

City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

memo

DATE: January 13, 2026
TO: Historic Districts Review Board
VIA: Heather Lamboy, Planning & Land Use Department *HL*
Director Maggie Moore, Assistant Land Use Director *MM*
Gary Moquino, Historic Preservation Division Manager GM
FROM: Paul A. Duran, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Division

2025-011537-HDRB, 521 Calle Corvo, Downtown & Eastside Historic District, Contributing, Rajah Bose, agent for Louis Pepper & Ruth Williamson, owners, request status review with primary façade(s) designation if applicable.

REFERENCE ATTACHMENTS (Sequentially):

CITY SUBMITTALS

District Standards & yard wall
& fence standards.

Historic Inventory Form

Zoning Review Sheet

Other: Previous Case Documents

APPLICANT SUBMITTALS

Proposal Letter

Site Plan/Floor Plan

Elevations

Photographs

Other:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the historic status of the main residential structure be maintained as contributing, and the south façades (1, 2, 3, and 4), including the portal, and excluding non-historic doors and windows, be designated as primary, per 14-5.2(C) Designation of Significant and Contributing Structures.

Staff recommends that the garage structure be designated as non-contributing due to its age.
Staff recommends that the yard wall be designated non-contributing due to its age.

Sample motions:

- a. Approve or deny Case #2025-011537 to maintain the historic status as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District and designate the south façade as primary, including the portal and excluding non-historic doors and windows.

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:

The single-family residence at 521 Calle Corvo is listed as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. The GIS map, 1984 Historic Cultural Properties Inventory, and historic cases refer to the structure as contributing. However, there is no record of a status review. Most likely, the status is a result of the mass inventory of the historic districts in the early 1980s.

The structure was built in 1946 in the Territorial Revival architectural design style, as seen by the red brick coping on top of the parapet, recessed wooden framed picture windows, and terra-cotta tile on the entry portal, commonly observed on the Calle Corvo streetscape. In September of 2025, Mr. John Murphey conducted a Historic Cultural Property Inventory (HCPI) survey form on the property and concluded that since the main residential structure has maintained its original footprint since 1958, the structure should remain contributing and further that the south façade should be designated as primary. The recommended designation excludes the yard wall, which was constructed after 1984 (Murphey 2025:12).

Based on aerial evidence and the 1984 HCPI, the garage (521A) was constructed between 1984 and 1992. No garage was noted in the 1984 HCPI.

The 1984 Historic Inventory Form’s photo illustrates a hedge and no yard wall at the front of the property; therefore, the yard wall should be designated as non-contributing.

Previous cases at 521 Calle Corvo include:

On May 29, 2001, in Case No. H-01-72, the Historic Design Review Board (Board) made a motion to conditionally approve the request to build a 685 sq. ft. addition to the non-primary north façade.

APPLICANT’S REQUEST:

The applicant requests a status review with primary façade(s) designation if applicable.

Due to the structures association with the Calle Corvo subdivision, the brick corbelling, tiled roof over the entry portal, the retained massing and footprint, and unchanged fenestration openings, staff recommends the structure be retained as contributing with the south facades (1, 2, 3, and 4) including the portal as the primary since this is where the integrity of the structure is most notable. However, staff does recommend excluding the non-historic windows and doors.



Figure 1: Proposed Façade Diagram for 521 Calle Corvo.

Primary Façade: ———

Non-primary Façade: ———

Figure 1: Façade Diagram

RELEVANT CODE CITATIONS:

14-5.2 HISTORIC DISTRICTS

(A) General Provisions

(1) General Purpose

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 a 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 outlined 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.

(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 rarely 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

The 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 that of *Adobe* construction, prescribed as follows:

- (a) No *building* shall be over two stories in height in any façade unless the façade includes 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 overhang.

DEFINITIONS:

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 Primary Façade:

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