

PROPOSAL LETTER – 539 GARCIA HOUSE RENOVATION PROJECT

Date: 11/01/2025

Architect/Applicant/ Agent Name: Evan Geisler Cell (505-699-5463)

Owner Name: Penelope Ellen Rembe Cell:505-350-0354

Work Site Address: **539 Garcia Street (back alley behind 533 Garcia)**

PROJECT NAME: 539 GARCIA HOUSE RENOVATION PROJECT

Project Summary:

We writing to respectfully submit for your review a proposed renovation to a 1948 adobe residence located within the original subdivision of the historic Don José Dolores García House, a significant 19th-century adobe compound in this district. The intention of this project is to honor, preserve, and re-establish the home's architectural and historic relationship to the surrounding built environment.

This project has been designed with careful consideration for the preservation of original materials and character, the restoration of key historic features, and the removal of noncontributing elements that were added after 1958. Our work will focus on restoring the contributing historic principal elevation, including the original windows, and utilizing traditional materials/colors throughout.

On the non-contributing western elevation of the home, we propose a modification of the living room that replaces the existing New England style bay window (added on the 1980s) with a modest, squared-off pueblo style extension. This approach resolves both the historic inconsistency of the bay window and creates a form and scale that are more in keeping with traditional New Mexican vernacular architecture. Furthermore, it allows for a western facing portal, which will serve both functional and architectural purposes—resolving the asymmetry of the existing façade and reinforcing the pueblo revival vernacular of the home. Lastly, we are proposing to renovate the Garage into Casita. This includes preserving the contributing south façade of the Garage by keeping the scale and footprint as it exists and using the existing headers and openings for door and windows. We will add bathroom, kitchenette, and independent dwelling function.

The design draws material and stylistic cues from the adjacent García House itself and a pueblo style John Gaw Meem home, using it as a guiding precedent for window detailing, stucco coloration, and portal proportions. Our overarching goal is not only to maintain the historic integrity of the existing structure, but to reinforce its connection to the architectural language and cultural significance of the original compound.

We approach this project with deep respect for the history of this neighborhood and a desire to contribute positively to its long-term preservation. We welcome your feedback and would be honored to work with the Board to ensure this renovation supports the goals of the Historic Review Ordinance and enhances the cultural continuity of this unique part of Santa Fe.

Architectural History:

Original structure built: 1948

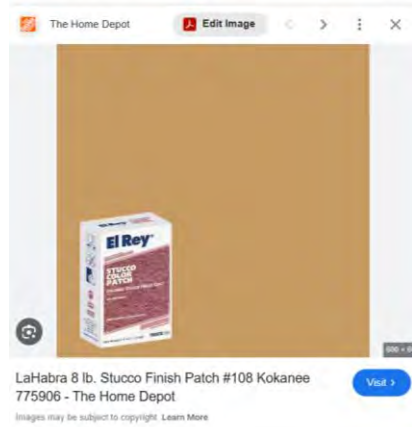
- Property lies within historic Don José Dolores García compound (per subdivision map)
- Alterations after 1958 are identified as non-contributing and proposed for removal

Proposed Work Includes:

- Living Room Expansion: Small-scale addition to improve livability; massing consistent with vernacular New Mexican architecture
- West facing Portal: Adds symmetry to façade and improves strength of Pueblo Revival vocabulary
- Garage Conversion: Convert a non-contributing garage into a casita while maintaining scale and footprint, while preserving original openings of contributing southern facade
- Stucco Repair & Exterior Paint: Restucco and repaint as needed; facade updates in keeping with historic palette
- Windows: Replace existing with clad/wood, double-hung windows in white (ext)
- Roof Area: Total of 2,305 SF, with no height change, setbacks ranging from 3'5" to 5'2" (approximately 2,000 sq ft heated)

Materials and Finishes:

- Stucco: To match traditional finishes (La Habra Stucco #108 Kokanee)



- Paint: Benjamin Moore Simply White -painted millwork trim (portal details)

- Window framing: Painted millwork wood, natural dark stained header
- Hardscape: 3/8 gravel driveway, concrete landings/steps as needed
- Fencing: Existing coyote fence and metal chain link gate to remain

EXTERIOR FINISHES

- Paint and stucco samples to be specified; no use of "match existing"
- Paint: White-painted millwork trim, stucco finish in traditional New Mexican tones
- Stain: Portal posts and corbels to match existing, dark walnut

SITE PLANS

- Existing Site Plan: Includes building footprint, setbacks, fencing, existing trees
- Proposed Site Plan: Includes casita conversion, wraparound portal addition, grading references

FLOOR PLANS

- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans: Provided at 1/4" = 1'-0" scale; clearly dimensioned
- Includes spatial reorganization and minor square footage adjustments

ELEVATIONS

- Separate sheets for West, South, and East elevations at 1/4" = 1'-0" scale
- Shows new portal, casita elevation, window replacement details, and restucco zones

SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS (AS NEEDED)

- Window Schedule & Specs: A1-1, A2-A, and C-A window types all double-hung with same finishes
- Wall/Fence/Gate Details: Existing coyote fence to remain
- Demolition Plans: Non-contributing additions to be removed (detailed in proposed site plan)
- Zoning Worksheet: Preliminary zoning approval submitted July 3, 2025; 31% lot coverage; RC8 compound zoning

EXCEPTION CRITERIA (IF REQUESTED)

Historic District Exception Requests

Applicant: Penny Rembe

Hearing Date: December 9

Exceptions Requested:

1. Section **14-5.2(D)(2)(d)** – Addition within 10 feet of a contributing façade
2. Section **14-5.2(E)(2)(b)** – Window opening located less than 3 feet from a corner

1. Exception Request – Addition Within 10’ of a Contributing Façade

(Previously submitted and accepted by staff; included here for completeness.)

(i) Do not damage the character of the district

The proposed modifications have been intentionally designed to preserve and reinforce the architectural integrity of the historic district. All exterior changes—including window replacements, portal repairs, and minor footprint modifications—are completed in a manner consistent with existing historic features, including matching proportions, materials, headers, and sills as shown in the submitted elevations (pages 4–8). The project retains all character-defining elements such as the portal structure, coyote fencing, and traditional massing while using materials compatible with established district guidelines. The work does not diminish, obscure, or compromise the historic character of the structure or the surrounding district.

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

The requested exception is necessary to prevent practical hardship related to the continued use, safety, and viability of the property. Several existing windows and doors are deteriorated or deficient and require replacement for energy efficiency, security, and code compliance (existing conditions, pages 2–3). Without approval of these modest, historically sensitive improvements, the property would remain in a compromised state—creating ongoing maintenance challenges, safety risks, and reduced habitability.

Additionally, the project improves structural stability, ensures proper egress, and retains streetscape continuity. These upgrades support both neighborhood safety and long-term preservation, aligning with the district’s objectives.

(iii) Strengthen the unique heterogeneous character of the City

The proposed work supports the City’s goal of enabling sensitive, historically aligned updates that maintain livability within historic districts. By preserving massing, portals, window proportions, and stucco forms (pages 4–9), the project reinforces the district’s eclectic architectural character while allowing the home to continue functioning as a residence.

Supporting responsible upgrades ensures long-term occupancy, economic stability, and neighborhood continuity.

2. Exception Request – Window Located Less Than 3’ From the Corner

Section 14-5.2(E)(2)(b)

Modification to an existing window opening under the portal.

(i) Do not damage the character of the district

The proposed modification to the window under the portal is fully consistent with the architectural vocabulary of the district. The existing opening is already located within 3 feet of the corner, and the proposal does not introduce a new encroachment—rather, it improves an existing non-ideal condition.

The replacement window will match traditional Pueblo Revival proportions, sill and header details, and materials, aligning it with the rest of the structure’s historic character. By correcting and regularizing an outdated or incompatible feature, the project strengthens architectural coherence without obscuring or diminishing district character.

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

This exception is necessary because the existing window—already within 3 feet of the corner—requires replacement to meet current safety, energy efficiency, and functional needs. Without the ability to repair or replace the window in its existing location, the applicant would face hardship due to deterioration, weather intrusion, and compromised security.

Approval avoids unnecessary demolition or the creation of a new opening elsewhere on the façade, which would have greater visual impact. The improvement supports public welfare through better construction, safety, and durability while preventing further structural decline.

(iii) Strengthen the unique heterogeneous character of the City

This exception aligns with the City’s objective of preserving the eclectic and layered character of its historic districts. By replacing an inconsistent or non-historic window condition with one that matches the building’s Pueblo Revival style, the project enhances architectural authenticity.

Allowing sensitive improvements to pre-existing conditions supports long-term residential use and prevents deterioration that would harm neighborhood character. The result is a more cohesive façade that contributes positively to the district’s heterogeneous historic fabric.

Additional Context for Both Exceptions

This exception request follows the guidance of City preservation staff, who acknowledged that the existing structure includes several non-New Mexican architectural features—specifically the non-conforming bay window near the primary façade and the window located less than 3 feet from the corner under the portal. These conditions predate the current renovation effort and are inconsistent with the Pueblo Revival vocabulary.

Our proposal does not introduce new non-conforming elements. Instead, it corrects and harmonizes these conditions by:

- Replacing the bay window with a massing that aligns with New Mexico vernacular forms
- Improving the corner-adjacent window with historically consistent proportions and detailing
- Reinforcing traditional massing, stucco, and portal features
- Avoiding unnecessary demolition while restoring architectural coherence

This approach directly supports the City’s preservation goals:

- It strengthens historic character rather than diluting it
- It replaces incongruous elements with contextually appropriate ones
- It enhances long-term livability and maintenance
- It benefits both the property and the surrounding district

Approval of these exceptions will allow the property to remain functional, safe, and historically aligned, consistent with the City’s objectives.

Matt Rembe

Executive Director
505.938.2185



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EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project

WEST ELEVATION (Camera facing East) - ALL POST 1958 WINDOWS DOORS TO BE REPLACED; BAY WINDOW REMOVED



EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project



EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project

SOUTH ELEVATION #1_HOUSE FACING ALLEY DRIVE



EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project

SOUTH ELEVATION (CONT'D)_HISTORIC WINDOWS (TO REMAIN AND SERVE AS MODEL FOR NEW AND REPLACED NON-PERIOD)



EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project

GARAGE ELEVATION_ SOUTH



EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project

GARAGE ELEVATION_ EAST



EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project

EAST ELEVATION



EXISTING _Exterior Elevation Photos - 539 GARCIA House Renovation Project

SOUTH ELEVATION



539 GARCIA ST ALT/REPAIR

539 Garcia Street
Santa Fe, NM 87505

SHEET INDEX

ARCHITECTURAL SHEET LIST		
Sheet Number	Sheet Name	Sheet Sorting
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VICINITY MAP



PROJECT INFORMATION

Parcel / UPC

- Parcel Number: 12382336
- UPC: 1054098451406000000 (County Assessor)
- UPC (Permit Set): 12382336

Owner

- Owner Name: Penelope Ellen Rembe
- Owner Mailing Address:
4903 Rio Grande Blvd NW
Los Ranchos, NM 87107-5530

Physical / Site Address

- 539 Garcia St, Santa Fe, NM 87505

Tax / Zoning / Neighborhood

- Tax Code Area: CI-R
- Neighborhood: Acequia Madre
- Tax Year: 2023
- Tax District: 11AM
- Property Class: SRES

Legal Description

- County Assessor Legal Description:
T17N R9E S25, JOSE DOLORES GARCIA S/D,
LOT 2 (Acres: 0.0000 listed)

Deeds

- Current Deed: 2054047 REC 03/05/2025
- Previous Deed: 492/845

BUILDING HEIGHT: + 11'-4"

1. OCCUPANCY GROUP

R-2

3. PLUMBING COUNT

3 WC EXISTING
+ 1 WC NEW (MAIN HOUSE)
+ 1 WC NEW (GARAGE)

5 WC TOTAL

NET AREAS – EXISTING

MAIN HOUSE:

- Heated: 1,386 sq. ft.
- Portal: 72 sq. ft.
- Total Roofed Area: 1,458 sq. ft.

GARAGE:

- Existing Roofed Area: 458 sq. ft.

TOTAL EXISTING ROOFED AREA ON LOT: 1,916 SF

NET AREAS – PROPOSED

MAIN HOUSE – NEW WORK:

- Added Portal: 309 sq. ft.
- Added Heated Space: 33 sq. ft.
- Total Added Roofed Area:
309 SF portal + 33 SF enclosed = 343 SF

GARAGE – NEW WORK:

- Convert garage to studio
- Add new bathroom
- Replace all windows and door
(Roofed area remains same footprint)

TOTAL PROPOSED ROOFED AREA ON LOT: 2,282 SF

HEATED AREA SUMMARY (FOR PERMIT):

- Existing Heated: 1,386 SF
- Added Heated Main House: +33 SF.
- Added Heated Garage: +343 SF.
- Final Heated: 1,762 SF

LOT AREA: 6,300 sq. ft.

LOT COVERAGE:

- Existing: 30.4%
- Proposed: 36.2%

UTILITY DATA:

- Gas: Natural Gas
- Electric: Underground
- Sewer: Municipal
- Water: Municipal

SPECIAL DISTRICTS:

Downtown and Eastside

PARKING REQUIREMENTS:

3 spaces required and provided

BUILDING CODES USED

YEAR	CODE DESCRIPTION
2015	NM Residential Building Code
2015	NM Existing Building Code
2021	NM Plumbing Code
2021	NM Mechanical Code
2020	NM Electrical Code

PERSPECTIVE VIEW



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REVISIONS

Revision Date	Revision Number	Revision Description
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539 GARCIA

539 GARCIA ST Santa Fe, NM
87505

25-0401

COVER

DATE
14 JUL 2025

SCALE

A-000

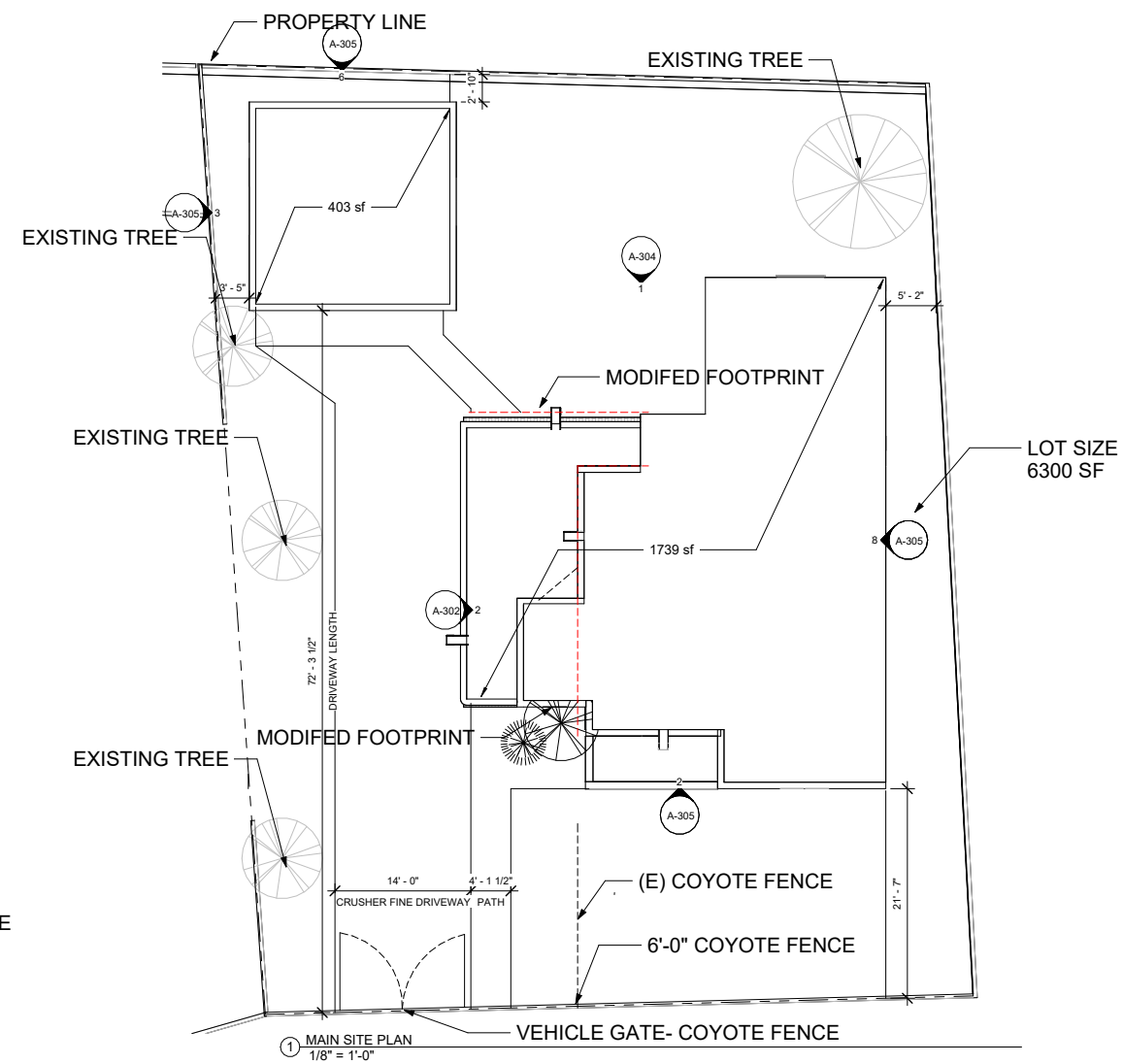
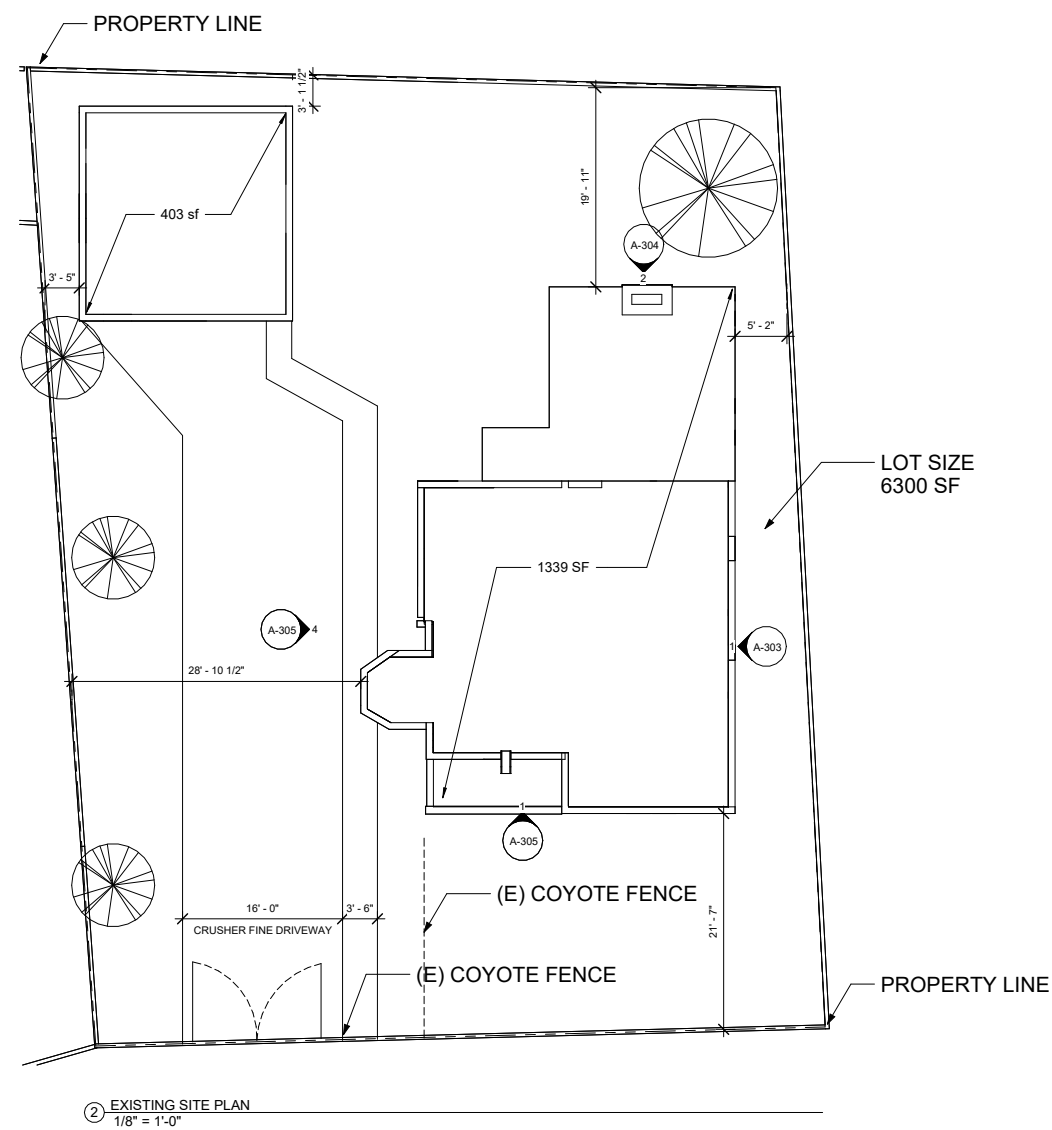
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539 GARCIA

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25-0401

SITE PLAN

DATE:
10 NOV 2025
SCALE:
1/8" = 1'-0"
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A-050

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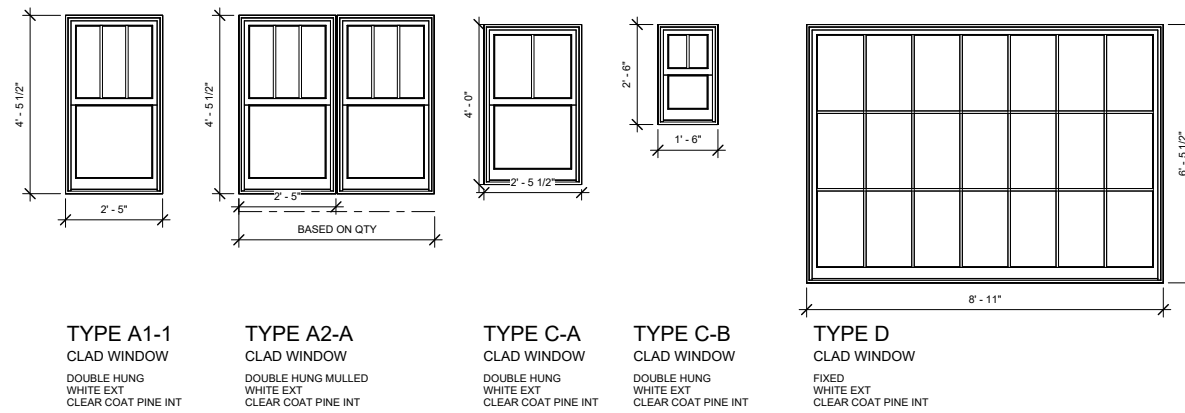
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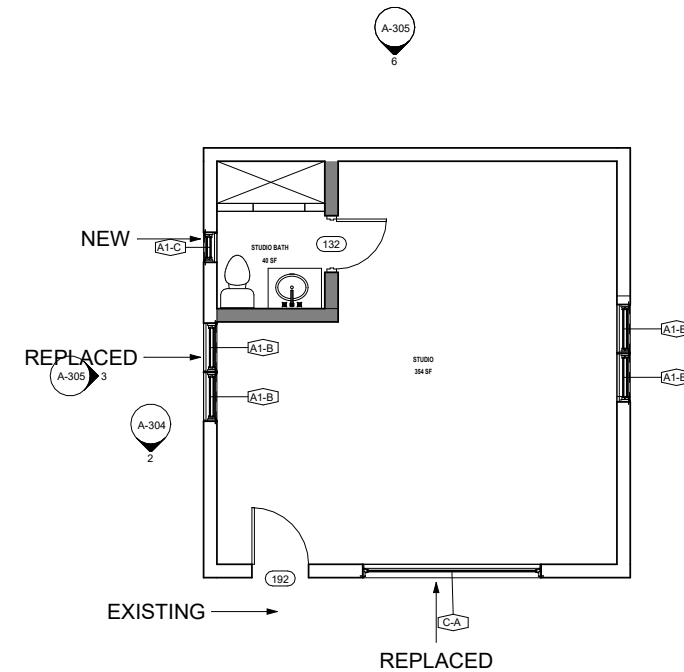
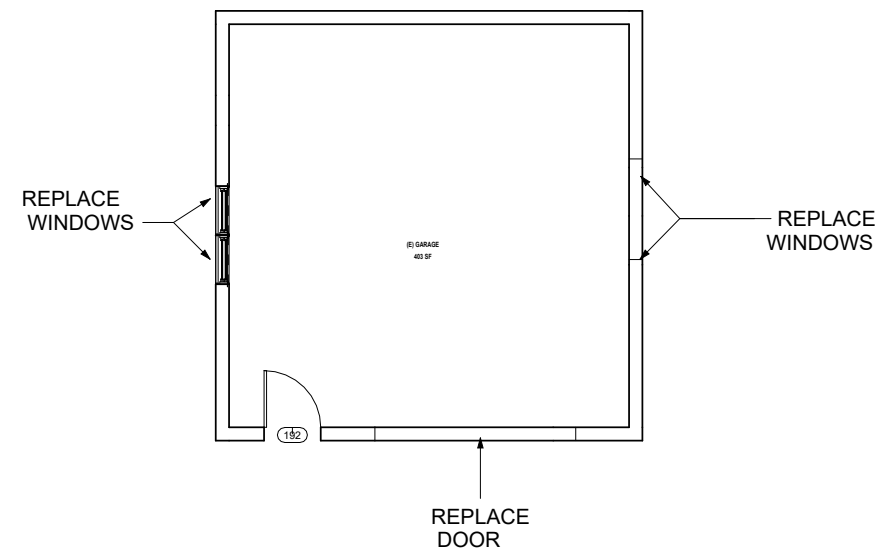
GARAGE FLOOR PLAN

DATE: 10 NOV 2025	A-200
SCALE: As Indicated	
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DOOR SCHEDULE Copy 2										
Mark	Description	Door Height	Door Width	Constructi on Type	Glass	Thicknes s	Frame Material	Finish/ Note	Function	Comments
125	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
126	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
127	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
128	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
129	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
130	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
131	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-4"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
132	3 Panel Door	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD	PT-1	Interior	
192	EXISTING	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 1 1/2"	WD		Exterior	EXISTING TO BE REFURBISHED
193	EXISTING	6'-8"	2'-6"	WD		0' - 2"	WD		Exterior	EXISTING TO BE REFURBISHED
195	FRENCH LITE	6'-8"	3'-0"	WD	GL-1	0' - 2"	WD	PT-1	Exterior	



WINDOW TYPES NEW
1/2" = 1'-0"

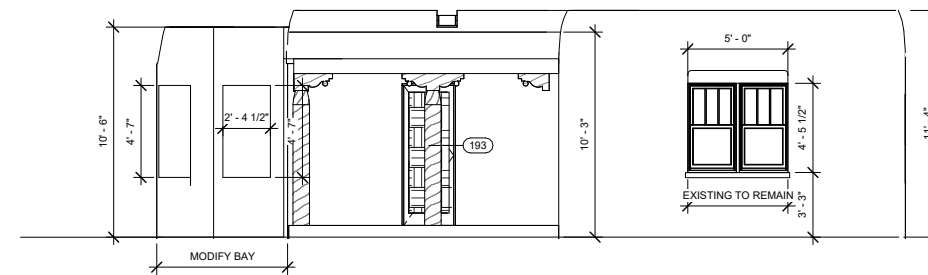


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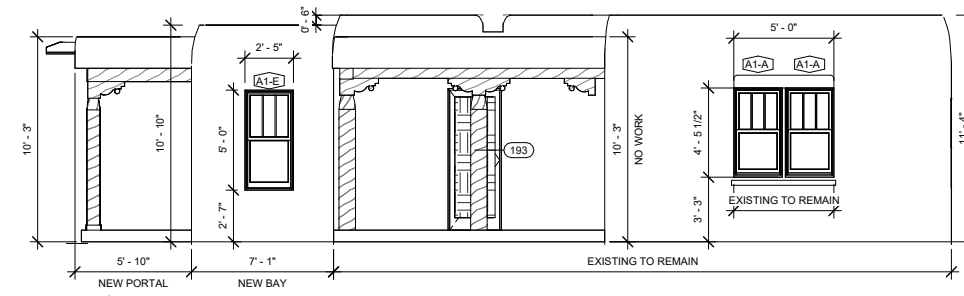
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REVISIONS

Revision Date	Revision Number	Revision Description
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④ Existing South Elevation-House
1/4" = 1'-0"



② Proposed South Elevation-House
1/4" = 1'-0"

539 GARCIA

539 GARCIA ST Santa Fe, NM
87505

25-0401

SOUTH
ELEVATIONS

DATE:
10 NOV 2025
SCALE:
1/4" = 1'-0"
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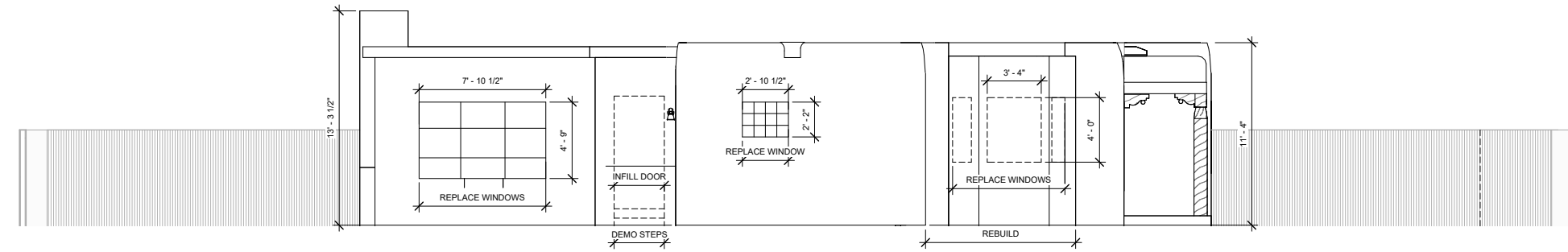
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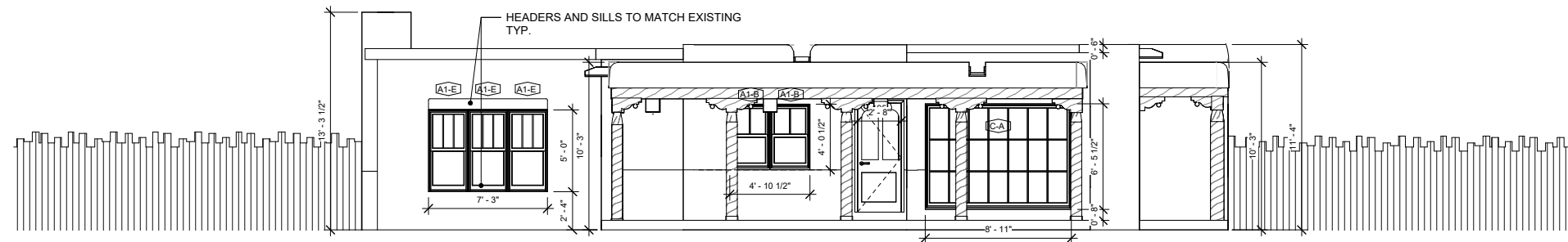
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REVISIONS

Revision Date	Revision Number	Revision Description
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① Existing West Elevation Main House
1/4" = 1'-0"



② Proposed West Elevation Main House
1/4" = 1'-0"

539 GARCIA

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87505

25-0401

WEST ELEVATIONS

DATE:
10 NOV 2025
SCALE:
1/4" = 1'-0"
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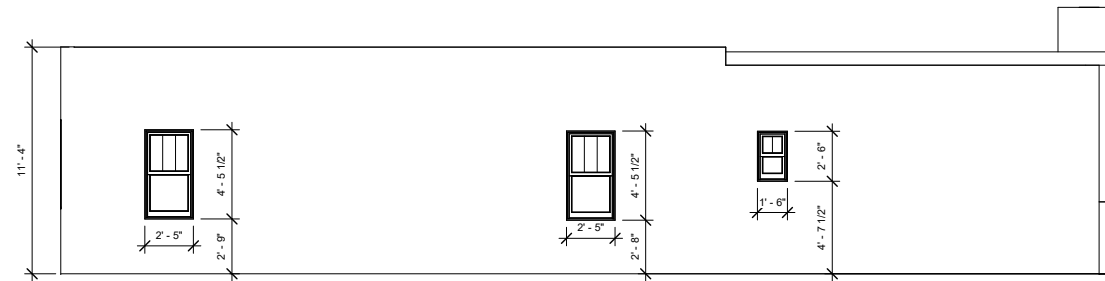
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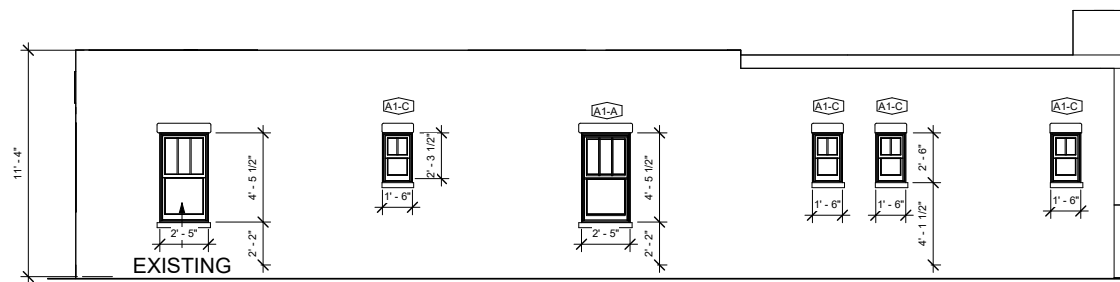
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REVISIONS

Revision Date	Revision Number	Revision Description
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① Existing East Elevation - Main House
1/4" = 1'-0"



② Proposed East Elevation - Main House
1/4" = 1'-0"

539 GARCIA

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25-0401

EAST ELEVATION

DATE:
10 NOV 2025
SCALE:
1/4" = 1'-0"
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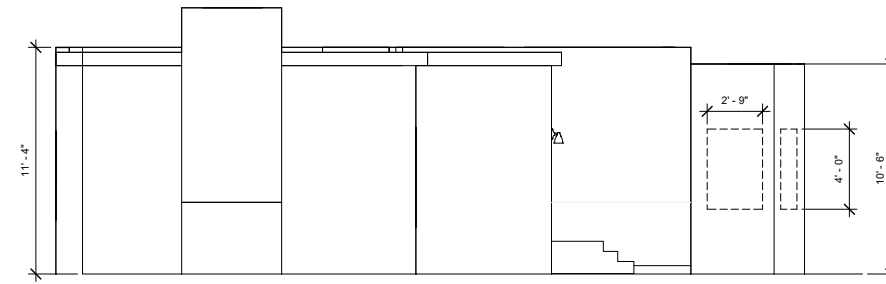
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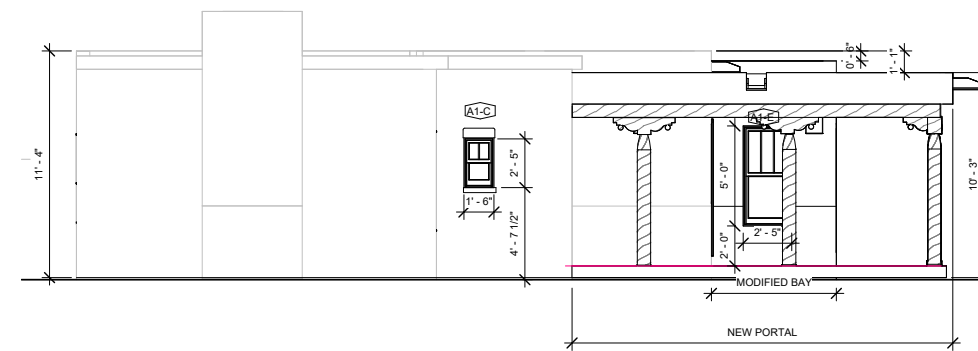
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REVISIONS

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② Existing North Elevation
1/4" = 1'-0"



① Proposed North Elevation
1/4" = 1'-0"

539 GARCIA

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25-0401

NORTH ELEVATIONS

DATE:
10 NOV 2025
SCALE:
1/4" = 1'-0"
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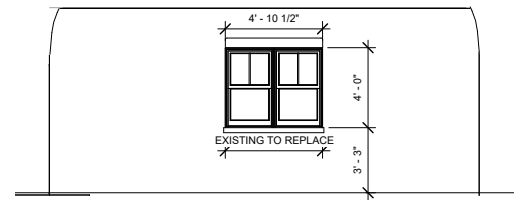
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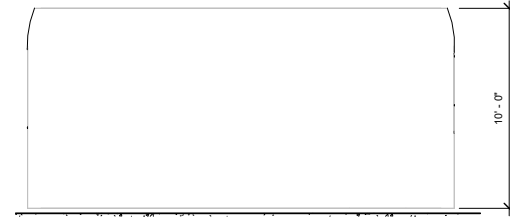
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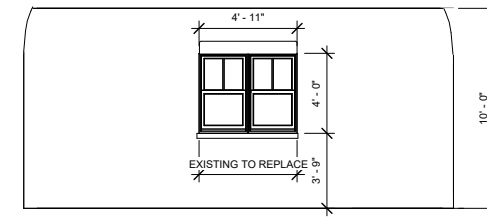
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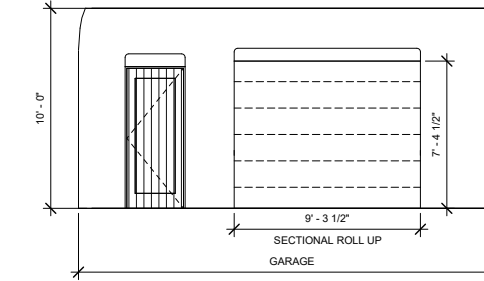
7 Existing East Elevation -Garage
1/4" = 1'-0"



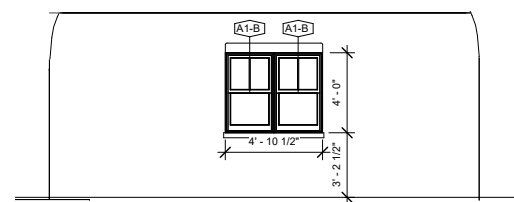
5 Existing North Garage - No Change
1/4" = 1'-0"



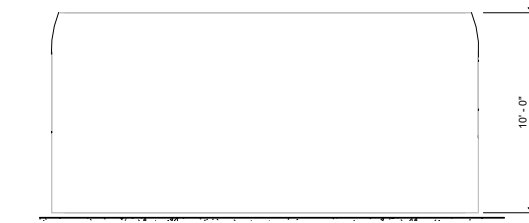
4 Existing West Elevation Garage
1/4" = 1'-0"



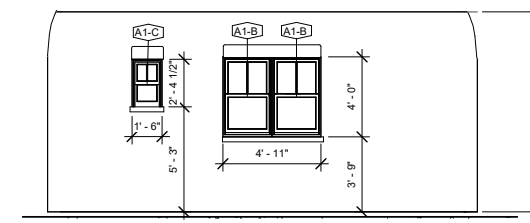
1 Existing South Elevation-Garage
1/4" = 1'-0"



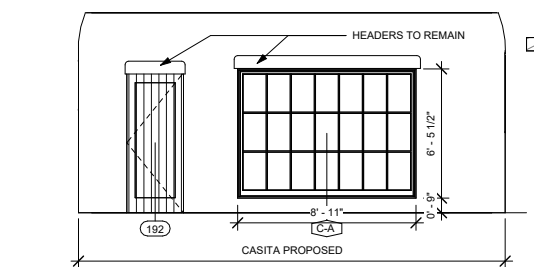
8 Proposed East Elevation -Garage
1/4" = 1'-0"



6 Proposed North Garage - No Change
1/4" = 1'-0"



3 Proposed West Elevation Garage
1/4" = 1'-0"



2 Proposed South Elevation-Garage
1/4" = 1'-0"

539 GARCIA

539 GARCIA ST Santa Fe, NM
87505

25-0401

GARAGE ELEVATIONS

DATE:
10 NOV 2025
SCALE:
1/4" = 1'-0"
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△ REVISIONS

Revision Date	Revision Number	Revision Description



539 GARCIA

539 GARCIA ST Santa Fe, NM
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25-0401

RENDERING
FACADE

DATE:
10 NOV 2025

SCALE:

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A-308

This Meem home perfectly exemplifies the Pueblo Revival vernacular—hallmarks of the John Gaw Meem legacy and directly influential to the design at 539 Garcia



