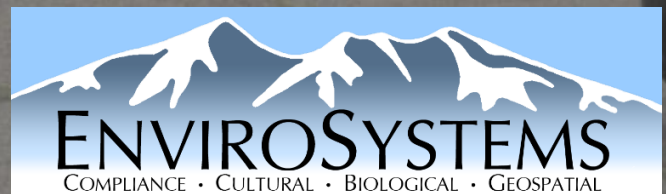


PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCES STUDY: ARCHITECTURAL DOCUMENTATION AND, EVALUATION OF 302 WEST OAK AVENUE, FLAGSTAFF, COCONINO COUNTY, ARIZONA

SUBMITTED TO:
MR. MARK REAVIS
HERITAGE PRESERVATION OFFICER
FLAGSTAFF CITY HALL
211 W. ASPEN AVENUE
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PREPARED ON BEHALF OF:
NORTHERN ARIZONA HEALTHCARE
1200 N. Beaver Street
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Prepared on behalf of:

Northern Arizona Healthcare
1200 N. Beaver Street
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Submitted to:

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November 22, 2021



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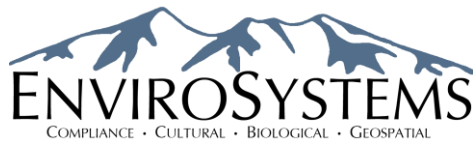
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INTRODUCTION

At the request of Mr. Jason Peak, Construction Project Manager with Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH) and in compliance with City of Flagstaff (City) Zoning Code 10-30.30.050, EnviroSystems Management, Inc. (EnviroSystems/ESM) conducted a Phase I Cultural Resources Study of 302 West Oak Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona. NAH is proposing to sell the abandoned building and parcel due to its condition, which would then be demolished and redeveloped. The cultural/architectural investigation is necessary due to the age of the building. Although NAH originally ordered this report, Brookfield Communities has now taken possession of the property.

METHODS

In-person archival research was done at the Arizona Historical Society's Arizona Heritage Center in Tempe, Coconino County Recorder's office, and Flagstaff Community Development Department. The reason for this limited in-person investigation is because the three Flagstaff research facilities—Arizona Historical Society Pioneer Museum, Flagstaff City-Coconino County Public Library, and NAU Cline Library—were not open to the public for research due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records facilities were also closed.

However, considerable archival resources were available online. Ancestry.com and the Arizona Department of Health Services (<https://www.azdhs.gov/licensing/vital-records/genealogy>) provided information on the family histories of individuals associated with the Flagstaff Mortuary from census manuscripts and birth, death, and marriage records. Newspapers.com provided hundreds of ads and nearly 5,000 small obituary notices in the Arizona Daily Sun that were associated with the Flagstaff Mortuary between 1958 and 2002, but no feature articles on the business or the key people involved were found. The Arizona Memory Project (azmemory.azlibrary.gov) had a nearly complete set of city directories for Flagstaff during the period examined.

Secretary of the Interior Qualified Architectural Historian Scott Solliday visited the property on August 11, 2021. Field documentation included assessment of building materials, construction methods, current condition, and any alterations that could be identified visually. All buildings and significant features were recorded by digital photography.

Norvel G. Owens, who was co-director at the Flagstaff Mortuary, 1976-1998, was interviewed on November 5, 2021.

HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE MORTUARY BUSINESS IN FLAGSTAFF THROUGH THE 20TH CENTURY

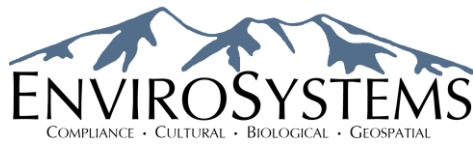
Flagstaff was established as a camp along the Beale Wagon Road in 1876, but the permanent settlement of a town began in 1882, when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was built across northern Arizona (Woodward, et al. 1985). Edgar Whipple, one of the first pioneer businessmen, arrived at Antelope Springs in 1881 and built a log cabin that served as Flagstaff's first saloon (Cline 1994: 5, 61, 199; Gazetteer Publishing Company 1909). He became a building contractor, having built the Babbitt Building and the dome at Lowell Observatory, and by 1909 he

was the town's first undertaker. Whipple built the Flagstaff Undertaking Parlor in about 1920 (Johnson Publishing Company 1965). The address was variably listed as 116 or 120 East Aspen Avenue, depending on which door was used. It continued to operate at its prominent location in downtown Flagstaff long after Whipple's death. (*Coconino Sun* 1929; Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company [MSTTC] 1931-1958; Southwick Company 1948; Baldwin ConSurvey Company 1950; National Home Directory Company 1955).

William L. Compton grew up in Flagstaff around the turn of the century. He served as a soldier in the Great World War, and when he returned to Flagstaff he worked in the sheep-raising industry. In 1921 he married Edgar Whipple's stepdaughter, Flora Jensen, and began working for his father-in-law as assistant undertaker (Cline 1994:69; *Coconino Sun* 1929; Find a Grave 2021a, 2021b). When Edgar Whipple passed away in 1939, W.L. Compton became director of the Flagstaff Undertaking Parlor and operated it until he retired in 1958 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. 1955 Ad for Flagstaff Undertaking Parlor (National Home Directory Company 1955).



It is worth noting that the Flagstaff Undertaking Parlor, as well as later mortuaries, offered ambulance service starting in about 1940 (MSTTC 1940-1968; Southwick Company 1948; Baldwin ConSurvey Company 1950; National Home Directory Company 1955; Flagstaff Directory Company 1959; Johnson Publishing Company 1965, 1972). The mortuary vehicles were equipped to accommodate guests in a supine position, whether they were dead or living. By the 1960s ads noted 24-hour ambulance service with oxygen tanks and trained attendants. It was not until 1972 that ambulance companies appeared, and mortuaries no longer offered this service.

This one mortuary served the needs of the Flagstaff community until the mid-1950s. During this time the town's population more than doubled in size, from 3,186 in 1920 to 7,663 in 1950. The first competing mortuary appeared in 1955. It was the Compton Mortuary, operated by Glenn R. Compton, W.L. Compton's nephew, undoubtedly with the elder Compton's blessing and support (National Home Directory Company 1955; Arizona Department of Health Services 1921; Find a Grave 2021b). No address was provided for the Compton Mortuary in the 1955 directory, but W.L. Compton soon retired and Glenn Compton soon took over operation of his uncle's business (Arizona Daily Star, April 4, 1958).

Dr. Herbert R. Rice and Maxine E. Rice moved from Minneapolis to Flagstaff in 1944 (Arizona Daily Sun, November 15, 1993). In the early 1950s they bought a small complex of buildings at 302 West Oak Avenue. The buildings had been built about 1949 by the Kerr Bottling Company (Coconino County Assessor 2021; Owens 2021). A missing page in the Coconino County Recorder's Index of Deeds makes it impossible to trace earlier property ownership. The neighborhood, Mt Elden Addition, was platted outside of town limits in 1929 (Figure 2). The rural subdivision grew slowly. The 1950 city directory (Baldwin ConSurvey Company 1950) listed a few residences at 110-120 and 210 West Oak Avenue; however, the 1955 city directory (National Home Directory Company 1955) listed all residences north of the city as just rural delivery numbers, and there were no businesses listed in the area. The Rices used the main building on the north end of the lot as their home, and the large building to the south was converted into Dr. Rice's medical office. Dr. Rice died unexpectedly in 1955. Maxine Rice soon remarried, to Dr. James H. Watt (Arizona Daily Sun, October 16, 1956), and in 1957 she entered into a partnership with Glenn Compton to convert her old family home into the Flagstaff Mortuary (Arizona Daily Sun, March 11, 1958).

For probably less than a year, in 1958, Glenn Compton's Flagstaff Mortuary had been, like his uncle's business, the sole undertaking business in Flagstaff. However, Flagstaff was rapidly growing into a small city. From a relatively small population of 7,663 in 1950, Flagstaff quickly grew in the following years, to 18,214 residents in 1960 and to 26,117 in 1970. In 1958 Flagstaff annexed 48 square miles for total 51 square miles within its corporate boundaries and expanded again in 1959 to 60 square miles (Cline 1994:427; University of Arizona 1958). This provided the first opportunity for competing mortuaries to open. Philip M. Ganley was owner and director of Ganley & Sons Chapel at 1402 Lakin Drive (7th Avenue) c.1959-1968, and Tony Whitney was director of Greenlaw Funeral Home at 2603 Patterson Boulevard c.1972-1980 (Flagstaff Directory Company 1959; MSTTC 1961-1975; Johnson Publishing Company 1965, 1972, 1980).

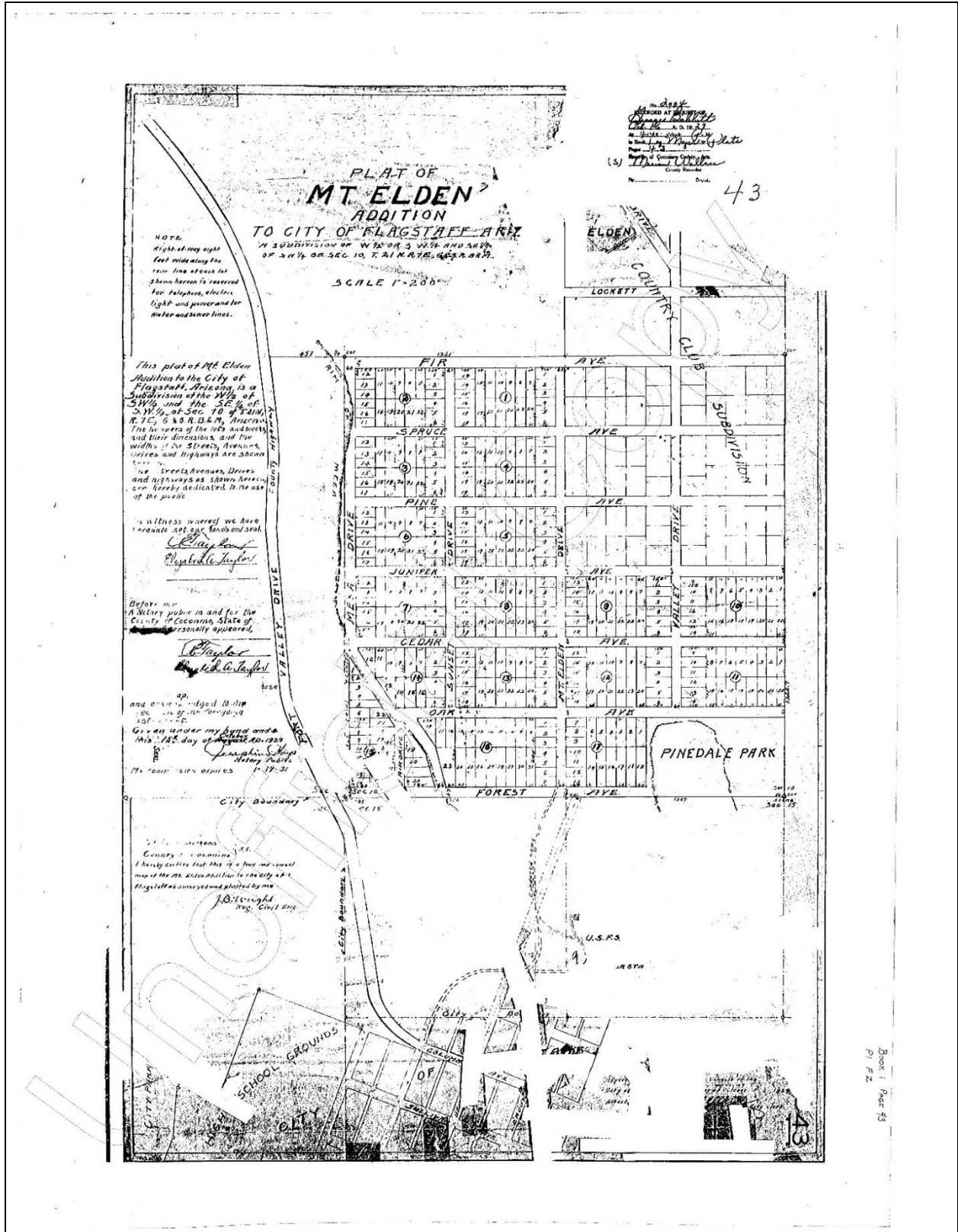


Figure 2. Mt Elden Addition plat map (Coconino County Recorder 1929).

However, Richard L. Bagwell, the new director at the Flagstaff Mortuary, would continue to dominate the mortuary business, operating until 2002 (Coconino County Assessor 2021; Luttrell 2020). Maxine B. Rice was listed as the business owner until 1968, but by 1972 Bagwell had taken over full ownership (Coconino County Assessor 2021; Johnson Publishing Company 1965, 1972, 1980; MSTTC 1968, 1975) (Figure 3, Figure 4, Table 1). Norvel G. Owens joined Bagwell as co-director at Flagstaff Mortuary 1976-1998, and then started his own mortuary (Johnson Publishing Company 1980; Luttrell 2020). Bagwell also had an ownership interest in the Greenlaw Mortuary at 2603 N Patterson c.1970-c.1982 (Coconino County Recorder 2021).



Figure 3. 1959 ad for Flagstaff Mortuary (Flagstaff Directory Company 1959).



Figure 4. 1965 ad for Flagstaff Mortuary (Johnson Publishing Company 1965).

Table 1. Owners of the Flagstaff Mortuary Property

Property Owner	Years	Source
Maxine B. Rice	c.1949-c.1972	Release of Mortgage 1038818 (1984) City directories, 1959 and 1965-68
Richard Bagwell	c.1972-1988	Agreements for Deeds 20414, 20415 City directories, 1972-80
FMI Acquisition Corp. (Richard and Susan Bagwell, Flagstaff Mortuary)	1988-2002	Reception Nos. 1157402, 1242955
Mighty Oak Alliance	2002-2005	Reception No. 3176549
Loven Contracting, Inc. and Paul and Anne Grasser	2005-2006	Reception No. 3341368
Paul and Anne Grasser	2006-2009	Reception No. 3394236
Robert Edward Woolley	2009-2011	Reception No. 3548911
Flagstaff Medical Center, Inc.	2011-present	Reception No. 3596700

Source: Coconino County Assessor 2021; Coconino County Recorder 2021.

The layout and use of the property in the earliest years is unknown, but Norvel G. Owens, who was a funeral director at the Flagstaff Mortuary, provided details of the arrangement and operations of the mortuary in the 1980s and 1990s. The Chapel in the front of the property was the primary public facility for viewings, rosaries, and services. If more than one funeral was being prepared, the room connecting the chapel to the main building was used as a secondary viewing room. These rooms were furnished with comfortable seating, carpeting, and dim lighting (Photographs 1 and 2).



Photograph 1. Interior of the chapel on 10/27/2021, facing east



Photograph 2. Interior of viewing rooms on 10/27, facing south.

The morgue preparation room, with embalming tables and tools, was located in the east end of the main building (Photograph 3). There was also a morgue refrigerator and laundry room in this area. A large crematorium was installed in the small garage attached to the east end of the building (Photograph 4).



Photograph 3. Interior of morgue preparation room on 10/27/2021, facing north by northwest.



Photograph 4. Crematorium on 10/27/2021, facing south by southwest.

The addition of the crematorium was considerable investment at that time (Figure 5). In 1960 cremations only accounted for 3.5 percent of funerals but had grown to 10 percent in 1980 (Habenstein and Lamers 1981). However, this rapidly changed as demand for cremation services rose quickly. Mr. Owens estimated that 70-75 percent of all funerals in Arizona and the western states are now cremation funerals.



Figure 5. 1999 ad for Flagstaff Mortuary (*Arizona Daily Star*, December 3, 1999).

The western wing, which was added in 1982 and expanded in 1985, was the casket selection room. Different types of caskets were restocked with weekly deliveries (Photograph 5). The office, with its entry on the courtyard, was used for consulting with clients, coordinating arrangements with churches and cemeteries, and managing records (Photograph 6). The detached garage on the eastern end of the property housed a funeral coach, a limousine, and a first call car, which was usually a van or station wagon. There was a large sign at the front of the property, near the road.



Photograph 5. Interior of casket display room addition on 10/27/2021, facing north.



Photograph 6. Interior of office on 10/27/2021, facing east.

Mr. Owens could not estimate the number of funeral services that were conducted at the Flagstaff Mortuary. A search of the Arizona Daily Star shows that almost 5,000 obituary notices for services at the Flagstaff Mortuary were published between 1958 and 2002. Many were printed over several days. However, during its 45 years of service to the community, the Flagstaff Mortuary undoubtedly provided many more funeral services than are indicated by the obituary notices.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE FLAGSTAFF MORTUARY PROPERTY

The Flagstaff Mortuary property is identified as Accessor's Parcel Number 110-06-036-E (Coconino County Accessor 2021). The legal description identifies it as Mt Elden Addition, Block 13, all of Lots 20 and 21, Lots 8-11 with exceptions, and parts of Lots 22 and 23. The parcel contains 0.89 acres. All buildings, including the main building, attached garage, and detached garage, as well as asphalt paving and concrete paving, were constructed in 1949, but additions were built on the northwest end of the complex in 1982 and 1985. The overall plan of the complex includes a chapel and a main building joined to form a courtyard between the two building, and a detached garage (Figure 6).

No plans or building permits were found documenting the construction and early history of the property. A search of building permits at the Flagstaff Community Development Department provided an undated permit to repair a fire-damage area, a permit for construction of the casket display room on the west side of the building in 1985, and two more recent documents.

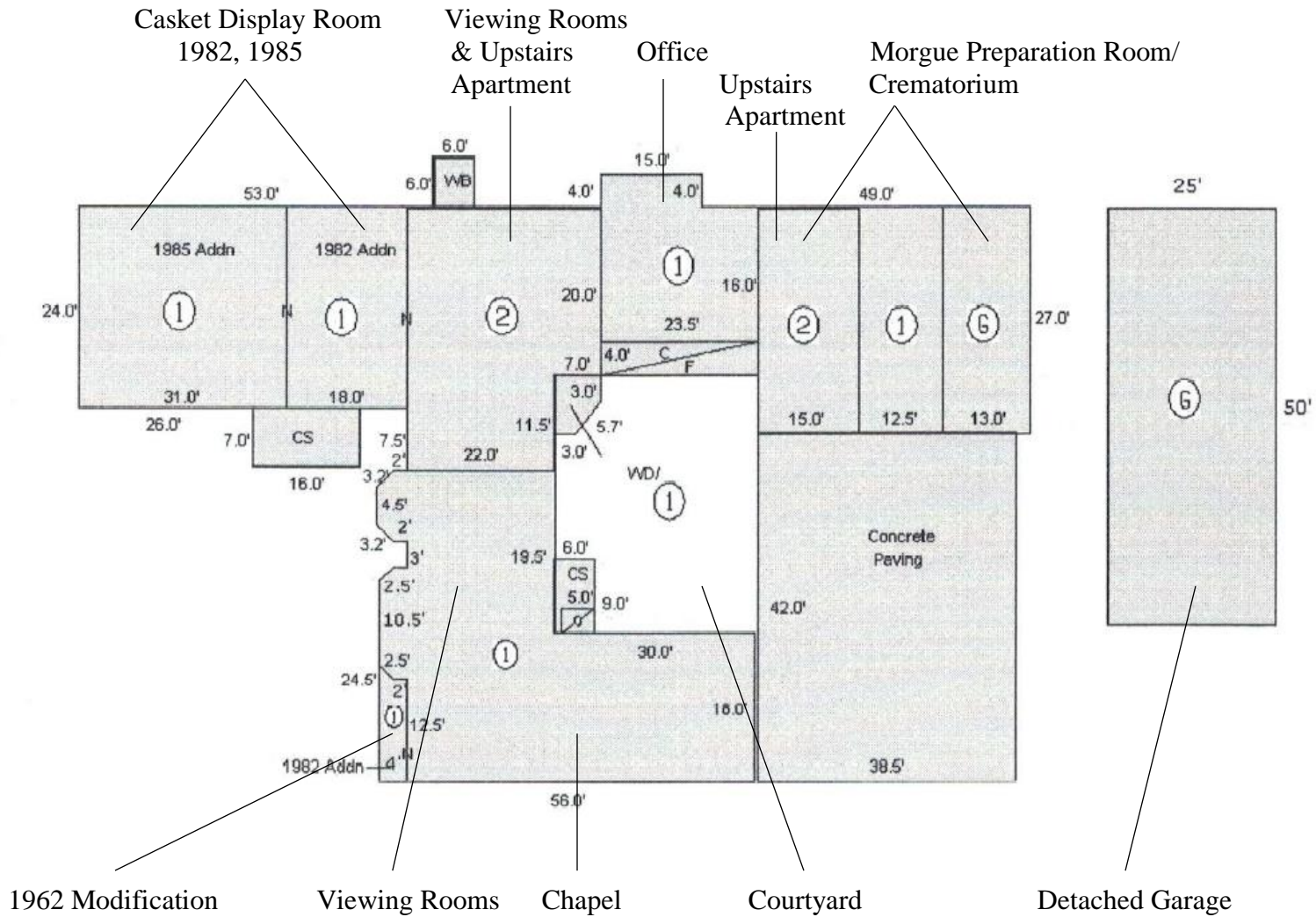


Figure 6. Layout of the Flagstaff Mortuary Property (Coconino County Assessor 2021; Luttrell 2020).

The Flagstaff Mortuary reflects the Minimal Traditional style with random rubble malpais stone masonry walls constructed in the local vernacular style that became popular in Flagstaff after 1910 (Woodward, et al. 1985) (Photograph 7, Photograph 8).



Photograph 7. Central and western façade of Chapel and Main Building, facing north.



Photograph 8. Full façade of Chapel and Main Building, facing north.

Almost all windows have been removed and filled with plywood, but photographs of the windows are still depicted on Google Earth™ (Photographs 9 and 10).



Photograph 9. Google Earth image of central and western façade of Chapel and Main Building, facing north by northeast.



Photograph 10. Google Earth image off full façade of Chapel and Main Building, facing north.

The Chapel has an L-shaped plan and a low-pitched intersecting gable roof with asphalt shingles (Photographs 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15). The building has stone masonry walls on three sides, with board and batten siding only on the west wall and in the gable ends. Windows have concrete sills and drip caps. There is a cant bay window in the northwest corner of the building. Originally there

was another cant bay window in the southwest corner, and apparently an entry, that were enclosed in 1962, suggesting that the west side of the Chapel was the original main entrance (see Figure 6).



Photograph 11. Chapel, facing north.



Photograph 12. Google Earth image of chapel, facing north.



Photograph 13. Chapel, facing northwest.



Photograph 14. West end of Chapel façade with front-facing gable end, facing northwest.



Photograph 15. East side of Chapel, facing west.

The Main Building has a long rectilinear plan and a low-pitched side gable roof with asphalt shingles with small second-floor apartments at the east and west ends (Photographs 16, 17, and 18). The west end of the building is of wood frame construction with board and batten siding; the walls on the east end are of stone masonry. There is a cant bay window at the west end, in the northwest corner of the courtyard, two single-door entries in the central part, and a rolling metal garage door at the east end of the façade. There is a stone masonry chimney at the west end of the building. At the southwest corner of courtyard is another entry into the Chapel (Photograph 19).



Photograph 16. Chapel and Main Building, facing northwest.



Photograph 17. Google Earth image of chapel and Main Building, facing northwest from above.



Photograph 18. Main Building and courtyard, facing northwest.



Photograph 19. Courtyard and north entry to the Chapel, facing southwest.

The East Apartment extends above the stone masonry walls of the Morgue Preparation Room and Crematorium at the east end of the Main Building (Photographs 20, 21, 22, and 23). It is of wood frame construction with bevel siding and a medium-pitched front gable roof with asphalt shingles. There is a gable window and board and batten siding in the gable end. Two hipped dormers are on the east side of the roof.



Photograph 20. East second-floor apartment with telephone bell mounted on exterior wall, facing north.



Photograph 21. East end of Main Building, facing north.



Photograph 22. Interior of second floor east apartment on 10/27/2021, facing south.

Photograph 22.



Photograph 23. Morgue Preparation Room and east second floor apartment, facing northwest.

The West Apartment extends above the west end of the Main Building. It is of wood frame construction with bevel siding and a low-pitched front gable roof with asphalt shingles, with board and batten siding in the gable end (Photograph 24).



Photograph 24. Interior of second floor west apartment, facing southwest.

The Casket Display Room was added to the west side of the main building in 1985 (Photographs 25, 26, and 27). It has a long rectilinear plan and a low-pitched side gable roof with roll roofing. It is of wood frame construction with board and batten siding and has a large double-door entry for transferring coffins.



Photograph 25. Northwest Addition, facing north.



Photograph 26. West side of Main Building and Northwest Addition, facing northeast.



Photograph 27. Chapel, west side of Main Building and Northwest Addition, facing northeast.

The Detached Garage has a rectilinear plan and a low-pitched front gable roof with asphalt shingles and exposed rafters (Photographs 28, 29, and 30). It is of wood frame construction with board and batten siding and has a large rolling metal garage door and side entry door.



Photograph 28. Detached Garage, facing northeast.



Photograph 29. Detached Garage, facing north-northeast.



Photograph 30. West side of the Detached Garage, facing northeast.

There are two memorial plaques in the grass in front of the Northwest Addition, for Carroll C. Creighton, M.D. (1903-1962) and Rosa Lee Mealey (1880-1975). It has been confirmed that these two individuals were buried in Flagstaff cemeteries and that there are no burials on the property associated with these individuals (Luttrell 2020; Find a Grave 2021c, 2021d) (Photographs 31 and 32).



Photograph 31. Memorial plaque for Carroll C. Creighton.



Photograph 32. Memorial plaque for Rasa Lee Mealey.

Nearly all windows had been removed prior to the architectural field documentation of the property. Patty Luttrell of Tallpines Environmental Consulting Company provided these photographs of the property (Photographs 33, 34, 35, and 36) that were taken in 2020. They show the configuration of some of the windows as they existed at that time. Original windows appear to have been multi-light wood casement or fixed windows. Many of the windows had already been replaced with modern fixed pane windows (see Google Earth images).



Photograph 33. Entry with cant bay window on the northwest corner of Chapel, facing north.



Photograph 34. Back of Main Building and east second-floor apartment, facing south.



Photograph 35. Window on the Morgue Preparation Room on the east end of the Main Building, facing north.



Photograph 36. Main Building and courtyard, facing northwest

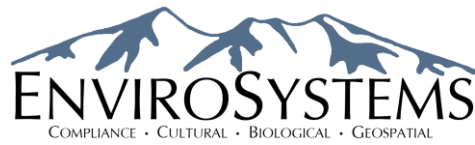
RECOMMENDATION OF NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

The Flagstaff Mortuary is recommended as not eligible for listing on the Arizona or National Register of Historic Places (AZ/NRHP). The period of significance for the property is 1949-1971. It is significant under National Register Criteria A and C, but it no longer retains the degree of integrity required to exhibit its significance. This corresponds with local Criteria B and D.

Properties that are significant under Criterion A are “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” (National Park Service 1997). As Flagstaff’s oldest existing mortuary, which was operated for nearly 50 years, the Flagstaff Mortuary marginally meets this level of significance at the local level (Criterion B).

Properties that are significant under National and State Criterion C are defined as properties that “embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction” (National Park Service 1997). With its random rubble malpais stone masonry walls constructed in the local vernacular style, the Flagstaff Mortuary meets this level of significance at the local level under local Criterion D (Flagstaff Zoning Code 10-30.30.050), which is analogous to National Criterion C.

However, due to substantial alterations to the buildings, the property has lost much of its historical and architectural integrity (Appendix A). The removal of nearly all windows in the buildings has greatly impacted integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The property also lacks integrity of feeling and association because there are no intact features that identify the use of the property as a mortuary. There is no surviving signage. While the 1962 alteration of the Chapel was done more than 50 years ago and is thus a change that was made during the building’s period of



significance, the loss of one of the two cant bay windows that flanked what was probably the original main entrance to the Chapel removed a key feature that would have visually suggested the use of the property as a mortuary.

For projects that will have an adverse effect on a historic property that is eligible for listing on the National Register, the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Parks Service often consider photographic documentation and a written history of the property to be adequate mitigation of effects. As the Flagstaff Mortuary is recommended as not eligible for listing on the AZ/NRHP, the documentation in this Phase I Cultural Resource Study should serve as an appropriate mitigation measure. Additional measures required at the local level are the preservation and repurposing of the malpais basalt into the proposed new construction, whether in the façade of the structure or landscaping/signage.



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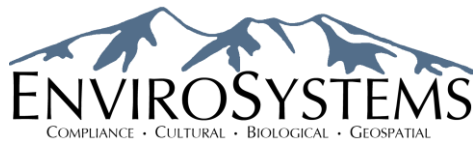
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Luttrell, Patty Rubick

2020 Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of 302 West Oak Avenue in Flagstaff, Arizona.
Tallpines Environmental Consulting Co., Flagstaff.

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1933 *Telephone Directory; 1933-34 for Flagstaff–Grand Canyon–Williams–Winslow*. Denver.

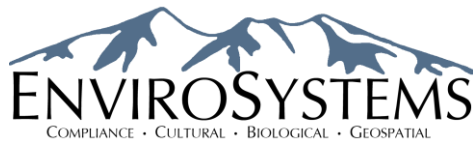
1935 *Telephone Directory; 1935-36 for Flagstaff–Grand Canyon–Williams–Winslow*. Denver.

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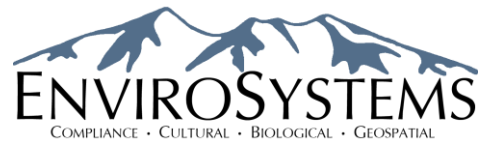
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**APPENDIX A:
2020 PHASE I ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT OF 302 WEST OAK
AVENUE IN FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA.
TALLPINES ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, FLAGSTAFF**