

Cultural Resource Study

Baca House
3 S. Colorado Street, Flagstaff, AZ
APN Parcel# 104-01-019

Prepared for

City of Flagstaff

211 W Aspen Ave, Flagstaff AZ 86001

For Compliance with Heritage Preservation Requirements

Municipal Code 10-30.30

Prepared by

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June 23, 2023

SUMMARY OF FINDING

Introduction: The City of Flagstaff (COF) is required to demolish the Baca House at 3 S. Colorado Street, on parcel APN 104-01-019, in order to facilitate construction of the voter-approved Lone Tree Overpass project, which includes improvements at the intersection of Lone Tree Road and Butler Avenue and provides new roadway between Butler Avenue and U.S. Route 66 among other improvements. Existing Colorado Street will be removed. The structures on parcel APN 104-01-019 are within the required construction limits of the project and as such, will be demolished and removed. The parcel contains two dwellings. This documentation addresses the Baca House, which is located at the west end of the lot facing Colorado Street; the dwelling at the east, or rear end of the lot is not subject to documentation requirements.

Legal Description Summary: The property occupies parcel APN 104-01-019. Subdivision: Brannen Addition to Flagstaff, Block 24, Lot 11. Township 21N Range 07E, Section 22, NW Quarter, NW Sixteenth.

Evaluated Structure: The Baca House was recommended as a contributing resource within the National Register-listed Flagstaff Southside Historic District during an inventory update that revises the boundary and expands the period of significance to 1968. The updated National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) documentation has yet to be submitted to the AZSite's Committee. The age of the house and its status as a contributing resource necessitate completion of a cultural resource study under City of Flagstaff Municipal Code 10-30.30, Heritage Preservation. The Baca House retains integrity as a ca. 1937-1945 Minimal Traditional dwelling expressing local stone construction methods typical of Flagstaff homebuilders in the Southside.

Areas of Significance: The Baca House is significant as a contributing resource within the updated Flagstaff Southside Historic District, which is listed with significance under NHRP Criteria A, for history, and Criterion C, for architecture. According to Municipal Code 10-30.30, the dwelling has significance because it demonstrates characteristics of type, period, region, artistic values or methods of construction (City of Flagstaff Criterion D) and because of its association to historical patterns in the development of Flagstaff's Southside (City of Flagstaff Criterion B).

CULTURAL RESOURCES STUDY

Baca House

3 S. Colorado Street, Flagstaff, AZ

Project Name:	Lone Tree Overpass
Owner:	City of Flagstaff
Present Use:	Occupied Single-Family Residence
Significance:	The areas of significance have been identified in the updated inventory and historic context prepared for the National Register-listed Flagstaff Southside Historic District, but the updated documentation has not yet been submitted to AZSITE, Arizona's GIS Cultural Resource Inventory. The property illustrates the vernacular architectural traditions and adaptations of the working-class residents who lived in Flagstaff's Southside neighborhood during its period of development in the early to mid-twentieth century.

INTRODUCTION

The Lone Tree Overpass project is a voter-approved City of Flagstaff public infrastructure project intended to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians by providing an alternate connection to U.S. Route 66 that is grade-separated from the BNSF railroad tracks (Figure 1). The project proposes to include visual amenities that relate to the community and are inclusive of concepts developed in the adopted Southside Neighborhood Plan. The City of Flagstaff is currently acquiring right-of-way (ROW) for the new roadway and overpass structure that will extend Lone Tree Road north from Butler Avenue in the location of present S. Colorado Street, curve east on a filled roadbed with retaining walls, span the Rio de Flag and the BNSF railroad tracks with a bridge structure, and terminate in a new "T" intersection with U.S. Route 66.

The complexity of the project includes but is not limited to property acquisition, demolitions, geotechnical and structural analysis, interface with the Rio de Flag realignment (a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project), BNSF lowering of tracks, access for maintenance, utilization of acquired ROW, and public involvement. The overpass project will eliminate the one-block length of S. Colorado Street and require the City of Flagstaff to demolish buildings within the acquired new ROW for the project, including the Baca House.

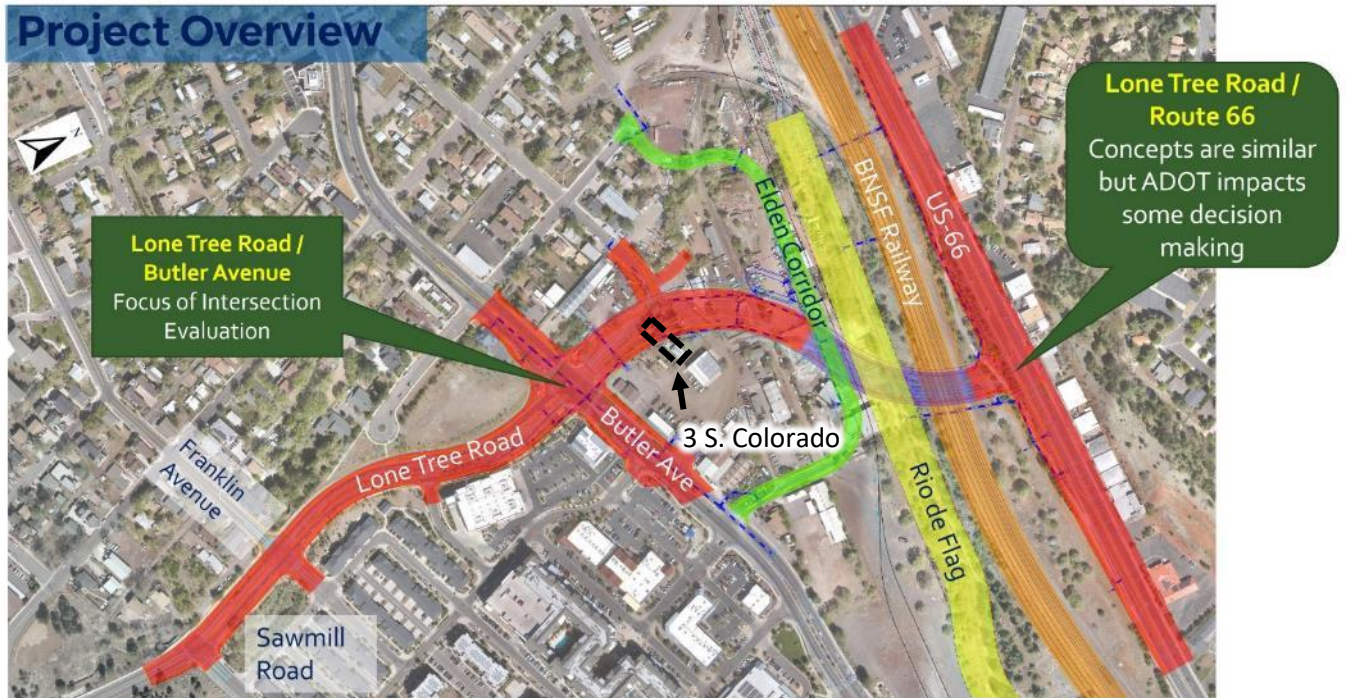


Figure 1. Lone Tree Overpass Project Overview (COF 2022)

The structures on the Baca parcel (APN 104-01-019) are within the required construction limits of the Lone Tree Overpass project and have been acquired by the City of Flagstaff. The parcel contains 2 structures, a home identified as the Baca House that faces Colorado Street and bears the address 3 S. Colorado Street, and a second house at the rear of the same parcel that is not subject to documentation requirements and will not be addressed in this report. The parcel has the following **Legal Description Summary**: Subdivision: Brannen Addition to Flagstaff, Block 24, Lot 12; Township 21N Range 07E, Section 22, NW Quarter, NW Sixteenth (Figure 2). This study is being completed prior to redevelopment of this property and others for the Lone Tree Overpass, a City of Flagstaff project.

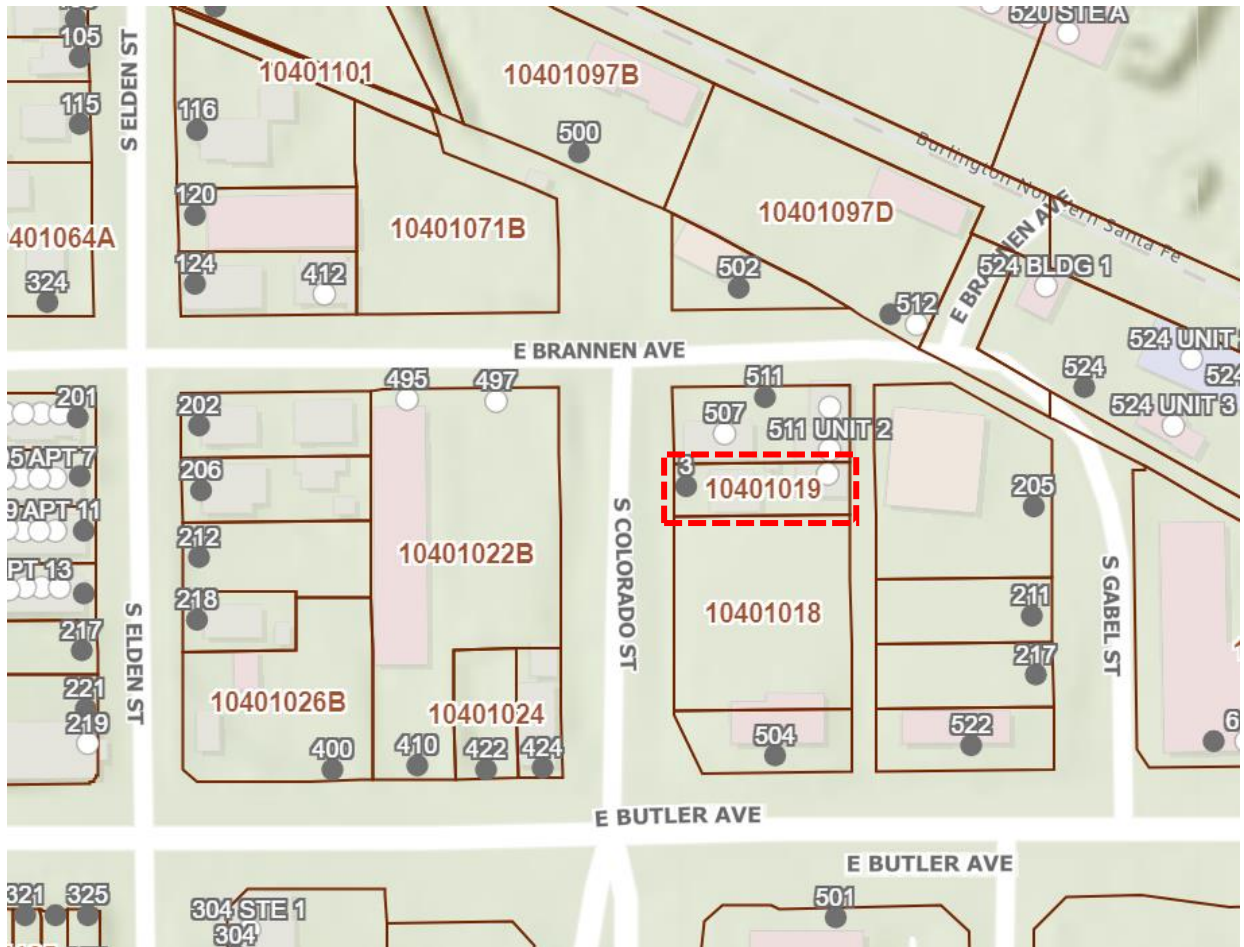


Figure 2. Location of Baca House, 3 S. Colorado Street

The Baca House is not currently included in the National Register-listed Flagstaff Southside Historic District. Although it was evaluated as part of the Southside/Old Town historic building survey in 1992 and deemed to have sufficient integrity to convey its historic character, the eastern boundary of the Flagstaff Southside Historic District as finalized in the National Register nomination of 2009 was located one-half block to the west of S. Colorado Street (Woodward 1993b:Site 111; Woodward et al. 2009) and extending between the property lines of west-facing S Elden Street and east-facing S. Colorado Street. An updated National Registration form for the Flagstaff Southside Historic District currently in preparation defines a new boundary and expanded period of significance that includes the Baca House and other adjacent properties as contributing resources within the historic district.

In the 1992 survey of Flagstaff's southside architecture (Woodward 1993), the Baca House was identified by its historic name reflecting the name of its builder, the Lomeli House. Currently identified as the Baca House, the dwelling takes its name from Jennie Baca, the last private owner of the dwelling, who is the daughter of the late Joe Lomeli, who built the house. Baca provided extensive oral history about the dwelling and her family. Her contributions are provided in this report. Joe Lomeli worked at the adjacent Southwest Forest Industries sawmill and built the house from 1948 to 1950 using scrap lumber from the sawmill and local stone. The dwelling

expresses the typical construction methods and house forms of the working-class, ethnically diverse population of Flagstaff's Southside. The Baca House is an adaptation of the Minimal Traditional house forms of the post-World War II era and utilizes the traditional malpais stone bearing-wall construction visible in other dwellings of the Southside. Local Basque and Hispanic families with masonry skills collected malpais stones from the surrounding forest as an inexpensive, found building material for home construction. In addition, Southside builders sometimes recycled materials from demolished buildings found elsewhere in Flagstaff, and employees at the sawmill utilized "scrap material and discounted lumber from the company store" (COF 2020:26). Indeed, this pattern of salvage and vernacular home-building is corroborated by Mrs. Baca (Oral History Section). The stone wall construction is traditional to Flagstaff builders, who used interior formwork to support rubble fill and a cement-like mortar while carefully laying larger stones with smooth faces for a substantial, uncoursed exterior wall.

Historic Context

Southside History

Early settlement at Flagstaff occurred in connection with the construction of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (later the Sante Fe and Pacific Railroad) in 1881. That same year, Edward E. Ayer erected a sawmill in Flagstaff, subsequently known as the Arizona Lumber and Timber Company, to provide lumber under contract to the railroad for ties and bridge construction. The early commercial center of town was located on the south side of the railroad tracks in the vicinity of San Francisco Street. In 1891, the Territorial Legislative Assembly created Coconino County and established Flagstaff as the county seat. By 1900, Flagstaff had a population of nearly 2,000 and the local economy was based on lumber, sheep, and freight (Woodward 1993a:11).

The layout of Flagstaff expresses several off-set grids of streets and blocks that emerged from the choices of the early surveyors. The Flagstaff Townsite laid out by the railroad company in 1889 adopted a grid skewed southwest-northeast to align with a portion of the railroad tracks. The School Addition to its south and the Railroad Addition to the north and east continued this alignment. The plan of the Brannen Addition to the east, laid out in 1884 but not recorded until 1894, occupies the northwest corner of township section 22 and employs a north-south grid oriented to the section lines, with an exception for Cottage Avenue along its northern limits (Woodward 1993a:16). Peter J. Brannen, who laid out this subdivision, envisioned Block 24, where the Baca House is located, as the location for a hotel and expected upper middle-class homeowners to build in the area (Woodward 1993a:18). He built his own house at 101 South Agassiz and persuaded other prominent families to join him.

In the 1890s and early 1900s the commercial center of Flagstaff moved north of the railroad. New government buildings and upper-middle-class residences were also built in this area. By the end of World War I, Anglo-American residents of Flagstaff lived primarily north of the railroad tracks in areas distinguished by higher economic status (Woodward 1993a:25). Between 1894 and 1935, the Old Town area of Flagstaff south of the railroad evolved into a neighborhood with a predominantly Hispanics population, comprised of families who came to Flagstaff from New

Mexico or Mexico. By the 1920s, African American families were also residing in the area and Basques from California and New Mexico had established small concentrations in the Southside, including in the area north of Brannen between O'Leary and Elden Streets (Woodward 1993a:17-18).

The diverse ethnic heritage of the Southside neighborhoods evolved from the engines of economic growth in Flagstaff in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including railroad construction and the lumber and sheep industries. Substantial numbers of Hispanics arrived early in the area to work on railroad construction. Afterward, nearly all the Hispanics living in the Southside neighborhood were employed in the lumber or sheep industries (Woodward 1993a:6). Teams of Mexican sheep shearers came to Flagstaff in the 1890s, but the violence and disruption of the Mexican revolution brought the most substantial wave of immigrants from Mexico in the 1910s. Mexican immigrants were the predominant labor group in the lumber industry, and once established in Flagstaff became property owners and built businesses (Woodward 1993a:26-27). By 1920, Hispanics from New Mexico and Mexico comprised thirty percent of Flagstaff's population (Woodward 1993a:25).

The prominence of the local lumber industry enabled Flagstaff to grow and flourish in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Arizona Lumber and Timber Company dominated in the lumber industry statewide, but smaller companies offered competition in Flagstaff. One of them, the Flagstaff Lumber Company, established its sawmill in Brannen's Addition in 1910, bringing new workers to this section and prompting a building boom. In 1925, the Flagstaff Lumber Company came into the possession of two Louisiana lumbermen, James G. McNary and W.M. Cady, who brought African American workers from the south to work in the Flagstaff business, which was renamed the Cady Lumber Corporation and by 1935 reorganized as Southwest Lumber Mills, Inc. (Woodward 1993a:21, 23). The company was rebuilt and modernized after a fire in 1947 and by 1959 became known as Southwest Forest Industries, with an expanded range of production that included paper products and packaging plants. The company was renamed Stone Forest Industries in 1987 and in the spring of 1993 the mill closed down, bringing an end to the lumber industry in Flagstaff (Woodward 1993a:23).

Raising sheep became another prominent industry in Coconino County after drought and decreased grazing land in California pushed sheep breeders to establish operations in adjacent states (Woodward 1993a:23). Beginning in the 1880s, hundreds of Hispanic workers from New Mexico were recruited to work on the sheep farms, as well as a substantial number of Basques. Many of these recruits built flocks of their own; by 1920, ninety percent of the sheep breeders in Flagstaff were of Hispanic origin (Woodward 1993a:24).

The dwellings built in Flagstaff's Southside reflect the heritage of its changing population and multicultural heritage. Early Anglo-American residents built vernacular dwellings reflecting national house types such as late-nineteenth century gabled-ell cottages and by the 1910s bungalows (Woodward 1993a:33-34). The Southside soon became associated with Flagstaff's working-class residents, who built houses of a modest nature, one or one-and-a-half stories tall, featuring simple architectural details derived from bungalows and later Minimal Tradition dwellings. Basque settlers built a vernacular adaptation of traditional Basque houses—usually

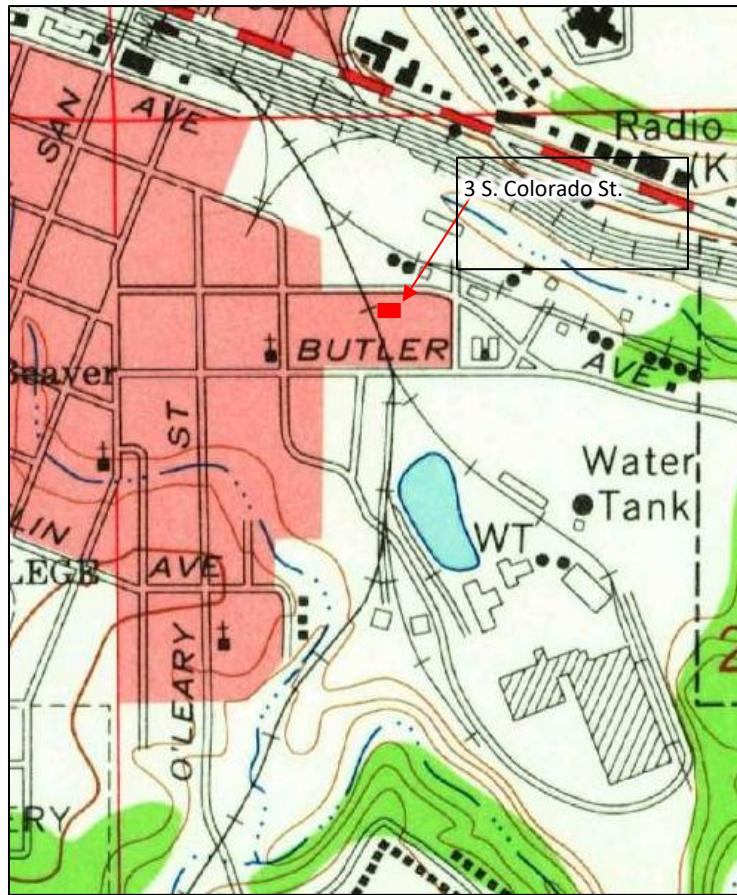


Figure 4. Location of 3 S. Colorado Street, U.S.G.S. Flagstaff West Quadrangle, 1962

The corner house at 2 S. Colorado Street (also known as 511 E. Brannen Avenue) was built by Felix Garcia ca. 1912-1917 and was recently documented in connection with the Lone Tree Overpass project (Woodward 1993a:Site Survey 110; Reavis 2022). According to the 1993 Southside survey, the corner lot was owned by Pablo Lomeli after 1924, suggesting that the Lomeli family began to establish roots in this area shortly after emigrating from Mexico in the 1920s. The Lomeli family eventually built multiple homes on both the corner lot and the lot containing the Baca House, which Joe Lomeli built in the late 1940s. Building a second residence at the rear of a lot was a common practice in the Southside neighborhood, and numerous instances are evident. The practice helped provide affordable housing for working-class families and allowed multiple generations to stay connected or to augment their income with rental units.

The Baca House exhibits the characteristics of mid-twentieth-century Minimal Traditional houses as inflected by local building traditions. Typically small one-story, rectangular or L-shaped dwellings, Minimal Traditional houses are modest in scale and plain in detail. They represented standardized, efficient designs that could be built quickly to meet the need for affordable housing after World War II. The use of malpais stone in the wall construction of the

Baca House reflects significant local building traditions. The dwelling also shows its debt to the preceding bungalow era in its floor plan, overhanging eaves, and use of a Craftsman window. Although most of the windows are metal casement sash and more industrial in nature, the impressive six-over-one Craftsman window in the north gable suggests a fortuitous find that was incorporated into the construction of the house.

Jennie Baca Oral History

On May 30, 2023, Senior Archaeologist and Cultural Resource Specialist Ted Roberts, M.A., RPA conducted an oral history interview with Mrs. Jennie Baca, the current resident of the house. Mrs. Baca, now 75 years of age, has lived in the house her entire life except for a two-year span during her high school years. Mrs. Baca's mother lives in the secondary house (back house) on the lot and is currently 95 years old. Both Mrs. Baca's parents (Vera and Joe Lomali) were born and raised in Flagstaff. Both sides of family emigrated from small villages around Durango, Mexico and both sides bore an unusual last name: Lomeli (though it was confirmed at the time there was no family relation between the two Lomali clans).

Joe Lomali worked across the street at the Southwest Forest Industries Sawmill (site of the current Sawmill Place shopping center housing a Whole Foods, REI, and other retail spaces). Joe was orphaned at a young age and developed a passion and talent for building and especially for working with lumber. As regular practice, Mr. Lomali would come home for a tamale lunch with a wheelbarrow full of scrap lumber from the sawmill. The house took approximately two years to build, and the family lived on the lot in a canvas temporary house during that time. Mr. Lomali retired at the age of 62 after having served as the foreman of the Eagar Mill in Springerville from 1965-1976.

As mentioned previously, the wood used in the construction was scrap from the sawmill across the street and the rock was procured informally from surrounding buildings and the general landscape. These found materials formed the raw materials with which Mr. Lomali fashioned the family home using his "God-given talent" (Jennie Baca, personal communication 2023). Later, Mr. Lomali built two additional houses in Flagstaff (one at 25 West Cedar) and one in Springerville- all for use by the family. The Baca House, in particular, was always an option for family (often newlyweds) to live as they sought to establish financial security. As Mrs. Baca recalls "whoever needed a house could live in my dad's houses".

Growing up, Mrs. Baca recalls the neighborhood was far more residential than today. She recalls her neighbors were primarily African-Americans and they would all play together at the log pond on Butler. Mrs. Baca recalls the physical address of the house has changed multiple times throughout its use-life. Mrs. Baca lived in the back house during college (NAU Business School, BA in 1970). Mrs. Baca is the oldest of four siblings. Her brother Fernando (age 72) is a resident of Tucson and Sandra (age 63) lives in Phoenix. A second daughter (third child) was killed in a car crash in Springerville during her senior year at Round Valley High School, Mrs. Baca's husband is 83 years old and has lived in the house with Mrs. Baca since their marriage in 1970. Mrs. Baca's maternal grandfather was struck by lightning and killed in the yard between the two houses.

Despite lack of formal training as a builder or carpenter, Mr. Lomali's house remained sturdy and strong, notwithstanding some interior sagging. The house was built without insulation so has always been cold- no more so than the past winter (2022-2023) which was, to Mrs. Baca's recollection, the most severe since the winter of 1967 when a blizzard dumped 7 feet of snow on Flagstaff. Mr. Lomali took particular pride in using oak for the kitchen cabinets and in the hand molding and tongue-and-groove work of the upstairs bedroom. Mr. Lomali's last major project on the house came in the mid-1980s when he opened up the main floor by constructing a significant under-stairway modification. At around the same time, the current fireplace was also installed. Mr. Lomali died in 1996.

Architectural Description

Exterior

The Baca House is a one-and-one-half story, L-shaped dwelling featuring carefully laid local malpais stone construction at the first floor and frame construction at the upper level. The dwelling faces west toward S. Colorado Street and measures three bays wide and two rooms deep. The shallow side-gable roof has two gabled dormer windows at the front and a shed-dormer at the rear; the rear ell has a gable roof. The gable ends of the house are clad with asbestos shingles. The roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles and has open eaves with exposed rafters at the front and rear.

The dwelling sits back from the street behind a shallow lawn and fills nearly the width of the lot, leaving only a narrow passageway along each side of the house. A driveway enters the front of the property from S. Colorado Street adjacent to the south property line. The spur that constituted original S. Colorado Street remains evident as a gravel roadway along the front yards of both the Baca property and the corner property, lined by an asphalt sidewalk on its west side. The Baca property features a variety of fences, including prefabricated metal railings between cinder-block piers at the west edge of the front yard, a chain link fence along the south property line, and a sequence of chain link and wooden privacy fencing with both cinderblock and random-course stone walls along the north property line. A small, one-story rectangular dwelling stands at the rear of the lot and will not be further addressed in this documentation.

The main entrance is located in the southernmost bay of the main, or west façade, and contains a metal storm door and replacement inner door. The entrance is flanked to the north by two twelve-light metal-framed windows with both fixed sash and operable casements. The windows have thick painted concrete sills and even thicker concrete lintels, which are framed underneath by wood planks. All the first-floor windows are similarly finished. A small concrete patio in front of the entrance features stucco-clad brick knee walls, brick piers, metal railings, and brick lined steps. The two front dormers contain paired two-light casement sash and display such carpentry details as vertical corner boards, horizontal wooden clapboards, open eaves, and wooden cornices, and decorative diamond-shaped wooden ornaments at the apex of each gable.

The north elevation features a four-light casement window and an eight-light casement window. The gable overhead contains a six-over-one wood Craftsman window with simple molded wood surrounds. The south elevation contains a single twelve-light casement window identical to those

in front, and a paired eight-light casement sash with plain wood surrounds in the gable. A large exterior brick chimney rises near the west end of this elevation.

The east, or rear elevation is four bays wide, with two bays in the projecting gabled ell containing the rear door and a twelve-light metal casement sash, and the main wall of the house containing a six-light casement window and an eight-light casement window. The projecting gable has open eaves with exposed rafters and is clad with vertical boards featuring an access panel. The rear shed dormer has plywood siding, open eaves, and a six-light casement window. A small concrete patio with a metal pipe railing is located outside the rear door.

Interior

The first floor of the house has a modified bungalow plan with open circulation between living room, dining room, and kitchen, and a bathroom flanked by two bedrooms situated more privately along the north side (Figure 5). The house demonstrates the customized alterations and careful finishes of a long-term owner-craftsman. The front door leads into a partially enclosed shallow entry framed by a partition wall and a closet. The entry has a hardwood oak floor. The living room contains the main stairway and features a fireplace built into a wide floor-to-ceiling chimney breast with a low brick bench on the south wall. The front entry partition and staircase are finished with varnished pine boards and trim. The living room flows under the staircase into a space at the northwest corner of the dwelling, possibly once a bedroom but no longer private and currently used for storage. A tiled bathroom is centrally located between the front storage space and a bedroom to the rear, also currently used for storage. The rear bedroom has built-in cupboards and shelves framing the rear window. The living room and the front and rear rooms on the north side of the house are carpeted and have plaster walls and foam ceiling tiles.

At the rear of the living room, a wide square arch leads into the dining room. The dining room and kitchen form an open space at the rear of the house, partially divided by a partition wall marked with the names and heights of the children who once lived in the house. The kitchen features plain maple cabinetry against the north and east walls. An open arch provides access to an entry in the rear ell used as a laundry room. The dining room, kitchen, and entry/laundry room have a linoleum floor, foam ceiling tiles, and simple molded trim at the floor and ceiling.

The staircase is located in the center of the house and rises from front to rear. The second floor has two bedrooms—one at each end of the dwelling, and a small storage room in the rear shed dormer (Figure 6). The north bedroom has plaster walls and garret ceiling and two closets under the garret at the rear. The south bedroom is finished on the walls and garret ceiling with pine boards. The storage room also features pine boards on the walls and ceiling.

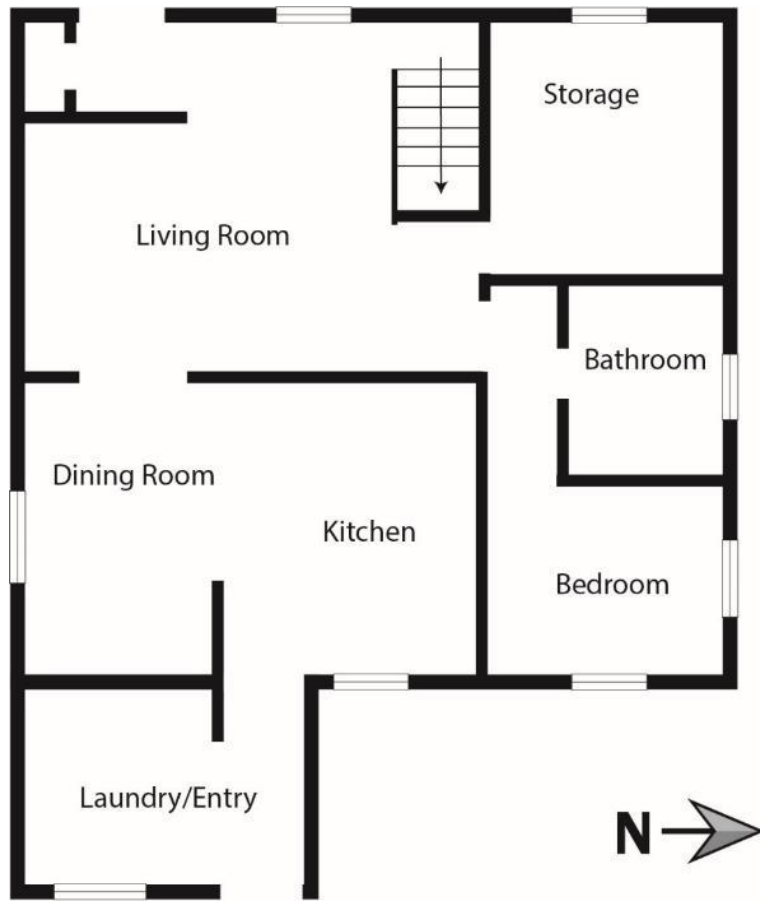


Figure 5. Sketch Plan of First Floor

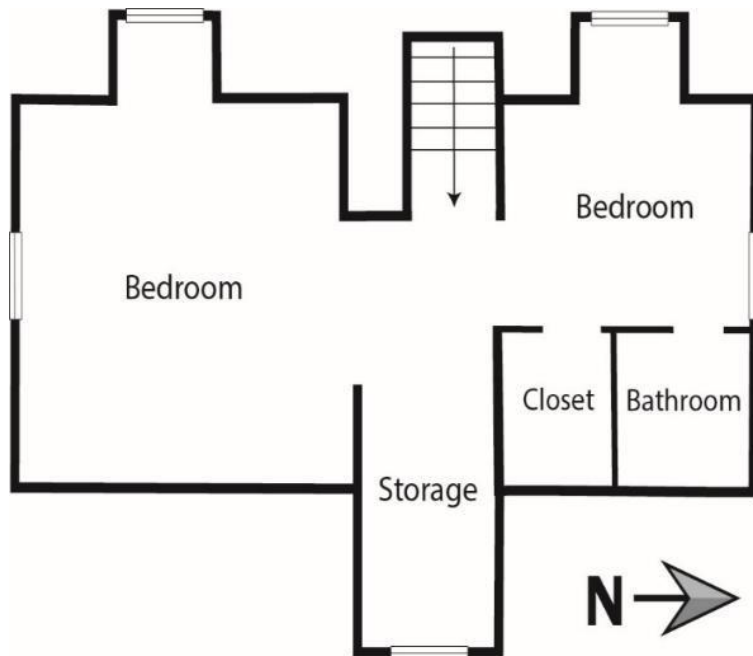


Figure 6. Sketch Plan of Second Floor

Sources

City of Flagstaff [COF]

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Reavis, Mark

2022 Letter Report Cultural Resource Study for 507 & 511 #1 & #2 E. Brannen. Prepared for City of Flagstaff by Mark Reavis, Flagstaff Heritage Preservation Officer, September 14.

Woodward Architectural Group [Woodward]

1993a *City of Flagstaff Southside/Old Town Historic Building Survey. Volume I, Final Summary Report*. Prepared by Woodward Architectural Group, Tempe, Arizona, for the Arizona Historical Society, Northern Division, Northern Arizona Pioneers Historical Society, Flagstaff, Arizona.

1993b *City of Flagstaff Southside/Old Town Historic Building Survey. Volume II, Inventory Forms #01 - #360*. Prepared by Woodward Architectural Group, Tempe, Arizona, for the Arizona Historical Society, Northern Division, Northern Arizona Pioneers Historical Society, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Woodward, James, Susan Wilcox, and Michael Wilson Kelly Architects, Ltd.

2009 Flagstaff Southside Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.



Plate 1. View east toward main façade.



Plate 2. View east toward main entrance of west façade.



Plate 3. View east toward north half of west façade.



Plate 4. View southeast toward north elevation.

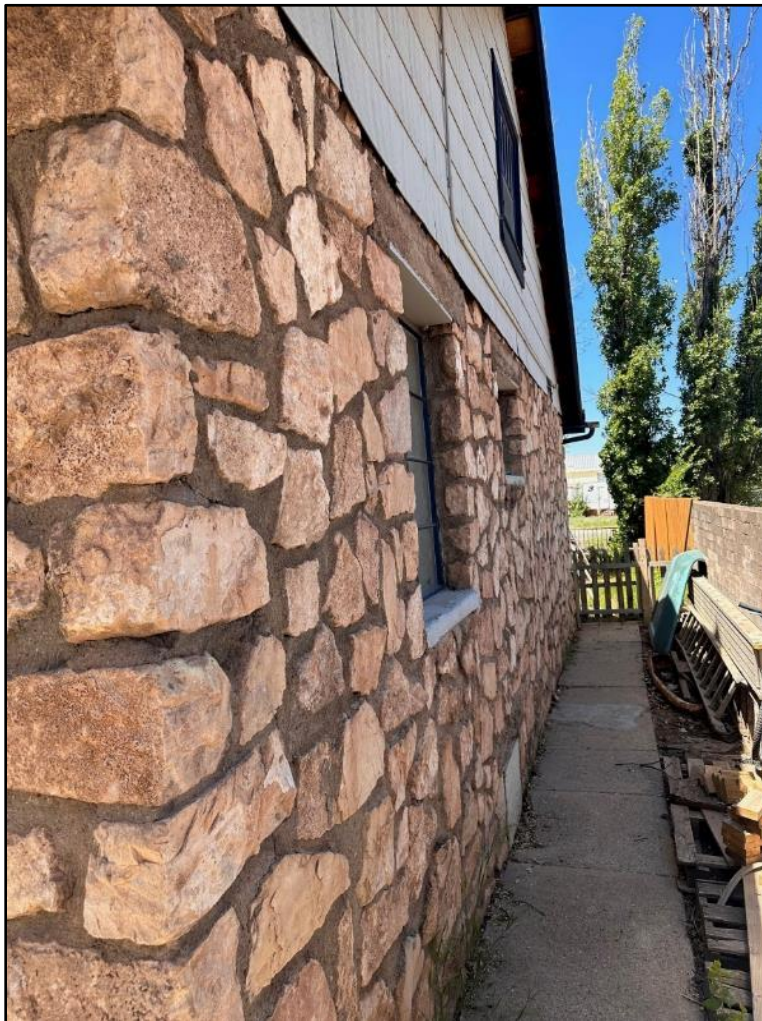


Plate 5. View west along north elevation.



Plate 6. View of north gable details.



Plate 7. View of north elevation window.



Plate 8. View north toward south elevation (second dwelling visible at rear of lot).



Plate 9. View of east, or rear, elevation.



Plate 10. View west toward rear ell.



Plate 11. View northwest toward bedroom window in east elevation.



Plate 12. View of south elevation



Plate 13. View of living room toward front entry, showing stairway finish.



Plate 14. View of front entry.



Plate 15. View of living room toward dining room at the rear of the house.



Plate 16. View from living room toward storage room in northwest corner and bathroom.



Plate 17. View of bathroom, north side of house.



Plate 18. Hallway in front of bathroom toward rear bedroom/storage room.



Plate 19. Rear room, north side of house.



Plate 20. View of kitchen and part of rear ell.



Plate 21. View of kitchen.



Plate 22. View of kitchen, rear ell, and dining room.



Plate 23. View of rear ell entry/laundry area.



Plate 24. North bedroom, second floor.



Plate 25. North bedroom, closets in east wall.



Plate 26. South bedroom, second floor.



Plate 27. South bedroom, view toward front dormer.



Plate 28. View of storage room in east shed dormer.