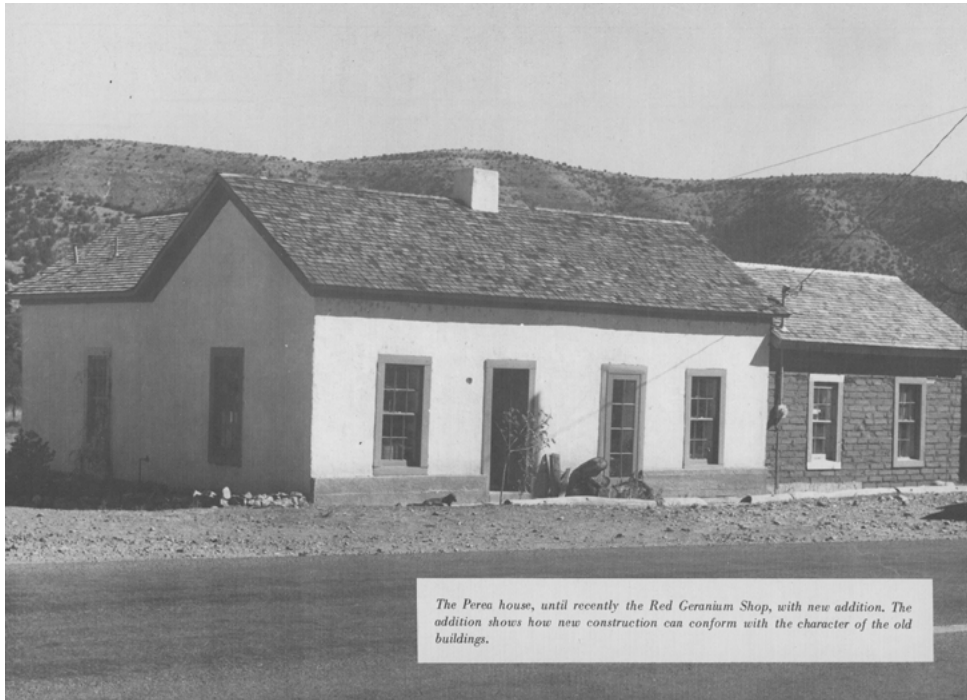


Design Philosophy

How Mosaic thinks about shaping space



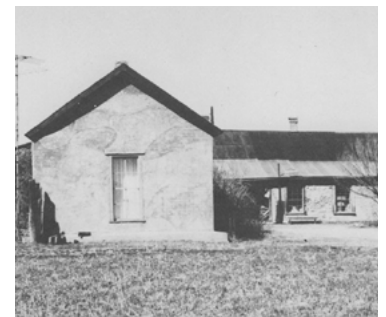
The Perea house, until recently the Red Geranium Shop, with new addition. The addition shows how new construction can conform with the character of the old buildings.



Mosaic's mission is to help people feel at home in the world. We do this by building communities that celebrate the uniqueness of each human being, while fostering a deep sense of connection and belonging. Our belief is that the nuclear family is too small a unit to meet all our needs, and that groups of 8–12 households (at a minimum) provide a more dynamic and nurturing environment for healthy human life. Mosaic's communities are designed to encourage and support this broader scale of social interaction.

Architecturally, we are inspired by the philosophy of Christopher Alexander, as expressed through such classic texts as *A Pattern Language*, *The Timeless Way of Building*, and *The Nature of Order*. In each place that we build, we study the traditional vernacular that existed before 1950, when suburbs and strip-malls began to overtake the landscape. Our belief is that the best possible future involves a deep integration of the distant past.

Here you see a collection of historical images from the small town of Lincoln, New Mexico, showing houses constructed in the mid-1800s. When we first encountered these images, they immediately spoke to our heart — their solid forms, their straightforward construction, their quiet confidence, their elegant simplicity. To us, they represent a kind of guiding star: not to be copied or replicated directly, but to inspire a formal language that is new and also very old. Most of all, this timeless quality is the thing that we seek.



Selected images from "Lincoln, New Mexico: A Plan for Preservation and Growth"

Community Design

How Mosaic thinks about building community



The feeling of street life within the Canyon Trails community, showing a common courtyard where residents can gather and meet.

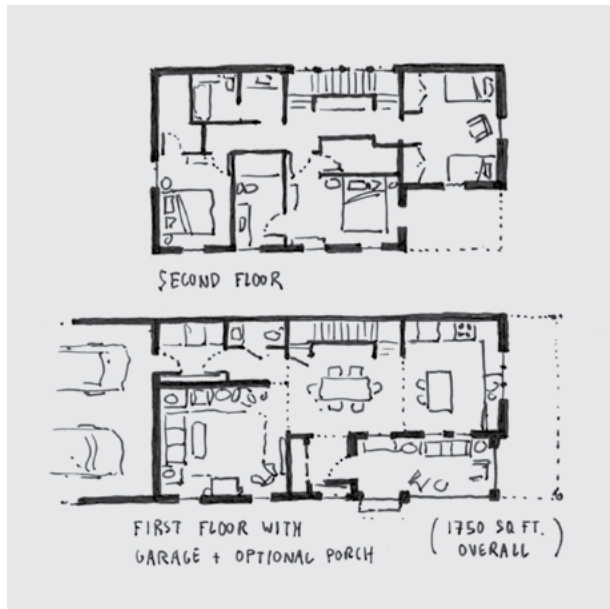
Canyon Trails will incorporate a number of special “patterns” that help to cultivate vibrant and connected community life.

Buildings will be arranged in **House Clusters** around **Common Courtyards**, providing semi-private places for neighbors to gather. Disparate parts of the site will be connected by a network of **Wandering Paths**. At the heart of the site, there will be **Common Land** with **Something Roughly in the Middle**, providing a center of gravity for community life, a **Connected Play** space for children, and a place for **Local Sports**. There will be a flexible **Common Building** for social events, with **Beautiful Parking** nearby. The Arizona summer sun will be mitigated by **Shaded Gathering Places** with **Cool and Textured Ground** below and **Tree Canopies** of well-adapted vegetation above. A pool and a fountain will offer a vital **Connection to Water**.

There will be space set aside for the possible later emergence of various community initiatives, including a **Garden for Growing Food**, a **Shared Tool Shed**, a **Coworking Cafe**, a **Shopfront School**, and **Bike Paths and Racks** to encourage a more car-free existence. We expect the specific design of Canyon Trails to unfold naturally in time.

Home Design

How Mosaic thinks about creating homes



Top: An archetypal Mosaic home within a community.

Bottom: First and second floor plans for the pictured home.

Mosaic's homes are designed with humility — their true beauty comes from the way they belong to the whole. Through the spaces we create, we strive for elegant simplicity, and the timeless feeling of "home". We often ask the question, "What would a farmer do?"

Houses are generally conceived at **Cottage Scale** — one or two-story buildings with **Simple Roof Shapes** and **Offset T-Square** floor plans, producing **Simple Building Forms** that don't feel fussy. Such simple buildings are less expensive to construct, allowing for the use of **Good and Honest Materials** whose beauty deepens with age. Rather than industrial "perfection," we seek and embrace the **Mark of the Maker**, encouraging a sense of **Organic Roughness**. When possible, houses are built using **Thick Walls**, providing a sense of shelter, protection and permanency — and relief from the Arizona summer sun.

Within a given community, a few homes in key locations will **Stand a Bit Taller and Speak a Bit Louder**, as a way of anchoring and defining the community's common spaces. Most homes are designed for **Nesting Into One Another**, with "open" and "closed" sides, allowing each house to have a **Private Side Yard**, even when nearby its neighbor. Houses generally have **Large Living Porches** facing onto common space, with an **Entrance Transition** (a gated yard, a small garden) providing **Fertile Boundaries** between public and private space.

Interior space is arranged along an **Intimacy Gradient**, with **Farmhouse Kitchens** towards the front and bedrooms and studies further to the back or upstairs. When possible, there is **Light on Two Sides of Each Room**, creating bright and cheerful spaces for gathering. Common rooms are lined with **Alcoves**, giving family members a way of being alone, while also together. Master bedrooms are conceived as a **Couple's Realm**, providing an intimate sanctuary apart from full family life. Each house has a **Flourish of Ornament** (a name, a plaque, a special tile), communicating the personality of its owner.