

City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

memo

DATE: March 10, 2026
TO: Historic Districts Review Board
FROM: Heather Lamboy, AICP, Planning & Land Use Department Director #LL

2026-011792-HDRB. 924 Paseo de Peralta. Downtown & Eastside Historic District. Contributing. John A. Padilla, agent for Carole Peet, Executive Director of El Castillo Life Plan Community, requests status review with primary façade(s) designation if applicable. Request for reconsideration of the January 27, 2026, decision to classify portions of the building as “significant” and the rest as “contributing.”

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:

At the January 27, 2026, meeting, the HDRB acted on the status of 924 Paseo de Peralta, designating the original 1936 house as significant and the rest of the structure as contributing. Having 2 historic statuses on one building is difficult to administer and can be challenging to interpret. It is accurate that the 1936 structure has defining characteristics and should be preserved. The primary façade designation will protect that building as if those facades were designated as significant. Staff administers applications that propose changes on primary facades in the same manner as facades on significant buildings.

Section 14-4.6(C)(2) states,

“2. Designation of Significant, Contributing, or Noncontributing Status

I. Status Designation Structures within historic districts may be designated a status of "significant," "contributing," or "noncontributing," as defined in Section 14-9.3, General Definitions. Staff shall maintain a record as to the current status of structures located in the historic districts.”

Staff requests reconsideration of the HDRB decision to status a portion of the building as significant and the other as contributing. Based on the Code, status designation may be significant, contributing, or non-contributing. There is no provision in the Code that permits portions of one building to have more than one status.

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:

The current El Castillo Retirement Resident Office space and the previous architect, Isaac Hamilton Rapp’s original single-family residence at 924 Paseo de Peralta, are listed as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. The original structure was built on a 0.42-acre lot in the late 1920s and comprises 5,906 sq. ft. of roofed area. The residence was constructed in the Spanish-Pueblo Revival architectural style, as evidenced by the flat roof with rounded parapets, recessed doors and windows, and wooden lentil and viga elements throughout the structure. The structure eloquently speaks to its surroundings along the streetscape and has a monumental impact as an aesthetically pleasing element on Paseo de Peralta.

Mr. John Murphey’s 2025 Historic Cultural Property Inventory (HCPI) survey report encapsulates the history of this special structure's construction and the owners who once called this residence home. Mr. Murphey’s analysis of the structure and its previous additions shows how this historic building speaks to the times and places of the people in the heart of Santa Fe. In general, Mr. Murphey expresses that the structure retains a high level of historic integrity except for the east elevation of the former service wing (2025:16). This determination is observed by previous Historic Districts Review Board (Board) cases in the 1980s and 1990s where changes have impacted the original form of the structure. The changes do not diminish the contributing status of the structure as a whole, it does not give a good representation of the original construction as other elevations demonstrate on the structure. Staff agrees with the historian’s evaluation and the recommendations of the primary facades.

Previous cases for 924 Paseo de Peralta include:

Below are previous Legacy HDRB and ADMIN cases for 924 Paseo de Peralta. Currently there are no records available in the Historic Preservation Division files for these cases.

1982-010100025-HDRB, approved.

1983-010100420-HDRB, approved.

1986-010100071-HDRB, approved.

1989-010100007-HDRB, approved.

1989-010100405-HDRB, approved.

HDRBAA-390-ADMIN, approved.

HDRBAA-391-ADMIN, approved.

HDRBAA-551-ADMIN, approved.
HDRBAA-1451-ADMIN, approved.

On March 8, 2018, in Case No. AR-09-2018-1030-ARC, the Archaeological Review Committee (ARC) conditionally approved an inventory and testing report at 924 Paseo de Peralta with the condition that the archaeologist will monitor all ground disturbance on the property or that the archaeologist re-open trenches and excavate to sterile soil and staff can administratively approve the addendum report.

APPLICANT'S REQUEST:

The applicant requests status review with primary façade(s) designation if applicable for 924 Paseo de Peralta.

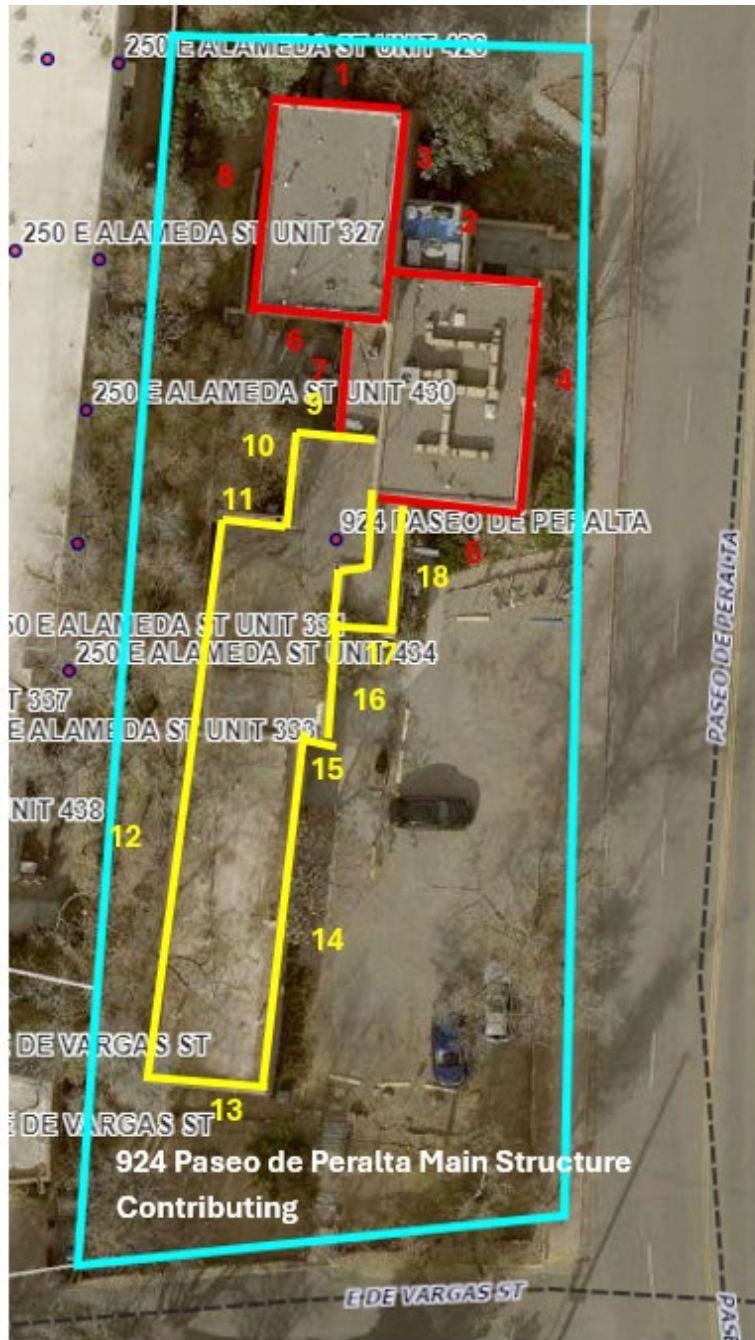


Figure 1: Proposed Façade Diagram for 924 Paseo de Peralta.

Primary Façade: —

Non-primary Façade: —

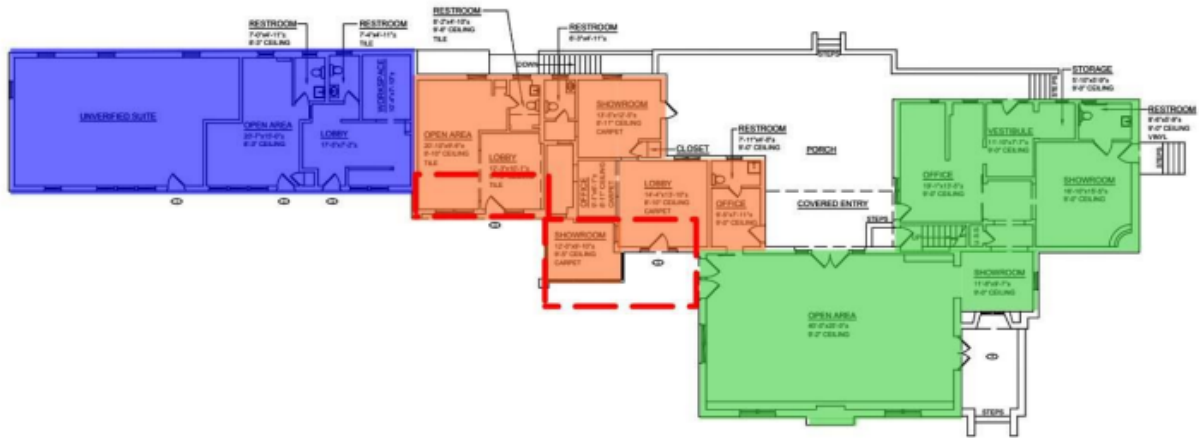


Figure 1: Colored current floor plan.

- Green: 1936 house**
- Orange: 1936 service wing**
- Blue: c.1940s workshop area**
- Red: c.1980s alterations and infill**

Floor plan courtesy of John Padilla, Architect.

Figure 2: Colored illustration floor plan showing the dates of additions. Courtesy of Mr. John A. Padilla and Mr. John Murphy 2025.

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."

(c) 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.

(d) 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 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.

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 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.