

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

**National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries-complete applicable sections

\*\* Note: This is an exact transcription of the original Nomination form from 1981 \*\*

**1. Name**

Historic Taos Downtown Historic District

And/or common

**2. Location**

street & number not for publication?

city, town Taos vicinity of congressional district 1<sup>st</sup>

state New Mexico code 35 county Taos County code 055

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Multiple

street & number

city, town Taos New Mexico state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Taos County Courthouse

street & number 105 Albright St Suite F

city, town Taos state New Mexico

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition**                      **Check one**   **Check one**  
 excellent    deteriorated    unaltered    original site  
 good    ruins    altered    moved-date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 fair    unexposed

---

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The town of Don Fernando de Taos, established sometime between 1780 and 1800, ranks after San Geronimo de Taos Pueblo and Ranchos de Taos as one of the oldest settlements in the Taos Valley. It consists of a central plaza with surrounding residential areas to the north, west, southwest, southeast, and northeast. Though little remains of the original structures surrounding the plaza itself, the buildings have maintained an architectural style and scale consistent with the history of the area. Many of the buildings in the surrounding area remain in the original state in which they were built in the 19th century, while newer or remodeled older houses, constructed under the influence of Spanish Pueblo Revival architecture, maintain the low lying adobe character of the original town site.

Don Fernando de Taos was originally constructed as a fortified plaza in response to continued raids on the Spanish settlers by the Comanche and Ute Indians. The town probably took on the plan typical of most settlements in Northern New Mexico: an open plaza area surrounded by low, flat-roofed adobe buildings with portals in front. No windows or opening faced out from the rear of the buildings, hence offering a unified, breechless battlement to the outside. Fortified watchtowers stood at each end of town, guarding the gated access to the plaza.

Due to a series of fires in the 1920's and 1930's, few of these original buildings surrounding the plaza remain. In the northwest section of the plaza a structure incorporating portions of the original outer wall has survived. Most of the buildings since constructed have maintained the original style and scale of the town: long portals supported by wood posts and corbels surround the open plaza, while the structures themselves consist of one or two story flat-roofed adobes with small window and door openings.

In the early 18th century, as the danger of Indian raids became less, the town began to expand beyond the original boundary of its defensive wall. Low lying adobe houses were built around small courtyards called placitas, and streets or narrow lanes were formed as houses began to line the paths to the fields and springs to the south and north. Taos grew as it attracted people to its annual trade fairs originally held at the nearby Pueblo.

With the advent of French and American fur traders in 1815 came Anglo tastes in architecture. After the first wagon train from the east arrived in 1824, new building materials brought from the east began to change the style of buildings in Taos. This trend was further advanced by the American occupation in 1847, the location of nearby Fort Burgwin in 1851, and the arrival of the railroad in New Mexico in 1879. While the wagon trains and the army introduced glass for windows, bricks and milled lumber, the railroad made possible the relatively cheap shipment of metal roofing material, decorative wood and metal architectural details, and the wholesale import of eastern architectural detailing.

Taos, declared an official port of entry in 1837, remained the most important northern center of trade on the Santa Fe Trail for a long time (until the Cimarron cut-off, which passed south through Las Vegas, New Mexico, which was largely used after the Civil War), and hence did not escape the influence of new material on its native architecture. Mill cut wood moldings around doors and windows together with brick - dentil courses atop adobe parapets combined to yield the Territorial Style. Many examples still remain in Taos of these and also buildings with metal pitched roofs which illustrate this influence.

A second wave of remodeling began with the influx of artists to Taos in the early part of the 20th century. Finding the town a natural subject for their picturesque style, they moved into older houses and remodeled them to resemble a vision of the romantic pastoral life they depicted in their paintings. Rambling, often purposely asymmetrical plans, together with archeologically accurate detailing, was preferred over the symmetry and neo-classical detailing of the earlier, progress-oriented eastern remodelers of the 19th century.

At the same time, the Bungalow Style arrived from the west coast and combined with the new Spanish-Pueblo Revival to form a new style of residential architecture.

Recently, newer materials have made their way into the architectural vocabulary of Taos. Often they are intrusive, and destroy the scale and texture of the surrounding area. Aluminum frame windows and concrete masonry units often provoke a glaring contrast to the small paned windows and soft adobe surfaces of the original structures.

The areas surrounding the central plaza of Taos offer a juxtaposition of these styles. To the west, Padre Street offers an interesting variety of structures, including a range of one and two story buildings in Spanish Colonial, Territorial and Spanish Pueblo Revival Style. To the southwest, the winding LeDoux Street reflects, at least in name, the scattered French Fur Trapper influence on the town. Along this street are many of the larger houses built around placitas. To the southeast there still exists a smaller plaza and its surrounding older houses, including an old chapel. Nearby are a remodeled monastery and the houses converted into shops which line Kit Carson Street. To the northeast is the Taos Inn and other old houses converted into shops and galleries. Finally to the north, centered along Bent Street, are a series of houses which belonged to the Anglo newcomers of the early 19th century.

In researching the district, structures were designated as significant, contributing or non-contributing. Significant buildings were worthy of especial notice due to integrity of architectural design, use as an exceptional example of a style, or the historical association of a person or event together with merit as a building. Structures were designated as contributing when they reinforced or added to the character of the district and yet were not out of the ordinary in their architectural merits. Non-contributing was used to describe structures which intruded upon the surrounding area because of scale, style or materials. In the following pages, each significant structure will be described. This will be followed by a list of the non-contributing structures, both those included in the survey and those not surveyed because they were obviously post-1945. The forms of significant, contributing and non-contributing structures before 1945 are included in this report.

Structures have been dated by means of maps, surveys, historical research and oral history. The Sanborn Insurance Company maps of Taos dating from 1908, 1929 and 1939 were of great help in establishing recent construction dates and descriptions of buildings. The "Joy" survey, conducted in 1915 by F.E. Joy, provided information on the location and shape of structures and their ownership at that time. In the case of particularly well known persons or buildings, the various histories of Taos noted in the bibliography proved helpful, and conversations with local residents helped to provide additional information. Finally, a visual analysis of style and building materials was applied to each structure to confirm dates obtained from the sources above.

Map 2 #105: Although extensively remodeled in the 1970's, the Plaza has remained the spiritual center of Taos. Until recently the courthouse was located there, and most of the major businesses still remain. An American flag flies day and night over the Plaza because Kit Carson and some friends nailed it to a wood pole there at the beginning of the Civil War to prevent Confederate sympathizers from tearing it down. Today the Plaza is shaded by large cottonwoods and offers a variety of benches for the weary and a gazebo for local functions.

Map 2 #119: Said to have escaped the fires which burned through the Plaza in the 1920's and 1930's, this building is the only part of the original town wall existing. A low flat-roofed adobe lies along the street with a remodeled, two story adobe attached on the north.

Map 2 #111: Standing on the west side of the placita where the Church used to stand, this two story structure is an excellent example of a Territorial house. All of the structures were originally one story. By 1929, however, the northern wing which still stands was two stories, as well as a wing to the north of it, since destroyed. The north wing has a roll-roofing covered gable roof with two story porch of turned posts and balustrade. To the south, a two story adobe with flat roof steps down on the east to a single story adobe. The compound is surrounded by an adobe wall, forming a pleasant courtyard within.

Map 2 #7: This two story house once belonged to Santiago Romero. Made out of adobe, its distinctive sheet-metal gable roof extends over a wood porch on the east side, facing Padre Lane. Six over six wood frame double hung windows and the chamfered posts and scroll work detail give testimony to the age of this structure.

Map 2 #11: Sometime after Padre Jose Antonio Martinez moved to Taos to administer the local parish, he built this house. The shingled, steep gable roof with a fish scale gable marks the Anglo-influenced southeast wing, while the low flat roof adobe with wood posts and vigas to the west illustrate the more traditional New Mexico style. Padre Martinez became a well known and beloved leader of the people of Taos during the Territorial period, and is perhaps most famous for his confrontation with the new Bishop of Santa Fe, Jean Baptiste Lamy. In addition, he established the first printing press in New Mexico, on which he published the first newspaper, El Crepusculo de la Libertad, and textbooks for his school for boys and girls.

Map 2 #12: Originally a series of dwellings surrounding a placita, this single story structure, recently remodeled into doctor's offices, reflects a standard New Mexican house plan type. It is low-lying, constructed of adobe, and has portals lining the placita.

Map 2 #13: Renamed the "Turley Mill", this structure represents the style and scale of traditional adobes remodeled in a Territorial Style. The roof is a medium pitch gable with sheet metal. A portal extends along the north side of the building. The wall surface is a dark stuccoed adobe, while the windows are trimmed in contrasting wood moldings painted white.

Map 2 #32: This single story adobe structure, dating from at least the turn of the century, is arranged in a typical ell-shaped plan of several conjoined dwellings. The roof is flat with parapets and the walls are stuccoed adobe. A portal extends along the street on the north side, sporting canales and Supported by wood columns.

Map 2 #46: Entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, the Blumenshein House is principally known for its owner Ernest L. Blumenshein, co-founder with Bert Phillips of the Taos Society of Artists in 1914. The house, an eleven room adobe which is said to have been built during Spanish Colonial times (prior to 1821), was first owned by Herbert Dutton. Blumenshein purchased it for his home and studio in 1919.

Map 2 #49: This rambling, two story adobe building is the permanent home of the Harwood Foundation. The building was originally constructed in the 1860's by Captain Smith H. Simpson, a veteran of the American occupation and a leading citizen of Taos. It was later bought in 1916 and subsequently added on to by E. Burnit and Lucy Case Harwood. Following her husband's death, Mrs. Harwood established the Harwood Foundation in 1923 to Support the intellectual life of Taos. She, in turn, willed it to the University of New Mexico. It is presently on the National Register of Historic Places.

Map 2 #57: This structure is represented on maps as early as 1915, and from its style appears to have been built earlier. An ell-shaped adobe with a sheet metal gable roof, it has a porch with turned spindle posts and balustrade on the north side. With only a minor degree of remodeling, this building is a fine example of a New Mexican vernacular house.

Map 2 #61: The Quesnel family, after whom the road to the south was named, once owned this house, and the owner's papers date it back to 1864, an ell-shaped adobe, it has a flat roof with parapet on the south wing and a shed roof on the north wing. Wood canales offer drainage for the flat roof.

Map 2 #66 & #67: In the mid-1870s the Catholic Order of the Christian Brothers built a monastery in Don Fernando de Taos. This was acquired by the artist J.H. Sharpe, in the 1890's, and then Irving Couse. Today the complex is divided into two separate properties: the Irving Couse House and the Joseph Sharpe House-Mission Gallery. The complex consists of several large structures, all constructed of adobe with flat roofs and parapets. Among the Couse House buildings is a chapel with espinada and flanking "horned" parapets. The Joseph Sharpe House, which has undergone some major remodeling, consists of large buildings facing Kit Carson Street, with large picture windows and a stepped back facade with clerestory.

Map 2 #73: Built in the mid-1880s, this small structure was originally the Guadalupe Chapel, which served as a meeting place and parish Chapel for the Guadalupanas. In 1916 Walter Ufer, an artist, bought the chapel and used it as a studio until 1936. Today it serves once again as a studio. It is a single story adobe building with a standing seam metal gable roof. A small flat roof building addition was added to the south side in the 1930's; otherwise, the building retains much of the character of its original use.

Map 2 #75: Dating from before 1908, this two story adobe is an excellent example of the combination of new, eastern detailing adapted to New Mexican vernacular architecture. It has a gable roof with two cross gables containing dormers surrounded by fish scale shingles. The single story porch below is supported by turned spindle posts, and a capped brick chimney rests mid-ridge between the two gables.

Map 4 #5: The Kit Carson Home is already on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1825, the house was purchased by Kit Carson in 1843 when he married Josefa Jaramillo. It proved to be their permanent home for the next twenty-five years. In 1910, the Bent Lodge #42, Masonic Order, bought the property to restore it in honor of their famous charter member. Since 1952, the Museum has been administered by the Kit Carson Foundation. The house is a single story adobe in the shape of a "U". The three rooms facing the street, living room, kitchen, and bedroom, as well as one room at the base of the "U", are original. The rest has been restored to the appearance of a traditional house of that era.

Map 4 #21: The Taos Inn was created in 1934 from four existing structures, three of which faced Paseo del Pueblo Norte. It was owned and run by Doctor T.P. Martin and his wife. The structure is composed of the existing three houses facing the street, a "U" shaped addition in back which mirrors the northern-most of these, a house in back and two adobe outbuildings. The Inn served as a classy place to stay for visitors to Taos before and after World War II. It has been recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Map 4 #22: The Stables Gallery is the current occupant of the historic Manby house. The property was acquired by Arthur Rockford Manby between 1891 and 1898. In 1900, Manby began to build a larger house by combining several small buildings. This, the current building, was constructed of adobe with wood vigas and flat roofs with parapets. Possibly because of his questionable dealings in local land grants, Manby was found beheaded there on July 3, 1929; a bizarre situation which later led to one of New Mexico's more famous unsolved mysteries. The house was later bought by the Taos Artist Association, and is currently occupied by the Stables Gallery. Due to its historical association, as well as being a good example of regional architecture, this building is significant. It is currently on the New Mexico State Register of Historic Places.

Map 3 #5: Built between 1915 and 1929, this single story house is worthy of note due to its integrity as an example of a Mission Style residence. Undulating parapets with river rock coping give it a distinct profile, while the river rock detailing of the porches, parapets, columns and guard rail, as well as the chimney, give it a quaint integrity of decoration. A bay window graces the north facade, and is in keeping with the scale of the whole. Several outbuildings, though not in the same style, nevertheless maintain a scale that is compatible with the main structure.

Map 3 #13: The Bent House is currently on the National Register of Historic Places. Built around a nucleus constructed prior to 1835, the structure consists of a single story, "U" shaped adobe dwelling, now occupied by a gallery and a museum. It is an excellent example of an early 19th century New Mexico residence. Charles Bent settled into the house in 1835 with his wife, Maria Ignacia Jaramillo. Prominent in the trade with St. Louis, Bent had established a reputation for trade in partnership with Ceran St. Vrain and his brother, who helped to establish Bent's Fort in Colorado. When Kearney marched into New Mexico during the Mexican-American War and declared it United States Territory, Charles Bent was declared the first civilian governor. While visiting his family in January of 1847 he was scalped and killed by insurrectionists hostile to the American Occupation. The house, both for its historic value and as an example of New Mexican vernacular residential architecture, is significant.

### **List of Non-Contributing Structures**

Map 2 #8: 2nd house south of Don Fernando on west side of Padre Lane.

Map 2 #10: 4th house south of Don Fernando on west side of Padre Lane.

Map 2 #34: In apex of corner of Ranchitos and LeDoux.

---2nd building south of corner of Ranchitos and La Placita.

Map 2 #39: Southwest corner of Ranchitos and La Placita.

Map 2 #44: South side of LeDoux, 4th house going west.

Map 2 #45: #11 LeDoux.

Map 2 #56: 2nd building north of Quesnel on the alley east of Paseo del Pueblo Sur. Map 2 #60: #105 Des Georges Road.

Map 2 #68: South side of Kit Carson, building west of Sharpe house.

Map 2 #84:#110 south corner of west side of Taos Plaza.

Map 2 #89: South side of Taos Plaza, east of La Fonda.

---- #103 (?) Paseo del Pueblo Norte.

Map 2 #94: #110 Paseo del Pueblo Norte.

Map 2 #95:#102 - north side of Taos Plaza.

Map 2 #101:#212 -6th building west of northeast corner of Taos Plaza.

Map 2 #103: #222 -8th building west of northeast corner of Taos Plaza.

Map 2 #108: 2nd building north of Ranchitos and Camino de La Placita -west side of street.

Map 2 #109: 108 Camino de La Placita.

Map 2 #110: 1st building north of 108 Camino de La Placita.

Map 2 #115: East side of Padre Lane, 2nd building north of Ranchitos.

Map 3 #1: Southeast corner of municipal parking lot north of Taos Plaza...

Map 3 #2: North of Plaza, west of municipal parking lot, south of Bent Street.

Map 3 #6: 2nd building east of La Placita on Bent Street.

Map 3 #22: South side of Martyrs Lane, one building west of Paseo del Pueblo Norte.

Map 4 #1: Northeast corner of Kit Carson Street and Paseo del Pueblo Norte.

---1st building east of Kit Carson house on the north side of Kit Carson Street.

---2nd building east of Kit Carson house on the north side of Kit Carson Street.

---3rd building east of Kit Carson house on the north side of Kit Carson Street.

---5th building east of Kit Carson house on the north side of Kit Carson Street.

---2nd building west of Morada Lane off the north side of Kit Carson Street.

Map 4 #9: On Dragoon Lane, west side, one building north of Kit Carson Street.

---East side of Paseo Del Pueblo Norte, 3rd building north of Kit Carson Street.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance – Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other/specify		

**Specific Dates – ca. 1790 to Present**

**Builder/Architect**

### Statement of Significance

Don Fernando de Taos, at least the third oldest settlement in the Taos Valley, has a long history as a center of trade and political activity in New Mexico. Settled by the Spanish near the already trade-involved Pueblo of Taos, the town became famous for its trade fair of the late 18th century. Later, it became a focal point for numerous trappers working the northern New Mexico and southern Colorado mountains: With the advent of foreigners in the region also came rivalry between the native population and the newcomers, which led to the assassination of Governor Bent in 1847. Later, at the turn of the last century, Taos became famous for the influx of a new kind of foreigner: the artist. Under the patronage of Mabel Dodge Lujan and others, well known writers and artists such as Andrew Dasburg, Mary Austin, and D.H. Lawrence visited or stayed in Taos, enjoying the picturesqueness of the locale. Today, Taos is undergoing a new kind of growth, springing from the influx of leisure-oriented visitors and the influence of the nearby Taos Ski Valley.

The architecture of Don Fernando de Taos reflects its significance as the meeting place of many cultures and famous people. Houses built in the Spanish Colonial and Territorial styles stand side by side with Mission and Spanish Pueblo Revival structures built by artists and newcomers influenced in their vision by the cultures they found in Taos. The layout of the town reflects its origin as a fortified settlement and later importance as a center of trade for northern New Mexico. Today, it reveals not only its history but interest by the many tourists that pass through the area.

It is hard to put an exact date as to when the town of Don Fernando de Taos was actually built. Taos Pueblo had long been known to the Spanish conquistadores ever since Captain Hernando de Alvarado first discovered it in September 1540. When Don Juan de Onate marched up the river to settle San Gabriel in 1598, he sent the priest Fray Francisco de Zamora to the Pueblo of San Geronimo de Taos for conversion of the 'heathen'. The first Spanish settlers in the Taos Valley arrived around 1615, probably from Onate's settlement of San Gabriel, forty miles to the south. In 1617, the Church, San Geronimo de Taos, was built under the direction of Fray Pedro de Miranda at the Pueblo. The Pueblo did not take kindly to the intrusion of the Spanish: in 1631, two soldiers and a padre were killed by the Taos, and in 1640, part of the Pueblo moved east to Quartalejo over a dissent with the priest.

Animosity between the Indians and the Spanish culminated in the Pueblo Revolt of 1670, led from Taos by Pope, a San Juan Indian. The Spanish, after much loss of life, were forced to retreat to El Paso, and were not able to return until 1692, when Don Diego de Vargas reconquered New Mexico. Although Taos originally submitted in 1692, De Vargas was forced to return in 1694 and again in 1696 to ensure the allegiance of the rebellious Pueblo.

During the first half of the 18th century, the Spanish began to resettle the Taos Valley. As early as 1710 a land grant was transferred from a pre-Revolt resident of the Valley to a new settler, and further records of grants occur in 1715, 1716, 1723 and 1724. By 1730, the Pueblo had filed complaints for encroachment upon Pueblo land, and the Spanish were ordered to move three leagues away from the Pueblo. During this time, trade fairs, attended by both the Pueblo Indians and the Spanish settlers, were held with the Plains

Indians. At the same time, however, the Valley was subject to frequent raids by the Comanches, who often regained what they had originally traded. Bishop Tamaron, on an official visit to the New Mexican missions, describes one such raid in August of 1760, in which over fifty people were taken captive or killed. Shortly after this, Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez related that a fortified plaza was being built in the canada of the Valley in 1776. No doubt this was the nearby settlement of Ranchos de Taos, whose church was built around 1803.

It is difficult to determine the exact date when the Plaza of Don Fernando de Taos was constructed. A grant to the south of Pueblo land was made in 1796 by Governor Fernando Chacon, and sixty-three families, led by Alcalde Antonio Jose Ortiz, took possession of the 0011 Fernando de Taos grant. But the town itself is located within the San Geronimo de Taos (Pueblo) grant, so it is hard to say exactly when it was settled. In this connection, a similar difficulty arises concerning the name of the town. Although it is clear that "Taos" was taken from the Pueblo of that name, the town has been called variously throughout the years "Don Fernando de Taos", "Don Fernandez de Taos", "San Fernando de Taos" and "San Fernandez de Taos". Historians speculate that the "Don Fernando" referred to was the local settler Don Fernando de Chavez, a captain under Otermin. The question of naming was still an issue in 1884, when William L. McClure, postmaster of the town, wrote to Washington to request that the town be simply referred to as "Taos". When the town later incorporated on January 24, 1934, however, it did so as "Don Fernando de Taos".

We can probably surmise that the construction of the early plaza took the form of a fortified village, common to many settlements of Northern New Mexico. A square of houses lined the plaza, with portals opening onto the common space within. On the outside, these dwellings had no windows, doors or openings, forming a common fortified outer wall. Access to the Plaza was probably guarded by towers and heavy gates. The formation of the land, a high rise above the Valley to the south, was an ideal defensive position against Indian attacks.

Little remains today of the village as it was then; only a small one story building to the northwest of the plaza incorporates portions of this original wall. However, the form of the city with a central plaza and outlying hacienda residential districts was generated by this original plan. Toward the end of the 18th century the trade fairs died out, and the Comanche raids began to abate. With no need for guarded defenses, Taos no doubt spread out towards its surrounding fields. Most houses were still built on the rise above the valley land to the south, since this land was less fertile than that below.

Around 1815 fur traders began to arrive in Taos for supplies and a place to trade their goods. Not only Spanish traders, but French from the north and Americans from the east began to visit there annually. With this rising foreign influence also came the news of the declaration of the Mexican Republic in 1821. Meanwhile, the first wagon train arrived from the east in 1824, the same year American whiskey, the local imitation of which later became known as "Taos Lightning", purportedly arrived. Taos was officially declared a port of entry in 1837, reflecting the growth in trade of this most important small town en route of the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis and Bent's Fort in Colorado to Santa Fe. Charles Bent arrived in Taos with the first oxen wagon train in 1831, and was joined a year later by Ceran St. Vrain to form a partnership that was to last until Bent's assassination in 1847.

Padre Jose Antonio Martinez first arrived to serve the parish of Taos in 1826. Educated and ordained in Mexico City, Padre Martinez was a brilliant leader and educator. He established the first school in Taos, for both boys and girls, and acquired the first press in New Mexico to publish its textbooks. Later, he published the first newspaper, *El Crepusculo de la Libertad*. Perhaps best known for his controversial opposition to, and later excommunicated by Bishop Lamy, Padre Martinez was one of the great citizens of Taos who served his people many times as a politician.

One of the events that he was involved in was the resistance to the Revolt of 1837. Jose Gonzales, a Pueblo Indian from Taos, together with a number of conspirators, led forces against the current governor, Albino Perez. When Perez was killed, Gonzales was appointed governor. Former governor Manuel Armijo rallied troops and marched up from Albuquerque and quickly captured the rebels. Padre Martinez supported Armijo, and witnessed the execution of Jose Gonzales.

With the outbreak of the Mexican-American War in 1846, another revolt saw its beginnings in Taos. When General Kearney marched into Santa Fe to declare New Mexico a possession of the United States, he

appointed the prominent trader Charles Bent as the Territory's first governor. Several groups of local residents throughout the New Mexico area resented the occupation, and plotted revolt in the name of the Mexican Republic. These plottings culminated in the scalping and assassination of Governor Bent at his home in Taos, as well as the murder of several other leading American citizens, on January 19, 1847. Colonel Sterling Price, stationed in Santa Fe, hurriedly set out north in pursuit of the revolutionists upon receipt of the news of Bent's death. After two engagements south of Taos, he surrounded them in the San Geronimo de Taos church and proceeded to level it. The rebels eventually surrendered, and their leaders, after a drumhead trial and conviction of "treason", were hung north of Taos Plaza.

The middle of the 19th century saw much activity in the town of Taos. Kit Carson, who arrived in Taos shortly after Charles Bent, married a local woman, Josefa Jaramillo, in 1843 and went on to establish a famous reputation as scout, Indian fighter and trader. Fort Burgwin, located nearby in 1851, brought military men to Taos, including Captain Simpson, Kirby Benedict, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, came to Taos in 1854. With the influx of Americans to Taos, and the introduction of new building materials such as brick, glass and milled lumber, the architecture of the town began to reflect eastern styles, and the residential area north of the Plaza, mainly settled by Americans, has many examples of this style.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Confederate sympathizers rode off with deserting Union troops. Kit Carson, Ceran St. Vrain, and others nailed the United States flag to a pole in the Plaza and stood guard over it to prevent Confederate sympathizers from tearing it down. Called away after the War to quell the Navajo Tribe, Carson later returned to Taos as Indian Agent for New Mexico.

The discovery of gold at nearby Red River in 1866-67 brought added prosperity to Taos. In 1871 the Denver and Rio Grande established a station at Tres Piedras, the first to take passengers for Taos, who proceeded on to town by stage coach. With prosperity came educational and religious institutions: the Sisters of Loretto set up a school in 1863; the Christian Brothers established a monastery (later the Sharpe Studio) in the 1870s; Angel Carlos Labarta set up a short-lived school in 1878; and a Presbyterian school was established in 1880. In the new atmosphere of progress, the portales on the Plaza were torn down in 1887, and a picket fence enclosing trees and bushes was erected around the Plaza in 1897. Meanwhile, the Dibble Hotel, established in 1867, gained competition from the Columbian in 1890.

In 1898, Taos once again saw racial violence, this time precipitated by the Spanish-American War. Local Hispanics threatened to chase Anglos out of town, and the sheriff, Luciano Trujillo, was accidentally shot and killed in a scuffle over the arrest of Bert Phillips and Lester Myers. Al Gifford, the man accused of the shooting, barely escaped by hiding around town for many days.

With the turn of the century a new cultural influx into Taos began: the artists. Ernest Blumenshein, introduced to Taos by artist Joseph Henry Sharpe in 1880, later came to settle in 1898. Together with Bert Phillips he founded the Taos Society of Artists in 1914. Since then, under the patronage of such notables as Mabel Dodge Lujan, many artists and writers such as Mary Austin, D.H. Lawrence and Andrew Dasburg, have come to visit or live in Taos. Mabel Dodge Lujan, who married a Taos Indian, Tony Lujan, built a beautiful house to the east of town and remained until her death.

Meanwhile, the town itself continued to change slowly. In 1911 the old church situated on Guadalupe Plaza (just west of the town Plaza) was razed and new one built. Around 1912 the east side of the Plaza burned down, first of many fires to plague the Plaza area: the Columbian Hotel (south side of Plaza) in 1928; the north side of the Plaza, including the courthouse, in 1932; and the Don Fernando Hotel (established in 1927) on the southwest corner of the Plaza in 1933. In 1934, the Taos Inn was started by T. Paul ("Doc") Martin to fill the vacancies created by the loss of the Columbian and the Don Fernando. The La Fonda, on the south side of the Plaza, was also built in the Thirties, and a new stone wall was erected around the Plaza, replacing the picket fence, in 1929.

On July 3, 1929, Arthur Rockford Manby was found beheaded in his home on Paseo del Pueblo Norte. The causes of death are still unknown, and the resulting mystery has intrigued Taoseños ever since. Manby, an ambitious and perhaps crazed man in search of power, wished to secure Spanish land grants surrounding Taos and form an "empire." Little is known of the degree to which these were the dreams of a crazed man or the goals of a successful businessman.

After World War II, Taos began to grow again with the influx of leisure-oriented visitors and residents. People visiting the Pueblo, the Taos Ski Valley or Don Fernando de Taos itself stay in town and wander around the Plaza. Recently, the old church in Guadalupe Plaza burned down (1961), and was rebuilt across Don Fernando to the north. Otherwise, the town has changed gradually by people remodeling houses, building additions, and restoring historic sites.

The significance of Taos today rests in the fact that it is one of the three oldest continuous settlements in the Taos Valley, a key area of Northern New Mexico. Laid out as a Spanish fortified plaza, the town grew with the influx of natives and foreigners attracted by its central position as a center of trade linking St. Louis and Bent's Fort with Santa Fe. Later, it was home to such great New Mexican leaders as Padre Jose Antonio Martinez, Kit Carson, Ceran St. Vrain, and Charles Bent. It was also the originating place of a series of rebellions: the Pueblo Revolt of 1680; the Revolt of 1837; the 1847 insurrection; and the Spanish-American War disturbances. After its phase as a trade center, Taos was discovered by artists, and underwent a cultural revival from the turn of the present century through the 1930s.

Today, aspects of each of these periods are evident in the historic downtown district. Spanish Colonial Style residences stand by Territorial, Mission Revival and Spanish Pueblo Revival houses. The architectural fabric of Don Fernando de Taos reflects the many cultural influences of the Spanish, Indians, Anglos and artists upon the growth of the town. It is significant because it incorporates these varying lifestyles, and reveals the history of Don Fernando de Taos for what it is: the crossroads of many cultures and eras.

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

---

Bunting, Bainbrige. Taos Adobes; Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1964.

Burton, Estelle Bennett. "The Taos Rebellion"; Old Santa Fe; 1:176-209, 1913.

Coke, Van Deren. Taos and Santa Fe; the Artist's Environment; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1963.

de Aragon, Ray John. Padre Martinez and Bishop Lamy; Las Vegas: The Pan American Publishing Company, 1978.

Fergusson, Erna. Murder and Mystery in New Mexico; Albuquerque: Merle Armitage Editions, 1948.

Galbraith, Den. Turbulent Taos; Santa Fe: Press of the Territorian, 1970.

Garrard, Lewis H. Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

Grant, Blanche C. When Old Trails Were New: The Story of Taos; Chicago: The Rio Grande Press, 1963.

Jenkins, Myra Ellen. "Taos Pueblo and its Neighbors, 1540-1847"; New Mexico Historical Review; 41:2 (April 1966).

Martinez, Rowena (editor). Land Grants in Taos Valley; Taos: Taos County Historical Society, 1968.

Morrill, Claire. A Taos Mosaic - Portrait of a New Mexico Village; Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973.

Sanchez, Pedro. Memories of José Antonio Martinez; Santa Fe: The Rydal Press, 1978.

Simmons, Marc. New Mexico: A History; New York: W.W. Norton and Co.; 1977.

Valdes, Felix D. "A History of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish"; Souvenir Brochure, Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine, Taos, New Mexico; (1962).

### MAPS

Joy, F.E. (surveyor) and Ahrens, A.F. (transitman). "Plat Showing Private Claims within the Taos Pueblo Grant'. Surveyed September 4 to October 4, 1915.

Sanborn Map Company. "Taos, New Mexico": 1908, 1929, 1939.

---

## 10. Geographical Data

---

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 30 acres

Quadrangle name Taos

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	13	448700	4029130
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	13	448660	4028870
E	13	448590	4029070
G	13	448500	4028930
I	13	448360	4029010
K	13	448450	4029120
M	13	448740	4029230

B	13	448890	4028950
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	13	448690	4029040
F	13	448490	4029010
H	13	448130	4028920
J	13	448320	4029150
L	13	448540	4029300

---

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

Starting at the intersection of Ojitos Road and Ranchitos Road proceed northeast along the north edge of Ojitos Road for approximately 612 feet; continue northeast along the lane that runs between Ojitos Road and LeDoux Street for approximately 704 feet to the intersection with Camino de Santa Fe; proceed northwest and north along the south and west edge of Camino de Santa Fe and Trujillo Street for 520 feet to the intersection with Ranchitos Road; proceed east along the south edge of Ranchitos Road for approximately 184 feet to the intersection with Camino de Santa Fe; proceed south along the east edge of Camino de Santa Fe for approximately 110 feet to La Fonda Alley; proceed east along the north edge of La Fonda Alley and along the rear of the buildings facing the Plaza for approximately 294 feet to the intersection of an alley; proceed north along the alley and the east edge of the Plaza for approximately 269 feet to the north edge of the Plaza; proceed east along the North edge of the Plaza and along the south edge of Kit Carson Street to a point approximately 196 feet east of Paseo de Pueblo Sur; proceed south along the east edge of Cabot Plaza for approximately 214 feet to a fence; continue south along the fence for approximately 220 feet; proceed east along the fence for approximately 25 feet to an alley; proceed south and east along the alley for approximately 196 feet to Quesnel Road; proceed northeast along the north edge of Quesnel Road for approximately 857 feet to the intersection with Kit Carson Street; continue north along the west edge of Morada Lane for approximately 184 feet; proceed west for approximately 122 feet to Dragoon Lane; proceed north along the west edge of Dragoon Lane for approximately 49 feet; proceed west paralleling the rear of structures facing Kit Carson Street for approximately 380 feet to a fence line; proceed north along the fence line for approximately 428 feet; proceed west along the north edge of the Stables Gallery property for approximately 367 feet to Paseo del Pueblo Norte; proceed north along the east edge of Paseo del Pueblo Norte for approximately 92 feet to the intersection with Martyrs Lane; proceed west along the north edge of Martyrs Lane for approximately 306 feet to the intersection with La Placitas; proceed south along the west side of La Placitas for approximately 661 feet to the intersection with Don Fernando; proceed west along the north edge of Don Fernando for approximately 392 feet; proceed south for approximately 196 feet; proceed southwest for approximately 147 feet; proceed south for approximately 233 feet to an alley; proceed east along the alley for approximately 122 feet; proceed south along the rear of the "Turley Mill" building for approximately 49 feet; proceed east along the south edge of the same building for approximately 159 feet to Ranchitos Road; proceed southwest along the northwest edge of Ranchitos Road for approximately 808 feet to the starting point."

---

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

State	code	county	code
State	code	county	code

---

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title	Boyd C. Pratt/Researcher		
organization	Architectural Research consultants, Inc.	date	15 September 1981
street & number	PO Box 1158	telephone	505-842-1254
city or Town	Albuquerque	state	New Mexico

---

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification Form**

---

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated Historic Preservation Officer for the National Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_