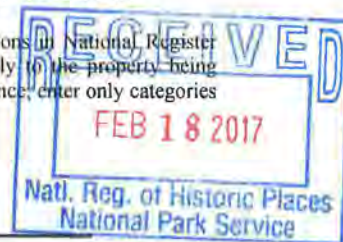


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of multiple property listing: "Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959"

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: 3707 Old Santa Fe Trail

City or town: Santa Fe State: NM County: Santa Fe Zip Code: 87501

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

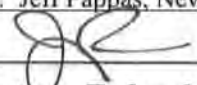
I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A X B X C \_\_\_ D

<hr/>	
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b> <u>2/18/17</u>
<u>Dr. Jeff Pappas, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer</u>	
	
<hr/>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

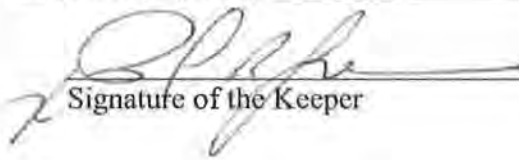
Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

  
Signature of the Keeper

4/3/2017  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

---

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural outbuilding

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

---

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS

Other: Territorial Revival style

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: STONE; CONCRETE

Walls: ADOBE; STONE; CLAY

Roof: ASPHALT; GRAVEL

Other: N/A

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

---

### Summary Paragraph

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is a large, sprawling house located in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, on a fifteen-acre property roughly two miles southeast of the downtown Santa Fe. The house is located at a sharp bend in Old Santa Fe Trail, adjacent to Arroyo de los Chamisos. The house rests on a sloping site, with sweeping views to the south and southwest. The Territorial Revival-style house encloses 8,900 square feet in a complex of interlocking masses. In plan, the house is U-shaped with a short “panhandle” at its northeast corner. The plan is organized around a terraced lawn, which provides an interior focus to the composition. The core of the design is a two-story wing, which includes the main living areas at the southeast corner. Separate wings attached by *portales*, or porches or covered walkways, hold additional bedrooms and an apartment. The uphill fourth wing contains service functions and a garage. The property includes a wood corral, a building that combines stables, a barn, and a tack room, and a chicken house, well house, trash incinerator, and three gates. The landscape, with its curved drive, arrangement of buildings, open spaces, terraced lawn, and areas set aside for natural vegetation, also contributes to the significance of the property.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

---

## Narrative Description

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is a large, sprawling house located in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, on a fifteen-acre property roughly two miles southeast of the downtown Santa Fe. The house is located at a sharp bend in Old Santa Fe Trail, adjacent to Arroyo de los Chamisos. The house rests on a sloping site, with sweeping views to the south and southwest. The Territorial Revival-style house encloses 8,900 square feet in a complex of interlocking masses. In plan, the house is U-shaped with a short “panhandle” at its northeast corner. The plan is organized around a terraced lawn, which provides an interior focus to the composition. The core of the design is a two-story wing, which includes the main living areas at the southeast corner. Separate wings attached by *portales* (porches or covered walkways) hold additional bedrooms and an apartment. The uphill fourth wing contains service functions and a garage. The property includes a wood corral, a building that combines stables, a barn, and a tack room, and a chicken house, well house, trash incinerator, and three gates. The landscape, with its curved drive, arrangement of buildings, open spaces, terraced lawn, and areas set aside for natural vegetation, also contributes to the significance of the property.

## Setting

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is located approximately 1.78 miles southeast of the Santa Fe Plaza, in a rural area of Santa Fe. The roughly rectangular 15.5-acre parcel is bounded by Arroyo de los Chamisos on the north, St. John’s College on the east, and the grounds of the National Park Service regional office on the west. North of the arroyo is the location of the former Sunmount Sanatorium, where John Gaw Meem arrived in 1920 for treatment for tuberculosis. Sun Mountain, a geological landmark, rises to 7,995’ at the southeast corner of the property. The majority of the land is covered with native juniper and piñon trees. The area south of the house was at one time cleared and put into agricultural use. The house is set back from this clearing on a southwest-facing slope, with outbuildings behind it to the east.

From the east side of Old Santa Fe Trail, a gravel drive curves and turns northward, offering a sequence of views of the distant house (photo 1). John Gaw Meem designed the curving drive for this effect, replacing the original, shorter drive, which made a straight line to the base of the courtyard. The curving drive passes remnants of an orchard and fenced gardens and approaches the west side of the west wing of the house, opening into an area of vehicle circulation and parking. The drive then climbs past the main entrance to the house, terminating at the garage portion of the service wing.

## Footprint of Compound

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House presents a complex footprint of four wings connected by portales and a breezeway (figure 1). The four wings of the flat-roofed house are closely integrated into the sloping site. Three masses form a U-shape that encloses terraces retained by low stone walls. The fourth wing, which holds the garage and utilitarian functions of the house, extends uphill from the northeast corner of the “U.” The complex includes several preexisting buildings which John Gaw Meem brought together into one cohesive building

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

through the introduction of portales and new construction.

### **Preexisting Building (West Wing)**

Forming the west edge of the footprint is a long, rectangular one-story mass representing a preexisting building that the Meems purchased with the property in 1935. It started as a simple rock-constructed building made of a line of five square rooms, each entered by an exterior door. Meem removed the adobes of the upper walls and replaced them with stone. This can be observed as the masonry changes from irregular to regular coursing near the roofline. He also created a portal across the east elevation and introduced new fenestration on the east, west, and south elevations.

Built along a slope, the flat-roof structure appears from the drive as a rock-faced façade penetrated by irregularly spaced window openings and a door (photo 2). The windows, like most of those in the house, are a traditional double-hung, six-over-six design. All openings have pink-toned Territorial Revival-style wood casings with pediment trim at the heads, a motif used throughout. A small porch at the south door is sheltered by a plain pediment-shaped roof (photo 1). Its opening is fitted with a wood-panel door.

The east elevation, facing the terraces, is protected by a shed-roof portal (photo 2). Stout round posts and a rectangular beams support the roof (photo 4). The roof is covered with gravel and is bracketed by stone parapets at the north and south ends. The portal shelters a shallow walkway made of random-course flagstone, descending the grade as steps. At the south end are wood steps edged by plain wood railing (photo 5).

The east elevation is finished with adobe and is penetrated by double-hung wood windows and wood-panel doors with wood screens. The south elevation, faced with the same stonework found on the west, has a single six-over-six, double-hung wood window (photo 5). Two flues rise above the roof.

This wing holds a two-bedroom apartment, with separate kitchen and living room areas. The walls are white plastered. Heavy round *vigas* span the ceiling in the living room (photo 6). The floor is made of narrow oak strips. The deep window reveals create wide, nearly rectangular reveals, giving ample space for display. A traditional *horno*-type fireplace with a three-sided flue projects from the southwest corner of the room. Despite its narrow width, the apartment has a feeling of airiness and light.

### **Entry Portal (North Wing)**

The compound is entered through a visually striking stone *zagan*, traditionally a shallow passageway leading from the outside to the interior of a residence. The front wall of the *zagan* is set back a few inches from the older building and is higher than the adjacent wings (photos 7-8). In composition, it is a simple cube with a large, rectangular opening cut out at its center to form a passageway. Spanning the opening is a broad exposed wood lintel above a pair of custom multi-panel wood doors, both stained dark brown (photo 9). The floor is made of flagstone. A fragment of historic wood railing with three turned spindles extends several feet as a decorative

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

guardrail for steps down the east side of the older building.

Beyond the zaguan is a long portal leading to the front door of the main house (photos 10-11). Stretching nearly fifty feet, it provides a vista of the grass terraces to the south. It is constructed of wood posts and a beam that support vigas and a wood deck. Its floor is made of random-course flagstone. The wall facing the portal, which is finished with adobe, is penetrated with an irregular pattern of openings: a wood door with two panels below and two lights above; a six-over-six wood double-hung window; a wood-panel door; and an opening of more horizontal proportions containing a pair of double-hung wood windows.

The wing holds a dining room designed by Meem and two rooms of a preexisting dwelling. The dining room was created when Meem combined the former kitchen and a smaller room into a larger space. The rooms present a mixture of original and new finishes that Meem introduced during the design. His touches include reworked window openings, closets, and a bathroom.

The kitchen area, consisting of two rooms, was likely designed by Faith Meem, a trained architect. The smaller room holds a pantry with original glass cabinets across the north, south and, west walls. Steel counters on the north and south sides terminate at the east wall as a double-basin sink. Located partially below grade, the space has a closed-in, comfortable feeling. Connected to the north is the roughly L-shaped kitchen. Original floor-to-ceiling wood cabinets painted yellow cover the south and west walls. Two large double-hung wood windows on the east wall provide natural light. A set of steps at the north end lead to a breezeway, which connects to the service wing.

### **Main House (East Wing)**

The main house is a two-story stone structure built along the east side of the terraces. It is roughly L-shaped with several projections. Like the west wing, it is made of undressed field stone, laid in random coursing, but in this wing it is a veneer over hollow-clay tile walls.

Meem selected medium-size pink granite stones (Pink Granitic Gneiss) as the facing material for the zaguan and the main house. Found in the nearby arroyo, the local stone is a fine-grained quartz that is strong and resistant to weathering. The pinkish tone of the stone became a motif of the design, influencing the color of the door and window trim, and the garden gates.

The Territorial Revival-style detailing of the other wings continues along the west, east, and south elevations of the main house, with larger double-hung, multi-light wood windows. An elaborate Territorial-style door on the lower level opens onto the middle terrace. It is composed of a pair of French doors topped with an eight-light transom and flanked by narrow sidelights.

The entrance on the west elevation is set back from the bulk of the wing. The setback mitigates the bulk of the higher, two-story mass above (photo 12). The upper-level mass is framed across the east, west, and south elevations by a three-sided portal. The flat-roof portal is supported by plain wood posts and beams and is floored with random-course flagstone. The portal wraps around the mass, providing shade and protecting a group of south-facing windows in the living

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

room (photos 12-14). The walls under the portal have an adobe finish, providing a contrast to the stonework on the rest of the house.

The flagstone continues beyond the portal on the south elevation, creating a wide deck over a lower level roof, with views across the southwest portion of the city and vistas to the distant Sandia and Jemez mountains (photo 16). The Meems hosted many parties and social events that gravitated to the upstairs portal for the open air and majestic views.<sup>1</sup> The portal continues along the east, where it terminates at a horno fireplace built into a stone wall. Defining the edge of the upper story is a wood railing made of small turned-wood balusters framed by a light balustrade. Meem based the design on a relict section of historic railing he observed at an old adobe house on Delgado Street in Santa Fe. The upper-level mass terminates the portal, with areas of raised and projecting stonework, providing visual relief to an otherwise monolithic form (photo 13).

### Interior

The main entrance is accessed from the zaguan and across the length of the portal on the north wing. The custom-made door is inspired by a design found historically in northern New Mexico villages. A cross-shaped form creates the upper panel with two recessed panels below. It is set in a classic Territorial-style frame with a pediment head and dentils under the cornice (photo 16).

The door opens to a spacious hall which serves as the primary circulation point for the house (photo 17). The white-walled space has a viga and *latilla* (peeled aspen branches) ceiling over a decorative patterned-brick floor. From this space one set of stairs leads down to the lower level, holding the bedrooms and a former nursery. Another set rises up to the living room. The second set of stairs—the more elaborate of the two—includes a spiral wood newel post and a plain balustrade made of turned wood balusters.

Two custom-wood-panel and pintle-hinged doors at the upper-level landing open to the living room, a large space filled with books and furniture (photo 18). A floor-to-ceiling wood bookcase spans the north wall. A broad fireplace framed by a molded mantelpiece gives focus to the east wall. The south wall, facing the portal, is dominated by a bank of windows. The ceiling is made of large square beams and smaller aspen latillas arranged in a perpendicular pattern. The floor is finished with wide oak planks. This space functioned dually as a living room for the family and an area to entertain friends and guests.

The lower level contains two bedrooms, the Garden Hall, and the former nursery. The guest bedroom and the earlier nursery are accessed from the Garden Hall by a narrow corridor. Once a casual circulation space giving entry to the master bedroom, the Garden Hall was partitioned in the 1940s to create a separate bedroom.

The most elaborate of these rooms is the master bedroom, a rectangular space that includes a fireplace, framed by built-in bookshelves (photos 19-20). The one-and-a-half-story mass creating the bedroom projects from the south elevation, with its roof creating the deck above.

---

<sup>1</sup> While the configuration technically includes a deck, the family historically referred to the area as the “upstairs portal.” Nancy Meem Wirth, email communication to John Murphey, November 19, 2016.



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Like the apartment in the north wing, the windows have deep reveals, one ample enough to hold potted plants.

A dressing room between the master bedroom and the nursery remains much as did when it was originally designed, with its hand-painted green wallpaper and cherry-wood vanity. The nursery, which was designed for the current resident when she was an infant, has an inset fireplace with a mantelpiece holding tiles, which depict Biblical scenes. The remaining rooms are plain spaces, spare in ornamentation.

### **Service Area (Northeast Wing)**

Forming the “panhandle” of the composition is a wing serving the utilitarian purposes of the house. A breezeway marks the separation between the north wing containing the kitchen and an addition Meem built in c.1937-1938 as a laundry room and garage (photo 21).

From the driveway it presents an approximately eighty-foot-long mass built along a slope (photo 22). A void at the south end encloses a small portal and breezeway (photo 23). Thin wood vigas jut out from the top of the portal. The plain concrete-floored laundry room is entered through a narrow door. A six-over-six, double-hung wood window provides light from the west. A half-light-and-wood-panel door leads to the garage.

The three-bay garage combines stone masonry and stucco cladding. Each bay is fitted with a custom-made retractable wood door. The design of the door is made up of eight-sided geometric forms framing vertical wood panels. Heavy wood lintels span the openings. The garage is plastered across the east elevation and is penetrated with three double-hung wood windows with casings that are more plain than those in the house. A non-historic metal shed is attached to its north elevation. Despite its utilitarian use, the decorative garage doors and the finely proportioned portal and breezeway lend character to the service area.

### **Secondary Resources**

The property includes historic outbuildings, structures and a landscape which contribute to the house and its historic context. The majority of these are located east of the house, north of the horse corral.

#### Corral

A simple, utilitarian structure, the corral is composed of three sections of railing, totaling approximately 250-linear feet and creating an almost 330-square-foot enclosure (photo 23). The corral is made of panels of three-rail-and-post fence (photo 24). The fence posts are peeled juniper poles, driven into the ground. A steel-panel gate is located at the south side. Hog and chicken wire were recently tacked to the two lowest rails to contain family pets. Based on aerial photographs, Meem constructed the enclosure before 1938.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

### Stables/Barn/Tack Room Building

Forming the north side of the corral are two joined structures holding horse stables, a small barn and a tack room (photo 26). Constructed of adobe on a fieldstone foundation, the stables and barn portion appear to pre-date the Meem family's purchase of the property. The tack room, most likely designed by John Gaw Meem, reflects some of his Pueblo Revival tenets.

Forming the west end of the structure, the stables are an approximately eighty-square-foot rectangular, flat-roof mass. The south, corral-facing elevation has two wood-plank Dutch doors, giving entry to the stables. Connected to the structure by a shared wall is an approximately 120-square-foot, L-plan "barn" and tack room. A shallow, shed-roof portal, supported by hefty wood posts, visually joins the two structures along the south façade. The south wall of the barn is penetrated by double-swinging plank doors, leading to a feed room outfitted with wood bins. To the south, the footprint bumps out from the wall as a separate mass—a common design element of the Pueblo Revival idiom. Reflecting the style, it has a shaped parapet and irregular corners; a wood *canale* (roof drain) pierces the south elevation. It is entered through a handmade wood door. Inside is an unadorned space with wood shelves and the hardware for storing saddles and other equestrian equipment.

### Chicken House

Connected to the Stables/Barn/Tack Room by a tall stucco-on-adobe wall is a chicken house (photo 27). Constructed of adobe, the approximately sixty-square-foot structure is a flat-roof, square-plan coop resting on a fieldstone foundation. The structure is entered from the south through a non-historic glass door. The interior is illuminated by a non-original two-over-two double-hung window in the west elevation; new windows are additionally located on the south elevation. The space is used as a pottery studio. Despite its small size, the former chicken house, most likely designed by Meem, reflects the Pueblo Revival manner, with its simple cubed mass plan, shaped parapet and curving walls.

### Well House

Located approximately seventy feet from the southeast corner of the corral is a small well house that John Gaw Meem redesigned in the 1940s (photo 28). It is a plain four-sided wood structure sheltering a well. The lower section is made of horizontal boards nailed to posts. Rising above the enclosure is a steep pyramidal covered with sheets of weathered tin. Below, forming the top of the framed structure, are scalloped horizontal boards painted white. A sheet of corrugated tin covers the well opening. Aside from the scalloped boards, the well house is painted blue. The whimsical, almost frail structure was created by Meem to cover a well that had been drilled by the previous owner. Soon after building the structure, the Meems capped the well, as it posed a danger to children living on the property.

### Trash Incinerator

Situated approximately thirty feet from the northwest corner of the garage is a small enclosure that was used as a trash incinerator (photo 29). The structure is made of low adobe walls, enclosing approximately forty square feet of earth. The thick, undulating walls rest on a fieldstone foundation and are clad in pink-toned cementitious stucco. A small wood gate is located at the center of the south elevation. The custom-designed gate was constructed in the

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
 Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
 County and State

1990s and designed to match the garage doors. The structure is used to secure trash cans. This, like the other secondary structures on the property, was designed by John Gaw Meem, and reflects the Pueblo Revival style and the architect’s intention to give style to even the most utilitarian objects.

Garden Gates

Positioned on the east side of the house, along a path giving entry to a garden, is a wood gate designed by Meem (photo 30). The gate is topped by an elaborate wood arch decorated with a pattern of raised diamonds and “flowers.” Its door is faced with raised squares. Both are painted white with a contrasting pink tone to match the color of the home’s stone and trim. Two smaller gates are set within a low adobe wall edging the garden. Like the main gate, they feature geometric patterns painted white and pink.

Landscape

The larger grounds around the house include both intact and relict features of earlier landscape manipulations. Intact elements include the formal drive, terraces, and a restored flower garden originally designed by Faith Meem. The once abundant apple orchard and a former Victory garden are fading impressions on the historic landscape. The arrangement of open spaces and wooded areas also contributes to the setting and historical significance of the property

**Table of Contributing/Noncontributing Properties**

Name	Date of Construction	Type	Status
Main House	c.1898; 1935-1938	Building	Contributing
Stables/Barn/Tack Room Building	Pre-1935; 1938	Building	Contributing
Chicken House	c.1940s	Building	Contributing
Corral	c.1937	Structure	Contributing
Well House	c.1940s	Structure	Contributing
Trash Incinerator	c.1938	Structure	Contributing
Garden Gates (three gates)	c.1940s	Structure	Contributing
Designed landscape	c.1940s	Site	Contributing
There are no noncontributing resources associated with this nomination			

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**  
1938-1959  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**  
1935; 1937; 1938  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**  
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)  
Meem, John Gaw  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**  
Meem, John Gaw (architect)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion C, in the area architecture under the multiple property documentation form “Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959” because it incorporates Territorial Revival-style elements well-known in Meem’s work while reflecting personal design choices, such as stone veneer, evolutionary floor plan, bold stone massing, and the upper-level deck with its cooling breezes and views of the landscape.

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion B because of its association with architect John Gaw Meem, who practiced architecture from 1925 until 1959, is among the state’s most significant architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century whose work in Southwest regional styles shaped the built environment and a popular image of New Mexico. Meem designed nearly 150 houses and his major public commissions include the renovation of La Fonda Hotel, the Laboratory of Anthropology, and about thirty buildings on the main campus of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is significant as the primary of residence of master architect John Gaw Meem from 1938 until his retirement in 1959.

---

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

In 1935, John and Faith Meem purchased property in Old Santa Fe Trail and began work on their personal residence. They worked slowly on remodeling three stone buildings that were constructed on the property in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a short-lived tuberculosis sanatorium. The buildings, arranged in an informal courtyard, were lightly reworked and given a Territorial Revival-style appearance, a style that Meem began to master in the late 1920s. During the period the house was under construction, 1935 to 1938, Meem’s career was busy period, despite the Great Depression. Meem’s young architectural firm managed multiple projects, including many large and complex institutional commissions. As his house was nearly completed, the architect decided to demolish one structure that he had converted into a garage, and develop in its place a large, two-story, U-shaped stone residence.

The completed house is a large, one- and two-story dwelling includes three wings lined with portals on two sides, which surround a terraced court. In the two-story main house, Meem capitalized on the site by locating the bedrooms in the lower level and placing the living room above, which opens on to portals and terraces with views of the surrounding mountains to the south and southwest. “The houses of John Gaw Meem,” including Meem’s personal residence, as described by David Kammer,

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

reflect the regional revival designs for which he is best known. . . .All exhibit character-defining details associated with the Spanish-Pueblo and Territorial Revival styles. . . .Accompanying portales are often deeply recessed and have wood supports with corbel brackets. Decorative details include exposed wood lintels, projecting *vigas* and *canales*, and buttresses, often located near portales and entries. Specific exterior details associated with the latter style include flat roofs with brick coping often ornamented with dentil courses, windows and entries marked with pedimented lintels, and porticos, often deeply recessed, with square columns, often with capital moldings.<sup>2</sup>

The bold, almost monumental structure coincided with a period in which Meem explored a modern style of regional expression incorporating traditional architectural forms of the Southwest. Although brief, his experiment with a terraced form reflects the tension of the time, when modernist principles were pitted against revival styles of architecture. Faced with random coursed fieldstone, the house and the connected zaguan departed radically from much of his residential work, offering little evidence of the more picturesque Pueblo Revival style. In this regard, the John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is singular in the architect's oeuvre.

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion C, in the area architecture under the multiple property documentation form "Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959" because it incorporates Territorial Revival-style elements well-known in Meem's work while reflecting personal design choices, such as stone veneer, evolutionary floor plan, bold stone massing, and the upper-level deck with its cooling breezes and views of the landscape.

The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion B because of its association with architect John Gaw Meem, who practiced architecture from 1925 until 1959, is among the state's most significant architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century whose work in Southwest regional styles shaped the built environment and a popular image of New Mexico and especially Santa Fe. Meem designed nearly 150 houses and his major public commissions include the renovation of La Fonda Hotel, the Laboratory of Anthropology, and about thirty buildings on the main campus of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is significant as the primary of residence of master architect John Gaw Meem from 1938 until his retirement in 1959. The Meems raised a daughter, Nancy, who grew up in the house. John died in 1983 and Faith died in 1989.

---

<sup>2</sup> David Kammer, "Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959" (Multiple Property Listing prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 2002), F-27.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

---

### Developmental history/additional historic context information

*The following context by John W. Murphey derives from David Kammer, "Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959," Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2002. On file at the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe, New Mexico.*

#### A Flowering Period—The 1930s

During the Great Depression, John Gaw Meem's office expanded rapidly, often through federally sponsored projects coming under various New Deal programs. He later called the thirteen-year period between 1929 and 1941 his "flowering or creative" years.<sup>3</sup> During this time, Meem and his firm designed over twenty residences and work on complex institutional commissions, including the Laboratory of Anthropology (1930) in Santa Fe; Fountain Valley School (1930-1937) in Colorado Springs; buildings at the University of New Mexico (1934-1936) in Albuquerque; and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (1936) in Colorado Springs. For the latter, Meem was awarded a silver medal at the Fifth Pan American Congress of Architecture.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the start of the nationwide economic downturn, Meem embarked with his then-partner Cassius McCormick on his first major commercial commission, a large addition to the La Fonda hotel in Santa Fe (1927). This challenging project developed a tall mass of new rooms, appended to the original two-story building designed by Rapp & Rapp, who were the progenitors of the so-called Indian and Spanish-derived Santa Fe style.

The project tested Meem's skill, blending an otherwise ungainly mass to a smaller-scale building marked by an exuberance of Santa Fe-style details. Meem's design, including the sixth-story battered-wall bell tower at the southwest corner, harmonized both buildings and continued the Southwest accent promoted by the Fred Harvey Company, but with more restraint. While the young architectural firm made little money on the project, Meem proved that he could manage large and complex commissions.<sup>5</sup>

He received his next major work, the Laboratory of Anthropology, after winning a national design contest in January 1930.<sup>6</sup> Meem's project gained national attention, with his rendering for the main building published in multiple newspapers across the United States. Supported by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the Laboratory of Anthropology required Meem to develop a campus plan of individual buildings, including laboratories, a museum, a library, administrative offices, residences, and ancillary buildings across a juniper-and-piñon-covered fifty-acre site.

---

<sup>3</sup> Quote appears in Bainbridge Bunting, *John Gaw Meem: Southwestern Architect*, (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1983), 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, list of Meem job numbers, 161-163.

<sup>5</sup> Bunting, *John Gaw Meem*, 77.

<sup>6</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 1930, 64.



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Although only three of Meem's thirty-eight designs were erected, the Administration and Research Building—a masterfully arranged Pueblo Revival edifice—gave the architect widespread exposure, and led to larger campus and institutional commissions that dominated his work through the 1930s.

During this early period, his firm, which consisted of Meem and several draftsmen, operated in a combination house and studio located near Sunmount Sanatorium, where Meem was treated for tuberculosis in the early 1920s. In 1931, he hired a new employee—Faith Bemis, a young draftsman who was introduced to him by his client Alice Bemis Taylor of Colorado Springs.

### **Faith Bemis**

Born in 1902, Faith Bemis was the daughter of Albert Farwell Bemis, an industrialist whose family started the Bemis Brothers Bag Company, a national bag-making concern. Her father graduated with a civil engineering degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1893. He became interested in mass housing in 1899 when he assisted his father, Judson Moss Bemis, design a cotton mill company town. Named for the mill, Bemis, Tennessee included the mill and 500 houses.<sup>7</sup>

Interest in town-building and construction standardization continued into the new century. Bemis formed The Building Company, a Boston-based land development concern, promoting standardized construction techniques.<sup>8</sup> In 1922, the businessman donated \$50,000 to the Hampton Institute, an early African American college in Hampton Roads, Virginia (Hampton University), to endow a two-year building construction program.<sup>9</sup> He later emerged as an early proponent of prefabricated housing, writing a three-volume treatise, *The Evolving House*, on the subject between 1933 and 1936. The books, published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, championed uniform standards and dimensions for building components, and ultimately advocated for modular construction.<sup>10</sup>

His daughter Faith followed her father's footsteps, becoming interested in design and architecture. After attending Vassar College for two years, she enrolled in the Cambridge School of Domestic Architecture and Landscape Architecture for Women, the first school devoted exclusively to the training of women in the fields of architecture and landscape design. The school arose in 1915, when Katherine Brooks, a Radcliffe College student, attempted to enroll in the Harvard School of Architecture. Denied admission because she was a woman, Brooks (who later became a prominent landscape architect) approached the head of the architectural school, James Sturgis Pray, requesting a course in drafting.<sup>11</sup> Pray arranged for Brooks to have private tutoring. This evolved into the Cambridge School, housed in the Brattle

<sup>7</sup> Andrew L. Russell, "Modularity: An Interdisciplinary History of an Ordering Concept," *Information and Culture: A Journal of History*, 47 (2012), 263.

<sup>8</sup> Advertisement for The Housing Company, *New York Times*, October 30, 1919, 13.

<sup>9</sup> *The Dallas Express* (newspaper), December 9, 1922, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Russell, "Modularity and Interdisciplinary History," 264.

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Allaback, *The First American Women Architects*, (Champagne, Il.: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 25-26.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Building at Harvard Square. While the school did not grant degrees until 1932, it provided the same professional training in architecture and landscape architecture afforded at Harvard, awarding students who completed the program with a certificate.

Faith entered the program in 1922, while living at her parents' home in Chestnut Hill, a suburb of Boston. She completed her coursework in 1927, writing a thesis on the development of a small suburban community for Wellesley Farms, Massachusetts. The approximately fifty-house development, as described in her proposal, was planned for "people of moderate means," and would include communal areas, tennis courts, and a central heating plant.<sup>12</sup> Its buildings were to be erected with a new type of construction technology that her father developed. The system was based on interchangeable stucco-faced walls, which could be altered in color and texture.<sup>13</sup> Bemis received her certificate in April 1928.

By the early 1930s, Bemis worked with fellow Cambridge School graduate Anita Rathbun at the New York City architectural firm of Cross & Cross, which was then involved in several larger commissions in Manhattan.<sup>14</sup> Other than the notification in the Cambridge School alumnae bulletin, it is unclear what role Bemis played in the firm. In addition, Faith designed a house for her aunt, Elinor Gregg, in Washington, D.C. and developed drawings for her father, as a consulting architect to his town-building firm.<sup>15</sup>

By 1932, Bemis, like many of her male counterparts during the Depression, was unemployed. Alice Bemis Taylor asked Meem to take her niece on as an employee. After making a few adjustments to the male-dominated drafting room, Meem brought the new draftsman into his employ. Faith worked on a number of designs, including a remodel of a cottage at Los Alamos Ranch School, a boarding school for wealthy boys in Los Alamos; the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, one of Meem's major works of the 1930s; and the unbuilt Coburn Library of Colorado College, also in Colorado Springs.<sup>16</sup> Writing in the April 1932 edition of the Cambridge School Alumnae Notes, Faith described her new place of employment as "small and informal," concluding that she was "thrilled to have a job in such an interesting part of the world," finding it a "contrast to a New York office!"<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Faith Bemis, "Program for a Thesis," 1926-27. Two-page handwritten document contained with the Cambridge School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture collection, Smith College Archives. Bemis's actual thesis has not been located. Nanci A. Young, Smith College Archives, email communication to John Murphey, November 11, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 28. The author established Bemis worked for the firm after reviewing Cambridge School alumnae bulletins (1930-33) located in the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture Records collection at the Smith College Archives. Additionally, Faith during a 1977 interview, referred to working two years in a New York City architectural firm, Beatrice Chauvenet, *John Gaw Meem: Pioneer in Historic Preservation*, (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1985), 52.

<sup>15</sup> F.W. Dodge Co., *Sweet's Catalog Service*, advertisement, 1931, no page.

<sup>16</sup> John D. Wirth, *Los Alamos: The Ranch School Years, 1917-1943*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 234; Nancy Meem Wirth, email communication to John W. Murphey, September 24, 2016; *Alumnae Bulletin* of the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Volume 4, #2, April 1932, no page.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Within eighteen months, the employer and employee were engaged. They announced their engagement in April 1933, marrying a month later on May 20 at her parent's Flemish Revival-style house in Chestnut Hill. The couple initially created a home in the architect's combination architect studio and apartment near Sunmount Sanatorium, turning the north portion of the office into a domicile. But this did not prove satisfactory, and soon the newlyweds were looking for property on which to build a home. An opportunity arose in late 1934, when a nearby ranch came on the market.

### **Sunny Pinecroft**

Located immediately south of Sunmount Sanatorium, between Arroyo de los Chamisos and Sun Mountain, the property was a large piece of sloped land that been patented as a homestead in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bordering the Sebastian de Vargas Grant, it was homesteaded in c.1892 by Mathias J. Nagel, a Prussian-born landscape gardener, who arrived in the area (presumably via the Santa Fe Trail) from Missouri to treat his tuberculosis. Through farming and hard work, as well as "lying in the sunshine doing nothing," Nagel claimed he cured himself of consumption.<sup>18</sup> On the property, named Sunny Pinecroft (later called Nagel Ranch), he erected a modest house and developed an orchard fed by a reservoir from a dam he constructed across Arroyo de los Chamisos. He built a cider press, and was soon producing sweet cider and vinegar from the apples grown in the orchard. He later raised figs—a rare feat for Santa Fe's high desert climate.<sup>19</sup> He also established a ranch on the property, which included steers and milk cows, horses, burros, and poultry.

In the late 1890s, Nagel flirted with the idea of developing a tuberculosis sanatorium, following a trend of the period when the idea prevailed that the region's ever-present sun and dry climate could cure the disease.<sup>20</sup> In c.1898, Nagel built three five-room stone structures with verandas, which would form the nucleus of a sanatorium. A newspaper account states the structures "followed the suggestions" of Dr. Robert Heinrich Herman Koch, a German physician and pioneering microbiologist, who identified the causative agents of tuberculosis, as well as cholera and anthrax.<sup>21</sup> According to the article, Nagel located the buildings around a small courtyard which "afforded a maximum amount of sunshine and yet protection from winds and moisture."<sup>22</sup> To demonstrate his system to potential investors, Nagel recruited five tubercular patients. Several arrived from Minnesota at the urging of Dr. Francis Crosson, an Albuquerque-based tuberculosis specialist, who promoted the climatic form of treatment. Nagel hoped to make Santa Fe the next Colorado Springs. If his venture had succeeded, the sanatorium would have predated Sunmount, which treated John Gaw Meem twenty years later, by several years.

---

<sup>18</sup> *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 31, 1899, 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, September 11, 1919, 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, August 31, 1899, 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, September 7, 1899, 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

The homestead, which totaled more than 600 acres, incurred debt in the 1910s, resulting in delinquent taxes. Approximately 400 acres of the homestead was likely at that time in the possession of his son, Mathias J. Nagel Jr.<sup>23</sup>

Mathias J. Nagel Sr. died in 1922. Soon after his death, his son got into a tangle with Sunmount Sanatorium over the use of water from the arroyo separating their properties. The Sunmount Company filed a lawsuit claiming that the younger Nagel had dynamited a hole in a dam they had erected above the diversion built by his father.<sup>24</sup> They protested that without the water from the new dam and another diversion on the arroyo, the institution, which now treated over fifty patients, would have to close. In a countersuit, Nagel Jr. asserted that the sanatorium's diversion deprived his property of water for domestic and farming use, a source that his father established nearly thirty years prior.<sup>25</sup>

The Sunmount Company won the lawsuit, resulting in a restraining order against Nagel. Nagel appealed the order, with the court ruling in favor of Sunmount again in 1925.<sup>26</sup> Without the water, the orchard and gardens began to wither. Mathias J. Nagel, Jr. held onto Sunny Pinecroft for eight more years, before filing a quiet title on the property in late 1933.

Meem, still in close contact with Sunmount officials, most likely heard of Nagel's difficulties. As a onetime resident of the facility, he would have also known the property visually, as it lay just to the south of the main building where patients were treated. He may have had a desire to obtain the scenic property for some time, and known something of Nagel's predicament when he approached the owner, purchasing nearly 400 acres of the original homestead on April 13, 1935.<sup>27</sup>

### **A Territorial Experiment**

From period photographs, it appears the Meems purchased a primitively developed property (figures 3-4). It had a few roughly constructed buildings, including the structures making up the speculative sanatorium. Given its ideal location, the Meems chose to situate their future home around the old sanatorium. They moved into the stone structure on the west edge of the courtyard as they developed a plan to reuse the other buildings.<sup>28</sup>

While the stonework was rough, Meem decided to retain the west building, increasing its ceiling height through additional courses of stone. He either removed or reconstructed large sections of wall across the east elevation facing the plaza, adding an adobe veneer. He constructed a sturdy

---

<sup>23</sup> This is inferred from a listing of delinquent property taxes for Mathias J. Nagel Jr., appearing in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 3, 1920, Second Section, 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 28, 1922, 6.

<sup>25</sup> In his countersuit he claimed that the loss of water had already killed 35 orchard trees on the property.

<sup>26</sup> *Sunmount Co. v. Nagel*, 1925-NMSC-013, 30 N.M. 450, 236 P. 505 (S. Ct. 1925).

<sup>27</sup> *Santa Fe New Mexican*, April 21, 1960, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Bunting, *John Gaw Meem*, 142. As the project was his own home, there is no job file or set of drawings for the house in the John Gaw Meem Archives of Southwestern Architecture, University of New Mexico; Audra Bellmore, email communication to John Murphey, March 21, 2016. The few drawings that were produced and/or survive consist of conceptual elevations for the Main House.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

portal along the same elevation to shade the structure. Along with replacing the doors, the east, west and south elevations were altered to hold new fenestration.

Recognized by different names, the style of the new windows and doors harkened back to the early period of U.S. occupation of New Mexico, in which the then popular Greek Revival elements began to appear in domestic architecture. Houses erected during the territorial era were of brick or adobe, and built as rectilinear volumes, displaying symmetrical fenestration. Stylistically, these houses were differentiated by their large, multi-light wood windows and pedimented hoods, formal front entries flanked by sidelights sometimes topped by transoms, and brick coping recalling a classical entablature.

Meem first began to explore the evolving Territorial Revival idiom in the early 1920s, applying elements of the style to his residential work marked in particular by the strong triangular window pediments applied at the Ashley Pond Residence (1925) and the Conkey Residence (1928), both in Santa Fe.<sup>29</sup> Meem further expressed the style in 1930s, starting with Los Poblanos Ranch (1932), a hacienda commissioned by Albert and Ruth Simms in Albuquerque's North Valley. The design for the Simms's retreat is notable for removing the Indian-Spanish antecedents of his earlier work and replacing it with a more classically aligned Territorial vision. Built as a series of rectilinear forms, the house has formal porticos supported by square wood posts topped with classically derived capitals. Additional Territorial elements are expressed by pedimented lintels and window heads, six-over-six windows flanked by operable wood shutters and entries crowned with fanlights.

Meem employed the style for the first time with an institutional building the year before purchasing the Nagel property. For the design of the New Mexico Welfare Building (1934) in Santa Fe, he found that the symmetrical fenestration of larger double-hung windows provided better light for office work than windows typically associated with the Pueblo Revival style.<sup>30</sup> The Territorial Revival style emerged as the dominant design Meem gave to residential commissions during the period, and it is natural that he extended this style into his own home. The Meems next altered the stone building forming the north end of the courtyard. Like the west structure, it was constructed of fieldstone, arranged in haphazard courses. It appears to have had the same arrangement of small rooms entered by single exterior doors. Like the earlier alteration, a pattern of large six-over-six wood windows was introduced to the north and south elevations. Meem replaced the shorter, shed-roof porch and sheltered the area with a longer portal. To link the lower portal of the west building with the higher portal of the north building, Meem inserted a free-standing wood portal midway between the two structures. The intermediary structure created a jumbled juncture of different roof heights (figure 6).

<sup>29</sup> Chris Wilson and Robert Reck, *Facing Southwest: The Life and Houses of John Gaw Meem* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005), 43.

<sup>30</sup> John W. Murphey, "New Mexico Public Welfare Building," (New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, #1821, 2002), 12-15.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

### **A Modernist Turn**

The final phase, and the most dramatic of the alterations, resulted in the erection of the two-story main house and the zaguan—the most significant architectural statements of Meem’s design. Like the rest of the structures, the last building making up the east arm of the composition of the unfinished sanatorium consisted of a stone mass, penetrated by exterior doors. From period photographs it appears Meem demolished or greatly altered the structure to turn it into a garage (figures 5-6). A photograph from 1937 shows the barn-like garage faced with adobe across the west elevation, with a yawning bay opening at the south. Although a utilitarian structure, it was clearly intended to be Pueblo Revival in style, with its battered adobe walls and shaped parapets. Reportedly, repairing the roof of the garage one day, Meem became aware of an “extraordinary view” which altered the course of the home.<sup>31</sup> The design, which until this time had been a gentle reworking of existing structures to fit within the Territorial Revival idiom, took a dramatic turn, as Meem used the final elements to possibly work out his evolving ideas on a modernist form of regional architecture.

Recent institutional and commercial commissions, including the Lovelace Building (1936), Maisel Store (1937), and Zimmerman Library of the University of New Mexico (1936), all in Albuquerque, and particularly the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (1936), had pushed Meem closer to Modernist design principles and monumentality. Further, his work with federal New Deal agencies, particularly with the Public Works Administration (PWA), required him to design with modern building materials and construction methods, resulting in a minimization of picturesque elements. The most striking example is the stripped down design of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, a stark minimalist concrete structure which brought the architect acclaim.

Conceived in 1931 by Alice Bemis Taylor, the project originally consisted of an Indian arts center and small theater to be used by the public and students of nearby Colorado College. On a slow timetable, it evolved over the years in complexity to become more centrally a large performing arts theater housed in a monumental temple-like structure. Meem worked out the design with an asymmetrical yet balanced grouping of block-like masses arranged as setbacks. The use of setbacks, also employed masterfully in the design of the Zimmerman Library, allowed Meem to artistically arrange large blocks of masses, which respected both the goals of the commission and the expression of a regional design precedent.<sup>32</sup>

The setback, also an element of the Art Deco style, had its regional antecedent in the Southwest in the stepped “terrace” forms of Native American Indian pueblos. Despite the nod to traditional form, the plain concrete structure was trimmed with only aluminum edging on its doors, windows and balcony railings, and was devoid of any regional decorative references. In 1934, during the construction of the theater, Meem pondered the future of regional architecture in an article published in the *American Architect*. He posed the question of whether preserving the characteristic qualities of any regional architecture, including those of the

<sup>31</sup> As reported in Bunting, *John Gaw Meem*, 142.

<sup>32</sup> David Kammer, “Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959,” (Multiple Property Listing prepared for the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 2002), E-20.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Southwest so dear to his work, were “compatible with the modern spirit; or ... [were] merely a sentimental attempt to preserve picturesqueness or ‘scenery’?”<sup>33</sup> Reflecting upon a tenet of modernism, which emphasized an “honesty” of building composition and material, Meem found the traditional forms of the Southwest “so honest, so completely logical and native to the environment that one finds—to one’s delight and surprise—that modern problems can be solved and are best solved, by use of forms based on tradition.”<sup>34</sup> As if describing his design for the Fine Arts Center and eventually the last phase of his home, Meem concluded that the Southwest tradition, stripped to its essence, consisted of simply “flat-top, rectangular masses devoid of ornament, [in which] the aesthetic effect [depends] almost entirely on the relative proportion of the masses.”<sup>35</sup>

The new two-story structure additionally solved a quandary of how to complete the U form of the house. The earlier disconnected garage left a group of isolated buildings of different heights. The redesign created an anchor to connect the almost spindly arms of the earlier composition with a solid mass. To balance the visual weight of the two-story structure, Meem removed the freestanding wood canopy at the northwest corner of the composition and replaced it with a smaller stone mass. Functioning as a zaguan, it worked to connect all three structures and add a visual counterweight to the two-story house. It additionally screened the tall structure from the driveway and public entrance. To complete the design, Meem leveled what had been a sloping courtyard into four terraces edged with rock retaining walls. The retaining walls worked to unify the composition, connecting the east and west arms of the U with as an axis.

The final phase of the John and Faith Meem House could be viewed as the architect’s short-lived exploration of a regional modernism, based on the play of traditional material, block massing and terraced setbacks. While Meem had worked with stone in his design of the Santa Maria de Acoma (1932) at McCarty’s and the restoration of the San Esteban del Rey Mission Church (1924-29) at Old Acoma, his use of rock as a facing material was rare. However the abundant stone found on the old Nagel Ranch, along with its earlier use in the prototypical sanatorium structures, provided him an opportunity to work with the modernist dictum calling for the honest expression of building materials.<sup>36</sup> Yet, in the end Meem chose to apply the stone over a hollow-clay tile frame, rather than use it as the primary construction material.<sup>37</sup> The architect next applied stone facing (although reduced to only a raised foundation) and modernist lines to a home he designed for Faith’s aunt, Elinor Gregg. While distinct in its horizontality, projecting overhang and solar orientation, the Elinor Gregg House (1939), which received attention in *Architectural Forum*, was mostly an older adobe form employing picturesque details of an earlier era.

---

<sup>33</sup> John Gaw Meem, “Old Forms for New Buildings,” originally published in *American Architect* 145 (November 1934): 10-20, and reprinted in *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008): 189.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>36</sup> Wilson and Reck, *Facing Southwest*, 164.

<sup>37</sup> Meem’s earlier uses of unadulterated adobe and the exposed concrete formwork of the Fine Arts Center were closer in spirit to the “honesty” tenet. Meem would return later to masonry facing with the design of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd (1954).

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Meem's impulse for a modernist regional design was short-lived. At the request of a corporate client, the architect designed in the International Style in the 1940s, producing several glass-dominated branch offices of the Southern Union Gas Company. Mostly, his exploration of modern design principles ceased in the 1930s. In the late 1950s, assisting the City of Santa Fe in establishing its first historic design ordinance, Meem discouraged common modernist architectural elements of corner windows, large areas of glass and projecting eaves. Twenty years after his exploration of modernism, Meem had returned to a deeper respect for traditional forms and regional stylistic expression.

### **A Refuge and Social Center**

The architect balanced numerous commissions during the development of his home. From job files and newspaper accounts, it appears he made frequent excursions out of town in 1936, with repeated trips to Colorado Springs to supervise work on the Fine Arts Center and the University of New Mexico, where he worked out details on the multiple building PWA project. In June 1936, with only half the house finished, Meem's mother, sisters, his married brother, and his wife and child arrived from Rio de Janeiro to spend the summer at the home.<sup>38</sup> The following summer, Faith, who was expecting their child, Nancy, received her mother and other family members for a prolonged visit. And in late 1937, Meem—sometimes with Faith—traveled on extended trips to San Francisco, Chicago, and New York.<sup>39</sup> Yet during this hectic period, Meem found work on his house relaxing, as he had total freedom to pursue the project as he wished without the usual demands of a client.<sup>40</sup> In this regard, the prolonged project became a refuge for the busy architect.

According to newspaper articles, the home was finished and open to guests in early 1938. In mid-January the couple hosted the first annual meeting of the Santa Fe Maternal Health Center, the local chapter of a national effort to address infant mortality and birth control.<sup>41</sup> Three months later it was the site of their daughter's christening party, which included most of the family from Chestnut Hill. In the fall, Meem, who served as chairman of the Santa Fe Fiesta Council, hosted a dinner party to kick off the annual Fiesta season, a major event for the community. On September 2, the house was lit by hundreds of *farolitos* and Japanese lanterns, casting light over the second-story terrace and a lower dance platform assembled for the event. Entertainment included dancing and Los Mariachis de Jalisco, a folkloric band brought by train from Mexico. Nearly 500 guests attended the event, which was described by the local newspaper "as one of the most brilliant private parties in Santa Fe history."<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Santa Fe New Mexican*, June 16, 1936: 8.

<sup>39</sup> The Meems, according a newspaper account, sailed for New York, via San Francisco and Panama Canal, in the fall of 1937; two months later, John Gaw Meem made an extended trip to Chicago with Dr. Frank W. Mera, the director of Sunmount Sanitarium, *Ibid.*, October 5, 1937, 11 and December 14, 1937, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Nancy Meem Wirth, interview with John W. Murphey, March 11, 2016.

<sup>41</sup> *Santa Fe New Mexican*, January 29, 1938, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, September 3, 1938, 14.



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

During the late 1930s, the architect's work became less frenzied, with Meem's commissions reduced to a few local residential and remodeling projects and two church commissions, most notably a design for Cristo Rey Church (1939) in Santa Fe. During the downtime, the Meems took a short-lived vacation to Europe, turning back in Cherbourg, France, when they learned the Nazis had invaded Czechoslovakia.

With more time, the home emerged as a creative, cultural spot in Santa Fe. Here, the Meems entertained their friends, many of whom were involved in the arts and culture. One night, Thomas Wood Stevens, a well-known artist and theater director, entertained Santa Feans with a dramatic reading of one of his poems.<sup>43</sup> On another, W. E. Strohm, an engineer, read a paper on the progress of public works in New Mexico to members of the Axis Club, a group of various professionals.<sup>44</sup> This group would continue meeting at the Meem home under the name the Chile Club through the 1970s.

The 1940 census documented the home as occupied by John, Faith, and their daughter, along with Meem's younger brother, James C. Meem, who worked as a clerk at the First National Bank of Santa Fe.<sup>45</sup> The household included Marianne Gebhardt, who operated a small nursery school in the living room of the west wing.<sup>46</sup> Gebhardt, trained as a kindergarten teacher in Vienna, left Austria after the Nazis invaded in 1938. She later operated a kindergarten for several decades (the Children's Patio Day School) in a house remodeled by Meem.<sup>47</sup> The census documented the home to be worth \$70,000, considerably higher than surrounding properties.

Meem's work picked up again with the United States' entry into World War II in December 1941. In just eighteen months his firm (Meem & Zehner) oversaw the design and construction of multiple military bases, two hospitals, and an aviator's school, a total of 25 buildings.<sup>48</sup> During the war the Meem house became a refuge for children affected by the distant conflict. The Meems initially tried to work with a program Eleanor Roosevelt established for the evacuation of English refugee children to the United States. After an unsuccessful attempt to bring two children under the program, the Meems learned of another opportunity through Aileen O'Bryan, a friend in Santa Fe.<sup>49</sup> Through the personal effort of O'Bryan's son's fiancée, Pamela Milligan, seven children were delivered to the United States via a dangerous passage across the Atlantic. Four of the children, the Matthews sisters of Bath, England (ages 6, 8, 10 and 12), came to live with the Meems in September 1940.<sup>50</sup> Another part of the group, the Cooke brothers (ages 10 and 14), went to live with Faith's aunt, Elinor Gregg, who resided nearby. The arrival of the sisters, who would live with the Meems for four years, resulted in changes to the

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., March 12, 1940, 2. The proceeds of the event went to the New Mexico Indian Association.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., December 21, 1938, 2.

<sup>45</sup> 1940; Census Place: Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Roll: T627\_2452; Page: 13B; Enumeration District: 25-5B.

<sup>46</sup> Nancy Meem Wirth, email communication to John W. Murphey, September 24, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> Historic Santa Fe Foundation, *Old Santa Fe Today* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991): 61.

<sup>48</sup> Wilson, *Facing Southwest*, 46.

<sup>49</sup> Nancy Meem Wirth, email communication to John W. Murphey, September 8, 2016.

<sup>50</sup> Alumnae update form, May 1942, the Cambridge School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture collection, Smith College Archives.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

home's arrangement of rooms. What was originally a pleasantly proportioned hallway at the lower level of the house was shortened with a partition to create a new room for their daughter Nancy. Later, an Estonian refugee couple and their two children lived for a few years in the west wing of the house.

After the war, the Meems resumed their role as hosts, holding parties and events, many associated with their church, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Faith of Santa Fe, where John Gaw Meem served as vestryman for many years.<sup>51</sup> After his retirement in 1959, Meem moved his office at 785 Camino de Monte Sol to the westernmost room of the north wing of his home. An influential member of Santa Fe's historic preservation community, he was frequently called upon to weigh in on issues affecting the city's historic built environment. The architect's legacy began to take shape during this period. At various times, he was interviewed in the home by Bainbridge Bunting and Beatrice Chauvenet for monographs later published on his work. The couple remained active in the Santa Fe community. They were instrumental in attracting John's College to Santa Fe, donating approximately 200 acres of the hillside northeast of the house for the campus. They supported the arts, education, and healthcare organizations, including the Santa Fe Opera, the Museum of New Mexico, the School of American Research (now School for Advanced Research) and the Maternal Health Center.

Faith and John Gaw Meem occupied the house continuously until their deaths—John Gaw Meem in 1983 and Faith Bemis Meem in 1989. Today, their daughter, Nancy Meem Wirth, resides in the house, and works to maintain her parents' legacy, with the goal of recognizing and preserving her father's best work. The nomination of the John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House works toward this effort, by recognizing the house as the canvas for John Gaw Meem's architectural experimentation. The well-preserved house and its history is deserving of this recognition.

---

<sup>51</sup> Bunting, *John Gaw Meem*, 155.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### **Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Allaback, Sarah. *The First American Women Architects*. Champagne, Il.: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Bunting, Bainbridge. *John Gaw Meem, Southwestern Architect*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988.

Canizaro, Vincent. *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Chauvenet, Beatrice. *John Gaw Meem: Pioneer in Historic Preservation*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1985.

Kammer, David. "Buildings Designed by John Gaw Meem, 1925-1959." Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2002. On file at the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Markovich, Nicholas C., Wolfgang F.E. Preiser and Fred Strum, eds. *Pueblo Style and Regional Architecture*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990.

McNary, John. "John Gaw Meem: His Style Development and Residential Architecture Between 1924 and 1940." M.A. Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1977.

Meem, John Gaw. "Old Forms for New Buildings." *American Architect*. 145 November 1934: 10-20.

Russel, Andrew L. "Modularity: An Interdisciplinary History of an Ordering Concept." *Information and Culture: A Journal of History*, 47, 2012, 257-287.

*Santa Fe New Mexican* (newspaper). Various years, 1920-1983

Wilson, Chris and Robert. *Facing Southwest: The Life & Houses of John Gaw Meem*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005.

Wirth, Nancy Meem, interviews with Catherine Colby, August and October 2011, Santa Fe.

\_\_\_\_\_. Interview with John W. Murphey, March 11, 2016, Santa Fe.

Wright, Gwendolyn. *USA: Modern Architecture in History*. London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2008.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

---

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Approximately 15.5 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.667414 | Longitude: -105.919544 |
| 2. Latitude: 35.668639 | Longitude: -105.917476 |
| 3. Latitude: 35.666301 | Longitude: -105.917457 |
| 4. Latitude: 35.665876 | Longitude: -105.920691 |

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is indicated by a heavy black line on an attached map drawn to scale and corresponding to the above-listed points of latitude and longitude.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property coincides with the legal boundaries of the property.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: John W. Murphey, Architectural Historian  
organization: FirstLight Consulting  
street & number: 111 Stanford Street  
city or town: Santa Rosa state: California zip code: 95404  
e-mail: Firstlightconsulting@gmail.com  
telephone: 505-577-7593  
date: December 6, 2016

**State Historic Preservation Office**

name/title: Steven Moffson, State and National Register Coordinator  
organization: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division  
street & number: 407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236  
city or town: Santa Fe State: New Mexico zip: 87501  
telephone: 505.476.0444  
date: December 15, 2016

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

---

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House

City or Vicinity: Santa Fe

County: Santa Fe State: New Mexico

Photographer(s): John W. Murphey, except when noted.

Date Photographed: March 11, 2016, unless otherwise noted.

Photo 1 of 30: Approaching house from driveway, facing east.

Photo 2 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), west and south elevations, facing northeast.

Photo 3 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), east elevation, facing southwest.

Photo 4 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), east elevation portal, facing southwest.

Photo 5 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), south and east elevations, facing northwest.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

- Photo 6 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), apartment, facing south.
- Photo 7 of 30: Partial west elevation, with zaguan at center, facing southeast.
- Photo 8 of 30: West elevation of zaguan, facing southeast.
- Photo 9 of 30: Zaguan, entry door, facing southwest.
- Photo 10 of 30: Entry Portal (North Wing), facing east.
- Photo 11 of 30: Entry Portal (North Wing), facing northeast.
- Photo 12 of 30: Main House (East Wing), west elevation, facing southeast.
- Photo 13 of 30: Main House (East Wing), south and east elevations, facing northwest.
- Photo 14 of 30: Main House (East Wing), portal, facing northwest.
- Photo 15 of 30: Main House (East Wing), terrace deck, facing southeast.
- Photo 16 of 30: Main House (East Wing), entry door, facing southeast.
- Photo 17 of 30: Main House (East Wing), entry hall, facing east.
- Photo 18 of 30: Main House (East Wing), living room, facing northeast.
- Photo 19 of 30: Main House (East Wing), master bedroom, facing southwest.
- Photo 20 of 30: Main House (East Wing), master bedroom, fireplace, facing northwest.
- Photo 21 of 30: Service Area (Northeast Wing), breezeway, facing east.
- Photo 22 of 30: Service Area (Northeast Wing), garage, west elevation, facing northeast.
- Photo 23 of 30: Terracing, facing northwest.
- Photo 24 of 30: Corral, facing north.
- Photo 25 of 30: Corral, facing northeast.
- Photo 26 of 30: Stable/Barn/Tack Room, south elevation, facing northeast.
- Photo 27 of 30: Chicken House, west elevation, facing northeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Photo 28 of 30: Well House, facing southeast.

Photo 29 of 30: Trash incinerator, facing northwest.

Photo 30 of 30: Garden Gate, facing northwest, Catherine Colby, July 25, 2011.

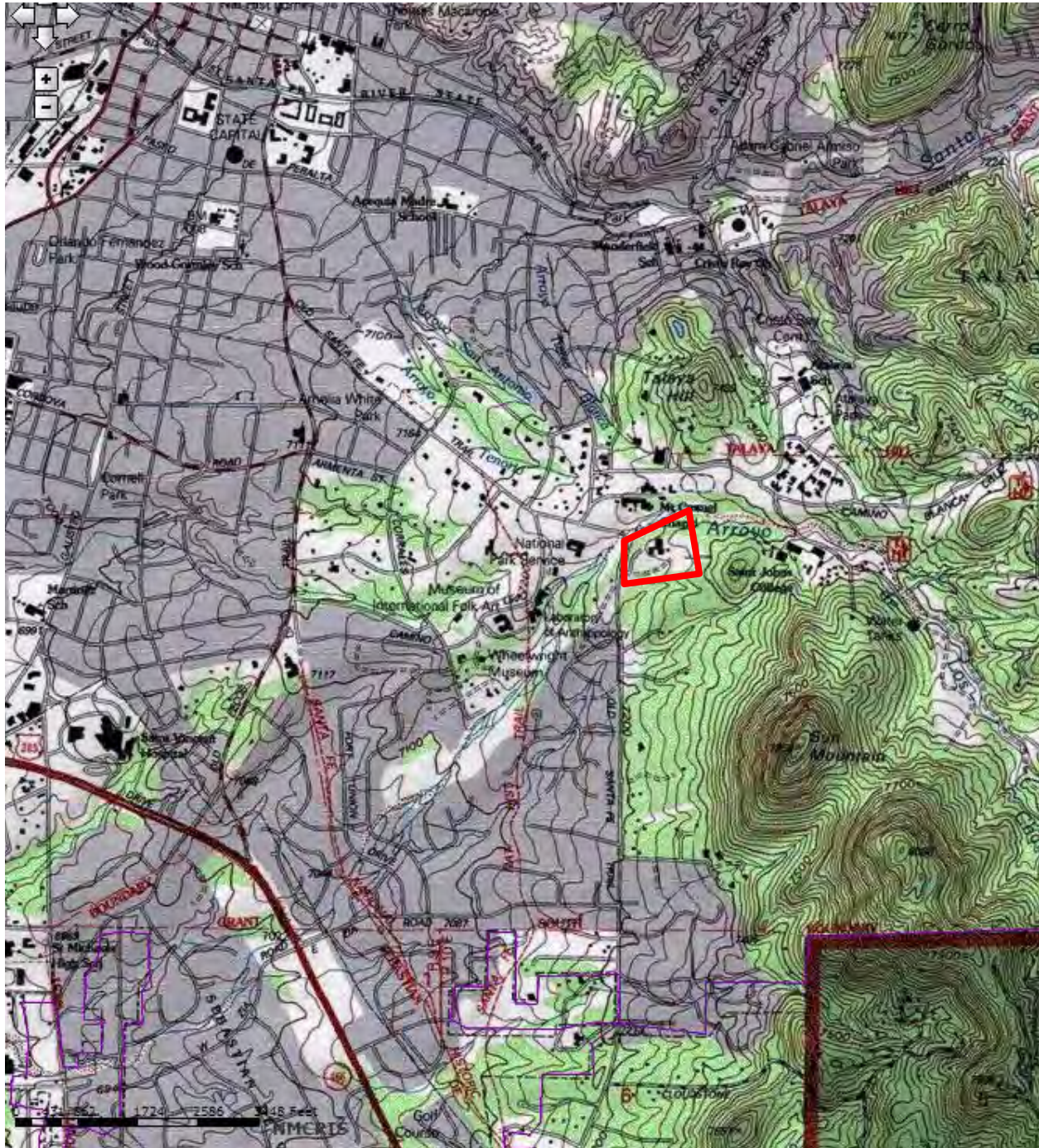
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



**John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House**  
**Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico**  
**Location Map**

**National Register Boundary** 




Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House  
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

Sketch Map

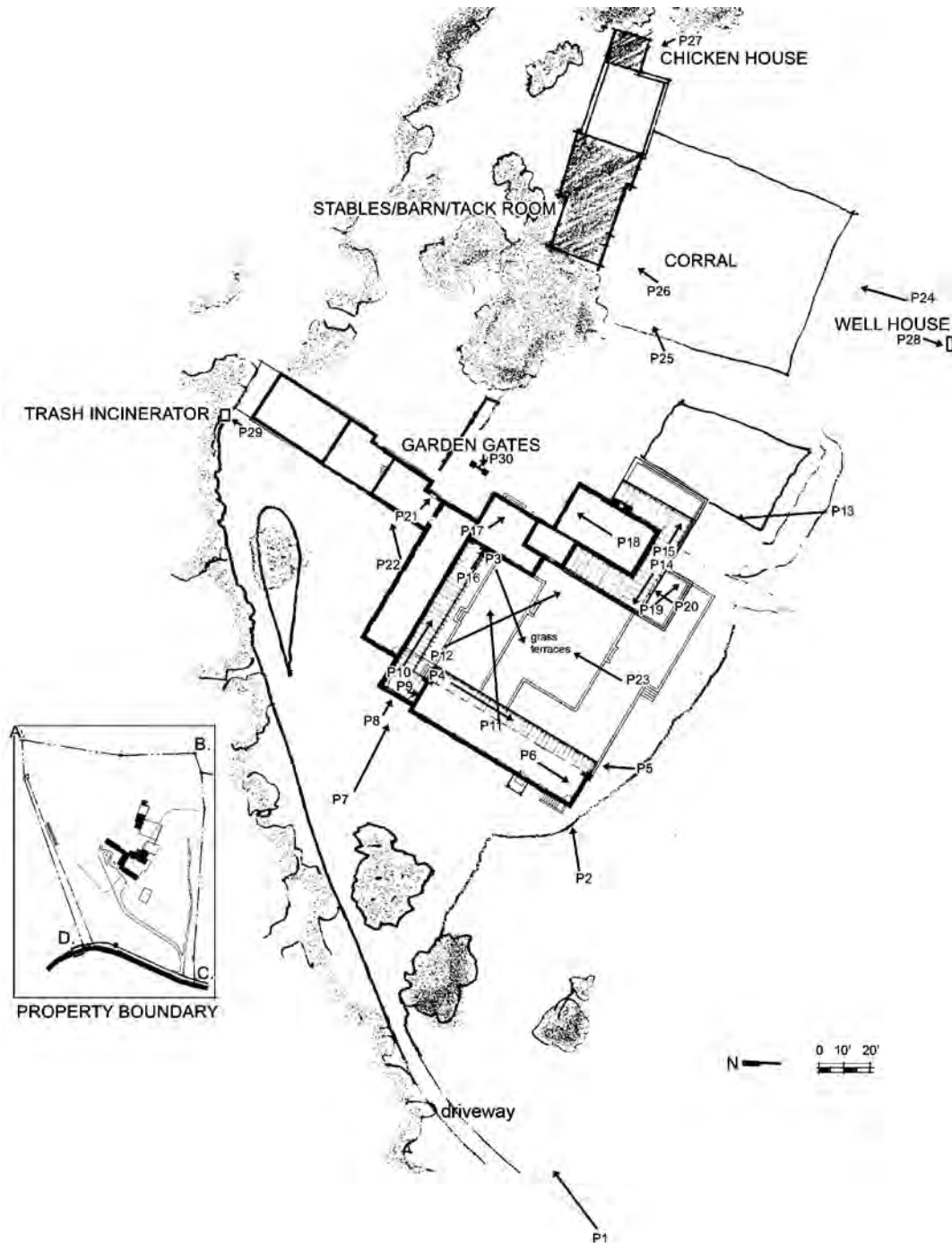
National Register Boundary 

Scale: 1" = 200'



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House  
Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, New Mexico  
Site Plan  
“P” indicates photograph number and camera angle

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Figure 1: Building Layout and Floor Plan. Plan based on George C. Pearl drawing, modified by Catherine Colby and John W. Murphey.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

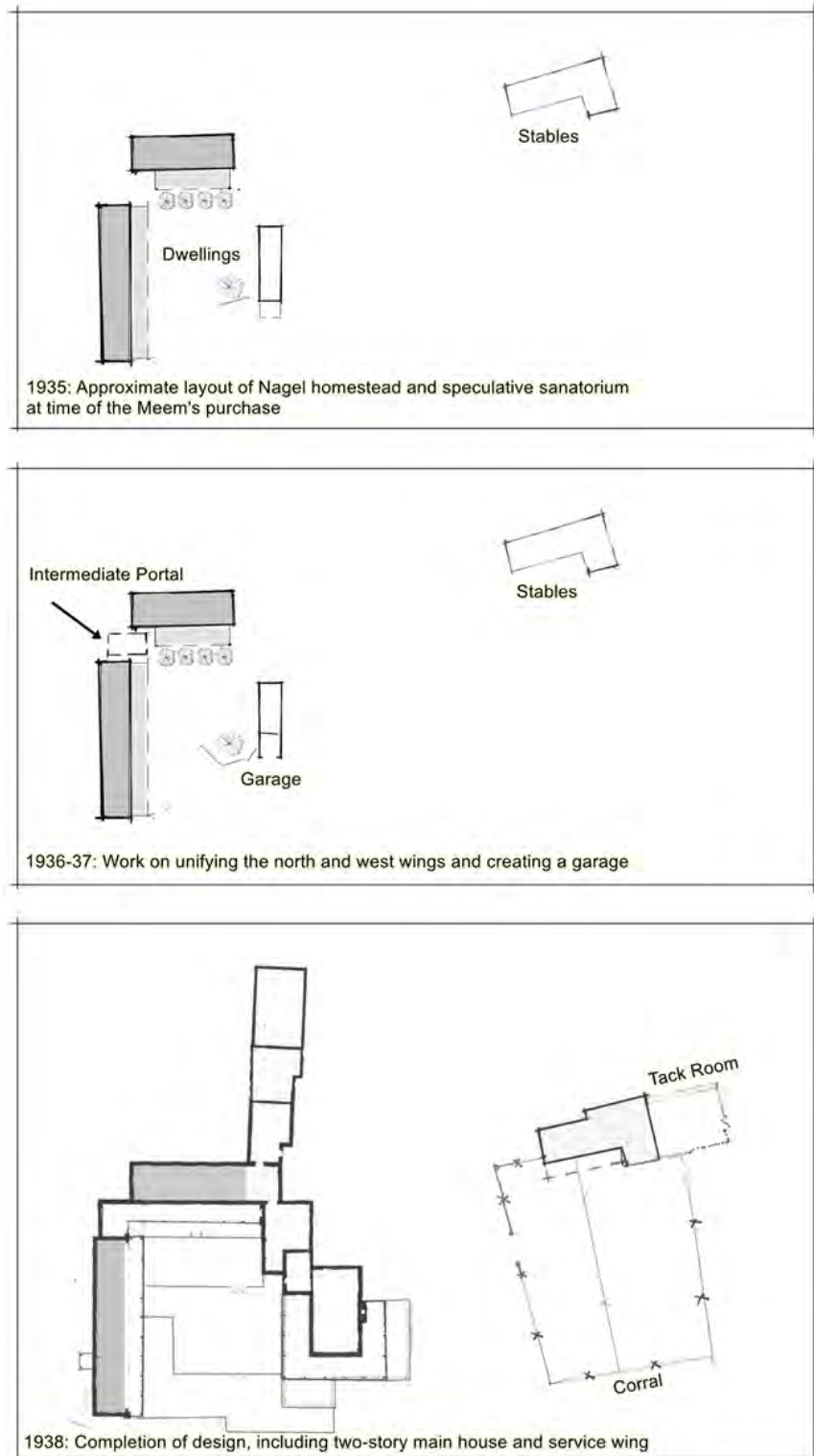


Figure 2: Evolution of Property, 1935-1938.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



John and Faith Bemis Meem on their wedding day, 1933.



Nancy, Faith, and John Meem, 1946  
(Laura Gilpin).

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Figure 3: Nagel Ranch with speculative sanatorium buildings in foreground, 1905.  
Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.



Figure 4: Nagel buildings later modified into the west and north wings of the Meem House, c1910. Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Figure 5: Reconstruction of east building into a garage, c.1935-1936.  
Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.



Figure 6: Portal (center) connecting the north and west wings, with garage (right), c.1936-1937.  
Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Figure 7: Aerial photograph showing completion of house and grounds, 1938.  
Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.



Figure 8: Southeast corner of house, n.d. Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Figure 9: Entrance Hall, n.d. Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.



Figure 10: Living Room, c.1940 (Ernest Knee). Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Figure 11: Garden Hall, c.1940 (Ernest Knee). Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.



Figure 12: Elevations of the East Wing (Main House), n.d. Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

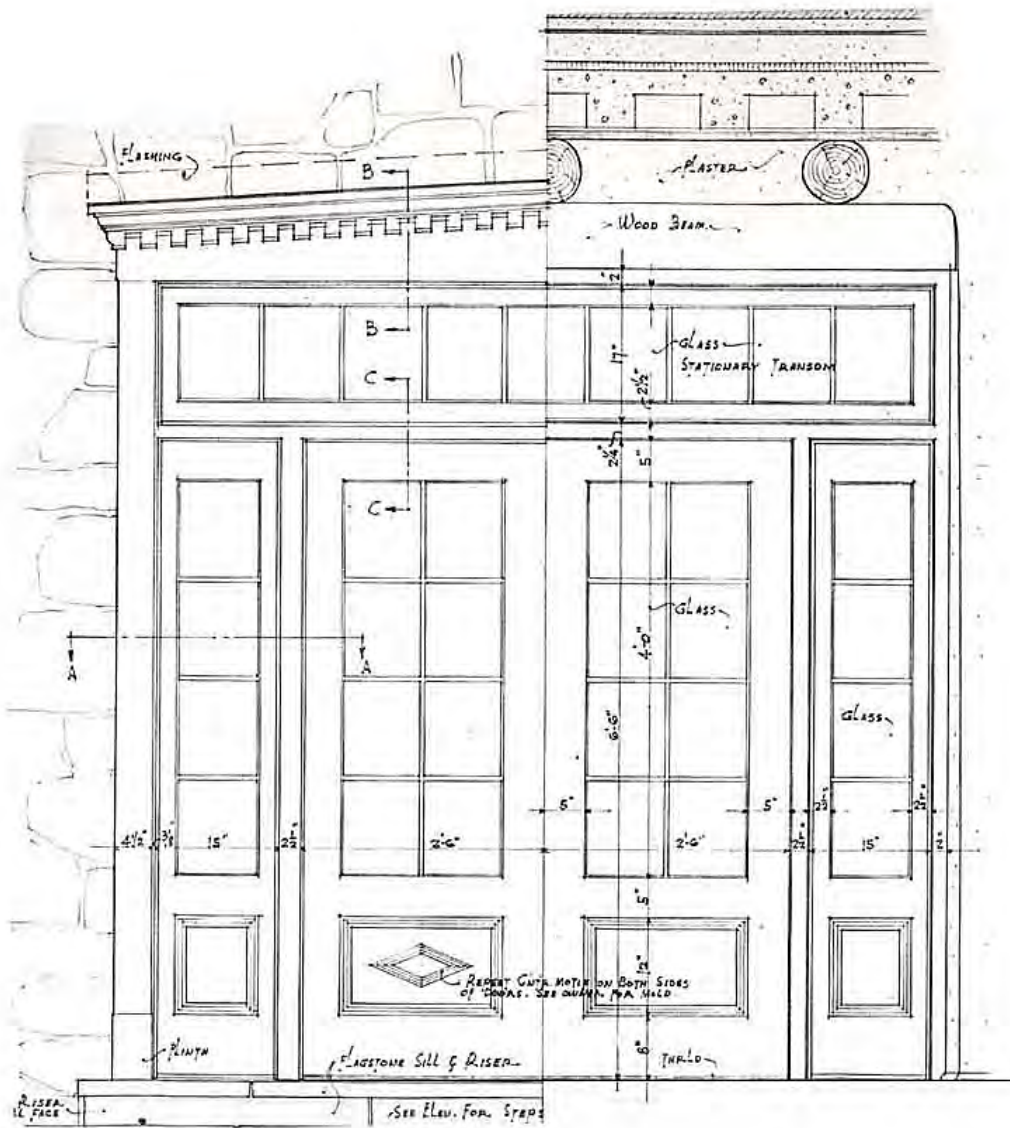


Figure 13: Territorial Revival-style door system at east wing, n.d. Courtesy Nancy Meem Wirth.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State

Photographs



Photo 1 of 30: Approaching house from driveway, facing east.



Photo 2 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), west and south elevations, facing northeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 3 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), east elevation, facing southwest.



Photo 4 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), east elevation portal, facing southwest.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 5 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), south and east elevations, facing northwest.



Photo 6 of 30: Preexisting Building (West Wing), apartment, facing south.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 7 of 30: Partial west elevation, with zaguan at center, facing southeast.

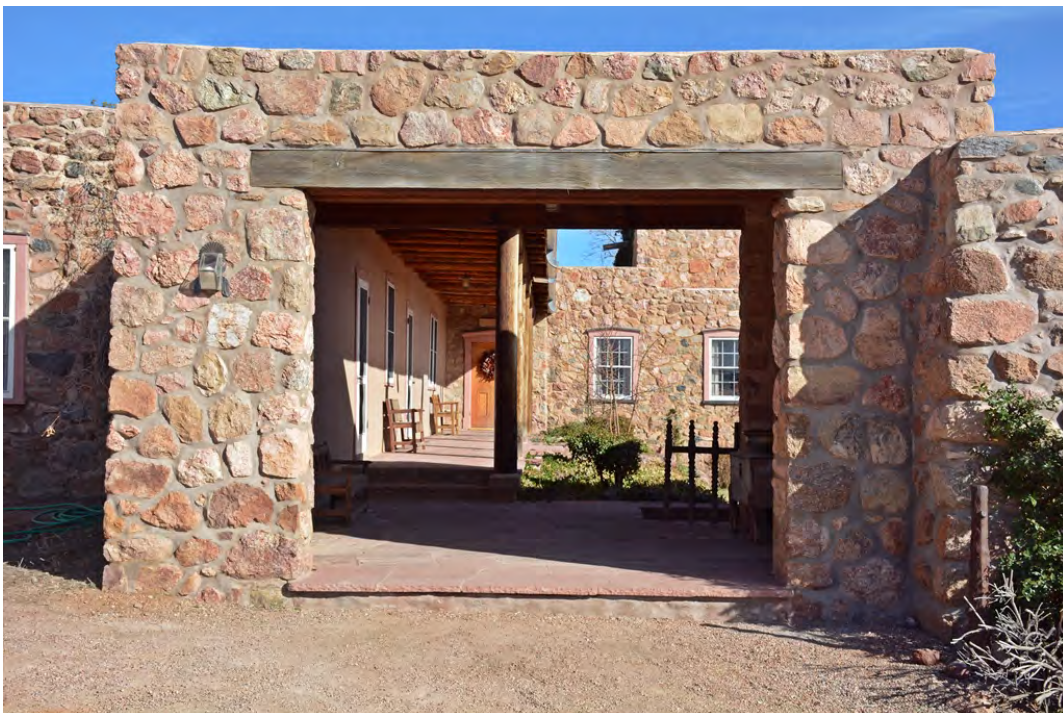


Photo 8 of 30: West elevation of zaguan, facing southeast.



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 9 of 30: Zaguan, entry door, facing southwest.



Photo 10 of 30: Entry Portal (North Wing), facing east.  
Sections 9-end page 49

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 11 of 30: Entry Portal (North Wing), facing northeast.



Photo 12 of 30: Main House (East Wing), west elevation, facing southeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 13 of 30: Main House (East Wing), south and east elevations, facing northwest.



Photo 14 of 30: Main House (East Wing), portal, facing northwest.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 15 of 30: Main House (East Wing), terrace deck, facing southeast.



Photo 16 of 30: Main House (East Wing), entry door, facing southeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 17 of 30: Main House (East Wing), entry hall, facing east.



Photo 18 of 30: Main House (East Wing), living room, facing northeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 19 of 30: Main House (East Wing), master bedroom, facing southwest.



Photo 20 of 30: Main House (East Wing), master bedroom, fireplace, facing northwest.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 21 of 30: Service Area (Northeast Wing), breezeway, facing east.



Photo 22 of 30: Service Area (Northeast Wing), garage, west elevation, facing northeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 23 of 30: Terracing, facing northwest.



Photo 24 of 30: Corral, facing north.



Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 25 of 30: Corral, facing northeast.



Photo 26 of 30: Stable/Barn/Tack Room, south elevation, facing northeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 27 of 30: Chicken House, west elevation, facing northeast.



Photo 28 of 30: Well House, facing southeast.

Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House  
Name of Property

Santa Fe, NM  
County and State



Photo 29 of 30: Trash incinerator, facing northwest.



Photo 30 of 30: Garden Gate, facing northwest, Catherine Colby, July 25, 2011.





































NM 1960 JW













BENVENUTO  
A LA ORA ES  
LA ASADA























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Meem, John Gaw and Faith Bemis, House

Multiple Name:

State & County: NEW MEXICO, Santa Fe

Date Received: 2/17/2017      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 4/3/2017      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: SG100000828

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal           | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver           | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      4/3/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House is locally significant under National Register Criteria B and C in the area of Architecture. Constructed between 1935 and 1938 as the architects' family residence, the property represents a highly personalized Territorial Revival-style design, incorporating common elements from Meem's work as well as more experimental forms and modern design details. Among New Mexico's most prolific and well respected early twentieth-century architect's, John Gaw Meem made significant contributions to the built environment of the state and Santa Fe in particular, popularizing various Southwest Regional styles. The property meets the Registration Requirements of the Meem MPS.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept National Register Criteria B and C

Reviewer: Paul Lusignan

Discipline: Historian

Telephone: (202)354-2229

Date: 4/3/2017

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : No



Susana Martinez  
Governor

STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION**

BATAAN MEMORIAL BUILDING  
407 GALISTEO STREET, SUITE 236  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501  
PHONE (505) 827-6320 FAX (505) 827-6338



February 13, 2017

J. Paul Loether  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W. 8th floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the John Gaw and Faith Bemis Meem House in Santa Fe County, New Mexico to the National Register of Historic Places.

- Disk of National Register of Historic Places nomination form and maps as a pdf
- Disk with digital photo images
- Physical signature page
- Sketch map(s)/attachment(s) in hard copy
- Correspondence
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- The enclosed owner objection(s) do  do not  constitute a majority of property owners.
- Special considerations: Note that this property is significant at the national level.

Sincerely,  
  
Steven Moffson  
State and National Register Coordinator

Enclosures