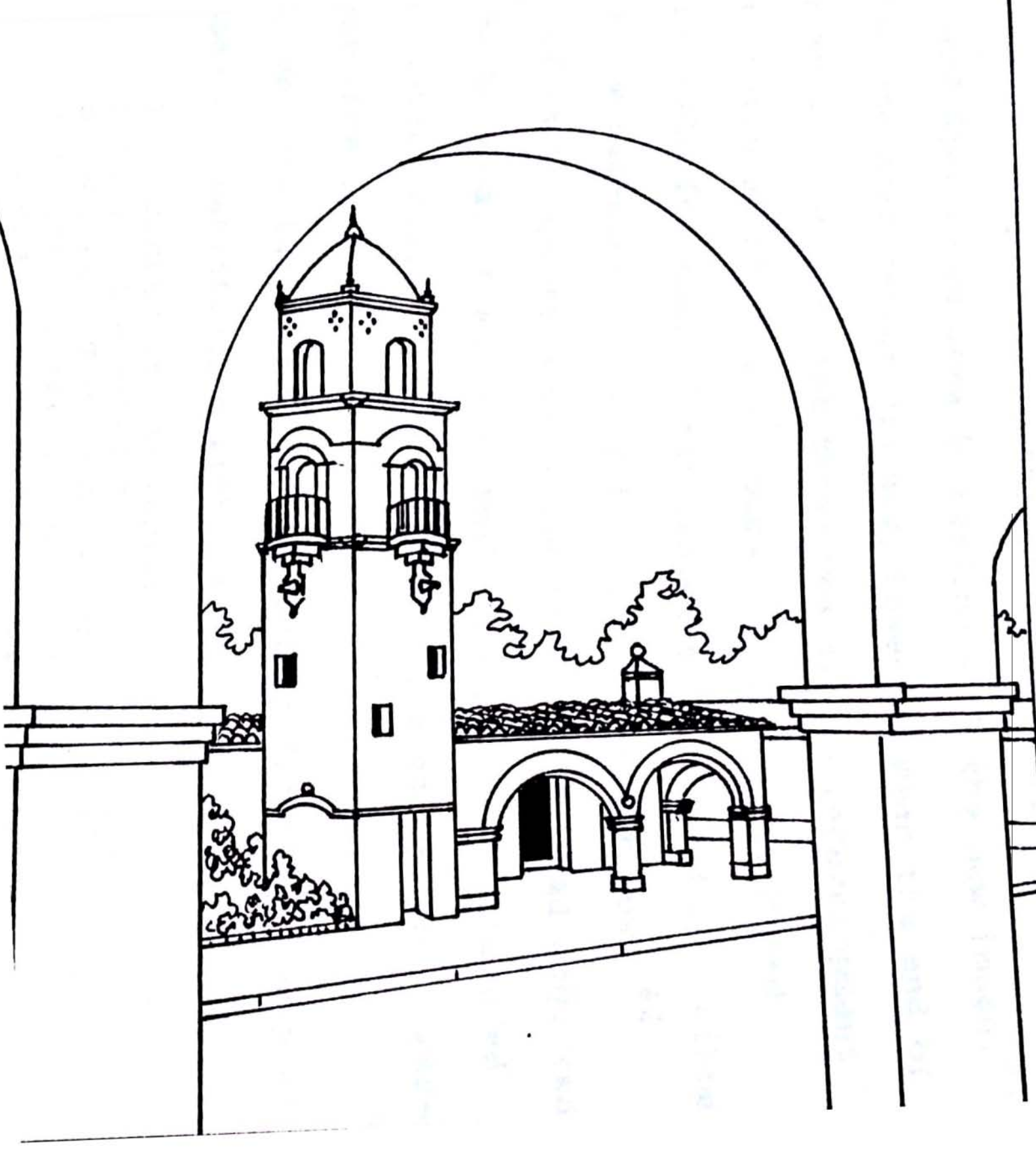
<sup>39</sup>"Architectural Significance...", p.1. In the article, Requa explained the various inspirations he used for his designs, including the San Juan Capistrano Mission arches for the treatment in front of the stores; the east entrance of Mission San Luis Rey for the entrance to the park and several Mexican cathedrals for the postoffice and tower.

<sup>40</sup>"Requa's Plans are Satisfactory," The Ojai, Nordhoff, California, November 3, 1916, p. 1.

Figure 11

Ojai Civic Center and Postoffice

(Drawn by the author from personal observation and also based on early photographs of Ojai found in the Ojai Valley News, 50th Anniversary Issue, August 1971.)



After the completion of the town center in 1917, Nordhoff was renamed Ojai to be more in keeping with the new image.<sup>41</sup> Finishing the town center did not, however, mean the end of Requa's work. For the next three years, the redevelopment of Ojai continued at a steady pace. Libbey contributed financial help for many of the projects. In addition, Libbey began a new sub-division away from the center of town.<sup>42</sup> Requa had ample opportunity to use the ideas he had acquired in South America. Eventually buildings completed included several large hotels, a Catholic church, a garage and numerous residences.

In an 1918 interview for the Western Architect, Requa expressed his satisfaction with the project:

The success of the venture has far exceeded the expectations of its promoters. Thousands of visitors have been attracted to the valley, business has shown a decided improvement, residents have been encouraged to improve their property and realty values have shown a marked increase.

Requa encouraged other small towns to follow the example set by Ojai even if they had little money. He believed that in most cases, a careful study of the situation would demonstrate

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<sup>41</sup> Charles T. Butler, "Building the Post Office--It Wasn't Easy," Ojai Valley News, 50th Anniversary Issue, August 1971, p. 31.

<sup>42</sup> "The Libbey Barn," The Ventura County Historical Society, Vol. XX, No. 2, Winter 1975, pp. 21-29.

that a great deal could be done to unify and transform an entire village street at a cost no greater than would be necessary to remodel each store individually. Money could be found from firms and persons interested in the growth and development of the community. The end results would far outweigh the costs.<sup>43</sup>

During the course of the project at Ojai, the whole world changed with the entry of the United States into World War I on April 6, 1917. With the passage of a bill in Congress on June 30, 1917, San Diego's North Island became the site for a new naval base to be known as Rockwell Field.<sup>44</sup> By September, Albert Kahn, an architect from Detroit had begun preparing plans for the new facilities to be built at the Field.<sup>45</sup>

Since Kahn performed similar services for many bases throughout the country, he needed an associate at each base to take charge of the actual construction. Kahn received a telegram on January 18, 1918 designating Richard Requa as Kahn's San Diego associate. By January 23rd, Requa had

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<sup>43</sup>George H. Reed, "The Civic Improvements at Ojai, California," *Western Architect*, Vol. XXVII, August 1918, pp. 63-65, 71.

<sup>44</sup>Richard F. Pourade, Gold in the Sun, San Diego: The Union-Tribune Publishing Company, 1965, pp. 226-227.

<sup>45</sup>Letter from Colonel C.G. Edgar to Albert Kahn dated September 20, 1917, on file at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

arrived in Detroit to discuss the division of responsibilities at Rockwell Field.

Kahn signified his full approval of Requa's appointment in a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel E.G. Edgar of the Signal Corps. At the same time, Kahn spelled out the division of duties. Requa's responsibility would be to cooperate with the Signal Corps Superintendent of Construction at the Field; and in consultation with Kahn, interpret plans and specifications; select and approve finished materials and decide details of construction. Kahn would furnish complete plans and details for the work.<sup>46</sup>

In March, Kahn received authorization from Colonel Edgar to proceed with some of the buildings for Rockwell Field.<sup>47</sup> Edgar's list of buildings unfortunately did not coincide with those urged by the Commanding Officer as most important.<sup>48</sup> After a series of telegrams between Colonel Edgar, Kahn and Requa, construction began on the permanent

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<sup>46</sup>Letter from Albert Kahn to Colonel C.G. Edgar dated January 23, 1918, on file at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>47</sup>A telegram dated March 14, 1918 from Squier, Chief Signal Officer, per Edgar to Albert Kahn, authorized Kahn to proceed with barracks for cadets and enlisted men, bachelor quarters, NC double house, aircraft construction shop, post exchange, administration, school and a guard house.

<sup>48</sup>The Commanding Officer wanted a construction shop, power house, foundry, dope house, aero and quartermaster supply building, barracks and hangars.



buildings at Rockwell Field.<sup>49</sup> Requa acted as supervisor for the work, a role with which he was very familiar.

With two major projects to supervise, the Mead/Requa office had more than enough work to keep busy. But the war years brought about an increase in all kinds of construction. In 1918, the firm received commissions for half a dozen luxury homes in addition to the work they already had underway. In spite of the press of work, the two architects lavished attention on each individual house so that the house seemed tailor-made for the owner.

San Diego opera star Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink commissioned such a house for herself. To be located in Coronado, the house was planned to be a showcase for an opera singer. The major rooms of the house opened onto an interior court custom designed with an organ console and sound grilles all around. The court rose two stories high so that Madame Schumann-Heink's music could be heard throughout the house.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, the lavish house with its Moorish details was never built and eventually Madame

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<sup>49</sup> A letter from Kahn to Edgar dated April 9, 1918 indicates that Kahn had sent construction bulletins for the post exchange, aircraft construction shop, guard house, barracks, aviation school, hospital and administration building.

<sup>50</sup> Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.

Schumann-Heink moved into an existing residence in Coronado.<sup>51</sup>

Another house designed for the San Diego area in 1918 did get built. The three story dwelling for Captain John F. Anderson was located across the street from the Charles Martin house, designed by Requa in 1911. The Anderson house shows an interesting progression from Requa's earlier building which had been designed in Craftsmen style with wide eaves supported by heavy beams. In contrast, the Anderson house consists of a series of cubes of varying heights. The plain, simple masses are highlighted with a porch and loggia of Algerian origin. As usual with Mead/Requa buildings, the house has ample sources of light. In addition to the many windows, a skylight in the roof is centered over a glass floor so that the room below can receive sunlight.<sup>52</sup>

Another notable house of the 1918 period was built for E. Roscoe Shrader in Hollywood. The house is an excellent example of the Secessionist phase of Mead and Requa's work. The Secessionists made a conscious or unconscious effort to think in simple elemental shapes, but also maintain a close relationship with Spanish Colonial Revivalism.<sup>53</sup> The Shrader

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<sup>51</sup>The Coronado Journal for April 7, 1923 announced that Madame Schumann-Heink would be moving into the former Harry L. Titus residence.

<sup>52</sup>Hamill Collection.

<sup>53</sup>David Gebhard, "The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, May 1967, p. 140.

house has a basic cubical form and square doors and windows, but at the same time, the additions of Spanish tile and heavy columns forming the pergola show a Spanish Colonial influence.<sup>54</sup>

The combination proved to be successful, at least in the eyes of Mead's and Requa's fellow architects. In 1920, the Shrader house was submitted to the Southern California chapter of the AIA as a contender for the most notable example of small house architecture. The jury cited five notable examples and bestowed honorable mention on eleven others. Mead and Requa received an honorable mention for the Shrader residence.<sup>55</sup>

Before that occurrence, however, Mead and Requa received written plaudits for their work in a 1918 article appearing in The Architect and Engineer of California. The author of the article, an architect named W. Garden Mitchell, highly recommended the Secessionist philosophy as a guideline for good design. Mitchell believed that men of moderate means, guided by good taste, would always choose simplicity as the medium through which to express their judgment. For these people, interested in quality without elaboration, Mitchell suggested a simple home with a few elaborate spots to add

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<sup>54</sup>Hamill Collection.

<sup>55</sup>"Jury Designates Notable Examples of Architecture," Southwest Builder and Contractor, Vol. 55, No. 16, April 16, 1920, p. 11.

interest if the budget permitted.<sup>56</sup>

To illustrate his beliefs, Mitchell selected some of the recent work of Mead and Requa.<sup>57</sup> He maintained that the Mead/Requa buildings "exhibited in many pleasing ways the attempt to make the construction of artificial additions to nature harmonize with and become a part thereof, heightening and increasing the interest of the scene."<sup>58</sup>

Along with a number of houses from San Diego, Mitchell also chose the Hollywood home of Mrs. Valdemar Knudsen to illustrate the article. Built circa 1916, the house, like the Shrader residence, exemplified the principles of the Secessionist movement. Simple geometric shapes contrasted with Spanish details including a tile roof, arched entrances, balconies and a fountain. Mitchell considered these details to perfectly exhibit the beliefs he had propounded in his writing.

We may confidently say, that Messrs. Mead and Requa are following along the right lines in their quite successful attempt to provide interesting and sane homes of

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<sup>56</sup>W. Garden Mitchell, "Some Picturesque Homes in Southern California," The Architect and Engineer, Vol. 52, March 1918, p. 48.

<sup>57</sup>Illustrations of work in the San Diego area included the homes of R. Brackenbury and Dr. I.D. Webster, both on 32nd Street; the Robert Winsor house in Bonita and the R.C. Gemmel house in San Diego.

<sup>58</sup>Mitchell, "Some Picturesque...", p. 49.

moderate cost by the use of simple forms, with only just sufficient elaboration in some special feature or features to provide the necessary contrast to plain and restful backgrounds. 59

Although the article and the later AIA award for the Shrader house referred to the firm of Mead and Requa, in actuality Mead had begun to spend more and more time away from San Diego. He went to Santa Barbara for awhile and also worked in Ojai. Finally, in 1920, Mead left San Diego permanently although he did not formally dissolve his partnership with Requa until 1923.<sup>60</sup> Requa took as his new partner, Herbert Jackson, a young architect who had been working in the firm for several years.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Mitchell, "Some Picturesque...", pp. 40-42, 49.

<sup>60</sup> Anderson, Moore, Winter, California Design 1910, p. 133.

<sup>61</sup> Hamill interview, 1981.

## Chapter 4

### The Requa/Jackson Partnership 1920-1935

During the last few years of the Mead/Requa partnership, Richard Requa had become the main spokesman for the firm. In his role as image-maker, Requa traveled all over California and other parts of the United States on behalf of Mead and Requa. He joined various professional and social organizations in San Diego and Los Angeles. Through these, his speaking engagements, and photographic exhibits, Requa's stature grew. He developed considerably as an architect through diligent study and observation, both at home and abroad. While his early work had been largely imitative of Irving Gill, by 1920 Requa had begun to develop his own style. When Frank Mead left the partnership, therefore, Requa chose as his new partner a man who could take over the engineering work, leaving himself free to be a designer.

Herbert Lewis Jackson had a degree in structural engineering. His first job had been with a railroad company in the midwest. When he decided to move to California, as Requa had done, Jackson applied at Irving Gill's office and was hired immediately. Jackson later moved to Mead and Requa

and worked there for about five years before becoming Requa's junior partner.<sup>1</sup>

Jackson entered the partnership at a propitious moment in San Diego's history. Between 1921 and 1928, a real estate boom transformed San Diego from a small town to a city. New houses began to spring up as thousands of lots sold in the subdivisions created to fulfill the need for land.<sup>2</sup>

Requa purchased a lot in Plumosa Park, one of the new subdivisions in Loma Portal. For his home, Requa designed a modest one story building with a simple gable roof.<sup>3</sup> The house showed none of the design qualities which might have been expected for an architect's home. Apparently Requa no longer felt the need to advertise his architectural capabilities as he had done with his first home.

In 1921, when San Diego began to prosper, several leading citizens became interested in developing a country club for the city. Previous attempts had failed when government pre-empted the land. The prospective golfers selected

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel Hamill, a former partner of Jackson's, provided information about his early life in an interview, March 1981.

<sup>2</sup>Oscar Cotton, a San Diego developer, wrote in his book The Good Old Days, New York: Exposition Press, 1962, pp. 155-156 about his part in the real estate boom. He sold about forty subdivisions, ranging in size from a few hundred to several thousand lots each.

<sup>3</sup>Plans for Requa's house are among the Samuel Hamill Collection on file with the San Diego Historical Society.

a new site in Chula Vista for the permanent eighteen hole golf course.<sup>4</sup> Requa received the commission to design the new clubhouse.<sup>5</sup>

Surprisingly, for the clubhouse design, Requa left his successful Secessionist style work and reverted back to the earlier Mission style. The country club, a cubistic structure, is nearly a replica of Irving Gill's work. Requa's touch is a decorative chimney with a Spanish tile roof.<sup>6</sup>

Requa's stylistic development did not express itself in a unified series of works, whereby he built upon his earlier work. In fact, during the early twenties, Requa seemed to be searching for the architectural style which he preferred. In 1922, he experimented with a number of different styles. For the D.E. Thompson residence in Del Mar, Requa went back to the Secessionist style.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the Alva D.

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<sup>4</sup>Cotton, The Good Old Days, pp. 157-158. San Diego's first golf course had been laid out in Balboa Park between Laurel and Upas Streets. The City needed the land for the 1915 Exposition. The second course, laid out near the Marine base, dwindled into a nine hole course after the federal government purchased part of the land for training Marines in World War I.

<sup>5</sup>Clarence Alan McGrew, City of San Diego and San Diego County, Vol. II, Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1922, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup>Cotton, The Good Old Days, photographs between pp. 174-175.

<sup>7</sup>The Thompson house, 482 15th Street, is described as a modern cliff dwelling on the plans. It exemplifies the Secessionist style with the plain wall surfaces contrasting with ornamentation.



Bernhard house in Coronado with brick trim and shingle roof appears totally different from anything else Requa had ever done.<sup>8</sup>

Still another style appeared in the 1922 substation for San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric Company.<sup>9</sup> To disguise the real use so that the machinery could be hidden and yet have the structure harmonize with other buildings in the area, Requa designed a monumental Spanish Romanesque style building, somewhat reminiscent of the work of Henry Hobson Richardson, because of the rusticated stone facade. The massive arched doors, the Spanish tile roof and the grilled windows, however, are of Spanish influence.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, the wealth of details has been lost beneath the blanket of ivy which covers the building today. The substation received an AIA honor award in 1933, almost eleven years after being built.<sup>11</sup>

Requa may have still been searching for his ultimate style when he designed the 1922 Torrey Pines Lodge in Pueblo

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<sup>8</sup>Katherine E. Carlin and Bunny MacKensie, "Coronado Historical Tour Guide," Coronado Historical Association. The Bernhard house is located at 1244 Alameda Blvd.

<sup>9</sup>The building is located at the corner of 4th and Ash in San Diego.

<sup>10</sup>Hamill Collection.

<sup>11</sup>"Honor Awards on Seventy Buildings in San Diego County," The Architect and Engineer, Vol. 114, No. 2, August 1933, pp. 49-50.

style architecture. But more likely, he selected the 18th century style because that seemed appropriate for the setting and the use intended.

The site chosen is at the top of a steep grade in Torrey Pines State Park. Surrounded on all sides by forest, the promontory site has a 360 degree view of the Pacific Ocean in the distance. Miss Ellen Scripps commissioned the Lodge to provide a rest stop and eating facilities for auto travelers.<sup>12</sup> In order to take advantage of the view and yet provide shelter, both indoor and outdoor accommodations were necessary.

Requa had learned from Frank Mead that Pueblo or Hopi Indians often built on top of promontories for primary defense motives. The Pueblo buildings usually consisted of groups of low terraced structures built of adobe brick made from nearby soil.<sup>13</sup>

Requa must have felt that the hilltop site in Torrey Pines State Park offered the perfect setting for a Pueblo style building. Furthermore, the characteristics of that style could be easily adapted to use as a rest stop. The low, earth-hugging buildings would impart a sense of shelter

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<sup>12</sup>The Lodge also contained a two bedroom apartment for a resident caretaker, as well as a kitchen which served snacks at a bar in the main lounge. The rooms have all been converted into offices for the Rangers who use the Lodge as headquarters.

<sup>13</sup>Hunter D. Scott, "American-Indian Architecture," California Arts and Architecture, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, August 1929, pp. 30-33.

to travelers and at the same time, the courtyards and terraces surrounding the buildings would provide outdoor accommodations.<sup>14</sup>

In order to be as authentic as possible, in his written specifications for the Lodge, Requa directed that the walls be built of adobe bricks made from soil excavated near the building site. He also specified that the bricks be made and laid by Mexicans who had thorough experience with the work. Each brick had to be fourteen inches wide, twenty inches long and four inches thick. After the walls had been laid with the bricks, they were to be finished with a wavy irregular course of concrete humped up at the corners. For all that hand-done adobe work, Requa allowed a \$3,000 budget.<sup>15</sup>

For the Lodge, Requa designed a traditional looking building consisting of a series of small rooms and a large lounge surrounded by walled terraces. The terraces could be used for alfresco diners or for enjoyment of the view.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>On the question of the building and setting at Torrey Pines, James Britton II disagreed. In his article "Torrey Pines Park Offers Growth Possibilities," San Diego Union, December 24, 1978, Britton wrote that the building had a poor setting and that the small windows allowed only tantalizing glimpses of the view.

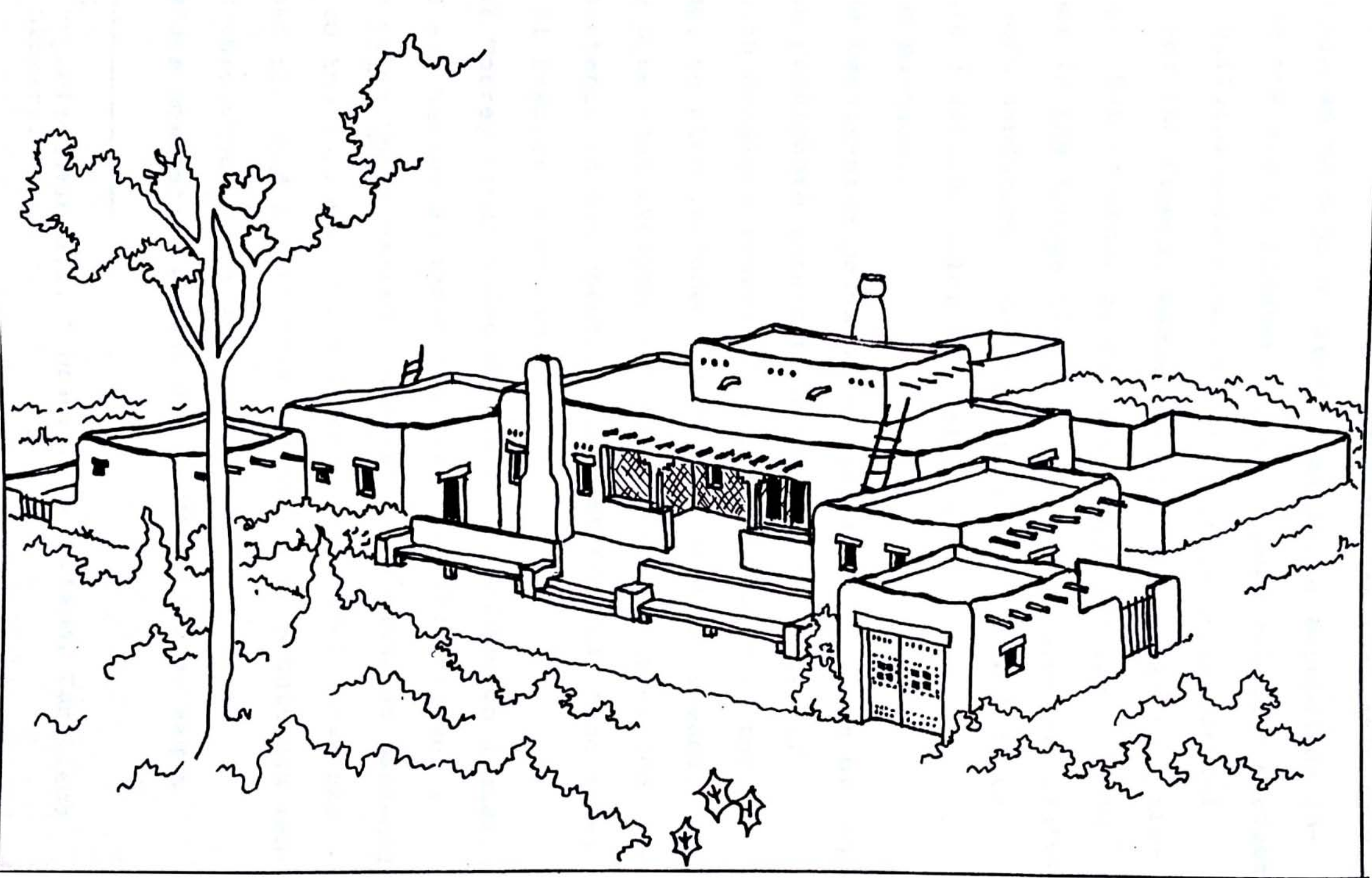
<sup>15</sup>"Specifications for Torrey Pines Lodge," San Diego Park and Recreation Department Architectural Drawing Collection, California Room, San Diego Public Library.

<sup>16</sup>Plans for Torrey Pines Lodge, San Diego Public Library.

Figure 12

Torrey Pines Lodge

(Drawn by the author from personal observation and also based on original elevations by the architect, San Diego Parks and Recreation Department Architectural Drawing Collection, California Room, San Diego Public Library.)



The interior of the building maintained the authentic look of a Pueblo as no door or window casings or baseboards intruded on the smooth plaster walls. Beamed ceilings throughout the building were made of logs left in their natural state. For the floors, Requa specified magnasite for practicality. But in order to duplicate authenticity, he had the floor in the lounge tinted to match the color and texture of old worn sandstone. For the other floors, he left the magnasite a natural color and had it troweled to a smooth polished surface.

The twenty-nine pages of specifications written by Requa show his passionate interest in covering every detail. Along with complete instructions for every part of the building, he also included directions for daily cleanup. To make sure that everything would be done as specified, the final sentence in the specifications states that "the architect will inspect everything."<sup>17</sup>

The Torrey Pines Lodge opened to the public on January 1, 1923 and became an immediate success. The reviewer in the San Diego Union hailed the building as being so perfectly suited to the surroundings and the use intended, that the Lodge had elicited a favorable response from architects and artists throughout the southwest.

Before completion of the Torrey Pines Lodge, Requa

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<sup>17</sup>"Specifications....," Drawing Collection, San Diego Public Library.

received one of the major commissions of his career. The Santa Fe Railroad interests had bought Rancho San Dieguito in north San Diego County.<sup>18</sup> They renamed the land Rancho Santa Fe and invited various architects to submit plans to convert the old rancho into a new town.<sup>19</sup> The Santa Fe Railroad officials wanted the development to be done in such a way as to preserve and enhance the historic traditions of the area.<sup>20</sup>

Requa drew upon the knowledge he had gained in his travels abroad for a proposed layout of the town. He aimed for the general effect of a small rural village somewhere in Spain or in another Mediterranean country. To achieve that effect, Requa laid out a formal city center with straight streets and surrounded the center with a loose pattern of curving roads undulating around the hilly terrain. Hill sites for homes nestled among the orchards surrounding the village.<sup>21</sup>

The Rancho Santa Fe Land Improvement Company represented

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<sup>18</sup>Ruth R. Nelson, Rancho Santa Fe Yesterday and Today, Encinitas, California: The Coast Dispatch, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup>L.G. Sinnard, "Rancho Santa Fe, California, Yesterday-Today," pamphlet, on file San Diego Historical Society.

<sup>20</sup>Nelson, Rancho Santa Fe..., p. 15.

<sup>21</sup>M. Urmey Sears, "The Village of Rancho Santa Fe," California Arts and Architecture, Vol. XXXIX, No.3, September 1930, pp. 38-39, 66.

by L. G. Sinnard was greatly impressed by the plans presented by Requa. Sinnard had also seen Requa's work at Ojai and considered it outstanding. On the basis of his impressions, Sinnard awarded the commission for Rancho Santa Fe to the office of Requa and Jackson.<sup>22</sup>

Because of the immensity of the project, the firm set up a branch office in Rancho Santa Fe. They put Lilian Rice, one of their staff architects, in charge of implementing the master plan. Rice worked with the firm for several years before she took over the entire operation under her own name.<sup>23</sup> The Requa/Jackson firm designed a number of the major buildings in the Civic Center at Rancho Santa Fe which are still in use.

The first building to be completed, the Guest House, is known as the Rancho Santa Fe Inn. Although the building appears to be of Spanish Colonial Revival as the plan required, in actuality the Inn is a combination of several stylistic influences. The center section with a tile roof and arched entrances is Spanish, however, the simple

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<sup>22</sup>Marcia Van Liew, Director of the Rancho Santa Fe Association, provided information about Requa's selection in an interview at Rancho Santa Fe, February 1981. Similar information appeared in Harriet Rochlin's paper, "Among the First and the Finest: Julia, Hazel, Lilian, Lutah, Edla," on file San Diego Historical Society.

<sup>23</sup>Samuel Hamill, in a letter to the San Diego Historical Society, provided information about Lilian Rice.



rectangular wings show directly the influence of Gill.<sup>24</sup>

Located across the street from the Guest House on the southeast corner of Paseo Delicias is the Commercial Building. This impressive looking structure in Spanish Colonial style is only one story high with a raised central section delineated by four arches and columns.<sup>25</sup> Although the building is now used for offices, the raised central section was originally built to hide road building equipment for the new village.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the buildings most typical of a small Spanish village are the townhouses designed in 1924. The complex consists of a group of single-story townhouses. With their low white stucco walls and red tile roofs, the buildings look like a village in miniature. The architects planned the townhouses around a series of enclosed courtyards and atria so that each unit would have a private outdoor living area. As a result, the living accommodations have both open space and privacy in a high-density complex.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>David Gebhard, Robert Winter, A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1977, p. 493.

<sup>25</sup>Gebhard, Winter, A Guide to..., p. 493.

<sup>26</sup>Van Liew, interview, February 1981.

<sup>27</sup>Gebhard, Winter, A Guide to..., p. 493.

With the layout of the town and the design of the major buildings completed, the firm of Requa and Jackson disassociated from the Rancho Santa Fe project. Lilian Rice carried on alone until her death in 1938, designing many of the homes in the village.<sup>28</sup>

By 1924, Requa and Jackson had become so busy, they really did not have the time to devote to Rancho Santa Fe. The real estate boom had spread from San Diego to communities all over the county. Between 1923 and 1924, the firm had received commissions in Del Mar, Solana Beach, Coronado, La Jolla and San Pasqual in addition to their work in San Diego.<sup>29</sup>

Because of the affluence of many of his clients, Requa designed the most luxurious and romantic houses of his career during the 1920s. In order to satisfy sophisticated tastes, Requa made extended trips abroad to record ideas and to collect various architectural elements to compliment his designs. Two books for the Monolith Portland Cement Company also resulted from Requa's travels.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Rochlin, "Among the First...", Rice received her architecture degree from Berkeley in 1910. She worked for Hazel Waterman before her employment with Requa and Jackson. The Rancho Santa Fe project gave her career a definitive turn.

<sup>29</sup>Hamill Collection.

<sup>30</sup>Richard S. Requa, Architectural Details: Spain and the Mediterranean, Los Angeles: The Monolith Portland Cement Company, 1926; Old World Inspiration for American Architecture, 1929.

As a result of his trips, Requa at last began to formally verbalize his philosophy about architecture. With that formal expression of his ideas, Requa stopped his ceaseless search for the "right" style and started to develop his own potential. He explained his previous vacillation in a 1926 San Diego Union article.

The development of this new style has indeed been slow...It is essential that many types and designs must be tried out and lived with. Inappropriate, incongruous and impractical styles are gradually eliminated and the one retained that stands best the test of time and is not found wanting. 31

For Requa, only one style met those criteria. He had used it in many designs during his Secessionist phase. Called by others Spanish Colonial Revival, now Requa gave the style his own name, the Southern California style. He believed that to call the style by any other name would be just as inappropriate as to call Spanish work Italian simply because Spain had received inspiration from details used earlier in the architecture of southern Italy.

Requa objected vigorously to the practice of mimicking old world styles or adding a few Spanish ornaments and calling what resulted Spanish. He did admit that the architectural treatment of buildings in the western Mediterranean countries was wonderfully appropriate, and attractive, and

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<sup>31</sup>Richard S. Requa, "San Diego's Distinctive Architecture," San Diego Union, January 1, 1926.

beautifully harmonious with the semi-tropical environment. Requa also felt that the climate in Southern California closely matched that of the western Mediterranean. Requa did not believe, however, that the mere copying of such architecture could ever result in anything vital and satisfying which would live through the coming generations. Instead, Requa strongly advocated using the Mediterranean architecture only for inspiration, because he believed that modern buildings should express the spirit of the 20th century and not of ages that are past and dead.<sup>32</sup>

For the most part, Requa found the early Spanish house to be the antithesis of what is desirable in a modern home. He considered the Spanish house rather formidable because of the fortress-like street facade, so necessary in an earlier age. He described the interior as a series of cheerless rooms, poorly lit and lacking in any conveniences such as closets, bathrooms or heating facilities. With such a description, Requa could not see why anyone would want to blindly copy a Spanish house.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Richard S. Requa, "The Architectural Style for Southern California," San Diego Business, Vol.2, No.8. October 1926, pp. 4-5; Requa, "An Architectural Style for Southern California," The Architect and Engineer, Vol. 89, No. 3, pp. 45-46.

<sup>33</sup>Richard S. Requa, "My Idea of a Real California Home," The Modern Clubwoman, December 1929, p.8.

In spite of his feelings, Requa did find certain fundamental characteristics of Spanish architecture which he considered suited to 20th century homes. He believed that the picturesque simplicity and the unpretentious honesty in the use and treatment of construction materials to be particularly worthy of emulation. In addition, Requa found the incorporation of gardens into the architectural theme one of the most important features of Spanish design.<sup>34</sup>

In his first book Architectural Details: Spain and the Mediterranean, Requa listed seven characteristics of Mediterranean architecture which he considered the most inspirational and appropriate to modern work:

1. Buildings simple in mass and pleasing in outline and proportion;
2. Walls built of rough masonry, finished on the exterior with stucco, whitewashed or tinted light pastel shades;
3. Roofs either flat or low pitched, covered with well rounded, burned clay tiles;
4. Ornament used with restraint, discrimination, with definite reason and purpose;
5. Exterior interest obtained by wrought iron, wood or stucco, window grilles, shutters, balconies or similar practical features;
6. Focal point of exterior usually the main entrance where the finest ornamental work is concentrated; and

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<sup>34</sup> Requa, "My Idea of a...", p. 9.

7. Courts, patios and gardens an indispensable feature of the architectural treatment. 35

Requa hastened to add, however, that the preceding features should be studied for inspiration, but never plagiarized. Designing a building by making the plan and structural requirements subservient to its decorative treatment could only result in a forced and impractical interior. On the other hand, Requa believed that lack of inspiration and ingenuity resulted in a banal, spiritless imitation without character or reason.<sup>36</sup>

With his beliefs clearly spelled out, Requa proceeded to demonstrate the fundamentals he advocated so strongly in his books and articles. During the twenties, the great majority of the work done in the Requa/Jackson office embodied the Southern California style. In 1924, Requa began the first of several residences so grandiose that they are often called castles. Each of them provided an admirable showcase for Requa's new style.

Perhaps the most widely publicized of the "castles" is the residence built for Marston Harding in 1925. Situated at the top of a cliff in Del Mar, the colossal 10,000 square foot building has a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside and the Pacific Ocean. Requa used his own patented hollow cement blocks to construct the two foot thick walls

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<sup>36</sup> Requa, Old World Inspiration..., foreward.

for the castle.<sup>37</sup> He also used many of his own designs for details throughout the building. In addition, Requa searched Europe for authentic items such as the twenty foot tall hand-carved front doors and the stained glass windows and wrought iron gates which he found in Spanish castles.<sup>38</sup>

Requa combined these items with his own ideas to create a castle unlike any he could have encountered in Spain. For the Del Mar Castle is not a huge, compact structure several stories high and surrounded by a moat. Instead, the Del Mar Castle is a long sprawling building with wings jutting off gracefully at various angles. Different living areas within the Castle are clearly visible on the exterior because of the varying roof levels. In fact, the Del Mar Castle provides a textbook example of Requa's belief that a plan should never be subservient to exterior treatment.

Requa's careful attention to detail and his vivid imagination are evident throughout the Castle. Even lacking the moat, the building has enough castlelike details to satisfy royalty. Entering through the massive front doors, the visitor finds himself in an enormous hexagonal shaped entrance hall, its importance further emphasized by the high groined ceiling. The entrance hall leads into the 1,500

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<sup>37</sup>Hamill Collection.

<sup>38</sup>Lori Weisberg, "Castle 'Priced for Quick Sale' at \$2.4 Million," San Diego Union, October 4, 1981, p. B-14.

square foot living room or grand hall dominated by a huge walk-in fireplace. As is evidenced by the higher roof level visible on the outside, the grand hall has a different ceiling treatment than other rooms in the house. The ceiling is vaulted and supported by beams brought from a castle in Spain. Because of the high ceiling, there is room for a musician's balcony above the fireplace. Nestled behind the balcony is a small chapel with a carved pulpit.

Opening off the grand hall, the twenty-six foot long dining room has a slightly lower roofline to provide a little more intimacy.<sup>39</sup> The fireplace, one of six in the house, nestles in one corner. Requa designed it to feature the twelve signs of the zodiac. Molds found on the property by the present owner suggest that the fireplace may have been cast at the site during construction of the house.<sup>40</sup>

Opening off the grand hall in another direction is the huge circular turret which is visible for miles in Del Mar. On the ground floor, the turret functions as a billiard room, while the turret room above offers a 360 degree view of the countryside.

In order to provide privacy for the bedrooms, Requa

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<sup>39</sup>Hamill Collection.

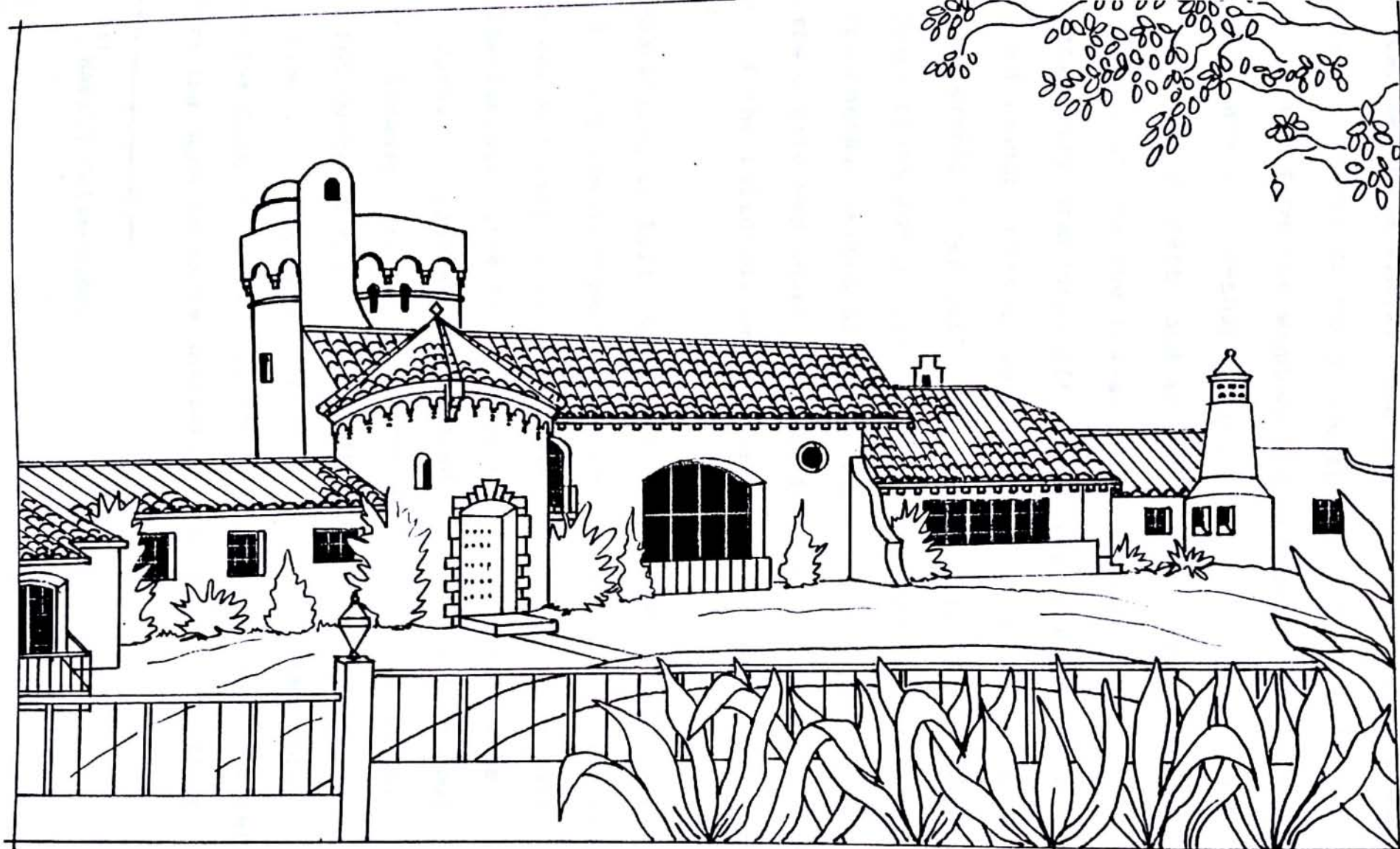
<sup>40</sup>Patricia Schaelchlin, "Del Mar's Castle has a New Lease on Life," San Diego Home/Garden, Vol. 2, No. 2, October 1980, p. 56.



Figure 13

Marston Harding house

(Drawn by the author)



designed two separate wings. The master suite angles gracefully toward the rear of the property, providing a view of the back country from the windows and balcony. The rest of the bedrooms are in a T-shaped wing which is angled toward the front of the property and an ocean view. Ceilings in the bedroom wings are the lowest in the house.

Another wing branching off the dining room contains the kitchen and laundry room as well as maid's quarters. In addition, several other buildings on the property provided extra guest rooms and a cottage for the chauffeur. Built in 1924, the cottage served as a temporary home for the Hardings while the castle was under construction. Because of the complexity of the building, several years passed before completion.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1924, Regua had begun another elaborate house for William A. Gunn of Coronado. Although not as large as the Del Mar Castle, the Gunn house has many of the same characteristics. Like the Harding house, the Gunn house has a long sprawling plan with an angled wing and varying roof levels. Because parts of the house are two stories high, it is not quite so easy to determine the interior functions by looking at the exterior. As in the case of the Harding house, the Gunn house is dominated by a huge tower or turret. Because the Gunn house is smaller, there is only one tower

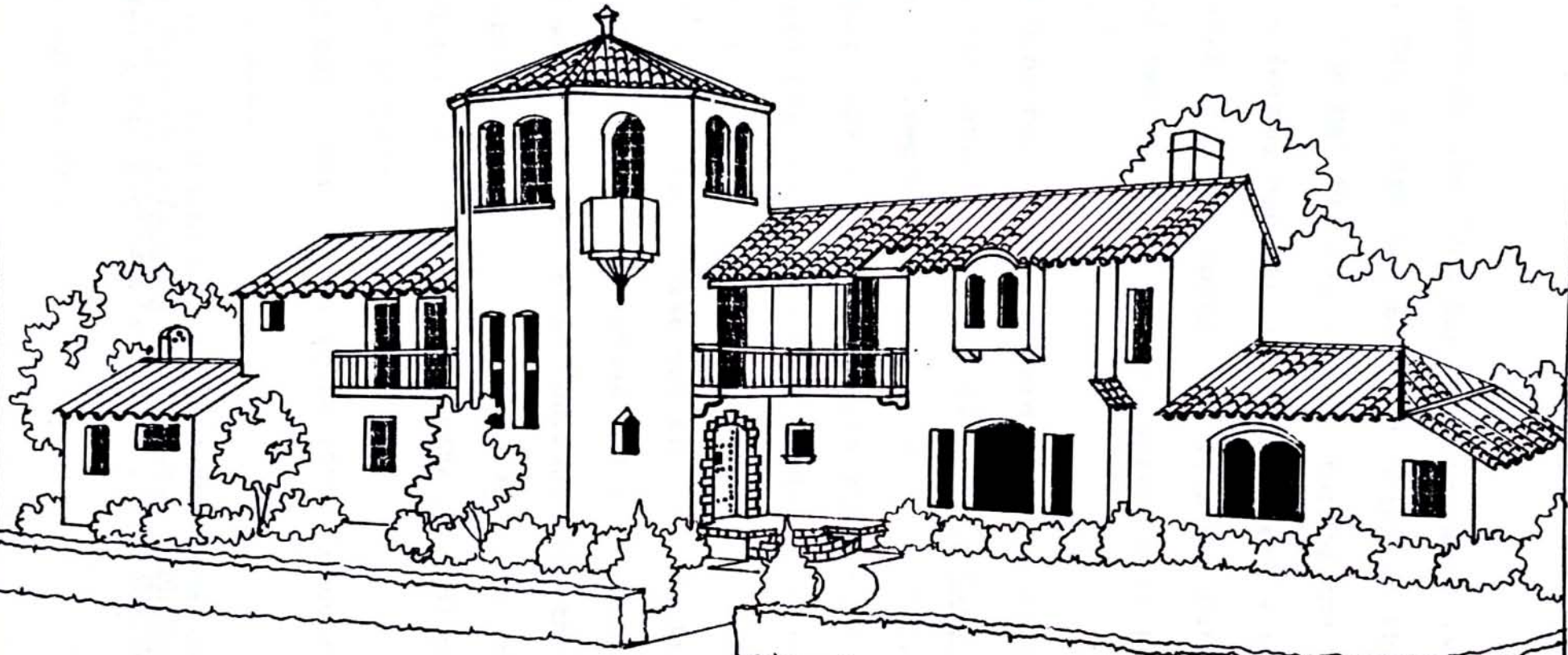
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<sup>41</sup>Hamill Collection.

Figure 14

William A. Gunn house

(Drawn by the author)



which serves as both the entrance hall and upstairs turret room.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps because the Gunn house seemed more like a home than a castle, Requa lavished more attention on the garden than he had at the Del Mar Castle. He turned the pie-shaped Gunn lot into a formal Moorish garden complete with a tiled fountain, pergola and lath house. As with the Harding house, Requa also included quarters for the servants at the far end of the garden.<sup>43</sup>

Both the Gunn house and the Harding house served as illustrations for Requa's 1926 article in San Diego Business entitled "The Architectural Style for Southern California." The article again spelled out the seven characteristics which Requa considered the most noteworthy in Mediterranean architecture. The two "castles" served as admirable models of the seven points listed. Each house had stuccoed walls and tiled roofs. Ornament in each house was used with restraint so that plain wall surfaces would contrast with the focal point, the elaborate main entrance. In addition, the patios and gardens surrounding the houses became an indispensable feature of each project.

Requa did not limit his illustrations, however, to the

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<sup>42</sup>Interior photographs of the Gunn house can be found in R.W. Sexton's Spanish Influence on American Architecture and Decoration, New York: Brentano's, 1927, pp.71,108,195,247.

<sup>43</sup>Hamill Collection.

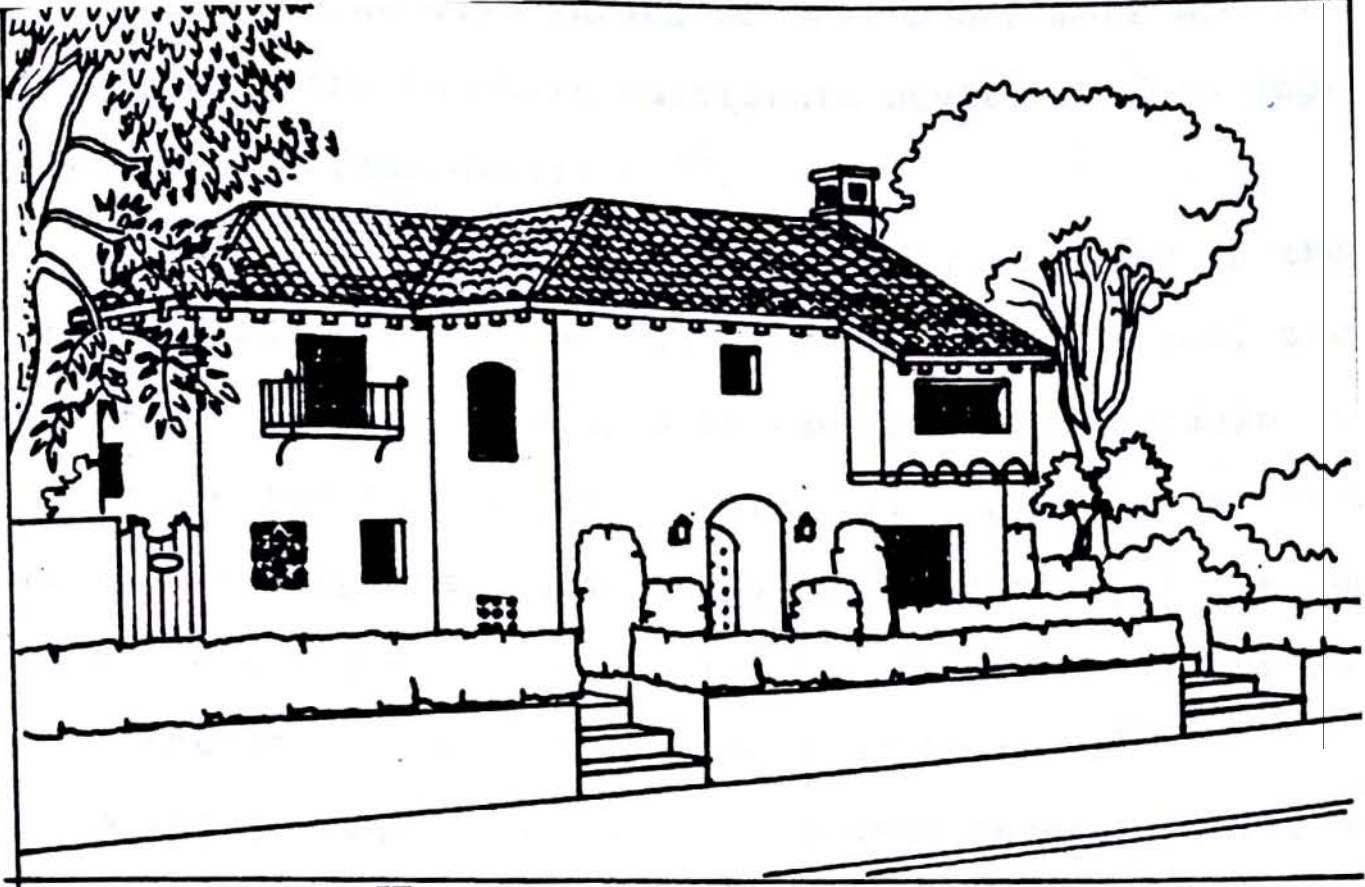
Examples of the Southern California Style  
(Drawn by the author)

Figure 15

D.H. Cameron house

Figure 16

William Barie house





two "castles". He also showed several other more modest homes to prove that the Southern California style would be appropriate for any size dwelling.<sup>44</sup>

Requa did not limit himself to designing only in the Southern California style. He believed that two real architectural styles had developed in America--real because they belonged to the localities in which they had been erected and because they expressed completely the character of the region. One of these styles was of course his Southern California style; the other the Indian pueblos of Arizona.<sup>45</sup>

Although Requa had already designed several buildings in the Pueblo style, and had studied the characteristics with his partner Frank Mead, he was always ready to learn more. Requa found his opportunity in the mid-twenties when he met Professor Ernest Rogers,<sup>46</sup> founder of a mountain school for boys in Los Gatos, California. Professor Rogers had decided that pueblo type architecture would be an appropriate style for his new school buildings. Unfortunately, Rogers could not find anyone in Northern California who

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<sup>44</sup> Requa also showed photographs of the homes of Mrs. J. B. Olsen, Loma Portal; and W.C. Barker of Mission Hills.

<sup>45</sup> Requa, Old World Inspiration..., foreward.

<sup>46</sup> Ernest Andrew Rogers founded and served as president of the Montezuma Mountain School for Boys. The school derived its name from the original Spanish grant, Rancho Montezuma.

agreed with him, so he finally did his own designing for the first school building. Then Rogers met Requa. The two of them journeyed to New Mexico to make a first hand study of pueblo types in mountain and forest surroundings. They spent several weeks studying the native pueblos, while Requa took pictures of various corners and angles that might be appropriate for the school buildings.<sup>47</sup>

The study trip convinced Professor Rogers that the pueblo type buildings would indeed be ideal for his school. In August 1925, Requa produced a master plan for the entire projected school complex. Because of the school's location in a tiny mountain valley, Requa planned the buildings to be constructed in a semi-circle surrounding the athletic field. Dominating the group of pueblo buildings would be a large administration building of pure Aztec architecture.<sup>48</sup>

Construction began almost immediately on the first dormitory. To provide maximum insulation and minimum upkeep cost, Requa designed two to three foot thick concrete walls with a hollow center. To support the roof, he used redwood beams cut from the forests surrounding the site of the school. Because of the monolithic construction, the building became extremely well insulated against cold, heat, and sound.

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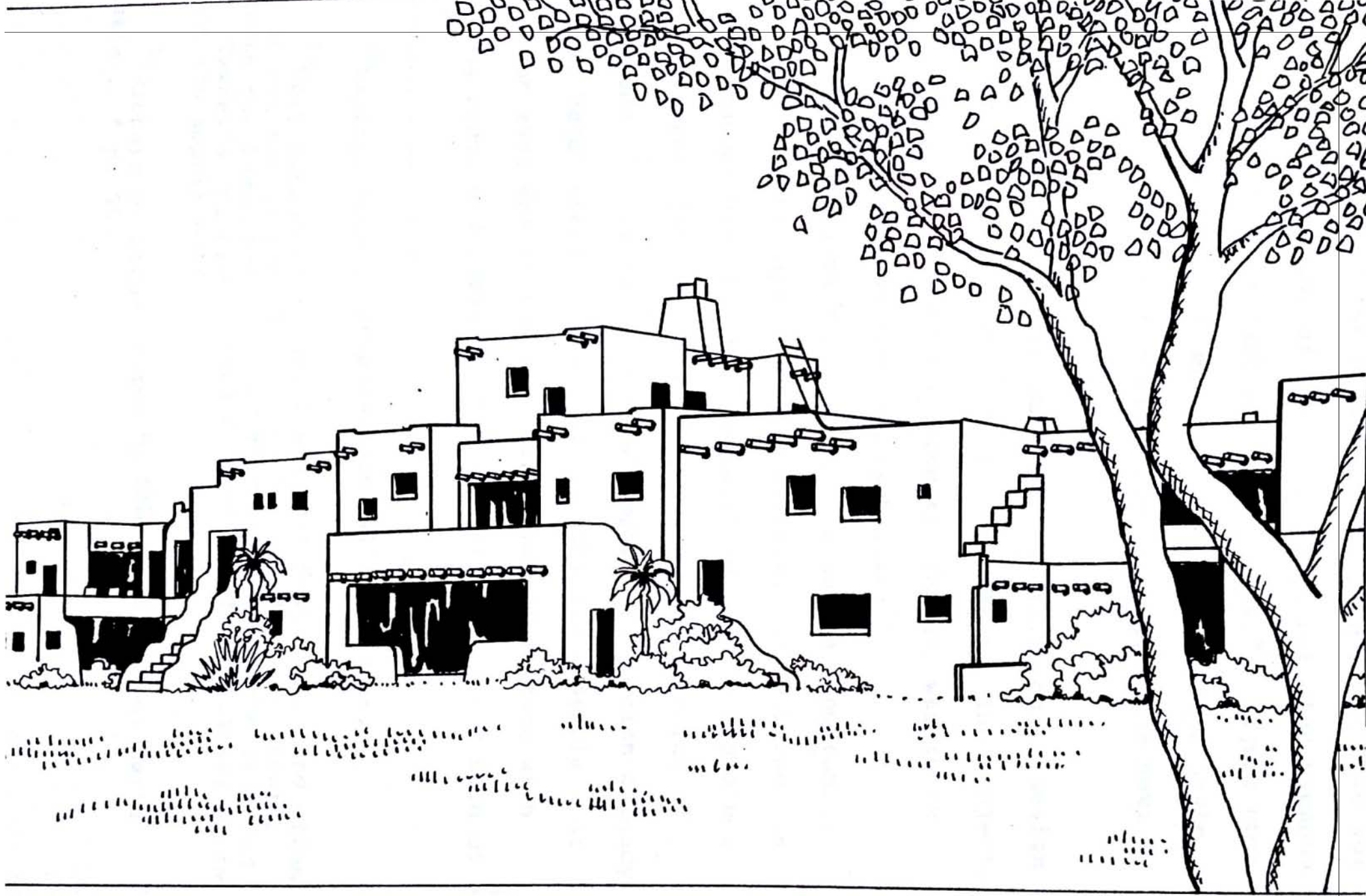
<sup>47</sup> Frank J. Taylor, "Pueblo Architecture for Montezuma School," Architect and Engineer, Vol. 119, No. 2, November 1934, pp. 12-13.

<sup>48</sup> Hamill Collection.

Figure 17

Montezuma Mountain School Dormitory

(Drawn by the author from a photograph by Ralph Ward, The Architect and Engineer, Vol. 119, No. 2, November 1934, p.13)



Professor Rogers found the dormitory to be an ideal home for youngsters, both because of its durability, but also because the design held a great fascination for boys.<sup>49</sup> Rogers commissioned Requa to design more buildings in the same style. The buildings were constructed periodically over the next few years.

In 1925, Requa received an unusual commission to design an open air theatre on San Diego's Mount Helix. The project, planned as a memorial to Mary Carpenter Yawkey, was to be used for Easter sunrise services each year.<sup>50</sup>

Requa looked upon the project as a unique opportunity. He said of it, "Perhaps once in a lifetime, an architect is given an opportunity to design a building or plan a project that completely fulfills his early dreams and youthful aspirations."<sup>51</sup> Using the natural amphitheatre which already existed, Requa created a seating area for 4,000 people. At the lower east end of the theatre, he formed a stage with dressing rooms underneath. By using fieldstones for much of

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<sup>49</sup>Taylor, "Pueblo Architecture...", pp. 13,16,40.

<sup>50</sup>Mary Carpenter Yawkey lived near Mount Helix and often sat at the top of the mountain to commune with her Creator. Because she loved the site, Ed Fletcher donated the land and Mrs. Yawkey's children, Cyrus C. Yawkey and Mary Yawkey White built the amphitheatre.

<sup>51</sup>Richard S. Requa, cited by Schaelchlin, "Del Mar's Castle...", p. 56.

the construction, he was able to maintain the beautiful, natural setting.<sup>52</sup> The Mount Helix Open Air Theatre has become a landmark in San Diego. The firm of Requa and Jackson received an AIA honor award for the theatre in 1933.<sup>53</sup>

But in spite of several unique opportunities received by Requa and Jackson in the twenties, for the most part the firm's work consisted of what they considered to be modest residences. Four houses designed in 1926 and 1927 deserve special mention as excellent examples of Requa's Southern California style with Moorish overtones.

The Samuel Mann house in Coronado and the E.H. Curtiss house in San Diego have the long strung out floor plans and the varying roof levels discussed previously as examples of designing from the inside out. Both houses show evidences of Moorish influence in their arched doors and window screens. Particularly noteworthy are the crisply executed corbels over the main entrance of the Mann house.<sup>54</sup>

In 1927, Dorothy B. Mills had two houses designed side

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<sup>52</sup>Lyman Bryson, "Architecture and Sculpture in San Diego County," San Diego Magazine, Vol. 3, No. 10, September 1927, pp. 7-8.

<sup>53</sup>"Honor Awards on Seventy Buildings in San Diego County," Architect and Engineer, Vol. 114, No. 2, August 1933, pp. 49-50.

<sup>54</sup>Hamill Collection. The Mann house is located at 1045 Loma Avenue in Coronado overlooking Star Park. The Curtiss house at 4388 Hawk Street is located near several other Requa designed homes.

by side on a hill in San Diego. The very steep grade on the site necessitated a long flight of stairs from the street up to the houses. Requa met that challenge by designing a Moorish gatehouse for each house to break the monotony of the stairs. Each gatehouse has an iron lace gate surrounded by beautiful tile work. This ingenious solution to a handicap has become one of the most interesting features of each of the two residences.<sup>55</sup>

As Requa's style became increasingly visible in the San Diego community, he began receiving commissions to alter existing houses. A fairly small commission, but one which is still highly visible came about because of Requa's long acquaintance with the Darlington family of La Jolla.<sup>56</sup> Mrs. Darlington commissioned Requa to re-design her garden and patio so they would have a Moorish effect. She also asked Requa to design a private library for her collection of beautiful books.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Hamill interview, March 1981. Miss Mills built the two houses at 4334 Avalon and 4355 Arcadia Drive for herself and her niece.

<sup>56</sup>Mrs. Sybil Darlington was a cultural leader in La Jolla for forty years. Samuel Hamill related that Requa and the Darlington son had gone to Baja on a photography expedition.

<sup>57</sup>Hamill Collection. A photograph of the garden is located on p. 65 of Syd Love's San Diego Portrait of a Spectacular City, San Diego: San Diego Magazine Publishing Company, 1969. The house and garden are open to the public on certain days.

Requa designed a similar library with a vaulted ceiling for a more involved renovation project at the Irving Snyder house in Coronado. Requa and his then partner Frank Mead had been the original architects for the house when it was built in 1915.<sup>58</sup> For the 1929 renovation, Requa transformed the exterior with a tile roof, wrought-iron grille work, and an elaborate front entrance. Although the house was already of substantial size (eighteen rooms), Requa added more rooms and changed others. The major addition was the previously mentioned library, also called the grand hall because of the twenty-two foot by fifty foot dimensions. When completed, the Snyder house had many of the features of a "castle", including a chapel, subterranean wine cellar, the grand hall, and spacious quarters for the staff.<sup>59</sup>

The Snyder house marked the last of the really castle-like houses built by Requa and Jackson. The stock market crash at the end of 1929 brought the building of luxury homes to an abrupt halt. Strangely enough, however, the firm received two more commissions for houses that could only be classified as "castles". Although neither mansion was ever built, they are worthy of mention because of the total luxury

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<sup>58</sup>The house, located at 1015 Alameda in Coronado, was originally built by Mrs. K. G. Jordan.

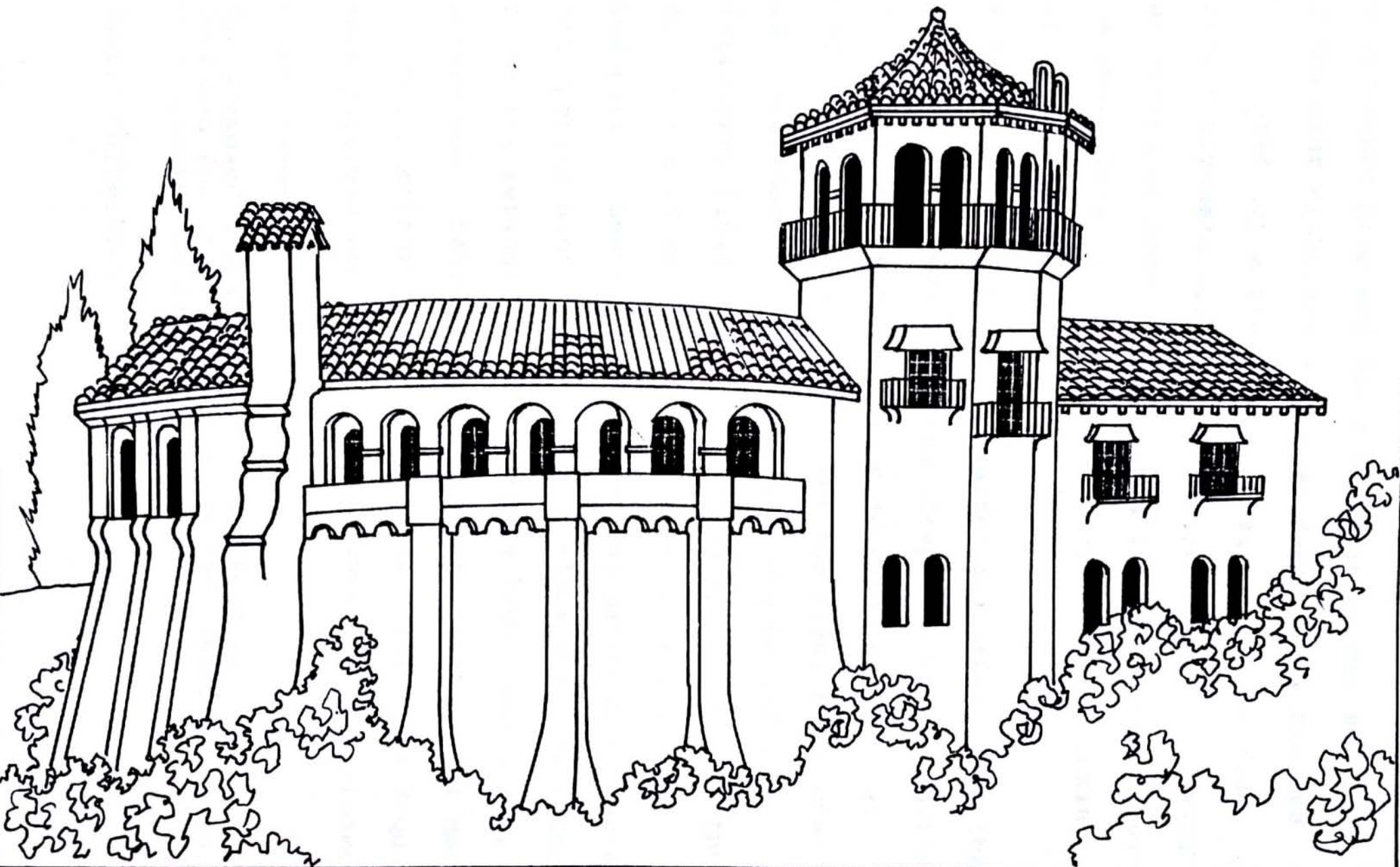
<sup>59</sup>Carrie Peck, "The Snyder Property, Past, Present and Projected," Bridge and Bay, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1976, pp. 6-8, 18.



Figure 18

C.E. Smith house

(Drawn by the author from a perspective drawing by the architect, Hamill Collection, San Diego Historical Society.)



of each mansion.

The residence proposed for C.E. Smith of Del Mar is probably the most elaborate home ever designed by Richard Requa.<sup>60</sup> Planned for a steep, canyon site, the building looked like everyone's vision of a fairytale castle. Heavy piers supporting an arched loggia gave it the look of a fortress. A three story tall tower and many romantic looking lacey balconies completed the castlelike effect.

The size of the Smith house dwarfed any other house that Requa had designed. Because of the steep site which required the tall supporting piers, the house appeared even larger than it actually would have been. For the plan, Requa combined his inside-out designing with a scheme he had used successfully many times in his earlier days. He grouped the spread out series of rooms around an enormous six-sided cloistered patio. Leaving one side of the patio open, Requa framed the opening with two long angled wings which provided quarters for the servants. Had the house been constructed, the structure would have made a spectacular sight in Del Mar.<sup>61</sup>

The other commission for a castlelike house which Requa and Jackson received was actually a continuation of a project

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<sup>60</sup>The proposed house would have replaced an earlier residence designed for the Smiths by Requa and Jackson in 1929. The house is located on Zapo Street in Del Mar.

<sup>61</sup>Hamill Collection.

begun several years earlier. In 1925, Requa's old friend Coy Burnett<sup>62</sup> of the Monolith Portland Cement Company had begun an elaborate complex on another steep hillside site in Del Mar. The first building had been a service building with a five-car garage and laundry on the first floor and a large three bedroom apartment above the garage. Between 1927 and 1928, an extensive serpentine wall and gate were placed around the entire property. An elaborate main house would have completed the complex.<sup>63</sup> The house never got built although the long winding wall and service building are still in existence. Because of the extent of the wall, it has become somewhat of a mystery in Del Mar with many tales circulated about the probable reason for its existence.<sup>64</sup>

The depression had hit San Diego's building industry with particular severity. Oscar Cotton, a local developer, recalled in his book The Good Old Days, that in 1934, building permits for the entire city of San Diego totaled seven in July and six in August.<sup>65</sup> With such statistics, it is no

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<sup>62</sup>Refer to footnote 35 in Chapter 1, for details about Burnett.

<sup>63</sup>Hamill Collection.

<sup>64</sup>"Mysterious 'Snake Wall' Still Del Mar Secret," The Blade Tribune, June 27, 1976, p. 91.

<sup>65</sup>Cotton, The Good Old Days, p. 232.

wonder that work in Requa's office had come almost to a standstill.

When Frank Lloyd Wright proposed a plan for a Broadacre City, wherein each family would have one acre of land and become relatively self-sufficient, the San Diego Union picked up on the idea as a possible solution for San Diego's housing problems. In a 1933 article, Requa gave his opinion of the whole idea, "Fine especially in spots. It has been tried in England with indifferent success and it has been approached at Rancho Santa Fe rather closely." Requa qualified his approval, however, maintaining that Wright's plan could never become universal, but that in modified form it would eventually pervade California.

Always an enthusiastic advocate of the possibilities for indoor/outdoor living in Southern California, Requa expanded his thoughts, "There is no better place than here for that combination of indoor and outdoor life. We already have and we should have more easy transitions from outside to inside." But true to his predilection for the Southern California style, Requa continued, "I feel, however, that Mr. Wright's mechanical type of architecture would be distinctly unsuitable to Southern California...this country requires buildings that are friendly in appearance...Native materials or their equivalent in more structurally efficient modern construction are the answer." He added that the house should have enough small individual parts so that it may be designed to express

its own personality.<sup>66</sup>

Even though the article expressed good ideas, building did not pick up in the San Diego area. Requa and Jackson had added Samuel Hamill as another partner in the firm in 1928 during the height of the boom.<sup>67</sup> With three partners in the firm, the sparse profits after the stock market crash made even less impact. In 1934, the partners finally received a commission for a large project which promised to be very rewarding.

The Twenty-second Agricultural District commissioned the firm to design a park or fairground to be located on Mission Bay in San Diego. The proposed project gave Requa his third opportunity to indulge in village-making, although in miniature. As eventually designed, the project included a racetrack, a grandstand, a model farm and at least eight other buildings to form a complete fairground plan.<sup>68</sup>

Because of lack of money or some other reason, the fair as

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<sup>66</sup>"Swing Away From Life in Cities Visioned by Architects," San Diego Union, February 26, 1933, pp. 1-2.

<sup>67</sup>Hamill interview.

<sup>68</sup>Drawing Collection, San Diego Public Library.

designed by Requa, Jackson and Hamill was never built on Mission Bay.<sup>69</sup>

Fortunately, in 1934, Requa became involved in renovation work at Balboa Park. After his appointment in October 1934 as consulting architect for the new exposition to be held in 1935, Requa no longer operated as a member of the firm of Requa, Jackson and Hamill. He resigned from the firm in 1935 to take up his new duties.

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<sup>69</sup> Conversations with people in the 22nd Agricultural District office or with Sam Hamill failed to explain why the original fairgrounds were not built. Correspondence with George Gomes of the State Division of Fairs and Expos added no clarification of the matter.

## Chapter 5

### California Pacific International Exposition

By the spring of 1934, renovation work had nearly been completed at Balboa Park. New concrete footings replaced rotted wood sills and allowed the buildings to be jacked back to plumb. The addition of paint to the repaired plaster facades gave the 1915 buildings new life.<sup>1</sup>

As the park rapidly took on a fresh appearance, visitors flocked to marvel at the success of the restoration work. Among the visitors was a man named Frank Drugan.<sup>2</sup> He viewed the newly restored buildings with something other than just appreciation for their beauty. Looking at the buildings from a businessman's standpoint, Drugan believed that they could serve as a nucleus for another Exposition. The idea seemed so feasible to Drugan that he decided to broach the plan to various influential men in the city.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard S. Requa, Inside Lights on the Building of San Diego's Exposition, 1935, San Diego: Frye and Smith, Ltd., 1937, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Drugan, "father of the 1935 Exposition", also acted as director for the proposed 1953 Expo. He lived in San Diego from 1933 until his death in 1950.



The men reacted with total disbelief--a gigantic venture costing thousands of dollars while San Diego was floundering in the depths of the depression?<sup>3</sup> Undaunted, Drugan presented the proposition to the San Diego Chamber of Commerce. There he found a warmer reception. Men such as Roy Hegg,<sup>4</sup> chairman of the San Diegans sub-committee, received the idea with enthusiasm although financing seemed an insurmountable obstacle.

The depression had shown no signs of lessening in San Diego. Instead, financial conditions had actually worsened even though they had been improving slightly in other parts of the country. Nevertheless, in March 1934, the Chamber of Commerce appointed a committee to study the feasibility of an Exposition. Upon the strength of the committee report, the Chamber decided to go on record in favor of the project.<sup>5</sup> With the Chamber endorsement, plans went forward rapidly for the new California Pacific International Exposition.<sup>6</sup> A Board of Directors was selected including G. Aubrey

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<sup>3</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 28-31.

<sup>4</sup>Hegg was an executive vice-president of San Diego Building and Loan Association and later president of San Diego Savings and Loan Association.

<sup>5</sup>The San Diego Union for March 21, 1934 on p. 1, cols. 7-8, reported that the San Diegans had made tentative plans and appointed a committee to consider finance.

<sup>6</sup>San Diego Union, June 28, 1934, p. 6, col. 7.

Davidson as chairman, Frank Belcher as president and Oscar Cotton as chairman of the campaign to raise \$500,000.<sup>7</sup> Enthusiasm ran high among the business community for the idea of another San Diego Expo. Unfortunately, contributions did not match the enthusiasm. When supporters were faced with a deadline to raise the money, however, they responded overwhelmingly. On September 19, 1934, the quota had not only been raised, but oversubscribed by almost \$200,000. The Expo seemed a certainty.<sup>8</sup>

In the middle of the fund raising campaign, Requa carried out his own campaigning for the new Expo through a lengthy interview in the San Diego Union. Apparently hoping to interest all the citizens of San Diego, Requa pictured the Exposition as an opportunity for cultural and educational benefits and the prospect made sound business sense. Drawing upon the pride that San Diegans felt in their newly restored park, Requa described the existing buildings as the only group of Expo buildings that had ever been of sufficient architectural merit to be preserved for twenty years.

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<sup>7</sup> Davidson was a San Diego civic leader and pioneer developer; termed "Mr. San Diego"; credited with bringing the Navy to San Diego. Belcher was the son of a socially prominent San Diego banking family and director and vice-president of the First National Trust and Savings Bank. Cotton was a San Diego realtor, developer and avid city booster, founder of the San Diego--California club.

<sup>8</sup> Oscar W. Cotton, The Good Old Days, New York: Exposition Press, 1962, pp. 230-240.

Because the combination of site, architecture and landscaping had produced an Exposition in 1915 unequalled for art and beauty, Requa believed that those buildings could form the nucleus of another international exposition.

Perhaps Requa anticipated his appointment as director of architecture for the exposition. At any rate, he continued the interview with his own suggestions for 1935.

I would suggest the use of more fountains in 1935. Many could be small sidewalk fountains such as as found in the Alcazar gardens in Seville... Then the electrical effects of modern science which so enhance the beauty of buildings and their settings are made even more dazzling by playing water.

To carry out the spirit of 1915, Requa recommended that the 1935 amusement zone be built around a patio. In addition, as a variation from gaudy entertainment, he suggested the reproduction of a Mexican market place to provide education as well as entertainment. But above all, whatever was done, Requa believed that the supplementary work should be in the same spirit as the old.<sup>9</sup>

Requa got the opportunity to carry out his beliefs. On October 6, 1934, the Exposition Board of Directors announced that Richard Requa had been appointed to be the Director of

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<sup>9</sup>Ada Perry, "Expo Buildings Keep Art, Beauty in Restoration," San Diego Union, July 29, 1934, Sec. II, p. 4.

Architecture for the 1935 Exposition.<sup>10</sup> He would be responsible for the general ground plan, the design of the new exhibit buildings with their surrounding landscaping, the new architectural gardens, the remodeling of the old buildings where required, and the interior and exterior decorations.<sup>11</sup>

At the time of Requa's appointment, less than eight months remained before the selected opening day, May 29, 1935. The time could not be extended if San Diego wished to use exhibits from the Century of Progress, closing at that time in Chicago.<sup>12</sup> Of necessity, therefore, all the normal months spent preparing the plans for any large building project had to be eliminated. The time usually required for sketches and drawings would have been longer than the actual time available to complete the entire Exposition.<sup>13</sup>

Fortunately for Requa, he had a brief interval while final organization took place and crews were being hired. He used that time to full advantage to map out the general

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<sup>10</sup>"Requa is Named by Expo to Post on Architecture," San Diego Union, October 7, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 40.

<sup>12</sup>The San Diego Union, on September 14, 1934, reported that P.M. Massman, executive director of the Century of Progress, had arrived to discuss plans for moving the exhibits.

<sup>13</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 48.

plan and decide on an architectural scheme for the new buildings. As Requa had stated in his early interview, he strongly believed that the new Expo should be in the same spirit as the old.<sup>14</sup> For that reason, in order to select an architectural scheme, Requa studied the buildings of the 1915 Exposition as designed by Bertram Goodhue. Goodhue's plan had been to present examples of all the interesting styles used during the period of Spanish rule in America. Ranging from the Mission style of the House of Charm through the Churrigueresque of the California Building to the Spanish Baroque used on the Palace of Foods and Beverages, the 1915 Expo had illustrated the architectural history of the Southwest.

Requa determined that this original and inspired idea should be carried on. Rather than duplicate Goodhue's plan, however, Requa decided instead to expand the 1915 plan to provide a more complete architectural history from prehistoric to modern time. By going back to the prehistoric and native architecture of the Southwest, he hoped to re-introduce the public to a great classical style. At the same time, by tracing architecture all the way to the present, he could show the striking similarities between modern and prehistoric architecture. Requa believed that his plans would combine novelty, beauty and authenticity and yet remain in

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<sup>14</sup>Perry, "Expo Buildings....," p. 4.

harmony with the original buildings.<sup>15</sup>

The only land available for the expansion of the plan lay southwest of the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. On this mesa, Requa laid out a plan reminiscent of various Latin American cities. The central portion of the mesa was graded for a broad plaza. Surrounding the plaza, Requa planned to have the buildings arranged in an architectural progression from prehistoric to modern times.

The progression began on the west side of the plaza with examples of Indian Pueblo architecture from the American southwest. Two buildings, the Hollywood Hall of Fame, and the Palisades Restaurant, were designed in the Pueblo style. A third building, originally named the New Mexico Building, needed only minor alterations to fit into the progression.

Across the plaza, on the east side three more buildings represented the Mayan and Aztec styles. They were the Federal Building, the Palace of Water and Transportation, and the Standard Oil Tower to the Sun.

Facing each other across the Firestone Singing Fountain, the California State Building and the Palace of Electricity and Varied Industries continued the progression from prehistoric to modern. The two buildings were designed to show the close relationship between ancient Mayan and twentieth

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<sup>15</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 48-52.

century architecture.

To complete Requa's series of styles, the Ford Building, stretching across the south end of the plaza, exemplified the very latest ideas in modern industrial design. In addition, the central patio and semi-tropical landscaping imparted a definite Southern California atmosphere.<sup>16</sup>

The Ford Building, however, did not complete Requa's plan for the Expo. Requa always had an affinity for the simple and unpretentious villages of the masses. He considered that type of architecture, notably at Rancho Santa Fe, more expressive of a country than monumental structures.<sup>17</sup>

For his Exposition plan, therefore, Requa provided examples of those humble buildings in the Spanish Village, and in a group of cottages which formed the House of Pacific Relations.<sup>18</sup>

With the completion of the plot plan and the architectural scheme, Requa gave the order to begin field work. He described the beginning: "Almost on the instant the Exposition grounds teemed with life and activity, like the sudden

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<sup>16</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 52-55; "California Pacific International Exposition Official Guide 1935," pamphlet, pp. 15-16, on file U.C. San Diego.

<sup>17</sup> Richard S. Requa, Old World Inspiration for American Architecture, Los Angeles: The Monolith Portland Cement Company, 1929, Section B.

<sup>18</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 59.

invasion of an army drilled and instructed for every maneuver."<sup>19</sup> In the beginning, crews worked a mere sixteen to eighteen hours a day. By the middle of April, 8,000 men worked in shifts around the clock to complete the monumental task. Erecting the new exhibit buildings was only a small part of the work. In addition, grading, blasting, landscaping, installation of sewers, water, gas, electricity, telephone and drainage pipes all had to be completed.

While the workmen struggled to finish their tasks, the department heads worked frantically to make all the daily adjustments needed. They carefully designed buildings which never got built, while at the same time, totally new buildings sometimes had to be designed almost overnight. Construction work started on foundations while the architects tried to rapidly design and draw plans for the actual building. Elaborate plans and time tables all had to be scrapped at an instant when unforeseen events changed everything.<sup>20</sup>

To keep up the frenetic pace required total devotion. At the first general meeting of the entire organization, Zack Farmer,<sup>21</sup> director of the Exposition, gave everyone the challenge:

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<sup>19</sup> Requa, Inside Lights...., p. 63.

<sup>20</sup> Requa, Inside Lights...., pp. 64-68.

<sup>21</sup> Farmer had served as the managing director of the Tenth Olympiad in 1932; he also served as director of the 1938 Olympic Games.



This job must go over and you are the ones and the only ones who can put it over. If you don't feel equal to it, the time to quit is right now. You must put aside every personal feeling of prejudice, or jealousy. You must be prepared to sacrifice your personal comfort and convenience. You must give yourself to the work without a single reservation. You must make this thing your religion! 22

As Director of Architecture, Requa had a tremendous responsibility. While coping with day-to-day problems as they arose, he still had to supervise the design of the major exhibit buildings as he had envisioned them. Fortunately, Requa had a great deal of familiarity with the architectural styles he had proposed, so he didn't have to waste precious time on research. He had designed several buildings in the Pueblo style, including the Torrey Pines Lodge and the Montezuma School. He had also designed a building in the Aztec style for the Montezuma School. As for the small cottage designs, Requa had designed similar structures many times and in addition, had taken many village photographs on his tours abroad which proved helpful.

In spite of Requa's knowledge, many problems occurred with the design and construction of the buildings which could not have been anticipated. Some buildings which had been planned and already built for one purpose suddenly had to be remodeled for another use. An example of this was the

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<sup>22</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 83.

Palace of Electricity and Varied Industries. The building had originally been designed to be the Transportation Building. Special shapes and ornamentations had been carefully planned to suggest airplanes and prows of ships. Almost at the last moment, Exposition directors decided to design another building for transportation and remodel the original building for electricity and industrial exhibits.<sup>23</sup> The basic shape of the building could not be changed, however, a newly designed large mural over the entrance provided a link with the exhibits found within. The brightly colored mural looked like it was made of old Spanish tiles. In actuality, artist Juan Larrinaga had created the plaque out of several thicknesses of wall board which he carved in bas-relief and painted to simulate tile. To add a look of antiquity, Larrinaga added a final bronze coating which gave the effect of weather aging.

Larrinaga's idea proved to be so effective and easy to do that the process was used for the entrance treatment on most of the new exhibit buildings. Requa believed that for the dramatic appeal vital to a fair, exterior surfaces of the buildings needed some form of exciting decoration which would prepare the mind for the proper appreciation of the exhibits. He designed, therefore, many of the buildings

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<sup>23</sup>Requa, *Inside Lights...*, p. 68.

with a large open space over the entrance which could be used for a mural.<sup>24</sup>

Because of the tight time schedule, the major buildings had to be designed almost simultaneously. The Palace of Electricity and Varied Industries and the California State Building were probably the first buildings to be constructed. As previously mentioned, both the buildings had been designed to show the close relationship between ancient Mayan and modern structures. By the arrangement of masses and the use of horizontal lines and geometrical ornamentation, Requa demonstrated that the principal elements of modern and pre-historic buildings had striking similarities.<sup>25</sup> As originally designed, the two exhibit halls amply proved Requa's theory. Today, with much of the ornamentation stripped away, the buildings appear to be almost completely Moderne in style.

Stretched between the Palace of Electricity and the State Building at the south end of the plaza, the Ford Building exemplified the totally modern. The building almost did not get built. With an opening day at the end of May, the Ford Motor Company did not sign up for space in the

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<sup>24</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 112-116.

<sup>25</sup>San Diego Park and Recreation Department Architectural Drawing Collection, California Room, San Diego Public Library. Murals over the entrance to the California Building depicted the principal industries of the state. Both buildings featured elaborately carved Mayan decorations.

Exposition until February. That allowed only four months for preparing all the plans and specifications as well as the actual construction work. Under normal circumstances, at least twice that amount of time would be needed.<sup>26</sup>

To help matters along, Ford sent Walter Dorwin Teague, an industrial designer who had designed automobiles for the Ford Company.<sup>27</sup> With Requa's assistance, Teague came up with the basic idea for the Ford Building and then could go no farther. Requa and his drafting room prepared all the working drawings and specifications and had a time schedule worked out. The staff had just put the finishing touches on the plans when the bombshell hit! Ford Motor Company called from Detroit and requested that the tower be considerably reduced in height and that the interior of the building be rearranged. The changes meant completely re-drawing the plans. They also meant that a month of precious time had been wasted.

Reeling from the blow, the drafting staff went doggedly back to work. Requa commented later, "Since then I have believed in miracles. The building was completed on time."<sup>28</sup>

At the present time, the Ford Building looks much as it

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<sup>26</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 72-75.

<sup>27</sup> Commercial Art and Industry, Vol. XIX, No. 113, November 1935, p. 169.

<sup>28</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 75-76.

did in 1935. The huge circular exhibition building is dominated by the eighty-eight foot tall entrance rotunda. The tower, as it is sometimes called, resembles a fluted drum,<sup>29</sup> with the sharp edges of the flutes blunted with blue vertical reflectors. This unconventional treatment provides almost the only ornamentation for the windowless building. To orient the building to its Southern California setting, a long terrace across the back gives a view of the city.<sup>30</sup> Also, using a favorite Regua device, the entire building surrounds an enormous central courtyard open to the sky. As originally designed, the patio was landscaped with a fountain and pools set among a variety of tropical and semi-tropical plants.<sup>31</sup>

The unusual design of the Ford Building provided an outstanding space for exhibitions. By using curved walls, the designers gave a sense of flow to the exhibits, but at the same time concentrated viewer attention because of the difficulty of seeing far ahead. For the same reason, the impossibility of estimating how many exhibits were ahead lessened the sense of fatigue that the viewer might feel.

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<sup>29</sup>"Ringing Round the Facts: Ford Building," Commercial Art and Industry, Vol. XIX, No. 113, November 1935, pp. 183-184.

<sup>30</sup>"Ford Building," Architectural Forum, Vol. LXII, No. 2, August 1935, pp. 123-125.

<sup>31</sup>Drawing Collection, San Diego Public Library.

The lack of side windows also allowed an advantage to exhibitors. Additional wall space in an unbroken flow could be provided. A constant source of light could be maintained from above using skylights or artificial lighting. Through these innovations, Requa and Teague made possible a very workable exhibition area.<sup>32</sup>

While the staff coped with the Ford Building, work continued on the rest of the Exposition. New buildings included the Standard Oil Tower to the Sun, elaborately ornamented with prehistoric Mexican designs; while the Hollywood Hall of Fame and the Palisades Restaurant had simple Pueblo style lines. Because of the last minute decision to use the building originally designed as Transportation Building for another purpose, Requa found it necessary to quickly design a new building. Placed in the prehistoric group, the Travel and Transportation Building in the Aztec mode was characterized by horizontal decorative bands and a tryptic mural over the entrance.<sup>33</sup>

The most outstanding building in the prehistoric group

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<sup>32</sup>"Ford Building," pp. 124-125; "Ringling Round the Facts....," p. 186.

<sup>33</sup>Architectural Drawing Collection, San Diego Public Library.

is the Mayan style Federal Building.<sup>34</sup> This building had an even more frenzied beginning than the Ford Building. Just two months before opening day, Congress passed an appropriation bill for a federal building at the San Diego Exposition. Further, Congress specified that the structure had to be of reinforced concrete or other permanent construction.

When the news reached the Exposition directors, their initial reaction was one of rejection. Requa persisted, however, and still believing in miracles found a way to get the building designed and constructed in two months time. The night before opening day, every detail had been completed except for the huge glass panels over the main entrance. When the crew of glass setters arrived, they just looked at the job, shook their heads and left. The crew felt too tired from constant days and nights of work to even contemplate such a delicate job. Frantically, directors summoned a second crew. They had the same reaction as the first crew. The third crew summoned finally consented to do the job. At 5:00 A.M. the last glass had been secured in place and the building was ready for the opening.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Letter from David Gebhard, Professor and Director, The Art Galleries, U.C. Santa Barbara to Mrs. Edward Hutshing, February 26, 1972, on file San Diego Historical Society. "The San Diego Fairs of 1915 and 1935 were the two principal means of introducing Americans to the richness of pre-Columbian architecture of the New World--and the Federal Building states this very well."

<sup>35</sup>Requa, Inside Lights...., pp. 76-80.

Requa described the Federal Building as a free interpretation of the Palace of the Governor in Uxmal, Yucatan. For purposes of the Exposition, modifications had to be made in the design to adapt it to modern exposition needs. Requa retained the main features, however, the triangular entrance portal flanked by massive pylons and a broad frieze supported on plain walls of rectangular blocks. The design of the triangular glass panel was suggested by some stucco figures on the interior walls of a building in Mayapan. By back-lighting the glass, it became possible to reproduce the effect of the original glowing colors. Requa specified a rich brown color tint for the exterior of the Federal Building in order to closely approximate the stone used in Mayan buildings.<sup>36</sup> At the government's request, the building had been designed with a sloping sub-floor so that it could be easily converted into an auditorium.<sup>37</sup> Although this has never been done, the Federal Building still remains in Balboa Park, functioning as a gymnasium.

Other buildings designed for the 1935 Exposition remain as community assets. Requa's two village groups are widely used today. The fifteen small cottages in the House of Pacific Relations still function as meeting places for various

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<sup>36</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 56-59.

<sup>37</sup> Florence Christman, The Romance of Balboa Park, San Diego: The Committee of 100, 1977, p. 124.



nationalities. The Spanish Village, which originally suggested a Mexican marketplace, has been converted into a series of artist studios.

Perhaps the most beloved and widely used of the 1935 buildings was the Old Globe Theatre. Requa designed the theatre to be a replica of the Elizabethan Globe Theatre in London. As originally designed, the theatre had a polygon plan open to the sky.<sup>38</sup> Over the years, the theatre was completely enclosed and became the center of San Diego's Shakespeare Festivals. An arsonist's fire demolished the building in March 1978.

Given Requa's almost fanatic interest in developing the possibilities of outdoor living, he naturally took a strong interest in the landscaping for the 1935 Exposition. Studying the trees and shrubs planted for the first Exposition, Requa realized that the greenery had been carefully planned for the future and not just the duration of the fair. He determined that the additions made in 1935, must not only harmonize with the existing landscape, but must also provide permanent enjoyment.<sup>39</sup>

For his major gardens, Requa drew upon information he

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<sup>38</sup> Architectural Drawing Collection, San Diego Public Library.

<sup>39</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 87; C.P.I.E. Official Guide, p. 18.

had gathered while traveling around the world. Three gardens had impressed him so much that he had always wanted to reproduce the gardens in San Diego. Before the Expo, however, Requa had never found the right setting.<sup>40</sup>

Requa considered the finest garden he had ever seen to be in Ronda, Spain. He had made several trips there to study and photograph the garden. The Ronda garden occupied a triangular site which had sloping sides dropping down to a ravine below. When one of the wings had to be removed from the House of Hospitality, Requa found the ideal spot to reproduce the garden at Ronda. The newly uncovered site closely resembled the garden at Ronda in every detail, including an adjoining Spanish style building which would blend in well with a Spanish garden. The garden plan so impressed the other directors of the Exposition, that they agreed it must be built even if a building had to be sacrificed.<sup>41</sup>

As a result, Requa reproduced the Casa del Rey Moro garden as exactly as possible with all the details included. The finished garden has a fountain, grotto, pool, well and pergolas among the terraces and planting.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 92.

<sup>41</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 91, 95-96.

<sup>42</sup>Architectural Drawing Collection, San Diego Public Library.

For his second garden, Requa chose a spot near the west entrance of the original Exposition already known as the Montezuma Garden. Requa saw the large level area as the perfect place to reproduce a portion of the Alcazar Gardens laid out by Charles V in Seville, Spain. As with the Casa del Rey Moro garden, all the conditions seemed tailor made for a formal garden. With the help of the landscape department, the area was quickly transformed into a series of flower beds outlined by hedges and surrounding a tiled fountain.<sup>43</sup>

Requa's third garden also came about because of the renovation work at the House of Hospitality. In order to create fire walls in the building, the center had been cut out leaving space for an enclosed patio.<sup>44</sup> For this space, Requa decided to use for his inspiration, a patio he had seen in Guadalajara, Mexico. In the center of the patio, he placed another fountain, this time a sculpture of a Mexican woman by San Diego sculptor, Donal Hord.<sup>45</sup>

Many other landscape features were added to Balboa Park during the construction of the 1935 Exposition. Requa amply

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<sup>43</sup> Requa, Inside Lights...., pp. 96-98.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel Hamill described this process during an interview in March 1981.

<sup>45</sup> Requa, Inside Lights...., p. 99.

fulfilled his pre-Expo recommendation to add more fountains to the Park. In addition to those in the three formal gardens, Requa added several small fountains including the Persian Water Rug near the House of Hospitality and a fountain on the wall enclosing the Organ Pavillion.<sup>46</sup> One portion of the Travel and Transportation Building had been named the Water Palace and featured several fountains as part of the entrance treatment. Perhaps the most impressive of the new fountains were the Firestone Singing Fountains located in the center of the south section of the Palisades Plaza.<sup>47</sup> These fountains combined water with music and underwater tinted flood lights to create a spectacular show.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the Exposition, lights transformed the Fair into a fantasyland reminiscent of a Maxfield Parrish painting. Soft, colored lights, blending and ever changing, painted the foliage with light to create a mystical effect.<sup>49</sup>

The Plaza del Pacifico, center of the 1915 Exposition, caused a special problem. After the Expo, the broad area had been asphalt paved to use as a parking lot. The black pavement seemed to absorb every bit of light beamed on it.

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<sup>46</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 100.

<sup>47</sup> Architectural Drawing Collection, San Diego Public Library.

<sup>48</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., p. 139.

<sup>49</sup> C.P.I.E. Official Guide 1935.

For that reason, and because a structure was needed to house the public address system; two weeks before opening day, Requa designed a structure for the center of the Plaza. In order to harmonize with, but not compete with the 1915 buildings, Requa decided on a simple, rectangular structure with a broad arch and open loggia at the top. The Arco del Futuro proved an effective feature as it framed the vista to the end of the Avenida de los Palacios, giving it an illusion of greater length. With the addition of two, large reflecting pools on either side, the Arch became a spectacular sight when lit each night.<sup>50</sup>

The San Diego Exposition ran for two seasons, 1935 and 1936.<sup>51</sup> After the closing, Requa made his own assessment of what had been accomplished through the vast amounts of time, money and manpower that had been expended.

Requa considered the principle objective of an exposition or world's fair to be the stimulation of business which would result in increased general prosperity in the area in which it is held. From a commercial standpoint, Requa felt that San Diego had no cause for disappointment.

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<sup>50</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 123-127.

<sup>51</sup> The San Diego Union of November 13, 1935 reported the 1935 attendance as 4,784,811. Richard Pourade wrote in The Rising Tide, San Diego: Union-Tribune Publishing Company, 1967, p. 225 that the final number of visitors to both fairs reached 7,220,000.

After the commercial objectives have been satisfied, Requa believed that an exposition had another function.

They should aim to educate as they entertain; inspire confidence and faith in enterprise and industry; stimulate the desire for art and beauty and promote friendliness and standing between nations. By glorifying achievement, an exposition can encourage initiative. There is no doubt that San Diego's Exposition attained its objectives, fulfilled its obligations. 52

Requa explained his feelings. He believed that San Diego's Exposition had contributed a great deal to cultural knowledge by using buildings designed in the historic styles of the region. Because of the perfect blending of architecture with landscaping, viewers had received a complete and satisfying experience of art and beauty.

In addition to these achievements, the 1935 Exposition had also added many valuable improvements to Balboa Park including buildings, gardens and fountains. Most important from Requa's point of view were the Ford Bowl, and improvements to the Organ Plaza. Many of the new and renovated buildings became meeting places for numerous cultural and civic activities.

Even more important to Requa, he believed that the Exposition had created a desire in the minds of thousands of visitors for greater harmony and beauty in their own lives. That this had taken place, Requa claimed, was evidenced by

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<sup>52</sup>Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 143-144.

the general beautification of San Diego and the harbor district. He noted a tendency towards better architecture, less ornamentation and more attention to landscaping. For Requa, passing on a desire to create more beautiful homes and gardens made all the effort and expenditures very worthwhile.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Requa, Inside Lights..., pp. 144-148; James Britton II, writing in the San Diego Union on October 29, 1978, made his assessment of the 1935 Exposition, particularly the architecture. Britton suggested studying the Federal Building, the State Building and the Palace of Electricity in relation to Wright's Mayan designs to discover their weaknesses. Britton admitted that Requa had money limitations which did not trouble Wright. Britton has forgotten that Requa not only suffered from lack of money, but also had almost unbelievable time restraints.

## Chapter 6

### The Declining Years 1936-1941

After the close of the Exposition, Richard Requa returned to private practice. He set up a small office on Broadway, employing Frank Morehead as his major draftsman.<sup>1</sup> Morehead had been a designer in the office Requa headed at the Fair.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the successful Exposition, conditions in San Diego had not returned to their pre-1930 status. Although the value of San Diego's building permits had almost doubled in 1935, much of that could be attributed to building at the Exposition.<sup>3</sup> The housing market remained in a slump. For that reason, Requa did not need a large office to handle the small amount of work available. In fact, he was very fortunate to have the City and County Administration Building

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<sup>1</sup>The San Diego City and County Directory, San Diego: San Diego Directory Company, 1936, lists Requa's office as 121 Broadway, Room 401.

<sup>2</sup>Samuel Hamill mentioned this during an interview in March 1981.

<sup>3</sup>Richard F. Pourade wrote in his book The Rising Tide, San Diego: Union-Tribune Publishing Company, 1967, p. 195, that more than \$6,000,000 had been expended for WPA projects because of the Expo. Tourist income had risen more than \$5,000,000.



project waiting for him after the Fair.

The idea for a new civic center had arisen many years earlier. In 1925, the city of San Diego had commissioned John Nolen to make his second general study plan for the development of the city and harbor. His new plan differed somewhat from the earlier 1908 plan. Nolen still maintained, however:

San Diego has needed a Civic Center for 25 years or more. Everything the city is or hopes to be depends in a measure upon having valid claims for beauty on which the city can make good. One of the chief means to achieve beauty in any city is a civic center.

Nolen recommended that the new civic center be placed on the waterfront where the buildings would act as the entrance to the city.<sup>4</sup>

The city Planning Commission and the county Planning Commission appointed a committee which studied Nolen's plan and made the same recommendations.<sup>5</sup> At that stage, the San Diego chapter of the American Institute of Architects volunteered to prepare preliminary plans for the first building. The group chose three members to do the actual work. They were Richard Requa, Louis Gill and William Templeton Johnson. The three architects completed the drawings, however due to

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<sup>4</sup>John Nolen, City Plan for San Diego, California, San Diego: City Planning Commission, 1926, pp. 28-30.

<sup>5</sup>Hamill interview, March 1981.

lack of funds, the project moved no farther.<sup>6</sup>

Finally in the fall of 1935, the project was revived when money became available. The Works Progress Administration agreed to appropriate \$989,527 for a City and County Administration Building and, the city and county granted another \$105,600 as the sponsor's share.<sup>7</sup>

The AIA voted that the three members who had donated their services to prepare the original drawings should be recommended as the chief architects for the project. The Civic Center Committee agreed with the AIA and awarded the contract to Requa, Johnson and Gill.<sup>8</sup> The three architects, in turn, added Samuel Hamill to their number.

Because Requa was in the middle of the Exposition when the Civic Center project began, he could give little attention to the project until after opening day at the Exposition. Meanwhile, Samuel Hamill had taken charge of the drafting room. Hamill had been able to assemble an excellent work force because jobs were so scarce, particularly for architects. After Requa had completed his duties at the Exposition, he joined the Civic Center group and eventually wrote all the

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<sup>6</sup>William Templeton Johnson, "First Unit of Civic Center Completed," American City, Vol. 56, April 1941, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup>Richard S. Requa, "San Diego's New Civic Center," Architect and Engineer, Vol. 138, July 1939, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>San Diego Union, November 2, 1935, November 7, 1935, November 13, 1935.

specifications for the new building.<sup>9</sup>

The plans and specifications were completed by February 1936, and construction began on the building. By December, a WPA crew had finished the initial construction work, including pile driving and the concrete substructure. In order to construct the rest of the building, bids were invited from private contractors.<sup>10</sup> B.O. Larsen, low bidder at \$627,069, received the contract to build the superstructure and rough in the plumbing, heating and wiring.<sup>11</sup> Larsen concluded that phase of the work on January 10, 1938.<sup>12</sup> In May, supervisors accepted Charles L. Haskins' bid of \$348,185 to complete the interior of the building.<sup>13</sup> To carry on the work, the county and city each appropriated an additional \$250,000 bringing the final cost for the structure to almost \$1,500,000.<sup>14</sup>

The Administration Building was built almost entirely

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<sup>9</sup>Hamill interview, March 1981.

<sup>10</sup>Requa, "San Diego's New....," p. 33; Johnson, "First Unit of....," p. 87.

<sup>11</sup>The October 17, 1936 San Diego Union reported Larsen as low bidder.

<sup>12</sup>Requa, "San Diego's New....," p. 33.

<sup>13</sup>Haskins' bid was accepted by supervisors according to the May 15, 1938 San Diego Union.

<sup>14</sup>Johnson, "First Unit of....," p. 87; Requa, "San Diego's New....," p. 35.

of reinforced concrete. In order to prevent earthquake damage, the building has five entirely separate sections divided by expansion joints. As a further precaution, the various sections of the building rest on piles which are carried down twenty-six to thirty-five feet in order to reach the firm subsoil beneath the sand fill. The design met in every particular the stringent state requirements relating to school construction to resist earthquake.<sup>15</sup>

The 545 foot long structure conveys a classical feeling with a perfectly balanced and symmetrical exterior. The long horizontal building is dominated by a central tower. Two wings at either end extend toward the east with space left for similar wings to the west when needed. Because the Administration Building had been planned to be the first of a group in the Civic Center complex, space was also left to permit erection of a Hall of Justice and an Operations Building.<sup>16</sup> These additional structures were never built.

Architectural treatment for the exterior of the Administration Building is what Requa called "a pleasing combination of modern design with Spanish detail."<sup>17</sup> To a present day observer, the building appears to have many of the

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<sup>15</sup>Requa, "San Diego's New...", pp. 34-35.

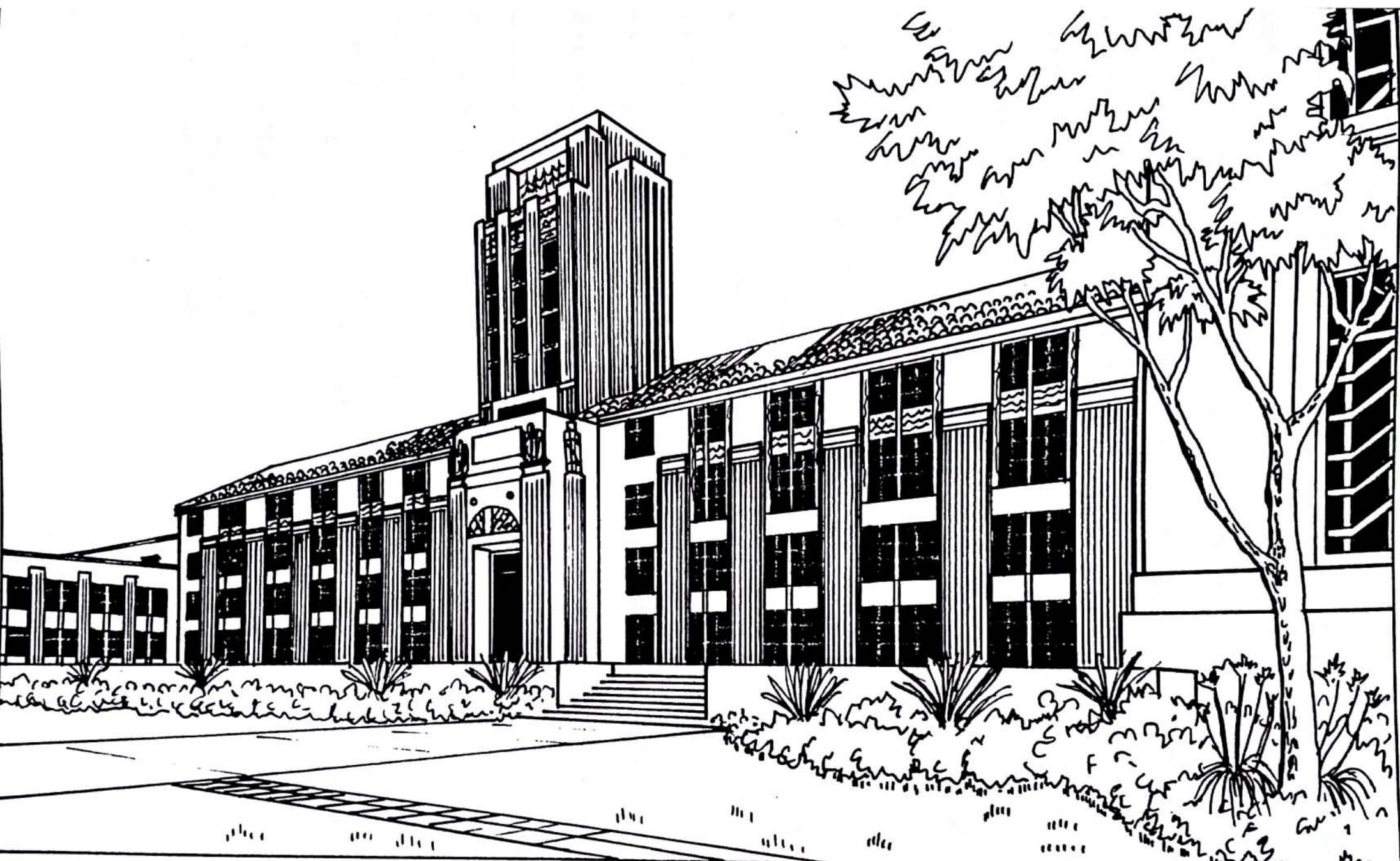
<sup>16</sup>Requa, "San Diego's New...", p. 34.

<sup>17</sup>Requa, "San Diego's New...", p. 34.

Figure 19

City and County Administration Building

(Drawn by the author)



characteristics of WPA Moderne style.<sup>18</sup> The flat smooth concrete surface of the structure is broken at regular intervals with fluted piers. Between the piers, the windows are arranged as vertical recessed panels. This technique is used to provide an illusion of greater height to the tower which was originally designed to be much higher. Because of airplanes flying overhead, the tower had to be shortened.<sup>19</sup> Requa's Spanish details are evidenced by colored tiles facing the main entrances, borders around window groups and recessed panels in the tower. The building is roofed with Spanish tile in variegated shades of reds and browns. These details provide a link with the Spanish heritage of the San Diego area and at the same time differentiate the building from similar WPA Moderne buildings.

The lengthy project was finally completed in 1938. President Franklin D. Roosevelt made a special trip to San

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<sup>18</sup>According to David Gebhard's and Robert Winters' style guide in A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California, Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1977, p. 703, the characteristics of WPA Moderne include symmetrical form, piers or fluted piers, windows arranged as vertical recessed panels, smooth surfaces and use of relief sculpture.

<sup>19</sup>The April 26, 1936 San Diego Union reported that architects would reduce the height of the tower by 26' to meet regulations of Department of Commerce governing height of buildings near airports.

Diego to dedicate the building.<sup>20</sup>

Early in 1937, Requa became involved in another project of great interest to him. The San Diegans, a sub-committee of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, had decided to follow through on an idea put forth in John Nolen's second City Plan for San Diego. Nolen had suggested that the city should take steps to preserve places of historic interest such as Old Town.<sup>21</sup>

Because the San Diegans had been established as a recreational and hospitality bureau, the group decided to find out if Old Town could be preserved and also become a viable tourist attraction.<sup>22</sup> The San Diegans asked Requa to help them develop a plan.<sup>23</sup>

Requa, student of Mexican customs and architecture, immediately suggested creating the replica of an old Mexican

<sup>20</sup>The structure was dedicated on July 16. The next day's San Diego Union described Roosevelt's chatty and informal speech to the crowd of 30,000 assembled for the dedication. Roosevelt used as his theme "The noblest motive is the public good."

<sup>21</sup>Nolen, City Plan for San Diego.

<sup>22</sup>"Mexican Mart Plan at Old Town is Explained," San Diego Union, February 26, 1937, p. 3; Pourade, The Rising Tide, pp. 192-193. San Diego needed a tourist attraction to offset the closing of the Exposition and also the loss of Agua Caliente after President Lazara Cardenas issued a decree banning gambling.

<sup>23</sup>"Requa Outlines Plan to Create Old Mexican Town," San Diego Union, February 19, 1937, p.1.



village around the Old Town plaza. He emphasized, however, that the plan would not work unless an architectural control area could be established in the vicinity of the plaza. To demonstrate the point, Requa showed the San Diegans photographs which he had taken on Olvera Street in Los Angeles. The photos showed clearly how the effect of a Mexican village could be completely spoiled by the interspersing of modern buildings among the old. To guard against such a condition occurring in Old Town, Requa suggested that the area placed under architectural control should be much larger than the proposed Mexican marketplace.<sup>24</sup>

On February 18, 1937, Requa and L.F. Wegginman, Vice President of the San Diegans, appeared before the San Diego Planning Commission to present plans for Old Town. Requa showed the Commissioners his Olvera Street photos as well as sketches of the proposed Mexican village. He asked the Commission to form an architectural control district in an area roughly bounded by Taylor Street on the north, Conde Street on the south, Presidio Hill on the east and the Santa Fe Railroad on the west. The commissioners responded by indicating their sympathy with any movement to restore and control the architecture of Old Town. They also agreed to

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<sup>24</sup>The minutes of the Board of Directors, San Diego Chamber of Commerce for February 25, 1937 report on the February 15th meeting of the San Diegans sub-committee.

call a public hearing preliminary to making any recommendation on adoption of an architectural control ordinance.<sup>25</sup> The hearing was subsequently called, but nothing further developed.<sup>26</sup>

The Chamber of Commerce did not give up on the idea to rehabilitate Old Town. Interested members held a special meeting on March 12th and appointed an Old Town Renaissance Committee to further plans for the area.<sup>27</sup>

By April, over five hundred Old Town residents had signed a petition indicating their interest in the restoration project. The Renaissance Committee had selected three properties for rehabilitation work. Requa estimated that approximately \$20,000 would be needed to bring the properties to the desired appearance.<sup>28</sup>

Eventually, under the leadership of George White Marston, a corporation was formed and restoration work

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<sup>25</sup>City Planning Commission Minutes, February 18, 1937; Chamber of Commerce Minutes..., March 4, 1937.

<sup>26</sup>Glen A. Rick, San Diego 1927-1955, Recollections of a City Planner, San Diego: author, 1977, p. 96.

<sup>27</sup>According to the March 12, 1937 Minutes of the Chamber of Commerce, the meeting was attended by George Marston, Rufus Choate, John Forward, Jr., Jos. Dryer, G.A. Davidson, Lester Bradley, Frank Belcher, Sam Mason, Richard Requa, M.F. Heller and others.

<sup>28</sup>Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., April 15, 1937.

began.<sup>29</sup> By September, work on the Old Town chapel had been almost completed with plans underway for adobe walls around the old cemetery next to the Grant School.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, Regua's plan to create an old Mexican village or architectural zoning did not develop during his own lifetime. Both plans did come to fruition a generation later. Ironically, one of Regua's own buildings became the marketplace that he had envisioned in 1937.<sup>31</sup>

Although documentation of Regua's work is very scarce for the last few years of his life, one residence has definitely been established as a Regua work. Artist Alfred Mitchell and his wife asked Regua to design a small house for them on Beech Street in San Diego. Like nearly everyone else at the time, the Mitchells had little money, however, they did have special reasons for wanting Regua to design their home.<sup>32</sup>

Many years earlier, Regua had designed a family home for Dr. Isaac Webster in San Diego. The house and plan had subsequently been pictured in a 1918 article in The Architect

<sup>29</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., July 15, 1937.

<sup>30</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., August 5, 1937.

<sup>31</sup> The Casa de Pico Motel became the Bazaar del Mundo.

<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Alfred Mitchell provided information at an interview in her San Diego home in June 1981.

and Engineer. Mrs. Mitchell was the daughter of Dr. Webster and grew up in the house.<sup>33</sup>

Because of her fond memories of the Webster house and also because Mr. Mitchell, as an artist, admired Requa's work, the Mitchells desired a Requa designed home. But when they approached Requa with their request, the Mitchells found that he could not take the job for the money they had available. With his usual kindness, however, Requa worked out an arrangement so that the Mitchells could still have their house. For part of his fee, Requa accepted a painting which Alfred Mitchell had made of the Webster house. To further cut costs, Mitchell designed and made the bronze hardware in the house and helped put up the beams and wood-work.

Although the Mitchells wanted only a very small house, they had special requirements. Mitchell intended to use the house as his studio as well as for living quarters. He needed space for painting, storage and a workshop. Mrs. Mitchell needed space for her enormous collection of books. They both wanted a comfortable, unpretentious, but artistic setting.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Mrs. Mitchell recalled that her family had left Mankato, Minnesota because of her father's health. After traveling in Europe, the Websters settled in San Diego in the house designed by Requa in 1913.

<sup>34</sup>Mitchell interview, June 1981.

To answer these needs, Requa designed a small Southern California style cottage. He enlarged the normal entrance hall to serve as a painting studio. The high airy room is lined with wood paneling and built-in furniture. Two storage closets cleverly concealed behind the paneling contain storage space for Mitchell's paintings and supplies. Huge windows provide the requisite northern light.

In order to establish a more intimate feeling in the living quarters, Requa raised the floors two steps higher than the studio floor and also lowered the ceiling level. The addition of many built-in bookcases against the wood paneled walls adds to the warm atmosphere of the living room. The two small bedrooms have been visually enlarged by Requa's technique of forming a cove at the corner junction of the walls.

In spite of the modest size of the Mitchell house and lot, Requa did not forget to include a garden. With his usual sensitivity, he created a pleasant outdoor room sheltered on three sides by the house and garage/workshop. Even though the small corner lot precluded total privacy, Requa managed to create the illusion by adding heavy planting and a wall along the public sidewalk.

In 1939, Requa once again became involved in Old Town. George Marston, who had headed the 1937 movement to restore Old Town, decided that the area needed a tourist court. He chose Requa to design a court which would match Marston's

conception of the type of modern architecture appropriate to the tradition of old San Diego. The commission afforded Requa the ideal opportunity to design a building in his Southern California style. With the help of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Cardwell, chosen by Marston to be proprietors and eventual owners, Requa designed a building which he felt answered perfectly the needs of tourists.<sup>35</sup>

The Casa de Pico, as the court was named, consisted of several, low rambling buildings surrounding a garden. To avoid any appearance of rigid standardization, Requa used several different roof lines and styles. Some were covered with handmade variegated tile while the flat roofs had old rafters standing out from the firewalls. In addition, Requa used many different kinds of chimneys and twelve different porch designs to further increase the feeling of individualization.

As always, Requa's concern with the exterior of the building did not prevent him from giving careful consideration to the needs of the people who would be using the building. Knowing that one of the major concerns of an overnight guest is a quiet, relaxing atmosphere, Requa tried to provide for that need in various ways. Each room opened onto a wide porch where the occupants could isolate themselves

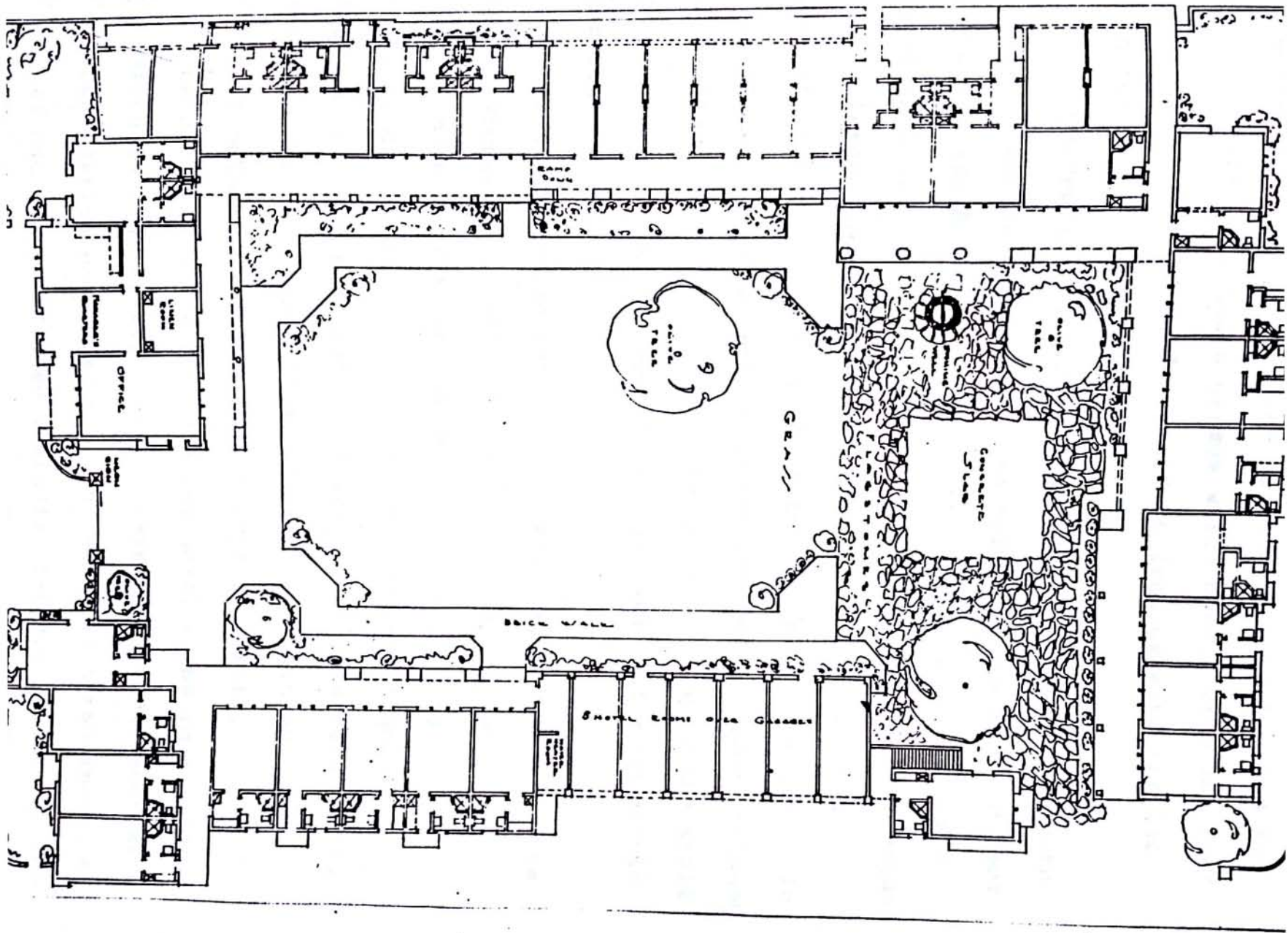
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<sup>35</sup> Mary Gilman Marston, George White Marston: A Family Chronicle, Vol. II, U.S.A.: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1956, pp. 162-163.

Figure 20

Plan, Casa de Pico Motel

(Tourist Court Journal, August 1940, p. 2; San Diego Historical Society Library and Manuscripts Collection.)





from street noises. Brick walks extended the full length of the garden so that the porches did not have to be used for walking. Each room had a garage which opened from the rear so that the interior garden would be free of auto traffic and noise.

The garden itself provided an excellent place for both relaxation and entertainment. An eighty by one hundred foot area was grassed and landscaped with many colorful flowers and several old olive trees. At one end of the garden, Requa added a large flagstone terrace with a twenty-four foot by twenty-four foot concrete slab in the center for dancing. In addition to the large central garden and patio, Requa included two smaller patios which had barbecue pits. One of the small patios contained an old Spanish wishing well lit from within with colored lights.

Throughout the gardens and porches, Requa hung over one hundred wrought iron wall brackets which held flowering plants. More wrought iron added a Spanish feeling to the interiors of the building. Each room had iron lighting fixtures, drapery rods and ash trays. Thick plastered walls gave the effect of massiveness as well as providing an effective noise barrier for the comfort of guests.

The combination of comfortable, quiet rooms in a colorful garden setting proved to be successful. A 1940 tourist court publication concluded that the artistic arrangements of the court not only attracted visitors, but also increased the

length of their stay.<sup>36</sup> The Casa de Pico continued to operate as a tourist court until 1968 when the buildings were converted into temporary gift shops for the 1969 bi-centennial celebration.<sup>37</sup>

In 1971, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, owner of the Casa de Pico, decided to lease the buildings for a permanent shopping arcade.<sup>38</sup> A \$1,000,000 renovation project converted the rooms into fifteen shops which opened in November 1971 as the Bazaar del Mundo.<sup>39</sup> The Mexican marketplace Requa had planned in 1937 finally became a reality. Today the Bazaar is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the Old Town area, amply fulfilling Requa's early predictions.

The original renovation efforts in Old Town did little to affect the overall economy of San Diego. By 1937, the city had not fully recovered from the effects of the depression. The community had remained quiet and slow-moving, largely dependent on one major industry--the U.S. Navy.

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<sup>36</sup>E.H. Lightfoot, "Casa de Pico--One of the Smarter Courts," Tourist Court Journal, August 1940, pp. 1-4.

<sup>37</sup>"Arcade Will be Dedicated Today at Old Town Park," San Diego Union, November 4, 1971.

<sup>38</sup>"Bids Accepted for Old Town Arcade Shops," San Diego Union, April 4, 1971.

<sup>39</sup>"New Mexican Market Place for Old Town," San Diego Union, October 26, 1971.

The population grew slowly as a few adventurous newcomers discovered the ideal climate of Southern California. As a result, the need for new houses remained largely static.<sup>40</sup>

The threat of World War II changed all that. San Diego became a major defense center with three aircraft factories which recruited all over the nation for defense workers to man the factories.<sup>41</sup> As the workers and their families began pouring into the area, the lack of housing became a critical issue.<sup>42</sup> The federal government passed the Lanham Defense Housing Act in an effort to help the situation. But even with funds available, permanent houses couldn't be built fast enough to fill the need, so the government began several demountable house projects.<sup>43</sup>

Requa and his associate, Edward Morehead, became supervising architects for the project known as Bayview Terrace.

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<sup>40</sup>C. McWilliams, "The Boom Nobody Wanted," New Republic, Vol. 104, No. 26, June 30, 1941, p. 882.

<sup>41</sup>"Boomtown: San Diego," Life, Vol. II, July 28, 1941, pp. 64-69. The three aircraft factories were Consolidated, which made flying boats for the Navy; Solar, which made exhaust manifolds; and Ryan, which operated the Army Air Corps Flying School.

<sup>42</sup>According to F.J. Taylor, in his article "Blitz-Boom," for the Saturday Evening Post, July 19, 1941, pp. 14-15, the population jumped from 202,038 in 1940 to 300,000 less than a year later.

<sup>43</sup>"Defense Housing," Architectural Forum, Vol. 76, May 1942, p. 275. Demountable housing projects included 500 units at Chollas View, 75 units at Torrey Pines and over 3,000 units in the Frontier project.

The project, located on a site overlooking Mission Bay, consisted of one thousand demountable dwelling units planned to house four thousand people.<sup>44</sup> The one, two and three bedroom units were designed for low wage earners who could not afford to pay 25% to 40% of their incomes for housing.<sup>45</sup>

Since those people had the most difficulty finding living accommodations, Bayview Terrace had to be put up as quickly as possible. To break the time bottleneck, the shells of the houses were pre-fabricated in National City and trucked to the Pacific Beach site for assembly. Each house consisted of four foot plywood modules which formed the floors, ceilings, and roofing structure. Once at the site, workmen joined the modules together so that the joints had a tight seal. Then the panels were quickly raised on the concrete foundations which had already been laid.

Requa and Morehead had charge of overseeing all the activities necessary to complete the project. The actual design of the houses had been done by government architects working for the Federal Works Agency.<sup>46</sup> The Bayview

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<sup>44</sup>"The Government Builds for Industrial Workers," California Arts and Architecture, October 1941, pp. 23-25. A project of the Federal Works Agency, the units were constructed at a cost of \$3,300,000 by Myers Brothers, Fred J. Early, Jr., Company and Wesco Construction Company.

<sup>45</sup>"Defense Housing," p. 275.

<sup>46</sup>"The Government Builds....," pp. 23-25, 36, 40-42.

Terrace project was probably the last commission in Regua's career. He died on June 10, 1941 while working in his office.<sup>47</sup> The Chamber of Commerce paid him a final tribute in a resolution entitled "A Leader Passes".

Chamber Director William La Monte read the resolution which praised Regua as "a friend, counselor and advisor of many years, whose service to this organization and to this community have been outstanding." The resolution continued:

His work in connection with the carrying out of the Civic Center plan alone would have entitled him to a secure place as a city builder, as would the work he performed in combatting those agencies which endeavored to undermine and nullify the Nolen Plan.

A believer in planned development and in everything pertaining to civic progress and advancement, his activity and courageous efforts were major factors in saving the Balboa Park buildings at a critical time, thus making possible the holding of our second great exposition.

The loss of this friend and community builder will be deeply felt. He leaves as a lasting heritage many structures, including our own Chamber of Commerce building, that for years will remain assets to the city he loved and served. He holds a place in our hearts that will always remain his--a place won by playing the game unselfishly, fairly and conscientiously, in the best interests of a community which he served faithfully and well, and which will always revere him as a civic leader worthy of our highest esteem.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Certificate of Death, San Diego County.

<sup>48</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Minutes..., June 12, 1941.

## Conclusion

Richard Requa's contributions to Southern California have been many and varied. Ranging from books to photographs to inventions to buildings, Requa's achievements have had a lasting impact on San Diego County in several ways.

Although Richard Requa's work cannot be credited with the inventive genius of Irving Gill or Frank Lloyd Wright, he made his own place in the development of Southern California architecture. Shaped by Irving Gill and influenced by Bertram Goodhue's 1915 Exposition buildings, Requa's development could not have occurred the same way in any other place. Because to Requa, only one place existed--Southern California. He directed all of his diligent study and hard work to the advancement of Southern California living.

To that end, Requa devoted his life. He traveled to other countries with similar climates in an effort to determine the most logical style for San Diego. At the same time, Requa studied the architecture of the American southwest to see how the Indians had adapted their buildings to the climate. By putting his findings together with the Gill training, Requa developed what he called the Southern

California style. In this style, Requa made his most significant contribution to Southern California architecture.

Although to the casual observer, Requa's mature style may seem similar to that of his contemporaries, there is a difference. Requa arrived at his conclusions through a logical process of study, observation and travel. He did not blindly follow the fashions of the day. Because Requa's style had logically evolved, rather than having been copied, certain definite standards are apparent in the work. Each building shows the harmony between environment and structure which Requa considered so necessary to maximize enjoyment of the Southern California climate. In addition, each Requa building exhibits a basic integrity of design, plan and construction. These qualities combine to create Requa's unique contribution to San Diego.

For many years, Requa's name has been largely forgotten by the citizens of San Diego County. Six months after his death, the United States was suddenly plunged into World War II with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. San Diego, already geared up for defense production, forgot everything but the necessity to win the war. A whole new city formed as thousands of defense workers and military personnel descended upon San Diego. Miles of housing tracts, similar to Requa's Bayview Terrace, appeared almost overnight on the landscape. Balboa Park, so carefully manicured for the 1935 Exposition, turned into a military reservation.

At war's end, Requa's name and contributions had already been forgotten in the bustling new city San Diego had become. The neighborly, slow-moving city of Requa's day had disappeared forever. Many of the 200,000 migrants brought by the war elected to stay in Southern California. With a new population and a new way of life prevailing in San Diego, mass produced houses, all alike, became the universal architecture of the city. The old principles of design and construction no longer seemed necessary.

Fortunately, in spite of the new conditions, parts of the old San Diego have remained. A large percentage of Richard Requa's works are in that category. Nearly all of the residences Requa designed are still being used by a single family and appear to be in mint condition. Lush landscaping surrounding each building complements the design as Requa planned many years ago. Even with age and changing architectural trends, Requa's buildings have remained viable real estate assets.

There are many reasons for the continuing popularity of the structures. Perhaps, most importantly, the buildings remain because of the excellent materials and methods used in the original construction. Because of Requa's sound training as a practical builder, he often supervised the execution of his own works, thereby insuring a well built structure. In addition to careful supervision, Requa planned his buildings for maximum energy efficiency. With a concern



for conservation many years ahead of his time, Requa designed the hollow cement block which he used so often in buildings. The blocks not only formed a sturdy, long-lasting shell, but also provided an effective insulation against heat, cold, and sound. Along with the well insulated walls, Requa used windows and skylights lavishly to provide light and heat from the sun. As a result, a Requa designed building compares favorably with a modern building using the latest methods of construction and energy conservation.

Going beyond the basic structure of Requa's buildings to discover the reason for their continuing popularity, one must look to the appearance of the buildings. Although they are not in any sense contemporary, the buildings do not have a dated look consigning them to one particular period in the past. Rather, the straight crisp lines contrasting with a few embellishments seem to blend in well with contemporary structures. Perhaps this is because the modern observer is apt to find Spanish Colonial architecture most appealing in reverse ratio to the amount of Churrigueresque ornament displayed.<sup>1</sup> Since Requa followed the Secessionist philosophy of thinking in elemental shapes, his works never had an overly ornate appearance. As a result, houses designed by Requa seventy years ago still retain a feeling of freshness.

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<sup>1</sup>Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780 A Guide to the Styles, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1969, pp. 225-226.

Requa would probably have explained his continuing popularity in another way. As an ardent booster of Southern California, Requa strongly advocated appropriate design for the climate. His research abroad led him to feel that the only appropriate modern style should be inspired by architecture from Mediterranean countries. Requa, therefore, believed his Southern California style would "never go out of style because it is logical."<sup>2</sup>

Because of Requa's insistence on the logical style for the climate, he designed both house and garden to complement the climate. At a time when most Americans still lived in tightly closed Victorian houses, Requa opened up his buildings with the addition of patios, gardens, pergolas, and loggias. His outdoor living spaces became an integral part of the building, not a tacked on afterthought. Requa's advanced thinking on the subject of outdoor living has added greatly to the contemporary value of his residential designs.

In addition to the outdoor living rooms Requa included in all his buildings, his houses have other features which make them highly adaptable to modern living. Instead of the small, isolated rooms of the typical Spanish Colonial Revival house, Requa designed homes with large, open and flowing spaces. He varied the shapes of the rooms with triangular and circular forms. Both features appeal to contemporary

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<sup>2</sup>Ada Perry, "Expo Buildings Keep Art, Beauty in Restoration," San Diego Union, July 29, 1934, Sec. II, p. 4.

tastes.

In common with the most successful of today's architects, Requa worked hard to harmonize his buildings with the site. He was particularly successful in the design of homes for steep canyon sites where he took full advantage of the vistas and at the same time shaped the building to fit the land. On some structures Requa even used materials indigenous to the land in a further effort to relate building and site.

On all the buildings he designed, Requa always included a landscape design, which he believed a necessity for support and decoration. He used the planting for various purposes, to tone down the plain whiteness and glare of walls, to soften corners, give privacy, and add color to the structure.<sup>3</sup> The results of that careful consideration are obvious today in the mature landscape which surrounds all Requa buildings.

Throughout his career, Requa always believed in individualization. He said in a 1933 interview:

Steel frames are all right unless they are too rigidly standardized and I do not believe the American people will stand for this. Standardization is coming, but it must be in small individual parts so that the house

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<sup>3</sup>Milton Sessions, "San Diego Yields Readily to the Demands of Southern California Architecture for Garden Treatment," San Diego Magazine, Vol. 4, No. 5, April 1928, pp. 10-11.

may be designed to express its own personality. 4

Perhaps the individuality demonstrated in each structure Requa designed is the real reason for the continuing popularity of the buildings. The construction, physical appearance and workable plans all add up to what Requa called "the friendly type", so necessary to the frequently colorless desert landscape of Southern California.<sup>5</sup>

While residential buildings make up the major portion of Requa's contribution to Southern California living, his public buildings and gardens have great significance also. Among these, the exhibition buildings for the 1935 Exposition and the County Administration Building stand out. The Torrey Pines Lodge and the Mount Helix Open Air Theatre occupy an important place in San Diego life. The gardens Requa designed for Balboa Park receive constant use, while the landscaping he added to each residence provides visual enjoyment throughout the city and county.

In the list of Requa's contributions to Southern California life, his city planning skills must be included. These skills are most clearly demonstrated in Requa's work at Ojai and Rancho Santa Fe. In both villages, one a redevelopment

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<sup>4</sup>"Swing Away From Life in Cities Visioned by Architects," San Diego Union, February 26, 1933, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>"Swing Away From...", p. 2.

project and the other a completely new town, Requa carefully planned the layout to provide maximum livability in an attractive setting. The same concern for the total environment is exhibited in some measure in all of Requa's work.

Although less visible than his architectural achievements, Requa's contributions as a civic leader also had an important effect. His work with the San Diego Chamber of Commerce helped that group to save the 1915 Exposition buildings at Balboa Park. Again working with the Chamber of Commerce, Requa pointed the way to the restoration of Old Town.

Unfortunately, many of Requa's most important ideas came a generation too early for any real consideration in his own time. Although not directly attributable to Requa, many of those ideas are now of major importance. Architectural zoning, which Requa tried to attain in Old Town, is now frequently used in many cities. Redevelopment of small towns, initiated by Requa in Ojai, has spread throughout California. Using construction techniques and materials for energy conservation has become increasingly important. The addition of landscaping to beautify and improve the environment is a normal requirement in many California cities.

During the thirty-four year span of his career, Richard Requa created over two hundred buildings. Indirectly, he influenced hundreds of architects and builders who used his books and photographs as patterns for their own buildings.

Requa's commissions had reached to Los Angeles, northern California, and as far away as Michigan and Texas. It is hoped that this study will revive the reputation of Richard Requa and underscore his contributions to Southern California architecture.

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- "Bids Accepted for Old Town Arcade Shops." San Diego Union, April 26, 1971.
- Bloch, Lydia Levis. "A Man's Home is His Castle." News Press, November 9, 1978.
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- \_\_\_\_\_. "San Diego Did Have a School of Architecture." San Diego Union, October 29, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Torrey Pines Offers Growth Possibilities." San Diego Union, December 24, 1978.
- Butler, Charles T. "Building the Post Office--It Wasn't Easy." Ojai [California] Valley News, August 1971, 50th Anniversary Issue.
- "Coronado Saturday Night." Coronado [California] Journal, April 7, 1923.
- Los Angeles Times, December 10, 1971.
- "Mexican Mart Plan at Old Town is Explained." San Diego Union, February 26, 1937.
- Morris, Ralph. "Bits of Old and New Spain Caught by Camera of Richard Requa are Shown at Art Gallery." San Diego Union, September 30, 1928.
- "Mysterious 'Snake Wall' Still Del Mar Secret." The Blade [Oceanside, California] Tribune, June 27, 1976.
- "New Fire Station Almost Completed." Coronado [California] Journal, June 30, 1923.
- "New Mexican Market Place for Old Town." San Diego Union, October 26, 1971.

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- "Arcade Will be Dedicated Today at Old Town Park." San Diego Union, November 4, 1971.
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## Appendix A

Chronological listing of known projects by Richard Requa and his associates. Dates in parentheses indicate dates of original drawings in the Samuel Hamill Collection on file at the San Diego Historical Society. Condition of the building is given if known.

Requa/associate of Gill and Mead

1908

Boy's Building at Holly Sefton Memorial Hospital  
Balboa Park  
San Diego, CA (demolished)

Richard Requa

1911

Brick Store and Hotel  
north side of "D" between 2nd and 3rd Streets  
San Diego, CA (demolished)

John S. Hawley house (3/30/11)  
205 Laurel Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Richard Requa house  
4346 Valle Vista  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Sarah Requa house  
3556 Valle Vista  
San Diego, CA

Owen Wister house (11/11/11)  
Grossmont, CA

1912

Jarvis L. Doyle house (3/26/12)  
1625 Plumosa Way  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Charles A. Martin house  
3147 Front Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Pine Hills Cottages (5/16/12)  
2960 Posada Way  
Julian, CA (fair condition)

Pine Hills Lodge (2/7/12)  
2960 Posada Way  
Julian, CA (good condition, somewhat altered)

Mead and Requa

1912

Anna B. Darst House--alterations and extensions (8/12)  
2425 5th Avenue  
San Diego, CA

Dr. Edwin Hallenbeck house  
3240 Curlew Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

George W. Marston cottage (8/26/12)  
Pine Hills, CA

Marston Company Playground (10/23/12)  
San Diego, CA

Miss Mary A. Richmond cottage (9/3/12)  
259 Coast  
La Jolla, CA (demolished)

Miss Mary A. Richmond-alterations (1912-1913)  
259 Coast  
La Jolla, CA (demolished)

Fred K. Webb house (12/12)  
2483 "C" Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition, altered)

1913

Lorenze W. Barney house (3/21/13)  
3530 7th Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition, somewhat altered)

Mrs. Anna B. Darst Apartments (6/13)  
Kalmia near 5th Street  
San Diego, CA

John C. Dement house  
1610 Plumosa Way  
San Diego, CA (good condition)  
c. 1913

Charles Hamilton house  
La Playa  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1913

H. M. Johnson cottage (10/24/13)  
Descanso, CA

Krotona Institute of Theosophy  
2130 Vista del Mar Avenue  
Hollywood, CA (fair condition, altered)  
c. 1913

Nurses' Dormitory at San Diego County Hospital  
Dickenson and Front  
San Diego, CA (good condition, partially demolished)

Palomar Apartments (10/13)  
536 Maple  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

A.H. Sweet house (1913-1915)  
435 W. Spruce  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

A. H. Sweet house (1913-1915)  
3141 Curlew  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Dr. Isaac D. Webster house (5/21/13)  
1028 32nd Street  
San Diego, CA (demolished)

Robert Winsor house  
Bonita, CA  
c. 1913

F.O. Wyman cottage (10/7/13)  
7904 Princess  
La Jolla, CA (good condition)

## 1914

Wheeler Bailey beach cottage (9/18/14)  
7964 Princess  
La Jolla, CA (altered beyond recognition)

J.W. Bennet house (2/14)  
"C" Street near 25th  
San Diego, CA

William Gird house (8/25/14)  
Gird Road  
Bonsall, CA (good condition)

La Mesa Grammar School  
La Mesa, CA (demolished)

Col. Robert H. Noble house  
La Playa  
San Diego, CA

## 1915

Fallbrook High School  
Fallbrook, CA  
c. 1915

Mrs. K.G. Jordan house  
1015 Alameda  
Coronado, CA (good condition, altered)

Plan of Las Quintas Moriscas (7/16/15)  
between San Geronio and San Fernando  
San Diego, CA

Harry T. Sinclair house  
Ojai, CA  
c. 1915

## 1916

R. Brackenbury house (3/7/16)  
32nd Street  
San Diego, CA (demolished)

R.C. Gemmell house (4/19/16)  
San Diego, CA

Mrs. Valdemar Knudsen house  
2117 Vista del Mar  
Hollywood, CA  
c. 1916

E.D. Libbey garage doors  
 Nordhoff, CA  
 c. 1916

Col. Robert H. Noble cottage (4/4/16)  
 La Playa  
 San Diego, CA

Col. Robert H. Noble maps of property (1/16)  
 La Playa  
 San Diego, CA

Ojai Town Center (1916-1917)  
 Ojai Avenue  
 Ojai, CA (good condition)

Ojai Post Office (12/2/16)  
 Ojai, CA (good condition)

W.R. Rogers cottage (11/14/16)  
 El Monte Ranch, CA

1917

Tom Clark Garage  
 Ojai Avenue  
 Ojai, CA (altered)  
 c. 1917

Foothills Hotel  
 Ojai, CA (demolished)

O.W. Robertson house (10/9/17)  
 Ojai, CA

Dr. M.O. Terry house-alterations (9/11/17)  
 711 "A" Street  
 Coronado, CA

1918

Captain John F. Anderson house  
 3136 Front Street  
 San Diego, CA (fair condition)

Dr. F.A. Hennessy house  
 Ojai, CA  
 c. 1918

Oliver Moorshead cottage (8/12/18)  
La Jolla, CA

Presbyterian Manse (1/2/18)  
Ojai, CA

O.W. Robertson house (2/8/18)  
Ojai, CA

St. Thomas Catholic Church (7/31/18)  
Ojai Avenue  
Ojai, CA (good condition)

Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink house  
Coronado, CA (never built)

Miss Julia A. Schwartz house  
La Jolla, CA

E. Roscoe Shrader house (1/16/18)  
1927 Highland  
Hollywood, CA

Ralph Ward house  
4239 Palmeto Way  
San Diego, CA (good condition)  
c. 1918

Requa/associate Albert Kahn

1918

Rockwell Field  
North Island  
San Diego, CA

Mead and Requa

1919

William Barie house (5/28/19)  
875 Alameda  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Boys' Building and Receiving Cottage (9/25/19)  
San Diego, CA

Mrs. Edward M. Bruce house (8/1/19)  
Altadena, CA

- Hotel El Roblar (2/14/19)  
Ojai, CA (altered)
- Marston Company Pattern Hat Room and Drapery Room (9/26/19)  
5th Avenue and C Street  
San Diego, CA (demolished)
- Col. Robert H. Noble cottage (5/23/19)  
La Playa  
San Diego, CA
- Miss Mary A. Richmond cottage and garage (11/1/19)  
Coast and Vista del Mar  
La Jolla, CA (demolished)
- St Thomas Catholic Church Parish House (7/9/19)  
Ojai, CA
- St Thomas Catholic Church Property Walls (9/19)  
Ojai, CA
- Fred W. Smith house (10/31/19)  
Ventura, CA
- YMCA Saloon Substitute (10/20/19)  
8th Street and "C" Street  
San Diego, CA

## 1920

- Jarvis L. Doyle house-alterations (8/9/20)  
1625 Plumosa Way  
San Diego, CA (good condition)
- Arthur Goldberger cottage (3/8/20)  
San Diego, CA
- Oliver Moorshead house-alteration and garage (8/30/20)  
1174 Prospect  
La Jolla, CA (demolished)
- Richard Requa house  
2906 Locust  
San Diego, CA (good condition, altered)
- Alex L. Verner house (9/30/20--3/23/23)  
400 10th Street  
Coronado, CA (good condition)



## Requa and Jackson

1920

Harold Angier house  
Owen Street  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1920

G.J. Champlain house (12/11/20)  
2221 Fort Stockton Drive  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Alfred Stahel Store Building--store front modernization  
1500 block on 5th Avenue  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1920

1921

Mrs. Gertrude D. Evans house  
1506 Plumosa Way  
San Diego, CA (good condition)  
c. 1921

Camille Foret house (7/27/21)  
1117 4th Street  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Jesse A. Locke house (2/25/21)  
7683 Mar Avenue  
La Jolla, CA (fair condition)

Nannie Dodson Home Society, Inc.  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1921

San Diego Country Club  
88L Street  
Chula Vista, CA

1922

Alva Bernhard house  
1244 Alameda Blvd.  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Rancho Santa Fe Civic Center site plan  
Rancho Santa Fe, CA

San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric Company Substation  
 (10/16/22)  
 4th and Ash Street  
 San Diego, CA (good condition)

D.E. Thompson house (12/22--6/23)  
 482 15th Street  
 Del Mar, CA (good condition)

Torrey Pines Lodge (7/17/22)  
 Torrey Pines State Park  
 San Diego, CA (good condition)

1923

E.C. Batchelder house (12/12/23)  
 Del Mar, CA

Lester Bradley house (6/22/23)  
 148 W. Spruce  
 San Diego, CA (good condition)

Commercial Building  
 Paseo Delicias and Avenida de Acacias  
 Rancho Santa Fe, CA (good condition)

Coronado Fire and Police Station  
 6th and Orange  
 Coronado, CA (fair condition)

Ed Fletcher Company Garage (11/26/23)  
 Solana Beach, CA

Ed Fletcher Company Railway Station (9/11/23)  
 Solana Beach, CA

Guest House  
 Paseo Delicias  
 Rancho Santa Fe, CA (good condition)

S.F. Holcomb house  
 4263 Hawk  
 San Diego, CA (good condition)

Loma Portal School addition (9/28/23)  
 San Diego, CA

B. Franklin Mahoney house  
 4105 Alameda  
 San Diego, CA  
 c. 1923 (good condition)

H.E. Rhoads Commercial Building (9/7/23)  
La Jolla, CA

J.S. Wilson house (12/21/23)  
San Diego, CA

## 1924

William C. Barker house (8/30/24)  
4395 Hawk Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Harry M. Blake house (8/11/24)  
300 9th Street  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Community House (1/3/24)  
San Pasqual, CA

Elementary School (5/16/24)  
San Diego, CA

Marston Harding garage and chauffer's cottage (3/26/24)  
544 Avenida Primavera  
Del Mar, CA (good condition)

McKinley School (5/16/24)  
3045 Felton Street  
San Diego, CA

Lumber and Builder's Supply Company Warehouse (7/18/24)  
Solana Beach, CA

Rancho Santa Fe School (1/29/24)  
Rancho Santa Fe, CA

Mark Schoenbrum house (12/24/24)  
4428 Valle Vista  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Townhouses (1/11/24)  
Paseo Delicias  
Rancho Santa Fe, CA (good condition)

## 1925

Maurice Braun house  
61 Silvergate Place  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1925

- Coy Burnett service building (4/30/25)  
Del Mar, CA (good condition)
- Dr. William R. Eastman house (8/27/25)  
1703 Soledad  
La Jolla, CA (good condition)
- A.R. Georgia house (12/17/25)  
Loma Portal  
San Diego, CA
- William A. Gunn house (10/30/24--7/6/25)  
1127 "F" Avenue  
Coronado, CA (good condition)
- Marston Harding house  
544 Avenida Primavera  
Del Mar, CA (good condition)
- Montezuma Mountain School Dormitory #1 (8/18/25)  
Los Gatos, CA
- Montezuma Mountain School Plot Plan (8/4/25)  
Los Gatos, CA
- Mount Helix Open Air Theatre (2/27/25)  
San Diego, CA (good condition)
- J.B. Olsen house  
Loma Portal  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1925
- Pacific Building Company tract office (3/25)  
Plumosa Park  
San Diego, CA
- Palomar Apartments--additions (5/20/25)  
536 Maple  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

## 1926

- E.H. Curtiss house (7/12/26)  
4388 Hawk Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition)
- Ed Fletcher garage and apartments (12/17/26)  
Unknown

B.A. Gemmell house  
4476 Hortensia  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Mrs. R.C. Gemmell studio (9/30/26)  
Mission Hills  
San Diego, CA

Mrs. D.E. Mann house (8/20/26--3/4/27)  
1045 Loma Avenue  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Walter B. Neill house (10/11/26)  
1313 10th Avenue  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Mrs. Grace Keys Ramsey house  
7227 Olivetas  
La Jolla, CA (good condition, altered)  
c. 1926

Professor Ernest Rogers house-alterations and additions  
(April-October, 1926)  
Los Gatos, CA

L.R. Wallace house (2/11/26)  
Rancho Santa Fe, CA

#### 1927

Coy Burnett gate (10/20/27--7/5/28)  
Del Mar, CA (good condition)

D.H. Cameron, Esq. house (11/27)  
815 Alameda  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Oscar Cotton residential tract office  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1927

Ed Fletcher house-alterations (1/7/27)  
San Diego, CA

Mrs. Marion Hamilton house (3/10/27)  
3726 Elliot  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Dorothy B. Mills house  
4334 Avalon  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Dorothy B. Mills house  
4355 Arcadia Drive  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Etta and Lydia Schweider house  
2344 Pine Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Albert Stickley house (5/14/27)  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

E.L. Walbridge house  
1038 "E" Avenue  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Women's Club (12/27--8/23/28)  
Park Drive  
Vista, CA (good condition)

1928

Darwin R. Aldridge house-alterations (10/12/28)  
801 Tolita  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

Darwin R. Aldridge service building (9/18/28)  
Coronado, CA

Oscar Cotton cabin  
Corte Madera Ranch, CA

First National Trust and Savings Bank  
2927 University Avenue  
San Diego, CA (demolished)

James Forward house  
3133 Zola  
San Diego, CA (good condition)  
c. 1928

Edward Fuller house  
1010 Olive  
Coronado, CA (good condition)  
c. 1928

D.F. Garrettson mountain cottage (3/28)  
Corte Madera Ranch, CA

Matt Heller house  
3131 Zola  
San Diego, CA (good condition)  
c. 1928

Milton Heller house  
3107 Zola  
San Diego, CA (good condition)  
c. 1928

Mrs. H.C. Magee house (5/22/28)  
4440 Hermosa Way  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

McKinley School addition (8/27/28)  
3045 Felton Street  
San Diego, CA

R.W. Merrill house (6/20/28)  
Chula Vista, CA

Mrs. Claus Spreckels house-alterations and additions  
(3/16/28)  
1403 Ocean Blvd.  
Coronado, CA

Requa, Jackson and Hamill

1928

Coronado Unified School District  
several schools between 1928 and 1935 (demolished)

Mrs. Herbert Darlington  
7441 Olivetas  
La Jolla, CA (good condition)

Davis-Baker prize home  
Kensington Heights  
San Diego, CA  
c. 1928

Miss Alice M. Keys house-alterations (11/28/28)  
435 Sea Lane  
La Jolla, CA (demolished)

1929

Bertram J. Carteri store building (5/27/29)  
3351 Adams  
San Diego, CA (fair condition)

Ira C. Copley house-alterations and additions (6/27/29)  
1630 Glorietta  
Coronado, CA

First National Trust and Savings Bank  
7714 Girard  
La Jolla, CA (demolished)

Walter Fitch, Jr. house-alterations (2/5/29)  
535 Ocean Blvd.  
Coronado, CA

Ridgeway house--Davis-Baker Company  
4256 Ridgeway  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Milton D. Sessions Sales Building (3/8/29)  
2635 San Diego Avenue  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Mrs. C.E. Smith house (10/26/29)  
Zapo Street  
Del Mar, CA

Irving Snyder house-remodel  
1015 Alameda  
Coronado, CA (good condition)

First National Bank office additions  
Silverado Street  
La Jolla, CA (demolished)  
c. 1929

1930

George Forbes house (9/26/30)  
Kensington Heights  
San Diego, CA

Montezuma Mountain School Dormitory #2 (12/4/30)  
Los Gatos, CA

Col. Robert H. Noble house-additions and alterations (8/30)  
La Playa  
San Diego, CA

Dwight J. Peterson house-alterations  
1007 Ocean  
Coronado, CA  
c. 1930

J. Harold Peterson house  
619 Ocean Blvd.  
Coronado, CA (good condition)



San Diego Chamber of Commerce-remodel (10/8/30)  
 449 W. Broadway  
 San Diego, CA (poor condition)

1931

Mrs. Robert Gemmell mountain cabin (3/31/31)  
 Unknown

Laurence R. Green house (6/30/31)  
 2440 Pine  
 San Diego, CA (good condition)

Montezuma Mountain School Temple  
 Los Gatos, CA  
 c. 1931

C.E. Smith house (2/11/31)  
 Del Mar, CA (project)

1932

William T. Macdonald house (1/16/32)  
 7329 Country Club Drive  
 La Jolla, CA (good condition)

1933

Building #8 (12/27/33)  
 Balboa Park  
 San Diego, CA

Lieut. John F. Greenslade house-remodeled Barie house  
 (10/4/33)  
 875 Alameda  
 Coronado, CA (good condition)

House for Lot 17, Block B (8/8/33)  
 Presidio Hills  
 San Diego, CA

House for Lot 18, Block B (8/8/33)  
 Presidio Hills  
 San Diego, CA

1934

Bridge and Entrance Pavillion  
 Mission Bay  
 San Diego, CA (project)

Coy Burnett house-additions (6/15/34)  
Del Mar, CA (project)

Exhibition Building  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

Grandstand  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

Mrs. C.M. Jackman house (2/17/34)  
2705 Barnson Place  
San Diego, CA (good condition, altered)

Jockey Club  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

Loma Portal Elementary School Kindergarten (8/22/34)  
between Alcott, Browning, Plum and Willow Streets  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Model Farm  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

Paddock Buildings, No. 1 and No. 2  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

Secretary Building  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

Stables  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

Stock Building and Tower  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

22nd Agricultural District--Park Layout  
Mission Bay  
San Diego, CA (project)

1935

Dr. A.W. Golder Apartments-additions and alterations  
(4/27/35)  
San Diego, CA

Dr. Robert S. Smylie house-partial architecture service  
(2/2/35)  
Plumosa Park  
San Diego, CA

## Requa--Exposition Buildings

1935

Arco del Futuro (demolished)  
Alcazar Garden (good condition)  
Bank of America Building (demolished)  
California State Building (good condition)  
Casa del Rey Moro Garden (good condition)  
Federal Building (good condition)  
Firestone Pool (demolished)  
Ford Building (good condition)  
Ford Music Bowl (good condition)  
Hollywood Hall of Fame (good condition)  
House of Pacific Relations (good condition)  
Old Globe Theatre (demolished)  
Palace of Electricity and Varied Industries (good condition)  
Palace of Travel and Transportation (demolished)  
Radio Studio (demolished)  
Spanish Village (good condition)

Requa, Gill, Hamill, Johnson

1935-1938

City and County Administration Building  
1600 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

Richard Requa

Consolidated Aircraft Corporation  
Fort Worth, Texas  
c. 1936 (Requa, consulting architect)

1937

Alfred Mitchell house  
1506 Beech Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition)

1939

Casa de Pico Motel  
2754 Calhoun Street  
San Diego, CA (good condition, altered)

Plans, Unknown Whether Built

Bartlett house  
Los Angeles, CA

C. Bryant house

Mrs. Frank Frary cottage  
Pine Hills, CA

Ellis G. Georgia house  
Plumosa Park, CA

Mrs. B.J. Hobart house  
La Jolla, CA

A.L. Hobson tract layout  
Ventura, CA

Jerry Sullivan, Jr. house

Miss Edna J. Thomas house

1940

Bayview Terrace  
San Diego, CA (demolished)  
c. 1940

H. S. REQUA.  
HOLLOW TILE.  
APPLICATION FILED SEPT. 18, 1918.

1,341,071.

Patented May 25, 1920.  
2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

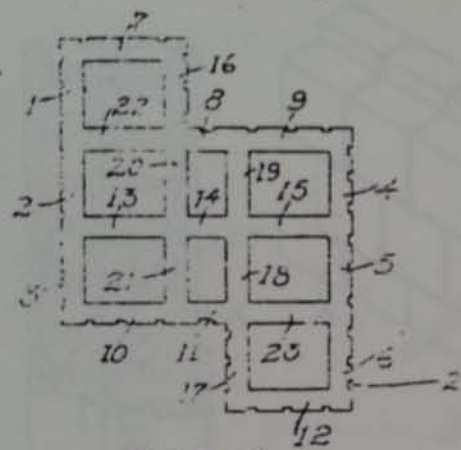


FIG. 1.

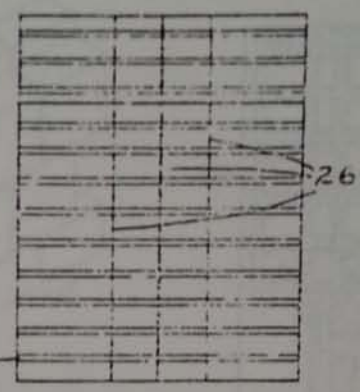


FIG. 2.

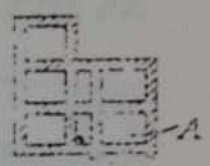


FIG. 3.

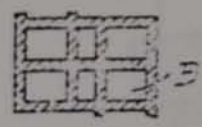


FIG. 4.

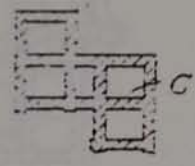


FIG. 5.

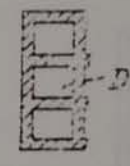


FIG. 6.

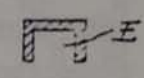


FIG. 7.

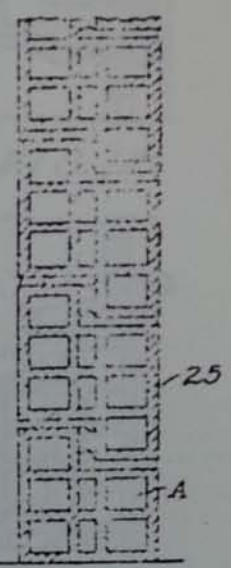


FIG. 8.

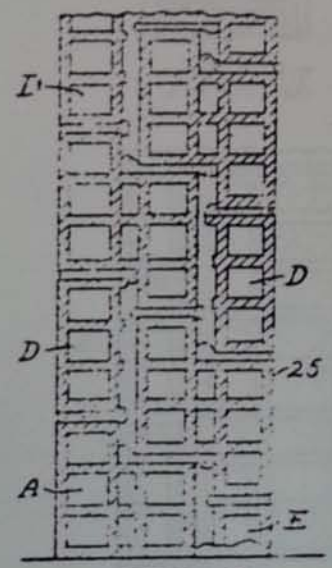


FIG. 9.

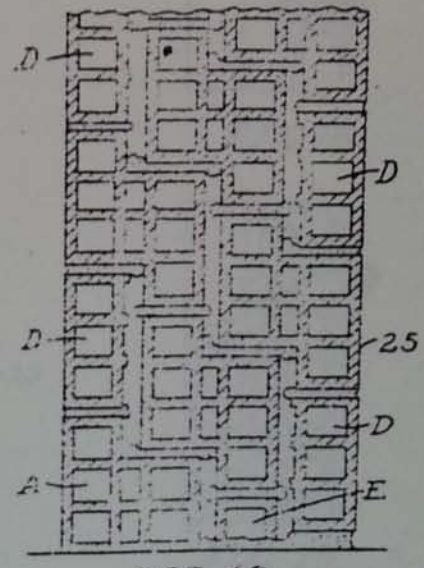


FIG. 10.

INVENTOR.  
RICHARD S. REQUA.  
BY *A. B. Bouman*  
ATTORNEY

R. S. REQUA.  
HOLLOW TILE.

APPLICATION FILED SEPT. 18, 1918.

1,341,071.

Patented May 25, 1920.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 2.

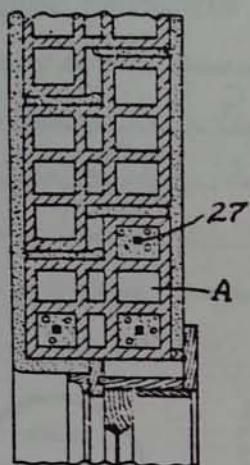


FIG. 11.

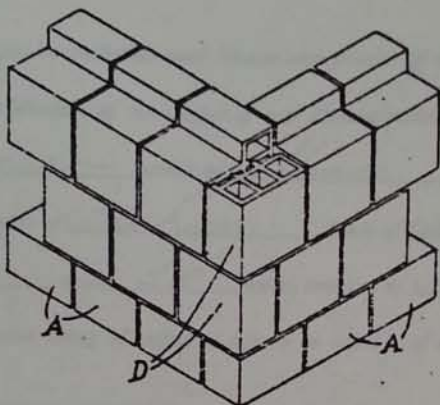


FIG. 14.

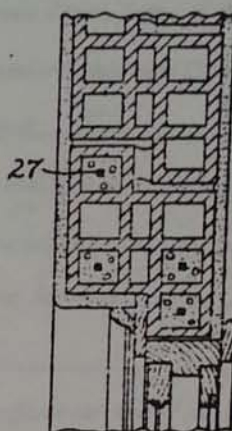


FIG. 17.

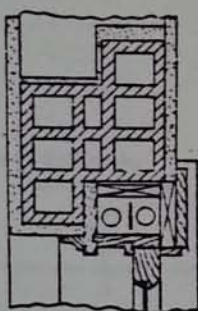


FIG. 12.

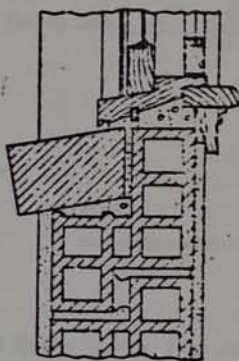


FIG. 15.

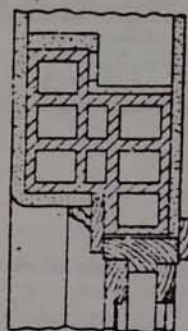


FIG. 18.

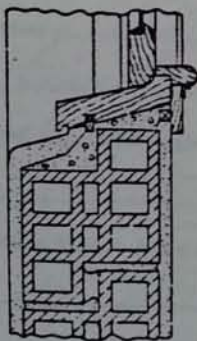


FIG. 13.

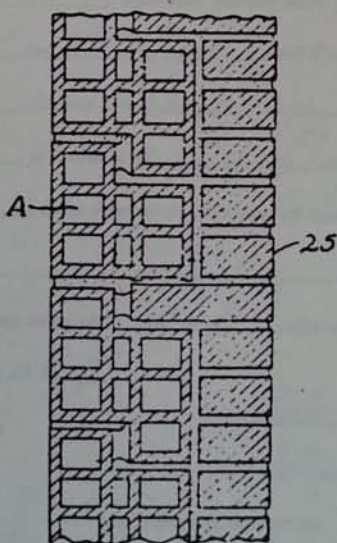


FIG. 16.

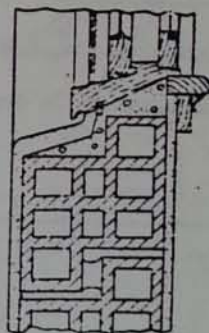


FIG. 19.

INVENTOR.  
RICHARD S. REQUA.

BY *A. B. Cowman*  
ATTORNEY

DISTRICT NO. 3701 REGISTRAR'S NO. 1303

1. FULL NAME RICHARD SMITH REQUA

2. PLACE OF DEATH: (A) COUNTY San Diego  
 (B) CITY OR TOWN San Diego  
 (C) NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION 1434 Sixth Avenue  
 (D) LENGTH OF STAY: (SPECIFY WHETHER YEARS, MONTHS OR DAYS)  
 IN HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 IN THIS COMMUNITY 41 years IN CALIFORNIA 41 years  
 (E) IF FOREIGN BORN, HOW LONG IN THE U. S. A. \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS

3. (G) IF VETERAN, NAME OF WAR No (H) SOCIAL SECURITY NO. None

4. SEX Male 5. COLOR OR RACE White 6. (A) SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED Married

6. (B) NAME OF HUSBAND OR WIFE Viola Requa 6. (C) AGE OF HUSBAND OR WIFE IF ALIVE 59 YEARS

7. BIRTHDATE OF DECEASED March 27, 1881

8. AGE 60 YRS 2 MOS 14 DAYS IF LESS THAN ONE DAY OLD

9. BIRTHPLACE Rock Island, Illinois

10. USUAL OCCUPATION Architect

11. INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS Own business

12. NAME Edward H. Requa

13. BIRTHPLACE New York, New York

14. MAIDEN NAME Sarah Powers

15. BIRTHPLACE Rock Island, Illinois

16. (A) INFORMANT Viola Requa  
 (B) ADDRESS 2906 Locust, San Diego, Calif.

17. (A) Burial (B) DATE June 12, 1941  
 (C) PLACE Greenwood Memorial Park

18. (A) EMBALMER SIGNATURE Walter J. Kellough LICENSE NO. 1626  
 (B) FUNERAL DIRECTOR JOHNSON-SAUM COMPANY  
1205 Fourth Ave., San Diego, Calif.

19. (A) 6/12/41 (B) Alex M. Losen M.D.  
 DATE FILED REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE

3. USUAL RESIDENCE OF DECEASED:  
 (A) STATE California  
 (B) COUNTY San Diego  
 (C) CITY OR TOWN San Diego  
 (D) STREET NO. 2906 Locust Street

20. DATE OF DEATH: MONTH June DAY 10  
 YEAR 1941 HOUR 11 MINUTE A.M.

21. MEDICAL CERTIFICATE  
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_ ON THE REMAINS OF THE DECEASED AND FIND THAT I LAST SAW HIM \_\_\_\_\_ ALIVE ON \_\_\_\_\_ AND THAT DEATH OCCURRED ON THE DATE AND HOUR STATED ABOVE.

22. CORONER'S CERTIFICATE  
 I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HELD AN AUTOPSY. I REQUEST GRANT INVESTIGATION ON THE REMAINS OF THE DECEASED AND FIND FROM SUCH ACTION THAT DECEASED CAME TO DEATH ON THE DATE AND HOUR STATED ABOVE.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DEATH Coronary Thromboses  
 DUE TO Arteriosclerosis

OTHER CONDITIONS (INCLUDE PREGNANCY WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF DEATH): \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR FINDINGS OF OPERATIONS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF OPERATION \_\_\_\_\_

PHYSICIAN UNDERLINE THE CAUSE TO WHICH DEATH SHOULD BE CHARGED STATISTICALLY \_\_\_\_\_

23. IF DEATH WAS DUE TO INTERNAL CAUSES, FILL IN THE FOLLOWING:  
 (A) ACCIDENT, SUICIDE OR HOMICIDE (Autopsy by surgeon)  
 (B) WHERE DID INJURY OCCUR? CITY OR TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 (C) DID INJURY OCCUR IN OR ABOUT HOME, OR FARM, IN INDUSTRIAL PLACE, OR IN PUBLIC PLACE? SPECIFY TYPE OF PLACE \_\_\_\_\_ WHILE AT WORK? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (D) MEANS OF INJURY \_\_\_\_\_

24. CORONER'S OR PHYSICIAN'S SIGNATURE CHESTER D. GUNN  
 (SPECIFY WHICH) By David J. Bone DATE 6/12/41  
 ADDRESS San Diego, Calif. U. S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

I hereby certify that if impressed with the seal of the San Diego County Recorder, this is a true copy of the permanent record filed and/or recorded in this office.

*Vera L. Lyle*

Vera L. Lyle, Recorder  
 County of San Diego, California

Date

FEB 13 1981