

**City of Santa Fe
Historic Districts Review Board
Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law**

Case # 2025-10697-HDRB

Address – 401 E. Palace Ave.

Agent’s Name – Andrew Lyons Design LLC

Owner/Applicant’s Name – Abrams Development LLC

THIS MATTER came before the Historic Districts Review Board (“Board”) for hearing on July 8, 2025.

BACKGROUND

The property at 401 E. Palace Ave. is 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 current building on the site is the second residence in this location; the site was previously occupied by a two-story residence built by Romulo Martinez, likely the eponym of Martinez Street. 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.

The present single-family residence at this address is listed as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. The 1,927-square-foot, one-story residence was built 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 shiner-laid bricks creating a brick coping. The south façade, which fronts East Palace Avenue, has a portal on the western corner of the building. The portal contains a flagstone floor and a 28-inch-high pony wall topped with brick coping. 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, listed as contributing, is a single-vehicle garage located in the northeast corner of the property. The 300-square-foot structure was built, 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 surrounding the property, and have no historic designation. The four sections of yard walls are constructed of cobblestones and limestone. While they were constructed over time, all of the walls were in place by 1973. The oldest 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 inches to 36.5 inches. 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 inches. 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 inches. 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 inches.

Lida T. Brasher White was an educator who taught at Catron School, where she was also the principal. She obtained the permit to construct the residence at 401 E. Palace Ave., and she resided in the home until 1967. The house was then sold to Dr. George C. Abrams, an orthodontist. Mr. Abrams repurposed the residence for his practice and 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 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.

The Applicant requests the following:

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

After conducting a public hearing and having heard from the Applicant and all interested persons, the Board hereby FINDS, as follows:

1. City Historic Preservation Division Staff reviewed the application and related materials and information submitted by the Applicant for conformity with applicable Santa Fe City Code (“SFCC”) requirements and provided the Board with a written report of its findings (“Staff Report”), which evaluates the factors relevant to the application.
2. Historic Preservation Division Staff Recommendation: Staff recommended 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 SFCC Section 14-5.2(C), Designation of Significant, Contributing or Non-Contributing Status Within Historic Districts.
3. The project is subject to SFCC Section 14-5.2(C), Regulation of Significant and Contributing Structures.

4. The project is subject to the requirements and general design standards set forth in SFCC Section 14-5.2(D), General Design Standards.
5. The property is located in the Downtown and Eastside Historic District and is subject to the district design standards set forth in SFCC Section 14-5.2(E).
6. SFCC Section 14-5.2(C)(2)(a-c) gives the Board authority to review and approve “significant,” “contributing,” or “non-contributing” status designations and to designate primary façades of contributing structures.
7. Under SFCC Section 14-12.1, the definition of a “contributing structure” is “a structure, located in a Historic District, approximately 50 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.”
8. Under SFCC Section 14-12.1, the definition of a “primary façade” is one or more principal faces or elevations of a building with features that define the character of the building’s architecture.
9. Under SFCC Section 14-12.1, the definition of a “non-contributing structure” is a “structure, located in a Historic District, that is less than 50 years old or that does not exhibit sufficient historic integrity to establish and maintain the character of the Historic District.”
10. Under SFCC Section 14-12.1, the definition of a “significant structure” is a “structure located in a Historic District that is approximately 50 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.”
11. Based on the information set forth in the Staff Report and exhibits and the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, the Board finds that the residential structure meets the definition of a “contributing structure.” The Board finds distinctive architectural design qualities in the Territorial styling, “alligatored” stucco, wood sash windows with shallow pedimented heads, and shiner-laid brick coping. The Board also finds that the structure has historic integrity.
12. The Board finds that the south and west façades are the primary elevations of the structure with the features that define the character of the structure’s architecture.
13. Based on the information set forth in the Staff Report and exhibits and the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, the Board finds that the accessory (garage) structure meets the definition of a “contributing structure,” having the same design qualities as those of the residence. The Board also finds that the structure has historic integrity.
14. The Board finds that the south and west façades are the primary elevations of the garage structure with the features that define the character of the structure’s architecture.
15. Based on the information set forth in the Staff Report and exhibits and the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, the Board finds that the yard walls meet the definition of “contributing structures,” as recommended by the Staff. The Board finds distinctive

architectural design qualities in the cobblestone and pebbled aggregate surfaces, glazed ceramic tile topping, cobblestone posts, and outdoor fireplace with chimney that is integrated into the wall. The Board also finds that these structures have historic integrity.

16. The information contained in the application and provided in testimony and evidence establishes that all applicable requirements for Board review have been met.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Under the circumstances and given the evidence and testimony submitted during the hearing, the Board acted upon the application as follows:

1. The Board has the authority to review and approve the application.
2. The Board grants the Applicant’s request to review historic status.
3. The Board maintains the residential structure’s contributing status.
4. The Board designates the following elevations of the residence as the primary façades: south and west.
5. The Board maintains the accessory (garage) structure’s contributing status.
6. The Board designates the following elevations of the garage structure as the primary façades: south and west.
7. The Board designates all property perimeter yard walls as contributing structures.

IT IS SO ORDERED ON THIS 12th DAY of MAY, 2026, BY THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS REVIEW BOARD OF THE CITY OF SANTA FE.

Cecilia Rios
Chair

Date

FILED:

Geralyn Cardenas
City Clerk

Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Frank Ruybalid
Assistant City Attorney

Date