



[EL PASO]

The Design Story

Elizabeth Taylor called the penthouse suite at **The Plaza Hotel Pioneer Park** home during her 1950 marriage to Conrad “Nicky” Hilton Jr. While the marriage of the then-18-year-old Hollywood starlet and the Hilton heir (pictured) lasted a brief eight months, the

iconic El Paso hotel has withstood the test of time. This year, the hotel is set to welcome guests after undergoing a \$78 million restoration. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 1930 Plaza Hotel Pioneer Park was the first high-rise in Conrad Hilton’s hotel empire. The hotel’s original architectural firm, El Paso-based Trost and Trost, was known throughout the country for its Pueblo art deco style, which included organic, botanical forms; geometric patterns and shapes; and soft curves made with adobe, stucco, and plaster-type materials. “The infusion of the local flavor through indigenous, Native

American design motifs in the architecture makes Pueblo art deco distinct from art deco buildings in New York or Chicago from the same time period,” says Anna McGrady Miller, the director of interior design for the Johnson Studio at Cooper Carry, the architects behind the new design. To develop a deeper understanding of the region’s influences, the design team studied buildings in El Paso’s Las Plazas Arts District, including the Plaza Theatre and a former Kress department store. Over the decades, many of the hotel’s original flourishes were removed, but photographs and newspaper articles helped the team remain faithful to the hotel’s roots with a modern reinterpretation. “Our goal is to make the hotel the pride of downtown El Paso—a thriving social hub where locals can come together and enjoy themselves,” McGrady Miller says. —*Sylvia Jeanne Caulfield*



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