



# CITY OF LAS CRUCES

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

December 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

The following are minutes of the Historic Preservation Committee Meeting held December 17, 2025, at Roadrunner Room, Thompas Branigan Memorial Library, 200 E. Picacho Avenue, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dr. Jerry Wallace, Chair  
Ernie Campos  
Paul John Deason, PhD  
Norma Chairez-Hartell

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jeffrey Shepherd, PhD  
Fernando Baeza  
Rosanna Torrez

**STAFF PRESENT:** Caitlin Beesley, Historic Preservation Specialist  
Chris Faivre, Director Community Development

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jay Muyse  
Cassie McClure  
George Pearson  
Carlos Melendrez  
Alex Mares  
Bill Acosta  
David Crider  
Henry Rodriguez

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wallace called the meeting to order at 6:00.

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -

#### 2.1 November 19, 2025 HPC Minutes

Motion to approve by Paul Deason; seconded by Ernie Campos. Motion passed unanimously.

### 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1 Carlos Melendrez thanked the committee for their expression of support at the last  
2 meeting. As this is the only venue dedicated to preserving and officially  
3 acknowledging the multicultural past. He read a statement that the HPC is to  
4 approve, deny, or place conditions on a case from the Historical Preservation  
5 Specialist or staff, however we can engage on ideas and give input on certain  
6 cases and subjects. Plan A is to get the project established from a city staff level.  
7 It was suggested to him to meet with Caitlin to explain the steps and guidelines for  
8 funding estimations, design infrastructure requirements, and construction. Also  
9 suggested a workshop in a pre-pre-application meeting be scheduled with  
10 community leaders involved to consult with the planning process site selection,  
11 land acquisition, and architectural design. They are hoping to save the building  
12 and turn it into a cultural center, La Casa de Cultura. He would like to have the  
13 pre-application meeting and hoping there is enough commitment to save the  
14 building. This center should have been established years ago, however it is never  
15 too late to establish.

16  
17 Alex Mares thanked the committee. He is a park ranger for 36 years. His family  
18 has been in the southwest for centuries. He was taught the past is with us and  
19 history matters. John Trudell stated, "The future is depending on how we treat the  
20 past in the present." He has a good understanding of the role of this committee  
21 and responsibilities throughout the city. He agrees with Carlos Melendrez and  
22 their priority is the Roybal House. Native people and Hispanic people of the  
23 southwest share migrant work. If people work together it can be done.

24  
25 Bill Martinez Acosta agreed with the previous two speakers. His family has deep  
26 roots here both Native American and Spanish. He spoke of the Lady in Blue/The  
27 Blue Nun. He supports preserving history.

28  
29 **4. STAFF AND COMMITTEE INPUT**

30  
31 Paul Deason stated that what they have heard tonight is a coming together worth  
32 recognizing.

33  
34 Ernie Campos stated he did sit down with Carlos Melendrez and explained the role  
35 of this board. And also there is a structure that needs to be done at the city level  
36 for a project like this. This project requires purchasing the building, inspecting,  
37 remodeling, etc, and if the city is willing to accept a cultural center. He suggests  
38 the city lease a building in the Mesquite Historical District area and do a quasi-  
39 501(c) museum, nonprofit to get this thing started. If the city does get money to  
40 purchase a building that will be a start for now.

41  
42 Norma Chairez-Hartell thinks Ernie Campos' idea is great. The city of Las Cruces  
43 is currently putting on year-long exhibits where they have sections highlighting the  
44 different tribes in the area.

1 Chair Wallace stated Mr. Melendrez reached out to Caitlin and he got on the e-  
2 mail chain and he chimed in about this. One of the challenges with this project is  
3 it is privately owned. He does not want government involved with private property.  
4 There are other residents that come to HPC meetings stating they do not want the  
5 city involved in anything in their community. And also other groups that want the  
6 city to save the property. He does not think the city should own a property, the  
7 community should own the property. The community should form a friends group  
8 in which the friends group they buy the property. He stated there is a famous  
9 public historian, Dolores Hayden, she talks about buildings being vessels of public  
10 memory. The first step is to reach out to the property owner. Chris Faivre had  
11 contacted the owner and he was willing to part with the property.  
12

13 Paul Deason agrees with a friends group owning the building. Maybe a GoFundMe  
14 would work.  
15

16 Ernie Campos stated this reminds him of the 1990s west side property owners  
17 complaining they did not have a community center, only the East Side Community  
18 Center and the Munsen Center. Henry Benavidez did get one on the west side  
19 that is named after him. He asked Caitlin Beesley to check what the board's role  
20 is as far as Vice-Chair giving input to this project.  
21

22 Chair Wallace stated that community members are reaching out to HPC board  
23 members. He is clear he is speaking not for the board but for the community.  
24

25 Norma Chairez-Hartell likes the idea of a friends group. Suggested Las  
26 Esperanzas as they are already a 501(c) and tapping into to see if they would be  
27 a fiscal sponsor.  
28

29 Caitlin Beesley is here to talk with anyone about grant opportunities or other  
30 support systems for community preservation projects.  
31

32 A member of the public brought handout with pictures of the Roybal House. He  
33 sees lots of potential. Chair Wallace encouraged community participation panel in  
34 Mesquite to drive awareness for this. The same people are coming out and saying  
35 the same things. He hopes this conversation continues into other meetings. Paul  
36 Deason stated he is worried that voices are being lost. There needs to be interest  
37 in putting together the story of the community; record the feelings, going house by  
38 house. What is the spirit in this house of those who were there? Chair Wallace  
39 stated there is an oral history project ongoing with Las Esperanzas.  
40

41 Chair Wallace reminded everyone to send suggestions for the watch list. This is  
42 a list of buildings that could be lost with historical significance. He wants this  
43 discussed at the January meeting and approved at the February meeting. They  
44 do have board positions and nominations, Chair and Vice-Chair. There are three  
45 things he would like to address in the next coming year; creating a historic  
46 preservation plan, one, two, three year plan; get the guidelines fixed by next year;

1 be able to salvage some of the buildings are being demolished or destroyed  
2 naturally, have someone salvage those, and then a community yard/bone yard for  
3 people to acquire parts etc.  
4

5 Caitlin Beesley stated there was a fire Monday morning 1127 N. Campo Street on  
6 the north end of the State Historic Register boundary. It is a non-contributing  
7 property and the city received concurrence from SHPO for the demo. The roof is  
8 a total loss, and damage to interior walls, the fire marshal has determined that it is  
9 a hazard, code 114.4, and recommends it be demolished. There are some  
10 questions about the owner. A true deconstruction for salvage will not be  
11 appropriate for this building. It was a really hot fire. Adobe is fire resistant, but  
12 sometimes adobe has a high sand content and fire can cause vitrification of the  
13 bricks, so those adobes would not be usable. There may also have been some  
14 contamination from fire retardant used to put the fire out.  
15

16 Caitlin Beesley wants the design guidelines to have two work sessions. Have one  
17 in the WIA building and one in the Papen Center. And have them both in February,  
18 the first on the 25th, a Wednesday evening, at 6:00 at Papen Center and then the  
19 second in the afternoon on Saturday 28th. She will check on getting it published  
20 in the Bulletin.  
21

## 22 **5. PRESENTATION**

### 23 **5.1 A Trost and Trost Legacy: Lloyd and June Englebrecht by Dr. Jerry Wallace**

24 Chair Wallace stated this is a chapter from his forthcoming book. June and Lloyd  
25 Englebrecht wrote the most known book about Trost and Trost, called Henry C.  
26 Trost, the Architect of the Southwest. Since 1981 when this book came out there  
27 has not been any other book. He spent four months at UTEP researching the  
28 Englebrecht's data. He found interesting things. He found the history of the first  
29 skateboard park in Albuquerque in late 1970s. There were 3 x 5 cards, little  
30 notebooks, spreadsheets, correspondence, architectural photographs and plans.  
31 He went through every piece of paper in the collection.  
32  
33  
34

35 Trost and Trost was an El Paso based architecture firm that officially opened doors  
36 in 1904. They did form the company in 1903 in Tucson. They were located in five  
37 different office buildings that they built themselves and have a contract that they  
38 get a floor of the building. The company officially closed in 1951, but take their last  
39 commission in 1946. It was a family business of mostly brothers, Henry C. Trost,  
40 lead architect, and his twin brothers 15 years younger, Gustavus Adolphus Trost  
41 and Adolphus Gustavus Trost. They bring on a sister to help in the office, a  
42 nephew, and one other guy that is not a family member.  
43

44 Henry Trost lived in Chicago in 1880-1890s. There is speculation of him working  
45 for Adler and Sullivan Architecture firm. Sullivan and Trost interact on a number  
46 of occasions. Sullivan hires Trost to do wrought iron work. There was no actual

1 apprenticeship. Trost was influenced by Sullivan's architectural style and  
2 implements and imprints it on some architectural buildings. What Chair Wallace  
3 argues is that Trost and Trost create a common architectural style in a region he  
4 called the triangle, which is Yuma, Arizona, to Austin Texas, and from Las Cruces,  
5 New Mexico to Denver, Colorado. They build in every rural community in the  
6 triangle and in major urban centers. He created architectural style that is no any  
7 one thing but all things. They design about 703 buildings, of that 650 are built in  
8 the American Southwest between 1904 and 1946. They are largest architectural  
9 firm in that period in the American West.

10  
11 When Trost and Trost close in 1951, their work is forgotten until 1965. Urban  
12 renewal did get rid of some of the older buildings and replacing them. In 1965  
13 Lloyd Englebrecht goes to El Paso and he investigates the Trost and Trost  
14 Architecture company. He finds there is no information available. Ted Jojola has  
15 built things like place making, place knowing, and place keeping. Chair Wallace  
16 states without the Engelbrecht's there would no knowledge of Trost and Trost  
17 company. Place keeping is process of preserving history, culture, and stories of  
18 place while creating new spaces. Lloyd Englebrecht does a lot of work on the  
19 Chicago based designers and artists. He comes to El Paso in 1952 and sees  
20 UTEP buildings will odd architecture. His wife is from El Paso and she encourages  
21 him to return and look into that architecture. In 1963 he is a librarian. Between  
22 1965-1969 he writes his first article about Trost. He gets everything wrong about  
23 Trost and the family, as there is no archive and he has to piece things together.  
24 His wife is well educated as well and copublished the book. She gets the  
25 information and Lloyd interprets the information.

26  
27 The Engelbrecht's as place keepers are helping to understand the sense of place  
28 that Trost and Trost buildings created over a 100 year period. Generations give  
29 buildings meaning. To tell the story of downtown Las Cruces, need to understand  
30 the various meanings of the generations and their versions. The Englebrecht's  
31 publish a lot of work about Trost. The peak is 1980-1990. In 1997 NMSU wanted  
32 to preserve the Trost buildings on campus, and bring Lloyd to NMSU. And he  
33 refers to Trost as an American architect.

34  
35 In 1987 the Engelbrecht's get an NEA grant for \$78,000 which was to do a building  
36 inventory of all the Trost buildings in the triangle. They drive for a whole year  
37 throughout that area and physically document all the buildings with photography.  
38 They run out of money after the year but NEA will match any private donors. They  
39 get money from Robert McKee Foundation. This ends up being a three year  
40 project that is funded. They collect about 600 of the Trost buildings in the  
41 southwest. They created a database and archive in the El Paso public library. All  
42 the information is now on the HenryCTrost.org website. They give good  
43 information on when the building was opened, if it still standing, building material,  
44 how it cost, owners name, and all of their sources. They also become advocates  
45 for preserving Trost and Trost buildings. In 1976 there are no Trost and Trost  
46 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. After the book came out, and

1 because of the book and their advocacy, they talk about Trost and Trost buildings.  
2 Within two years 30 buildings are placed on the National Register.

3  
4 The Englebrecht's named three Trost and Trost buildings that they thought were  
5 unique and exceptional architectural styles of the company. The Trost house in El  
6 Paso. The other is the Franciscan Hotel in Albuquerque, torn down in 1973. The  
7 other was Anson Building in downtown El Paso. Chair Wallace has three buildings  
8 he has a personal connection with. The Loretto Academy, when torn down and  
9 the materials were used to build other buildings. The old Casa Luna Cafe is almost  
10 entirely from these materials. In Albuquerque, the Sunshine Theater. Next is  
11 Goddard Hall at NMSU. Question on if there is a record of demolished Trost and  
12 Trost buildings and there is not.

13  
14 **6. ADJOURNMENT**

15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson