



Landmarks & Urban
Conservation Commission

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR EL VADO AUTO COURT/MOTEL
City of Albuquerque Landmark

2500 Central Avenue SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico

The Albuquerque City Council has designated El Vado Auto Court a City Landmark. Built in 1937 in the Spanish-Pueblo Revival style, the property warrants designation for its relationship to the growth of travel on US Route 66 and for embodying the distinctive design characteristics of a pre-World War II tourist court. El Vado is one of the best examples of a regional style expressed in roadside architecture.

The property meets the City of Albuquerque's criteria for landmark designation in the following ways:

- It is historically and architecturally significant, suitable for preservation, and has educational value.
- It portrays the environment of lodging operators and automobile tourists of the late 1930s, World War II, and early post-war years, characterized by Spanish-Pueblo Revival Style architecture in such environments.
- El Vado embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and method of construction; that being an automobile-tourist court consisting of stuccoed-adobe bearing walls with timber-roof beams and wood decking/ceiling and including multicolor luminous tube neon image on a painted metal sign.
- El Vado Auto Court/Motel was listed in both the State Register of Cultural Properties and National Register of Historic Places in 1993.
- Preservation of the El Vado Auto Court/Motel is critical because of its relationship to already designated landmarks

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

The following features of the El Vado Auto Court help convey its significance and should be preserved in any rehabilitation:

- All three buildings in the complex;

- Spanish-Pueblo Revival styling in the form of buttressed walls with curvilinear parapets, projecting vigas, wood posts and beams, and doors and windows recessed in the adobe bearing walls;
- The court space between the buildings and its openness to Central Avenue; and
- The El Vado Motel pole sign at the Central Avenue frontage.

DOORS, WINDOWS AND OTHER OPENINGS

The pattern and proportion of the openings in exterior walls facing public streets and the El Vado Court space are important in that they convey the use of the buildings as a motel. The pattern and proportion should be preserved even if all doors and windows are not operable.

The open carports between room units are historic features worthy of preservation. However, carports may be enclosed to increase heated space, provided that the shapes of the carport openings shall remain apparent from the exterior and at least one carport shall remain open for historic interpretation.

Many of the original windows in the building have been replaced with uncharacteristic metal windows. Wood windows and doors that remain should be preserved if possible in accordance with the Secretary's Standard No 6.

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADDITIONS

New construction and additions may be approved on the premises if compatible in scale, style, and exterior finish materials with the historic buildings. The court between existing buildings shall remain open to public view from Central Ave. New construction should align with existing facades, further define the court and should not destroy historic material, features and spatial relations that define the property. New construction and additions shall preserve visibility of existing buildings from Central and New York Avenues.

INTERIOR

Characteristic interior features of the property should be preserved: (1) the reception area space with fireplace (2) exposed viga ceilings (3) original interior wood doors with hardware and (4) the plastered walls. As much as the exterior features, these interior features exemplify the property's historic character.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation should be applied by the Commission. Information on how to apply the Standards is available from the City of Albuquerque Planning Department, the State of New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, and online at www.cr.nps.gov. To the extent the Secretary's Standards are inconsistent with these guidelines the guidelines shall prevail.