

## History Corner # 7, Part Three: The Apartments - Conclusion - A Surprise Ending

-by John Hemler

The following events in 1990-91 brought this saga of “The Apartments” to a surprise ending:

1. September 26, 1990: Earl Waid, Assistant to the Mayor, responded to TRNA’s August 21 letter requesting that the renovation permit not be extended beyond November. He stated: “We share your frustration with the lack of action taken by the owners to complete the apartments moved to your neighborhood. However, the owners have met all City requirements and have a valid building permit. The current permit was extended for 6 months in May, 1990, and will expire this coming November. If there is not substantial progress made at that time, it is the intent of Code Administration to void the permit and the City will then take action against the owners to remedy the situation.” This gave us some hope.
2. October, 1990: Two events occurred: a) A “For Sale” sign was placed at the apartment site; b) A large graffiti message appeared on the west (back) side of the apartments. It read “SADDAM –AIM SCUD MISSILES HERE”. (Desert Storm was underway in Iraq.) Because the complex was surrounded by a 6-foot chain link fence, our TRNA anti-graffiti team was unable to remove the message!!
3. November 9, 1990: A Journal article reported that the apartments were for sale and that State Senator Marty Chavez (west side) was drafting a bill appropriating State funds to buy the structure. He said “The idea is to get rid of them. They just don’t belong here.”
4. December, 1990: Just before Christmas, TRNA received a telephone call from Waterman, Inc., the company that had moved the apartments to TR. We were informed that Waterman, Inc., through litigation to recover their moving costs, had obtained clear title to the apartments and land. They requested a meeting in early January to discuss options with some members of the TRNA board.
5. January 5, 1991: Three board members met with the President and Albuquerque General Manager of Waterman Inc. Mr. Waterman informed us that he was considering two options:
  - a) recycling (renovating) the apartments using the current design and permit and then selling the property;
  - b) selling the apartments and land “as is” to a new buyer to recoup his investment.We asked him to consider a third option – selling the property to the City and moving them to another location (This option had been pursued the past year, with negative results, but we wanted to try one more time !!)
6. January, 1991: During the second week of January, the Waterman General Manager and I traveled to a number of locations in Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Albuquerque, where Waterman had moved in structures and renovated them. I became convinced that Waterman Inc. had the capabilities and resources to make such recycled efforts fit very well into their surroundings and decided to recommend Waterman’s first option (recycling) to the entire TRNA Board. Also

during this time, board members met again with City officials on the third option (selling to the City) and received the same negative responses: no money and little interest.

7. January 15, 1991: The TRNA Board met to consider the options and to prepare recommendations for the general membership to be presented at a special membership meeting in early February. The board agreed with the recommendation to pursue Waterman's recycling option.
8. January 17, 1991: When Waterman was informed of our proposed recommendation to the general membership, they informed us that they wanted to do a cost benefit analysis to determine if it was reasonable to execute this option. In late January, Waterman informed us that they had completed the cost benefit analysis and had determined that it was not a reasonable business option for them. Therefore, they had decided to raze the apartments, remove the debris, and consider other options for the property
9. February 1991: Razing began in early February. On February 18th my wife and I sat on our balcony located across the street from the razing and toasted with champagne as the last (Saddam.....) wall came tumbling down. On February 22, the last debris was removed. The ordeal was finally over for TR!!

POSTSCRIPT 1: As you can see when you drive up Montaña past the "apartments" location at San Ildefonso, a series of well-planned townhouses/condos now occupy the area.

POSTSCRIPT 2: In the mid-90s, the City Council passed an ordinance designed to prevent such an occurrence from ever happening again!!