

Direction Concerning Armijo House

DEC 10 2009

CITY OF LAS CRUCES
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

December 7, 2009

Mr. Terrence Moore
City Manager
City of Las Cruces

Dear Terrence,

Thank you for touring the Historic Armijo House on November 14, with members of your staff. As we discussed that day, Amador Bancshares Inc. is prepared to gift to the City of Las Cruces, the Armijo House, with the following conditions:

Once the City of Las Cruces takes ownership, should the City elect to dispose of the building, Amador Bancshares Inc. would be given first right of refused to acquire the property back at fair market value. Should Amador Bancshares decline the first right of refusal, the City of Las Cruces shall not sell the Armijo home to another financial institution.

Terrence, we welcome the City's interest in the Armijo House. Should you have any questions once you have reviewed our offer, please feel free to call us.

Sincerely,



Tom Hutchinson
Chairman of the Board
Amador Bancshares, Inc.



Justin Harper
President
Amador Bancshares, Inc.

January 26, 2010

City of Las Cruces
Terrance Moore, City Manager
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

Dear Mr. Moore,

We have had the opportunity to inspect the Armijo/Gallagher House and consider options for its preservation. We remain interested in preservation of the property, and would like to discuss possibilities with you.

As you may know, we have visited the Armijo/Gallagher House several times, and have done preliminary inspections, including consideration of site, structure, and mechanical systems. We have consulted with qualified preservationists, architects, engineers, and contractors as a part of this evaluation. We remain in close contact with the descendants of the Armijo/Gallagher family, and have located a number of high-quality documents that help us better understand changes to the building that were made during the 20th century. Based on these sources, we are in a good position to prepare construction plans that would preserve the house, restore significant historic features, and sensitively renovate the building for contemporary use.

During the course of our inspections, we identified a number of conditions that we feel represent potentially serious threats to public safety and the safety of the building. Suggested measures to address these risks are attached for your consideration. Independent of the disposition of the property, Mesilla Valley Preservation is willing to help with implementation of these recommendations on a low-cost or pro-bono basis. Besides addressing risk, implementation of these measures may also be in the interest of the city by demonstrating that active steps are being taken to save the building. Please contact us for more information.

We look forward to meeting with you in the near future to discuss the future of the Armijo/Gallagher House in more detail.

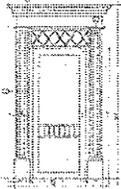
Sincerely,

Eric Liefeld – President, Mesilla Valley Preservation

Recommended Measures to Increase Public Safety in and around the Armijo/Gallagher House

Based on our inspections, we have several short-term recommendations that we'd like to propose. The goal of these recommendations is to reduce risk for the city, the building, and the public. These are only preliminary emergency measures that can be accomplished with minimal or negligible costs. However, these measures can help slow the deterioration of the structure in important ways. Again, members of Mesilla Valley Preservation would be happy to help advise on these and other measures, and may even be willing to provide direct assistance on a pro-bono basis.:

- **Secure the site with chain-link fence of appropriate height.** In its current vacant state, the building is a potential source of injury to the public, as well as an inviting target for vandalism or arson. Hazardous conditions include: cracked or loose pieces of cement plaster on the west wall, accessible electrical panels and mechanical equipment, and loose architectural elements. These conditions invite exploration by vagrants, the curious, and souvenir collectors.
- **Install emergency shoring to support the west wall.** Temporary interior structural shoring can relieve loads on the west wall by supporting the roof and second floor structure. We recommend placing interior shoring as necessary to support the second floor and west wall to stem collapse until more substantial stabilization measures can be undertaken. Members of Mesilla Valley Preservation can provide pole shores for this purpose and can supervise and assist with their installation.
- **Correct water problems in and around the building.** Water is a major threat to the Armijo/Gallagher House because of its adobe and wood construction. Primary sources of infiltration are external sprinklers, low areas next to the building, and broken down spouts. Accordingly, three specific actions are needed:
 - *Repair or turn off the sprinkler system on the west side of the house.* If watering is continued, reduce operation of the system to the minimum necessary to maintain essential landscaping and ensure that water is kept at least 10 feet from the damaged west wall.
 - *Establish temporary positive grading.* Where concrete has been removed on the West side of the building, depressions now exist that can collect substantial amounts of water. This condition should be corrected by raising the grade so that water drains away from the compromised adobe foundations.
 - *Repair and replace rain gutters.* Almost half of the rain that falls onto the building is currently directed to the area where the West wall settling is occurring. Immediate attention is needed on the west and east walls, and around the north porch.
- **Secure loose architectural elements.** Some architectural elements have become separated from the building. Some of these elements (shutters, balusters, etc.) may be historic in nature, and so could provide important information for restoration efforts. We recommend collecting these elements and moving them inside the building for safe keeping.



Mesilla Valley Preservation Board of Directors

Our board of directors represent a broad range of experience and expertise.

- **Dr. Troy M. Ainsworth** has served as the Historic Preservation Officer for the City of El Paso since April 2007. He was conferred a Doctorate of Philosophy in Land-use Planning, Management, and Design with a specialization in Historic Preservation from Texas Tech University in May 2005. Dr. Ainsworth is the author of several papers on the history of Trans-Pecos Texas and has worked on various restoration projects, including the Anson Mills Building (1910-1911) in El Paso, Texas.
- **Dr. Sonya Cooper** has served as Academic Department Head and Professor, Department of Engineering Technology and Survey Engineering at New Mexico State University since 2005. She was conferred a Doctor of Philosophy in 2000 from New Mexico State University. Dr. Cooper is a Professional Engineer (PE) with specialization in construction and structural engineering, materials science, and historic preservation.
- **Billy G. Garrett** was raised in Las Cruces and moved to Mesilla after retiring from the National Park Service after 26 years of federal service. He holds a degree in architecture from Arizona State University as well as a Master of Arts in Anthropology. Mr. Garrett's career covers a broad range of historic preservation activities, including serving as Historic Architect at Grand Canyon National Park and acting as an Advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- **Gregg Henry** is President of Full Circle Builders Inc, a small GB-98 General Contractor in business in New Mexico since 1985. With a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology from New Mexico State University, Mr. Henry has spent twenty-five years learning about adobe structures and how best to build, care for, renovate, and restore them. Mr. Henry has worked on many notable historic structures in the Mesilla Valley and elsewhere.
- **Dr. Jon Hunner** is Director of the Public History Program at New Mexico State University. At NMSU, Dr. Hunner has taught Historic Preservation where his classes surveyed the historic buildings and communities of Mesilla, Mesquite, downtown Las Cruces, Columbus, and Las Truchas for the N.M. Historic Preservation Division. For that Division, he served on the N.M. Cultural Properties Review Committee from 1999-2004 and again from 2006-2008. Dr. Hunner lives in a 100 year old house in Mesilla.
- **Eric Liefeld** is a native of Las Cruces with a Bachelor of Science from New Mexico State University (1985). Mr. Liefeld is president of KTLO, LLC, a small technical marketing consultancy, in operation since 1994. He is actively preserving and renovating several historic buildings in the Town of Mesilla, and he is well versed with both traditional adobe construction techniques as well as modern preservation approaches.

- **State Senator Mary Kay Papen** is a firm believer in the benefit to communities that culturally- and historically-important properties can make. In 1961 she was on the board of the El Paso Museum of Art when the 1907 William Ward Turney mansion (designed by Henry C. Trost) opened as the new El Paso Museum of Art. She is interested in preserving valuable historic structures and has also owned an old adobe home in Santa Fe since 1994 that is in the historic neighborhood near the State Capitol Building. Senator Papen holds a degree in horticulture from NMSU.
- **Gregory Z. Smith** serves as president of Downtown Las Cruces Partnership. Mr. Smith sees our cultural and architectural heritage from the perspective of how it contributes to an interesting and economically viable Main Street. With a Bachelor of Environmental Design degree from Texas A & M and Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction degree from UT Austin, Mr. Smith has a background in architecture and education. He is also the owner of DnA, Designs in Adobe.
- **The Honorable J. Paul Taylor** (former State Representative for Dona Ana County) has led a storied career as an educator, administrator, and served almost two decades in the State Legislature dedicated to the people and places of New Mexico. Mr. Taylor and his late wife Mary have provided an inspiring example, researching and documenting history in the Mesilla Valley, restoring their home in Mesilla, and ultimately donating their home, art, and historical collections to the State of New Mexico as the Taylor-Barela-Reynolds State Monument. In 2004, Mr. Taylor received the Heritage Preservation Lifetime Achievement Award from the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Division.
- **Henry Michael Trost** is the grandson of Adolphus Gustavus Trost, and grand nephew of famed southwestern architect Henry C. Trost of the firm Trost and Trost. After assisting Lloyd C. Engelbrecht with his definitive biography on Trost and Trost, Henry Michael Trost became interested in the architectural legacy left by his ancestors. Mr. Trost lives in Santa Teresa New Mexico and is active in regional historic preservation activities.