INTRODUCTION

The buildings and landscapes that form the University of New Mexico’s central campus offers uniqueness recognized by architects, historians, writers, and poets. Many of its historic buildings represent the legacy of one of the Southwest’s most respected regional architects, John Gaw Meem, and even the more contemporary buildings not designed by this recognized master reflect his influence and contribution not only to the university’s distinctive architectural style, but modern Southwest regionalism in general. The University’s characteristic Spanish-Pueblo Revival style is a legacy to the efforts of former presidents, such as William G. Tight, James Zimmerman, and Thomas Popejoy, who successfully endeavored to create a truly exceptional academic setting to benefit students, faculty, staff, and community.

Over the years, these buildings and landscapes have become a source of pride for University alumni and the residents of Albuquerque as well as those who come on campus daily to work or study. People in both the university community and the community at large, interact with the campus, and each have created their own “sense of place” – a subtle, perhaps even subconscious, emotion – that encompasses buildings, open spaces, and memories.

The importance of preserving the University’s historic buildings and sense of place has become in recent years part of the campus planning process. This awareness is evidenced by policy statements issued by the Board of Regents and incorporated in the University policy manual, which note that “several” buildings have “exceptional” historic value and reflect the University’s rich architectural heritage.

While it is acknowledged by most everyone that historic buildings on campus contribute significantly to sense of place, the question must be asked: Is preservation of “several” historic buildings the only component in maintaining this concept of place?

A guiding premise behind this preservation plan is that a sense of place is formed by more than just the preservation of one building or scattering of buildings. What evokes emotions about place is not only the preservation of familiar, often historic, buildings, but also the interrelationship of noteworthy places with their adjacent landscapes and open spaces. It is the interrelationships of these places and spaces that result in landscape corridors and building vistas that enhance the human scale of the campus and make it identifiable and memorable to those who encounter it.
As the university continues to grow both in enrollment and faculty, more demands are placed on classroom, laboratory, and office space, which are underscored by advances in technology. University planners and the Board of Regents must make difficult decisions regarding the significance of the University’s built environment. It is a goal that the concept of place which underlies this preservation plan will play a part in the decision-making process as they decide which buildings and open spaces are important and need to be left intact, which can be integrated into new designs, and which ones can be replaced with more modern facilities. Similarly, planners will face the challenge of how to preserve the visual qualities of the university’s significant buildings and landscapes as they design new facilities.

By successfully meeting these challenges the University can preserve the architectural heritage that makes the campus not only unique and interesting, but a comfortable place to be in the world, which is the true meaning of a sense of place.

**Project Background**

Prior to this Getty Campus Heritage Grant Project, there were a number of historic preservation studies at UNM whose goals were to further a continuum of architectural styles and sense of place on campus. The first step in any historic preservation project is to look at what is important about the buildings or places perceived to have intrinsic value and to develop a method to analyze what it is that makes those places important to an individual or community.

Although many past planning efforts have documented the importance of the university’s setting and architectural style, over the years, many of the historic buildings have been demolished and the spatiality of the campus has been altered. Many believe that if the university does not work to actively preserve its sense of place and architectural style, that which makes the campus unique will be lost. As such, the University formed a Historic Preservation Committee. The roots of the committee lie in the 1974 effort by the “Hodgin Hall Preservation Committee” led by Joe McKinney and later joined by alumni. Once Hodgin Hall was protected, Mr. McKinney worked to institutionalize historic preservation and wrote the 1999 Historic Preservation policy for the Board of Regents’ Policy Manual and aided in creating the Historic Preservation Committee, which was established and appointed by the University President in 2000. The committee operates under two policies (located in the appendices):

1. Section 2.10.1 of the UNM Board of Regents’ Policy Manual, adopted November 9, 1999
2. UNM Business Policy 5020, Historic Preservation adopted July 12, 2000
The previous architectural survey efforts at UNM include a study by Joe McKinney to document the historic buildings on campus, an initial architectural survey effort under the first year of the Getty Campus Heritage Grant Project, and classes at the University of New Mexico, School of Architecture and Planning.

In the fall of 2005 the Historic Community Research class at the School of Architecture and Planning conducted the architectural survey and research for the Getty Grant. The class studied a variety of methods for the survey and interpretation of historic environments, the history of campus planning and campus preservation in the United States. Each student contributed directly to the campus heritage survey by completing two New Mexico Historic Property Inventory forms (either on two buildings, or one building and one designed landscape), and a detailed research paper on the history and preservation potential of one of their properties. The class then summarized their work in a series of essays.

Van Citters: Historic Preservation, LLC (VCHP) teamed with Cherry/See/Reames Architects and competed on a request for proposal that the University issued to complete the Getty Grant. The project team included the Historic Preservation Committee and several students who participated in the preservation certificate program in the School of Architecture. VCHP oversaw the work of the students and submitted all phases of the work to the preservation committee for their review. The project resulted in:

- A completed architectural survey of the main campus
- Two national register nominations
- This preservation plan
- A walking tour map of historic properties and settings

Project Approach

This project includes only the Central Campus and is not intended to replace the general campus development plan. It is intended to supplement existing plans and be included in future planning efforts. This heritage preservation plan focuses on what sites, settings and buildings should be retained in order for the University to maintain its architectural heritage and sense of place. It is anticipated that the University’s Historic Preservation Committee, along with other planning committees on campus, will determine how this plan should be integrated into the overall decisions about the placement of new buildings and future campus development plans (see Figure 1).
It should be noted that in most cases a building’s interior space does not have historic significance and can be altered as needed. However, several historic buildings have important interior features which should be preserved. These features include murals, meeting areas with fireplaces, and rooms with significant architectural details and original furniture. These interior features are all called out separately and noted specifically for preservation in this plan.

The plan focuses on the buildings and landscapes identified in the initial work completed under the Getty Grant that set the foundation for the project. It does not address the development pressures that the University feels as the need for classroom space and modern facilities grows, nor does it address design guidelines for such new facilities. However, it does evaluate what is important to the architectural character and sense of place of the Central Campus. The project team defined important elements (buildings and landscapes) that contributed to the campus heritage such as those already listed on the State and National registers, and those that meet the National Register criteria for eligibility. The project team also considered those buildings that appeared to have an inherent value to the public and University staff/students and that should be considered eligible once they reach 50 years old. By not only identifying register eligible buildings and landscapes, but also those that regardless of age contribute to the campus sense of place, the University can incorporate historic preservation values into the planning process as it continues to expand campus facilities.