

A Raptor Enclosure for the Zuni Pueblo Zuni, New Mexico

CLAUDE ARMSTRONG and DONNA COHEN
University of Florida

Architects	Claude Armstrong and Donna Cohen
Client	Jim Enote and Steve Albert, director Zuni Fish and Wildlife
Construction Funding	Members of Zuni Pueblo The Lannan Foundation

Eagle feathers play a central role in the ritual observances of many Native Americans. In the past, tribal members were free to keep eagles for religious and ceremonial use. Today however, application must be made to the Federal Government to receive feathers. High demand for feathers results in waits of several years, and feathers may arrive in damaged condition.

The leaders of the Zuni Pueblo asked us to work with them to design a structure to hold eagles unsuited to the wild. This raptor enclosure is essentially a flight area and cages for eagles; when the birds molt the tribe will collect the feathers. We expect the building to take on a ceremonial character, and the ritual of gathering feathers here to become a part of life. This new program makes this the first building of its kind.

The intention is to use material from the pueblo lands for the construction. The highly skilled Zuni stone masons lay the reddish sandstone walls in Chaco style. Younger members of the tribe are being trained to learn this skill. Some lumber comes from the Zuni mountains and is being milled in the newly acquired sawmill. The overall dimensions of the building are 43 ft. wide x 110 ft. long x 18 ft. high. Orientation is east-west with protection from the winds on the ends. The structure is sited to face the mesa Dowayalane, which has sacred connections to the eagles and the tribe.



