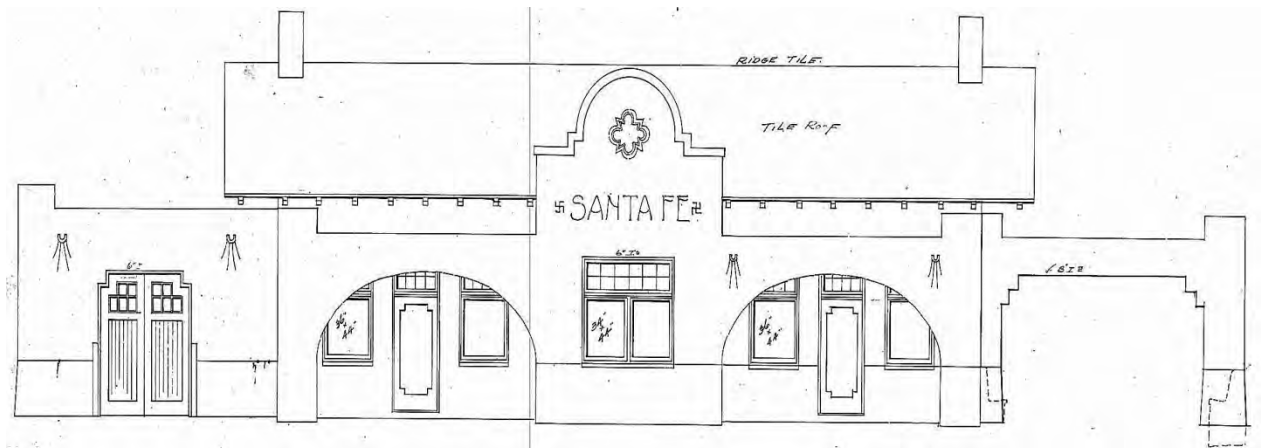


# The Santa Fe Depot of 1909

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Passenger Depot in  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

A Conditions Assessment Report and Preservation Plan  
for 2009



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# CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT AND PRESERVATION PLAN FOR THE SANTA FE DEPOT

## Section 1.0

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Santa Fe Depot celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. Designed and built by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in 1909 to replace a former wood frame structure, the building has been in continuous use as a depot for either passengers or freight since its original construction. As a result of its consistency of use the property exhibits a high degree of historic integrity and serves as a prominent reminder of the importance that the railway played in the development of the City of Santa Fe throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The property is listed as a “landmark” property within the City and was placed on the State Register of Cultural Properties in 1981 (State Register # 807).

In the late 1980’s the City of Santa Fe declared the Railyard a “blighted” area due to its neglected and unmaintained state. In the intervening twenty years since then, the district has undergone a transformation that few would have imagined. A magnificent 9-acre urban park has replaced “brownfields”. Historic buildings have undergone painstaking rehabilitation. Award-winning commercial buildings have sprung up as the entire area has come alive. A state-of-the-art commuter rail system deposits passengers directly in front of the old Depot--the last, neglected reminder of how the entire area looked twenty years ago.

The present *Report* describes the physical condition of the Depot and the immediate site, which is defined as the historic brick platform that surrounds the building itself. This assessment is based upon what we know of the property from a study of the original drawings, the historic documents and direct observation. The latter examination was conducted in a non-invasive manner so as to avoid destroying historic fabric; however the Report recommends that some further invasive investigation should take place during the next phase of planning. The assessment is followed by recommendations for correcting observed problems in ways that should not compromise the property’s historic integrity. In Section 7 the *Report* presents a prioritized list of recommended interventions based on issues of life safety, code compliance, abatement of hazardous materials, increased energy efficiency, strategies to reduce fire danger, and assure the preservation of historic fabric. This list comprises a Preservation Plan to which price estimates are attached to create a recommended Preservation Project.

As the occupancy requirements of the property in the near future are not entirely clear, the assessment and recommendations contained in this *Report* do not include allowances for re-configuring the interior spaces or for adapting them for uses other than those presently in place. Thus, although there are some recommendations for correcting interior conditions, the primary focus is on those exterior conditions where the urgency is the greatest.

A summary of the property's greatest needs include:

- Abatement of hazardous materials, including lead and asbestos
- Procedures leading to code compliance
- Correction of drainage problems on the building's exterior
- Mechanical and electrical needs
- Conservation of the historic windows
- Replacement of the building's flat roof surfaces with new membrane roofs
- Conservation of exterior surfaces
- Installation of thermal insulation to increase the building's energy efficiency
- Installation of fire alarm and fire suppression systems

Listed above are the major components of a recommended Preservation Project, structured in two phases, for which the present *Report* represents the initial planning document. The *Report* has estimated costs attached to the individual components comprising the Preservation Project, including estimated costs for the planning that is required to prepare the Project for implementation. Including these planning costs, an estimated cost for the recommended Project falls within the range from \$875,795 to \$1,084,285 as of the present date (June, 2009).

“The AT&SF Passenger Depot in Santa Fe built in 1909 is among the oldest extant buildings in the city. While the adobe cores of earlier buildings survive, few have not undergone changes to windows and stucco. For one hundred years the AT&SF Passenger Depot building has survived continuous use and changes in the purpose it served -- from passenger to freight to tourism. In 2009 it sits within the revitalized Railyard district of Santa Fe, and has recently added high-speed commuter trains to its repertoire. The iconic meaning the building holds in the history of the west will continue to attract visitors from across the United States and beyond. Rehabilitation of the Santa Fe Passenger Depot will address the current deteriorated conditions, and ready it for service for the beginning of its next one hundred years of use.” *Conclusion to the Depot's History included in this Report*”

END OF SECTION 1.0

## SECTION 3.0

### INTRODUCTION

The Santa Fe Depot celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. Designed and built by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in 1909 to replace a former wood frame structure, the building has been in continuous use as a depot since its original construction. As a result of its consistency of use the property exhibits a high degree of historic integrity and serves as a prominent reminder of the importance that the railway played in the development of the City of Santa Fe throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The property is listed as a “landmark” property within the City and was placed on the State Register of Cultural Properties in 1981 (State Register # 807).

The Depot is owned by the City of Santa Fe, managed by the Railyard Community Corporation and presently occupied by the Santa Fe Southern Railway. The present *Report* was commissioned by the Railyard Community Corporation in the fall of 2008. It represents the first detailed assessment of the physical conditions of the Depot. Because of the property’s historic significance it is deemed essential to place the property in its historic context so that recommendations for correcting physical problems do not place at risk the property’s ability to convey its own story in the development of Santa Fe during the past century. As with the physical assessment, little prior research has been done on the architectural history of the Depot except for brief historic surveys and one article written for the *Bulletin* of the Historic Santa Fe Foundation by historian Corrine Sze in 1992 (Volume 20, Number 1). Thus the present *Report* begins with a fuller architectural history of the property, tracing the changes that have taken place over the years and highlighting those components of the Depot that give it its characteristic uniqueness.

As part of the research background of this *Report* we were fortunate to have been provided with copies of the Depot’s original construction drawings, reproduced here courtesy of the Historic Santa Fe Foundation. The number of sheets originally drawn at the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe engineering office in 1908 are unknown, but the six sheets for which we have copies are a fund of useful information. These are included in the **Appendix** to the present *Report*. We have compiled new measured drawings of the Depot to illustrate its present condition and configuration. In the process of compiling the new drawings we have been constantly impressed by how closely the actual construction followed both the designs and the dimensions presented by the Railroad’s engineers.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this *Report and Preservation Plan* is to complete the requisite initial step in the preservation planning process, describing the property's history, its character-defining features and its physical needs, making recommendations for correcting these problems and finally recommending a Preservation Project that would address the most pressing needs. Estimated costs are presented so that adequate funding to complete both the project design and its implementation can be sought. The recommended Preservation Project is based upon the following set of priorities:

- **Stabilize the property to prevent further loss of historic fabric**
- **Rectify problems that may threaten public health and safety**
- **Effect procedures that will make the building more energy efficient while retaining its historic character so that it can continue to convey its important chapter in Santa Fe's history**

Components of the Depot's structure are assessed as being in good, fair or poor condition. These terms are applied according to the following definitions:

### **1. Good Condition.**

- The element or feature is intact, structurally sound and performing its intended purpose.
- There are few if no cosmetic imperfections.
- It needs no repair or only minor or routine maintenance.

### **2. Fair Condition.**

- There are early signs of wear, failure or deterioration, although the feature or element is structurally sound and performing its intended purpose.
- There is failure of a sub-component of the feature or element.
- Replacement of up to 25% of the feature or element is required.
- Replacement of a defective sub-component of the feature or element is required.

### **3. Poor Condition.**

- It is no longer performing its intended purpose.
- It is missing.
- It shows signs of imminent failure or breakdown.
- Deterioration or damage effects more than 25% of the feature or the element cannot be adjusted or repaired.
- It requires major repair or replacement.

Participants in the research that is presented in this Report are:

- Catherine Colby, architectural historian in Santa Fe, who authored the chapter on the Depot's history;
- Graciela Tomé, architect in Santa Fe, who produced the dimensioned drawings and opinions on code compliance;
- John Baumgartel, of M & E Engineering in Santa Fe, mechanical and electrical engineer, who investigated the building's heating, electrical and plumbing systems;
- Jim Hands, of Hands Engineering in Santa Fe, structural engineer, who assessed the building's structure;
- Cissy Puma of Havona Environmental Consulting in Albuquerque, who performed the environmental assessment;
- Natalie Feinberg of the Collaborative in Boulder Colorado, who performed the materials analyses;
- Alan Watson, of Watson Conserves in Santa Fe, architectural conservator who performed physical assessments and compiled this *Report*.

The author wishes to express his gratitude to these professionals as well as to the Historic Santa Fe Foundation, the Santa Fe Southern Railway and the Railyard Community Corporation for their genuine enthusiasm in an ongoing effort to preserve one of Santa Fe's most important historic properties.

END OF SECTION 3.0