



Santa Fe Real Estate Guide

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# ARCHITECTURE

## Spears group awarded for 'distinguished work' by AIA-NM

By Paul Weideman

SPEARS ARCHITECTS WAS NAMED NEW MEXICO ARCHITECTURE FIRM OF THE YEAR IN SEPTEMBER BY AIA NEW MEXICO, THE STATE CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

"This award recognizes the continuing collaboration among individuals in a firm who have produced distinguished architecture over a period of ten years, and have made significant contributions to the American Institute of Architects, the profession and their community, and have transcended their local boundaries in making these contributions," said Jean Gibson, AIA New Mexico executive director.

The firm was founded 31 years ago by Beverley Spears, FAIA. All of her employees, including architects James Horn and Kate Leriche, have been with Spears Architects for at least seven years.

The firm's projects during the past decade include numerous residences in Northern New Mexico, Open Hands, The Santa Fe New Mexican printing/circulation building, the Santa Fe Plaza bandstand, the LEED "Gold" Santa Fe Preparatory School library, the Santa Fe Community Convention Center (with Fentress Architects), and the Center at the Academy for the Love of Learning; as well as historic-preservation work at Los Luceros and the Lamy Building.

Horn was project architect on the Lamy Building project, which was completed in 2005. After researching the building's history, materials and colors, the firm oversaw repairs to deteriorating wood members and improvements to the surrounding porches, courts, and yards.

The structure, built in 1878, was part of St. Michael's College. The lower two floors, which remain today, are adobe. The third floor, with its domed cupola, mansard roof, and ornate windows, was built of wood. Local citizens contributed a heifer, two goats, two oxen, and 735 sheep to the building fund, as well as lumber for the building project.

A fire destroyed the third floor on Nov. 30, 1926, and it was never rebuilt. In the 1950s, the building was remodeled "in the Territorial Revival style that had become an accepted regional style for public buildings at that time," according to research by the Spears team. At that time, the roofline was trimmed with brick coping and an espadaña (bell tower) was added to the front (west-facing) façade.



PHOTO BY PAUL WEIDEMAN

The spruced-up facade of the Lamy Building. Below, the main St. Michael's College building, ca. 1920, photographed by T. Harmon Parkhurst, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), Neg. No. 014022

It became the Lamy Building, housing state offices, after St. Michael's High School moved to its current location on Siringo Road in 1967. The Lamy Building remains one of the largest adobe buildings in Santa Fe.

"We basically rehabilitated the exterior of the building, which included repairing the 2-story wood portal on the east side, trying to save as much historic fabric as we could," Beverley Spears said. "We did paint analysis on the exterior woodwork to look at past colors. The entire building was restuccoed. The cementitious stucco is a

warm beige/gray color responding to the old cement stucco used in the 1870s.

"We also opened up some fan lights on the front, facing west, restoring that sort of centerpiece on the building. And then from old photos we reconstructed the little espadaña [only the base was extant]. The building has few decorative elements, so that one stands out."

All grounds around the building were renovated to include new drought-tolerant plantings, benches, and walkways.

A more recent, and much bigger, project for Spears Architects was a new government center for Taos County. The recently completed complex on Albright Street includes a new district courthouse, the county administration building with the magistrate court, and a jail.

The firm's outlook in the new year can be read in its last Christmas card. The Spears crew, in a boat labeled "AIA New Mexico Firm of the Year," appears threatened by a huge ship labeled "Economy."

"We're running out of work," Spears said. "We're hurting, but we're not the only ones. Just today [Dec. 16] we're finishing up the drawings for Santo Domingo Trading Post, which will be an interesting construction project, but for architects once it's in construction and if you have no other active projects on the boards, you don't have very much to do."

"The tribe got a million-dollar grant from the feds to rebuild the old trading post, which is about a mile north of the pueblo. There was nothing left of it besides the standing adobe walls, which are pretty sound. We are rebuilding it as it was."

In this year's awards by the Albuquerque AIA chapter, MICHAEL FREEMAN ARCHITECT received a 2011 Citation Award for the Santa Fe County Public Works Complex, completed in late 2008; and ARCHAEO ARCHITECTS received Unbuilt Citation Awards for El Paso Residence and House Thirty-Three.

