

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: Amanda Romero, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Division *AR*

2025-010697-HDRB, 401 E. Palace Ave., Downtown & Eastside Historic District, contributing, Andrew Lyons Design, agent for Abrams Development LLC, owner, requests status and primary façade designations of residence and garage and yard walls.

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 upgraded to significant, the accessory structure (garage) be upgraded to significant, and the yard walls be designated as contributing, per section 14-5.2(C) Designation of Significant, Contributing or Noncontributing Status Within Historic Districts.

Sample motions:

- a. In case 2025-010697-HDRB, for 401 East Palace Avenue, upgrade/retain/downgrade the

- residential structure to/as significant/contributing/non-contributing with all facades/facades (mention desired facades) as primary.
- b. In case 2025-010697-HDRB, for 401 East Palace Avenue, upgrade/retain/downgrade the accessory structure to/as significant/contributing/non-contributing with all facades/facades 1-4 (mention desired facades) as primary.
 - c. In case 2025-010697-HDRB, for 401 East Palace Avenue, designate the yard walls as significant/contributing/non-contributing.

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:

Streetscape:

The property at 401 East Palace sits on the northeast corner of Palace Avenue and Martinez Street. Martinez Street is lined with Spanish Pueblo Style homes with higher yard walls and coyote fences. The typically detached garages on the street are connected to the residences. There are no freestanding accessory structures on this streetscape of Martinez Street. The current building on the site is the second residence in this location; the site was previously occupied by a two-story residence constructed by Romulo Martinez, who is likely the namesake of Martinez Lane. Some of the yard walls on the site date back to when the property was owned by Martinez. That building was demolished in 1937 when the current building was built.



Palace Avenue is primarily Spanish Pueblo Style and pitched roof homes with higher structures, including several two-story buildings. The yard walls along here are lower and are a combination of cobblestones and concrete masonry units with stucco. Most of the residences are set back from the street, while the La Posada Hotel buildings abut the sidewalk. Garages are either attached to or to the side of residences in this streetscape.

Site Description:

The single-family residence at 401 East Palace Avenue is listed as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. The property contains an accessory structure listed as contributing and a series of yard walls, which currently have no status.



Figure 2: The Residence with Garage Behind

The 1,927 sq. ft. single-story residence was constructed in 1937 in the Territorial Revival Style for Thomas and Lida White. The building is constructed of hollow clay tile, which is likely pentile. The roof is flat and capped with a shiner laid bricks creating a brick coping. The south façade, which fronts E Palace Ave, has a corner portal on the western portion of the building. The portal contains a flagstone floor and a 28” high pony wall topped with brick coping and includes the primary entrance to the residence and a triple set of 6-over-6 double-hung wood sash windows. The eastern side of the façade holds a second set of triple windows.

The west elevation of the residence houses two evenly spaced groupings of triple 6-over-6 wood sash windows and a single narrow service door. To the north of the service door is a double 6-over-6 wood sash window which matches the triple sets in assembly and detailing. Below this double window is a small well containing a basement window.

The rear, north portion of the residence is constructed over a basement. It holds a centralized rear entry door flanked by window groupings. The west holds a single 6-over-6 double-hung sash window, and to the east is a small 2-over-2 window.

The east elevation of the residence holds a combination of single and grouped six-lite wood sash windows set at varied sill heights and two pairs of double 6-over-6 wood sash windows, and an entry door.

The windows throughout the building are wood sash windows with a shallow pedimented head. The doors are also capped with a shallow pedimented head to match the windows. It appears that sometime in the 1970s or 1980s that three pedestrian doors were replaced with 11-panel doors. The residential structure has stucco that is characterized by wide, plate-like fragments separated by raised ridges referred to as “alligatored” in the HCPI. The stucco is painted white.

The accessory structure is a single vehicle garage located in the northeast corner of the property. The 300 sq. ft. structure was constructed similarly to the residence with the capped brick coping and white stucco; however, the stucco on the accessory structure is smooth. The wood tilt-up vehicle door is located on the west elevation. The pedestrian door is on the south elevation. The north and east elevations are plain walls with no fenestrations.

The yard walls are a combination of retaining and perimeter walls and surround the property. The four sections of yard walls are constructed of cobblestones and limestone. While they were constructed over time, all of the walls were constructed by 1973.

The oldest, pre-1937, and most prominent section of the wall is along East Palace Avenue. The limestone wall is capped with high-fire glazed ceramic tiles and ranges in height from 17.5” to 36.5”. Posts are constructed of cobblestones as well. The Martinez Street wall section is cobblestone with a short section of limestone. The wall is capped with a cementitious coping finished with a pebbled aggregate surface and ranges in height from 32.5” to 44.5”. This portion of the wall was also constructed before 1937. The north section along the alley is the shortest segment and consists of cobblestone and ranges in height from 36” to 63”. The east property line wall is the longest section and is constructed of cobblestones. It houses a fireplace with a short chimney that rises several feet above the wall. The wall ranges in height from 37” to 55”

Lida T. Brasher White was an educator who taught at Catron School, where she was also the principal. She was involved with the Daughters of the American Revolution, where she was active in preserving and restoring colonial-era buildings and hosted events for them at the residence. She obtained the permit to construct the residence at 401 East Palace Avenue. Her design of the residence is reflective of her values for architecture. She resided in the home until 1967. The house was then sold to Dr. George C. Abrams, who was an orthodontist. Mr. Abrams repurposed the residence for his practice. Mr. Abrams remained in the building until his retirement in 2007. Afterward, tenant improvements removed the dentistry features of the residence. Currently, the floor plan remains unaltered, and the residence is unoccupied.

There is a notation that an addition was considered for the back of the garage in 1985; however, there are no previous cases for the residence on file in the Historic Preservation Division. The only permit on file is for mechanical/gas in 1997.

APPLICANT’S REQUEST:

The applicant proposes the following exterior alterations:

- 1) Status review with primary façade designation, if applicable for the main structure.
- 2) Status review with primary façade designation, if applicable for the accessory structure.
- 3) Status review of the yard walls.

The residence remains untouched from its original historic design, which is unique with distinctive characteristics and method of construction and retains a high level of historic integrity. The property was designed by an influential resident of the city from construction in 1937 to 1967.

The garage remains untouched from its original historic design, which is unique with distinctive characteristics and method of construction and retains a high level of historic integrity. The property was designed and constructed by an influential resident, Lida T. Brasher White, who resided at the property from 1937 to 1967.

The yard walls are historic, help to define streetscape character, and contribute to the architectural character of the house and the streetscape.

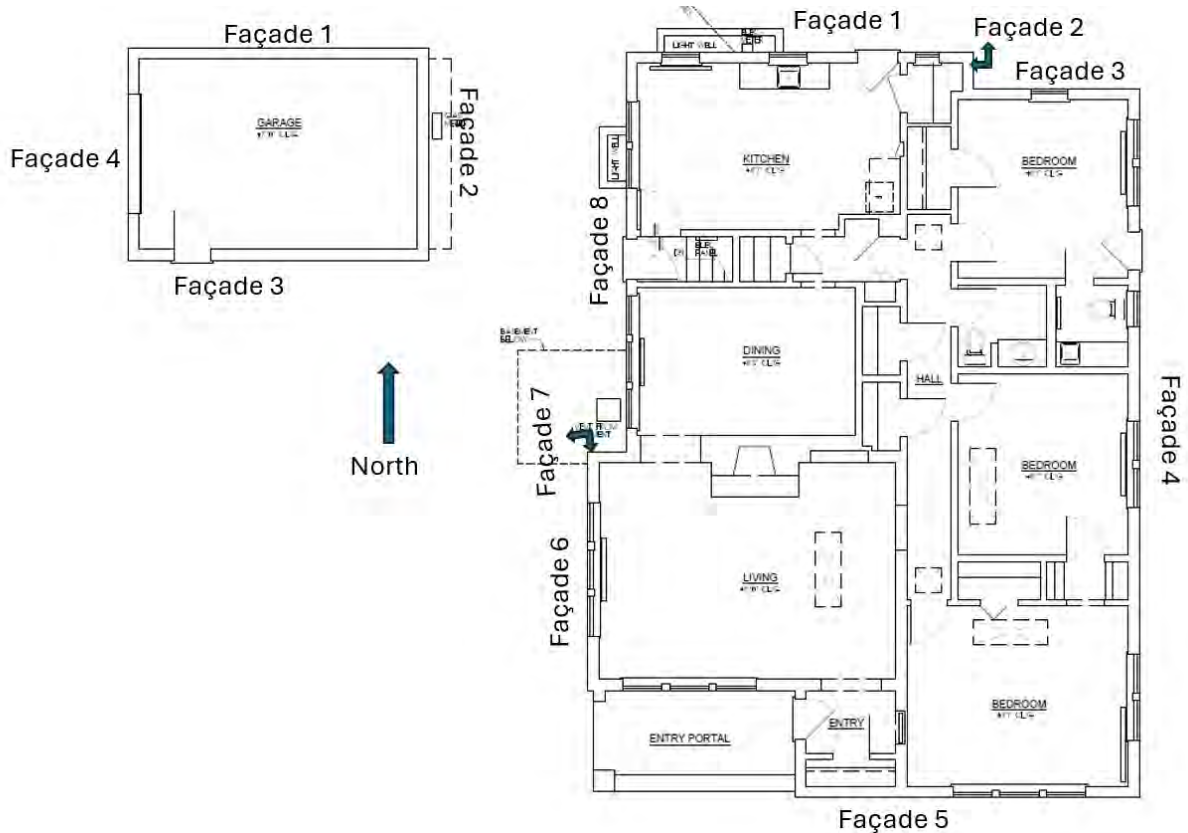


Figure 3: Façade Diagram

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* 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."

(e) Appeals (Ord. No. 2009-42 § 16)

Decisions made by the historic districts review board may be appealed to the *governing body* as set forth in Section 14-3.17.

(f) Restoration of Status

If a *property owner* makes changes to a *structure* without the proper *city* approvals which result in the lowering of the *structure's* status, staff or the board may require the *property owner* to restore the *structure* such that its former status is restored.

(4) Compliance with General and Specific Design Standards Required

All *development* located within the historic districts and subject to this Section 14-5.2 shall comply with all applicable general *development* standards set forth in Subsection 14-5.2(D), as well as any applicable specific *development* standards set forth in Subsections 14-5.2(E) through (I).

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.

14-12 Historic Compound

An identifiable grouping of historic resources, including buildings, structures and landscaping elements, as described in Section 14-5.2(K)(2)(a). Historic compounds may be comprised of more than one lot.

(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*.

(3) Remodeling to Increase Height; Rooftop Appurtenances

- (a) For *remodeling* of existing significant and *landmark structures*, no increase in height of the *structures* is permitted. (For standards relating to additions to existing *structures*, see paragraph (2) above.)
- (b) For significant and *landmark structures*, *publicly visible* roof top appurtenances, including but not limited to solar collectors, clerestories, decks, or mechanical equipment, shall not be added nor shall the parapet be raised to conceal the *rooftop appurtenances*. For contributing *buildings* solar collectors, clerestories, decks, or mechanical equipment if *publicly visible* shall not be added.

(4) Porches and Portals

Existing *porches* or *portals* shall not be enclosed.

(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.

(6) Roofs

The existing roof styles and materials shall be maintained or replaced in kind if necessary. The addition of dormers or other roof features should only be considered when they are an existing or historical feature of the *structure*.

(8) Archaeological Resources

Discovery of archaeological resources made during the historic districts review process shall be referred to the archaeological review committee.

(9) Height, Pitch, Scale, Massing and Floor Stepbacks

The height, pitch, *scale*, and massing of any *structure* in an historic district, as defined in this section, shall be limited as provided for in this section, unless further restricted within this chapter.

(a) Applicability

The following sections identify specific areas and specific *projects* subject to this section. Planning and land use department staff shall determine whether or not properties are included within this section. (Ord. No. 2007-45 § 30; Ord. #2020-22, § 16)

- F. When the proposed *building*, *yardwall*, or fence is located in a *streetscape* that includes no *buildings*, *yardwalls*, or fences, the height of the proposed *building* shall not exceed sixteen (16) feet. *Yardwalls* and fences in this *streetscape* shall not exceed five (5) feet in height.

(c) Height

(ii) In exercising its authority under this section, the board shall limit the height of *structures* as set forth in this section. Heights of existing *structures* shall be as set forth on the official map of *building* heights in the historic districts.

- A. If a proposed *building* has a parapet, the façade shall not be in excess of two (2) feet of the average of the height of the façades in the *streetscape*.
- B. If the proposed *building* has a pitched roof, the ridge height of the proposed *building* shall not be in excess of two (2) feet of the average of the ridge height of the pitched roofs in the *streetscape*.
- C. *Yardwalls* and fences shall be limited to a height that does not exceed the average of the height of other *yardwalls* and fences in the *streetscape*.
- D. Pursuant to Section 14-7.4(C), the height of any other *structure* shall be limited to the allowable *building* height within the applicable *streetscape*, as defined in this section. (Ord. No. 2002-37 § 26)
- E. The height and dimension of signage are as set forth in Section 14-8.10(H).
- F. The board may increase the allowable height for proposed *buildings* and additions located on a sloping site where the difference in the natural *grade* along the *structure's* foundation exceeds two (2) feet. In no case shall the height of a façade exceed four (4) feet above the allowable height of the applicable *streetscape* measured from natural or finished *grade*, whichever is more restrictive. This increase in height shall be constructed only in the form of *building* stepbacks from the *street*.

(d) Pitch

If the determined *streetscape* includes over fifty percent of *buildings* with pitched roofs, the proposed *building* may have a pitched roof. A pitched roof is defined as a gable, shed, or *hipped roof*. The pitch of the roof shall match the predominant pitch extant in the *streetscape*.

(e) Scale

The height of a proposed *building* or addition, its façade length, and its roof form and pitch shall appear to be in proportion to the height, façade length, and roof form and pitch of *buildings* in the applicable *streetscape*, or the *building* on which the addition is proposed.

(f) Massing and Floor Stepbacks

The Board may require that upper floor levels be stepped back, to carry out the intent of this section; provided that the board in making such determinations shall take into account whether the height of the proposed *building*, *yardwall*, fence, or proposed stepback of upper floor levels is in harmony with the massing of the applicable *streetscape* and *preservation* of the historic and characteristic visual qualities of the *streetscape*. The Board shall also require that the *publicly visible* façades of the *structure* be in conformance with Subsections 14-5.2(E) through (H), and in meeting those requirements, may require that different floor levels be stepped back.

(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.