



Santa Fe, New Mexico
Completed July 2006
10,200 square feet



The form of Fire Station No. 8 grew from the site context and functional and programmatic constraints. As the firefighters both work and live in the building, the most important consideration is that it not only functional, but also displays more intangible characteristics such as a human scale and the quality of natural light.

Fire Station No. 8 is essentially four buildings in one – community gathering place, living space, dormitory and apparatus bay; separate volumes for each delineate the difference. The volumes of the crew quarters share pitched roofs, echoing the sloped terrain, while the more utilitarian are flat-roofed. A central circulation spine organizes the plan and minimizes the distance to the apparatus bay.

The style of the station is a response to the regional vernacular: sculptural masses with inset windows, a simplified portal and two earthtone stucco colors to differentiate each volume.

The challenge of public project design is to work with tight programmatic constraints and a limited budget to create architecture. Where large-budget projects have the option to use costly materials and fine detailing, Fire Station No. 8 utilizes form, color and light to invite and inspire.



With a minimal setback, the large apparatus bay at the rear of the building and windows along the street, the design promotes a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

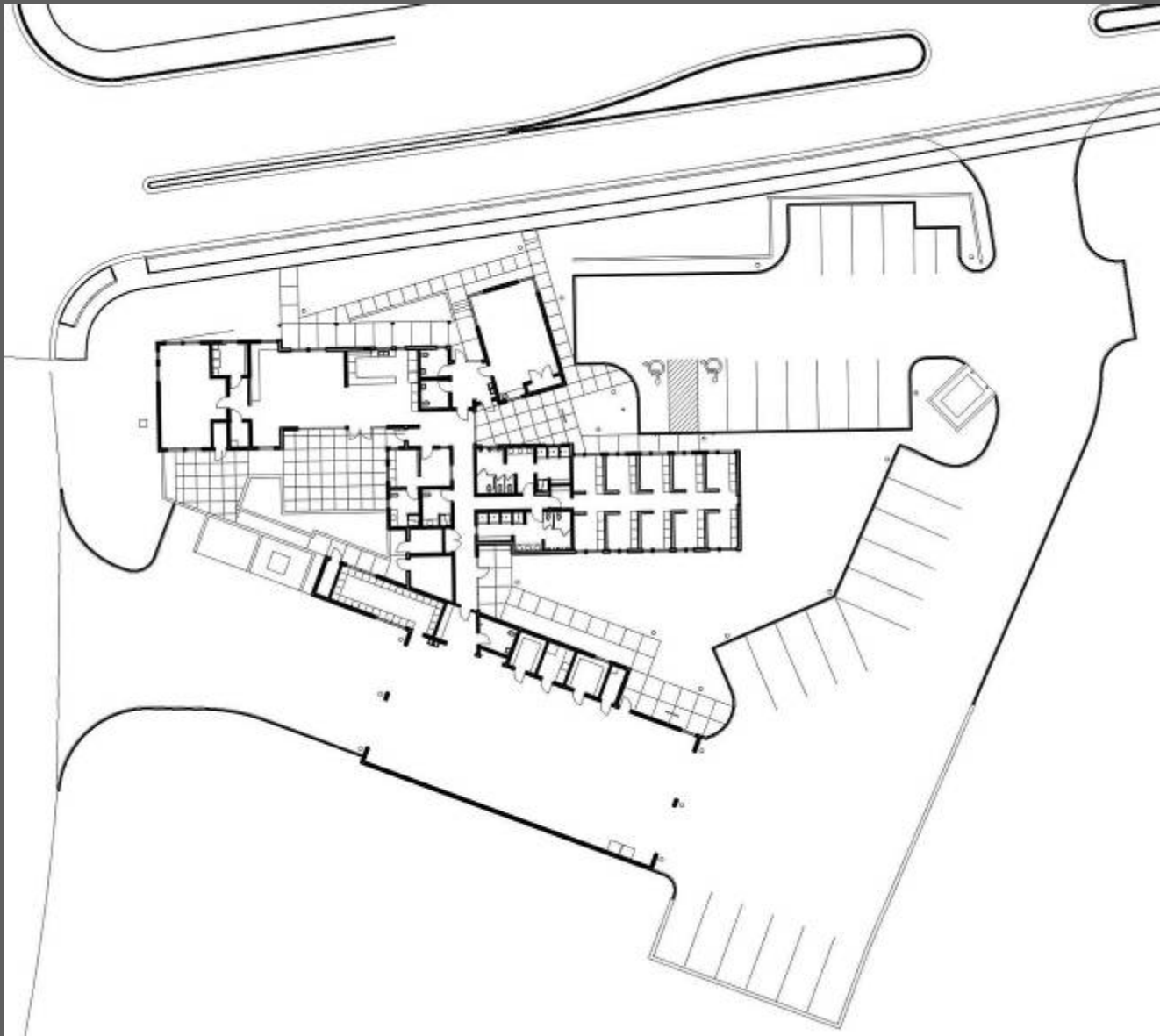
To further promote a walkable neighborhood, a single public lobby can be accessed not only from the parking lot but by pedestrians on Jaguar Drive.





Pitched roofs echo the sloped terrain of the site.





To reduce response time for a call, an open plan and wings off a central circulation spine minimize the distance to the apparatus bay.

A community room, which can be used for neighborhood meetings and fire department training, is separated from the rest of the station so groups can be left unattended when the crew is on a call.





An open plan makes the living quarters feel larger. Sophisticated colors create a stimulating environment. The concrete floors, anodized aluminum windows and simple materials are easy to maintain.

A private courtyard maximizes outdoor space, provides views of nearby hills and offers protection from the strong prevailing winds.



Daylighting (including lighting controls, sunshades, skylights and providing natural light on at least two sides of each room) not only reduces energy use but also creates inspiring, livable spaces.





Floating ceiling clouds allow for the expression of the building's structure while providing acoustic control and defining areas of open-plan rooms. They also provide more intimate residential-scale ceiling heights.

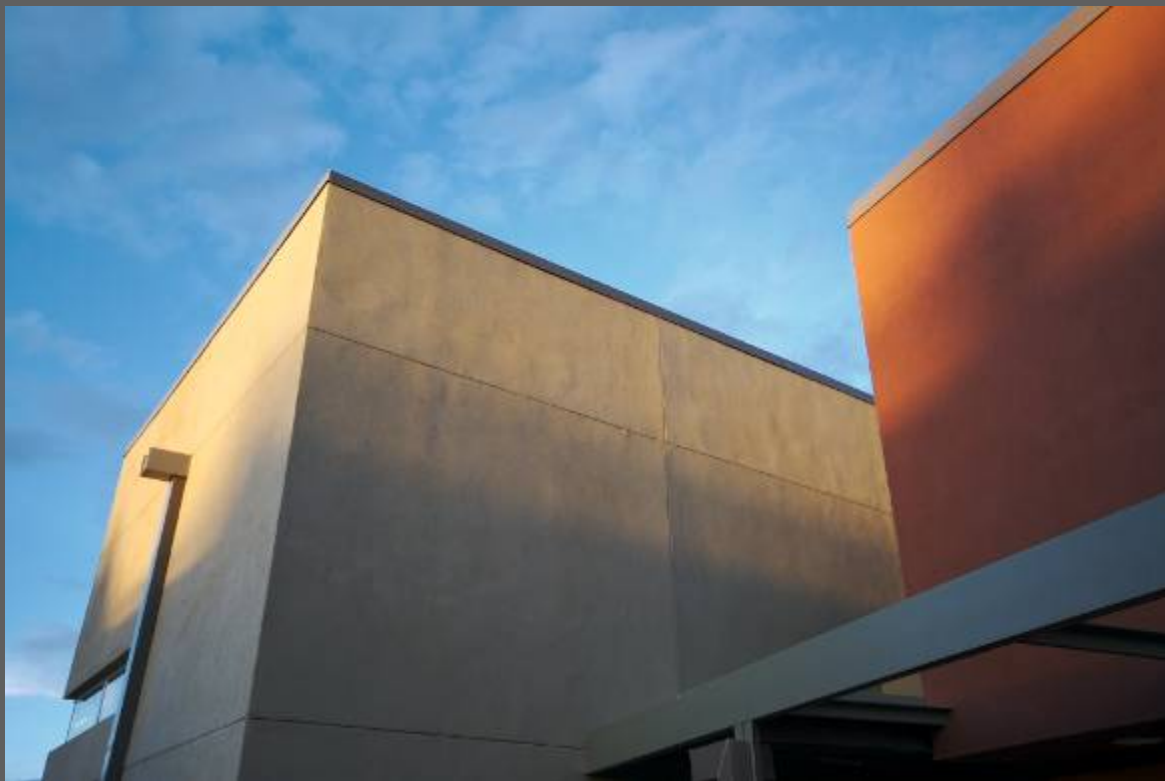


Along with partition walls, the acoustic tile clouds give privacy to individual dormitory spaces.

Each sleeping area has a square window over the bed and either a horizontal or vertical window to provide a choice in light quality and views which the occupant can control without affecting other firefighters; the windows create a pattern on the exterior elevation.



The human scale of the station is achieved with residential scale windows, overhangs and a pared-down version of the traditional portal.





Service spaces and a small level change put some physical and psychological distance between the very-industrial apparatus bay and the living quarters, yet they are still linked by a common ceiling structure and color scheme.

Skylights and glazed bay doors bring light into the apparatus bay.





Unlike a private residence commissioned by its owners, public projects such as Fire Station No. 8 bring contemporary architecture to the public.

Since its opening, a record number of firefighters have asked to be transferred to Fire Station No. 8; their reason: not only does it “work”, but it’s a pleasant place to be.