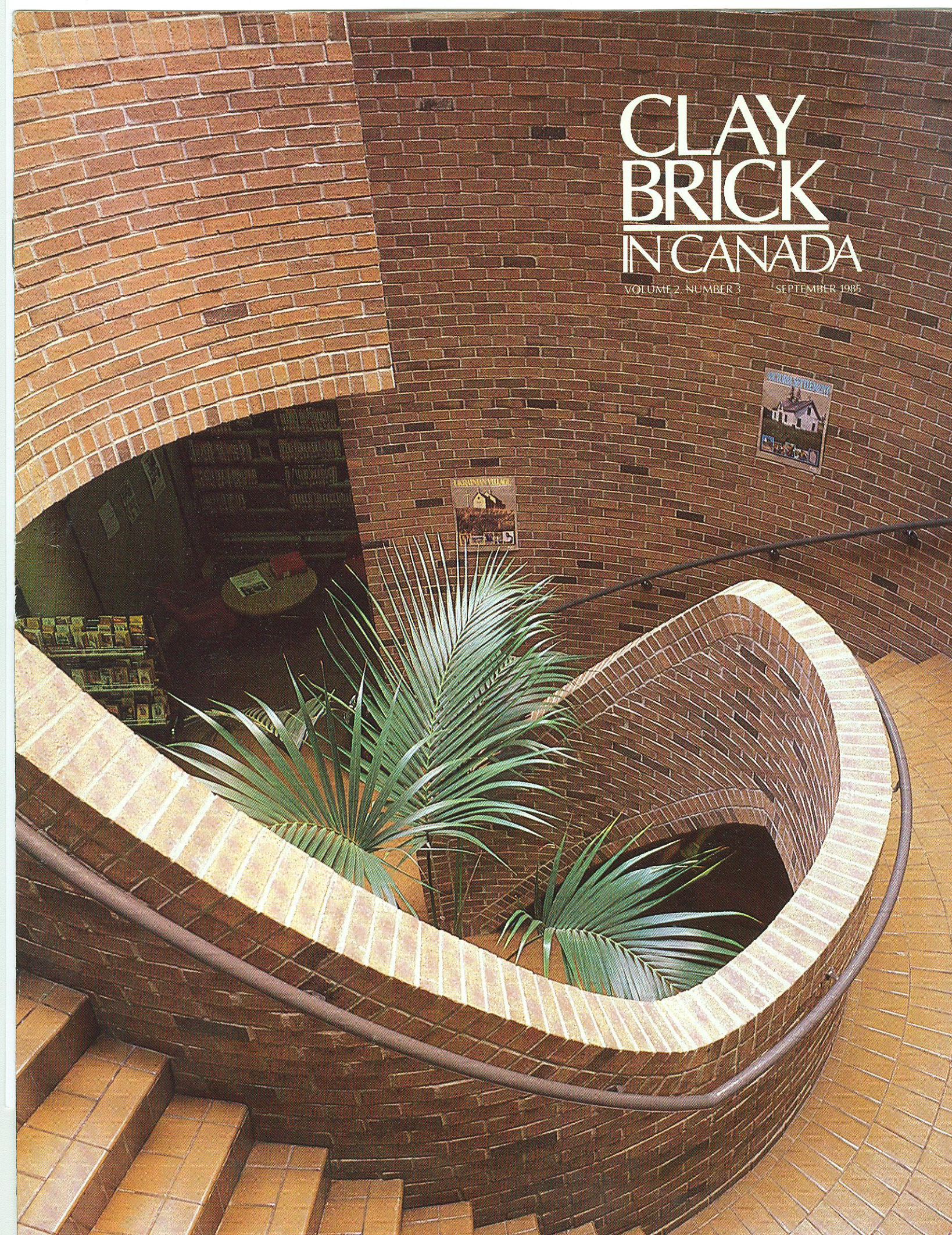


# CLAY BRICK IN CANADA

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# St. Albert Place – ALBERTA

*Architect: Douglas J. Cardinal B.Arch., M.A.A.A., R.C.A., F.R.A.I.C.*

St. Albert Place, Alberta, is a large multi purpose complex which includes Civic Centre, a theatre, a fine arts complex, a museum and a public library.

It is an excellent example of the design versatility of clay brick.

The architect, Douglas Cardinal, uses brick extensively in his buildings.

In this issue of Clay Brick in Canada he describes his design philosophy and how he combines the skills of the brick mason with the advantages of the computer.

## DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

"The curvilinear, organic shapes of my buildings result from my process of designing "from the inside out". Throughout my career I have petitioned the importance of designing for the needs of people. My role as an architect is to listen to the wishes, the dreams of the people who will be working in, and living in my buildings. I therefore listen carefully to the needs and concerns they express. Then I analyse the activities the people intend to conduct in each room, and I develop the ideal layout of furniture and equipment

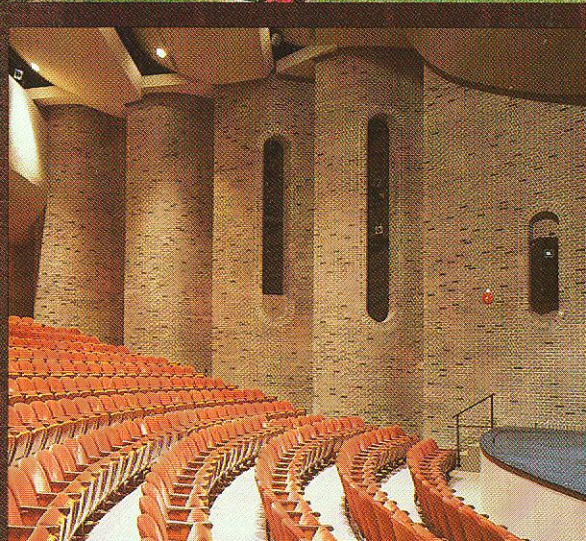
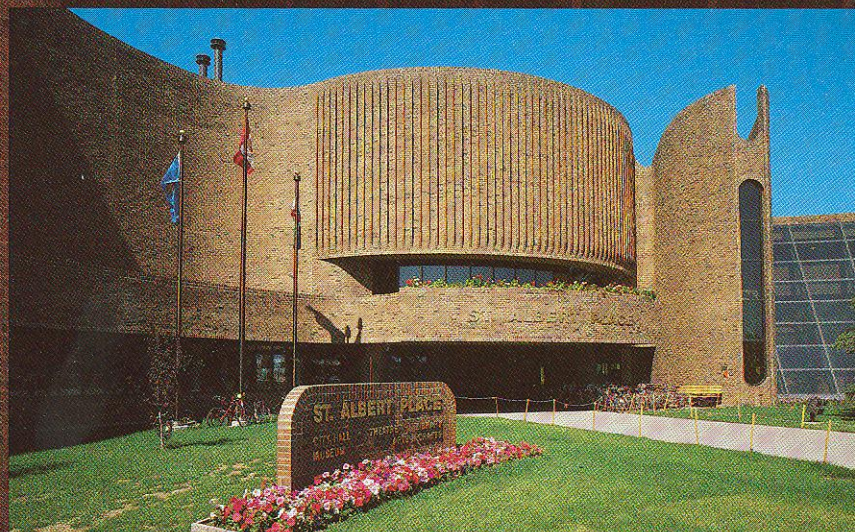
for that room. Finally I wrap the building skin around these layouts. I always find that, by designing thus from the inside out, the organic, changing, evolving ways in which people live and work give rise to equally organic forms in my buildings."

"I get the inspirations for my designs from nature. I do not study the works of other architects or other countries in developing my style; I just take a walk





in nature and observe the way in which nature solves its problems. I find that nature abhors straight lines. The circle, I find, is the dominant shape in nature: people gather in circles; some of the finest forms in nature are made up of circles; even the structures and homes built by insects and animals take the form of the circle. The circle has long been an important force in my Indian culture. My buildings therefore reflect the closeness man has with nature, particularly in the Indian culture."









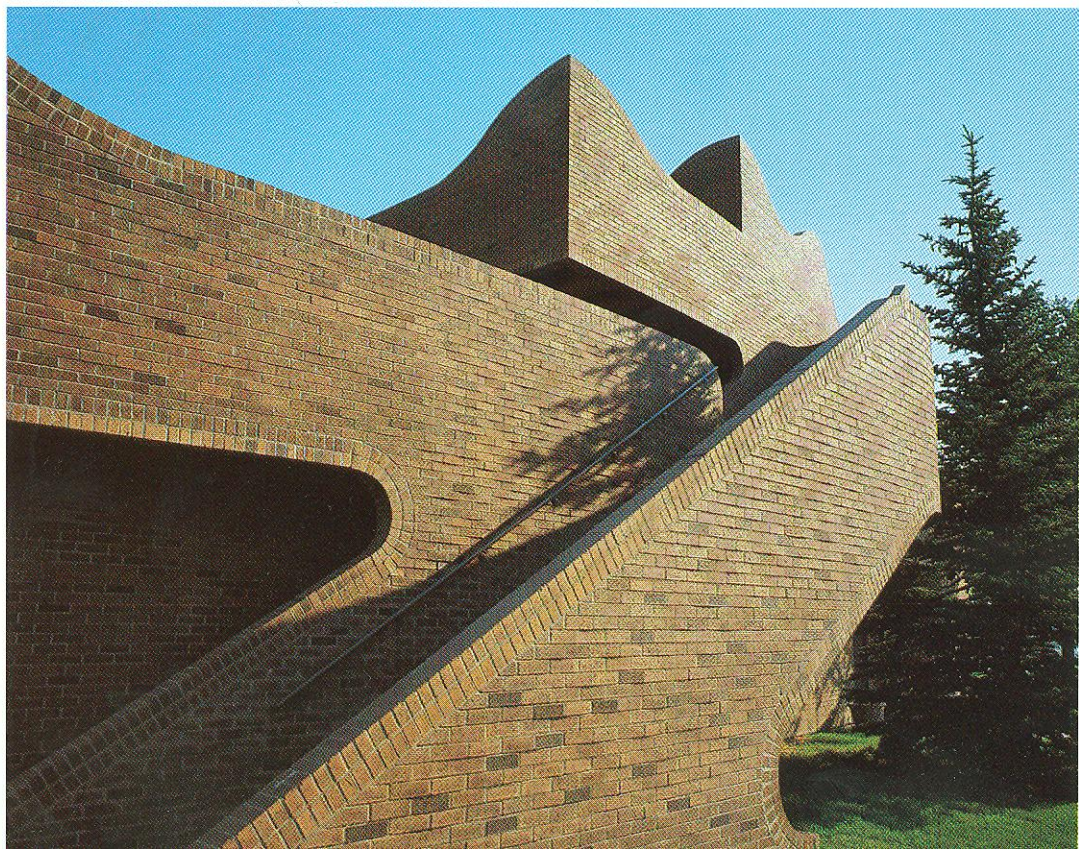
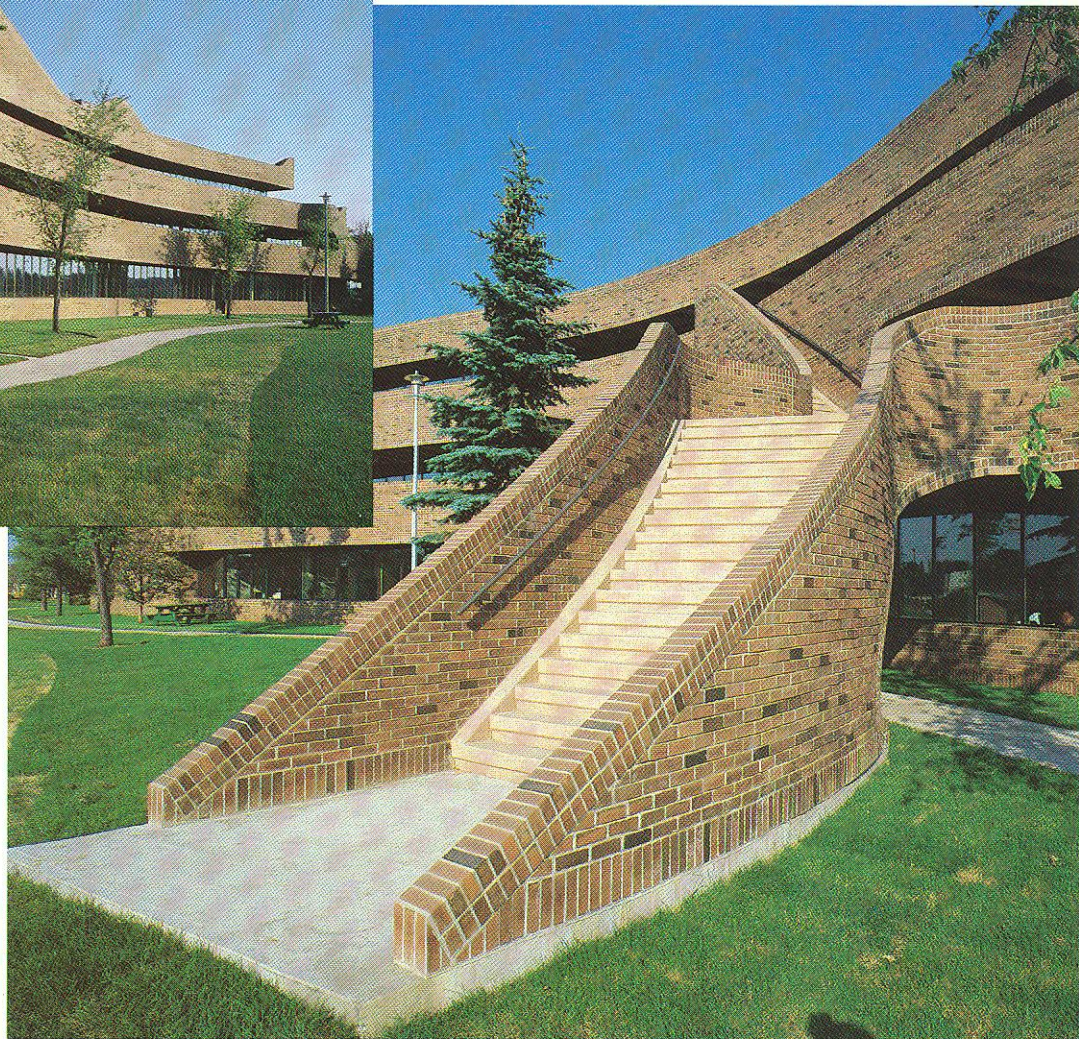


### THE USE OF BRICK

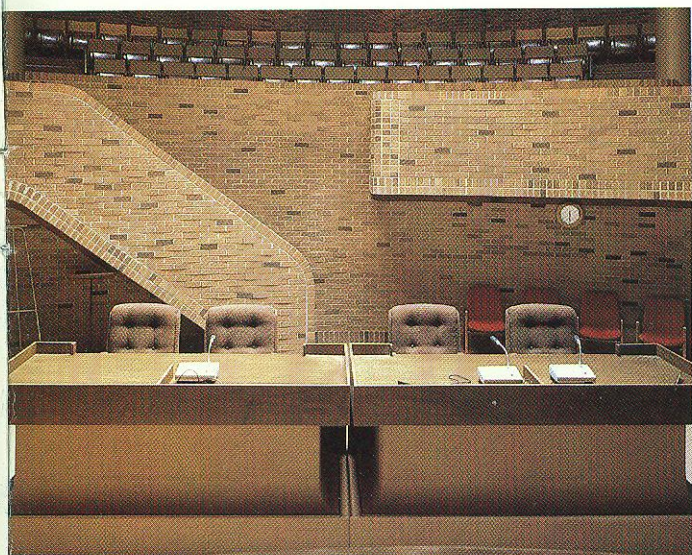
"My work is often regarded and described as art. I believe that each project I undertake deserves my very best effort, that each project must be the best I have ever achieved in my career. As true art, my buildings do not need cosmetic or decorative treatment to enhance their beauty; their own forms give them beauty. I find that brick is particularly suited to the flowing, graceful lines of my buildings in the hands of a skilled craftsman."

"Brick is a versatile material and has enormous capabilities. Brick masons, like all other contractors, are initially afraid of my buildings, they are unsure of the capabilities of their material. But as they work on the building, the true pride they possess in their craft shows up, and then they give the building their very best. I have found that the same masons always bid on my projects, and always come in as low bidder. Their pride is evident in the loving care with which they tackle their work, and the way in which they speak of their work in the future."









## USE OF THE COMPUTER

"Complex buildings like St. Albert Place would never have been possible to design without the aid of the computer. In the past, as with the Grande Prairie Regional College, for instance, every dimension, every radius, every coordinate had to be calculated trigonometrically by hand, with a high chance of error. Now the computer makes all calculations in seconds, automatically to the nearest millimeter. This and the many other marvellous drafting operations possible on the computer free up my staff and me to focus all our

energies on designing. We even extend the benefits of the computer to the tradesmen; when the bricklayer, for instance, needs detailed dimensions of a complicated junction between walls and parapets for cutting his bricks to shape, I can provide them for him on the computer. Contractors are finding that there is a very low chance of error and coordination problems on my jobs. Some day we will have computers on the site, and the mason can call up any detail he wishes from my office, directly on his computer screen and blow it up to any scale he wants, in an instant."

Douglas J. Cardinal