



New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

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January 22, 2025

Randy Randall
Interim City Manager
City of Santa Fe
200 Lincoln Avenue
P.O. Box 909
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SENT VIA EMAIL

RE: The Soldiers' Monument (HPD Log#124362)

Dear Mr. Randall:

Thank you for your letter, received at the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division (HPD), on December 30, 2024, requesting a determination on whether the proposal to move the Soldiers' Monument to the Santa Fe National Cemetery is a "use" of the Santa Fe Plaza. The Soldiers' Monument is significant as a commemorative monument erected for the purpose of memorializing men who died in New Mexican battles during the Civil War. It is also a contributing property within the Santa Fe Plaza National Historic Landmark and the Santa Fe Historic District, which are listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties and the National Register of Historic Places.

As defined in the implementing rule (4.10.12 NMAC) of the Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act (§§ 18-8-1 through 8, NMSA 1978) a "use" is an adverse effect on a significant historic or prehistoric site or lands of that site, including but not limited to partial or complete physical alteration or destruction; isolation of the site from its historic setting; the introduction of physical, audible, visual or atmospheric elements that substantially impair the historic character or significance of the site or substantially diminish the aesthetic value of the site; or the acquisition or taking of a historic or prehistoric site resulting in or designed to result in such alteration, destruction, isolation or introduction of elements that may alter the site.

The Soldiers Monument has been located in the center of the plaza since 1866, and it is the oldest existing feature. Removing the Soldiers' Monument from its original location to the Santa Fe National Cemetery would isolate it from its historic setting and destroy the relationship between the Monument and its surroundings as well as its association with historic events. The Santa Fe Plaza would also be altered with the removal of the Monument, which is a contributing feature of landscape. For these reasons, moving the Soldiers' Monument to the Santa Fe National Cemetery would be a "use" as defined under the Prehistoric and Historic Sites Preservation Act.

The next step in the process will be for the City of Santa Fe to hold at least one public hearing to solicit proposed alternatives that will avoid such use. Based on testimony received at the hearing(s), and upon its own initiative, the City shall document alternatives and determine that there is no prudent and feasible alternative to the use or select the alternative that causes the least harm to the Soldiers' Monument and the

Santa Fe Plaza. Common alternatives may include restoration of the monument and the no-build alternative. The City of Santa Fe should conduct a condition assessment of the monument as part of this process, to determine if the monument can be restored, the cost of restoration and feasibility of moving the monument to another location because of the damage that it has already incurred.

I look forward to working with the City of Santa Fe during this process. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Michelle M. Ensey
Executive Director, Historic Preservation Division
State Historic Preservation Officer