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302½ rio grande sw
albuquerque
new mexico 87104

Merrill Grinnell
18147 Coastline Drive
Malibu, CA 90265

11/9/82

RE: Pueblo Deco

Dear Merrill:

Please find enclosed both black and white prints and several Cibachrome prints (due to difficulty converting these to b & w). My experience has been that black and white negatives for reproduction can be made from the Cibas. Although my copyright appears on all prints, you (Stasis, to be exact) has my permission to use these prints for the Pueblo Deco article as well as any future use provided it is nonprofit and a photo credit appears.

I have also xeroxed excerpts from the book, Pueblo Deco: Art Deco Architecture in the Southwest for further information. These excerpts are not keyed to the prints enclosed but you should be able to relate them to the buildings.

The prints are: Plate 1, El Rio Theater, Truth or Consequences, NM, c. 1950, Architect Unknown

Plate 2, Detail from Mountainaire~~re~~ Drug Store, Mountainaire, NM, c. 1940, Architect Unknown

Plate 3, Portion of second floor of Shaffer Hotel, Mountainaire~~re~~, NM, 1928, Clem "Pop" Shaffer

Plate 4, Detail of fence at Shaffer Hotel, depicting Shaffer's "animals"

Plate 5, Portion of inset entrance at Mail~~sel's~~ (now Ney) Trading Post, Albuquerque, NM, 1957, John Gaw Meem

Plate 6, Albuquerque Indian Hospital, Albuquerque, NM, 1954, Hans Stamm

Plate 7, KiMo Theater, Albuquerque, NM, 1928, Carl Boller

Plate 8, wright's Trading Post, Albuquerque, NM, c. 1950, Architect Unknown

505/ 242-6683 or 883-4546

Plate 9, Detail of KiMo Theater, Albuquerque, NM, 1928, Carl Boller

Page 2

The buildings not covered in our book are the drug store and El Rio Theater, due in part to little information, but also to the condition of the buildings. El Rio appears to have been built after the KiMo in Albuquerque, which was probably the inspiration for much of the Pueblo Deco style in the SW. Like the KiMo it is bilaterally symmetrical (as is Shaffer's Hotel, also) and bears a strong relationship to pueblos such as Taos. The parapet is in the form of the stepped pyramid, a dominant motif of this style. This motif also appears on the drug store. The materials used in both El Rio and the drug store are stucco over concrete block with glazed tile details. El Rio also uses black and green Carrara glass above the windows. Unfortunately, the entrance to the El Rio has been paneled in rough wood? or other paneling with Astro turf covering what one could assume to be a tile floor at the entrance.

A few items not mentioned in the piece about Shaffer Hotel: The detail from the fence next to the hotel is of figures set into concrete. The figures are various stones and rocks in bright colors. These figures were termed "Pop" Shaffer's "animals" and apparently attracted tourists. What is interesting is the resemblance of these figures to Native American pictographs encountered everywhere in this region. The Shaffer Hotel is a registered historic property due to its importance as a folk environment. It's my theory that "Pop" Shaffer must have been influenced by the KiMo Theater and the Native American cultures, interpreting these influences in a unique manner.

While it is difficult to conceive of the KiMo as being the result of folk architecture, it was surely influenced by vernacular architecture and the popular culture growing up around tourism in the SW. I have expanded more on this topic in an article that's coming out this winter or spring by Four Winds entitled "Indian Motifs as Architectural Ornament". Marcus (my co-author on Pueblo Deco, who I will describe later) and I disagree over the origins of Pueblo Deco. Obviously there is the Art Deco movement elsewhere, but I feel that much of the impetus here was derived from the vernacular and popular culture rather than an intentional stylistic movement, consciously performed. So that while examples of these buildings are not strictly folk architecture, they were ~~originally~~ aligned with folk art traditions.

While Maisel's Trading Post was designed by a sophisticated architect, the murals in the inset entry and on the exterior ~~could~~ be termed a folk contribution, but arising from traditional

Page 3

Pueblo painting.

I originally became interested in the topic in 1978 and began by photographing all of the examples I could find, but not making the distinction between Streamline and Deco then. I probably became interested through having grown up in Albuquerque (my parents took me to the KiMo several times, but it closed by the time I was in my teens) and living later in New England and then returning to the SW with a greater interest in architecture.

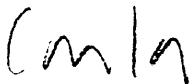
I asked Marcus Whiffen, who currently teaches architectural history at ASU in Tempe, Arizona, to work on writing the text for Pueblo Deco due to his interest in architectural styles. One of the most outstanding (and actually the first of its kind) books on stylistic periods in the US is his Guide to the Styles published by MIT Press.

The purpose of such a book as Pueblo Deco is primarily the preservation of buildings which are now deteriorating or even disappearing. The National Endowment for the Arts Design Program has contributed \$15,000 to UNM Press towards the reproduction of the 80 color plates, for this very reason.

Working on this project was of particular interest to me because until I began documentation, few people had even noticed these buildings. Now, the structures will be perceived with greater appreciation. One sad note, however, is it seems that the tiny glass panels (awkwardly stated, perhaps better is panels composed of tiny glass panes, such as in Wright's, but set in patterns and of various colors) in the Shaffer are covered up and perhaps missing; the interior also designed and executed by Pop Shaffer has definitely been tampered with or even removed.

I hope this letter and the xeroxes have been of some value to you. Do let me know if there is anything further I can clarify. It may also interest you that the photographs will be exhibited at the Museum of Albuquerque and then travel about the US over the next two years, commencing in the Fall of '83. Am also going to send you a photo in the near future of a folk environment I encountered in Oklahoma (can't remember the town at the moment) consisting of a million dolls and Disney figures, etc, set about the yard and fence of a home. If you haven't already, do have subscription information for Stasis sent to me.

Sincerely,



Carla Breeze

PS: The color is off on the 2 KiMo prints, however, this obviously won't affect b&w reproduction.