

# THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN LANDSCAPE URBANISM WORLDWIDE

## THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

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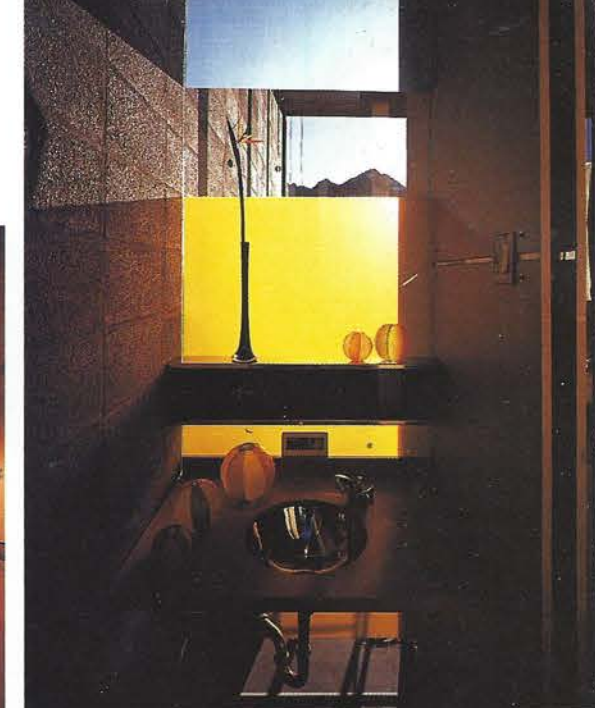
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November 1997 Vol CCII No 1209 Art and Industry in USA: Consultant Editor Annette Lecuyer

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### DELIGHT

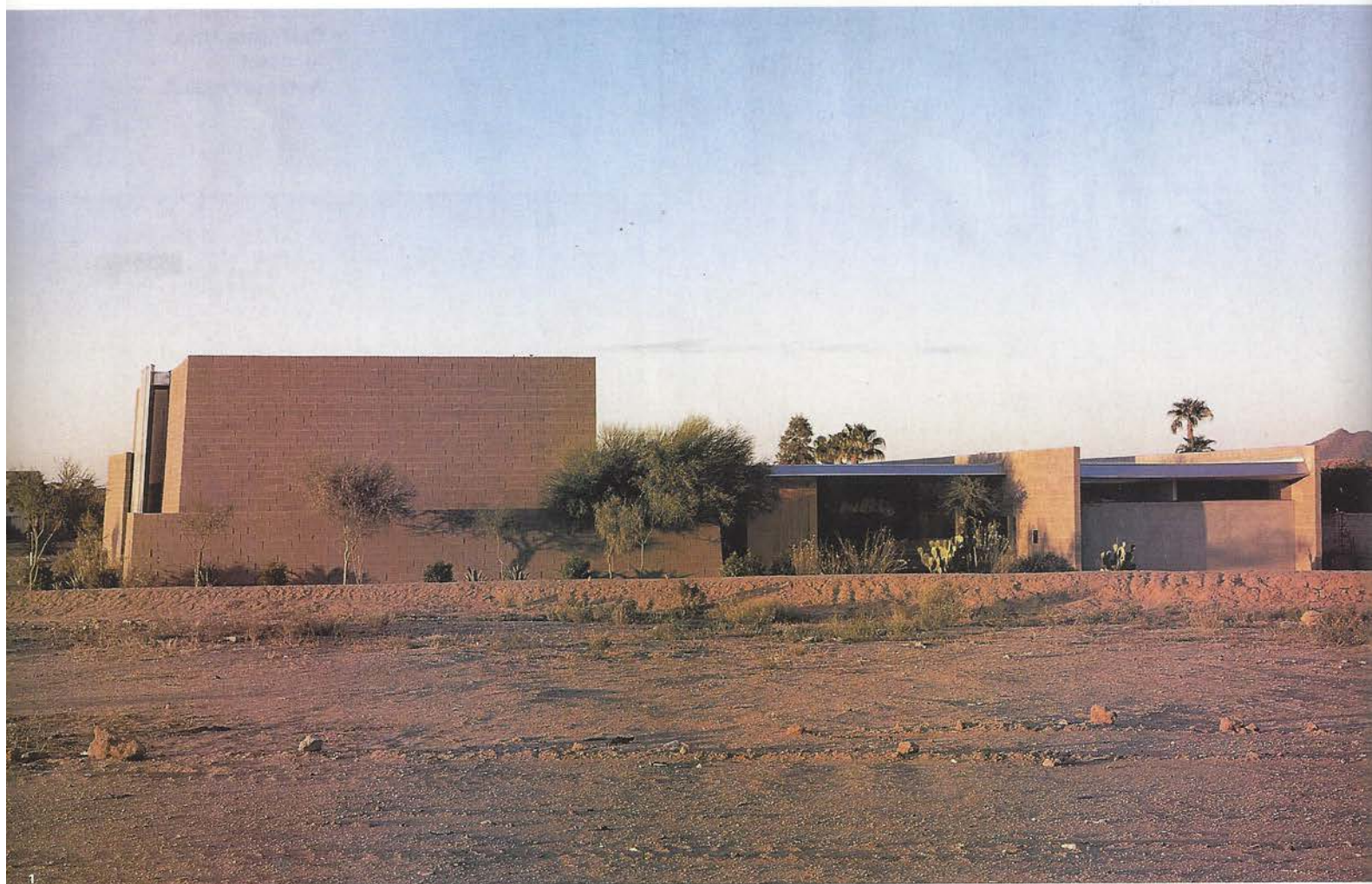
- 98** Hail Mary Marian Chapel, St James Roman Catholic Cathedral, Seattle, Washington, USA SUSAN JONES

### COVER

- House, Phoenix, Arizona, USA by Wendell Burnette (see p63) PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL TIMMERMAN

**ART AND INDUSTRY IN AMERICA**  
**Williams and Tsien in Phoenix**  
**Cranbrook continuum**





Located in Scottsdale (an eastern suburb of Phoenix), the Kol Ami worship and learning centre contains both religious and educational facilities for a local Jewish group. The complex of buildings is conceived as a modern version of the traditional fortified village in the spirit of ancient desert settlements. This deflects the rather lacklustre suburban context and reinforces the elemental presence and raw materiality of Will Bruder's complex of buildings. So far, the complex consists of a

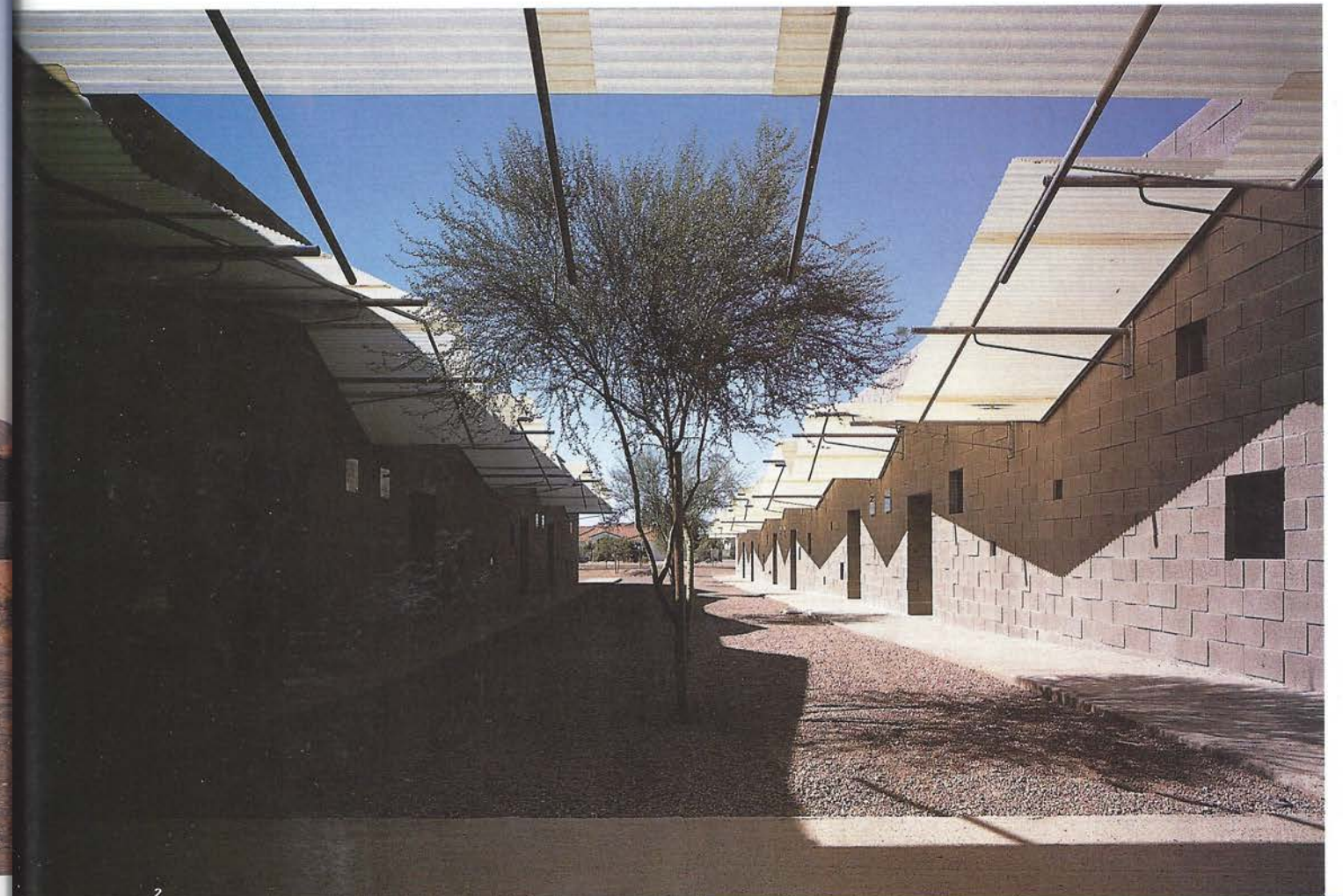
synagogue, school and community rooms arranged in a tight knit pattern of streets and protective courtyards. The intimate matrix is intended to reinforce a sense of community identity. Only the first phase has been completed, but eventually the complex will extend to occupy half its allotted suburban block; the rest of the site contains a landscaped area for car parking.

Overlooking the parking garden, the east wall of the Kol Ami compound forms its principal public elevation. As yet the wall is only

partly complete, but will eventually undulate along the full length of the complex in a languid, sensuous curve. The focus of the first phase is a large volume described as a sanctuary which is used for worship and various educational activities. Slashes of sunlight energise and illuminate the space through clerestory glazing in the roof and a carefully positioned square window on the south wall. A cherrywood ark containing the Torah's scrolls is set against the east wall.

## ELEMENTAL ABSTRACTION

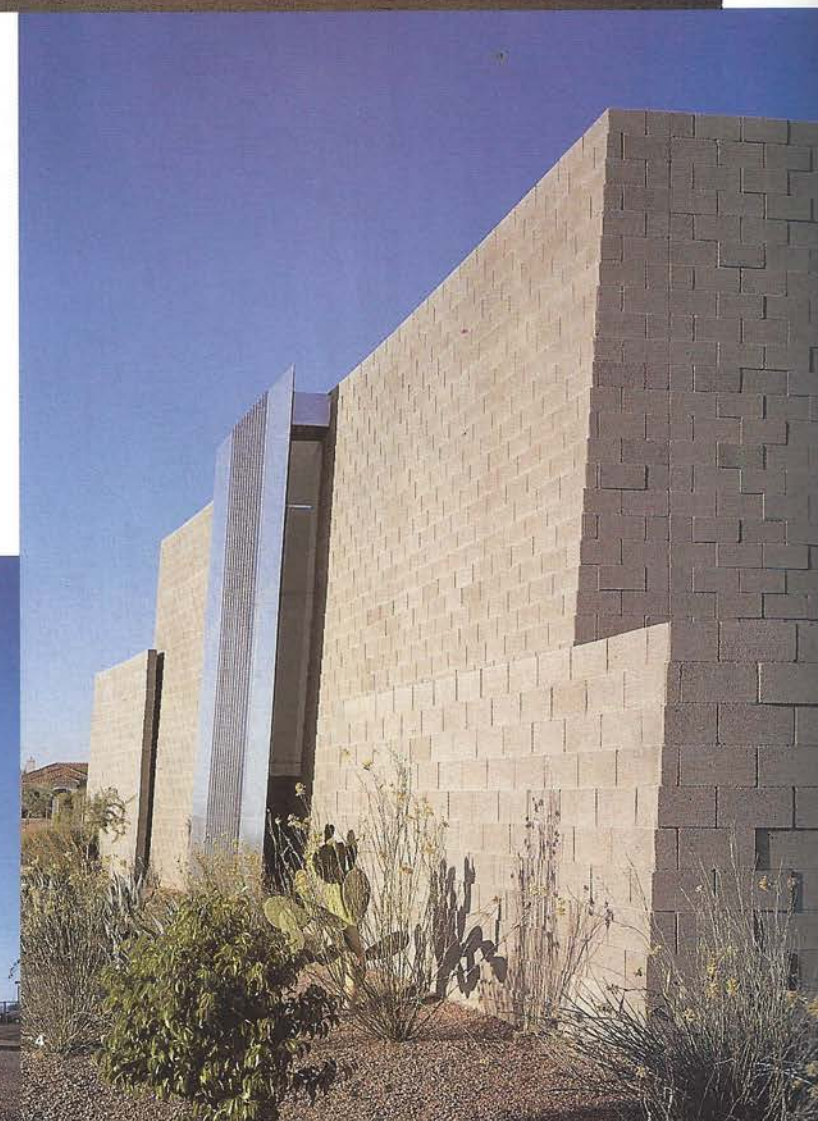
Using simple construction techniques and drawing on the traditions of ancient desert settlements, Will Bruder's worship and learning centre for a Jewish community has a compelling tectonic intensity.



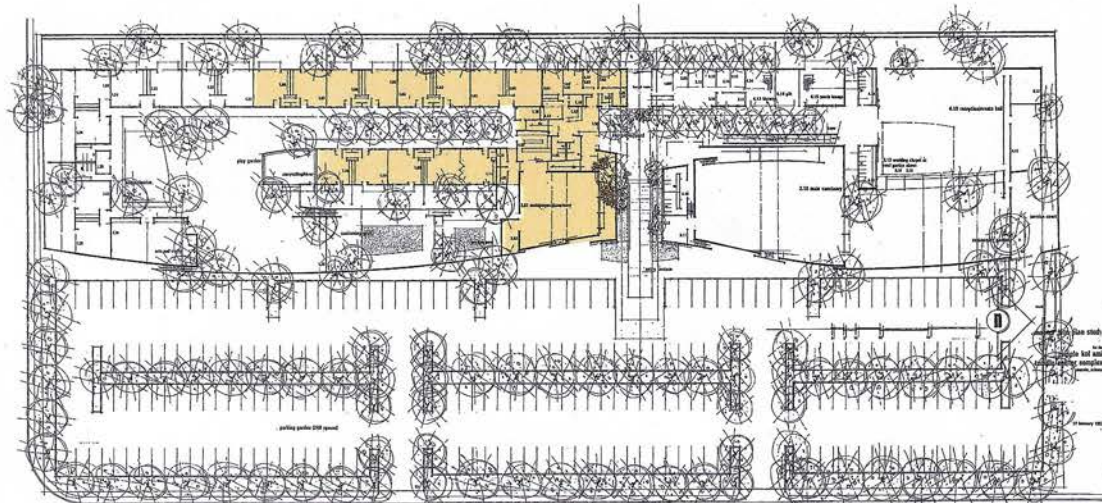
### Worship and learning centre, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

Architect  
**William P. Bruder Architect**

- 1 The first phase of the Kol Ami complex has a massive, elemental presence, inspired by traditional desert communities.
- 2 Part of the cloister between the two wings of classrooms.
- 3 Polycarbonate sheeting is fashioned into lightweight awnings providing shade.
- 4 The walls of the sanctuary consist of sand aggregate blocks laid slightly offset. Thrown into relief by the sun, the irregular texture of the blocks animates the huge flank walls.



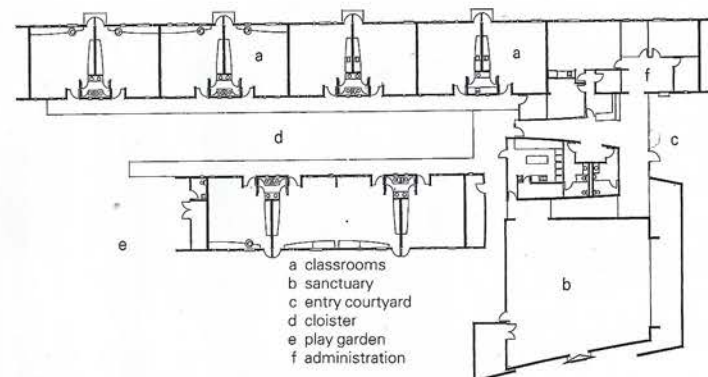




ground floor plan of overall complex (completed phase shown in tint)



6



ground floor plan of first (completed) phase (scale approx 1:650)

Extending southwards from the sanctuary are two narrow legs containing cellular classrooms. The space between the two blocks is treated as a kind of cloister, shaded by concertina-shaped awnings fashioned from ribbed, translucent polycarbonate sheeting. The awnings are supported by thin metal poles. The apparent flimsiness of the awnings contrasts with the potent, primal solidity of the masonry walls. Standard sand aggregate blocks, greyish pink in colour, are laid slightly offset to give

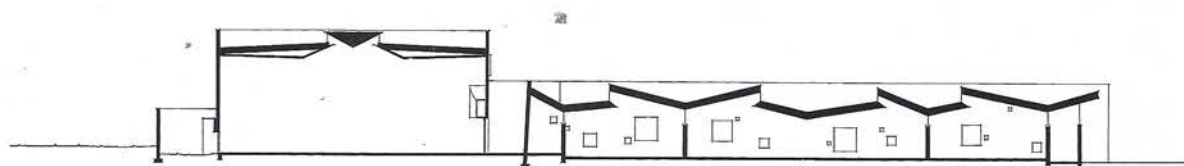
the walls a rough hewn quality without cutting or applying external finishes. Constructed in this simple yet ingenious fashion, the massive, solid walls seem to come alive as changing abstract patterns of shadows and reflections animate their surfaces each day under the harsh desert sun.

Rooted to the earth, the Kol Ami enclave reflects Bruder's study of Jerusalem and Judaism as well as his appropriation of vernacular construction methods to make buildings that manifest a restrained

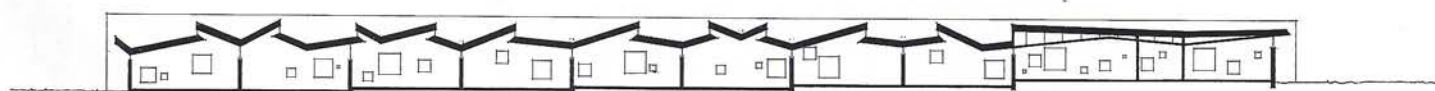
but strangely compelling material and spiritual intensity.

PHOEBE CHOW

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The Planning Centre  
*Photographs*  
Bill Timmerman



cross section through sanctuary



cross section through classroom wing



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**Worship and learning centre,  
Scottsdale, Arizona, USA**  
Architect  
**William P. Bruder Architect**

5

Inside a typical classroom.

6

The calm volume of the sanctuary is energised by shafts of daylight from clerestory glazing.

7

Concertina-shaped awnings on classroom wings are supported by spindly metal poles.

8

A cherrywood ark is ranged along the east wall of the sanctuary.

9

Detail of the translucent awning, contrasting with the heavy, earthbound walls.



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