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

Case # 2025-11724-HDRB
Address – 210 Don Gaspar Ave.
Agent's Name – Richard Martinez, Martinez Architecture Studio, P.C.
Owner/Applicant's Name – Heritage Hotels and Resorts Inc.

THIS MATTER came before the Historic Districts Review Board ("Board") for hearing on January 27, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The Hotel St. Francis at 210 Don Gaspar Ave. is a commercial Mission Revival Style structure listed as significant to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. All elevations are considered primary on significant buildings. The property was originally the De Vargas Hotel, constructed in 1924, but buildings were known to have occupied this location as early as 1890. The building is characterized by its unusual triangular footprint. It has arches at the patio and terrace entrances, as well as over some windows. It also holds wrought-iron elements and clay tile detailing on a stucco exterior. There is a long patio at the entrance with a brown wainscot under white, and an enclosed courtyard patio at the northwest corner. The courtyard is enclosed with an 8-foot-high wall with wood doors and windows with iron bars.

Don Gaspar Avenue is a commercial hub with two- to three-story buildings fronting the sidewalk, and a parking lot directly across Don Gaspar Avenue. The hotel abuts three street frontages: Don Gaspar Avenue, West Water Street and Ortiz Street. The 1984 Historic Building Inventory notes that the first floor of the hotel was thought to have existed by 1883, when it was the National Hotel. A second story was added between 1902 and 1908. The 1995 HBI notes that a remodel and restoration of the property took place in the mid-1980s, and some doors were replaced, and that some changes occurred to the storefront on the north side of the building. More recent remodeling from 2008, which was approved by the HDRB, included a new window opening on the north and west dining courtyard, alteration of the arched gate at the courtyard for functionality, and addition of clay roof tiles on the west elevation of the hotel.

The Applicant proposes the following exterior alterations:
1) Relocate a pedestrian door on the south, ground-floor level of the hotel.
2) Extend the landing at the new doorway.
3) Install railing at the new landing.
4) Stucco repair to match the existing stucco.

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. Land Use Department Staff conducted a preliminary zoning review ("PZR") and determined that the application appears to meet the underlying zoning standards set forth in the Santa Fe City Code ("SFCC").
2. Historic Preservation Division Staff reviewed the application and related materials and information submitted by the Applicant for conformity with applicable SFCC requirements and provided the Board with a written report of its findings ("Staff Report"), which evaluates the factors relevant to the application.
3. Historic Preservation Division Staff Recommendation: Staff found that the exception criteria had been met and recommended approval of the exception to SFCC Section 14-5.2(D)(5)(a) to alter an opening on a primary façade. Staff also recommended approval of the other elements of the application as they comply with SFCC Sections 14-5.2(D), General Design Standards for all Historic Districts, and 14-5.2(E), Downtown and Eastside Historic District Design Standards.
4. The project is subject to SFCC Section 14-5.2(C), Regulation of Significant and Contributing Structures.
5. The project is subject to the requirements and general design standards set forth in SFCC Section 14-5.2(D), General Design Standards.
6. 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).
7. Under SFCC Sections 14-2.6(B-C), 14-5.2(A)(1), 14-5.2(C)(2)(a-d & f), 14-5.2(C)(3)(a-b), 14-5.2(C)(4), and 14-5.2(D), the Board has authority to review, approve, with or without conditions, or deny, all or some of the Applicant's proposed design to assure overall compliance with applicable design standards.
8. Under SFCC Section 14-5.2(D)(5)(a) for all façades of significant structures no new opening shall be made where one presently does not exist unless historic documentation supports its prior existence, and no existing opening shall be closed.
9. The Applicant proposes to relocate a door on the ground level of the south elevation by infilling its current location and creating a new opening for the door about seven feet to the west. The Staff determined that an exception to SFCC Section 14-5.2(D)(5)(a) would be required for approval of the application, and the Applicant requested an exception.
10. To obtain an exception, the Applicant was required to conclusively demonstrate that the three exception criteria set forth in SFCC Section 14-5.2(C)(5)(b) have been met.
11. Based on the information set forth in the Staff Report and exhibits, and the evidence and testimony presented at the hearing, the Board agrees with Staff's finding that the Applicant has conclusively demonstrated that all exception criteria have been met:
    a. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-5.2(C)(5)(b)(i), the Board finds that granting the exception would not damage the character of the district because the alteration is a minor change, with little impact on the significant structure, and the door opens out to a parking lot between two buildings, minimally visible from the street;
    b. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-5.2(C)(5)(b)(ii), the Board finds that the exception is required to prevent a hardship to the Applicant or an injury to the public welfare because it allows for the hotel to provide ADA-compliant rooms and restrooms in compliance with current regulations; and
    c. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-5.2(C)(5)(b)(iii), the Board finds that granting the exception would strengthen the unique heterogeneous character of the City by providing a full range of design options to ensure that residents can continue to

reside within the Historic Districts because this change requires fewer alterations to the exterior of this historically significant structure that other design options would require.

12. The Board finds that the Applicant has conclusively demonstrated that all of the exception criteria have been met.
13. The information contained in the Staff Report and exhibits, and the testimony and evidence submitted at the hearing, establishes that all applicable requirements for Board review as herein described have been met.
14. The information contained in the Staff Report and exhibits, and the testimony and evidence submitted at the hearing, establishes that all applicable design criteria 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 approves Items # 1-4 as set forth in the application, as recommended by Staff.
3. The Board grants the exception requested in the application.

IT IS SO ORDERED ON THIS 27th DAY of OCTOBER, 2026, BY THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS REVIEW BOARD OF THE CITY OF SANTA FE.

_____ _____
Cecilia Rios, Chair Date

FILED:

_____ _____
Geralyn Cardenas Date
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____ _____
Frank Ruybalid Date
Assistant City Attorney