



BILL RICHARDSON  
Governor

STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION**

BATAAN MEMORIAL BUILDING  
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30 December 2010

Dr. Tim Maxwell, President  
The Old Santa Fe Association  
P.O. Box 1055  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-1055

Subject: National Register Eligibility for St. Catherine's Indian School, Santa Fe, New Mexico  
(SR# 1804)

Dear Dr. Maxwell:

Since your letter requesting my opinion on the potential eligibility of St. Catherine's Indian School for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), Terry Moody, National and State Register Coordinator for the Historic Preservation Division, and I have had the opportunity to visit and tour the property to assess, first-hand its present condition and eligibility. Terry and I have also reviewed and discussed the information in the State Register nomination and the National Register bulletins that provide guidance on NRHP eligibility and listing.

Based on the information currently available and guidance from the National Register, it is my opinion that St. Catherine's Indian School is eligible for listing in the National Register under three criteria:

Criterion A, for events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Native American Education): In the late nineteenth century, as the westward movement gained momentum and Native Indians lost the struggle to hold on to their homeland and traditional lifeways, the federal government established boarding schools in an attempt to assimilate Indian children into American society. Between 1880 and 1900, twenty-five federal, off-reservation schools were opened in fifteen states. New Mexico had two federal, off-reservation Indian Schools founded during this period. The Albuquerque Industrial Indian School, originally founded as a Presbyterian Indian School in 1881, was turned over to federal government control in 1884, and the Santa Fe Indian School founded in 1890. Shortly thereafter, St. Catherine's Indian School, was founded by the Order of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People, a Catholic missionary congregation founded by Philadelphia banking heiress Katharine Marie Drexel in 1891, a couple of years after she took her final vows as Sister Mary Katharine. St. Catherine's Indian School was completed in 1894 and was in continuous operation by the Order until 1998, when the property went into private ownership.

The Albuquerque Industrial Indian School closed its doors in 1982, and most of its historical buildings have been lost. While the Santa Fe Indian School still operates today, its historical campus buildings were demolished in 2008. Consequently, St. Catherine's Indian School is especially important to New Mexico and the Nation as an embodiment of the history of American Indian education, and is therefore eligible for listing to the NRHP under Criteria A.

Criterion B, in association with the lives of persons significant in our past (Saint Katharine Drexel, 1858-1955): Of equal importance to its significance in American history, St. Catherine's is eligible for listing under Criteria B for its association with Saint Katharine Drexel, canonized in 2000 as American's second saint, for her humanitarian efforts to better the lives of Native Indians and African American children.

Criterion C, for the buildings that embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction (Mission Revival and Spanish Pueblo Revival Styles): Over the more than 100 years of continuous operation as an Indian school, the buildings and campus of St. Catherine's evolved and expanded to meet the changing educational needs of the Indian children that attended school there. Nonetheless, a number of the early Mission Revival and Spanish Pueblo Revival buildings retain enough distinctive characteristics of these styles to be eligible for listing under Criteria C.

Criterion D, has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history: Currently there is no evidence to support an eligibility determination under Criterion D.

At present the Historic Preservation Division has not received any formal information on developments that might affect the integrity of St. Catherine's Indian School. We have made inquiries with our contacts with the federal Veteran's Administration and have learned that SRI conducted a cultural resources survey of the school property. At present, most historic preservation matters that may affect the property are governed by the City of Santa Fe's historic preservation ordinance.

I wanted to thank you and the Old Santa Fe Association for your continued interest and support of historic preservation in Santa Fe. It is important and critical to retaining the historic character of the City.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I may be of additional assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan V. Biella". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Jan V. Biella  
Interim NM State Historic Preservation Officer



# THE OLD SANTA FE ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 1055, SANTA FE, NM 87505-1055

November 1, 2010

Dr. Jan Biella, Interim State Historic Preservation Officer  
State of New Mexico  
Historic Preservation Division  
Bataan Memorial Building  
407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Dr. Biella,

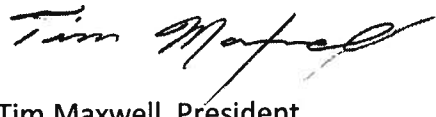
The Old Santa Fe Association respectfully seeks your opinion on the eligibility of St. Catherine's Industrial Indian School, in Santa Fe, to the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, the property is on the New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties (File # 1804) and has been given Landmark Status by the City of Santa Fe. This property has received public attention at various times since its sale by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in 2005. Different proposals for reuse of the property have been made in the past five years, but none have moved forward. As other proposals will undoubtedly emerge, the Old Santa Fe Association would like to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the possibilities for protecting the property while encouraging appropriate reuse.

The Santa Fe city council listed this property as a Landmark in 2006 based upon public testimony and the recommendations of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the State Cultural Properties Review Committee, the Historic Santa Fe Foundation, the Old Santa Fe Association, and the City of Santa Fe Historic Design Review Board. Given the recognized importance of the school and its grounds, my organization would like to know if it would be eligible for National Register status.

Also, as we look at the State Register listing it is unclear where the boundaries of the area included in the listing lie. Can your office clarify those boundaries?

If you would like to discuss my request further, please feel free to call me at 820-1299. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Maxwell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Tim Maxwell, President