City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

memo

DATE: October 27, 2026

TO: Historic Districts Review Board Members

VIA: Heather Lamboy, AICP, Planning & Land Use Department Director HLL
Maggie Moore, Assistant Land Use Director MM

FROM: Lani McCulley, Senior Planner, Historic Preservation Division, LGM

2026-013107-HDRB. 817 Vista Catedral. Downtown & Eastside Historic District. Michael Bodelson, agent for Sonny Otero, owner, proposes to construct a 6,605 sq. ft. residence to a height of 19'-6" where the maximum allowable height is 16'-0" on a sloped site, and erect walls, fencing and gates from 5'-0" to 6'-0" in height.

REFERENCE ATTACHMENTS (Sequentially):

CITY SUBMITTALS

____ District Standards & yard wall & fence standards.

__x__ Historic Inventory Form

__x__ Zoning Review Sheet

____ Other:

APPLICANT SUBMITTALS

__x__ Proposal Letter

__x__ Site Plan/Floor Plan

__x__ Elevations

__x__ Photographs

____ Other:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends approval of the proposed project and finds that the application complies with Section 14-.6(E) General Design Standards for all Historic Districts, and 14-4.6(G)(2) Downtown and Eastside Design Standards.

Sample motions:

a. In case 2026-013107-HDRB, for 817 Vista Catedral, approve or deny the application as submitted.

The property lies within the Historic Downtown Archaeological Review District. See Chapter 14, SFCC, Article 14-14-4.2(D). There may be archaeological concerns associated with this project, and archaeological clearance will be required.

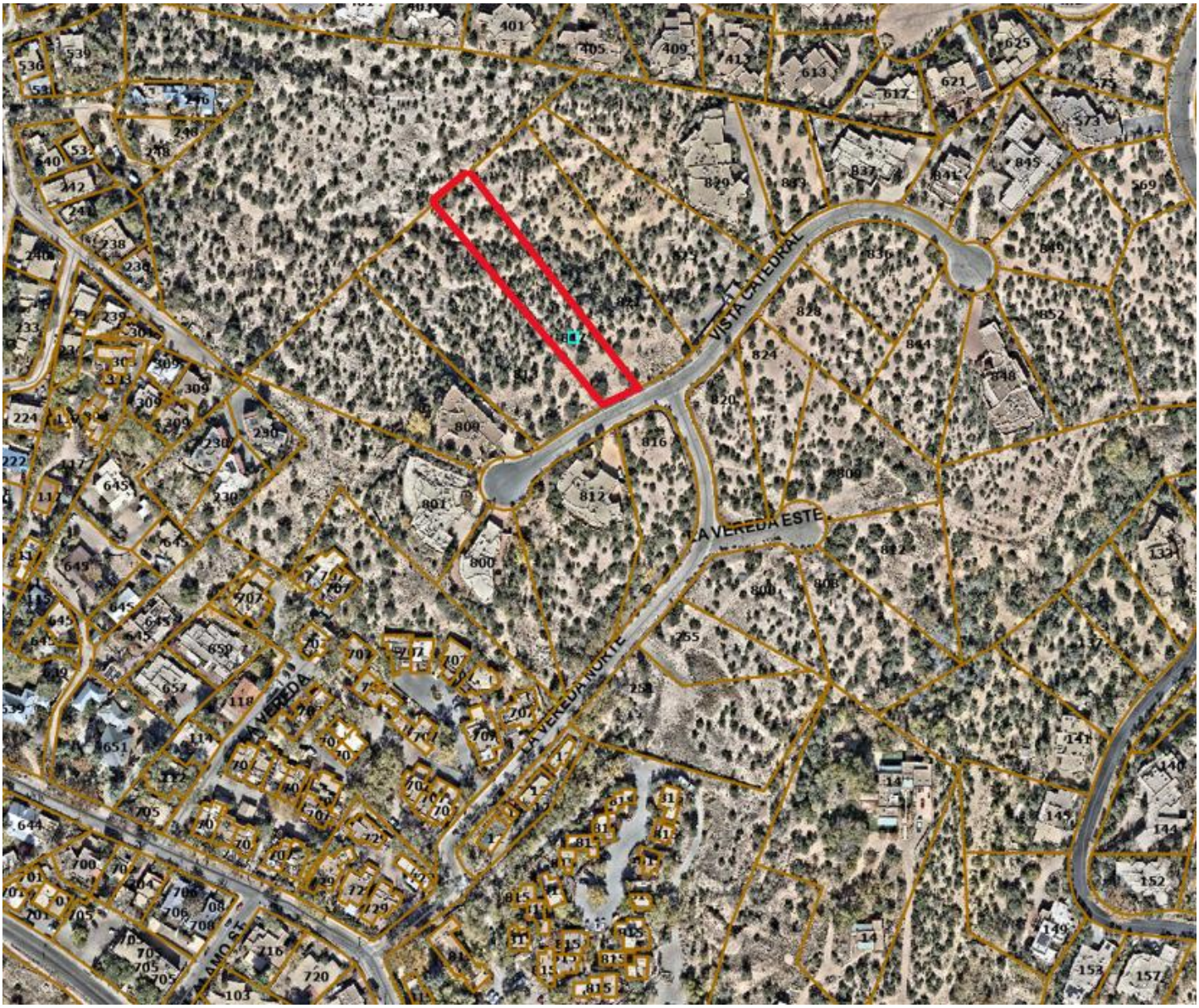


Figure 1: Property Location

BACKGROUND & SUMMARY:

Streetscape:
The development where Vista Catedral is located sits north of the La Vereda Compound and is accessed by La Vereda Norte. Of the twenty-one lots, nine are currently developed. The lots are all sloped. The structures are all in recent Santa Fe style with flat roofs dappled with skylights, solar panels, and HVAC units. The lots have low stucco yardwalls that create courtyards.

Site Description:
The lot at 817 Vista Catedral is approximately 0.87 acres with a large portion of the lot covered in 30% slopes. The buildable area of the property appears to be located to the east, closer to the street. This buildable area, on-site drainage control, and impervious surfaces will need to be confirmed with Terrain Management.

PREVIOUS CASE SUMMARIES:

ARC:
No Archaeological clearance has been issued for this property.

HDRB:
No previous cases are on file in the Historic Preservation Division.

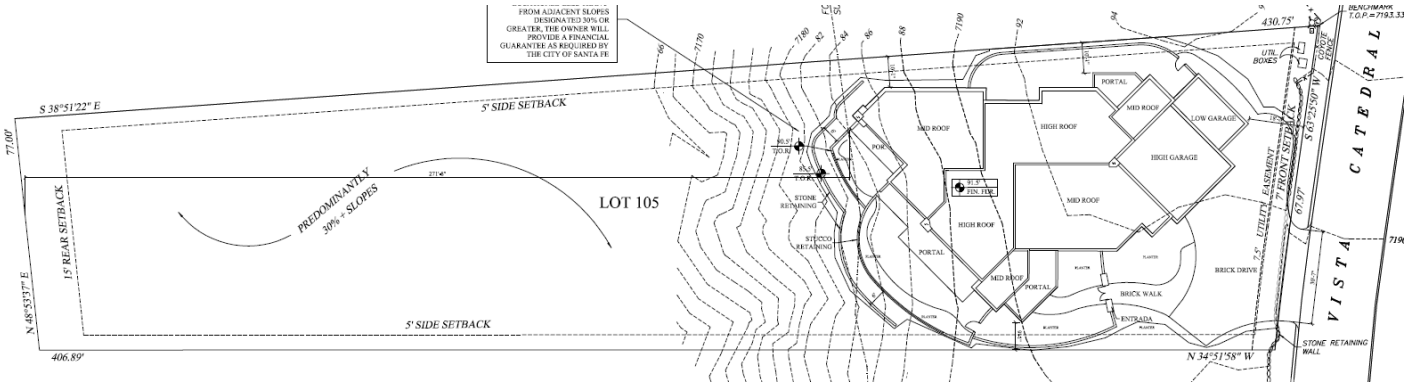
ADMINISTRATIVE:
No previous cases are on file in the Historic Preservation Division.

APPLICANT'S REQUEST:

The applicant proposes to construct a residence on a vacant lot.

1) Construct a 6,605 sq. ft. Spanish Pueblo Revival style residence to a height of 19'6" due to the slope. The maximum allowable height is 16'-0". The east street-facing elevation is at 14'-0". The design is in consistent with the El Cerro Moreno Subdivision's character. A request for additional height is requested under the provision of section 14-4.6(F)(2)(II)(f) *"The HDRB may increase the allowable height for proposed buildings and additions located on a sloping site where the difference in the natural grade along the structure's foundation exceeds two feet. In no case shall the height of a facade exceed four feet above the allowable height of the applicable streetscape measured from natural or finished grade, whichever is more restrictive. This increase in height shall be constructed only in the form of building setbacks from the street."*
    a. The residence will have several portals with heavy wood headers and columns.
    b. The windows and doors will be aluminum-clad wood single-lite windows in copper with a patina similar to dark bronze. The windows will have wood lintels.
    c. Windows and doors will be deep inset. The applicant did not state the amount of inset.
    d. Garage doors will be typical roll-up doors.
    e. There will be 4 chimneys.
    f. Canales will be copper-lined wood.
    g. Corners of the structure will be bullnosed at approximately 2"-3".
2) Construct 6'-0" stucco walls to create courtyards on the north, northwest, and southwest areas of the lot.
3) Install metal railings in a dark color.
4) Install exterior lighting with aged copper sconces.

5) Install hardscaping using brick pavers and cut stone.



Proposed Site Plan

RELEVANT CODE CITATIONS:

14-4.6 HISTORIC DISTRICTS

A. General Provisions

l. Purpose

In order to promote the economic, cultural, and general welfare of the people of Santa Fe and to ensure the harmonious, orderly, and efficient growth and development of the City, the Governing Body deems it essential to preserve the qualities relating to the history and culture of Santa Fe, maintain a harmonious outward appearance to preserve property values, and attract residents and tourists alike. The specific purposes of this section are to preserve qualities relating to the history of Santa Fe, such as the following:

I. Continue the existence and preservation of historic areas and buildings;

II. Continued construction of buildings in Santa Fe's historic styles; and

III. General harmony as to architectural style, form, color, height, proportion, texture, and material between buildings of historic design and those of more modern design.

C. Buildings with Significant or Contributing Historic Status

l. Purpose

Historic designation is intended to address the following:

I. Recognizing each structure as a physical record of its time, place, and use.

II. Preventing changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as the addition of conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings;

III. Preserving and retaining changes to structures that have acquired historic importance in their own right, recognizing that most structures change over time;

IV. Preserving distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a structure; and

V. Avoiding making new additions and related or adjacent new construction 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

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.

II. HDRB Authority to Review Status Designation

a. The HDRB may change the status of a structure or designate a status for a structure that has no status designated.

b. 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. When the HDRB designates a structure as contributing, it shall also specify which facades of the structure are primary.

V. 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.

3. Review by Historic Districts Review Board Required

I. Except where this chapter provides for review by staff, the HDRB shall review all applications for new construction, alteration, or demolition in the historic districts and of landmark structures throughout the city, based on the standards set forth in this section.

II. The historic board shall judge any proposed alteration or new structure for harmony with adjacent buildings, preservation of historical and characteristic qualities, and conformity to the standards for architectural style set forth in this section.

Ill. The HDRB may approve, deny, approve with conditions, or, with the consent of the applicant, postpone an application.

a. For applications approved with conditions, no permit shall be issued until the HDRB conditions have been met.

b. An application that is postponed shall be heard at a date agreed upon by the HDRB and the applicant.

IV. No permit shall be issued until the time for appeal to the Governing Body has expired.

4. Compliance with General and Specific Design Standards Required

All development located within the historic districts and subject to this section shall comply with all applicable general development standards set forth in Section 14-4.6E), *General Design Standards for All Historic Districts,* as well as any applicable specific development standards set forth in Section 14-4.6G), *Additional District-Specific Design Standards.*

E. General Design Standards for All Historic Districts

These standards shall apply to all additions or alterations to existing structures in the Historic Districts. Contributing, significant, and landmark structures may be subject to specific additional restrictions and district-specific standards in Section 14-4.6(G).

I. General

I. The historic status of a property with a historic status designation of significant, contributing, or landmark structure shall be retained and preserved. If a proposed alteration will cause a property to lose its significant, contributing, or landmark status, the application shall be denied. The removal of historic materials or alteration of architectural features and spaces that embody the status is prohibited.

II. If a proposed alteration or new construction will cause an adjacent property to lose its significant, contributing, or landmark status, the application may be denied.

Ill. For the regulations of this subsection, all facades of a significant structure are primary facades.

2. Building Additions

I. Design

a. Building additions that meet the standards of Section 14-4.6G.2), *Downtown and Eastside Historic District,* shall continue to meet those standards, in addition to the standards set forth in this section.

b. Building additions shall have similar materials, architectural treatments and styles, features, and details as the existing structure, but shall be distinguishable from and not attempt to duplicate the existing structure.

II. Size and Location

a. Building additions are not permitted on primary facades.

b. All building additions shall be set back a minimum of ten feet from the primary facade.

c. Building additions shall not exceed 50 percent of the square footage of the building's historic footprint and shall not exceed 50 percent of the historic length in linear feet of the primary facade.

d. To the extent architecturally practicable, new building additions shall be attached to any existing non-primary facade of a structure rather than attaching them to the primary facade of a structure.

III. Height

a. The maximum height of building additions to significant and landmark structures shall be at least six inches lower than the parapet or equivalent roof feature of the existing adjacent connecting facade.
b. Building additions to contributing structures shall be no more than one additional story higher than the existing structure. To the extent architecturally practicable, two-story additions shall be set to the rear or the side rear of the structure. When an additional story is to be placed upon an existing contributing structure, that footprint may be no greater than fifty percent of the footprint of the existing structure, subject to the provisions of Subsection A(1) above. For the purposes of this paragraph, an additional story shall not exceed twelve (12) feet from the existing rooftop to the highest point of that story.

IV. Remodeling to Increase Height
a. For remodeling of an existing significant or landmark structure, no increase in height of the structure is permitted.
b. For remodeling an existing contributing structure, a height increase may be permitted through approval of an exception, as described in Section 14-4.6D.

V. Rooftop Equipment

Rooftop equipment, including but not limited to solar collectors, clerestories, decks, or mechanical equipment, may only be installed on contributing and noncontributing structures and shall not be publicly visible, nor shall a parapet be raised to conceal such equipment.

3. Porches and Portals

Existing porches or portals on significant and landmark structures, and on primary facades of contributing structures, shall not be permanently enclosed.

4. Windows, Doors, and Other Architectural Features

I. For all facades of significant and landmark structures and for the primary facades of contributing structures:
a. Historic windows shall be repaired or restored wherever possible. Historic windows that cannot be repaired or restored shall be duplicated in the size, style, and material of the original. Thermal double-pane glass may be used. No window opening shall be widened or narrowed.
b. Window depth and other characteristics of window and door fenestration shall be preserved.
c. No new opening shall be made where one presently does not exist unless historic documentation supports its prior existence.
d. No historic opening shall be closed.

II. For all facades of contributing, significant, and landmark structures:
a. Architectural features, finishes, and details other than doors and windows shall be repaired rather than replaced.
b. In the event replacement is necessary, the use of new material may be approved. The new material shall match the material being replaced in

composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities.

c. Replacement or duplication of missing features shall be substantiated by documentation, physical, or pictorial evidence.

5. Roofs

The existing historic roof styles and materials shall be maintained or replaced in kind if necessary. The addition of dormers or other roof features should only be considered when they are an existing historic feature of the structure.

6. Surface Cleaning

The surface cleaning of structures shall employ the gentlest means possible. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials are not permitted.

7. Archaeological Resources

Discovery of archaeological resources made during the development of a historic property shall be referred to the Archaeological Review Committee. See Section 14-2.1G.1.V.c, *Unexpected Discoveries.*

8. Signs

9. Murals

10. Pedestrian-Oriented Areas

F. Height, Pitch, Scale, Massing, and Floor Stepbacks.

The height, pitch, scale, and massing of any structure in a historic district, as defined in this section, shall be limited as provided for in this section, unless further restricted elsewhere within this chapter.

I. Applicability

The following sections identify specific areas and specific projects subject to this section. The Planning and Land Use Director shall determine whether or not properties are included within this section.

I. Specific Areas

The height limitations in this subsection F apply:

a. Within the following historic districts:

1. Downtown and Eastside;
2. Don Gaspar Area;
3. Historic Transition; and
4. Westside-Guadalupe.

b. In the Historic Review district, as specified herein.

II. Streetscape Standards

III. Project Location

Planning and Land Use Department staff shall determine the applicability of this section to individual projects and the applicable streetscape

2. Height

I. Official Map of Building Heights in the Historic Districts - Procedures

II. Height Limitations

The HDRB shall limit the height of structures as set forth in this section. Heights of existing structures shall be as set forth on the official map of building heights in the historic districts.

a. If a proposed building has a parapet, the façade shall not exceed two feet of the average of the height of the façades in the streetscape.
b. If the proposed building has a pitched roof, the ridge height of the proposed building shall not exceed two feet of the average of the ridge height of the pitched roofs in the streetscape.
c. Yard walls and fences shall be limited to a height that does not exceed the average of the height of other yard walls and fences in the streetscape.
d. The height of any other structure shall be limited to the allowable building height within the applicable streetscape, as defined in this section.
e. The height and dimension of signage are as set forth in Section 14-7.61, *Sign Regulations in the Historic Districts.*
f. The HDRB may increase the allowable height for proposed buildings and additions located on a sloping site where the difference in the natural grade along the structure's foundation exceeds two feet. In no case shall the height of a façade exceed four feet above the allowable height of the applicable streetscape measured from natural or finished grade, whichever is more restrictive. This increase in height shall be constructed only in the form of building setbacks from the street.

III. Height Measurement

a. In historic districts, height shall be the vertical distance measured between the highest part of a structure and the existing grade or finished grade, whichever is more restrictive, at the midpoint of the street-facing facade, excluding rooftop appurtenances, the increased height of walls or fences over pedestrian and vehicular openings, and gates (either in open or closed position).
b. For structures that do not have street frontage, height shall be determined by the facade that contains the tallest vertical distance measured between the highest part of a structure and the existing grade or finished grade, whichever is more restrictive. The height of walls and fences is measured from the street-facing side of the wall or fence.

IV. Pitch

If the determined streetscape includes over 50 percent buildings with pitched roofs, the proposed building may have a pitched roof. A pitched roof is defined as a gable, shed, or hipped roof. The pitch of the roof shall match the predominant pitch extant in the streetscape.

V. Scale

The height of a proposed building or addition, its façade length, and its roof form and pitch shall appear to be in proportion to the height, façade length, and roof form and pitch of buildings in the applicable streetscape, or the building on which the addition is proposed.

VI. Massing and Floor Stepbacks

The HDRB may require that upper floor levels be stepped back, to carry out the intent of this section; provided that the HDRB in making such determinations shall take into account whether the height of the proposed building, yard wall, fence, or proposed step back of upper floor levels is in harmony with the massing of the applicable streetscape and preservation of the historic and characteristic visual qualities of the streetscape. The HDRB shall also require that the publicly visible facades of the structure be in conformance with Section 14-4.6G), *Additional District-Specific Design Standards,* and in meeting those requirements, may require that different floor levels be stepped back.

G. Additional District-Specific Design Standards

2. Downtown and Eastside Historic District

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.

I. 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; a 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. Facades are flat, varied by inset portales, exterior portales, projecting vigas or roof beams, canales or water-sprouts, 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, open 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 rules as to flat roofs shall not be constructed 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.

II. 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. Facade surfaces under portales may be of contrasting or complementary 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.