

# City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

# memo

**DATE:** June 10, 2025  
**TO:** Historic Districts Review Board  
**VIA:** Heather Lamboy, Planning & Land Use Department Director  
Maggie Moore, Assistant Land Use Director  
Gary Moquino, Historic Preservation Division Manager  
**FROM:** Lani McCulley, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Division

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**2025-010489-HDRB, 539 Garcia St.,** Downtown & Eastside Historic District, contributing, Matthew Rembe, agent for Penny Rembe, owner, requests a historic status review with primary facade(s) designation, if applicable, for a residential structure and an accessory structure.

**REFERENCE ATTACHMENTS (Sequentially):**

**CITY SUBMITTALS**

District Standards & yard wall & fence standards.

Historic Inventory Form

Zoning Review Sheet

Other:

**APPLICANT SUBMITTALS**

Proposal Letter

Site Plan/Floor Plan

Elevations

Photographs

Other: [2025 HCPI]

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the historic status of the residential structure be maintained as contributing with the south façade, which holds the greatest historic integrity, as the primary facade, and that the accessory structure be designated as contributing with the east facade as primary, per section 14-5.2(C)(2) Designation of Significant, Contributing or Noncontributing Status Within Historic Districts.

**Sample motions:**

- a. In case 2025-010489-HDRB, for 539 Garcia Street, retain the residential structure as

- contributing with the south façade as primary, and designate the accessory structure as contributing with the east façade as primary per staff’s recommendation.
- b. In case 2025-010489-HDRB, for 539 Garcia Street, retain the residential structure as contributing with the south façade as primary, and designate the accessory structure as non-contributing.
  - c. In case 2025-010489-HDRB, for 539 Garcia Street, downgrade the residential structure to non-contributing and designate the accessory structure as contributing with the east façade as primary.
  - d. In case 2025-010489-HDRB, for 539 Garcia Street, downgrade the residential structure to non-contributing, and designate the accessory structure as non-contributing.

**BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:**

The single-family residence at 539 Garcia Street is listed as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. No primary facades have been designated on the residential structure. The accessory structure has not been assigned a historic status.



Figure 1: Property setting

The Spanish Pueblo Revival-style home was constructed in the 1940s using adobe as part of the Garcia family compound. A rear addition was constructed sometime between 1958 and 1966 (see aerials provided in 2025 HCPI) in a ranch style at a lower height than the original structure. After 1978, a bay window addition was constructed on the west elevation along with two window opening changes. According to the 2025 Historic Cultural Properties Inventory (HCPI), the south elevation porch appears to have been reconstructed at an unknown date due to the types of materials used in the construction, including milled plates and precut corbels. The windows are a combination of wood, aluminum, and vinyl. The residence is one of the original homes located in the Jose Dolores Garcia Estate Subdivision (lot 2), which was developed to accommodate Garcia family members from land deeded from the Garcia family ranch.



Figure 2: South Elevation of Residential Structure



Figure 3: November 10, 1958, aerial photograph. Lot 2 is the subject property.

In the northwest corner of the lot sits an adobe one-car garage in Pueblo-Revival style consistent with the house style, also dating to the 1940s. The windows are wood sash windows, with one being a three-over-one window and the other a one-over-one window.



Figure 4: South Elevation of Accessory Structure

**APPLICANT’S REQUEST:**

The applicant requests the following:

- 1) Status review with primary façade designation, if applicable, for a residential structure, and
- 2) Status review with primary façade designation, if applicable, for an accessory structure.

The residence and accessory structure combination were constructed at the same time in matching styles. The lot is one of the first to be developed in the Jose Dolores Garcia Estate Subdivision, which is indicative of family compound development in Santa Fe, where the homes are built for the family and divided from the original family tract after the residences are constructed. The residential structure retains its original footprint and shows its development over time. Except for the bay window and rear addition, the entire structure has not been altered from its original historic condition. The residence contributes to the historic associations and architectural design qualities that are significant for the Downtown and Eastside Historic District and specifically to the Jose Dolores Garcia Estate Subdivision. The south façade holds the most historic integrity, even with the possibility of changes and/or reconstruction of the portal. The garage’s east elevation retains the most historic integrity with the three-over-one wood window, which is most likely original to the structure. Therefore, staff find that the residence and the associated garage are contributing to the district.

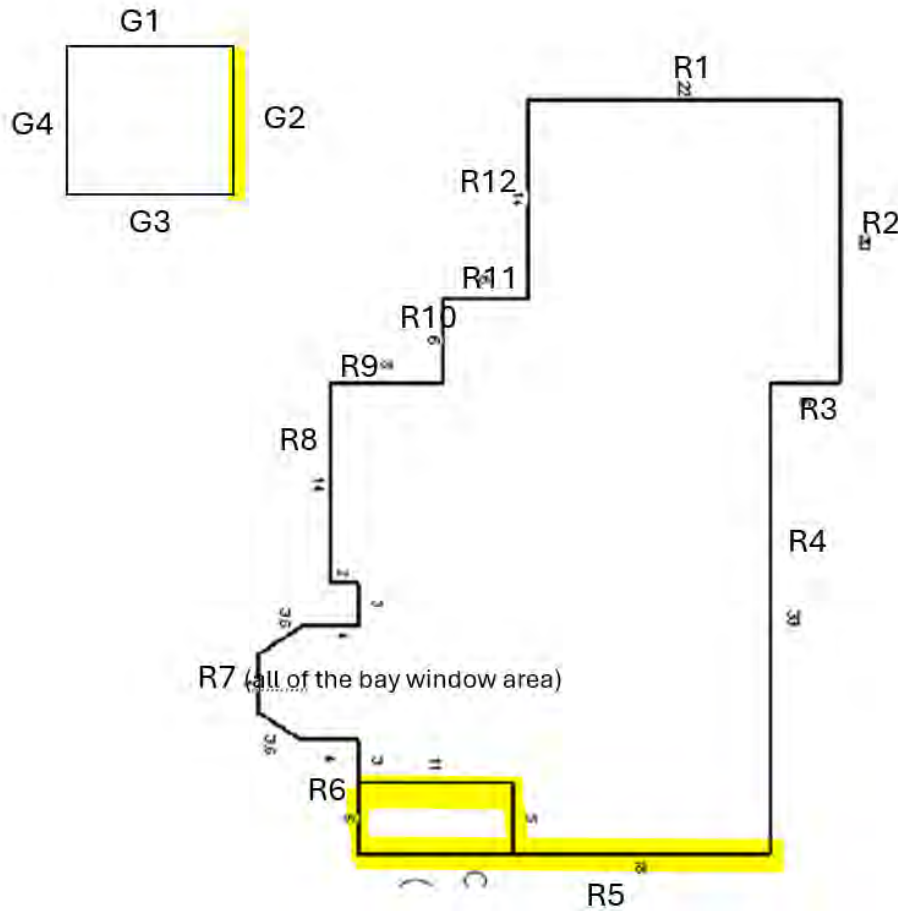


Figure 5: Façade Diagram

**RELEVANT CODE CITATIONS:**

**14-5.2 HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

**(A) General Provisions**

(1) General Purpose

In order to promote the economic, cultural, and general welfare of the people of the *city* and to ensure the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and *development* of the *city*, it is deemed essential by the *governing body* that the qualities relating to the history of Santa Fe, and a harmonious outward appearance, which preserve *property* values and attract tourists and residents alike, be preserved, some of these qualities being:

- (a) The continued existence and *preservation* of historical areas and *buildings*;
- (b) The continued construction of *buildings* in the historic styles; and
- (c) A general harmony as to style, form, color, height, proportion, texture, and material between *buildings* of historic design and those of more modern design.

**(C) Regulation of Significant and Contributing Structures in the Historic Districts**

(Ord. No. 2004-26)

(1) Purpose and Intent

It is intended that:

- (a) Each *structure* is to be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical *development*, such as the addition of conjectural features or architectural elements from other *buildings*, shall not be undertaken.
- (b) Changes to *structures* that have acquired historic *significance* in their own right shall be retained and preserved, recognizing that most *structures* change over time;
- (c) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a *structure* be preserved; and
- (d) New additions and related or adjacent new construction be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the original form and integrity of the historic *property* and its environment would be unimpaired.

(2) Designation of Significant, Contributing, or Noncontributing Status within Historic Districts

(a) Status Designation

*Structures* within historic districts may be designated a status of "significant," "contributing," or "noncontributing" based upon the definitions of these terms in Article 14-12. Staff shall maintain a record as to the current status of *structures* located in the Historic Districts.

(b) Board Authority to Review Status Designation

- (i) The Board is authorized to change the status of a *structure* or to designate a status for a *structure* with no status designated.
- (ii) A change in status or the designation of a status shall be based upon an evaluation of data provided through survey or other relevant sources of information and the definitions of "significant," "contributing," or "noncontributing."

14-12 Significant Structure:

A structure located in a historic district that is approximately fifty years old or older, and that embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. For a structure to be designated as significant, it must retain a high level of historic integrity. A structure may be designated as significant:

- (A) for its association with events or persons that are important on a local, regional, national, or global level; or
- (B) if it is listed on or is eligible to be listed on the State Register of Cultural Properties or the National Register of Historic Places.

14-12 Contributing Structure:

A structure, located in a historic district, approximately fifty years old or older, that helps to establish and maintain the character of that historic district. Although a contributing structure is not unique in itself, it adds to the historic associations or historic architectural design qualities that are significant for a district. The contributing structure may have had minor alterations, but its integrity remains.

#### 14-12 Noncontributing Structure:

A structure, located in an H district, that is less than fifty years old or that does not exhibit sufficient historic integrity to establish and maintain the character of the H District.

#### 14-12 Primary Façade:

One or more principal faces or elevations of a building with features that define the character of the building's architecture.

### (E) Downtown and Eastside Design Standards

The *governing body* recognizes that a style of architecture has evolved within the *city* from the year 1600 to the present characterized by construction with *adobe*, hereafter called "old Santa Fe style", and that another style has evolved, hereafter called "recent Santa Fe style", which is a *development* from, and an elaboration of the old Santa Fe style, with different materials and frequently with added decorations.

#### (1) Old Santa Fe Style

Old Santa Fe style, characterized by construction with *adobe*, is defined as including the so-called "pueblo" or "pueblo-Spanish" or "Spanish-Indian" and "territorial" styles, and is more specifically described as follows:

- (a) With rare exception, *buildings* are of one *story*, few have three stories, and the characteristic effect is that the *buildings* are long and low. Roofs are flat with a slight *slope* and surrounded on at least three sides by a firewall of the same color and material as the *walls* or of brick. Roofs are never carried out beyond the line of the *walls* except to cover an enclosed *portal* or *porch* formed by setting back a portion of the *wall* or to form an exterior *portal*, the outer edge of the roof being supported by wooden columns. Two-story construction is more common in the territorial than in other sub-styles, and is preferably accompanied by a balcony at the level of the floor of the second *story*. Façades are flat, varied by inset *portales*, exterior *portales*, projecting vigas or roof beams, canales or water-spouts, flanking buttresses, and wooden lintels, architraves, and cornices, which, as well as doors, are frequently carved, and the carving may be picked out with bright colors. Arches are almost never used except for nonfunctional arches, often slightly ogive, over gateways in freestanding *walls*.
- (b) All exterior *walls* of a *building* are painted alike. The colors range from a light earth color to a dark earth color. The exception to this rule is the protected space under *portales*, or in church-derived designs, inset panels in a *wall* under the roof, in which case the roof overhangs the panel. These spaces may be painted white or a contrasting color or have mural decorations.
- (c) Solid *wall* space is always greater in any façade than window and door space combined. Single panes of glass larger than thirty (30) inches in any dimension are not permissible except as otherwise provided in this section.
- (d) The rule as to flat roofs shall not be construed to prevent the construction of skylights or installation of air conditioning devices, or any other necessary roof *structures*, but such *structures* other than chimneys, flues, vents and aerials, shall be so placed as to be concealed by the firewall from the view of anyone standing in the *street* on which the *building* fronts;

- (e) True old Santa Fe style *buildings* are made of *adobe* with a mud plaster finish. Construction with masonry blocks, bricks, or other materials with which the *adobe* effect can be simulated is permissible, provided that the exterior *walls* are not less than eight (8) inches thick and that geometrically straight façade lines are avoided. Mud plaster or hard plaster simulating *adobe*, laid on smoothly, is required; and
- (f) It is characteristic of old Santa Fe style commercial *buildings* to place a *portal* so that it covers the entire sidewalk, the columns being set at the curb line.

(2) Recent Santa Fe Style

Recent Santa Fe style intends to achieve harmony with historic *buildings* by *retention* of a similarity of materials, color, proportion, and general detail. The dominating effect is to be that of *Adobe* construction, prescribed as follows:

- (a) No *building* shall be over two stories in height in any façade unless the façade shall include projecting or recessed *portales*, *setbacks*, or other design elements.
- (b) The combined door and window area in any *publicly visible* façade shall not exceed forty percent of the total area of the façade except for doors or windows located under a *portal*. No door or window in a *publicly visible* façade shall be located nearer than three (3) feet from the corner of the façade;
- (c) No cantilevers shall be permitted except over projecting vigas, beams, or wood corbels, or as part of the roof *treatment* described below;
- (d) No less than eighty percent of the surface area of any *publicly visible* façade shall be *adobe* finish or stucco simulating *adobe* finish. The balance of the *publicly visible* façade, except as above, may be of natural stone, wood, brick, tile, terra cotta, or other material, subject to approval as hereinafter provided for *building permits*.
- (e) The *publicly visible* façade of any *building* and of any adjoining *walls* shall, except as otherwise provided, be of one color, which color shall simulate a light earth or dark earth color, matte or dull finish, and of relatively smooth texture. Façade surfaces under *portales* may be of contrasting or complementary colors. Windows, doors, and *portals* on *publicly visible* portions of the *building* and *walls* shall be of one of the old Santa Fe styles, except that *buildings* with *portals* may have larger plate glass areas for windows under *portals* only. Deep window recesses are characteristic, and
- (f) Flat roofs shall have not more than thirty (30) inches of overhang.