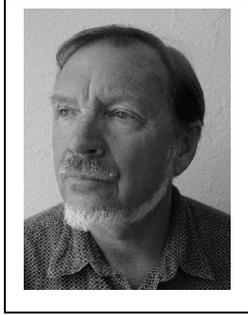


New Mexico USA: Where Adobe is the Premium Building Material



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ABSTRACT

New Mexico is perhaps unique in the world. Reports indicate that adobe and other forms of earthen construction suffer from a poor image in the minds of many people. In New Mexico the opposite is true. Before the arrival of the Spanish, Pueblo Indians built cities of monolithic adobe (cob) in New Mexico near Santa Fe around 1050. The Spanish brought the technique of sun-baked bricks assembled with mortar. The two cultures adopted and adapted each others' techniques.

In 1846, New Mexico became a territory of the United States. The US Army established adobe forts including officers' housing. The Territorial Government was established in Santa Fe in the very buildings that had been used by the Spanish and Mexican governments. New governmental buildings were built of adobe.

Today there is little new construction of governmental building using adobe although elements of the style often remain. Interest in adobe resides in residential and some monumental construction in a nearly reverential way. The wealthy and famous people build mansions of adobe for all to admire.

Four distinct architectural styles can be discerned: the pueblo style of the Native Americans and early Spanish, the territorial style brought by the US Army, the high-mountain style of the Spanish, and the solaradobe style that began in the 1970's. The high regard for adobe has drawbacks. Adobe homes now have the image of being unaffordable for all but the rich. Non-adobe copies of all the styles abound and most are not well done.

KEY WORDS :

Adobe, New Mexico, Premium Material