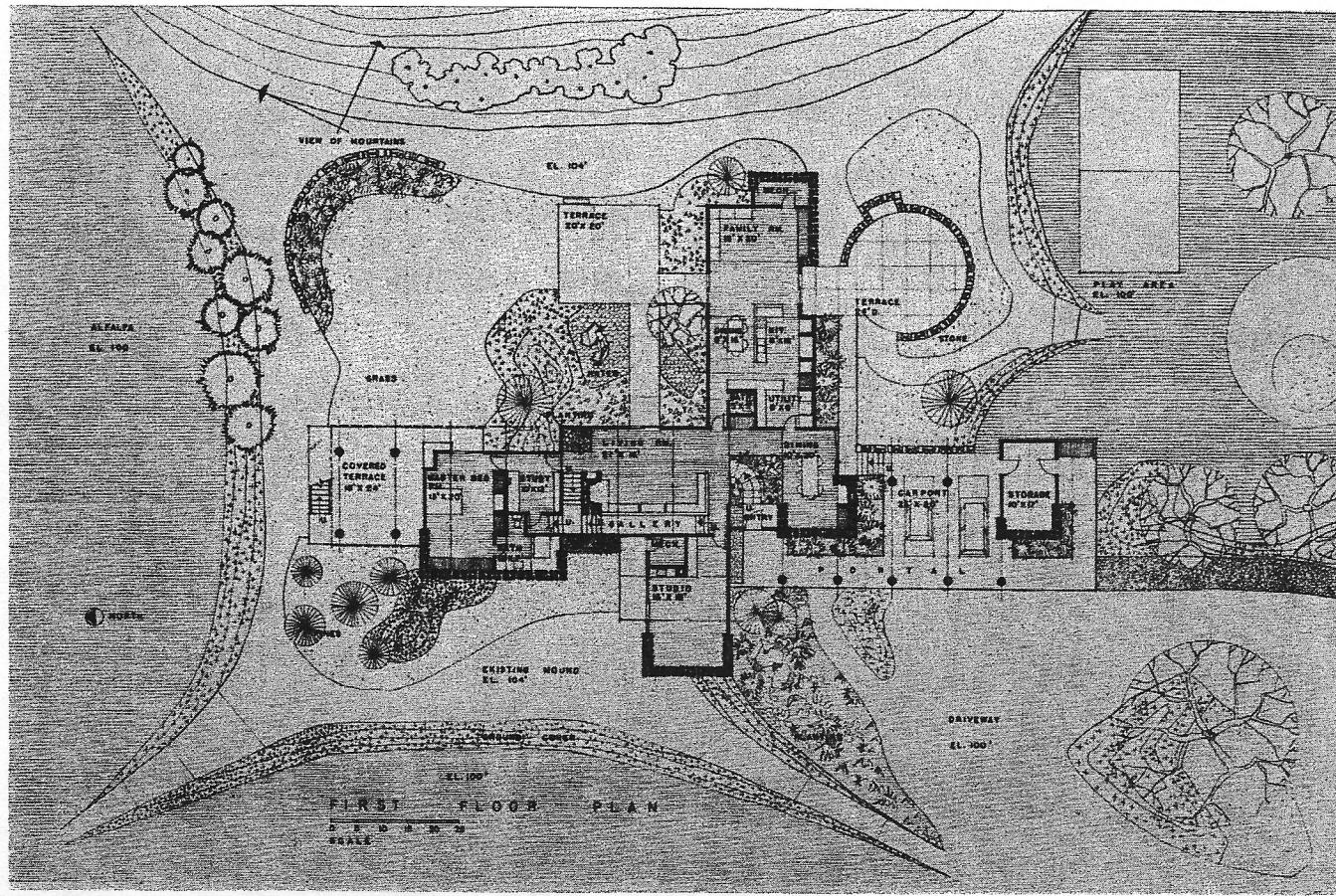




## A RESIDENCE . . . IN ALBUQUERQUE, N. M.

**Architect: Don Schlegel, A.I.A.  
Owners: Mr. and Mrs. John Robb  
Contractor: Gunnard Dahlquist**

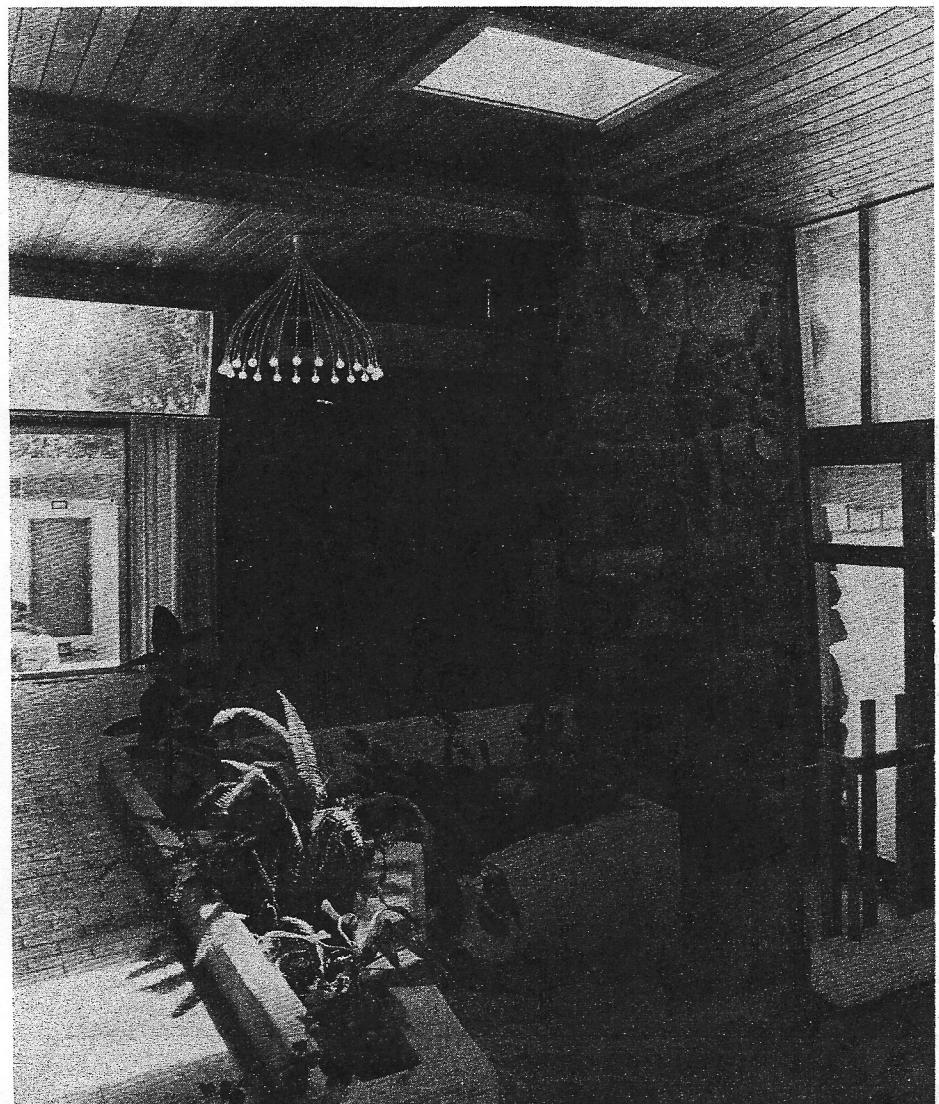
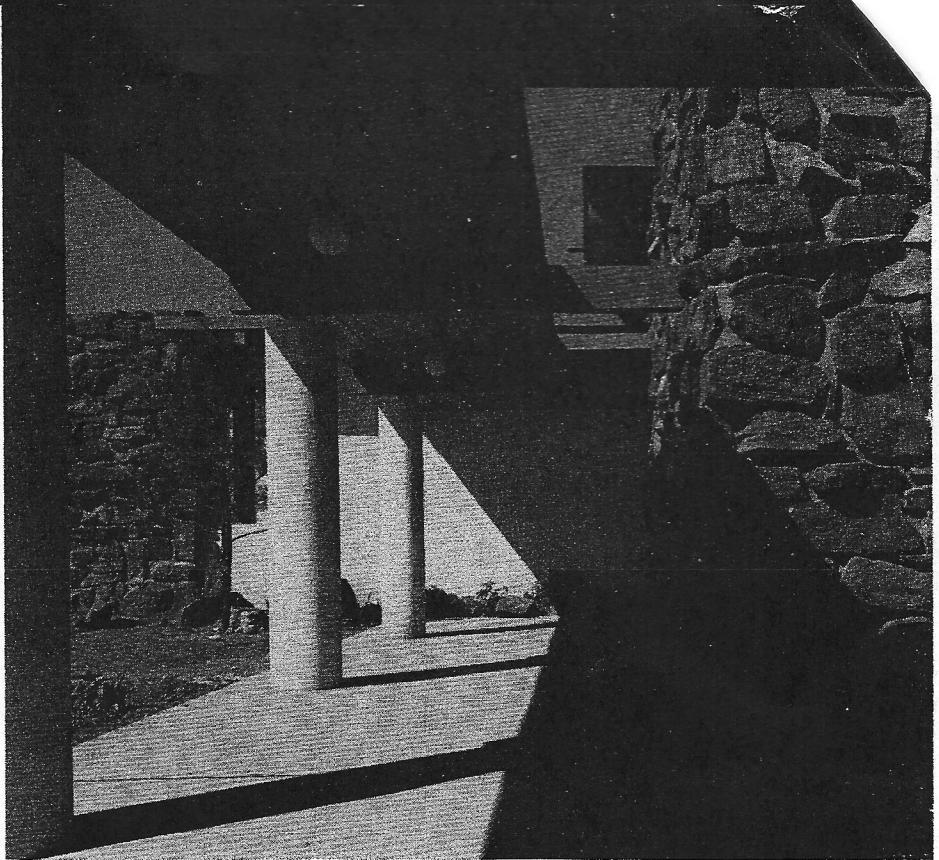


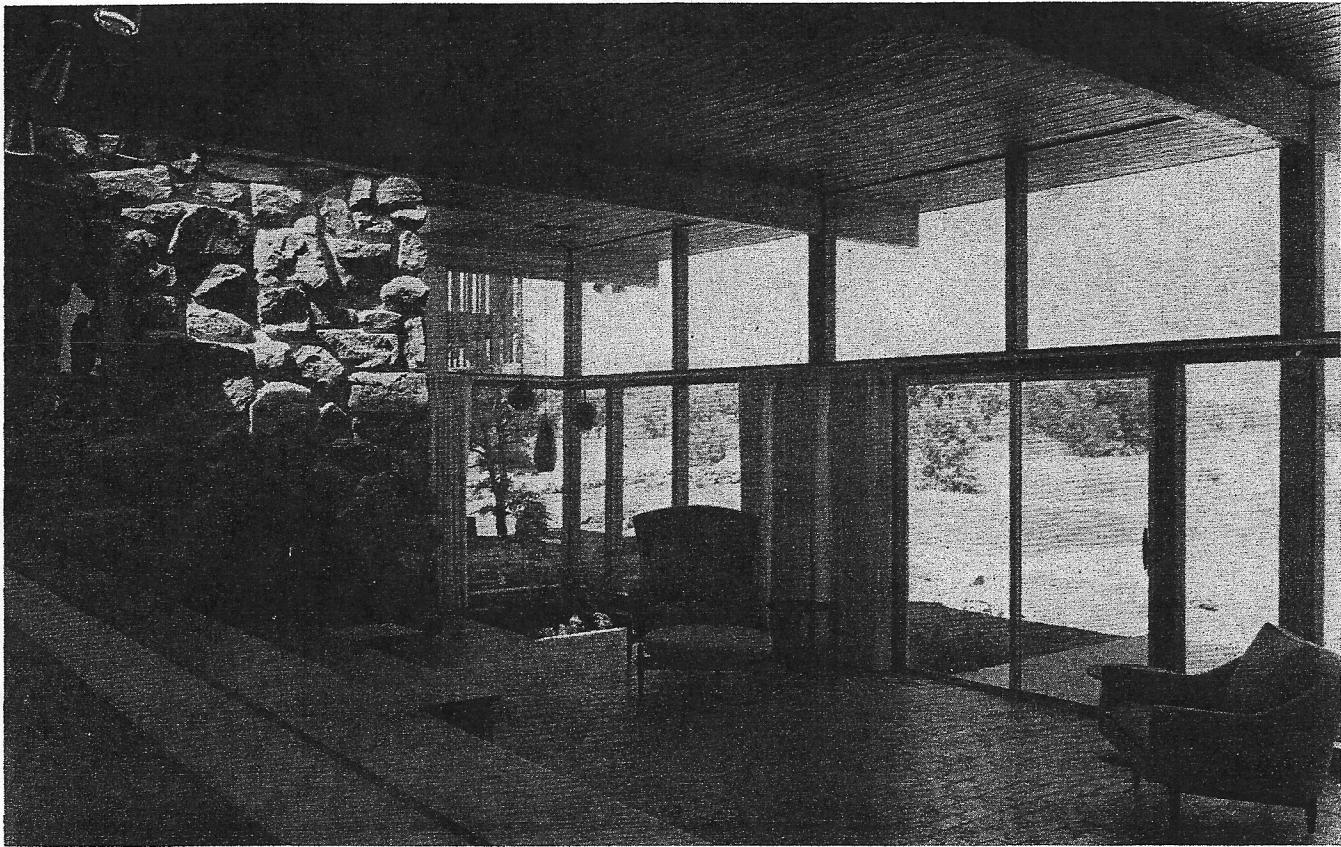
In the following notes I have tried to summarize the factors which contributed to the design of the John Robb house and my subsequent reactions to the solution. I realized that I had an ideal client, and if the work has any shortcomings, they are the fault of the architect, not the client.

The written program clearly described how the Robbs and their five children would like to live, and it expressed their desire that the design be sympathetic with the Southwest.

An eleven acre tract on the east side of Rio Grande Blvd. north of Albuquerque, the site commands a panoramic view of the Sandia Mountains. It contains also a 200 by 200-foot mound, four feet high which had been constructed by a former owner. It seemed ideal to place the house on top of this mound, thus allowing it to appear as if built on an island in a sea of alfalfa pasture.

As the Sandia Mountains seem to over-power most things in the foreground, it seemed appropriate that the house should be strong enough in mass and scale to maintain its own identity and have a character that would relate to the background. In attempting to solve this problem, many ideas passed through my mind. I know that I was impressed with the





ruins of Quarai, whose mighty stone masses relate so well to the ground and sky that they seem an indigenous solution to the architecture of New Mexico. Also the land forms of the state have always fascinated me, and I feel that they mean something architecturally.

The problem of getting on and off the mound without destroying the nature of the platform was important and it seemed wrong to drive on to it. The car port, therefore, was the only element of the house at the lower level. The process of entering the house, I felt, should be a continuing and developing experience in space and in view, almost processional in character.

The living space, I felt, should dominate the complex and be somewhat similar to the great halls of the late Medieval period.

It appeared that all major rooms should take advantage of the spectacular view which opened, fortunately, to the east and therefore away from the scorching west sun and winds. As the various living functions of the residence announced themselves very clearly, they should, it seemed, be expressed as distinctly. The area for entry and entertainment should be almost Baroque in space configuration.

Red sandstone from the Sandias would give the

visual tie with the mountains and they should be distributed throughout the composition. These forms would then be connected by light roofs and plaster walls in a way that would accentuate the heavy stone masses.

In reviewing and evaluating just how well I was able to integrate the above-stated concepts in the final solution, my reaction is something like this: The stone masses should have been slightly rearranged in order to convey a more three-dimensional quality. Also these masses should have been slightly higher so that a clearer definition between stone and roof would exist.

The center living space should, perhaps, contain a conversation area in order to provide a more intimate space and to add a change of scale.

The cantilever on the north end of the house was at one time longer. But one bedroom was eliminated, and that section now appears a little too short.

On the whole, I am well satisfied with the solution and I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Robb for this opportunity which enabled me to develop in practice many of the ideas I had heretofore only talked about in the classroom. No teacher of architecture, I believe, can really teach properly without also building.

—Don P. Schlegel

