

April 28, 2021

Los Alamos Historic Preservation Advisory Board  
Los Alamos County Historic Preservation Division  
1000 Central Avenue  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

Re: Fuller Lodge West Wing Portal Proposal

Dear Los Alamos Historic Preservation Advisory Board,

Los Alamos County is proposing to add a fixed portal at the west entry to the Art Center, located in the south portion of the Fuller Lodge building. Fuller Lodge is included in records found on both the National Register of Historic Places and on the State Register of Cultural Properties. These records are for the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory (SR13-10/15/1966 | NR66000893-10/15/1966); and the Los Alamos Ranch School (SR68-05/23/1969). Significant work has also been completed by the Los Alamos Historic Preservation Division, including the creation of a separate Fuller Lodge Districts Advisory Board, and the completion of several guiding documents regarding the historic preservation of the Fuller Lodge District which include relevant information for treatment of the building. These documents include the *Los Alamos County Comprehensive Plan Historic Preservation Plan* (2008), an *Architectural Survey of Fuller Lodge Historic District* (first completed in 2008 and updated in 2014), and the *Fuller Lodge Interpretive Plan* (2018).

**Existing Conditions of the Site:**

The entry to the Art Center is located significantly below the grade level of the adjacent landscaped areas. Ten-inch-wide concrete retaining walls have been built to the north, west, and south of the Art Center entry to define the edges of a concrete paved area that provides access to the entry doors. The concrete paved area is approximately 10'-0" wide by 11'-0" long, and is accessed by a sloped concrete pathway to the south. The retaining walls extend +/- 2'-0" above the finish floor level of the Art Center in response to the grade level to the north and west.

In the past, water has backed up in the sub-grade entry area and has flooded into the Art Center, causing severe damage to the interior of the building. The County has already taken some measures to respond to these drainage issues of flooding and water damage. Two linear trench drains have been installed in the paved concrete area west of the entry doors to mitigate the water that accumulates around the entry during rain and snow events. In addition, several French drains have been installed in the adjacent grass areas to safely move water out of the way of the entry doors.

In previous years, a canopy consisting of a metal frame wrapped in canvas was installed on brackets attached directly to the wood trim over the entry doors. The canvas canopy was in place before 1999 (exact date of installation is unknown), and remained in use until a couple of years ago when it was destroyed by a big snow fall. Due to the weight of the snow that accumulated on top of the canvas canopy, the metal brackets tore out of the wall, damaging the wood trim and the existing stucco in the area above the entry doors. Over the course of time when the canopy was in place, it was replaced several times, including in the late 2000's, and most recently in 2013-2015 with a version provided by Rader Awning.



*View of drains at entry and concrete retaining walls*



*View of previous Rader Awning canopy at Art Center Entry (no longer in place)*

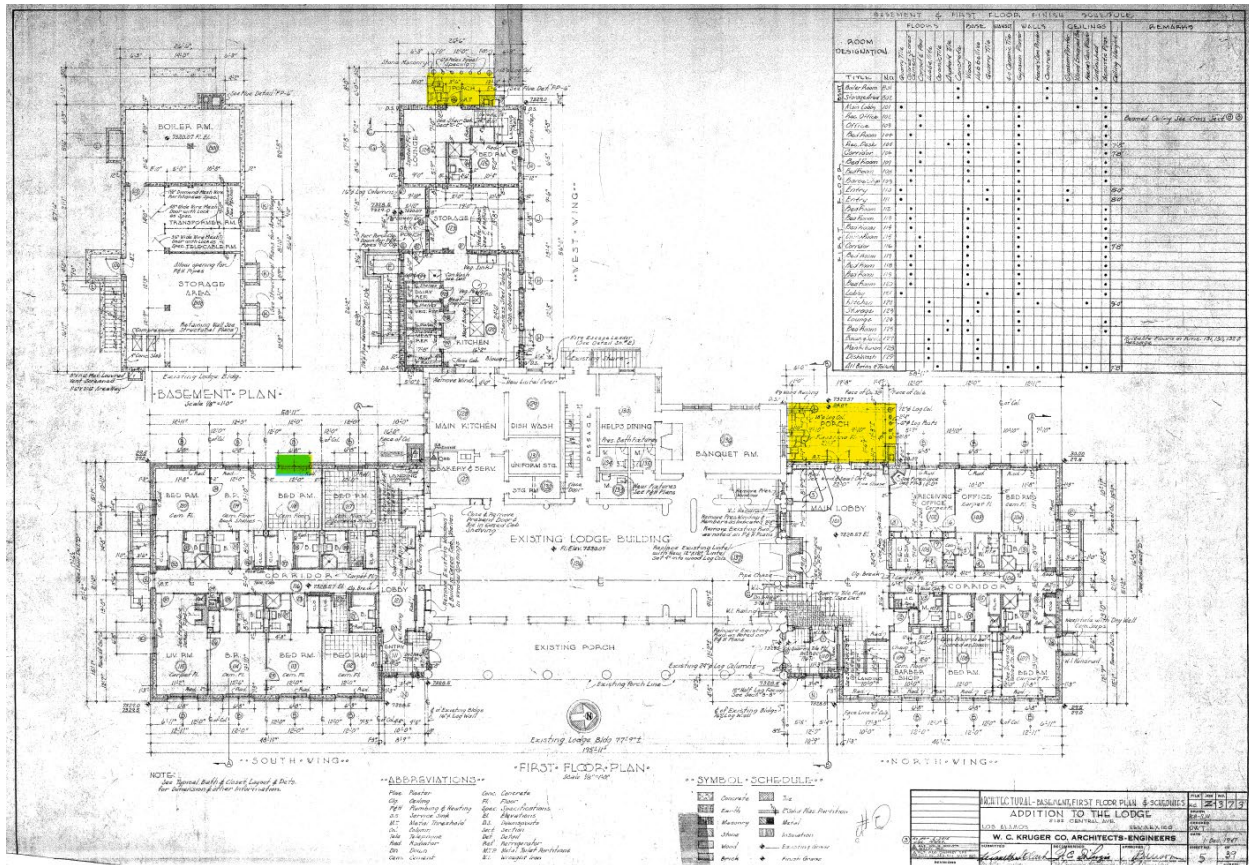
### **Reasons for the Proposed Change**

The County's proposal is intended to preserve the building from weather and water damage and to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the building users.

An extended fixed portal or covering will provide the following benefits to the preservation of the building:

- It will protect the entry doors and the interior of the building from direct exposure to weather events, particularly water damage.
- Per the proposed plans indicated in this letter, a portal fixed to the concrete retaining walls (which are not historic material), rather than to the building, will reduce the wear and tear, and damage that comes from installing and reinstalling a smaller canvas awning directly to the historic material.
- The proposed portal is fully engineered as a separate, self-supporting structure, and will only be connected to the historic building by a piece of flashing to protect against water damage to both structures. The proposed portal will not be supported in any way by the historic Fuller Lodge building.
- The current entry to the Art Center was originally a window, per the 1947 Addition to the Lodge drawings by W.C. Kruger Co. Architects & Engineers (see green highlight in 1947 floor plan below). In the 1947 design, all entries on the west side of the building have large fixed portals or

porch coverings (see yellow highlights in 1947 floor plan below), similar to the portal proposed by this letter. Adding the proposed portal at the Art Center entry helps to maintain stylistic continuity with the design features of the rest of the building, and uses architectural language that is already in use throughout Fuller Lodge.



Architectural Basement, First Floor Plan & Schedules drawing from W.C. Kruger Co. Architects & Engineers  
December 1, 1947 drawing set for the Addition to the Lodge project.

An extended fixed portal or covering will provide the following benefits to the building users:

- A buffer against ice, snow, and excessive water accumulation in the paved concrete entry area to the Art Center, reducing the risk of slipping for building users. In addition, it will alleviate the damage to the concrete area that occurs from repetitive salting of pedestrian pathways to protect against ice accumulation.
- The existing drains will remain in place, and have the capacity to mitigate the greatly reduced amount of water that would reach the concrete entry area if a portal covering is added. Adding the portal will divert much of the water that currently falls on the concrete entry area to the surrounding grass areas.
- An extended portal will create shade at the entry, and at the area inside the entry, providing protection to building users from sun and heat exposure. It will also help to reduce cooling loads inside the building to create a more comfortable environment.

**The Proposed Solution:**

The County has worked with Mullen Heller Architecture to develop a proposed design to add a portal/porch covering over the main entry to the Art Center that maintains stylistic continuity with the rest of the building.

The proposed design options include setting structural columns on the surrounding retaining walls around the concrete paved entry area (either existing concrete retaining walls, or new larger stone-faced walls in the same locations). The columns will be round wood columns, similar to the style used at the other fixed porches included in the 1947 Addition. The sloped roof will be finished in 6-sided interlocking aluminum shingles that match the shingles currently installed at the building's roof. Refer to the Fuller Lodge West Wing Portal Proposal document completed by Mullen Heller for more information about the two design options being proposed.

As it is early in the design process, precise detailing is continuing to be worked out. One of the things being considered are the existing exterior lighting fixtures mounted to the stone wall on either side of the Art Center entry doors. These lighting fixtures are not part of the historic material of the building, and are oversized for their location and function. The County is considering replacing these fixtures with similar light fixtures in a more appropriate size.

It is the intention of the County to find a solution that honors the historic character and character defining features of the Fuller Lodge building and district, and that has no adverse effects.

Los Alamos County owns the property, and public funding sources will be used to complete the renovations proposed in this project. The County, and their consultants, propose that the work included in this letter will not adversely affect the cultural resource of Fuller Lodge, and asks for concurrence and comment from the Los Alamos Historic Preservation Advisory Board.

Sincerely,

*Rebekah C. Bellum*

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