

# **Sanctuaries of Spanish New Mexico**

Marc Treib

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Among the oldest buildings in the United States, the churches of Spanish New Mexico—made of earth, of stone, of wood—are the surprisingly fragile reminders of a unique amalgam of Spanish architectural ideas and native American Pueblo culture. This book surveys the land and rivers, the people and ideas, that led to this compelling religious architecture; it is also a guide to visiting these churches today.

In the ninth century the Anasazi, progenitors of the Pueblo peoples, constructed refined architectural complexes at Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon. Contact with the Spanish in the late 1500s transformed the world of these indigenous peoples, changing their agricultural and living patterns—as well as religious practices. These changes were manifest architecturally in the sanctuaries the Spanish constructed as missions for the Indians or as parish churches for themselves. First built roughly between 1600 and 1829, but continuing to be rebuilt into this century, they were made of the very materials composing the land itself.

In Part I, Marc Treib addresses the geographical, anthropological, and architectural aspects of church building in New Mexico and provides background on the church as both an institution and a building type. Part II presents thirty churches in depth and discusses such topics as sitting, construction in adobe and stone, the use of light, ornamentation, and the issues surrounding restoration.

Sanctuaries of Spanish New Mexico is the only book in print to include all the major church sites still extant. Richly illustrated, with specially prepared plans of the churches, it will be welcomed by architectural historians and anyone with an interest in the American Southwest.



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