Henry C. Trost: Architect of the Southwest

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HENRY C. TROST

Architect of the Southwest

by LLOYD C. and JUNE-MARIE F. ENGELBRECHT

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Introduction

Henry Charles Trost (1860-1933) was an architect who built a prodigious number of buildings, most of them designed for Arizona, New Mexico and Trans-Pecos Texas. Although he built in an area remote from the major centers of population, commerce and communication, he achieved a national and even an international reputation during his lifetime. This reputation proved to be short-lived, however, and his name has not found its way into standard histories of architecture, even those limited to modern or American architecture. Why then, it might be asked, is a book about this architect called for nearly fifty years after his death? Why can he not remain one of the thousands of once successful architects whose careers are now merely of local concern?

This book, taken as a whole, is an attempt to answer these questions, and to answer them in a positive way. Surely no one has ever written a book about a little known architect to prove that a lack of attention is deserved! Nevertheless, these questions are legitimate and necessary. If architectural history, or any other form of history, is to be meaningful and useful, it must be more than a mere accumulation of facts and visual data.

Our justification for offering this book falls into two parts: one part lies in the nature of the achievement of Henry Trost, the other lies in the personal experience of the authors.

To take the second point first, each of us has been aware of the buildings of Trost for many years. Although the details of our first encounters with his buildings differ—June Marie grew up in El Paso, once lived in a Trost-designed house, and numbered the architect’s niece among her childhood acquaintances, while Lloyd’s interest in Trost developed during visits to El Paso—we found that our understanding of Trost was constantly being expanded, and altered, as we jointly discovered new and unexpected dimensions of his creative personality. We realize now that such a gradual process of discovery, the shedding of pre-conceptions, and re-evaluation was inevitable, for we became convinced of the true importance of Trost only through a bit-by-bit effort of research. Although some of our research did turn up information which was not expected, more often we merely verified and documented what Trost himself had said about his career, and what his immediate associates had told us about him.

We can now offer our readers a study of Henry Trost as the architect who dominated the architectural scene of a vast three-state area during a thirty-five year period of economic growth. This area, with a radius of about 500 miles and encompassing more than 200,000 square miles, is bordered by Mexico and centered in El Paso. Here he built homes, apartment buildings, banks, office buildings, government buildings, hospitals, department stores, theaters, hotels, lodges and religious buildings, plus more than 250 buildings for elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities. In designing these buildings he mastered virtually every architectural style current in the United States from the 1880s to the 1920s. In the years between, he ranged from work influenced by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright to Mission Revival buildings, and designed the most creative and original of the modern buildings inspired by Pueblo Indian forms and motifs. He very consciously designed for the exacting conditions imposed by the unique and special environment he liked to call “‘arid America,” and he produced drawings which are revealing documents of his creative mind.

We hope it will be clear from what follows that the sheer
size of his output, and the intrinsic quality of his best buildings, would qualify Trost for a place in architectural history. After all, no other architect in American history was allowed to shape such a huge chunk of our built environment, and Trost followed through on this opportunity with a sustained effort of high level creativity which still is awesome to contemplate. But standards for becoming part of architectural history are and always will be imprecise. As part of the process, two questions will inevitably be asked: how has the work of Trost affected or influenced what are now understood to be the main lines of American and/or modern architectural history, and what can a study of Trost's work add to our present understanding and practice of architecture? We would seek answers, first, in his early use of reinforced concrete for massive buildings, at a time when no one knew how such a building might or "should" look; second, in his dogged insistence that buildings must be designed for specific environments, by taking into account the climate, the terrain and other factors; and finally, in the corollary assertion that regional architecture in the United States is both desirable and necessary.

When we began our research into the work of Henry Trost it was not easy to find information. This situation is now much improved, thanks to the far-sightedness and generosity of several persons, whose contributions toward building Trost archives are acknowledged at the end of this book. In 1969 the first study of Trost appeared, in the form of an article written by Lloyd, aided by June-Marie. At that time we had only fragmentary biographical information, had identified only a fraction of his buildings, and had seen only a few of his drawings. Therefore we attempted to force Trost into the mold of a Prairie School architect as one way to understand his work in terms of the mainstream of architectural history. More recently we published, as co-authors, a study of the architect's house in El Paso, in which we sought to present a portion of a broader understanding of the work of Trost and its historical context. What follows is essentially a progress report, detailing some of what we have learned about the work of Trost and our present view of his significance. We do not intend that this book should deter anyone from delving still further into unknown or undocumented or insufficiently considered aspects of the work of Trost. Least of all will we allow this book to deter us from that effort.
Henry Charles Trost was born in Toledo, Ohio, on March 5, 1860, and he died in El Paso, Texas, on September 19, 1933. The architect's parents were natives of Germany who arrived in the United States in the early 1850s, during one of the peak periods in the flow of German immigrants. His father, Ernst Trost (1819 or 1820-1908), a carpenter, building contractor and grocer, was first listed in a Toledo city directory in 1860. Henry Trost's mother, Wilhelmina née Frank (died 1891), was the mother of at least seven children, and in addition to running a large household she helped to run the family grocery store. It is not known from what part of Germany the elder Trosts originated, or whether they lived in some other part of the United States before settling in Toledo. Ernst Trost probably had training and experience as a carpenter in Germany, since he was over thirty years of age before he emigrated. His granddaughter remembered being told that he was a cabinetmaker. In Toledo city directories he was listed variously as a carpenter, a contractor and a builder, and in a published account which appeared a few years after his death, he was described as "a successful contractor and builder." By the nineteenth century buildings constructed of wood had been almost entirely supplanted in most parts of Germany by those constructed of brick and stone, and it is likely that Ernst Trost was a skilled carpenter who specialized in such details as window pediments, stairways, built-in cabinets and the like, rather than basic construction. As a contractor in Toledo he would have been involved with a wider range of skills.

Toledo, which had a population of 5,829 in 1850, had grown to 13,786 by 1860. The modest two-storey brick house the Trost family occupied at 812 Bush Street (in present-day numbering) is still standing, five blocks from the Maumee River. Although much altered over the years, the presence of segmentally arched windows on the ground storey and semicircular arched windows on the upper storey suggests that the house had some architectural character. It is part of a neighborhood of small structures: homes, flats and retail business buildings. Italianate roof brackets and other details betray the fact that many of these buildings were standing while Henry Trost lived nearby. No longer standing is the Trost grocery store, which stood at 806 Bush Street, next to the Trost home.

Not much is known about the activities of Ernst Trost as a contractor. In 1867 he formed the partnership of Trost & Minneker, Carpenters and Contractors, with Ernst R. Minneker, a fellow carpenter. In the classified portion of the same city directory the partnership was listed under the category of "Builders & Contractors," but no other reference to it was found. Another partnership, formed with Peter J. Trost, a brother of Henry, was known as Trost & Son, but it lasted little longer. It was listed in only two city directories, in 1882 and 1883, and in the classified sections it was listed under the category of "Carpenters, Contractors and Builders."

The importance of the fact that the Trost family was engaged in the building trades is made clear in this 1914 account of Henry Trost's Toledo years:

Rared in Toledo and with an education derived from the public schools, Henry C. Trost gained a thorough working knowledge of his craft from his father and early evinced special inclination and talent for architecture. At the age of seventeen he was graduated from an art school and had a skill and knowledge of the fundamentals leading into his profession. During the three years following his graduation from the art school he was employed as a draftsman by architects at Toledo...
Downtown El Paso in 1912, showing several of Trust's reinforced concrete buildings.
Although the Romans made use of concrete in some of the best known monuments to survive from the ancient world, concrete was later to be neglected as a building material for more than a millennium. Concrete technology was essentially re-invented during the nineteenth century, and only gradually did the realization grow that concrete could work at its full potential only when combined with steel, so that the properties of steel and concrete might reinforce each other. Today few people anywhere can even imagine what the world would be like without modern reinforced concrete construction, forged from steel, sand, clay, gravel and lime-based cement.

If there was any traditional building technology which contributed to the revival of concrete in modern times, it was pisé de terre, or tamped earth construction. Usually known as pisé in English, this type of construction has long been used in the arid regions of Spain, and even in some of the less arid parts of Europe, in spite of vulnerability to heavy rains or flooding. The pisé builders used wooden form work, parallel supports of wood into which the mud was jammed and which were removed when the mud had dried. (The adobe builders in the arid portions of the area which was to become New Spain developed a method of construction called puddling, or the forming of a wall out of successive bands of mixed sand and clay, constructed one on top of the other as each level dried. Builders using puddling rarely employed wooden forms, but around 1200 the Hohokam builders at what is now Casa Grande National Monument in Arizona probably used wooden forms for a structure which rose to about 40 feet, made of puddled adobe containing caliche or lime-earth. When the Spaniards arrived, they introduced not true form work, but the practice of casting adobe bricks in small wooden frames, in sizes of about 35 pounds.) Efforts to improve the cohesion of the earth used in pisé led to the mixing of mortar with the earth. This, in turn, led to experiments with true concrete, cement mixed with sand and rubble, constructed within wooden form work.

A parallel to the experiments with a mixture of earth and mortar occurred in the Southwest, where efforts to improve the durability of adobe made use of plastered adobe construction. Trost described the Gray house in El Paso (fig. 24) as “adobe, plastered.”1 Sometimes adobe was dispensed with entirely in buildings with reinforced concrete walls fashioned to give the appearance of adobe. A good example was the Franciscan Hotel in Albuquerque, discussed in Chapter IX. One quality shared by adobe and concrete is that both are fireproof, an important consideration in dry, fire-prone climates.

“From the adobe . . . El Paso passed through the period of the brick and stone and has now reached the period of the modern concrete and steel structure. . . .”

HENRY C. TROST, 1911

“El Paso office and store buildings have no superiors anywhere for beauty and convenience, and the city is known as the ‘Reinforced Concrete City.’”

ANONYMOUS WRITER, 1914
Seldom do historical changes correspond neatly with changes in centuries, but with the advent of the twentieth century use of reinforced concrete quickened dramatically. The technology rapidly became more sophisticated, and architectural and engineering journals published numerous articles on reinforced concrete construction, often including diagrams and construction photographs. Similarly, the supply of lime-based cement increased exponentially. At the end of the nineteenth century, cement plants were mostly employed in turning out cement for concrete foundations and other utilitarian uses. The constantly increasing demand during the first decade of this century was met by new factories which were set up.

El Paso serves as a good example. In 1911, Henry Trost summarized the rise in concrete construction during the previous decade. "Ten years ago there was not a concrete building in the city," he wrote. He went on to point to seven reinforced concrete buildings of four or more stories. But "ten years" was just a figure of speech; Trost might as easily have said three years, because El Paso's first large concrete building was constructed during 1909, and its first cement plant went into production early in 1910.

The new cement plant, with its product marketed under the brand name of "El Toro," was named the Southwestern Portland Cement Company; it is still in operation. The name "Portland" was a reference to a method of producing lime-based cement developed in England in the nineteenth century, but the intent of the inventor of the process is apparent in the name, since Portland refers to a type of stone found in southern England. It was the ability of Portland cement to resemble this kind of stone, in other words, the quality of its surface texture, which was valued, rather than its structural qualities, a ready indication of the difference in attitude of builders during two different eras.

El Paso provided an ideal site for a cement factory. The most important raw material is limestone, and a site for a suitable quarry existed less than four miles from the business district. The factory was built next to this quarry, and benefited from both the adjacent supply of limestone and El Paso's network of rail connections. The officers and investors involved with the firm came from a wide area. Aman Moore, a Los Angeles chemical engineer, took the lead in organizing the company, and L. D. Gilbert, an engineer from Colorado, superintended construction of the plant. El Pasoans involved with the venture included two Trost clients: Felix Martínez, a real estate investor who served as one of the vice presidents, and banker Joseph F. Williams, who was treasurer. The plant began operations on February 11, 1910, and had an initial capacity of 1250 barrels per day.

While reinforced concrete offered new opportunities to the architect, it also presented new problems in architectural expression, and in solving these problems there were few precedents at hand to provide guidance. The situation was summed up in an article which appeared in the Architectural Record in 1908 and which may have been read by Trost:

The principle of reinforcement by means of steel rods, wire mesh or light bars in truss form has given to concrete a leading place among structural materials. It marks a departure in many essentials from traditional construction, and therefore must exert a like influence upon design. For this reason it has become a subject of absorbing interest in the architectural world, as it presents new problems not only of structure, but also of ornamental and, possibly, even of stylistic expression.

But it was also pointed out that the modern architect may "... veneer the structure with other materials," just as the Romans had used concrete "... as a material for rough walls which would be faced with stone or brick." It was this approach which characterized Trost's design for what was hailed as "El Paso's first poured building," the five-storey Richard Caples Building, constructed in 1909 on the southeast corner of East San Antonio Avenue and South Mesa Street: most of the surface of the two principal façades is faced with brick. The underlying
that when "... the concrete has set for a month the temporary boxes are removed, the construction material having hardened sufficiently to allow it to be exposed to the air." This (the "temporary boxes" would now be referred to as wooden forms or form work.) Completion of the building was announced late in November.

Evidently there was much interest in the community in the way the building was constructed; at any rate, details of construction were described at length in the El Paso Herald, where it was reported:

When the concrete is mixed sufficiently it is sluiced off in a big trough... and hoisted to the floor above, where the boxes have been prepared for its reception, [and] where, with the assistance of a crew of Mexican laborers, it is dumped into the molds the same as molten metal... Floor after floor is laid in the same way, the concrete being poured into the boxes containing the steel reinforcing...

It was also reported that: "The material used in the Caples building is composed of cement, sand and crushed stone in one, two and three parts, the greatest of which is the rock." The contractor was Otto P. Kroeger, who was ending a brief career as a Tucson architect when Trost arrived in that city. Kroeger went on to establish a construction firm based in El Paso. Richard Caples, the man who commissioned the building, served as mayor of El Paso from 1889 to 1893. His extensive experience as a masonry contractor may have been a factor in the choice of concrete as a building material, as well as in the decision to cover the concrete with brick. Two additional stories, also faced with brick, were constructed in 1916-1917.

The seven-storey building originally known as the Rio Grande Valley Bank Building, currently known as the Abdou Building, is located at 111 North Mesa Street, where it occupies an irregular quadrilateral site, without any parallel sides, on the southwest corner of Texas Avenue and North Mesa Street. Begun only slightly later than the Richard Caples Building, the Abdou Building is a direct expression of its con-

structure is indicated only in the concrete used for the cornice, the moldings and the sparsely applied ornament. (See fig. 38). Work was begun on the Richard Caples Building in April. In July it was announced that construction had proceeded to the level of the fourth story, and that the wooden forms had been removed from the first story. The pace of concrete work at that time is indicated by a report in the El Paso Herald noting
crete structure: most of the surface is exposed concrete. Construction was begun in July of 1909. Planned as a six-storey building, a scheduled completion date of January 1, 1910 was postponed and an additional storey was added to make it, for a time, the tallest building in El Paso. It was completed in March, 1910.

A two-storey tall arcade at the ground level is broken by a cornice separating the first two storeys. Six bays of this arcade face Mesa Street and the arcade continues around the only right angle corner of the building as two bays were built facing Texas Avenue (fig. 39). Two additional bays were built facing Texas Avenue as part of a two-storey wing constructed about a year after the original building was completed. This two-storey tall addition assured ample light and air for the west walls of the upper five storeys, no matter what might be built on the adjoining site. Although when viewed from the northeast the upper five storeys present the appearance of a rectangular slab, because the east and west façades are not parallel the building is considerably wider at the south end than at the north end.

Trapezoidal (rectangular) bays containing three-part windows were built on the third through the sixth floors of the Abdou Building. The spandrels between the sixth and seventh storeys form a continuous frieze in shallow cast concrete relief, perhaps reminiscent of the originally planned role of this part of the building to be a cornice capping the whole structure. There is no ornament between this frieze and the simple flat medallions in the spandrels between the arches at the second storey level. The windows of the seventh storey are treated differently from those below by occupying one half of a bay and by rising to a triangular peak. Above these windows the façade curves outward to a thick slab cornice, creating a very sculptured effect. Detailing on the south and west façades is simpler, since they face away from the streets.
The first two storeys were originally devoted to the Rio Grande Valley Bank and Trust Company. A lobby with a twenty-three foot ceiling occupied part of the space of each of these floors, with the balance of the second storey devoted to mezzanine level bank facilities. The building Trost designed, with stark, exposed concrete walls on a slab of irregular quadrilateral shape, provided decidedly unconventional quarters for a bank, compared, for example, with Trost’s designs for the State National Bank (fig. 56). However, the stark appearance of the Rio Grande Valley Bank Building was softened a bit by the marble facing of the first storey of the Mesa Street and Texas Avenue façades (later removed during remodelling). Contractors for the building were Sorenson & Morgan.\(^{18}\)

1910 was the year the Southwestern Portland Cement Company began production, and during the same year construction began on three major concrete buildings designed by Trost. It is likely that all three were built with concrete from the new facility.

The first of these buildings, the five-storey Roberts-Banner Building (fig. 40), had been in the planning stages since 1908. In that year two cattlemen from Deming, New Mexico, B. M. R. Roberts and W. M. Banner, purchased the lot on the southwest corner of Mills Avenue and North Mesa Street, facing San Jacinto Plaza, on which they planned to build.\(^{19}\) Construction began early in 1910,\(^{20}\) and by April construction had reached the third floor level.\(^{21}\) In August it was reported that the final touches were being completed and that the building was almost ready for the tenants.\(^{22}\)

In many respects the Roberts-Banner Building resembles the nearby Abdou Building. Most of the surface is of exposed concrete, but the ground storey, devoted to retail shops, was originally faced with green terra cotta tile. Upper storeys were given over to offices. There is a projecting cornice below the plain parapet on each wing of this U-shaped building, and an ornamental base, suitable for mounting a flagpole or a lightning rod, interrupts the parapet on each wing. The use of ornament is bolder than on the Abdou Building. The spandrels between the second and third and the third and fourth storeys are ornamented with cast concrete panels in a leafy motif, framed by projecting bands of concrete. Ornamented spandrels of a contrasting motif mark the separation between the fourth and fifth storeys. The sill level of the fifth storey is accentuated by a projecting concrete cornice similar to that at the sill level of the second storey. Fifth floor windows recall the windows on the top storey of the Abdou Building. Just below the projecting cornice of the Roberts-Banner Building is a frieze of ornamented lunettes alternating with medallions.
Although now obscured by remodelling, above the show windows on the ground floor there was originally a band of Luxfer prisms. These were designed to focus natural light into the dark interior of retail sales areas and other interior spaces. Similar windows were employed on the Richard Caples Building and other Trost-designed buildings. Although originally developed in the Midwest, these devices were especially effective in the intense light of the Southwest.

The Roberts-Banner Building was the high point in Trost’s use of cast concrete ornament. For the Posener Building, evidently designed a few months after he designed the Roberts-Banner Building, Trost provided no ornament at all, with the exception of four simple medallions near the top of this five-storey concrete structure. The Posener Building, now better known as the Little Caples Building, occupied a small, irregularly shaped site on the northwest corner of East San Antonio Avenue and North Mesa Street, where these streets meet at an acute angle. It stood just to the south of the Abdou Building, with only a small two-storey building and a walkway separating the two structures (fig. 39). The same contractor, Sorenson & Morgan, built both of them.59

Trost was equal to the challenge of building on this constricted site. He focussed the viewer’s attention on the upper storeys with their large windows held in a frame of exposed concrete, and on the simple projecting cornice which held the decorative medallions and which was topped by a plain parapet. The upper storeys were divided into four bays of unequal width. The first bay, facing San Antonio Avenue, projected out into a three-sided oriel where there were broad center windows on each floor. These windows were opened by turning them around central vertical axes. Adjacent to this was the bay above the entrance, which was narrower than the others and contained a single window rather than a three-sided oriel. The other two bays were identical to the first bay. These bays were joined at obtuse angles.
The detailing of the ground storey included marble facing, three large show windows and bands of Luxfer prisms. The sides not facing the streets presented only plain windowless walls, which were usually covered with painted advertisements. Located diagonally across from the Richard Caples Building, the Posener Building was also commissioned by Caples, who announced on March 1, 1910, that plans were being prepared by Trost & Trost.24 The entire building was leased to Max Posener, who opened a millinery business there in September, 1910.25 A 1911 photograph by Aultman (fig. 41) is one of the best of his numerous studies of Trost-designed buildings, and is a good example of his ability to endow these studies with intrinsic interest as photographs. In this photograph, hats and half price sale signs occupy windows on three floors, while the windows at the top, or work room floor, are bare. The apparently freely floating hats and signs, unnoticed by the pedestrians below, give the photograph a semblance of Surrealist creation (before that label had been applied to photographs or other creative work). It is especially fortunate that Aultman documented the Posener Building in such an imaginative way, because it was demolished in 1941.

The Mills Building, on the northwest corner of Mills Avenue and North Oregon Street, is the fifth in the series of essays by Trost in reinforced concrete, and one of the finest and most significant buildings of his long career. It was commissioned by Anson Mills (1854-1924), the best known of Trost’s clients, both in El Paso and nationally.26 In 1858 and 1859 he had plotted the streets of El Paso, and thus had given their present form to the streets in the principal business district of the city.27 This proved to be a difficult task because much of the property had already been divided in an unsystematic way, and the resulting street pattern was often irregular. Actually, Trost turned this into an advantage: because he designed or remodelled such a large number of buildings in this area of El Paso, he functioned as a de facto planner as well as an architect of individual buildings, and sometimes utilized the irregular street patterns to add interest to groups of buildings (fig. 39).

Mills was a businessman and a diplomat who capped a long military career during which he rose to the rank of brigadier general with an active role in the League to Enforce Peace, an organization which tried to keep the United States out of World War I. He served for many years on the International Boundary Commission, charged with settling disputes concerning the boundary between the United States and Mexico.28 In 1911 he was the United States representative in an arbitration effort aimed at a settlement of the Chamizal controversy (finally settled in 1963), which involved a tract of land just north of the Rio Grande, opposite Juárez. (After the settlement the river was re-channeled through the disputed territory, which was divided between the two countries.)29

In his autobiography Mills included a photograph of the Mills Building and a short description of it (although he did not mention Trost by name):

By 1912 the only piece of property I had remaining in El Paso became so valuable that I tore it down the two-story building then on it, and built a monolithic cement building twelve stories high, containing no steel beam, the concrete being held in place by steel rods interspersed through the walls, columns, floors and roof. There is no wooden floor in the entire building from basement to turret, even the wash-boards in the rooms are made of cement and on all sides not exposed to parks the windows are fireproof.30 Trost maintained that the Mills Building was “the tallest all-concrete building in the world.”31 After it was completed the firm of Trost & Trost moved its offices there, where they remained until 1920.

In its massing the twelve-storey Mills Building resembles the twelve-storey portion of Sullivan’s Carson Pirie Scott store erected in 1903-1904 (figs. 42 and 6), and also resembles an earlier study for that building rising to nine storeys (fig. 5).32 With its three-part bays of wide piers flanking two slender piers, topped by rounded arches just below the cornice, the
Mills Building resembles in its detailing the Schiller, or Garrick, Building of Adler & Sullivan in Chicago, completed in 1891 (now demolished). Even the treatment of the corner of the Mills Building resembles Sullivan's treatment of the corner of the Carson store, although that building has a right angle corner in contrast to the obtuse angle of the corner of the Mills Building (fig. 43), another consequence of the plotting by Mills of El Paso's streets.

Originally the Mills Building had two-storey tall "stripped down classic" porches marking the entrances, apparently at the suggestion of Mills. On the tops were balconies onto which French doors opened. The porches were removed in 1928 as part of a remodelling designed by Trost, with little loss in the overall visual effect of the building. Canopies, suspended from chains clutched in the mouths of ornamental lions' heads, sheltered the windows on the ground floor. Above the canopies were grids of Luxfer prisms, set in horizontal bands in each bay. As protection from the visual blight of telephone lines, they were still carried on poles in downtown El Paso. Trost used a series of brackets projecting from the building just above the lions' heads to hold the telephone lines in a more pleasing manner. These brackets were removed when the telephone lines were placed underground, and the canopies were also removed in the course of later remodelling.
The Mills Building was constructed in two stages. The first stage, eight storeys tall, was begun in the spring of 1910. Early in October it was reported that the form work for the fifth storey had been erected and the concrete for that floor was about to be poured. The first stage was completed the following year, and shortly after the remaining four storeys were constructed. Not all the floors were given their interior finish until 1916. As part of the 1928 remodelling, a frieze of polychrome terra cotta bats was installed near the lobby ceiling.

An anonymous writer in The Architectural Review provided one of the rare critical comments on a Trost building to appear in a national publication. Along with a reproduction of one of the illustrations which had appeared without comment in The Western Architect of October, 1913, the writer described the Mills Building as "... an office building of little merit in elevation, but representing a façade of perpendicular lines when viewed from the street beneath," and thus "worthy of comment."

It was George H. Edgell, dean of the School of Architecture at Harvard University, writing in 1928, who first compared the Mills Building (or any other work by Trost) to the work of Sullivan, in print. Edgell wrote that "... the Mills Building at El Paso, Texas (Trost & Trost), is designed in the spirit, and really in the letter, of Louis Sullivan's ideas."

Edgell's thoughtful and perceptive comment said more than he intended: surely the Mills Building does recall Sullivan, but in his larger buildings, Sullivan used not concrete, but steel frames, clad in masonry. Thus by designing a building which resembles the Garrick Building and Casson's, Trost was recalling designs for buildings constructed according to completely different principles than his reinforced concrete Mills Building. Nevertheless, because of its size, its pleasing lines, and its bold use of concrete, the Mills Building deserves to be ranked among the most significant of the pioneer efforts to incorporate reinforced concrete into serious architectural practice.

Perhaps there is some significance in the circumstance that Trost's largest reinforced concrete building was also his last Sullivanesque design. In an essay published in 1907, Sullivan wrote that he had "long desired to execute some effective exterior work" in reinforced concrete, but lamented that he had not had the opportunity to do so. Nevertheless, Sullivan maintained:

Reinforced concrete, like all other material, it should be obvious, must be designed in accordance with its essential nature, and I have no doubt that if this is taken as a basis extremely interesting and varied results might be obtained.

Trost was involved with the design of the Mills Building at least as early as March, 1909, and if Sullivan's 1907 essay had been read by Trost, this would help to explain not only the Sullivanesque aspect of the Mills Building, and also, more generally, Trost's interest in architectural expression in reinforced concrete.

The Oregon Street façade of the Mills Building faces San Jacinto Plaza, as does the Mills Avenue façade of the Roberts-Banner Building. Perhaps for this reason the ornamented lunettes at the tops of the arches of the Mills Building were made to resemble the ornamented lunettes on the earlier building. Moreover, the outward curve of the façade to the cornice topping the Mills Building recalls the top of the Abdou Building. It is probably no coincidence that until the demise of the Posner Building, one could stand near San Jacinto Plaza and see all five of Trost's masterful essays in reinforced concrete from one spot. The four remaining buildings possess unique historic significance both for architecture and for engineering.
Trost in El Paso: VI
Variety and Contrast

With the advent of the new science of archaeology in the mid-eighteenth century, architects began to make use of newly available information about buildings of the past, information that was comprehensive in scope and accurate in detail. By creating new buildings based on the practices of bygone days they gave birth to what have become known as the revival styles. Although designs based on revival styles soon began to dominate the architectural profession, voices of dissent had begun to be heard by the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of the objections centered around two main issues: it was held that clothing buildings in the garments of the past was not suitable to a modern age, and it was held that the use of pre-existing design solutions inhibited functional planning. In the United States it was often added that a specifically American architecture was called for, not an architecture borrowed from Europe or from anywhere else.

It proved to be easier to condemn the use of revival styles than to come forth with alternatives. Nevertheless, a number of alternatives were worked out. Those which appeared in the United States during the first third of the twentieth century, the most productive period in Trost’s career, might be grouped into five categories. The Chicago School, or the Chicago Commercial Style, was developed from about 1885 to 1900, and reached its high point in the work of Louis Sullivan. Trost’s Mills Building falls within this category. A second was the Prairie School, which flourished from 1900 to 1915; the Trost house in El Paso is a good example. Three other alternatives reached a peak after World War I: Expressionism, the International Style, and art deco. Expressionism was primarily a European phenomenon, but as Marcus Whiffen has pointed out, Trost’s Franciscan Hotel in Albuquerque, completed in 1923, discussed in Chapter IX, was "...one of the very few American examples of the Expressionism of the half decade following World War I." No buildings designed by Trost could be called examples of the International Style, however much he seemed to anticipate it in such buildings as the Donau house in Tucson. As for art deco, three superb examples designed by Trost can be cited: the O. T. Bassett Tower in El Paso, the Luhrs Tower in Phoenix, and additions to the Driskill Hotel in Austin, all completed in 1930.

These alternatives to the revival styles often made their way only by overcoming a considerable amount of opposition; as Henry-Russell Hitchcock, the dean of historians of modern architecture, has observed: "The rise of modern architecture...offers material for a dramatic narrative, for it follows the pattern of the ‘success story,’ just as does that of the Gothic in twelfth-century France or the beginnings of the Renaissance in fifteenth-century Italy." But it is difficult to fit Henry Trost into any dramatic narrative of this kind, because he insisted on embracing, simultaneously, the revival styles and the modern alternatives to them.

The modern designer has not only passed beyond archaeology, he has even overcome the fear of being accused of it, and is free to get his ideas from any source, provided only that they be appropriate to the work in hand.

GEORGE H. EDGELL, 1928
If historians have leaned too much in the direction of excluding whatever buildings could not easily be fit into this "dramatic narrative," surely the remedy would not be to eliminate all sense of drama from the history of twentieth century architecture. Indeed, the rise of modern architecture does present many examples of dramatic struggles against opposition. Nonetheless, the statement which heads this chapter should serve as a reminder that not all of the partisans in the struggle for modern architecture were ready always and everywhere to eschew the fruits of architecture. Examples of lingering attachment to the revival styles, or of inspiration from previously untapped archaeological sources, are easy to find even among the work of some of the leaders of the modern movement in architecture. And there is every reason to believe that Trost was moved more by example than by an attachment to purist critical or historical theories.

Sullivan and Wright are key actors in anyone's version of a dramatic narrative of the rise of modern architecture, and they are also architects whose work was carefully studied by Trost. Sullivan borrowed from Romanesque architecture, through Richardson's example, in designing the Auditorium Building in Chicago; he made use of Renaissance motifs, such as the egg and dart, for moldings in the Auditorium and other buildings; and even in one of his last works, the Farmers and Merchants Union Bank of 1919 in Columbus, Wisconsin, the entrance is flanked by a pair of guardian lions clutching medieval shields. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, one of Wright's most important biographers, had this to say about Wright's eclectic borrowings from the revival styles in the 1890s: Modern architects, like modern painters, need not regret that among their early works are buildings and projects which are remarkable successful exercises in traditional designs. They answer the malicious criticism that the avoidance of conventional modes is due to inability to manipulate them.

The Nathan G. Moore house in Oak Park, Illinois, built in 1895 in a Tudor Revival style, is an early work of Wright and his best essay in the revival styles. In An Autobiography, which first appeared in 1932, Wright described his fear that his agreement to design the house in a Tudor half-timber style at the suggestion of the client might preclude him from coming up with a design "good enough so that I would not 'sell out.'" Nevertheless, when the house burned in 1922, Wright was asked to restore it. Rather than just rebuild the house to look like it did in 1895, Wright used the opportunity to design basically a brand new Tudor Revival house. And he did this not just anywhere, but right in the midst of the largest cluster of Prairie houses in existence, designed by Wright and other architects. A bit earlier, Mayan influence could be seen in Wright's design for the A. D. German Warehouse in Richland Center, Wisconsin, of 1915, and in his design for the Aline Barnsdall house in Los Angeles (Hollywood), completed in 1921.

By comparison, then, it might be said that Trost's eclectic practice differed in degree rather than in kind from what Sullivan and Wright actually did. In any case, no effort to understand Trost can ignore the range of his work, and any attempt to treat Trost solely in terms of what might fit in easily with current trends in architectural history or criticism would be misleading.

Each of the buildings discussed in this chapter was chosen to illustrate the variety of Trost's work, and each is located in El Paso. Because Trost designed so many buildings in El Paso, he may have sought variety as an end in itself, as a way of giving El Paso something of the heterogeneous look of most large American cities.

The Young Men's Christian Association, a buff brick building which stood on the southeast corner of Missouri Avenue and North Mesa Street, was designed in 1906 and completed in 1908 at a cost of $125,000. The influence of Sullivan was apparent in the concentric arches of the main entrance, in the two-story tall arcades on the first and second story portions of the main facades, and in the metal ornament on the face of the
slab cornice (fig. 44). The windows of the top storey reflected the fact that this portion was devoted to individual guest rooms, in contrast to the variety of athletic, classroom, workshop, office, dining and lounging spaces in the two storeys below. The entrance bay was given added interest and emphasis by set-backs on the upper storeys. On the second storey a loggia occupied the space over the entrance; on the third storey, a garden occupied a rectangular area above and behind the loggia. Basement facilities included a bowling alley and a swimming pool.

The Y.M.C.A. building was one of a group of three substantial Trost-designed buildings which marked the northern edge of the downtown area; it is to be regretted that all of these have been demolished. The Brazos Apartments was only a block away, and the Masonic Temple, completed in 1913, was diagonally across the street. The purposes to which they were devoted provided a contrast to the retail stores, office buildings and hotels to the south.

The Alhambra Theater, at 209 South El Paso Street, was built at a cost of $150,000 and opened August 1, 1914. It was designed to be used as either a playhouse for live theater or as a movie house. In order to aid in the latter, a large organ was included to accompany the screening of “silent” films. For most
of its history it has been used for motion pictures, and under its current name, the Palace, it is still being used for this purpose.

The Alhambra is possibly Trost's only effort at Spanish Moorish design, and anticipates the vogue for Spanish Moorish movie palaces during the 1920s. The façade is a delicate tracery of arabesques, executed in plaster. Shops on either side were

designed as part of the theater building (fig. 45). Although it has been somewhat altered, much of the original character of the building may still be seen.

For an understanding of the Hotel Paso del Norte, one must turn to the urban luxury hotels of the pre-World War I period. In fact the Paso del Norte, opened in November, 1912, is one of a diminishing number of these hotels still in operation. They set a new standard of elegance for the hotels of the world, and an architectural vocabulary was developed to signal to travelers which ones were the luxury hotels. They were tall blocks, rectangular in shape, with one or more light wells beginning at the third floor and opening toward the street or toward the rear. Detailing was based on fashionable European palaces and mansions of the past, generally English or French, with walls of brick trimmed with stone, concrete and terra cotta.

It had been the conviction of many El Paso businessmen that just this sort of hotel was needed in El Paso, that the existing hotels did not offer enough to attract the discriminating traveler. One of the leaders in designing this kind of hotel was Frank Mills Andrews (1867-1948), who was with the firm of Jenney & Mundie in Chicago during part of the time Trost lived in that city. Later Andrews set up his own firm, F. M. Andrews & Co., with offices in Cincinnati and New York. Andrews was an investor in hotels as well as an architect, and he designed the Hotel Taft in New Haven, Connecticut, completed in 1911, as the first in a planned chain of first-class hotels. He went on to design hotels in New York, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville and other cities.

The El Pasans first turned to Andrews as architect for the planned hotel, and later it was evidently the plan to have Andrews and Trost work as associated architects on the project. Since the cost of the new hotel was about $1,000,000 the El Paso businessmen, including Zach T. White and Felix Martinez, who had raised the funds for the venture, would have wanted to do all they could to insure its success. Andrews withdrew from
the project, at least as a designer (although he may have continued to serve as an advisor), and the plans were signed with the names of the firms of Tröst & Tröst and Mauran, Russell & Crowell of St. Louis, with the latter firm listed in smaller lettering and designated as "associated." (The St. Louis firm was the successor to Mauran, Russell & Garden, for whom Gustavus Tröst had worked on the building for the El Paso Public Library.) Shortly after the hotel was opened, White stated in a letter to the Tröst & Tröst firm that they deserved the entire credit for the design, and in national architectural magazines it was credited solely as the work of Tröst & Tröst.\footnote{An issue of The Architectural Review for April, 1913, epitomized the latest in luxury hotels. Virtually all of the first-class American hotels of the era were illustrated, including the Paso del Norte, the Taft and other hotels designed by Andrews. Although the Paso del Norte seems to be very much in the company of its peers, as compared with the Taft it has simpler detailing and cleaner lines.\footnote{See fig. 46}}

Located on the northwest corner of West San Antonio Avenue and North El Paso Street, the Paso del Norte was built as a nine-storey hotel; a tenth storey ballroom was added later by Tröst, but was so planned that it did not obscure the lines of the two principal façades. A light well opening into San Antonio Avenue begins at the third storey, to allow space for a two-storey tall lobby. The detailing of the lobby is especially fine, and includes the only known piece of signed sculpture by Henry Tröst, a round plaque over the registration desk, depicting an Indian and a Spanish friar along with the Spanish royal crest, symbolic of El Paso's past. It is signed "H. C. Tröst." Stained glass windows face San Antonio Avenue, and a stained glass dome tops the lobby (one of the features this hotel has in common with the Taft). An oral tradition in El Paso and among White's descendants, and a recent brochure issued by the hotel, maintain that the glass dome is by the Tiffany Studios. Although there is no known documentary evidence, both the size and the quality of the dome substantiate this claim.
One indication that the Paso del Norte has lived up to the high expectations it had aroused is that it has been host to numerous persons from both sides of the border who are well known for their activities in government, business, theater, motion pictures, music, and other fields.

It was in 1917 that the new campus for the University of Texas at El Paso, then known as the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy, was constructed in a Bhutanese style. Although Edgell had contended that an architect was "... free to get his ideas from any source, provided only that they be appropriate to the work at hand," in practice most architects were not very original in their choice of sources for buildings in the revival styles. The architecture of Bhutan was a source not previously utilized by American architects. Bhutan is a small, mountainous Asian kingdom just to the south of Tibet, with an architecture akin to that of its northern neighbor.

Henry Trotz was the architect charged with designing the buildings for the new campus. For most of Trotz's work it has proven impossible to learn much about architect-client relationships; in the case of the School of Mines, rich sources of information have been preserved, recording details of a complex fabric of architect-client relationships. These relationships, viewed in the context of concurrent academic, political and military developments, constitute the raw material for a fascinating dramatic narrative. The full story would exceed the scope of this book; only a brief account can be included here.

The School of Mines held its first classes in 1914, on a campus which had been recently vacated by the defunct El Paso Military Institute. The major buildings used by the Institute had been designed by Trotz and erected in 1906 and 1909. By 1916 it had been decided that a new campus was needed for the School of Mines, because it was feared that the water supply was not sufficient for adequate fire protection and because it was expected that Fort Bliss, a United States Army post which surrounded the campus on three sides, would be expanded in the wake of the March 19, 1916, raid by Pancho Villa on Columbus, New Mexico. Fears of inadequate fire protection were indeed well founded, because on October 29, 1916, the main classroom building was destroyed by fire.

Kathleen L. Worrell, an El Paso artist, telegraphed news of the fire to Robert E. Vinson, president of the University of Texas. Vinson had overall administrative responsibility for the School of Mines, since it had been placed under the supervision of the University of Texas Board of Regents, even though it had not yet been made a part of the University of Texas System. Kathleen Worrell's husband, Stephen Howard Worrell, the dean of the School of Mines, was on a trip to Arizona at the time of the fire. It was also Kathleen Worrell who conceived the idea of building the new campus in a Bhutanese style, an idea which won the enthusiastic endorsement of her husband. Soon after the fire Vinson alerted Texas governor James E. Ferguson that the University Board of Regents could be expected to make a request for a supplemental appropriation for a new campus when the legislature convened early in the new year, and reported that it was likely that a new site would be offered in a better location. During the time the new campus was planned and built, relations between Ferguson and Vinson were often quite stormy. Ferguson had been opposed to Vinson's appointment as president of the University, and had sought his removal. Moreover, Ferguson was not on good terms with the University Board of Regents or with the legislature. As one result, he had difficulty in getting Senate confirmation of his nominees to the Board of Regents.

The struggle between Ferguson and the legislature culminated in August, 1917, when the House of Representatives voted twenty-one articles of impeachment against the governor; the charges in ten of these articles were sustained by the Senate, and the governor was forced from office. Two of these ten articles included charges that the governor had sought to remove members of the Board of Regents in an unlawful manner, and
that he had interfered with the work of the Board in an unconstitutional manner. While there is no evidence that Ferguson acted improperly in any matter directly concerned with the School of Mines, there was a period of about five months during which the Board of Regents was reluctant to meet because replacements for three members whose terms had expired had not been confirmed by the Senate. It was during this period that plans for the new campus for the School of Mines were under way.

Ferguson appointed three El Pasans to a site committee: mayor Tom Lea, Claude B. Hudspeth, a member of the Texas Senate, and Richard F. Burges, a member of the Texas House of Representatives. When the choice of sites had been narrowed to two, Worrell and Vinson decided to ask Charles M. Gibson, an El Paso architect, to make "sketches, not plans" for the proposed buildings. Gibson practiced architecture in El Paso from 1909 to 1918, and from 1913 to 1917 he was in partnership with George C. Robertson. An architect who worked for Gibson & Robertson during 1916 recently recalled that to aid them in preparing the sketches Kathleen Worrell brought into the office a copy of the April, 1914, issue of *The National Geographic Magazine*, an issue which featured an article on the architecture of Bhutan.

Stephen Worrell presented the idea of a Bhutanese style campus to Vinson in a letter of December 14, 1916:

> We have selected as a tentative plan a type of architecture suited to mountainous country, known as the Bhutanese, which is a type of architecture peculiar to Bhutan country in the Himalayas about 250 miles North of Calcutta. It was clear from this letter that Gibson had been hired only for preliminary work and that the architect for the new campus had not yet been chosen, a point emphasized a week later in a letter from Vinson to Worrell.

It was decided to seek an appropriation of $100,000 for the new campus, a sum deemed sufficient to erect the first group of buildings even if there were a delay in receiving funds from the sale of the old site. The new site was given free of charge by a group of El Pasans.

Shortly after the site committee had completed its work plans for the new campus were revealed to the press. The rendering by Gibson appeared on the front page of the *El Paso Herald* on January 6, 1917, thus giving the public the first inkling of what the new campus would look like on the chosen site. The rendering was actually a photomontage of sepia sketches of the individual buildings in a Bhutanese style placed against a photograph of the site. A caption, stating that the plans had been prepared by Gibson & Robertson and that they had the approval of Worrell and Vinson, was misleading because approval had been given only for preliminary work. The plans for the campus were described in detail in an inner page. "The Bhutanese style of architecture will be followed," it was reported, "characterized by battered or sloping walls and flat roof, with wide overhanging cornices, and ornamental frieze."

In fact Vinson was committed neither to Gibson & Robertson nor to the Bhutanese style. On a visit to El Paso he had sought, unsuccessfully, to meet with Trost & Trost to discuss the plans for the new campus. Henry Trost, however, was eager to receive the commission. In a letter to Vinson dated January 4, 1917, Trost wrote:

> We are very sorry we did not meet you when you were here recently, regarding the plans for the new School of Mines Building but we did not think it was as far advanced as it seems to be. We would like to be considered in connection with this work. We have just completed the new high school here, which Mr. Holland informed us you visited on one of your former trips here. We are also building the Court House and we do most of the work in El Paso South West, particularly school work. We imagine the School of Mines, like the High School, would be quite an interesting problem. We think our experience in the profession should surely entitle us to consideration as architects for these new buildings. We would refer you to anyone in El Paso of prominence.

Included with the letter was a two-page list of buildings and clients, in which Trost noted that his firm had designed six
buildings for the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, as well as a dormitory for the New Mexico Normal School at Silver City.

Vinson promptly acknowledged Trost’s letter, and promised that it would be presented to the Board of Regents after the legislative appropriation had been assured.48 However, when Vinson and the Building Committee of the Board of Regents realized that there would be a delay in getting the legislative appropriation passed,49 and even in getting a meeting of the full Board, they decided to move ahead anyway because they hoped to have the new campus completed by October. When the full Board did meet both the choice of an architect and the actual plans would require approval. The Building Committee, which included the Board’s chairman, Wilbur P. Allen of Austin, in addition to A. W. Fly of Galveston and Charles E. Kelly of El Paso, evidently felt confident that the rest of the Board would approve their actions.

After consultation with Worrell and the members of the site committee,49 Vinson and the Building Committee reached a decision. In a letter to Trost & Trost dated January 25, 1917, Vinson wrote that the Building Committee “...has decided to recommend to the Board of Regents the employment of your firm to draw the plans for the new School of Mines at El Paso. ...” and asked the firm to begin work right away. Vinson’s letter indicated that he would consider a design in the Bhutanese style, but he was not as yet committed to this type of architecture:

We should like to have a style of architecture adopted which will be as economical in the use of space as possible, with a minimum of exterior decoration, and which will also be suitable as a type which may be followed in the future in making additions to the plant which we are now able to erect. I have discussed this matter with Dean Worrell, and it is our desire to have a type of architecture which is peculiarly suited to the surroundings of El Paso, something along the order of the Mission type, or others which Dean Worrell will bring to your attention.55

When the Board of Regents finally met on April 24, 1917, plans and specifications had been completed by Trost & Trost; these were approved for submission to contractors for bids.56 The work on the plans for the new campus was accomplished in spite of numerous adverse factors, including: the rejection by Worrell and the faculty of the School of Mines of the first set of sketches drawn up by Trost & Trost;57 repeated insistence by Worrell that it would be better for the faculty to draw up its own plans;58 persistent rumors that the University had no firm commitment to Trost & Trost, and applications by other architects for the commission;59 rumors (emphatically denied by Vinson) that the decision to engage Trost & Trost was a political one;60 difficulty in keeping the cost of the new buildings within the allotted sum;61 negotiations initiated by the University which resulted in a lowering of the fee to be paid to Trost & Trost,62 and the engagement of another El Paso architect, Edward Kneecell, to supervise construction in place of Trost & Trost.63

The attitude of Worrell and the faculty of the School of Mines is particularly interesting, because they are the only well-documented examples of dissatisfied Trost clients. An early example of Worrell’s negative reaction is his comment in a letter reporting the rejection by him and the faculty of Trost’s initial design for the main building:

The type of architecture that they planned was not at all pleasing to me. They said in the beginning that they thought the Bhutanese was best suited to our location, but when they got through with it, it was not Bhutanese nor much of anything else, it was strictly Trost & Trost.

Worrell added: “We will submit our new sketches to them in a day or so and make another effort to get the plans started.”64

The initial sketches produced by Trost & Trost and the sketches made by the faculty have evidently all been lost. According to Worrell, the faculty drawings were made by John W. (“Cap”) Kidd, professor of engineering and later Worrell’s successor as dean.65 Although Kidd was a skilled administrator, an able engineer and a dedicated teacher, he had little understanding of architectural proportion or detailing,66 and it seems
47. School of Mines, now University of Texas at El Paso, c. 1921.

48. Elevation from plans of Old Main Building, University of Texas at El Paso.
unlikely that he had much impact on the architectural quality of the campus buildings. Nevertheless, when Worrell did credit Trost & Trost with achieving good results, he insisted that this was because they were able to make use of the work of Gibson and the faculty. For example, although he seemed satisfied with the design of the main building as it had progressed by the end of February, and commented that Trost & Trost "... have succeeded in working out a plan for the main building which will, I think, be very beautiful, decidedly more so than the plan they had before," he insisted that this was because they had made use of "the faculty plan."47

When the plans and specifications went to the bidders in May, V. E. Ware's bid of $115,070 was the lowest submitted.48 Ware had headed up the group of donors which provided the site for the new campus. Because the low bid was in excess of the legislative appropriation, the Board decided to loan up to $20,000 from another fund to meet the construction cost, with the former site for the School of Mines as security.49 Ware was notified on June 1 that he had been awarded the contract, and construction began later that month.50 It was not until December that all four buildings were completed and ready for use.

Whether or not he had any initial reluctance, Henry Trost did accept the idea that a Bhutanese style campus was appropriate to the terrain and climate of the Southwest. The arrangement of the buildings was informal, well suited to the rugged, rocky site of the campus. The first four buildings on the campus all bear a resemblance to the buildings in the Gibsons' rendering and in the April, 1914, issue of The National Geographic Magazine. In addition to the main building these are the Chemistry Building (later enlarged and renamed Geology), the dormitory (now Graham Hall), and the power plant (enlarged several times and renamed the New Geology Building). When he received a commission to design a fifth campus building, Kelly Hall (now the Old Mass Communication Building), built in 1920-1921, he made it very much like the 1917 buildings.

A photograph of the campus made about 1921 shows buildings which seem very much at home in the landscape (fig. 47). These buildings stand today as evidence that the steady hand of a master architect was able to assure quality results amid all the turbulence surrounding their creation.

The features of the main building (fig. 48), now known as Old Main, which derive from Bhutanese architecture include: the low hipped roof; the ornamental frieze of brick and tile below the roof line, broken by the windows of the top storey; the three corbels under the central window; battered outside walls, increasing in thickness toward the bottom by seven inches per ten feet; and, as a result of the battered walls, deep-set windows on the lower storeys.

The construction drawings, in red and black ink on linen, were elegant productions51 (fig. 48); evidently special care was taken so that when the Board of Regents held its delayed meeting, approval of the plans would be facilitated.

The buildings on the present campus of the University of Texas at El Paso were designed by a number of architects over a period of more than sixty years. Not all of these buildings resemble the 1917 group as closely as does Kelly Hall. As Dale L. Walker, the most astute commentator on the architecture of the El Paso campus, has observed, Kathleen Worrell's original idea "... influenced new designs, but does not govern them."52 The result is that while there is some variety, there is also a pleasing homogeneity, and a campus architecture that is unique.

The high school mentioned by Trost in his letter to Vinson was El Paso High School, designed in 1914 and completed in 1916.53 It occupies a mountainside site on the corner of Schuster Avenue and Virginia Street, on the edge of a campus which was originally four square blocks in size. A concrete sports stadium was constructed slightly later on lower ground, situated to take advantage of the slope in the earth. The whole complex is carefully fitted to natural contours, and several vantage points for viewing near and distant features of the landscape are incor-
porated.

For El Paso High School Trost designed a classic revival building, evoking memories of Greece and Rome. He located the Corinthian porch in an unusual (but not unprecedented) manner: the main part of the building consists of rectangular-block wings which meet to form an L, and the porch is at a 45 degree angle to each, on the inside corner (fig. 49). The porch also has a symbolic role, since Greece and Rome are associated with the origins of athletics and drama in the Western world: it looks out over the stadium, and on the interior of the building it leads to the auditorium (fig. 50). On entering the building through the porch one reaches the hallway which circles the rear of the auditorium, where the coffered low ceilings and the massive engaged columns, of original design but based on classic elements, create a mood which is grave and a bit mysterious (fig. 51).

The detailing of the wings, each nearly 300 feet long, is simpler, with outer walls of brick trimmed with light-hued terra cotta. The Corinthian columns on the porch are of buff terra cotta, as are the decorative elements in the gable and attic above the porch. The light hues reflect the heat of the sunlight and blend in well with the colors of nearby mountain and desert areas. Rooms are arranged along the outer walls of the wings. Although this plan sometimes requires a long walk between classes, it also provides for a maximum of natural light and cross ventilation. The classroom areas are large in size and straightforward and simple in detailing, with high ceilings and large, double-hung windows. Classrooms, a library and offices occupy the first and second storeys, while laboratory, workshop and studio areas, with special requirements for lighting and ventilation, occupy the top storey. The basement was designed for gymnasium, cafeteria and utility use.

Trost's Orndoff Hotel of 1926, later known as the Hussmann and currently known as the Hotel Cortez, must be under-
50. Plan of First Floor, El Paso High School.

stood in the context of the Spanish Colonial Revival. As noted in Chapter III, the Mission Revival achieved its first widely admired success in the California Building at the Chicago fair of 1893. The Mission Revival flourished for about two decades; by 1913 it had just about run its course. Curiously, it was succeeded by a style which came into prominence through the California Building at another fair: this was a building designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue (1869-1924) for the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 in San Diego. Goodhue, and the architects who followed his lead, no longer looked for inspiration to the missions of the northern frontiers of New Spain; rather, they looked to the high culture of central Mexico, left behind by the Spanish explorers and missionaries as they made their way north. Thus the Spanish Colonial Revival is based on ornate architectural traditions of Renaissance and Baroque buildings in central Mexico or on related buildings in Spain itself, and a booklet issued for the opening of the eleven-storey Orndorff Hotel, written by El Paso author Norman Walker, was called _A Castle of Old Spain on the Plaza of El Paso_.

There were numerous differences between Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival. In the latter there was less emphasis on rounded arched openings, and there was much emphasis on low relief ornament of the kind known as plateresque, inspired by the work of silversmiths. The ornament was usually concentrated on selected areas, such as entrances, and was contrasted with simpler wall treatment on other parts of buildings. Much use was made of wrought iron for picturesque effect, in the form of balcony railings, window grilles and gates.

Located on the northeast corner of North Mesa Street and Mills Avenue, the eleven-storey Cortez takes the form of an L-shaped block above the second storey, with twelve bays facing Mesa and ten bays facing Mills (fig. 52). A band of cast relief ornament, similar in hue to the mottled buff brick walls above, continues around the outer walls of the second storey. The Mesa entrance is emphasized by a five-storey cast relief portal, flanked
by pairs of ornamented windows on the sixth and seventh-storey levels. Other windows are treated more simply except on the eleventh storey, devoted to space for a club. The building is topped by a heavy cornice based on the egg and dart motif.

Special care was taken in the detailing of the interior where extensive use was made of glazed tile, wrought iron, and wooden beams with hand-painted decorative motifs. Among the finest features of the interior are the interlocking spaces of the lobby (fig. 54), lounge and dining areas, a series of interconnecting multi-level spaces approached by short flights of stairs.

While the Cortez is charming, it could not be classed with Trost’s most inspired creations. However, its opening did attract much attention in the architectural press and Trost brought one original feature to Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. This is to be seen in the series of portrait heads of conquistadores peering out of roundels above the Mesa Street entrance (fig. 53), also to be seen as part of the band of ornament at the second-storey level and surrounding the pair of ornamented windows on the sixth storey. Similar heads appear in Lorenzo Ghiberti’s famed Baptistery doors in Florence, Italy, created in the fifteenth century, and at the second-storey level of Adler & Sullivan’s Schiller Building of 1891.

The hotel was erected at a cost of $1,500,000 for Alzina DeGroff, a veteran hotel operator in Tucson and in El Paso, and the Trost-designed Orndoff Hotel was the third hotel to bear that name, the second on the site. Alzina DeGroff was associated in the hotel business with a son, Burtram Orndoff, and with her second husband, Charles DeGroff. Tragically, she died just before the last of the Orndoff hotels was opened.

Trost worked in still another art-inspired idiom: this was art deco, sometimes known as Modernistic Architecture. The term art deco refers to the fair which inspired it, the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, held in Paris in 1925. Although a variety of things were on display, what most caught the attention of visitors was decorative metal-
work emphasizing angular motifs, free of any obvious historical associations. From this developed an attempt to create a modern architectural idiom, not by eliminating ornament, but by employing suitably modern ornament. One of the most characteristic types of buildings utilizing art deco ornament was the setback skyscraper. A good example is Trost's fifteen-storey O. T. Bassett Tower, located on the northeast corner of East Texas Avenue and South Stanton Street, completed in 1930 (fig. 55). The fine detailing of the decorative metalwork in the lobby indicated that Trost had not lost his interest in that medium. The building was commissioned by an El Paso family active in banking and lumber retailing.

Trost also designed the Luhrs Tower in Phoenix, completed at about the same time as the O. T. Bassett Tower. The two buildings are very similar in basic outline, but there are differences in detailing. These buildings, along with Trost's additions to the Driskill Hotel in Austin (see chapter VIII), are among the best examples of art deco architecture to be seen in the Southwest.

The O. T. Bassett Tower was to be Trost's last major building in El Paso. The mustachioed face over the main entrance is believed by some to be a self-portrait in sculpture.
Trost in El Paso: VII
Social, Cultural and Economic Factors

During the last thirty years of his life, Trost designed at least two hundred buildings in El Paso, and he also made the city the headquarters of his extensive regional practice. His work during this period must be understood within the context of El Paso, and the buildings he designed there are also revealing documents about the community for which they were created.

In many ways El Paso might be thought of as merely a larger version of Tucson. Both cities had long been agricultural communities in an arid climate, depending on careful management of river waters, and both cities were near areas of mining activity on both sides of the border. Both experienced a burgeoning of economic activity in the wake of the arrival of the railroads. During Trost’s years in the Southwest both cities were made up of similar cosmopolitan groupings of people. Each city had large numbers of residents with Hispanic and with non-Hispanic names, the latter in each case including black and Chinese communities, and many persons who were natives of Europe. Each city even had an Indian village nearby: the counterpart of the Papagos in the village of Bac near Tucson would be the Tiguas in Ysleta, a town (presently part of El Paso) founded in 1680 or soon thereafter.

It was as true in El Paso as it was in Tucson that Trost’s architectural clients did not represent a cross-section of the community, and what has been said in these pages about his clients in Tucson would be very nearly the same as what could be said about his clients in El Paso. However, there was no counterpart in Tucson to Alzina DeGroff (although she also operated a hotel in Tucson, she commissioned nothing from Trost there), nor was there any counterpart in Tucson to Felix Martinez, a native of Taos, New Mexico.

Travellers stop at the Passo del Norte to lay in the necessary provisions for continuing their route to Santa Fe. The environs of the Passo are delicious, and resemble the finest parts of Andalusia. The fields are cultivated with maize and wheat; and the vineyards produce such excellent sweet wines that they are even preferred to the wines of Parras in New Biscay [i.e., Parras, Coahuila, Mexico].

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT, 1808

The Southwest is a big country, where they do big things, and the Elephant Butte dam, located in the Rio Grande Valley, is no exception to this rule, being the most enormous undertaking of this nature in the memory of mankind. . . . A complete explanation of what this will mean to the city of El Paso and the surrounding country would require a special volume. No part of North America produces such an abundance nor so great a variety of crops as are made possible when the arid lands of the Southwest are properly irrigated.

PIERRE N. BERINGER, 1910
Felix Martínez had been active in the populist movement and in the Democratic party in New Mexico prior to moving to El Paso. He was an articulate and bilingual community leader who worked hard for the Elephant Butte Dam and other projects, and he was one of the few persons of his generation who had any real influence in both Hispanic and non-Hispanic circles. He had newspaper publishing, real estate and other business interests in New Mexico and Texas, and he joined with other investors for several Trost commissions, including the Hotel Paso del Norte and the Plaza Block. The reinforced concrete Plaza Block is on Mills Avenue, just to the west of the Mills Building. After its completion in 1911 it was long shared by the White House department store and the McCoy Hotel.3

One of the differences between El Paso and Tucson is that El Paso is a border city, part of a larger two city community with Juárez, while Tucson is about 70 miles from the smaller border city of Nogales, Sonora. Because El Paso and Juárez are part of the same urban area, there is little that can happen in either city which does not affect the other city. The two cities might be said to have a symbiotic relationship, and this is especially true in the economic sphere. They have shared in relative size: in 1880, on the eve of the railroad era, when only 736 residents were enumerated in El Paso, Juárez was over ten times as large. In 1890 when there were 10,388 residents in El Paso, Juárez was about equal in size. Although Juárez is presently much the larger city, throughout the Trost era El Paso was consistently larger than its Mexican neighbor, as shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>El Paso</th>
<th>Juárez</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>15,906</td>
<td>8,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>39,279</td>
<td>10,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>77,560</td>
<td>19,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>102,421</td>
<td>39,669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The arrival of the railroads in the El Paso-Juárez region initially benefitted Juárez more than it benefited El Paso because in 1885 the border Free Trade Zone of Mexico was extended to include Juárez. Following this, its commerce flourished as many new retail establishments were set up, and others simply moved across the river from El Paso. Meanwhile on the American side it was saloons which flourished, and many persons in El Paso complained that for their city the railroad meant only an influx of gamblers, gunfighters and prostitutes.5

The prosperous times brought to Juárez by the railroads were short-lived. In the 1890s the Mexican border Free Trade Zone, resented in the United States and in the interior of Mexico, was gradually modified and was abolished completely in 1905. Because of this, and because the devaluation of the peso during the same period made it harder for Mexican merchants to offer imported goods, retail business in Juárez suffered greatly. At the same time, once flourishing Mexican agricultural districts near Juárez were forced to lie idle, hurt by a prolonged drought and by overuse of the waters of the Rio Grande upstream in New Mexico and Colorado. This situation was not altered until after 1916 when Elephant Butte dam, built by agreement between the governments of the United States and Mexico at a point in New Mexico 125 miles upstream from El Paso, began to channel water for irrigation back into the area. During this period of economic decline in Juárez, "clean-up" movements in El Paso began to gather strength, led by citizens opposed to illicit sporting events, gambling and prostitution. Many of these activities were simply moved across the river at a time when impoverished citizens of Juárez had little ability to object to any source of income.6 Juárez soon became a magnet for tourists from the United States because of its proximity to El Paso and because of good railroad connections. With the onset of prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages north of the border (Texas went "dry" in 1918, the United States as a whole in 1920), the tourist business in the area gained added strength. The numerous bars and liquor stores in El Paso were forced to close or move to Juárez.7

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While Trost built little or nothing in Juárez itself, he received two large hotel commissions in El Paso as a result of prohibition era tourism. One of these was the Hilton Hotel, completed in 1930. Located on the southwest corner of San Francisco Avenue and North Oregon Street, it has been renamed the Plaza and is presently not a part of the Hilton chain. The other hotel, the Orndorf, opened in 1926 (see chapter VI). Burton Orndorff, a member of the consortium which organized the hotel, was one of the El Paso businessmen who early recognized the importance of Juárez to those who benefited from tourism. In 1921 he remarked:

Juárez is our greatest asset and we are just beginning to realize it. High class tourists from the East on their way to California stop just to see Juárez. They have money to spend and they want to find a good time out the other side. The river can give them—

a dinner with liquor and other amusements.

The city of Juárez played a prominent role in Mexican history during two different periods. Because of its relative isolation in the pre-railroad era, Benito Juárez made it the seat of the government he set up as republican opposition to the reign of the Emperor Maximilian during the French Intervention. It was because of his presence there in 1865-1866 that the city was later named for him. Again, during Mexico's turbulent revolutionary decade beginning in 1910, the city of Juárez assumed prominence as the scene of several battles between opposing forces, as an important center of transportation and supply, and as the headquarters of revolutionary leader Francisco (Pancho) Villa.

During one period Villa spent a considerable amount of time in El Paso, although he evidently never returned to any part of the United States after he led a raid on Columbus, New Mexico, in March of 1916. While there is no reason to suppose that Trost and Villa ever met, they did share a photographer and a writer. Otis Aultman not only documented the buildings of Trost, he also covered every aspect of the border phase of the revolution with his camera: portraits of Villa and other leaders, and scenes of battle, negotiations and fleeing refugees. Norman Walker, a newsman who had followed Villa through many miles while covering revolutionary events for the Associated Press, remained in El Paso and later wrote the text for two brochures on Trost-designed hotels. While the nearby revolutionary developments had some effects which were harmful to the economy of El Paso, the net result was quite beneficial. Temporary disruptions of commerce were offset by a dramatic overall increase in shipments crossing the border. El Paso also benefited from the presence of wealthy refugees and from the increase in the number of soldiers stationed at Fort Bliss in the wake of the raid on Columbus, New Mexico. One result was a considerable amount of building activity in El Paso during the decade began in 1910. The refugees included those who fled food shortages and poverty, those who wanted to escape the violence, and those who feared specific reprisals against themselves. While some refugees stayed in El Paso only briefly before settling in other parts of the United States or returning to Mexico, others remained. Most refugees were Mexican nationals, but some were Americans and other foreigners who had merchandising, mining or ranching interests in Mexico. Most of the poor refugees lived in the southern part of El Paso in an area known as "Chihuahuita," where unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions prevailed. Because it was part of the disputed Chamiel territory, most of the structures were not very substantial since prospective builders were reluctant to invest much money there. But the presence of the wealthier refugees created an increased demand for office and merchandising space and for hotel rooms, apartments and homes. Some directly commissioned buildings. One of these was Victor Caruso, for whom Trost designed the Caruso Apartments. And it was the increased demand for office space in 1916 which prompted Anson Mills to commission Trost to finish the interiors of the upper stories of the Mills Building and to re-design the basement restaurant.
Although there were several periods during which El Paso experienced a spurt in economic activity, the city benefitted from an economic base sufficiently diverse to prevent the occurrence of cycles of boom and bust, and Trost and his El Paso clients operated from a base in a steadily growing economy. The shape of El Paso’s economy was determined in large measure by activities in the surrounding area: the raising of cattle; farming on irrigated land, an activity of increased importance after the opening of Elephant Butte dam; the mining of copper and other metals in Arizona and New Mexico; and the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora; and lumbering in the forests of Chihuahua and Sonora. It was once estimated that more cattle have been bought and sold in the lobby of the Hotel Paso del Norte
than in any other room in the world. Much of what went on in El Paso was directly related to mining, including the manufacture and sale of mining equipment, smelting and refining, managing and financing operations, and instruction in the School of Mines. Other important areas of El Paso’s economy during the Trost era involved food processing and distribution; wholesale and retail merchandising; railroads and other forms of transportation; manufacture and distribution of building products, including cement, bricks, lumber and finished wooden building materials; tourism; caring for and housing tuberculosis patients and other ill persons who sought out El Paso because of the climate; printing and publishing; and banking.

The State National Bank was organized in 1881, and is now the oldest bank in El Paso still in operation. Few types of business organizations are as self-conscious about the architecture of the buildings they occupy as are banks, and the State National Bank was evidently no exception. For them Trost designed a handsome classic building, with careful detailing based on Roman and Italian Renaissance motifs, evident in the bold Roman arches on the street façades, the ornamentation on the underside of the roof overhang, and on the inside, the richly decorated beams of the ceiling. Located on the southwest corner of East San Antonio Avenue and South Oregon Street, the building was completed in 1922. When an addition was constructed along San Antonio Avenue the fine detailing of the decorated post-and-lintel frame of the main entrance was preserved by moving it to serve as a centerpiece for the new wing (Figs. 56 and 57). The State National Bank moved to larger quarters in 1962, and its old building is owned by the Home Mortgage Company, which has restored it for its own use.

Since the beginning of the century, more than half of the people living in El Paso have been natives of Mexico or were persons whose parents or other antecedents were born there. Also, many residents of Juárez have been commuters to jobs in El Paso. Some of these were United States citizens, or persons who had the status of permanent resident aliens of the United States, in each case permitting unrestricted crossing of the border. Others simply commuted with or without benefit of documents. Although the occupational diversity of Mexican-American workers in El Paso has gradually increased, during the first third of this century most worked at unskilled or semi-skilled jobs and received low rates of pay.

Socially, there was little interaction between persons of Hispanic and non-Hispanic names, although the cleavage was never complete. Further, a large part of the community was bilingual. Until the reforms begun in the 1950s, Texas was the western outpost of the Old South, with separate educational systems for black people, and legal barriers which restricted their access to public accommodations. But these restrictions were not meant to apply to persons of Mexican birth or ancestry.

Of great importance to the social life of El Paso were clubs and lodges. Some of these, such as the El Paso Country Club, were for men and women, and others were for women or men only. A similar pattern of clubs and lodges existed in most other cities and towns of the Southwest, and much of Trost’s practice resulted from commissions from Masons, Knights of Columbus, Elks and other clubs and lodges.

Because he moved frequently during his younger years, and because he never married, Henry Trost would seem to be the kind of person to whom the social life of these clubs and lodges would appeal. Nevertheless he seemed to have been uninterested in joining any organizations other than professional associations. The exception was the Toltec Club, an El Paso men’s club, of which he was a member from 1905 until at least 1912. However, his brothers, Adolphus and Gustavus, were members of the Country Club as well as the Toltec Club, and his nephew George Ernest Trost was a member of the Country Club and was also a Mason.

The El Paso Country Club was organized in 1906, and Trost & Trost were commissioned to design a building with a budget
of $50,000 on a site near Fort Bliss. Completed late in 1908, it was destroyed by fire in 1916. Two members of the original board of directors, Joseph F. Williams and Tullius M. Wingo, were persons for whom Trost designed Mission Revival houses, in 1906 and 1907 respectively. This may have been a factor in the choice of Mission Revival for the design of the Country Club (fig. 58). The interiors were executed by Mitchell & Halbach of Chicago, then currently at work on the Trost house.24

There was little religious intolerance in El Paso. As one indication, membership in the Country Club was open to Jews at a time when this was not the case with similar clubs in other American cities. Further, it was possible for architects to accept commissions for religious buildings without precluding future commissions from other religious organizations so that Trost's El Paso commissions included Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish religious buildings.

The Westminster Presbyterian Church, now St. George Orthodox Church, was erected in 1910-1911 on the southwest corner of East Rio Grande Avenue and North Florence Street, with a budget of $25,000.25 It has an attached tower, open at the top, stucco-covered walls and red tile roofs on the building and on the tower, a design one architectural magazine referred to as "Italo-Mission."26 It was purchased by the St. George Orthodox Church in 1951, after Westminster Presbyterian had combined with another congregation. Much of Trost's original design has been obscured by the effects of a fire. After the fire the large arched windows were not restored, and most of the original window area has become solid wall. Nevertheless, with the aid of vintage photographs (fig. 59) it is possible for the viewer to get a good idea of what Trost's design was like by viewing the present structure. It was to be the last of Trost's Mission Revival buildings in El Paso.
Many of El Paso’s earliest residents were Jews, including some who arrived before the railroad era. They were active in a variety of business enterprises, and were among the pioneer merchants in El Paso and Juárez and in the surrounding region on both sides of the border. Many of the business buildings and homes Trést built in El Paso were commissioned by Jews, and when it was decided in 1914 that a new building was needed for Temple Mount Sinai, it was Trést who was asked to design it. The new synagogue, located on the northeast corner of North Oregon Street and Montana Avenue, was dedicated in 1916. The budget was $60,000.27 The detailing of the dark red brick exterior includes religious symbols expressed directly in the brickwork (fig. 60). The restrained mood of the interior is broken by the detailing of the frames of the amber-hued stained glass windows and the oak staircase of the foyer, both of which are light-spirited variants on Flemish Gothic woodcarving motifs.

In 1962 Temple Mount Sinai moved to a new building in another location. The 1916 building is no longer owned by the Temple, and is used for meetings and other activities.

The Loretto Academy is a school for girls operated by a Roman Catholic order, the Sisters of Loretto. The school was founded as St. Joseph’s Academy for Young Ladies in 1879 in San Elizario, but was later moved to El Paso because San Elizario was by-passed by the railroads. An earlier building for the school at 700 North El Paso Street, built about 1907 but later demolished, was among Trést’s earliest religious commissions in El Paso.28 The second commission Trést received from the school was for the present campus of Loretto Academy, completed in 1923.29 This was a complex commission, calling for a large chapel, residential quarters for nuns, classrooms for grammar school and high school students, and dormitories for high school students, some of whom lived on the campus. Trést met these requirements by designing a connected suite of buildings, joined by a continuous façade shaped like the inside of a
60. Old Temple Mt. Sinai.
reverse J. The chapel, flanked by a bell tower, opens onto the center of the curve. Walls are covered with buff stucco, roofs are red tile. The style was described as "Spanish Renaissance," and, as in the case of the slightly later Orndorff Hotel, Loretto Academy can be considered to be an example of a Spanish Colonial Revival building (fig. 61).

If measured in terms of present-day El Paso, a much larger city than the one in which Trost worked, or in terms of the cultural institutions of other American cities, the cultural life of El Paso while Trost lived there might seem a bit restricted. There was, as one example, little higher education for the student who did not wish to study mining or metallurgy. And there was no museum engaged in collecting or exhibiting visual arts materials, though there were exhibitions of the visual arts, most notably those organized by Maude Durlin Sullivan in the El Paso Public Library. Other exhibitions included one which Trost helped to organize. In any case the most active of the arts were the performing arts, due in large measure to the railroads: performers or groups of performers who were bound to or from Los Angeles or other West Coast cities found El Paso a convenient stopover. As a result El Paso engagements were frequently included in the itinerary of many actors, singers and musicians with national and international reputations. It is not known how frequently Trost attended the operas, plays and concerts available in El Paso, but surely he was interested in these performances if only because he was so active as a designer of theaters and auditoriums.

The fact that Trost lived in El Paso did not prevent him from keeping abreast of architectural developments elsewhere. Indeed, national architectural magazines performed in a dual role for Trost: they provided a means for keeping him informed of what was being built in other regions and, at the same time, because his own work appeared so frequently Trost was made conscious of the fact that his work was being seen by architects working in other regions. The case of *The Western Architect* offers the best example because it is known that Trost subscribed to it and kept a file of the issues. His work was illustrated regularly in its pages from 1909 through 1930. With an editorial office located alternately in Minneapolis and Chicago, before its demise in 1931, *The Western Architect* managed to
present more of what was worthwhile and of enduring interest in progressive architectural designs than did any other publication of its era. Thus Trost was able to maintain some sense of community and shared activity with progressive architects.

Travel provided Trost with another means of keeping current. In a 1914 biographical account it was asserted that, "A part of nearly every year is spent in the east, where he enjoys association with the best known architects of America, and where he has opportunity to learn all that is new and noteworthy in his field." 135

Trost was working where he most wished to work, and it is unlikely that he felt culturally isolated in El Paso. He no doubt admired some of the achievements of architectural colleagues in El Paso, particularly the work of Ernest Krause (1847-1932), a native of Germany who arrived in the city about 1881,136 and Edward Kneezell, who arrived about 1884.57 Trost must have taken much satisfaction from the support and respect of his clients, while he, in turn, admired them for their business acumen and achievements. But it was the entire ambience of the Southwest which stimulated Trost’s creative imagination: the expanding economy, surely, but also the sense of intermingling human cultures, the evocative remains of earlier human activity, and the landscape and climate which he loved and respected and took great pains to understand.