



(a)



(b)

Photograph by Kathy A. Kojnick

**Figure 6.8** Arcosanti, Arizona: the progress. (a) A view in 1995 and (b) a view in 2004.

had been given impetus by the success of a touring exhibition of Soleri's proposals. Over 100,000 people in Washington alone visited it.

The first steps in getting Arcosanti built involved the production of the working drawings for the foundry and ceramic workshops. The building of a campsite and drafting room followed. The housing frame was begun in 1973 and step-by-step, apse-by-apse, room-by-room, from year to year, progress is being made. It is slow going. By 2000 the project was 3% built (see Figure 6.8). Its completion date is predicted to be 2030.

Design decisions are very much made from the top down in a largely authoritarian manner. The reason is that an overall ideology, within the rationalist intellectual tradition, guides the design and dictates decisions. The slow construction of the projects and the emphasis on obtaining funds means that those elements that generate resources are built, rather than what is needed to build a residential community – the heart of any city. Few people live there and educational facilities are not available for other than the youngest children.

Arcosanti is a bold experiment. Whether it is as ecologically sound as claimed will be open to investigation as its full character develops. Perhaps it is the basis for future settlement patterns, perhaps not. Much depends on whether the world's population grows substantially and land for building becomes truly scarce. Interestingly enough many of Soleri's concerns are those that the 'smart growth' advocates are raising now. The design patterns they are promoting to deal with those concerns are, however, very different. Arcosanti is, nevertheless, a city design and, sensible a design or not, it is a type of architectural product: a new town in a single building.

### Major references

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