

ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING



Historic commercial buildings in New Mexico Main Street districts are easily characterized as those built before the railroad arrived in New Mexico in 1880 and those built after. Only a few communities can boast surviving pre-railroad buildings (usually built of adobe), and so Railroad era and modern buildings are easy to identify.

For any commercial building, the most important features are those on the street level called the “storefront.” With the exception of some public buildings such as city halls or courthouses, any commercial building is designed for optimum pedestrian appeal, offering large picture windows to display merchandise or printed advertising

materials. The classic three-part storefront of display window-entry-display window was created to lure the customer inside. Sometimes storefront windows were complex designs incorporating transoms, leaded glass, and occasionally stained glass accents. Entryways could be flush with the street or indented to offer more window area and shelter from the elements.

Prosperity sometimes enabled the design or addition of a second story where the merchant’s living quarters were often located. Railroad materials such as brick, cast iron, and stamped architectural ornamental metal (such as ceilings) could be crafted in

handsome and elaborate designs. Crowning the building up top is a decorative feature, sometimes a modest parapet or in older Victorian style buildings, a magnificent cornice with corbels, scrollwork, dentils, brackets, moldings, or other decorative elements that give the building an elegant profile against the sky.



For New Mexico Main Street By Elmo Baca and William Powell

New Mexico MainStreet Program

Joseph M. Montoya Building

NEW MEXICO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
goNM.biz

1100 St. Francis Drive

Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are ten basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs.

The Standards (**36 CFR Part 67**) apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes. They apply to both the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction.

The Standards are applied to projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and,

where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Architecture and Preservation Resources

MAINSTREET

Design Handbook

<https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/resourcecenter/designhandbook>

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

<https://savingplaces.org>

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PRESERVATION BRIEFS

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

NEW MEXICO HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

<http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org>

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF NEW MEXICO

<http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/assets/files/arms/HCPIArchitecturalStyles20131115.pdf>

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>