

DESIGN GUIDELINES

SECTION TWO

# THE MISSION TRAIL HISTORIC CORRIDOR & DISTRICT



Prepared By

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
City of El Paso, Texas

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## **Introduction to the Guidelines**

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**Purpose**  
**Enabling Legislation**  
**Background**

## PURPOSE

The Design Guidelines for the Mission Trail Historic District are a set of recommendations for the rehabilitation, restoration and new construction of structures.

Design guidelines serve to improve the quality of physical change, protect investments, protect existing architectural characteristics, and prevent incompatible new construction. These guidelines have been established to preserve the unique character and identity of Mission Trail landmarks and their environments. They also serve as an outline for new construction so that future development will harmonize and support existing structures.

Design Guidelines for the Mission Trail Historic District are for the guidance of professionals and property owners who participate in the revitalization of their community.

## ENABLING LEGISLATION

The City of El Paso, the City of Socorro, the County of El Paso, and the State of Texas made a commitment to historic preservation when legislation was passed establishing the Mission Trail. These government entities found as a matter of public policy that:

*The protection, enhancement, preservation and use of Mission Trail is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the culture, prosperity, education and general welfare of the people.*

The purposes of the legislation and ordinances are:

**To protect, enhance and perpetuate historic landmarks which represent or reflect distinctive and important elements of the city's, state's, or nation's architectural, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, ethnic and political history and to develop appropriate settings for such places;**

**To safeguard the Mission Trail historic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such historic landmarks by appropriate regulations.**

## **LANDMARKS**

The architectural character within the Mission Trail Historic District is diverse. Most structures cannot be identified as reflecting one particular architectural style. Rather, the majority of the structures are a mixture of styles, materials and construction techniques.

Three important historic landmarks tie the Mission Trail Historic District together: the Ysleta Mission , the Socorro Mission, and the San Elizario Chapel. These landmarks are used as the main points of reference in designating architectural zones in the area. Although a substantial amount of structures do not conform to any one particular architectural style, the intent of these guidelines is to set forth recommendations in cases where additions and/or new infill construction is being proposed. In addition, they provide guidance in the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing non-conforming structures, and existing adobe structures. Adobe structures are the typical and original type of construction in this valley.

## DESIGN ELEMENTS AND STANDARDS

It is essential that the qualities relating to the history of El Camino Real, and a harmonious outward appearance which preserves property values and attracts visitors and residence alike, be preserved; some of these qualities being: the continued existence and preservation of historical area and buildings; continued construction of buildings in the historic styles, a general harmony as to style, form, color, proportion, texture and material between buildings of historic design and those of modern design.

## STYLES OF ARCHITECTURE

The City of Socorro, and the City and County of El Paso recognize that a style of architecture has evolved within the valley from the year 1668 to the present, characterized by construction with adobe bricks, hereafter called "Pueblo Colonial", as well as a recent "Pueblo Revival" style with different materials and with added decorations.

### a. Pueblo Colonial Style

With rare exceptions, buildings are of one story, 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 parapet 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 waterspouts, 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 non-functional arches, often slightly ogive, over gateways in free standing walls.

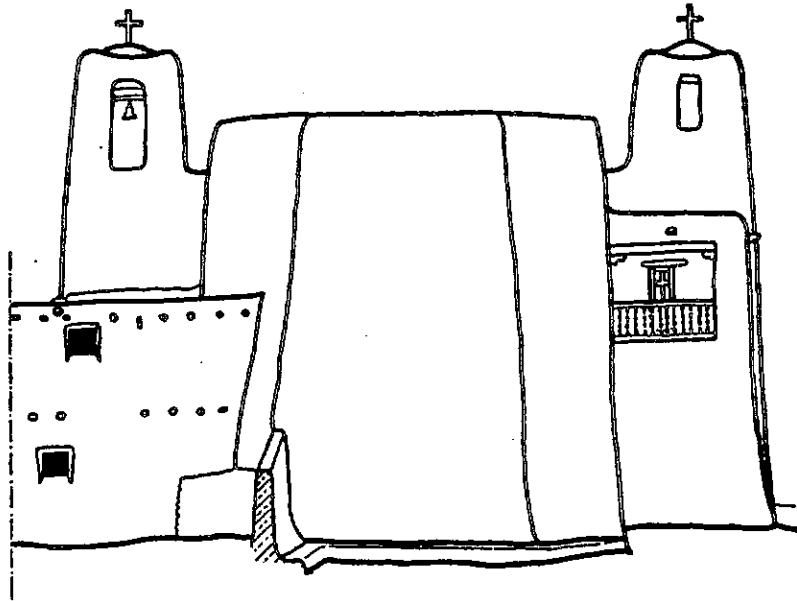
All exterior walls of a building are painted alike. The colors are those of natural adobe, ranging from a light earth color to a white color. The exception to this rule is the protected space under portales or, in church derived designs, inset panels in a wall under the roof, in which case the roof overhangs the panel. These spaces may be painted white or a contrasting color, or have mural decorations.

Solid wall space is always greater in any facade than window and door space combined. Single panes of glass larger than thirty inches square are not permissible except as otherwise provided.

The rule as to flat roofs shall not be construed to prevent the construction of skylights or installation of air conditioning devices, or other necessary roof structures, but such structures, other than chimneys, flues, vents and aerials, shall be so placed as to be concealed by the parapet from the view of anyone standing in the street on which the building fronts.

The Pueblo Colonial Style buildings are made of adobe bricks with adobe or lime plaster finish. Construction with masonry blocks, bricks, or other materials with which the adobe effect can be simulated is permissible, provided the exterior walls are not less than eight inches thick, and that geometrically straight facade lines are avoided. Adobe plaster or stucco simulating adobe, laid on smoothly, is required.

It is characteristic of Pueblo Colonial Style commercial and public buildings to place a portal so that it covers the entire sidewalk, the columns being set at the curb line.





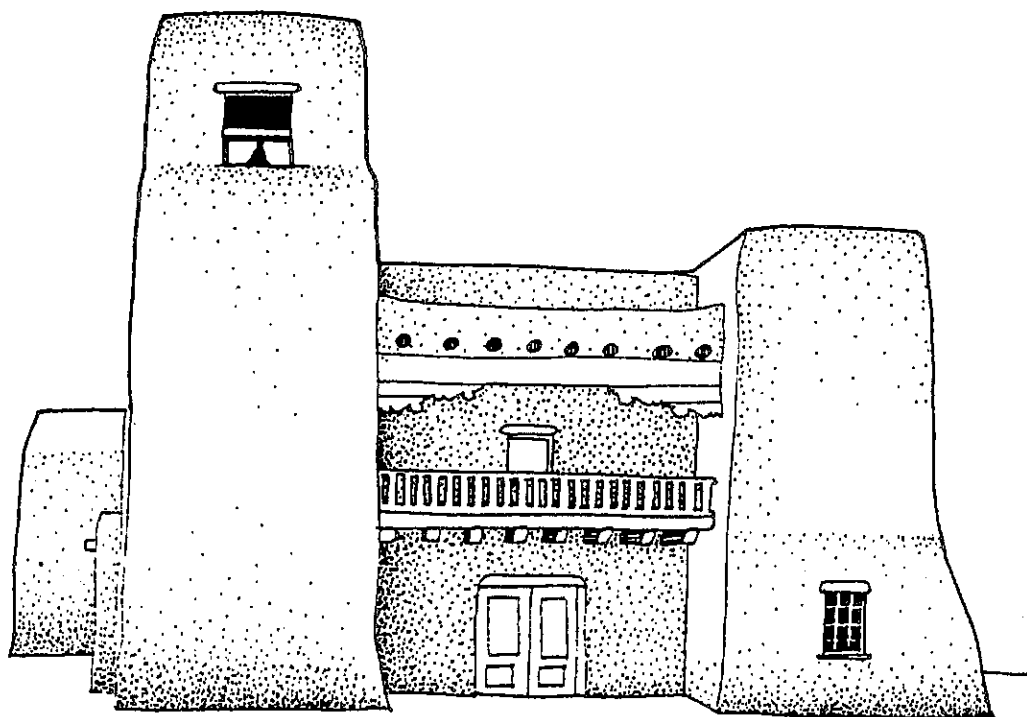
## Pueblo Revival

Typically, original Pueblo structures were part of small villages; living units were grouped together like apartments and entrance was gained by the use of ladders since many of the structures were constructed to heights exceeding two stories (this was done for defensive purposes). This apartment type massing was eventually abandoned for more traditional single family dwellings on platted parcels of land.

Early Pueblos were simple rectangular or square designs made of adobe brick. Hand hewn vigas (exposed roof rafters), and horizontal poles were used to support a flat roof of saplings, twigs and mud. Early floor plans depict several single rooms linked linearly. Original structures probably consisted of only one room, but as the family grew more rooms were added.

Pueblo Revival style architecture emerged around 1910-1920. Pueblo Revival is Pueblo architecture with a few modifications. For example, hand hewn vigas have been replaced with modern sewn lumber, and built-up roofing has replaced the high maintenance mud roofs.

Pueblo Revival is further defined by battered walls with rounder corners, projecting rounded vigas and round unpainted porch posts. Other characteristics include small wood windows, with roughly hewn wooden lintels set deeply into the walls. Some Pueblo Revival architectural features found in the Mission Trail Historic District include high ceilings, adobe brick, wood windows and flat roofs with projecting vigas. "Modern" Pueblo structures now use wood framed walls or CMU with a stucco finish.



## **Guidelines for Residential Buildings**

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**General Considerations**

**Height and Scale**

**Setbacks**

**Proportion**

**Pattern and Rhythm**

**Site Details**

**Landscaping and Open Space**

**Roofs**

**Chimneys and Vents**

**Openings**

**The Three Foot Rule**

**Porches**

**Foundations**

**Auxiliary Buildings**

**Materials and Finishes**

**Color**

**Mechanical Equipment**

**Health and Safety Codes**

## **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Approval must be obtained from the Historic Landmark Commission prior to construction or reconstruction of buildings or any exterior alterations to properties located within the Ysleta Historic District. Proposed plans should address the following concerns to determine the acceptability of modifications.

1. Do the plans maintain as much of the original building as possible?
2. Are exterior alterations and changes kept to a minimum?
3. Is the proposed design compatible in scale, materials, and style to the original design of the structure?
4. Are the original building materials maintained or restored?
5. Are all of the proposed building materials compatible with the surrounding historic buildings as well?
6. Are architectural elements such as parapets, window and door openings, porches, roof lines and vigas retained?
7. Are the original architectural details such as scroll work, balcony, porch railings, and columns kept?

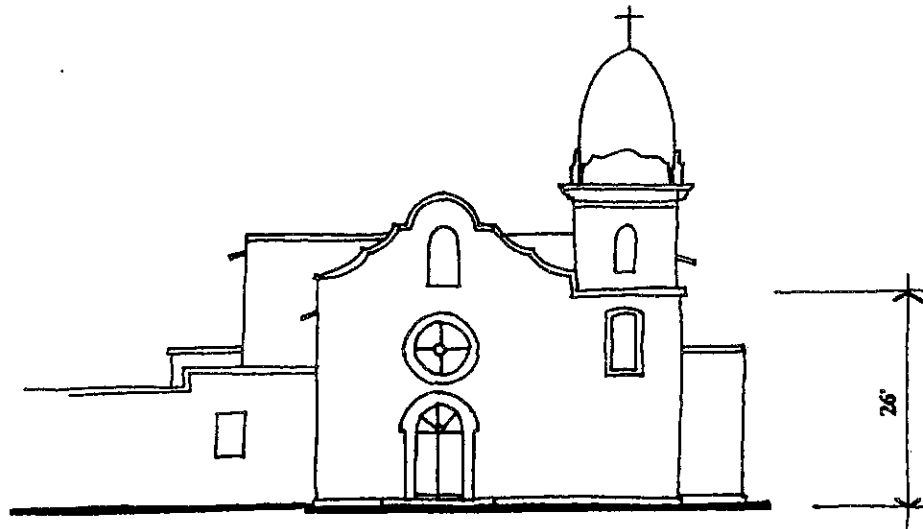
Approval of plans by the HLC will depend on the applicant's documentation of appropriate actions to address these general considerations.

## SITE DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of reviewing proposed alterations to structures within the Mission Trail Historic District is to assure compatibility with existing buildings. This also applies to the way a building is situated on its site. Site development is important in maintaining the historic integrity of a building.

## HEIGHT AND SCALE

Height limitations are established primarily to ensure the compatibility of height and scale between existing structures and new construction. Height limits for the Mission Trail Historic District are specifically established in order to prevent new development from dominating or obscuring the view of the Missions. No structure within 1,000 feet of the Missions or Chapel shall exceed 26 feet in height. Structures outside of the parameter shall comply with the building code requirements as stated in the City and the Zoning Ordinance.



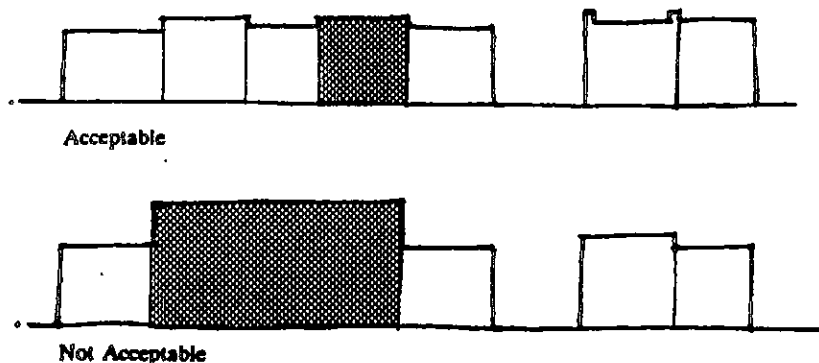
The height of new buildings should conform to the height of existing surrounding buildings. If a single story addition is being designed and proposed for a two-story structure, it should match the vertical and horizontal dimensions of other nearby or adjacent structures. Avoid overwhelming the original mass of existing structures with excessive additions (height). Excessive additions can detract from the architectural character of a building.

## SETBACKS

Setbacks help to create a unified rhythm along a street. Maintain the predominant existing building line. Existing building lines should not be disturbed by new construction. New construction of structures should be flush with the existing building line, and parking space should be located to the rear of the building. All other yard requirements as specified in the zoning ordinance shall apply.

## PROPORTION

The relationship between the height and width of a building establishes proportion. The proportions of new buildings should be consistent with the dominant proportions of existing buildings. Proportions of a group of structures defines a pattern which is called a streetscape. Streetscapes help to establish the architectural character of a neighborhood. All new construction and additions to existing structures should preserve and enhance the streetscape.



## PATTERN AND RHYTHM

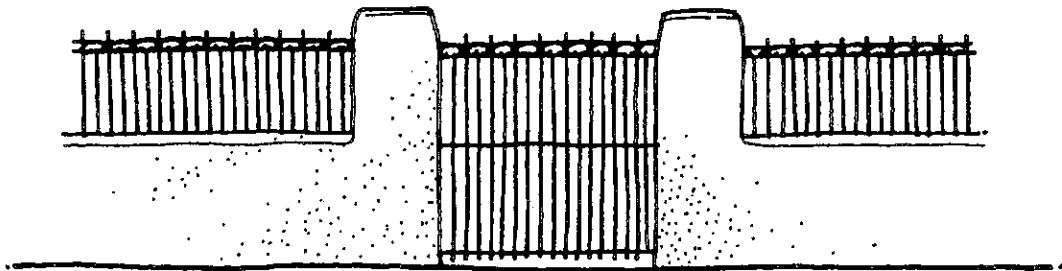
Solids and voids (walls vis-a-vis windows and doors) establishes a pattern in the facade of a building. A pattern of solids and voids establishes rhythm. Other architectural elements such as porches, projections and bays contribute to pattern and rhythm along a street. New construction or additions to existing structures should maintain and reinforce the existing pattern. The proportions of open space between facades should also remain constant so that the rhythm of the street is maintained.

## SITE DETAILS: Fencing

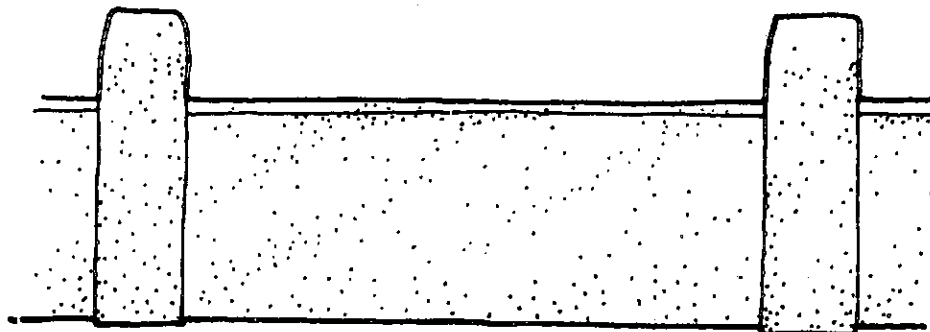
If fencing is desired, it should be incorporated into the overall design. Construction of new fences and replacement of older existing fences should be of compatible materials, in order to complement the building. Rock, brick, wood, and wrought iron are generally acceptable materials but each case should be decided individually. Examples: rock with stucco, adobe with stucco, or cement with stucco, are appropriate fencing materials for a Pueblo Style structure.

Cinder block with stucco can also be used for fencing but plastics should be avoided. Metal or wrought iron may be used with brick buildings and some adobe structures.

The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure and should not obstruct the public's view of the building.



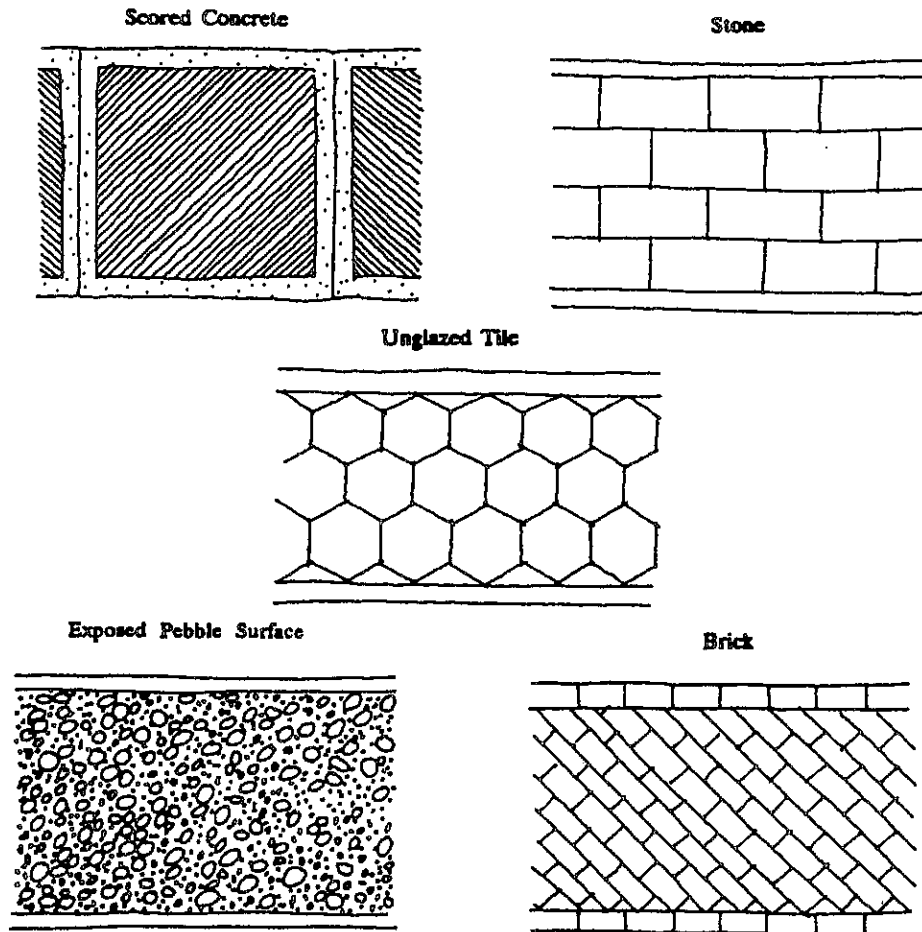
Fence With Wrought-Iron



Cinder Block or Adobe Fence & Stucco

## SITE DETAILS: Sidewalks and Parkways

Sidewalks within the Mission Trail Historic District are limited. This is due, in part, to the fact that the area is primarily rural. Almost all of the sidewalks are made of concrete; however, other alternatives exist. Brick and stone pavers are available in a wide assortment of colors and patterns and can contribute to the overall enhancement of an area. Exposed stones and pebbles set in concrete are other possibilities to consider as well.



## **SITE DETAILS: PARKING AND DRIVEWAYS**

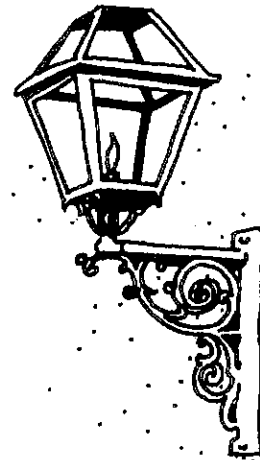
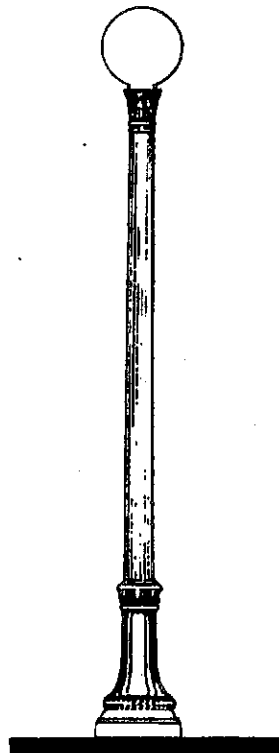
Most residential structures have parking at the side of the property in the form of a garage or carport. Effort should be taken to maintain the original parking area. When repair or replacement is required, the existing garage or driveway should be replaced in kind.

Paved area for driveways should be kept to a minimum. Acceptable driveway materials are concrete, asphalt or masonry.

Use plantings to screen parking areas.

## **SITE DETAILS: LIGHTING**

Most properties in the district originally were not lighted in a decorative manner. If you wish to accent your property with exterior lighting, it is recommended that you first try to find a replica (or an original) of a late nineteenth or early twentieth century-style fixture. Modern lighting fixtures should be as simple as possible, such as a plain pole with one globe attached.





## LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE

Landscaping is an inherent part of the siting and design of a building. Good landscaping reinforces and highlights the architectural qualities of a structure. Original vegetation should be maintained in good condition as it takes years for trees, shrubs, and lawns to properly mature and become established. When new landscaping is planned, it should be designed to complement the structure and the streetscape.

Socorro Road is a farm road in need of landscaping. Planting trees with a combination of shrubs and/or ground coverings can greatly enhance this road. Properly designed landscaping can set the tone for immediate and surrounding areas.

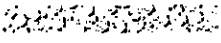

Along predominantly residential areas, property owners should be encouraged to plant trees with shrubs and/or ground coverings. Cooperation of the residents is essential as part of a neighborhood self-improvement program.

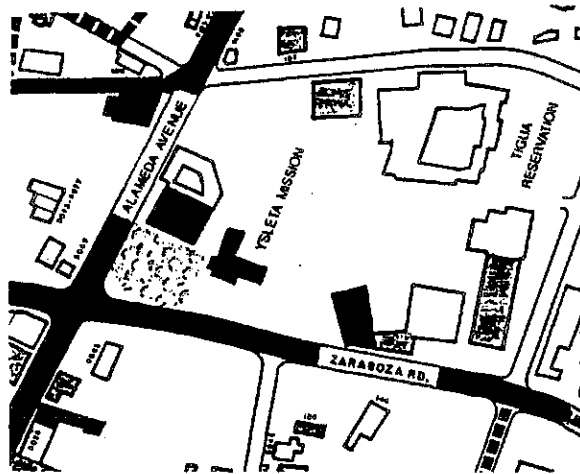
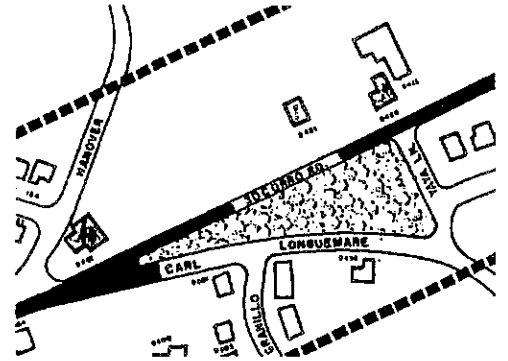
It is recommended that Socorro Road be the focus of a comprehensive and extensive landscaping program. Along Socorro Road a combination of trees, shrubs, and ground coverings should be planted from Zaragoza Road throughout the Mission Trail Historic District.

It is also recommended that within a 25' setback, landscaping or fencing be provided to screen uncompartable buildings or land use.

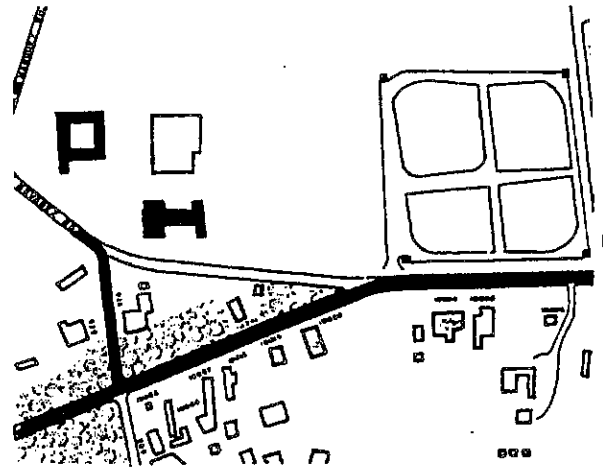
Gateways are important features where tourists are first introduced to the Mission Trail and the points of interest which it offers. Gateways provide excellent opportunities for landscaping.

KEY

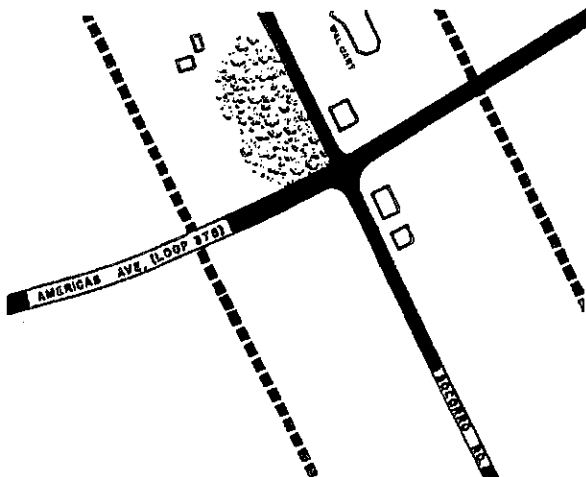
- Landscaping 
- Gateways 



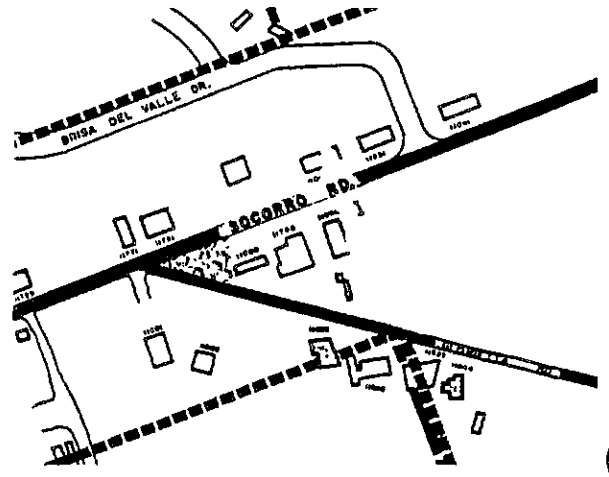
Ysleta



Socorro



Ysleta



San Elizario

There are several indigenous plants that require little water and maintenance, and are appropriate for the Mission Trail Historic District. Some fruit trees might be considered for front yard landscaping.

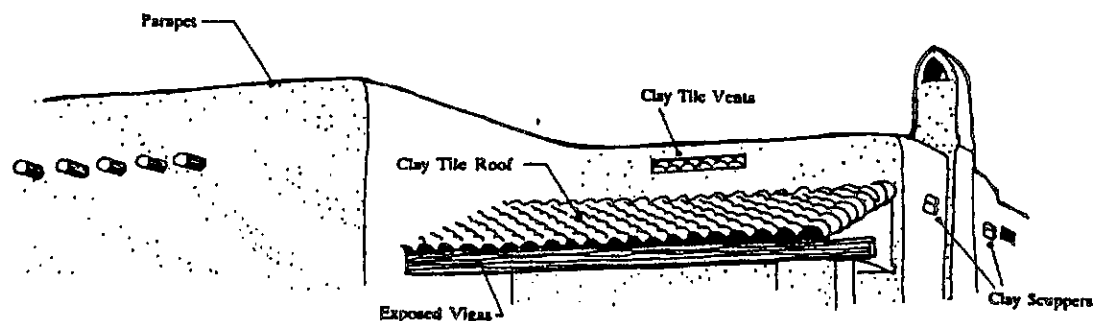
Mulberry trees are not native to the southwest and are inappropriate for use in landscaping plans.

NOTE: Refer to the most current copy of Residential Landscaping for Desert Climates, prepared by The El Paso Water Utility and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (Texas A&M University), for further landscaping guidance and information.

Landscaping proposed for parkways, right of ways, and other areas where vegetation might obscure traffic sight distances, must get approval from the Department of Traffic and Transportation, and must comply with City Ordinance.

## ROOFS

Roof types in the Mission Trail Historic District vary. Flat roofs are characteristic of Pueblo architecture. Mediterranean, however, may have flat roofs or hip roofs with red clay tile.



Essentially, all structures are intended to be wall dominated, "the geometry of a building should be more defined by walls than by roofs." The height of the roof above the wall should not be greater than the height of the wall itself.

If roofing is beyond repair, replacing materials should match the original as close as possible. A roof and all roofing materials should be compatible with the structure. Do not change the style or construction of the roof, e.g. constructing a gable or hip roof on top of an existing flat roof. If, however, the present roof is incompatible with the structure (and it needs to be replaced), it is recommended that new, compatible roofing materials be used to bring the structure together in overall design.

### CHIMNEYS AND VENTS

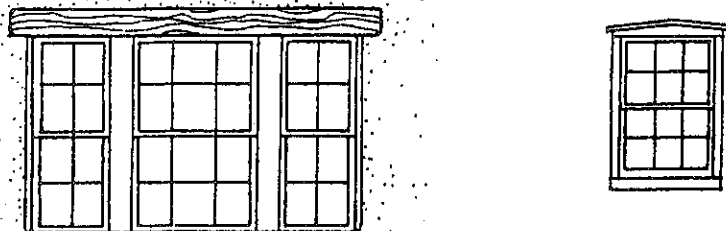
Existing chimneys and vents should be maintained. If repair is required the original materials, style, color and construction should be matched. New construction should not involve the removal of these elements.

Spark arrestors should complement the termination of the chimney in design, shape and color. Installation of spark arrestors should not disturb the character of the chimney nor the character of the structure. In addition, all spark arrestors must meet city code requirements.

### OPENINGS: Windows

Windows are important character defining features because of significant detailing as in decorative windows, or because they help to define a pattern through the use of voids (see Pattern and Rhythm). Window design will vary with the different architectural styles within the Mission Trail Historic District.

Wood, Double-Hung Windows



Windows should be repaired rather than replaced. In most cases this will simply entail removing old paint, installing new weather striping, and then repainting. If windows are damaged beyond repair, replacement windows should match the type, style, material and finish of the original. Do not plug, cover, or widen windows if they are on the exterior walls of the original structure.

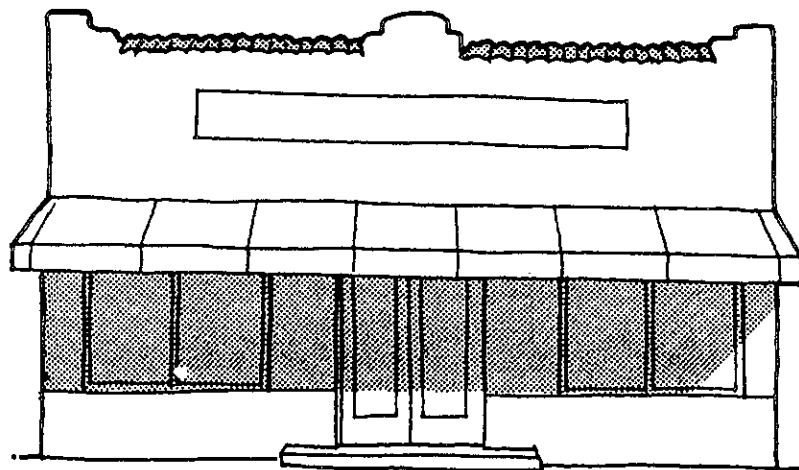
Aluminum sliding windows are not in character with the Mission Trail Historic District. Muntins should be installed on existing horizontal windows, so as create the appearance of true divided light.

Window frames and trim are sometimes elaborate. In Mission Trail area, window treatment is usually basic and less ornate. Frames, lintels, and sills should preferably be constructed of wood. Metal alternatives may be used if finished. The finish must be in character with the overall appearance of the structure and adequately complement its' style.

Storm windows should look like part of the building rather than something tacked on later. Well-proportioned storm windows can be installed without causing adverse visual effect. Color, shape, and general appearance of storm windows should correspond to the inner windows as closely as possible. Avoid using unpainted aluminum, and other unpainted types of storm windows, that may disturb the character of the building.

#### Shutters and Awnings

Shutters and awnings can be utilized if it can be documented that they originally existed. Both should be built to the appropriate proportions, even if they are not operable. Shutters should measure the full height of the window and half of its' width, so as to appear to cover the entire opening if closed. When opened, shutters should also lie flat against the wall.

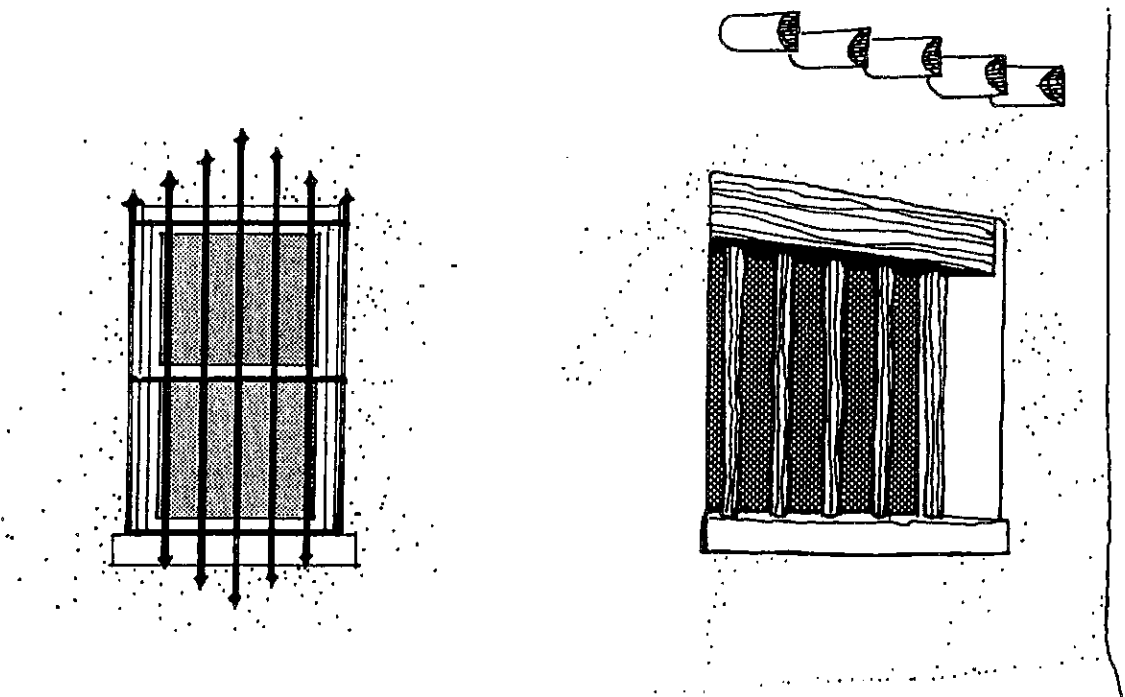


## Security Considerations

Crime has become an important factor for citizens to consider. The security measure most visible along the Mission Trail, as well as throughout the urban area, is "security bars". Originally, bars or grillwork appeared as more of a decorative treatment found in Mediterranean Style architecture. Whether bars are used for security or decoration, improper design and color can adversely affect the architectural style/design of a structure.

Ideally, bars should be installed on the interior of the building envelope; however, this procedure is not always feasible. Bars can also be mounted within the window opening on the exterior of the building. Each case will have to be considered individually in order to determine the impact of bar installation on the structure.

Avoid using complex, ornate bar designs. Simple bar designs will complement a structure far better than ornate patterns.



A permit for bar installation must be obtained from the appropriate Department of Public Inspection. Approval will be given to only those grill designs in which the grills over the bedroom windows shall easily be pushed open from the inside. This is a precautionary measure in case of fire.

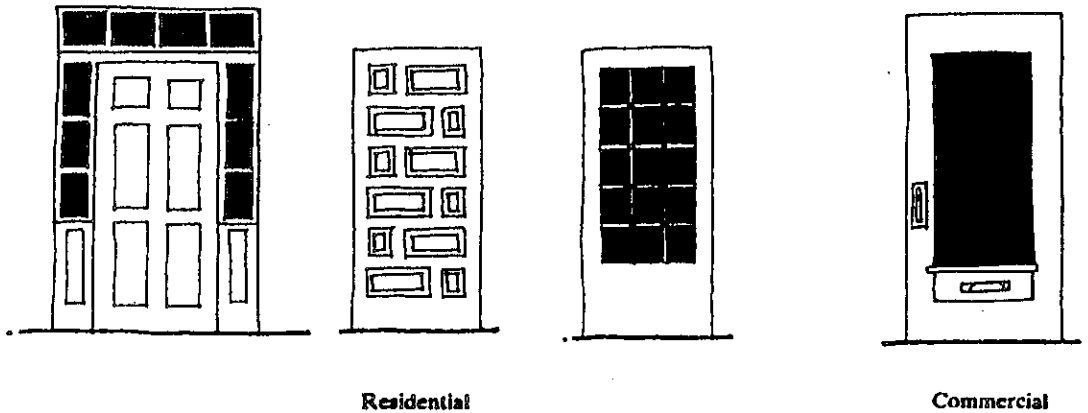
## DOORS

Doors are important elements contributing to the character of structures. Proportion, composition in elevation, detail and trim are all essential to the overall scheme.

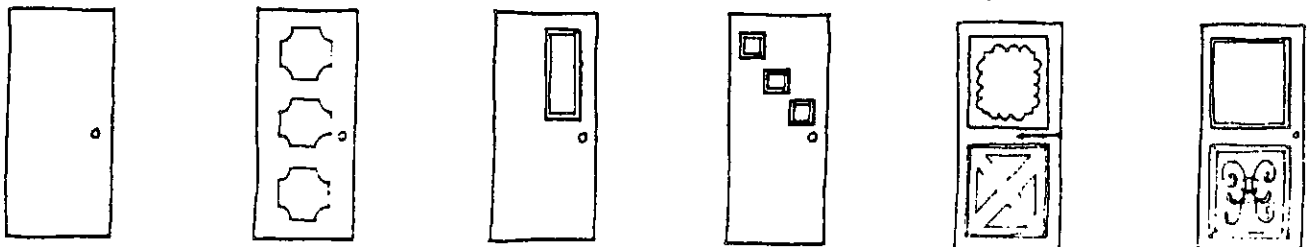
If possible, original doors should be retained. This includes original hardware e.g., doorknobs, hinges and pulls. Do not widen doorways or attempt to cut new ones, on the exterior walls of the original structure.

If existing doors are beyond repair, new ones should be installed. New doors should match original materials and should also be similar in design.

Doors appropriate to the Mission Trail Historic District:



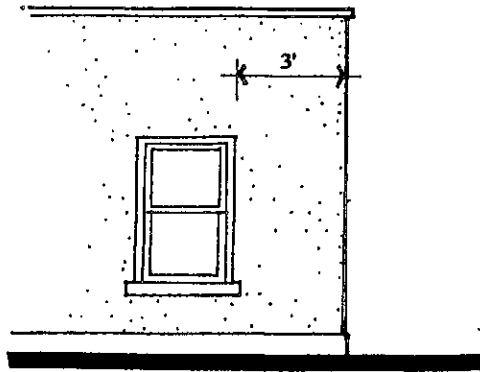
Flat surfaced and contemporary doors with small decorative windows should be avoided.



Like windows, storm doors should appear to be part of the building. Storm doors can be installed without causing adverse visual impact. Converted storm units e.g. those with sliding, stationary glass and screen, can be used if they are proportionally correct. If possible, storm doors and windows should be set back from the surface of the exterior frame, and should be painted to minimize their visual presence.

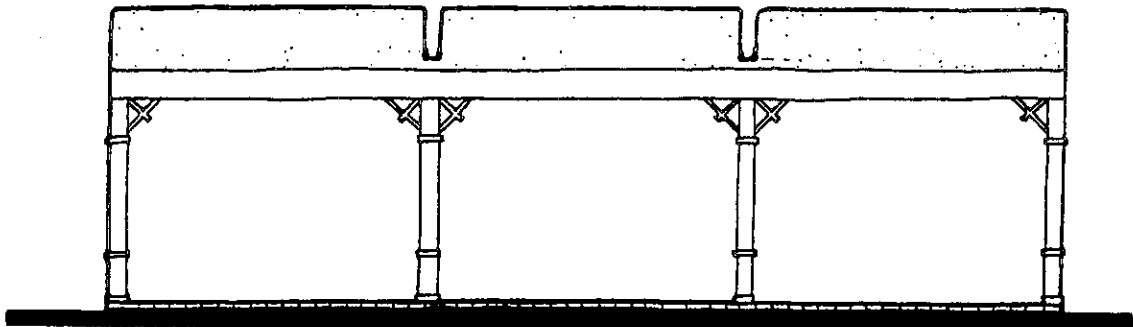
### THREE FOOT RULE

The integrity of adobe style buildings should be respected and protected. Windows and doors should not be placed within three feet of the outside corner of the structure, for in practice, the corner is load-bearing.

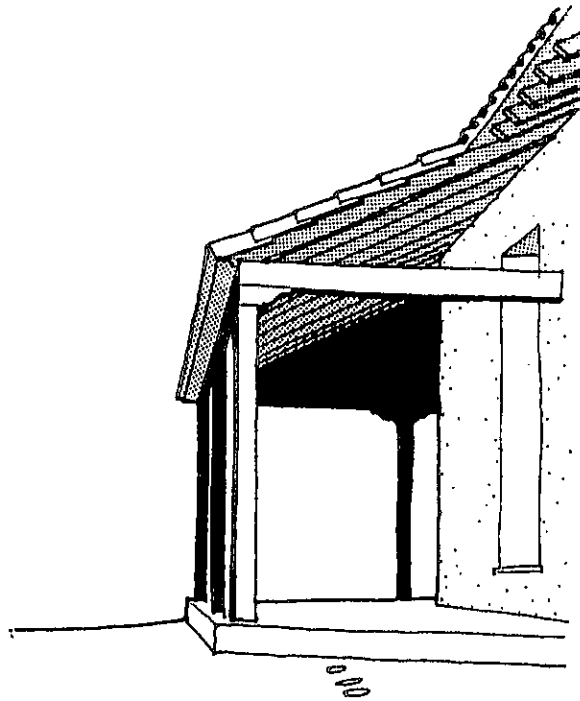


### PORCHES

Porches (portales) are functional as well as decorative features that help to define the overall character of a building. Pueblo Style and Mediterranean Style architecture have each incorporated porch construction at one time or another. Typically, porches are specific contributing features of Pueblo Style architecture.







A porch and all of its architectural elements should be maintained and repaired as needed. If elements must be replaced, materials should match the original construction. Porch railings should be of wood. Steel pipes, brick columns and wrought iron are not characteristic of porch construction in Pueblo Style architecture. They are therefore inappropriate materials for porch construction.

Exterior stairs to upper floors should be located to the side and/or rear of a structure - not adjacent to the porch. If major structural repairs are required, new construction should replicate the original work.

## **FOUNDATIONS**

All buildings have foundations of one kind or another; e.g., wooden post and beam, rock, or concrete. The majority of the structures in the Mission Trail Historic District, do not have exposed foundations. The exception is the one-part commercial type and some adobe buildings that have been rehabilitated. In these cases a thick coating of cement has been applied to the bottom courses to protect them from water damage.

The finished skin of the structure should run to the grade line or below it as required by building codes. Isolation joints are permitted at the floor line for the purpose of complying with code requirements. It is recommended that joints be finished with a color that complements the structure.

## AUXILIARY BUILDINGS

An auxiliary building is a free-standing structure near the primary building. A garage would be considered an auxiliary building. Since most auxiliary, or secondary, buildings were usually built at the same time and in the same style as the primary structure, they contribute to the architectural character of the property. The same attention to detail should be observed while planning construction for an auxiliary structure as was given to the planning of the primary structure. In respect to modernization, the most common element impacted is the door. Original doors should be repaired, but if replacement is necessary, new doors should match the original design as closely as possible. (See Doors)

## MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Much of the character of a structure is determined by the way materials and finishes are combined. The character of the Mission Trail Historic District should be preserved through proper design and construction practices.

### Masonry

Appropriate masonry for the Mission Trail Historic District includes terra cotta, stucco finishes, and adobe. Brick may be used as a coping for Territorial Style buildings.

Adobe is part of the Southwest tradition of wall construction. Adobe bricks are essentially composed of three elements: the bonding agent consisting of 20-30% of caliche or clay; 50-60% sand or fine gravel for compressive strength; and 3% of organic fibre, e.g., straw, grass, etc., which is used as an agent to prevent cracking during curing. Although water is another important element, it evaporates as the brick dries. Adobe structures reflect the durability this type of masonry has to offer; the missions are excellent examples. There are many adobe structures within the Mission Trail Historic District dating from the 1700s that exemplify this durability. Although keeping water out of adobe walls can be a principal problem, routine maintenance will help to preserve a structure. Any rehabilitation effort, and all new construction, should refer to the City of El Paso Building Code.

Masonry requires little maintenance. Adobe is the most easily damaged or destroyed material as a result of improper cleaning and repair methods.

Before cleaning any building, consult local experts on restoration who can help to research the surface of the building and determine the safest and most efficient cleaning method. **Sandblasting causes irreparable damage to terra cotta, adobe, and stucco finishes.**

If masonry is beyond repair, use similar materials that match the color, size and texture of the material being replaced. Mortar should also duplicate the composition, color, texture, joint size and joint profile of the original construction. If a brick surface has previously been stuccoed, it should remain stuccoed since removal may damage the underlying masonry.

It is recommended that the services of a reputable building contractor and a consulting structural engineer, be obtained prior to repair or replacement of major structural support members.

## **Wood**

With the availability of natural clays (adobe) and stone, very little wood construction is found within the Mission Trail Historic District. Wood is predominantly used in new construction of framework. Wood is also used for highlighting. It is commonly used for trimming around windows and doors. When working with exposed wood elements, original materials should be maintained where at all possible.

If surface paint must be removed, safe chemical compounds are available to do so. Check for leaks. Undetected moisture may penetrate behind the exterior surface of the building causing insect growth. More importantly, undetected moisture may cause rot and lead to eventual wood decay.

If wood is deteriorated beyond repair, replace with wood to match the existing as closely as possible. Metal, vinyl, asbestos and other synthetic materials are inappropriate, although some of these may be considered on an individual basis. Metal, vinyl and synthetic materials may be used under the following conditions:

1. Proposed materials match existing material;
2. Original detailing is not altered;
3. Window and door trim is properly detailed;
4. Unique finishes are not covered or damaged.

## **Metals**

Like wood, very little exterior metal has been used for construction within the Mission Trail Historic District. For the most part, metal is used for stair railings, balconies, windows, and fencing. Pueblo Revival Style architecture utilizes iron grill work as decoration or protection over windows and doors. This architecture also uses grill work in the ornamentation of balconies.

Metal functioning as structural hardware can also be decorative when used as a highlight on wood construction, e.g., metal wood connectors used to support beams and columns, or as hardware with a black metal finishes on wooden gates.

## COLOR

Color is one of the most personal decisions facing property owners. There are general guidelines, however, that should be taken into consideration. Before painting, keep in mind the relationship that buildings have to one another on a street. The color of one building can set the tone for an entire street and can either blend or clash with neighboring structures.

The natural color of originally exposed materials should be maintained. It is not appropriate to paint, stucco, or spray texture on brick. It is recommended to clean brick - never to paint over it.

If it can be determined, original color should be given first priority as a color choice. Documentation of colors for architectural styles and for certain periods in history is available in trade journals. Color choices should primarily be made from these documented palates.

### RECOMMENDED COLOR CHART FOR ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

STYLE	SHUTTER, WINDOW, & DOOR COLOR	WALL COLOR	TRIM
Pueblo Revival	earth tones light blue	earth tones to white wash	earth tone stains light blue
Pueblo Colonial	natural finish	white wash	natural finish

## **MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT**

Mechanical, electrical and telephone equipment, as well as other obtrusive elements or structures, should be screened from view. Obtrusive structures include satellite dishes, air conditioning units, and radio and television antennae.


## **HEALTH AND SAFETY CODES**

Most structures that are 50 years or older fail to meet the standard requirements of modern health and safety codes. Plumbing that was installed in the early 1900s might meet current codes, but pipes will more than likely be in need of repair or replacement.

Electrical and mechanical systems are other important considerations in respect to safety. Electrical wiring was originally wrapped in cloth, as opposed to modern plastics commonly used today. Older circuits were not designed to accommodate modern appliances such as microwaves, stereos, televisions and specialty lighting.

It is important to check code compliance for fire prevention, building construction, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, not only for new construction, but for responsible maintenance as well.

## Guidelines for Non-Residential Buildings



Storefronts  
Signs  
Parking

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

The guidelines and recommendations above apply to all structures - both residential and commercial. Site development, building elements, materials and finishes, modernization, etc. may require some modification in certain cases where the structure is to be used for commercial purposes.

## **STOREFRONTS**

Brickwork, pressed metal decorations, awnings, and wood-framed display windows are important storefront elements. Storefronts are the predominant elements of a commercial streetscape and should be restored whenever possible. If materials or elements are beyond repair, replacement materials should match the originals as closely as possible.

Although there is a variety of different storefront styles within the Mission Trail area, especially along Socorro Road, the following guidelines are flexible in that they are focused toward all storefronts in general.

Storefront finish should be fabricated from adobe, masonry, or frame covered with stucco. Doors and windows should be of wood or metal sheathed wood sash. Supporting structure may be of any material allowed by the City Building Code.

Security grillwork should be installed in such a manner that the grillwork does not detract from the storefront and its facade.

## **SIGNS**

Signs are any public display boards bearing information or advertising. The Zoning Ordinance of the City of El Paso, Chapter 20.66 specifically regulates design, color, material, location, and size of signs within the city limits. There are two types of signs:

1. On-premise (those signs advertising the actual business);
2. Off-premise (billboards).

These guidelines present recommendations for both types of signage, and a few basic sign regulations.

### **Number of Signs**

For single-tenant buildings there may be a maximum of one sign for each street frontage per landmark structure or site. For multi-tenant buildings, one sign is allowed for each storefront tenant.

### **Illumination/Motion**

Neon is permissible if implemented appropriately.  
Flashing, backlit, intermittent or moving light or lights are prohibited.  
Twirling or revolving signs are prohibited.

### **Color /Design**

Colors should complement the building and the surrounding area.  
Flourescents should be avoided.  
Designs should be artistic, innovative, yet compatible with the building and the surrounding area.  
Lettering should not exceed 40% of the total area.

### **Banners/Awnings**

Banners are prohibited - with the exception that they may be used for a period not exceed 10 days for grand openings and charitable functions only.  
Signage should be limited to the drop flaps of awning.  
Awnings made of fabric are more appropriate for the Mission Trail Historic District, and colors should coordinate with and complement the building, adjacent buildings, and the general vicinity.



### **Wall Signs**

A minimum border of three feet is required between the sign and the sides and top of the building wall. There must be a minimum clearance of eight feet between the bottom of the sign and the ground level of the building wall. Signs mounted perpendicular to the front facade of the building should not be attached above the sill of the top story window. Signs may be placed on bland wall surfaces only.

### **Freestanding Signs**

These signs may be placed in the front yard no closer than 5 feet to the property line; the setback shall be 15 feet where the property line is located at the curb line. Signs shall be pedestrian oriented and should not detract from any historic landmarks. There must be 35 feet of spacing between freestanding signs. Freestanding auxiliary signs should not exceed 2.5 feet in height and 3 square feet in area.

### **Projecting Signs**

Double-faced projecting wall signs must have a minimum nine feet clearance between the bottom of the sign and the ground level. Projecting signs are prohibited at the intersection of building corners - except if they are at right angles to a building front.

**NOTE:** "All signs are subject to review by the Historic Landmark Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness."

# EXAMPLES OF SIGNS

Band Sign



Shingle Sign



Freestanding Sign



## PARKING

When designing parking for commercial properties, the following guidelines should prevail:

1. Place the parking area where it will have minimal visual impact on the area.
  2. Commercial parking should generally be located to the rear of the property.
  3. Parking areas should not be placed in front or side yards.
  4. Parking presently located in front of a structure should be screened with compatible fencing materials or landscaping. (See Landscaping and Fencing)
  5. The combining of vegetation with fencing materials will enhance the quality of the site.
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## Guidelines for New Construction

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Infill Construction  
Additions

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

There is a large amount of undeveloped land within the Mission Trail Historic District. New construction and design should not detract or adversely affect existing historic properties in any way.

New construction may be defined in two ways: (1) new infill construction on vacant land, or (2) building additions to an existing building. In either case, all of the general guidelines above should be followed. Any new construction must be compatible in size, texture, color, design, proportion, and detail to adjacent buildings and streetscapes; it must follow the specific architectural styles designated appropriate for that particular zone. Incorporating existing architectural features with new design elements can contribute added interest and compatibility.

### Infill Construction

New structures should respect the integrity of existing buildings. Existing historic structures and the streetscape should be taken into consideration before designing new infill construction. Setbacks, proportion, rhythm, and building elements should all be addressed. Infill construction must follow the architectural style deemed appropriate for that particular area of the Mission Trail (refer to pages 4 & 5).

### Additions

New additions should be planned so that they are constructed to the rear of the property or on a "non-character-defining elevation". According to the Standards for Rehabilitation, new additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of buildings are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed in the process of rehabilitation. Do not add on top of an original historic structure. Instead, add to a more recent addition, or start a new one-to-two story addition on the side or rear of the building.

Additions should complement the original structure, but not necessarily attempt to duplicate or copy it. The older structure should be identifiable from the new addition.

### Jurisdiction

Any building or property lying completely beyond the prescribed limits of the Historic District shall be outside of the Historic Landmark Commission jurisdiction.

## MAINTENANCE

Property owners should practice general upkeep in order to maintain structures and properties. Buildings should be preserved against decay, deterioration, and structural defects. General maintenance considerations include roofs, ceilings, walls, fences, and foundations.

Ceilings, roofs, and roof supports that sag, split, or buckle due to deterioration or defective materials should be repaired or replaced.

Walls, partitions, and fencing that leans, splits, buckles, or is crumbling should be repaired or replaced. Loose plaster should be removed and replastered before any possible deterioration occurs. The reasons for such occurrences may be the result of deterioration or defective materials.

Faults in a building or structure that render it structurally unsafe should be repaired as soon as possible. Structural defects, such as damaged columns, should be corrected as soon as possible.

It is recommended that waterproofing and protection from the weather be included in maintenance. Protect a structure by waterproofing roofs, foundations, floors, windows, doors, and exterior walls. Exterior walls should be repainted when necessary or other protective coverings should be used to protect a structure from weathering elements.

Office Procedure

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Certificate of Appropriateness  
Certificate of Demolition

## CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

The Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) is responsible for reviewing requests for modifications, alterations, additions, infill construction, and demolition of historic structures or any structure located within the historic district. It is essential to identify and define the scope of the project for which a request is submitted.\* Any building wholly within or any portion that touches the boundary of the Historic District is subject to review by the Historic Landmark Commission.

New construction includes the construction of new structures or additions to existing structures. Example: building a new home, or adding a room to an existing building.

Rehabilitation is the repair or replacement of general building elements. Example: roofs, windows, wall finishes, etc. It might also be an attempt to bring a building up to code, using original or similar materials.

Maintenance refers to the general upkeep of a structure; an exception to this would be changing the color(s) of a structure.

After the scope of work of the proposed project has been identified and outlined by the applicant, the application process begins. The application for a Certificate of Appropriateness includes the following types of information and documentation:

1. Identification and location of the property.
2. The Zoning Classification.
3. The category of the structure.
  - a. Landmark structure.
  - b. Contributing structure.
  - c. Non-contributing structure.
4. Documentation for New Construction.
  - a. Scope of work.
  - b. Two (2) Sets of Drawings to show:
    - Site Plan - clearly indicating the location of the structure and site improvement elements.
    - Floor Plans.
    - Elevations - indicating the finishes of all four sides of the structure.
    - Roof Plan - identify material, roof slope, mechanical elements, and chimneys if intended.
    - Details of architectural elements impacting the appearance or character of the structure.
  - c. Photographs.
  - d. Sample materials.
  - e. Description of proposed work.

\*There may be minor differences in procedures between different Government jurisdictions.



5. Documentation for Rehabilitation
  - a. Scope of work
  - b. Two (2) Sets of Drawings to show:
    - Site Plan - clearly indicating the location of the structure and the scope of work
    - Floor Plans of the structure impacted by the scope of work
    - Full elevations of the structure impacted by scope of work
    - Roof Plans (if applicable) - indicating the roofing material
    - Details of architectural elements impacting the appearance or character of the structure
  - c. Photographs
  - d. Sample materials
6. Documentation for Maintenance
  - a. Scope of work
  - b. Photographs of areas to be worked on, clearly identifying the existing structure
7. The Application and all necessary documentation is submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation. (All documentation must be complete before the Historic Landmark Commission can consider the application for review)
8. Requests for new construction, rehabilitation and general maintenance will be reviewed by the Historic Landmark Commission.
9. After approval is granted, all necessary permits may be applied for from the appropriate office or department having jurisdiction for the location of the proposed project.
10. The Historic Landmark Commission must take action within sixty (60) days from the date the application was first submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation.

## **ACTION TAKEN BY THE HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**

The review of an application by the Commission may result in one of the following:

- Approval with no stipulations
- Approval with stipulations
- Tabled for further information
- Denial

Should the applicant disagree with the decision of the Historic Landmark Commission, the applicant has the right to appeal to City Council within sixty (60) days from the date of action taken by the HLC.

The City Council decision is binding and final.

After receiving project approval, the applicant shall secure all necessary building permits from the appropriate Department of Public Inspection, in order to begin work.

## CERTIFICATE OF DEMOLITION

Once a property is demolished it is gone forever and can never be replaced. The demolition of any structure causes permanent change and damage to the character of an area. Plans to demolish a structure shall not be approved until attempts have been made to work with the existing structure, and approval has been granted by the Historic Landmark Commission. Certificates of Demolition are generally only granted where a significant threat to public health and safety exists.

An application for a Certificate of Demolition must be submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation. Information should include, but not be limited to photographs, drawings, and a written description detailing the proposed scope of work.

After receiving approval for a demolition project, the necessary permit must be obtained from the Department of Public Inspection before demolition can begin.

Appendix

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**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Mission Trail Historic District shall consist of a 300 foot wide corridor on Socorro Road (measuring 150 feet on each side of the centerline). Beginning from the Southline of the Southside Feeder Lateral, thence Southward to a line of the boundary between the El Paso and Socorro City limits. Excluded from the district is Tract 10, Block 49, Ysleta Grant Surveys.

The above described corridor is 2.13 miles, and contains 76.72 acres more or less.

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El Paso Historic Landmark  
Commission

Morris Brown,  
Chairman  
Ray Baca  
Frank Candelaria  
Marguerite Davis  
Sheri Fashing  
A.N. Garcia  
Elle Harrison  
Lainie Hendrix  
Martin Jorgenson  
Martina Lorey  
Freddy Morales  
Jose Luis Sanchez  
Sandi Smith  
Patricia Webb

Department of Planning

Nat Campos,  
Director  
Alfonso Tellez  
Placido Cano, Jr.  
Les Smith  
Jim Fraser  
Rosemary Staley  
Leslie Kerr

Department of Planning  
City of Socorro

Aliné Herrera

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