

For example, S. R. Nelson, Manager, Santa Fe Land and Improvement Company wrote, "What Are We Coming to at Rancho Santa Fe," in the January 1928 issue of Rancho Santa Fe Progress, he wrote that "A little more than six years ago, J. B. Lippincott, one of the foremost engineers in the Pacific Southwest, stated his survey of conditions affecting the proposed establishment of the community of Rancho Santa Fe..." a prediction made on December 9, 1921,⁹ which approximates the letter from Sinnard to Hodges.

A San Diego Union article in June 1922, set forth the entire plan for Rancho Santa Fe. Work began immediately. In 1929, standing at the terrace of Hodges' guest house, Sinnard would call the attention of his host to the:

wonderful piece of engineering--53 miles without a straight line, an abrupt cut or fill--how the beautiful natural contours of the roads called attention to and accentuated the beauties of knoll and vale.

The first public notice of the 8,800 acre development for Rancho Santa Fe appeared in the San Diego Union, June 8, 1922,¹⁰ relating of the ground breaking for the village site, to include fifty miles of roads, more than forty miles of water distribution mains and a civic center in the heart of the tract. At this time the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company adopted the name Rancho Santa Fe for its development. The letter which Sinnard wrote to Hodges in the fall of 1921, accompanied by the map is key to the interpretation for that clearly shows the civic center with the unusual treatment of the "village center." (Letter and

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been engaged to draw the plans. Wheeler had been employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad yet was involved with the design and construction of buildings for the San Diego and Arizona Railroad. A personal tragedy had brought him to San Diego in 1913.¹¹ Wheeler's experience with Spanish-Colonial architecture had become well-regarded by the time the Rancho Santa Fe project was outlined. Had he drawn those plans? Wheeler's commissions had, or would include, the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Old Town, San Diego, and the Balboa, Mission theatres and other buildings of that style.

Yet it is Richard Requa and Herbert Jackson who would have charge of the influence over the direction to be taken. Between 1915 and 1919, they focused principally on constructing Spanish Colonial homes in Ojai and some churches and homes in San Diego. Having matured their architectural skills toward the Hispanic range of possibilities no doubt blended with the ideas Hodges had already expressed. These would eventually appear much like those now attributed to Richard Requa, Frank Mead, and Lilian Rice.

As S. R. Nelson pointed out,

The plan of Rancho Santa Fe differs very widely from colonization projects to which it was then compared. Instead of appealing to the man of small means who could at best by dint of hard work and sacrifice, be in a position of keeping his head above water only after several years of struggling, it was planned to attract families with appreciation for the natural advantage of the area and the means to magnify and develop....¹²

Gifted author Lee Shippey wrote in The Architect and Engineer, of February 1924 (which means the story was written sometime earlier than publication) titled the article "Rancho Santa Fe--California's Perfectly Planned Community." Shippey wrote

...one now is building. It has been planned on the theory that often your neighbors' architecture

and artistry which combined to produce the village with a centralized commercial district for efficient service. Requa and Jackson agreed that no better person could be assigned to fulfill the plan for Rancho Santa Fe.

The first Rancho Santa Fe school opened in October 1923, in a room in the village center. The first Rancho Santa Fe Public Library was placed in the La Flecha house. Also finished by July 1923, were a service station and some small buildings along Paseo Delicias. The Standard Oil Bulletin of October 1923, related that "what you might have mistaken for the town well or pump is a gasoline-filling stations..." Photographs show the completed civic center, "keynote of the colony architecture of La Mirada, Rancho Santa Fe's new hotel."¹⁷ An unusual feature of these early homes in 1923, was that they were all-electric. Charles Nelson wrote of the village center in 1924 where people picked up mail, bought groceries at a small store which the company then operated.

The question of the concept for Rancho Santa Fe is moot, but the idea probably came from a combination of minds. Ed Fletcher writes of his leasing of the rancho land, of his role in the water systems in the region and of suggesting to Ripley that here was a place for a village site. Certainly Hodges in the acquisition of the land grant extended his thoughts of growing eucalyptus trees to make railroad ties, to the building of the dam and lake named for him. From thereon it was a matter of clearing land and the potential for farming, particularly avocado and citrus. By 1919, it is very clear that he had engaged Sinnard to explore and pursue the potential for the development of a planned community.