

Architect: Lumpkins, William T.
Birth/Death Dates: 1909 - 2000
Practice Dates: ca. 1936 – ca. 1980
Firms: Sun Mountain Design

Biographical Information

When in the early 1960s Sam Arnold decided to build a home and restaurant near Morrison based on Bent's Old Fort near La Junta, Colorado, he needed a designer familiar with traditional adobe design and construction who also understood modern construction technologies and building codes. He found such a designer in architect William Lumpkins. Lumpkins accepted the commission and came from La Jolla, California, to visit the building site and the historic site of the original 1833 Bent's Fort.



William Lumpkins, born in 1909 at the Rabbit Ears Ranch near Clayton, New Mexico, was the son of a pioneer family. Young William realized that ranching was not his future. When his family relocated to the Roswell area, he met two men who became mentors: artist Peter Hurd and writer Paul Horgan. Much of Lumpkins' early artwork had its roots in the experience of working with Hurd and learning to depict the New Mexican landscape. He attended the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and also studied engineering at Colorado State College. He moved to Santa Fe and opened an architectural practice, and by the middle of the 1930s became known for both his contemporary artworks and his traditional architectural designs. Over the decades, he received awards in recognition of his leadership and achievements in both art and architecture.

The fundamental principles of Gustav Stickley and the Craftsman aesthetic became guides for Lumpkins' explorations in adobe design. With its focus on simplicity and usefulness, the Craftsman approach to design was easily translated to the regional styles and construction venues of New Mexico and the Southwest. Lumpkins quickly became a leader in the revival of adobe-based regional design, and incorporated Craftsman details and conceptual ideals into a genre of Pueblo-based conceptual projects. By the time of his death, he contributed to more than 2000 buildings in Santa Fe and surrounding areas. Merging traditional adobe building techniques with modern technology, Lumpkins was responsible for many historic preservation projects in the region, and became the foremost expert on contemporary adobe construction, authoring the adobe specifications chapter of the Universal Building Code (UBC) for national use. In addition, his interest in regional styles led to developments in the area of solar energy, and in 1972, Lumpkins co-founded Sun Mountain Design, which initiated solar energy design, innovation and demonstration projects specifically suited to the Southwestern climate and geographic conditions.

Lumpkins began his design work in the Spanish Colonial Revival movement of the 1920s and 1930s, the years of his training and early professional work. Relocating to La Jolla, California, he opened a practice which at first continued in this style, but by the late 1940s, he had begun to shift into a blending of Spanish Colonial with native design attributes, developing what he would later call

Spanish-Pueblo. These reflected more accurately the traditional Hispanic house forms (and furniture) and the Pueblo Indian concepts of space and form that he found in his native New Mexico. Producing drawings for numerous homes in California and the Southwest, he published *Modern Spanish Pueblo Homes* in 1946, a book that established his leadership in this field of design. Over the next decade, he continued to explore adobe as a form and as a material, and his 1961 book *La Casa Adobe* became the noted book on the subject. In this publication and subsequent work in Pueblo-based architecture, one of Lumpkins' efforts was to articulate in his designs the internal planning of residences to the needs of modern living while maintaining the elements and concepts of Pueblo design. His *La Casa Adobe* documented the techniques of traditional construction and attributes of historic design, but it was one of Lumpkins' ongoing quests to meet functional needs of contemporary lifestyles within traditional design forms of building and space (Lingo and Bond, 2006).

The Fort took Lumpkins beyond his challenge of blending form and function with the additional requirements of a public restaurant within the re-creation of a historic space. Supplied with his own measurements of the remains of Bent's Old Fort and the then available historic drawings, he designed a building that re-created the general form and spirit of the historic fort, but did not replicate it. Accommodations in design better suited the site and allowed the structure to meet the requirements of a restaurant. Adaptations in construction were also necessary to meet building codes for public space use. Lumpkins sent his drawings to Arnold by early 1962. Although he designed the building, Lumpkins never visited the Morrison, Colorado, site during construction.

Lumpkins and Pony Ault founded the Santa Fe Art Institute in 1985. Lumpkins also was a pioneer in passive-solar design. Examples of his architectural work that have become Santa Fe landmarks include Rancho Encantado, First Northern Plaza, DeVargas Center and parts of the Inn at Loretto and La Fonda. In 1988, Lumpkins received Santa Fe's first Arts Recognition Award. He also received the Governor's Award for Excellence and Achievement in Architecture and Painting and a National Historic Preservation Award. He died in March 2000.

Summarized from Kathy Lingo, Len Lingo, and Anne Wainstein Bond, "The Fort," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, February 24, 2006.

Credited Buildings (partial list)

Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
The Fort	Morrison	5JF7343	1963	National Register

*Completion date is stated if known. Plan, building permit, or assessor date is shown if completion date is unknown.

Information Sources

Lingo, Kathy, Len Lingo, and Anne Wainstein Bond "The Fort," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, February 24, 2006.

"Painter-architect William Lumpkins was a New Mexico treasure, visionary," *The Albuquerque Tribune*, Albuquerque, NM, March 23, 2000.

Site Files Database, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

Revised: June 1, 2007