

City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

memo

DATE: July 8, 2025

TO: Historic Districts Review Board Members

VIA: Heather Lamboy, Planning & Land Use Department Director *HL*
Maggie Moore, Assistant Land Use Director *MM*
Gary Moquino, Historic Preservation Division Manager

FROM: Lani McCulley, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Division *LGM*

2025-010684-HDRB, Shelby St. Foot Bridge, Downtown & Eastside Historic District, contributing, Wonderstone Consulting LLC, agent for City of Santa Fe, owner, requests to construct a pedestrian bridge. An exception is requested to section 14-5.2(D)(5)(b) for not matching the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.

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: [exception criteria]

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that the exception criteria have not been met and recommends denial of the exception to section 14-5.2(D)(5)(b) for not matching the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. However, staff recommends approval of the design option 2,

which closely emulates the existing bridge and complies with Section 14-5.2(D) General Design Standards for all Historic Districts, and 14-5.2(E) Downtown and Eastside Design Standards.

Sample motions:

- a. In case 2025-010684-HDRB, for Shelby Street Footbridge, approve/deny the reconstruction of the footbridge structure using design one/two as submitted.

Should the Board deny the exception request, the applicant shall return with an alternative proposal for review and approval before proceeding to a building permit.

The property lies within the Historic Downtown Archaeological Review District. See Chapter 14, SFCC, Article 14-3.13(B)(1). In the Archaeological Review Committee hearing on June 26, 2025, the ARC requested that all ground disturbance be monitored, given the significant cultural resources in the area of potential effect (APE).

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:

The Shelby Street Footbridge is located on the south side of Alameda Street at the base of Shelby Street. The footbridge is contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. It is located above the stone-lined channel constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The area is part of the Santa Fe River Park, which is a passive recreational area with landscaping, picnic tables, and a walking path. The park is restricted to parcel sections from twenty to one hundred feet wide, bounded on one side by the ten-foot drop to the riverbed and on the other side by Alameda Street. This parkway was developed for the visual enhancement of the nature of the site.



Figure 1: Location of Shelby Street Footbridge.

The Shelby Street Footbridge was constructed in 1968, most likely as a replacement for a timber bridge that was constructed in the 1930s as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps project. The 1968 bridge is constructed of concrete slabs with timber and stone abutments and concrete girders, and a steel pipe railing. An additional concrete beam was placed between the girders for added support at an unknown date. The exterior of the girders is embedded with sandstone blocks set into a concrete bed, which gives the footbridge an appearance of rock construction in an arch. The entrance to the bridge is bordered on each side by low sandstone parapets about 12” in height, and the metal railing is embedded in square masonry end posts at about 18” in height. The entrance on the north of the bridge has curved stone walls up to four feet in height flanking the approach to the bridge. These walls connect to the masonry end posts. The south entrance has had stones removed to accommodate the widening of the pedestrian path.



Figure 2: Side view of Shelby Street Footbridge.

The bridge was approved for demolition under case 2025-010683-HDRB.

APPLICANT’S REQUEST:

The applicant proposes the following:

- 1) Construct a replacement footbridge for the Shelby Street Footbridge. The new bridge will be brought up higher to the bank of the river and be extended from 37’3” long to 42’0” long. It will also be widened from 4’0” wide to 6’0” wide. The rail height will be raised from 18” to 3’10”. The proposed design is metal with no stone facades and a concrete approach. The pilasters or end caps will be constructed of CMU and stucco, a concrete deck, and painted metal railings.
**An alternative design (design 2) with a stone façade, brick approach, and stone pilasters or end caps, and a brick deck is offered.



Figure 3: Rendering of Design 1.



Figure 4: Rendering of Design 2.

EXCEPTION CRITERIA AND RESPONSES:

Exception to section 14-5.2(D)(5)(b): Staff request an exception to “*For all façades of significant, contributing and landmark structures, architectural features, finishes, and details other than doors and windows, shall be repaired rather than replaced. In the event replacement is necessary, the use of new material may be approved. The new material shall match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Replacement or duplication of missing features shall be substantiated by documentation, physical or pictorial evidence.*”

(i) *Do not damage the character of the district*

Applicant Response: The Shelby Street bridge is one of several small bridges that crosses the Santa Fe River, connecting the north and south banks. Small foot bridges and vehicular bridges which have existed since the river began to channelize around 1893 with the construction of the Two-Mile Dam. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and other historic maps indicate that the bridges crossing the river were stone, wood, and now concrete- changing materials over time

to accommodate the modernizing and engineering needs for crossing a river channel. The nearest pedestrian bridge to the Shelby Street bridge is the Brother's Lane bridge. This bridge was last replaced around 2016 and is now a wooden bridge with wooden rails. Given that bridge materials change over time, removal of the stone bridge will not damage the character of the district.

Removing the bridge entirely would change the character of this location along the river park, but the bridge will be replaced. The current situation of having a closed and dangerous bridge along a main street in the downtown area is damaging to the district, despite being constructed of materials not of historical age. Demolishing and replacing the bridge is not.

The removal of the bridge will not affect the space that embodies the bridge, which is the river park. The river park, with other bridges crossing the river, will remain intact and the overall character and design of the river park property will continue with the bridge replacement. However, the request is to remove historic material, and this request is being made because of the structure's condition and the inability to restore the structure. The historic material will be removed, but the design presentation has demonstrated that a replacement bridge will maintain and contribute to the river park, and the design of the bridge will be in keeping with the historic district standards. One of the proposed designs offers the potential of reusing the stone for a reconstructed stone façade if that is desired by the HDRB. The other design is proposed to be non-intrusive visually and stylistically. A commemorative plaque is also proposed to mitigate the removal of the historic material.

Staff Response: Staff find that this criterion is not met. While the footbridge the evaluation of the damage to the existing bridge demonstrates the need for replacement, staff recommends that the replacement bridge emulates the existing contributing structure, as the footbridge is an integral part of the district, and it would harm the district to lose the 1968 footbridge.

(ii) *Are required to prevent a hardship to the applicant or an injury to the public welfare*

Applicant Response: As is demonstrated through photos and letters in the demolition case preceding this case, the structure has failed, and the bridge is a public safety concern as it lacks structural integrity. The bridge is beyond repair. Removal of the historic material that composes the bridge is required to prevent injury to the public welfare, both bodily injury and liability to the City of Santa Fe.

Staff Response: Staff find that this criterion has not been met. The evaluation of the bridge by Wilson and Company clearly shows that the existing bridge is unsafe and would require enough work that replacement is required; however, staff point out that the replacement bridge should emulate the existing contributing structure, as no hardship prevents this.

(iii) *Strengthen the unique heterogeneous character of the City by providing a full range of design options to ensure that residents can continue to reside within the historic districts*

Applicant Response: Several design options were considered, and options 1 and 2 have been chosen to present to the HDRB in the design review case. Both designs strengthen the unique heterogeneous character of downtown Santa Fe and the river park area.

The design options considered were:

1) Leave the bridge and permanently close it.

- 2) Demolish the bridge and not replace it.
- 3) Demolish the bridge and replace it with a modern prefab pedestrian bridge as seen in other areas along the Santa Fe River.
- 4) Demolish the bridge and replace it with a modern prefab pedestrian bridge with non-structural rock girders to match closely the existing design.

Staff Response: Staff find that this criterion is met. The applicant has provided the Board with two options for consideration regarding the reconstruction of the footbridge. Staff recommends option 2 of the designs offered for approval, which most closely emulates the 1968 footbridge.

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* 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.

(D) General Design Standards for All H Districts

In any review of proposed additions or alterations to *structures* that have been declared significant or contributing in any historic district or a *landmark* in any part of the *city*, the following standards shall be met:

(1) General

- (a) The status of a significant, contributing, or *landmark structure* shall be retained and preserved. If a proposed alteration will cause a *structure* to lose its significant, contributing, or *landmark* status, the *application* shall be denied. The removal of historic materials or alteration of architectural features and spaces that embody the status shall be prohibited.
- (b) If a proposed alteration or new construction will cause an adjacent *structure* to lose its significant, contributing, or *landmark* status, the *application* may be denied.

(2) Additions

- (a) Additions shall have similar materials, architectural *treatments* and styles, features, and details as the existing *structure*, but shall not duplicate those of the existing *structure* in a manner that will make the addition indistinguishable from the existing *structure*.
- (b) Additions to *buildings* that meet the standards of Subsection 14-5.2(E) shall continue to meet those standards set forth in Subsection 14-5.2(E) in addition to the standards set forth in this section.
- (c) Additions are not permitted to *primary façades*.
- (d) Additions are not permitted to the side of the existing footprint unless the addition is set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the primary facade. The addition shall not exceed fifty percent of the square footage of the existing footprint, and shall not exceed fifty percent of the existing dimension of the primary facade. To the extent architecturally practicable, new additions shall be attached to any existing noncontributing portion of *structures* instead of attaching them to the significant or contributing portion.
- (e) The height of additions:
 - (i) For significant and *landmark structures* shall be a minimum of six (6) inches less than the parapet or equivalent roof-feature of the existing adjacent connecting facade.
 - (ii) For contributing *structures* shall be no more than one additional *story* higher than the existing *structure*. To the extent architecturally practicable, two-story additions shall be set to the rear or the side rear of the *structure*. When an additional *story* is to be placed upon an existing contributing *structure*, that footprint may be no greater than fifty percent of the footprint of the existing *structure*, subject to the provisions of Subsection A(1) above. For the purposes of this paragraph, an additional *story* shall not exceed twelve (12) feet from the existing rooftop to the highest point of that *story*.

(5) Windows, Doors, and Other Architectural Features

- (a) For all facades of significant and *landmark structures* and for the primary facades of contributing *structures*:
 - (i) Historic windows shall be repaired or restored wherever possible. Historic windows that cannot be repaired or restored shall be duplicated in the size, style, and material of the original. Thermal double pane glass may be used. No opening shall be widened or narrowed.
 - (ii) No new opening shall be made where one presently does not exist unless historic documentation supports its prior existence.
 - (iii) No existing opening shall be closed.
- (b) For all façades of significant, contributing and *landmark structures*, architectural features, finishes, and details other than doors and windows, shall be repaired rather than replaced. In the event *replacement* is necessary, the use of new material may be approved. The new material shall match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. *Replacement* or duplication of missing features shall be substantiated by documentation, physical or pictorial evidence.

(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 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 complimentary 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 overhang.