chored to an artery, the complex opened onto a secluded plaza and could extend no further than two blocks from that locus. The purpose of this arrangement was to contain commerce so that "future home surroundings are forever assured against business encroachment." The ultimate objective was to create "a 'guaranteed' neighborhood" where the "beauty of residential areas" would exist in perpetuity (figure 102).[2]

The proposal was an early manifestation of a new approach to business development in outlying areas, which was laying the groundwork for the mid-twentieth-century concept of the shopping center. Among the pioneering ventures advanced during the interwar decades, Palos Verdes was the most sweeping in its proposed territorial extent. Just before the depression, another important development was inaugurated near Beverly Hills, the first of its kind designed to compete with downtown. Through both schemes, Los Angeles made a major contribution to the concept during its formative period. That work, however, would have been inconceivable without the precedent set elsewhere in the country by several projects designed during the previous decade.

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"A 'Guaranteed' Neighborhood," advertisement for Palos Verdes Estates showing Lunada Bay Plaza in background. (*Los Angeles Times,* 6 April 1924, V-16.)

PRECEDENTS

Through the 1930s, "shopping center" was a term by and large loosely applied to a collection of businesses irrespective of size. Downtown might be called a "shopping center," as might major outlying business districts, modest neighborhood clusters, or even a taxpayer block that contained several stores. Yet as early as the 1920s, "shopping center" began to assume a much more specific meaning, which would become the dominant one by the post–World War II era.[3] This new definition entailed comprehensive planning in both the design and business realms. In the physical dimension, a shopping center was built according to an overall program that covered all aspects of the scheme, from the fundamental nature of the site plan down to the details of exterior lighting and signs. The design process was coordinated among the parties involved to achieve a unified ensemble, both visually and functionally. Often they sought a harmonious relationship with the residential areas served by the center. Toward that end, the ambience cultivated through the 1930s and sometimes later was an idealized presentation of preindustrial communities in Europe and North America. The shopping center was tailored to meet the needs of a prosperous consumer society, including ready access by automobile, but it was in no way to suggest the physical attributes of downtown.

Unity was just as important to the operational structure of the shopping center. A complex was initiated, implemented, owned, and managed under the auspices of a single party—an individual or a syndicate—which generally established an organization for the purpose. That organization bore ultimate responsibility for every aspect of the development, including site selection, financing, design, construction, choosing tenants, maintenance, and promotion. The shopping center thus was run as an integrated business to which a number of independent parties paid for the opportunity to participate. Tenants were picked on the basis of performance as well as how their respective businesses related to an overall merchandising plan. The optimal "mix," as it was called, enabled each tenant's presence to reinforce the others. The complexion of that mix depended upon the target audience—the number of people in a given income range residing within a specified radius of the site.[4]

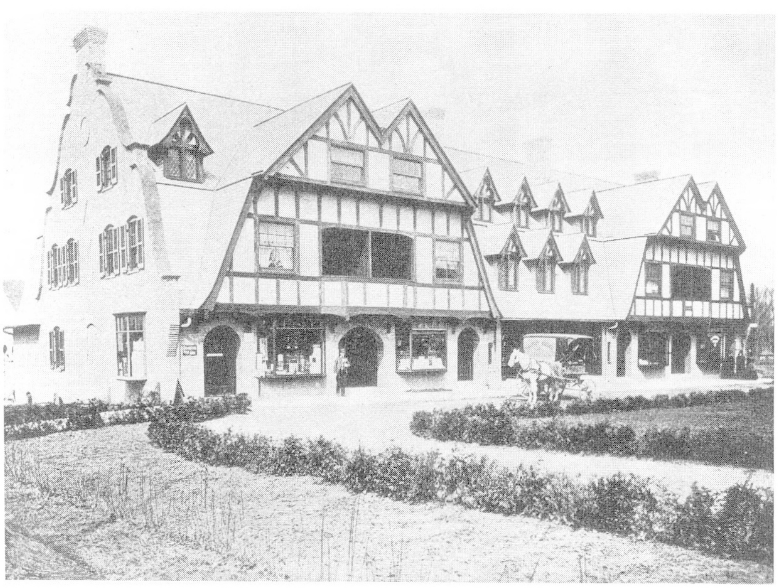
So complicated a strategy for retail development did not, of course, emerge fully formed. The mature conception of the shopping center grew incrementally over a period of about seventy-five years, beginning in the post–Civil War era. One reason why projects such as that proposed for Palos Verdes were so unlike conventional patterns of commercial real estate development is because the shopping center as an idea was nurtured under wholly different circumstances.

The shopping center was born not out of a drive to achieve maximum profits from arterial frontage, but rather from reform efforts in residential development, using a holistic approach to create places that functioned as communities in their own right rather than as undefined tracts added to the urban matrix. While connected to the city by railroad lines and dependent upon it as an employment base, the first generation of planned residential enclaves was championed for their seclusion from the urban world. A few stores providing goods and services residents needed on a routine basis were important under the circumstances. On the other hand, a basic purpose of the community was to allow escape from commerce as well as from industry and crowded conditions. Barring commercial uses altogether would likely mean that a scattering of operations, perhaps marginal in caliber, would establish themselves just outside the precinct. Allocating space for stores within the community, but without controls over what or who located there, might yield no better results. Furthermore, such ventures tended to be housed in rudimentary quarters that well-heeled residents considered eyesores.[5] The alternative was more costly and complicated but would enhance the community's prestige. The developer could invest in a building that was more ornamental, one that would be regarded as commensurate with its surroundings, and choose tenants for it that were well suited to address local demands. The purpose of the undertaking, then, was not to generate profits in itself, but to do so indirectly by making the community more appealing to prospective householders.

Probably the first decorous store building realized as an integral part of a planned residential community during its initial stage of development was a five-unit block erected in 1870 at Riverside, Illinois. Few other examples materialized over the ensuing years, in part because such enclaves themselves remained anomalous.[6] The situation began to change during the early twentieth century as the result of several factors. The exponential growth of cities made escape to satellite locations the more desirable among those who could afford it. Such places also became more accessible owing to the rapid growth of far-flung streetcar lines. The swelling market, in turn, made the development of elite residential enclaves a more competitive field. Amenities and safeguards against undesired forms of development were increasingly important to attracting well-off home-buyers. Planning, beyond the subdivision of lots and some basic improvements to the land, became a strategic means by which real estate entrepreneurs could sell house lots at substantial prices.[7]

Among the most celebrated examples, and one of the most important as a model for early twentieth-century real estate practices, was Roland Park, which lay just beyond the Baltimore city limits when it was first platted in 1891. Guards against business "encroachment" were a central part of the plan. Yet because the area lay some distance from the downtown establishments patronized by the prominent families courted for the development, a building was erected for a few basic retail functions. The developer, Edward Bouton, went to great lengths to ensure that the building would be viewed as an asset instead of an intrusion.[8] The exterior suggested a country house, or perhaps a country club, more than a commercial facility (figure 103). Bouton did not solicit tenants, but he was careful in choosing merchants (the initial group included a grocer, a pharmacist, and a confectioner) to purvey the types and caliber of goods expected by his elite clientele.

After 1900, Roland Park began to attract national attention among members of both the design and real estate fields, for it represented one of the most ambitious, sophisticated, and economically sound ventures of its kind on this side of the Atlantic.[9] The store block appears to have enjoyed special interest. While decorous examples could be found in an increasing number of affluent residential areas, this one was unusually elaborate. The building was one of a very few that stood in isolation, not as part of an unplanned village center but surrounded by residential functions, without the possibility of enlargement.[10] No better illustration could be found of how commerce could operate in an environment fully



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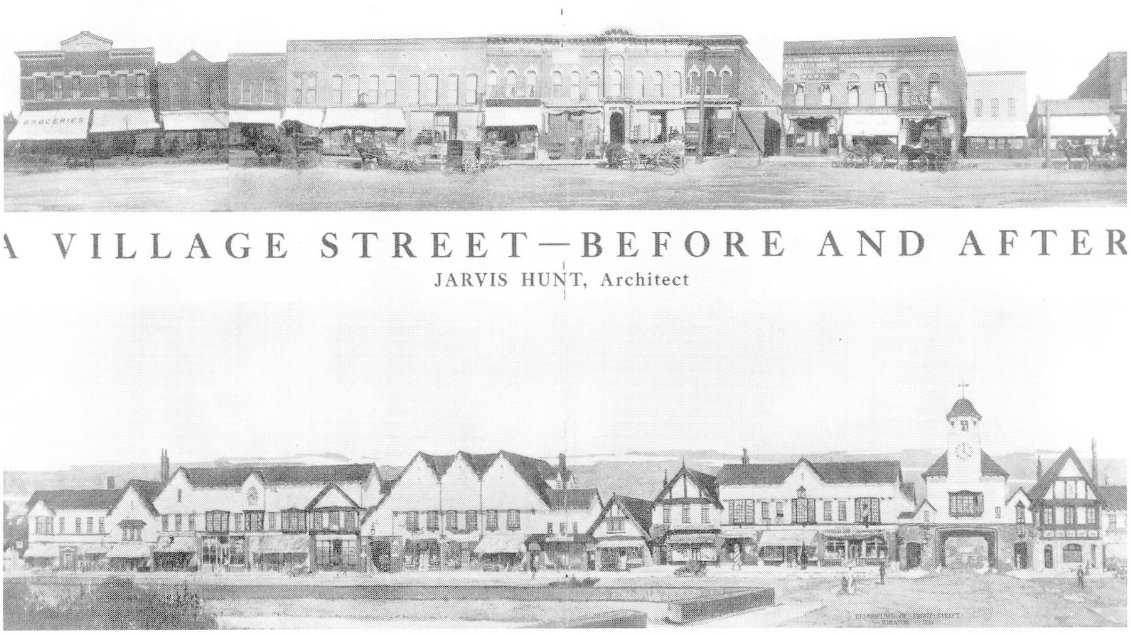
Roland Park store block, 4800–4812 Roland Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, 1894, Wyatt & Nolting, architects. (*Baltimore American Souvenir Edition* 1895, courtesy Jacques Kelly.)

consonant with genteel domesticity. The Roland Park store block afforded a paradigm both in the integration of retail outlets as amenities in residential development and in the planning of those outlets to address needs of a specific clientele.

A project undertaken in 1907 by the Los Angeles Investment Company indicates the extent to which the store block gained acceptance as a component of planned residential subdivisions. Founded in 1895, this firm became a major business within fifteen years, deriving its funds from a swelling corpus of stockholders (9,000 in 1911) who wished to partake in the city's real estate bonanza. Unlike most ventures of the period, the company built and sold houses rather than just platting land. The concern operated at an enormous scale by standards of the period, having purchased over 3,100 acres in the Southwest district and constructed some 2,200 houses there by 1913. The area was improved incrementally, but even those tracts were sizable. On the eighty-acre College Tract (begun 1907), houses were first erected on every other lot so that purchasers could temporarily enjoy a side yard. Seventy houses out of the 450 planned were almost completely sold within the first fifteen months. In contrast to many nearby areas, streets were improved, utilities installed, and landscaping undertaken as part of the enterprise. Space was set aside for small parks, and also for eight store buildings, on strategic corners so that they lay within convenient reach of all residents.[11]

Much like the bungalows they were built to serve, the store blocks had a standardized design. The scheme was more pedestrian than the Roland Park facility but otherwise embodied a similar approach. The Los Angeles buildings were separated from other commercial development and were consciously designed to resemble the houses that surrounded them (figure 104). Each had four units for stores. Space above was reserved for community purposes: recreation halls, fraternal lodges, and temporary quarters for churches and schools. The company retained ownership of the buildings and presumably had an ongoing plan for their management. Not all the buildings appear to have been realized, and they



were sold in 1914 when the company suffered setbacks due to a downturn in real estate activity.[12] Nevertheless, the venture was a precocious step locally toward establishing an integrative approach to outlying retail development.

Reform motives also led to the next, decisive move in the emergence of the shopping center concept: housing a broader range of commercial functions to serve community needs. Planning in this context entailed an ensemble of buildings that would function as a business district. Some of the earliest efforts in this vein were to remake existing centers of satellite towns that were attracting prosperous city dwellers. The urbanites' dislike of these junctions where the machine met the garden was considerable. In 1910 the editors of *House Beautiful* described the core of Wheaton, twenty-five miles west of the Chicago Loop:

> The station was hopeless in its packing-box ugliness, and the street across the way even more dreary. . . . Beyond the town were miles of beautiful country . . . , but not a hint of this was revealed by the foreground. . . . It was the average outlook in the average town . . . presenting the same hit-or-miss building scheme—a sort of architectural patchwork, unrelated and depressing.

Commercial architecture was the worst of the lot: "Beautiful country houses we have long had . . . , imposing public buildings, fine churches, but these alone have not made . . . our country places . . . architecturally perfect. There has always been a blot somewhere—usually at the [town center]."[13]

There followed a scheme for recasting this alleged wasteland proposed by a prominent Chicago architect, Jarvis Hunt. Hunt had convinced property owners to underwrite a preliminary plan, replacing an assemblage "irregular and monotonous—a combination peculiarly American" with a picturesque ensemble of freely interpreted postmedieval elements—"a little English, a touch of German, all planned by a Yankee"

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College Tract store block, 1942–1946 W. Forty-eighth Street, Los Angeles, 1907–1908, Los Angeles Investment Company, designer; altered. Photo "Dick" Whittington, 1927. (Whittington Collection, Department of Special Collections, University of Southern California.)

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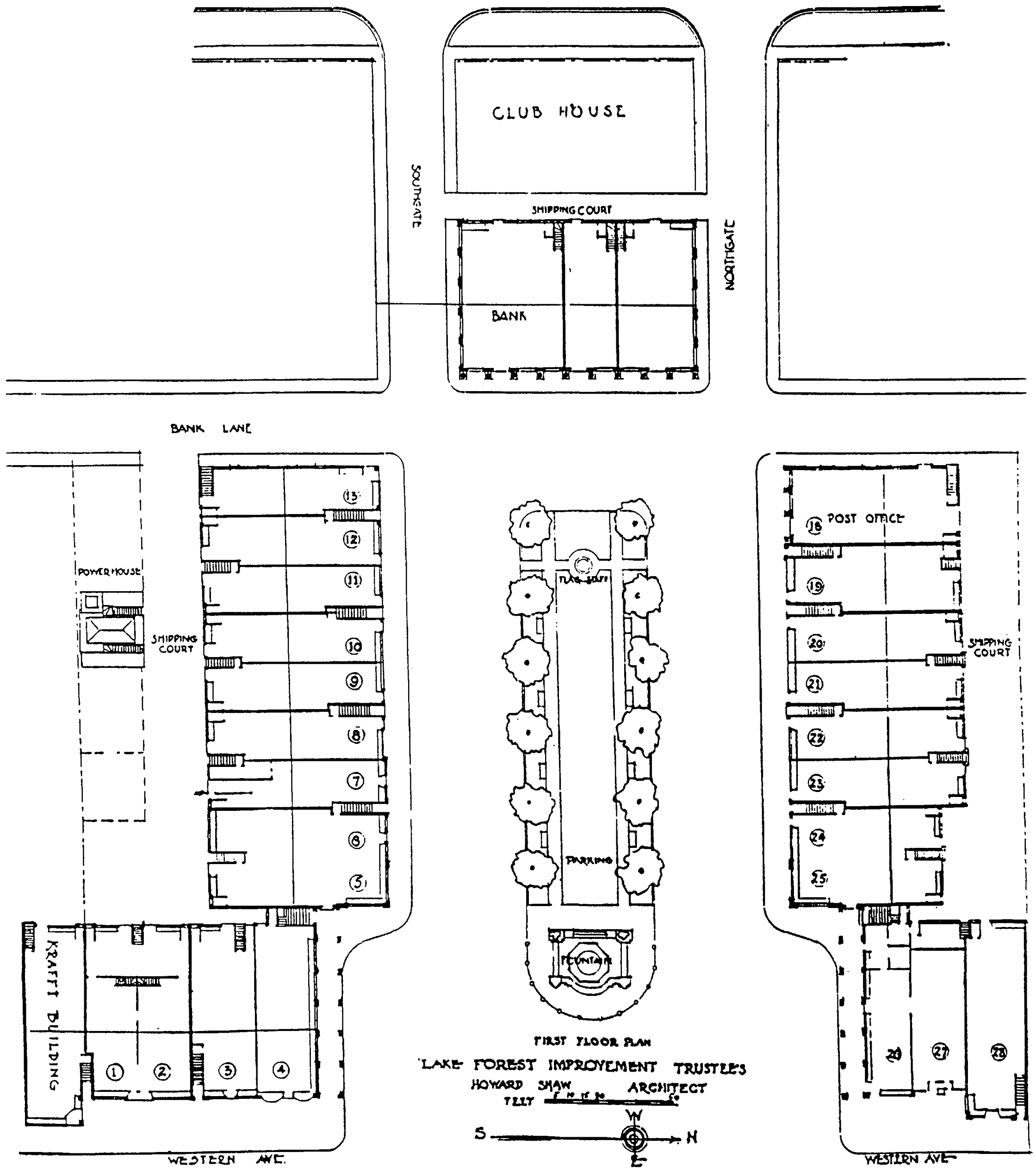
Hypothetical design for streetfront remodeling of commercial center, Wheaton, Illinois, ca. 1909–1920, Jarvis Hunt, architect. (*House Beautiful*, April 1910, 128–129.)

(figure 105). The design was practical, Hunt claimed. It would cost less than $1,000 because work entailed only few facades. While the vocabulary was by then well evident in prosperous residential areas, the scope was unprecedented in the commercial sphere. The design elicited widespread interest, the editors claimed; their own enthusiasm was overflowing: "Surely anyone who can start a movement to reform the American town, architecturally speaking, deserves . . . all kinds of monuments—and it is quite possible that [Hunt] might be remembered long after the maker of cathedrals had been forgotten. . . . The . . . scheme will be watched with keen interest, for the real story is just beginning."[14]

Hunt's proposal in fact stood little chance of materializing. The cost would have been greater than his estimate. Absent competition, property owners had little incentive to remodel. Even if some of them were willing to invest, the objective would have been lost without full participation. If nothing else, the proposal underscored the need for a single organization to undertake such an enterprise.

Perhaps the most important result of Hunt's proposal was the inspiration it almost certainly afforded for Market Square, which was built several years later and established a precedent nationally for an integrated shopping complex. Like Hunt's, the project was directed at the commercial center of a Chicago satellite town, Lake Forest. The existing fabric was similarly branded "a disgrace to civilization . . . strikingly like Sun Dance, Wyoming in the early '80s."[15] Likewise, too, the design was the brainchild of a leading Chicago architect, Howard Van Doren Shaw. But in this case, Shaw had a collaborator, Arthur Aldis, partner in one of the city's foremost real estate development and management firms. Aldis and Shaw both had "country" residences at Lake Forest, as did a number of friends who ranked among Chicago's richest families. Plans to redevelop the town center began in 1912 when Aldis persuaded several others, including Cyrus H. McCormick, Jr., to form an investment trust, of the sort



his company had pioneered for large downtown buildings several decades earlier. Shares in the venture cost from $5,000 to $25,000; over $540,000 was raised in subscriptions and through a bond issue in two campaigns. With these funds, the trustees purchased a major portion of the business district and erected Market Square behind the range of extant buildings to minimize disruption to merchants. Once work was completed in the spring of 1916, the trust assumed the role of manager for the ensemble of twenty-eight stores, twelve office suites, thirty apartments, a gymnasium, a clubhouse, and the landscaped space that served as a centerpiece (figures 106, 107). Although initial plans called for dissolving the trust once buildings were sold with restrictive covenants, the organization did not relinquish its role as steward for over half a century.[16]

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Market Square, Western Avenue, Lake Forest, Illinois, 1915–1916, Howard van Doren Shaw, architect. Photo author, 1988.

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Market Square, site plan. (*Architect and Engineer,* December 1918, 82.)

Market Square might be dismissed as a millionaire's indulgence had the program not been developed on a sound financial basis by so important a figure in the real estate field. Aldis and his associates received a return of from three to four percent on their investment even though the venture was driven by aesthetic rather than monetary objectives. Shaw worked closely with Aldis to create an arrangement that served both ends. The automobile was a central factor in this planning, since most Lake Foresters had cars at an early date. Market Square was perhaps the first business district to be laid out specifically to accommodate motor vehicles. The setback not only enabled construction to proceed before existing buildings were demolished, but permitted a significant widening of the main street. This step, combined with having new streets around the square, was designed to relieve traffic congestion that often occurred when trains arrived at the depot close by. The square also was seen as a means to increase curbside parking space. Delivery vehicles were given their own service courts behind both ranges of stores. The configuration further increased the area that could be used for business purposes; the linear footage of storefronts was nearly three times that of the earlier grouping. The cost of the buildings, whose exterior treatment was as decorous as any among commercial architecture in outlying areas, was justified on the grounds of increasing trade. Providing a full range of basic goods and services in embellished surroundings, the complex was intended to raise community patronage.[17]

Market Square attracted widespread attention within a few years of its opening. Much of the interest lay in its visual attributes. Here, it seemed, was a long overdue illustration of how the spirit of the city beautiful could be manifested in a mercantile endeavor, of how business buildings, no less than public ones, could give civic focus to a community. San Francisco architect Albert Farr wrote enthusiastically for west coast colleagues tht the scheme provided an exemplar for much-needed changes in small business districts throughout California.[18] Yet it was the practical aspects of Market Square that stimulated the most interest and enthusiasm. The project demonstrated that a single organization could bring order to the supposedly chaotic commercial landscape in such a way as to improve business and generate a profit for the sponsors.

The concept of developing a commercial center with set boundaries, designed as a unified entity, and with a harmonious relationship with its residential environs received considerable reinforcement from the flurry of comprehensive plans for industrial communities prepared during the 1910s. Manufacturers commissioned such work both to mitigate labor unrest and as a positive means of advancing stability and productivity in the workforce.[19] At the same time, proponents of city planning and of housing reform seized the opportunity to realize in embryo an agenda they believed should have general application. More than most undertakings of the period, these plans presented a matrix for total communities, places containing all the components necessary to sustain a well-rounded, healthful existence. Because the intended residents had few resources and little mobility, more attention was paid to providing a strong focal point for activity at the town center. In function as well as appearance, that center represented an idealized view of the traditional community core.[20]

Some of the most ambitious proposals for early twentieth-century industrial towns were developed for copper mining operations in the Southwest. These schemes provided a direct precedent for California work in their imaginative responses to topography and climate as well as their use of Latin-inspired forms.[21] One of the best known and most widely praised—in Los Angeles and nationally—was Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's scheme for Tyrone, New Mexico (1914–1918), prepared for the Phelps Dodge Corporation (figure 108). Though based in New York, Goodhue spent much of his time in southern California and did much to shape its architecture, first through his plans for the Panama-California Exposition at San Diego (1911–1915), which to many observers seemed at once more worldly and sensitive to the region, more sophisticated and natural, more decorous and coherent than local work.[22] The exposition influenced design in the state through the 1920s as few individual projects did. Tyrone was an important sequel, possessing many of the same attributes, simplified in a manner conducive to residential application. The design had an unpretentious gentility coveted by the affluent during the 1920s. The town center, which was emphasized in the presentation drawings, suggested not so much an outpost for miners as the heart of an exclusive residential tract in southern California. It was likely on the minds of those planning Palos Verdes.

PALOS VERDES

When designed in 1921–1923, Palos Verdes Estates was to be one of the largest planned communities in the United States. The tract encompassed some 16,000 acres. Topographically, it was spectacular by any standard,

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Town center, Tyrone, New Mexico, 1914, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, architect; partially realized, all constructed buildings destroyed. (*Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, Master of Many Arts*, pl. clxx.)