

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

**Case # 2025-10871-HDRB**

**Address** – 439 Camino del Monte Sol

**Agent’s Name** – Craig Hoopes, AIA

**Owner/Applicant’s Name** – Chris Greulich and Mathew Boland

THIS MATTER came before the Historic Districts Review Board (“Board”) for hearing on August 26, 2025.

**BACKGROUND**

The single-family residence at 439 Camino del Monte Sol, Lot 1-A, is listed as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. The main residential structure was built in 1925 on a 0.73-acre parcel and is comprised of 5,894 square feet of roofed area.

The house was built on property acquired by Mary Hunter Austin (1868–1934), a widely read and respected author and playwright, who first arrived in Santa Fe in 1918. Austin had written about the Paiute Indians of the Mojave Desert, and sought to expand her research into Native American cultures of the Southwest. She worked closely with the School of American Research, which then occupied the Palace of the Governors, and immersed herself in Santa Fe’s cultural life, establishing the Community Theater Association. According to Architectural Historian John W. Murphey, Austin acquired several parcels of land off Camino del Monte Sol, a road running from Acequia Madre to the Sunmount Sanatorium that was lined with artists’ homes and studios.

In 1925, Austin had her house built on Camino del Monte Sol, later naming it Casa Querida, or “The Beloved House.” John Gaw Meem, a young designer who was staying at Sunmount Sanatorium, started an architectural practice with fellow tuberculosis patient Cassius D. McCormick. On February 22, 1924, they announced their new firm, Meem & McCormick, Architects, and were influential in Santa Fe’s booming residential construction industry. Their early work was followed the next year by a rush of commissions for new homes, including the one for Mary Austin. Meem’s file for the Austin project is marked No. 9 and comes after a project for Ashley Pond, a former Roosevelt Rough Rider who established the Los Alamos Ranch School for Boys in the Jemez Mountains. The Mary Austin file contains many studies, suggesting various façade and floor-plan layouts. The surviving drawings show that Meem developed five different schemes for Austin. This level of iteration is unusual and may indicate Meem’s uncertainty or, more likely, that Austin was actively involved in the design process and asked for many changes.

Austin remained an active advocate for Native American rights and the arts throughout her later years. In her final years at Casa Querida, Austin focused on completing two novellas and her autobiography. She remained in her Casa Querida until her death from coronary disease in 1934 at age 65. The 1991 New Mexico Historic Building Inventory (HBI) survey records the

architectural design style as Spanish-Pueblo Revival, as seen by the adobe block and wooden viga construction material, recessed doors and windows, and flat roof with rounded parapets. The structure underwent several alterations and additions in the 1990s, however the core structure maintains the original inception of its design, character and connection to the streetscape and historic district.

The City's Historic Preservation Staff recommended upgrade of the structure's historic status to significant to ensure the preservation and integrity of the structure. While there were many additions over time, most are historic. Those additions represent the evolution over time from art salon, to apartments, and now a single-family residence. The additions of a bathroom and bedroom in 1958 and the courtyard wall in 1997 do not detract from the significant status of the main structure, which holds its original form. At this hearing, the Applicant asks the Board to review the structure's historic status and to designate primary facades, if applicable.

### **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. Historic Preservation Division City 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 the historic status of the structure be upgraded to significant, 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 “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.”
10. 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 structure meets the definition of a “significant structure” as recommended by Staff. The Board finds that the structure is associated with influential persons such as author and playwright Mary Hunter Austin and the architect John Gaw Meem, and it has a high level of historic integrity, both of whom were important on the local, regional and national level.
11. 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 upgrades the status of this contributing structure to significant.

**IT IS SO ORDERED ON THIS 9<sup>th</sup> DAY of JUNE, 2026, BY THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS REVIEW BOARD OF THE CITY OF SANTA FE.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cecilia Rios  
Chair

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Date

FILED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Geralyn Cardenas  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Ruybalid  
Assistant City Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date