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

Case # 2026-12571-HDRB
Address – 1295 Cerro Gordo Rd.
Agent's Name – Harvey N. Monroe, Jr., AIA, Terraplen Architects + Planners, LLC
Owner/Applicant's Name – Anne Pfauth and Thomas Eric Sikes

THIS MATTER came before the Historic Districts Review Board ("Board") for hearing on June 23, 2026.

BACKGROUND

The adobe 1930s Librado and Plácida Ortiz House at 1295 Cerro Gordo Rd. is listed as contributing to the Downtown and Eastside Historic District. The residence expresses a vernacular Pueblo Revival style, with exposed vigas at the façade and rounded parapets. The residence is 1,030 square feet, excluding the two portals. The south façade features an arched porch entry and wood casement windows, and appears to retain its original configuration. There was an addition of two rooms in the 1930s, which created a bump-out at the northeast corner.

Ownership of this property by the Armijo family, eponyms of Armijo Lane which runs north and south nearby, extends back to 1917 when it formed part of a five-acre irrigated parcel held by Ramoncita Armijo, Ramon Armijo and Florencio Armijo. In the 1920s, the land on both sides of Cerro Gordo Road came under the ownership of Abundio Armijo, Sr., a farmer, rancher and a founding member of La Unión Protectiva. According to a 2026 Historic Cultural Properties Inventory by Architectural Historian John W. Murphey, Abundio's daughter Plácida married Librado Ortiz, and they settled on the subject property. The property remained in the Armijo family until this past year when Roberta Glynn Armijo, the last Armijo to own the house, placed it on the market. In 1996, the structure was 927 square feet when a room addition was placed on the north elevation and the west-elevation portal altered, along with other changes. The Historic Design Review Board awarded Roberta Glynn Armijo a Heritage Preservation Award in 1997 in recognition of the home's sensitive renovation.

In a hearing May 12, 2026, in Case # 2026-12282-HDRB, the Board voted to retain the residence as a contributing structure, with the east and south façades, including the portal, as primary façades. The Board also designated both the retaining wall and the planter walls as contributing structures. The garage and attached shed were demolished in 1995. The origin of the stone retaining wall in front of the house is unclear. The low planters immediately in front of the house appear in earlier aerial photographs and lend period character to the property, helping to establish its historic setting. The lower rockwork is first clearly visible in 1978 aerial imagery.

The Applicants now propose the following:

Residence:

1) Construct 1,390 square feet of additions with 929 square feet of heated space and 461

square feet of portals to a height of 15 feet where the existing residence is 14 feet. An exception is requested to SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(2)(II)(c) to exceed 50 percent of the historic footprint.

a. The additions are set back from the primary façades by 10 feet and sit on the northwest corner of the structure.
b. The addition can be differentiated from the original structure through its style and height.
c. A chimney will be located in the northwest corner of the northern addition.
d. Windows will be simulated, divided-lite, wood-clad in blue.
e. Doors are located under portals and will be full single-lite doors, except for the south elevation door, which will hold divided lites.

2) Replace windows and doors:
    a. The circa 1990 entry door on the south primary façade is recommended for replacement in a report by a window-assessment professional. The size of this door will change as a result of lowering of the interior grade of the residence by 12 inches. The door size will become a standard door size.
    b. The window on the south primary façade is recommended to be replaced. The exterior wood condition is severely degraded.
    c. The modern window on the east primary façade, installed into what is most likely a historic window frame, is recommended for replacement. The mullions are a non-historic applied grill.
    d. All non-primary façade windows on the residence will be replaced.
3) Stucco in cementitious La Habra Desert Rose of Kokanee.
4) Stain wood in SW Hawthorne or Chestnut.

Accessory Structure:
(The applicant withdrew this portion of the request at the outset of the hearing.)

5) Construct a 1,391-square-foot, free-standing accessory structure to a height of 22'11", where the maximum allowable height is 15'3". An exception to SFCC Section 14-4.6(F)(2) to exceed the maximum allowable height is requested.

Property:

6) Remove approximately 12 feet of the existing contributing retaining wall. An exception is requested to SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(1)(I) to remove historic material.
7) Reconfigure the driveway, moving the entrance from the east to the south.
8) Extend an existing wall on the east side of the lot.
9) Replace the existing slat fence with a coyote fence to a height of 6 feet and align with the front of the residence going to the west.
10) Construct a retaining wall on the east to support the new driveway configuration. The retaining wall will be constructed of stone to blend with the existing retaining walls.

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 recommended a finding that the exception criteria for SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(2)(II)(c) for an addition exceeding 50 percent of the historic footprint had not been met and recommended denial of the additions. Staff recommended a finding that the exception criteria for SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(1)(I) to remove historic material from the front retaining wall had been met and recommended approval of the alteration to the contributing retaining wall. Staff recommended approval of the other elements of the application, as they comply with SFCC Sections 14-4.6(E), General Design Standards for all Historic Districts, and 14-4.6(G)(2), Downtown and Eastside Historic District Design Standards.
4. The project is subject to SFCC Section 14-4.6(C), Buildings with Significant or Contributing Historic Status.
5. The project is subject to the requirements and general design standards set forth in SFCC Section 14-4.6(E), General Design Standards for All Historic Districts.
6. The property is located in the Downtown and Eastside District and is subject to the district design standards set forth in SFCC Section 14-4.6(G)(2).
7. Under SFCC Sections 14-2.2(3)(I)(a-c), 14-4.6(A)(1), 14-4.6(3)(I), 14-4.6(3)(II), 14-4.6(3)(III)(a &b), and 14-4.6(E), the Board has the 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.

Addition Exceeding 50 Percent of Historic Footprint:

8. Under SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(2)(II)(c), additions to contributing structures shall not exceed 50 percent of the square footage of the building's historic footprint.
9. The Applicant proposes to construct an addition that exceeds 50 percent of the square footage of the building's historic footprint. The Staff determined that an exception to SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(2)(II)(c) 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 14-4.6(D)(2)(II) 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 finds that the Applicant has not conclusively demonstrated that all exception criteria have been met:
    a. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-4.6(D)(2)(II)(a), the Board finds that granting the exception would damage the character of the district because this small residence of 1,030 square feet would be dominated by a 1,390-square-foot addition, plainly visible from the street, and more than doubling the size of the historic residence;
    b. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-4.6(D)(2)(II)(b), the Board finds that the exception is not required to prevent a hardship to the Applicant or an injury to the public welfare because the Applicant only recently bought this house with a full

awareness of its existing size and location within a Historic District, and there has been no showing that a smaller addition, or an addition set back more from the south elevation, or a free-standing additional unit would not solve any inconvenience to the Applicant; and

c. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-4.6(D)(2)(II)(c), the Board finds that granting the exception would not 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 a 135-percent addition on a small residence will overwhelm the original structure, and there has been no showing that a smaller connection to the residence, with the bulk of the new construction detached from the historic structure, would not solve any habitability issues while ensuring that the historic character of this building is not lost.

12. The Board finds that the Applicant has failed to conclusively demonstrate that all of the exception criteria have been met for a 1,390-square-foot addition to a contributing structure (project element # 1).

Removal of Contributing Retaining Wall Section:

13. Under SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(1)(I), the removal of historic materials or alteration of architectural features and spaces that embody the status of a contributing structure is prohibited.
14. The Applicant proposes to remove a 12-foot section of a contributing, stone retaining wall to reconfigure the driveway to the front of the house. The Staff determined that an exception to SFCC Section 14-4.6(E)(1)(I) would be required for approval of the application, and the Applicant requested an exception.
15. To obtain an exception, the Applicant was required to conclusively demonstrate that the three exception criteria set forth in SFCC Section 14-4.6(D)(2)(II) have been met.
16. 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 not conclusively demonstrated that all exception criteria have been met:
    a. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-4.6(D)(2)(II)(a), the Board finds that granting the exception would damage the character of the district because historic rock retaining walls are highly characteristic of this part of the district;
    b. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-4.6(D)(2)(II)(b), the Board finds that the exception is not required to prevent a hardship to the Applicant or an injury to the public welfare because this is a condition that existed when the Applicant bought this property, there is an existing driveway to the house with its entry on the east property line, and there is an alternative access to the property via an easement from North Armijo Lane; and
    c. Pursuant to SFCC Section 14-4.6(D)(2)(II)(c), the Board finds that granting the exception would not 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 there is no persuasive evidence that the existing access to the house via the east driveway and easement from North Armijo Lane impairs the habitability of this residence.
17. The Board finds that the Applicant has failed to conclusively demonstrate that all of the exception criteria have been met for removal of a 12-foot section of a contributing

retaining wall to reconfigure the driveway (project elements # 6 and 7).

18. The Board finds, based on a report by a window assessment professional, that the windows on the south and east primary façade the Applicant proposes to replace (project element # 2(b-c)) cannot be repaired. The Board finds that the door on the south primary façade the Applicant proposes to replace (project element # 2(a)) is non-historic.
19. Applicant may resubmit for consideration a proposal for a free-standing accessory structure (project element # 5) that was withdrawn in the hearing June 23, 2026.
20. 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.
21. 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 not been met for the project elements that the HDRB approves.

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 # 2-4 and 8-10 as set forth in the application, as recommended by Staff.
3. The Board denies the exceptions requested in the application.
4. The Board denies approval of Items # 1, 6 and 7 (noting that Item 5 was withdrawn) as set forth 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