

MASSIVE ARCH, 16 inches thick, gives feeling of strength and character at entry of Julian Kaufmans' adobe home, Felicita Drive and Montesano Road in Escondido area. Door is hand carved. House is of circular design.

Adobe Homes Revive Warm Rustic Charm

(Continued from F-8)
most like the conventional concrete block."

Craig said that while all of the adobe production at the Escondido plant is now machine made, he plans to convert a certain percentage into the handcrafted block to meet this growing demand.

The critical period in adobe manufacture is the first three days of the drying process. Heavy rains at that time might destroy the entire batch. After the first three days, the blocks are turned on edge to permit exposure of greater surfaces to the air for more uniform drying.

The rows of blocks then remain in the field to dry for six weeks to 90 days. The longer the better, according to some experts. However, the drying and hardening process continues even after the adobe blocks are "harvested" and stored in pallets to await

delivery to the construction job.

Craig said that the Escondido plant produces its entire year's supply of adobe in three to four months of the year — always in the summer because the weather is drier and sunnier at that time. The block is then stockpiled to fill future orders.

Fifteen years ago, the Escondido plant manufactured enough adobe to last the entire season in a production run of from four to five weeks, turning out from 6,000 to 8,000 blocks a day.

The adobe block today isn't what it used to be. It is much better.

No longer is it a mixture of straw, mud and water. Now it is clay, water and oil emulsion, the latter giving the block a weather-resistant quality which protects it from disintegration.

The straw used in the primitive block was once believed to have been put there to provide the adobe mud with a bonding agent. But Larry Weir says he now believes this is a misconception. On a trip to Mexico, he found a worker still using straw in fashioning adobe block by hand. He asked him why, in view of later day techniques.

The Mexican explained the straw was necessary in his heavy adobe mud to provide air space within the block, for faster and more uniform drying, rather than serving as a bonding agent.

"It makes sense," said Weir.

The average adobe house today requires from 3,000 to 3,500 blocks, depending, of course, upon the size of the home. Some require twice or three times that many.

Many of the large, custom-designed adobe homes are residential showplaces.

An outstanding example of the contemporary use of adobe is a 4,900-square-foot dwelling now nearing completion on a 4½-acre wooded site in Rancho Santa Fe, the future home of Attorney and Mrs. Eugene Freeland.

The thick adobe walls will remain exposed on both the

interior and exterior of the house. The roof structure is supported by giant ceiling beams, which also remain exposed. There are 13 arched windows in the house, the glass inset into a cushion of rope around the frame. The rope will remain exposed. Part of the floors are covered with a hexagon tile.

Some of the interior partitions which are not adobe, were finished with a very rough textured plaster to blend with the rustic finish of the adobe.

Massive open wooden steps, bordered by a hand-railing carved in Mexico, leads from the central living area to the master bedroom suite and study upstairs. The home has four bedrooms, plus the study, three and one-half bathrooms and a large family or game room, actually, an all-purpose room bordering the patio.

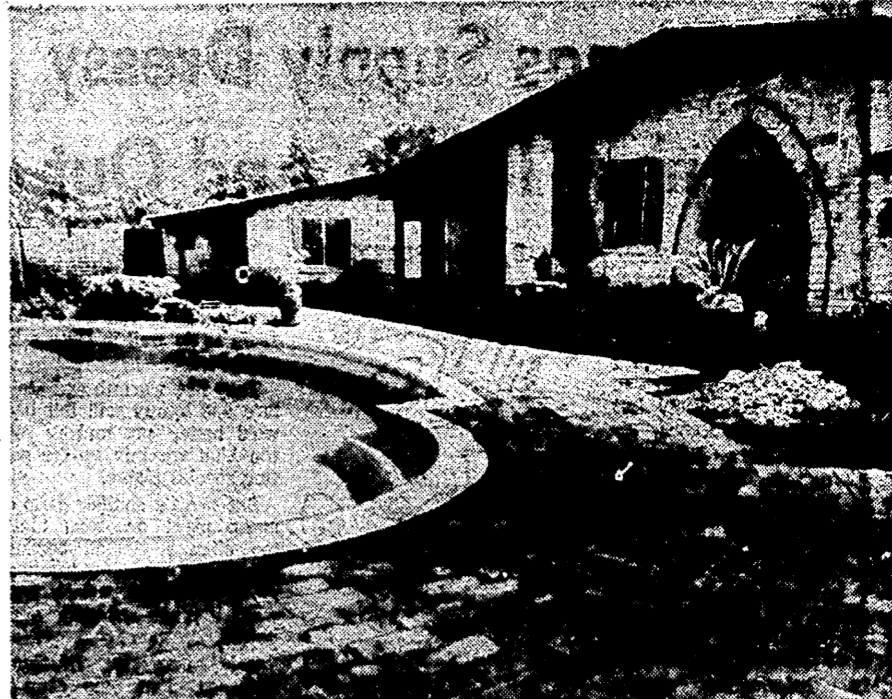
The patio itself is highly interesting, an amphitheater arrangement in front of the house, centered with a free-form swimming pool. Wings of the house swing around this sunken terrace.

There is a built-in outdoor barbecue and fireplace in the patio, fashioned from adobe, of course, as are the walls that surround the terrace. Opening off the Freeland's upper-level bedroom suite is a wide balcony which overlooks the patio scene.

While the greatest market for modern adobe is in the custom-home field at scattered rural locations, there are two San Diego County subdivisions which have architectural controls that require that the homes must be built of adobe.

One is Longview Acres just outside Escondido, off U.S. 395, started by L. R. Green nearly 20 years ago near his adobe plant. Green restricted this development to custom-designed adobe homes, each on sites of an acre or more. There are not 35 or 40 homes in this neighborhood. Progress has been slow, but the subdivision is still growing.

The other is Pala Mesa Village, at the intersection of



SWIM POOL TERRACE at rear of Dorgan house is burnt adobe tile from Mexico, a flooring that carries through interior. Roof is clay tile made in Tecate.



ADOBE BUILDINGS and walls enclose central recreation area at all-adobe Pala Mesa Village. Circular fountain, however, is fashioned from ornamental used brick for color accent. Roof, foreground, is adobe tile made at the site.

U.S. 395 and State 76, a project development of small adobe homes started three years ago.

Pala Mesa Village is an adult community, built around a recreation complex which includes swimming pool, clubhouse and other facilities. It is near the Pala Mesa golf course. Buyers in Pala Mesa Village own their homes outright, but share joint ownership in the recreation center. They pay a \$37 monthly fee for maintenance, which includes care of their own landscaping as well as upkeep of the community mall, the latter spreading over a 2½-acre site.

Mostly these homes, priced from \$26,500 to \$34,850, are used as second or vacation homes by their owners, although there are a few retired families there. The developers also offer a management service, which permits absent owners to lease their adobe houses to vacation families from other areas for \$450 a month, including all utilities and privileges.

Actually these houses are not "genuine" from the standpoint of all adobe construction, but the effect is the same. The exposed adobe on both exterior and interiors is a veneer on a wooden framework, a technique that per-

mits more economical construction. However, the community buildings are genuine all adobe.

At first, all Pala Mesa Village houses were roofed with an adobe shingle, made at the site, but this practice created too much of a look-alike pattern. For variety's sake, many of the homes now are roofed with red Spanish tile and other materials.

Sixty-four adobe homes have been completed at Pala Mesa Village and three others are nearing completion, all of which have been sold, in the first increment of 91 dwellings.

More construction is planned soon. The projected subdivision provides sites for

270 homes.

Inspired by the traditional adobe architecture of early California, and designed for contemporary living, the homes of Pala Mesa Village have a special charm and distinction that blend naturally into the environmental beauty of the verdant Pala area. It is a green valley surrounded by lush groves of orange and avocado trees.

So, while adobe construction today is still relatively limited, the revival has been steady and significantly progressive.

The coming years may see more and more of these attractive homes for those who want and admire the adobe abode.

Remodeling Project Can Add Elegance

Elegance and fine detailing are returning to architecture, and they can be applied as easily to an existing home as to a new home.

This does not mean fancy scroll work and "carpenter gothic." The elegance we see today is embedded in the basics of simplicity combined with good proportions, fine detail combined with good taste.

The circular staircase is a good example. It is a delight to the eye with its disciplined respect for line, curve and symmetry. In addition, it is one of architecture's truly great space savers in the home.

Several firms in California now manufacture circular staircases. If you want to conserve space, if you want to open up the area where a staircase now runs, and if you want an architectural item in your home that is bound to please you forever, the circular staircase is for you.

Several basic designs are available, but each is made to order based on the total "rise" and the radical space available.

Most are constructed of steel with a variety of tread surfaces. You can have flat steel, safety-tread steel, concrete or wood.

For the home, wood or carpet over steel are the usual choices, but some homes would provide a fine setting for concrete treads with exposed aggregate. This is very effective when contrasted to deep-pile carpeting at the lower level or with tongue-and-groove plank ceilings.

There are also stairs from these same manufacturers that are not circular but have

many of the same advantages of saving space. They also are characterized by good design.

Whenever a two-story house is remodeled, or a second story added, the problem of stairs should be very thoroughly investigated. The contribution to elegance and good architectural design of well-planned stairs is very important.

Of interest to all, of course, is cost. A circular stair will, without question, be more expensive than simple wood stairs. But, as if to prove the point that good design is one of the best investments you can make, the really outstanding stairs cost only a very little more than the very ordinary stairs.

Your home improvement contractor is the person to work with. Installing the stairs must be coordinated with other construction details and all must be integrated into a total design for best effect and utility.

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Tape Sets Lines

For a neat-looking home paint job, use masking tape around the edges of woodwork, window panes, etc. It also helps to remove the hardware while painting woodwork. It can be polished while it's off.