Brick
IN ARCHITECTURE

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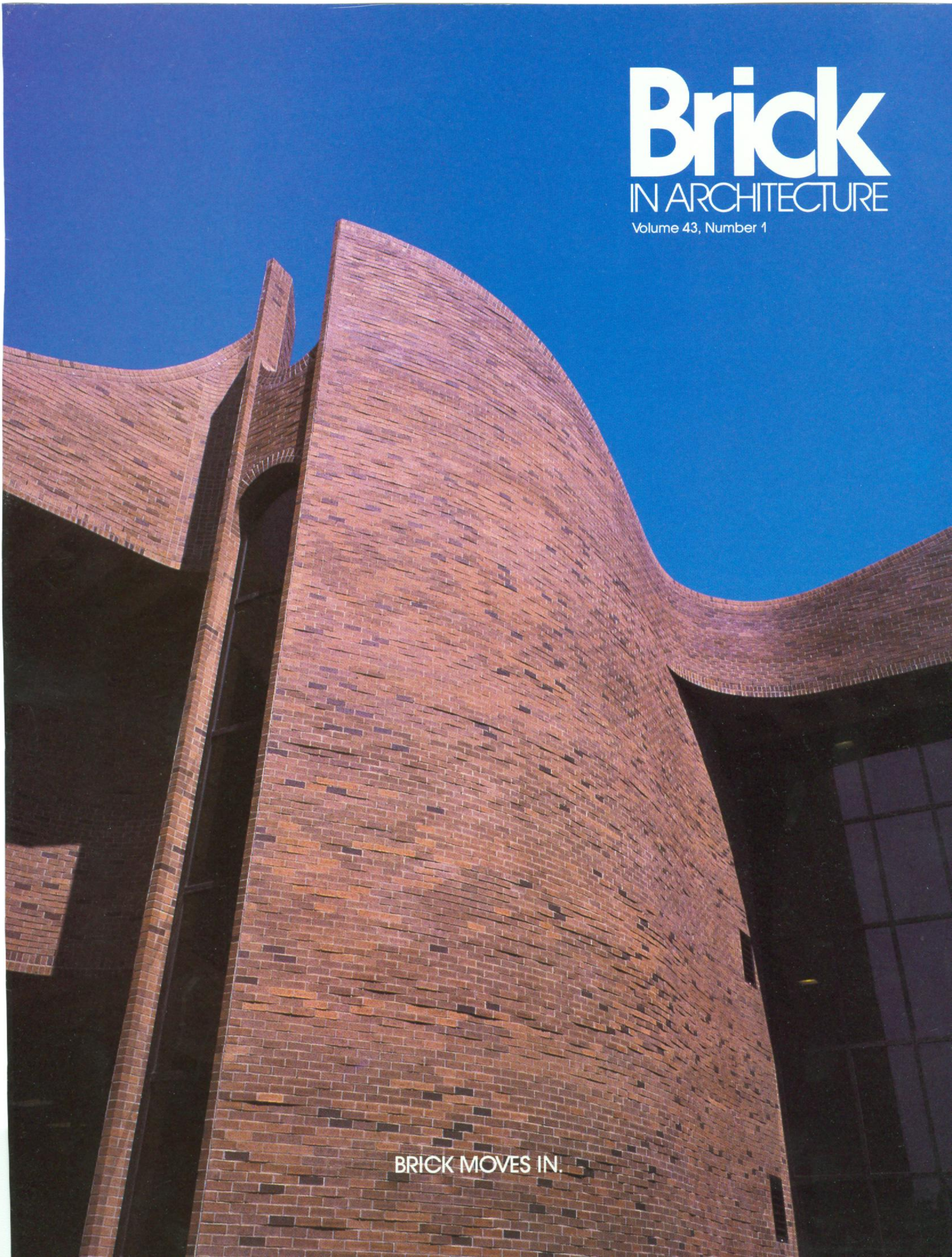
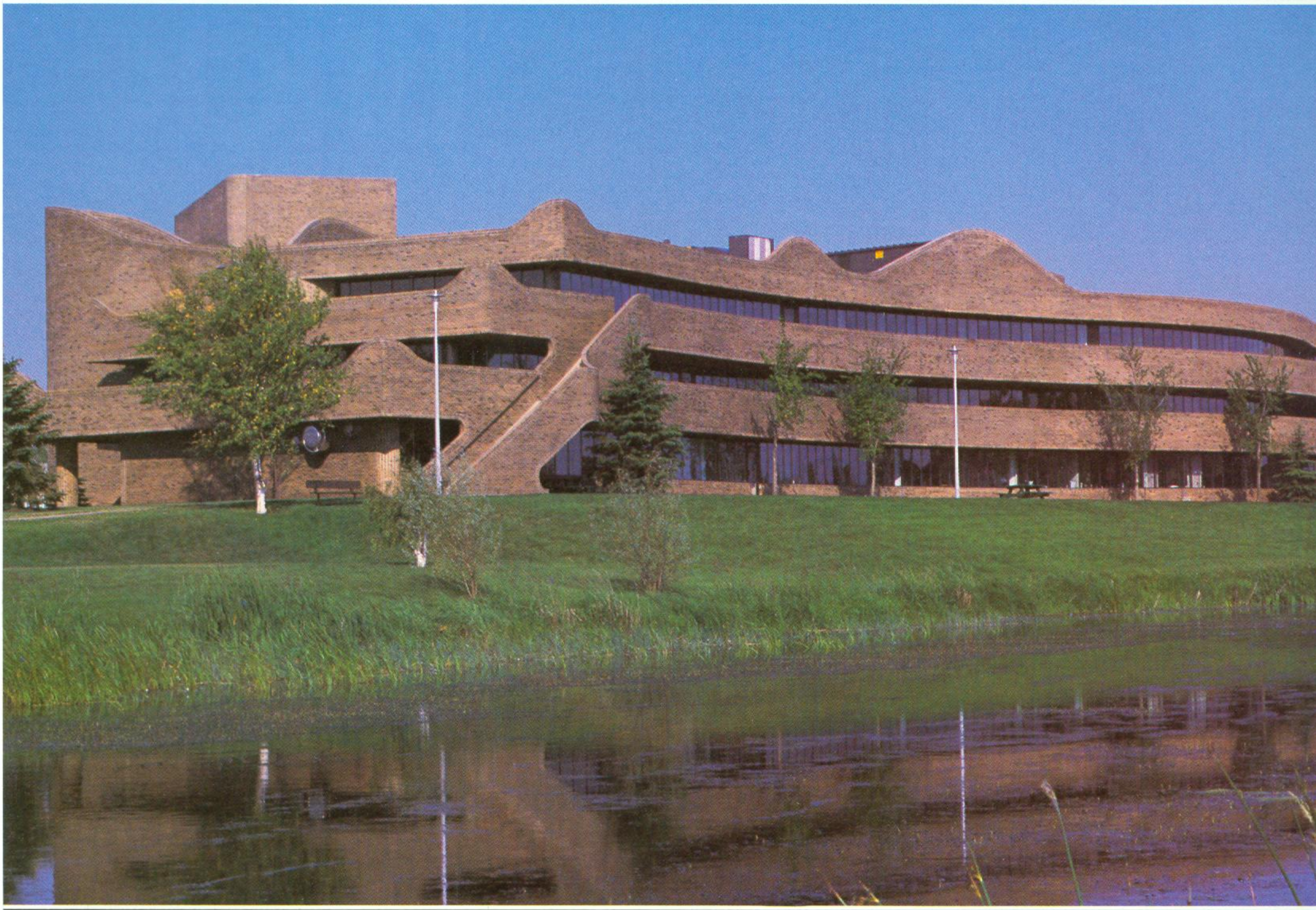


BRICK MOVES IN.

DESIGN #1 St. Albert Place



In this issue: St. Albert Place in Alberta, Canada, and St. Louis Place in St. Louis, Missouri. Two innovative designs that use brick to make a strong statement—inside and out.

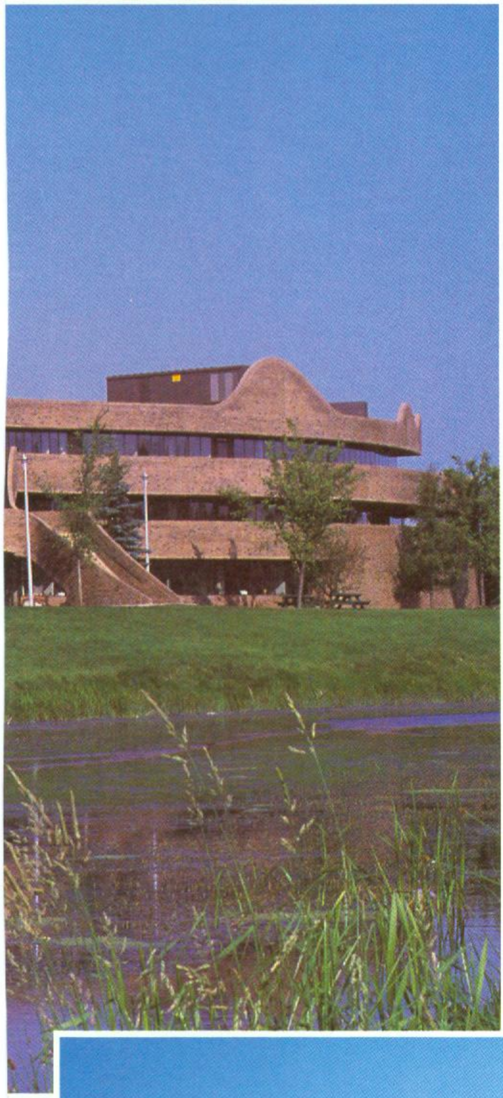
A multi-purpose community complex on the banks of a Canadian river and a 21-story office building in downtown St. Louis. Though these buildings differ widely in function, locale, and style, brick was the natural, logical, and undisputed choice for their exteriors. And significantly, in both buildings, the beauty of brick is more than skin deep. It covers interior walls, floors, terraces, and other spaces, creating a pleasing—and practical—continuity.

St. Albert Place combines City Hall offices, Council chambers, fine arts centre, recreation department offices, historical museum, community library, and 500-seat performing arts center in a single, graceful structure. Architect Douglas Cardinal conceived its fluid forms by observing how the Sturgeon River, flowing by the building's site, had sculpted the riverbank. His design, with its undulating roof line, curved expanses, and carved spaces, seems itself to be sculpted by the river, echoing the contours of the shore.

From the beginning, brick was an integral part of the architect's concept. Instead of viewing individual bricks as rectilinear units mandating rectilinear shapes, Cardinal viewed them as tiny components that could be strung together to create virtually any imaginable form, offering him the ability to create sweeping forms and rounded shapes economically.

What's more, instead of working to eliminate the knobbiness that naturally occurs when brick forms a round, Cardinal capitalized on it. He had his masons knock individual bricks askew on straight walls to coordinate with the degree of knobbiness that occurred on the curved walls. By traveling the brick in this way, Cardinal achieved an inviting, textured skin, appealingly consistent throughout the exterior.

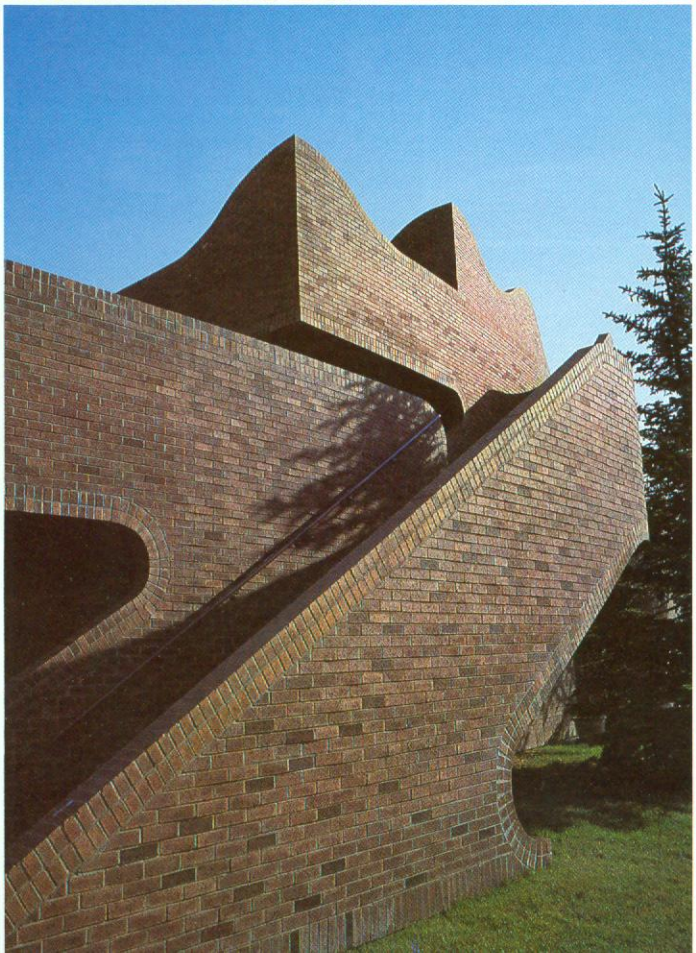
Brick also helped Cardinal meet the challenge of designing one building that had to function as five or six separate buildings.



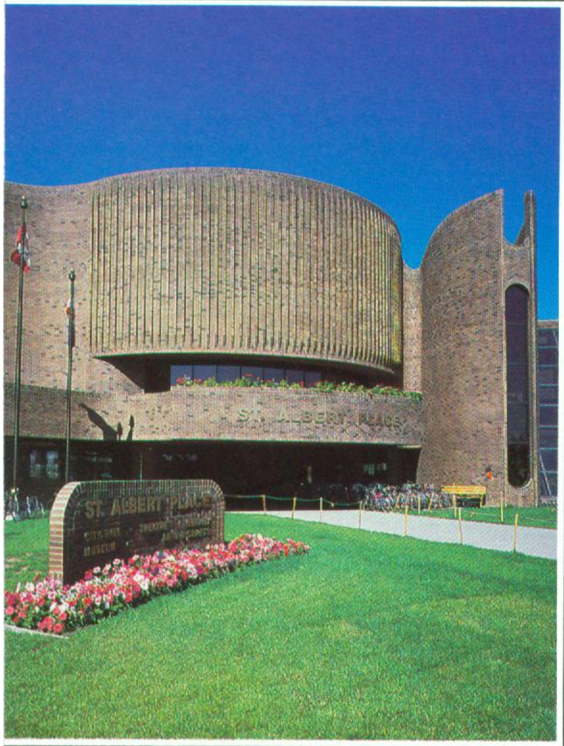
At St. Albert Place, brick forms an acoustical barrier between the different interior spaces, so that performances in the theater, for example, can't intrude on the library. And within each space, brick also serves as a sound reflector.

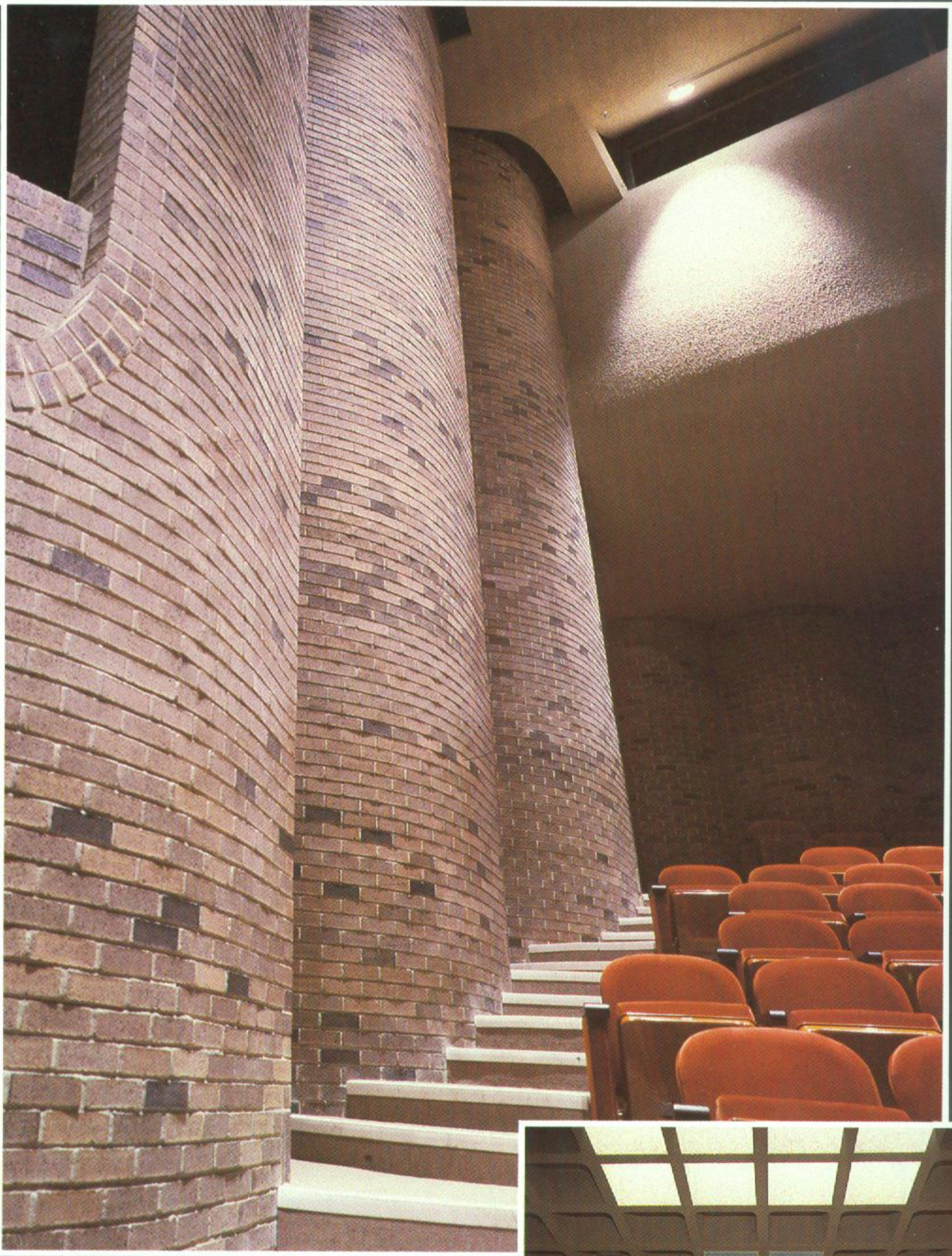
Drawing upon the human form for inspiration, Cardinal devised curving interior walls of brick that reflect sound from its source to its audience, without distortion or reverberation. In the performing arts center and council chambers, sound is disbursed even to the

"Brick gives you much more opportunity to create sculpture than other materials because you can create curved, sweeping forms by just putting the small modules of brick together."
Douglas J. Cardinal, Architect



"I wanted to retain an overall feeling using one material that would be suitable, in both color and texture, for the inside and outside. Brick allowed me to have fluid forms working into the building."



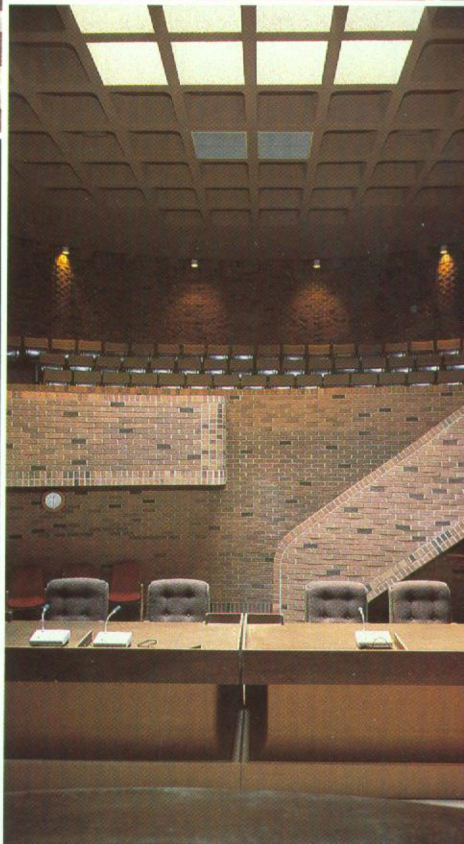


back of the room. And in the performing arts center, some sound is even reflected back to the stage, so performers can hear themselves.

Brick is also used on the dramatic staircases, both on the interior and exterior of the building. Cardinal designed them with high, bricked balustrades, to provide visitors with an opportunity for direct contact with the forms and textures that characterize the building.

Today, St. Albert Place not only functions as a center for the community, but, in its fluid brick forms and earthtones, as a sensitive reflection of the community.

"Brick is alive, warm, and texturous, which is particularly important in a cold climate. In the winter it stands out as a sort of warm blanket. One wants to come in and get out of the cold."



Photography courtesy of the Clay Brick Association of Canada