

Joseph P. Schopper House
524 Kuenzli Street
Reno
Washoe County
Nevada

HABS No. NV-30

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NEV
16-RENO,
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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U.S.G.S. *Reno, Nev.* 7.5' Quadrangle (1967, photo revised 1982)
UTM Coordinates: 258990mE/4378900mN

Significance: This building is an example of Reno vernacular cottage architecture from an early twentieth century working class neighborhood, and is representative of a type of housing stock common to Reno for that period. Generally, vernacular (or folk) houses were very simple in design, "built by their occupants or by non-professional builders" with the intent of providing elemental shelter, *sans* complex ornamentation or style (McAlester and McAlester 1994:5). In Reno, this cottage style (i.e., Tract Cottage; Fey et al. 1995) was common between 1910 and 1945, and was "the dominant style found in large tract housing developments" (Fey et al. 1995). Characteristically, this building does not exhibit any "high-style" or architecturally notable design elements, but it does display those attributes typical of the cottage style and of the hall-and-parlor family of vernacular architecture (generally one story high, rectangular shape - one room deep and two rooms wide, subsequent pattern of extension for enlarging the interior space, low pitched side-gable roof, wood exterior cladding, small attached porch, and a slightly offset but centrally located entrance). Generally, this building reflects its historical location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling as a representative entity of a combined commercial and working class residential environment from the 1920s-30s in Reno. This type of residence represents the affordable housing alternative particularly popular for working-class neighborhoods at that time. Based on the above information, this residence was recommended to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C.

Description: This single story building, constructed in 1920, is a simple wood frame vernacular cottage. The original mass displays a linear plan configuration reflective of the hall-and-parlor family (one room deep, originally two rooms wide; McAlester and McAlester 1994). It evidences clapboard siding, a side-gable roof, and has an engaged gable roof addition (one room) on the north side. The building with the addition measures 14 by 34 feet; the original

mass would have measured approximately 14 by 25 feet. The roof is low pitch, and the roofing material is composition. The slightly offset but centrally positioned entrance on the west elevation has a simple shed roof porch over concrete slab steps. It has six, one-over-one, double-hung windows; three on the west (front), and one each on the north, south, and east elevations (back and sides). The house rests on a concrete foundation, and a partial cellar (or crawl space) is located under the north side of the house. This area is accessed through a sloped concrete hatchway (cellar cap) located along the exterior north side of the addition. Doors on the hatchway are iron and corrugated sheet metal.

The floor plan (Attachment 1) consists of three primary rooms – living room, kitchen, and the small bedroom addition (north end). A small bathroom and closet are also located along the south end of the building, off of the living room. Interior flooring is covered with linoleum in the kitchen, bedroom (marble/mottled pattern of blue/gray/white) and bathroom (mottled plum/white). The interior walls appear to have been improved with sheet-rock and painted. Generally, the interior displays no distinctive or distinguishing architectural or decorative details. Doors are wood, and appear to represent the simple mass produced types of the period. Doorways and windows are encased with a simple wide, straight-cut, moulding. Built-in painted cabinets in the kitchen appear to be original, along with the light fixtures in kitchen. The bathrooms retain the original tub (cast-iron, rolled-edge, interior enameled, exterior painted) and sink (cast-iron, rolled-edge, exterior painted), although the toilet is newer.

Generally, this strictly vernacular building exhibits fair integrity. It displays some characteristics of a cottage style and of the hall-and-parlor family, but lacks definitive elements of other distinctive architectural styles (see Poppeliers et al. 1983; McAlester and McAlester 1984; Fey et al. 1995).

Historical Context: Reno lies in a valley bisected by the Truckee River where its tributary streams with associated lowland marsh and meadowland converge to form the Truckee Meadows. Initially welcomed by west-bound emigrants for its native grasses, water, and as a rest stop before the ascent of the Sierra Nevada Range, the Truckee Meadows eventually retained a few enterprising people. These pioneers offered amenities to travelers while charging for the use of their roads and river crossings. When the section of the Central Pacific Railroad through the valley was being surveyed in 1868, the area selected for a new station was located near (Myron C.) Lake's Crossing. This locale was chosen because it was distant from the hills to the west but before the eastern marshes. It also was a suitable site for the junction with the proposed Virginia & Truckee Railway (V&T RR), joining the Central Pacific with the Comstock. Named for Union General Jesse L. Reno, the new station was

situated on the north side of the Truckee River with the railroad tracks paralleling the river.

Reno served as a hub for the distribution of beef to Sacramento and San Francisco while goods from those urban centers were redistributed to the Comstock and nearby ranches. Its location on the Central Pacific helped in establishing its importance in the Truckee Meadows. This was augmented in 1871 with the move of the county seat from Washoe City to Reno. The new county courthouse was built on land donated by Lake on the south side of the river. However, despite the importance of Reno as a railroad hub, the city was described as displaying a lack of permanence during the 1870s. According to Townley (1982:66-74), "For over a decade, Reno stayed an overcrowded, underbuilt, busy" community with no lack of work, particularly in construction. Much of the nature of the town could be attributed to the wealth coming from the Comstock, but the fear that the mines would bust – a tendency on all mining frontiers – curtailed the citizens' enthusiasm for putting money into real estate improvement. On the other hand, real estate and construction were second only to transportation as mainstays of the new community. By the end of the decade, several tracts had been subdivided and added to Reno increasing the size of the city on all sides.

Reno of the 1870s had as its primary business center Commercial Row, with some businesses on Virginia Street. The railroad served as a focal point for the businesses. Clustered around this downtown core were residential areas. In describing where people of differing incomes built houses in early Reno, Townley (1982:73) writes that "society" people built larger houses on West Street between First and Fifth streets, presently the site of motels and casinos. Working family homes and tenement housing were built on the cheapest lots located near the railroad tracks and yards. The final group of people, referred to as the "second grouping," built south of the river between High and Park streets. Some of these houses still remain. This area is where the structures under study are located (Attachment 2).

As part of the development of land beyond the downtown nexus of Reno, on December 3, 1878 a subdivision tract, called the Haydon-Shoemaker's Southeast Addition, was surveyed and mapped. The area that includes the *Joseph P. Schopper House* is identified as Block H. The house is located on Lot 5 (Attachment 3). This block is bounded by Park and High streets on the east and west sides, respectively, and by Kuenzli (formerly North) and East Second (formerly Scott) streets on the north and south, respectively. Based on information in *Polk's Reno City Directories* (Polk v.d.), it was inferred that Scott Street became part of East Second Street around 1930. North Street was changed to Kuenzli Street between 1970 and 1975.

An examination of Sanborn Insurance Maps dated between 1879 and 1947, suggests that development in Block H began between 1890 and 1899. However, no structures appear on Lot 5 (on which were built the *Joseph P. Schopper House* and the *Schopper-Guerrera House*) up to 1918, but no maps between 1918 and 1947 were available for examination. The 1947 Sanborn Map indicates that the plan of the *Joseph P. Schopper House* appeared then as it is today. However, there are two addresses listed for the structure on the map, 520 and 524 Kuenzli, but no information was found in any *Polk's Reno City Directory* dating from 1946 to 1980 for the 520 Kuenzli Street address. It is possible, though unsubstantiated, that the bedroom addition to the building was being rented out at this time. The presence of the addition on the 1947 Sanborn Map suggests that this addition to the original *Joseph P. Schopper House* was built sometime between 1920-1947.

Although early descriptions of this neighborhood between High and Park streets indicate its character as being strictly residential, the introduction of commercial property came early into the area. Located next to the river and south of East Second Street at the crossing for the railroad were the V&T RR yards (Townley 1982:205; Wurm and Demoro 1983:53). The yards were located there from ca. 1871 to ca. 1930s (Wurm and Demoro 1983:48-52, 112). By 1904, the neighborhood contained the Troy Laundry Company on High Street (Sanborn Map Company 1904). This company continued to operate, along with the Economy Laundry Company, until around 1930 (*Polk's Reno City Directory* 1930-1931). In 1946 (*Polk's Reno City Directory* 1946, Sanborn Map of Reno 1947), the City of Reno Corporation Yard had replaced the laundries. That same year, the Reno City Police Department and Municipal Court were built on lots that had recently contained residences. Departments located in the City of Reno Corporation Yard included the City Paint Shop and the City Sewer Department. By 1972, the Corporation Yard had become a parking lot (Johnson 1998:11).

The presence of industrial, commercial, and municipal land use in the neighborhood where the Kuenzli Street structures are located can be explained by the development and growth of the city of Reno. Until around 1945, there were no established zoning ordinances in effect in Reno. Without specific zoning ordinances to direct the development of growth, land could be developed however the owner wished and could afford. As a result, land in a given area could include a mix of agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Between 1945 and 1989, zoning was based on a hierarchical format, where industrial use was at the top and agricultural was at the base. Specific criteria were established for each type of land use, but an area zoned for one type of land use could include those that ranked lower in the hierarchy. The presence of the Troy, Economy, and other laundries, the nursery, and other businesses in the neighborhood are there because the people who owned the property could develop it as they wished. With

regards to the city properties, the parcels that make up this area (2.12 acres) were purchased from the owners in 1946. The court, police department, and yard probably were built there because it was a location with enough space for these buildings, as well as the close proximity to downtown Reno. The City Corporation Yard was moved later because more space was needed (Christine Fey, Community Development Department, City of Reno, personal communication, 1998; Brent Boyer, Community Development Department, City of Reno, personal communication, 1998).

How this affected the residents of the Kuenzli Street neighborhood is not known. Documentation available from the *Polk's Reno City Directory* series suggests that some residents lived there because of proximity to their work; others purchased property for business and/or rental purposes. The Schopper family, for example, acquired several lots on Block H, built structures there, and later sold all but one of the lots by the end of the 1920s. Periodically, from 1920-1960, family members occupied an adjacent residence (526 Kuenzli Street) until it was sold. The family owned a nursery in the neighborhood, located first on Park Street and later on East Second Street, until the 1960s, when it was moved west of Reno.

In 1895 W. O'H. Martin acquired the lots that fronted Kuenzli Street in Block H of Haydon-Shoemaker's Southeast Addition. In 1917, the estate of W. O'H. Martin (Louise W. Martin, president, and Margaret Martin Mackay, secretary) sold Lots 5, 8, 9, and 12 to Joseph P. Schopper (Washoe County Deeds, Book 50, Page 132). Domestic structures already existed on Lots 8 and 12, but the two structures on Lot 5 were not built until 1920 (Washoe County Tax Assessor Records 1998). From 1920/1921 to around 1924, Schopper and his family resided at 526 Kuenzli Street (Lot 8), next to the 524 Kuenzli Street (Lot 5) building. Then the family moved to Park Street and lived at the same address as the Joseph P. Schopper Nursery (*Polk's Reno City Directory* 1920-1921, 1923, 1925-1926).

When Schopper sold Lot 5, which contains the *Joseph P. Schopper House* (524 Kuenzli Street) and the *Schopper-Guerrera House* (518 Kuenzli Street), in 1929 to Elbert W. O'Connell (Washoe County Deeds, Book 76, Page 557), O'Connell did not reside at either residence. The listing in *Polk's Reno City Directory* for 1929-1930 shows a listing only for 518 Kuenzli Street, which was a rental property. In 1930, O'Connell sold the property (Lot 5) to Robert Uccelli and Philip Guerrera (Washoe County Deeds, Book 83, Page 520). The house at 518 Kuenzli Street continued to be a rental property until 1939, when Guerrera bought Uccelli's share of the property (Washoe County Deeds, Book 121, Page 531). At that time, Guerrera and his wife, Lorene C., moved from 524 Kuenzli Street (*Joseph P. Schopper House*), where they had been residing since ca. 1935 (the first listing for that address in *Polk's Reno City Directory*), to 518 Kuenzli Street. After that move, Guerrera rented the

Joseph P. Schopper House (524 Kuenzli Street) until the lot was sold to Arthur G. Lindley in 1979 (Washoe County Deeds, Book 1361, Page 845; *Polk's Reno City Directory* 1946-1975). Both houses on Lot 5 have been rentals under subsequent owners (Attachment 4).

Occupations listed for the first four owners of the houses on Lot 5 (518 and 524 Kuenzli Street) include owner of a nursery and manager of a transfer company (Joseph P. Schopper), owner of a transfer company (Elbert O'Connell), employee at The Reno Arena (Robert Uccelli), and a machinist (Philip Guerrera). All of these people lived near or on the property during ownership and were familiar with the area, which may have been a stimulus for the purchases.

Of the people who rented the houses, occupations included farmer, laborer, servicemen in the U.S. Air Force, musician, U.S. Post Office employee, and University of Nevada employee (dormitory housekeeper and custodian). People residing in other houses on the block worked at the Reno Street Department (laborer), Reno Engineering Department, Sunshine Laundry Co. (located southwest of the block on East Second Street), Economy Laundry Company, Washoe County General Hospital (laundry worker), Pleasant Grove Baptist Church (pastor), Bell Telephone Company of Nevada (telephone operator), V&T RR (brakeman), and as a mechanic, carpenter, janitor, nurseryman (Schopper's Nursery), drayman, construction worker, and bartender. Based upon this information, the neighborhood represented a working class milieu with many renting or purchasing their properties near where they worked.

Today, the neighborhood continues to reflect the combined commercial and residential environment present since the turn of the century. Many buildings formerly on Block H are now gone, as are parts of the blocks bounded on the east by Wells Avenue (south to East Second Street) due to street widening. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings in the neighborhood has occurred - the nursery has become apartments, and single family dwellings are rooming houses. An apartment building at the corner of Kuenzli and Park streets was built on land that had formerly been single family dwellings. One characteristic apparent from examining the documents, and the neighborhood as it appears today, is that it is slowly moving to more commercial use, including rental residences. This Reno neighborhood is not unique in its composition of mixed commercial and residential buildings. Without specific zoning laws governing development, mixed land use became the norm rather than the exception, and industry, farming, and residential structures co-existed in close proximity. The pattern of the built environment in and around the 500 block of Kuenzli Street also may be explained by the neighborhood's proximity to downtown Reno and the presence of the Reno Police Department and Municipal Court.

Sources: The following sources are considered applicable to either the building's architectural description or its historic context:

Fey, Christine A., Kristen Shields, Scott A. Nebesky, Elizabeth Kane, and Stuart M. Peters (1995). *City of Reno Historic Structures Handbook*. City of Reno, Community Development Department, Reno.

Johnson, Linda A. (1998). *Phase I - Environmental Site Assessment, APN 012-011-02, 03, 04, 05, and 06; 514-544 Kuenzli Street, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada*. Submitted to Kuenzli Partners, LLC by Summit Engineering Corporation, Reno.

McAlester, V. and L. McAlester (1984). *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

McDonald, Joseph F. (1971). *The Life of a Newsboy in Nevada*. Oral History Project, University of Nevada, Reno Library, Reno, Nevada.

Ossa, Rebecca R. (1998). Letter to Linda Johnson, City of Reno Housing Programs Administrator, dated May 25, 1998.

Petricciani, Silvio (1982). *The Evolution of Gaming in Nevada: The Twenties to the Eighties*. Oral History Project, University of Nevada, Reno Library, Reno, Nevada.

Polk, R.L. and Company (various dates). *Polk's Reno City Directory, Including Washoe County and Carson City*. R.L. Polk and Company, Publishers, San Francisco, California.

Poppeliers, John C., S. Allen Chambers, Jr., and Nancy B. Schwartz (1983). *What Style is it?: A Guide to American Architecture*. Preservation Press, Washington, D.C.

Rowley, William D. (1984). *Reno, Hub of Washoe County: An Illustrated History*. Windsor Publications, Woodland Hills, California.

Townley, John M. (1983). *Tough Little Town on the Truckee: Reno, 1868-1900*. Great Basin Studies Center, Reno.

Wurm, Ted and Harre Demoro (1983). *The Silver Short Line: A History of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad*. Virginia & Truckee Railroad, Virginia City, Nevada.

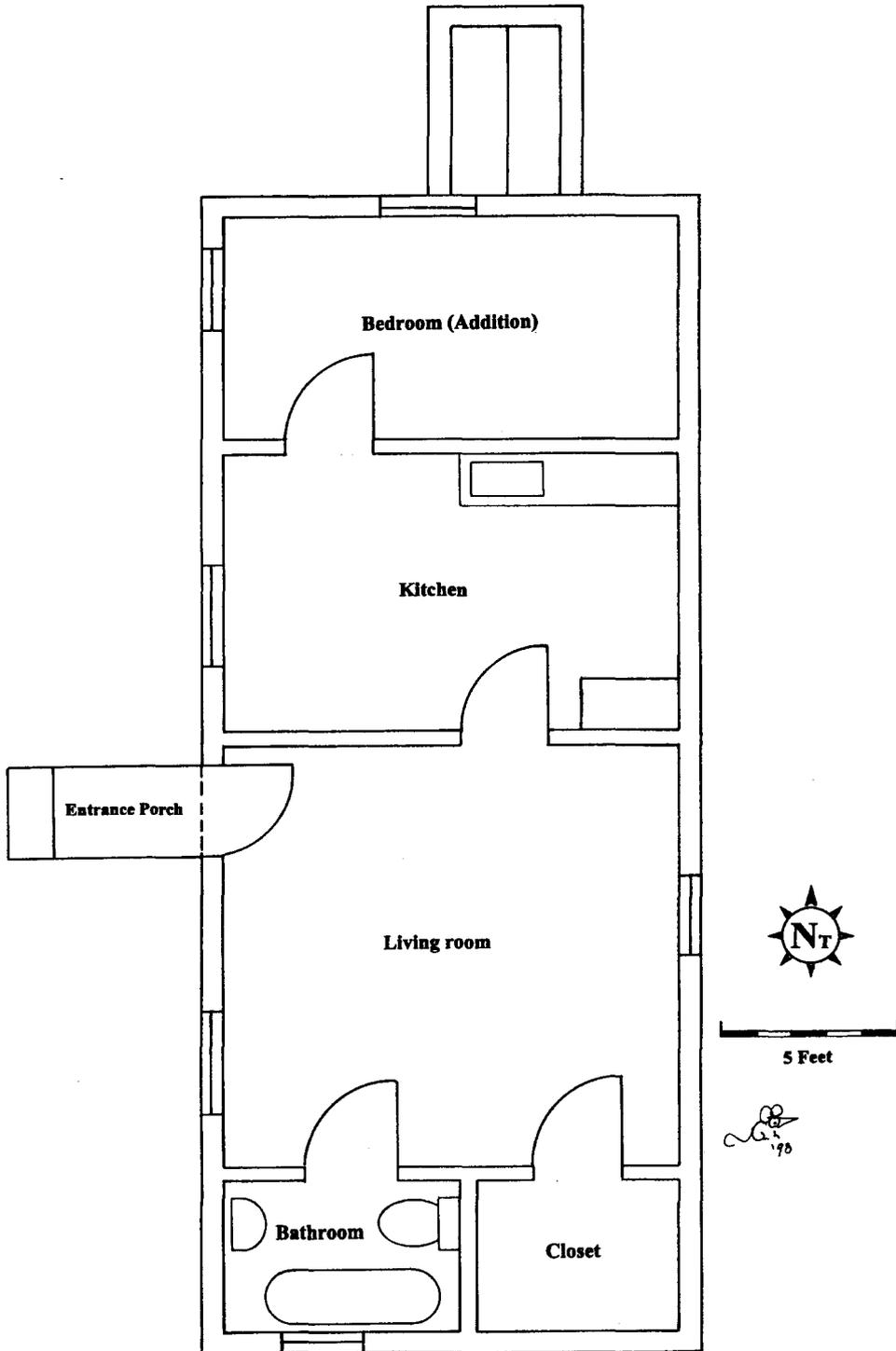
Project Information:

This HABS documentation, an outgrowth of a cultural resources assessment project, was conducted by Kautz Environmental Consultants, Inc. (KEC) of Reno preparatory to construction of a HUD-assisted low income apartment complex. This building, and two others situated on the proposed construction site – 518 and 542/544 Kuenzli Street, Reno – were determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. The HABS documentation of these three buildings fulfills the terms of a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the Executive Director of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on July 17, 1998. Other signatories include the Contracting Officer of the Washoe County HOME Consortium, a HUD program administered by the City of Reno, the Deputy Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, and representatives of Kuenzli Partners, Ltd., the project proponent. This report was prepared KEC Principal Investigator Dr. Peter Mires. Ms. Monique E. Kimball, KEC Historian, performed the archival research and prepared the historical context. The HABS photographs, taken by Ms. Kristi Hager of Missoula, Montana, were developed and prepared by Renewable Technologies, Inc. of Butte, Montana.

Additional Documentation:

Sketch of Floor Plan (Attachment 1)
Project Location Map (Attachment 2)
House Location Map (Attachment 3)
Chain of Title for Lot 5 (Attachment 4)

Attachment 1



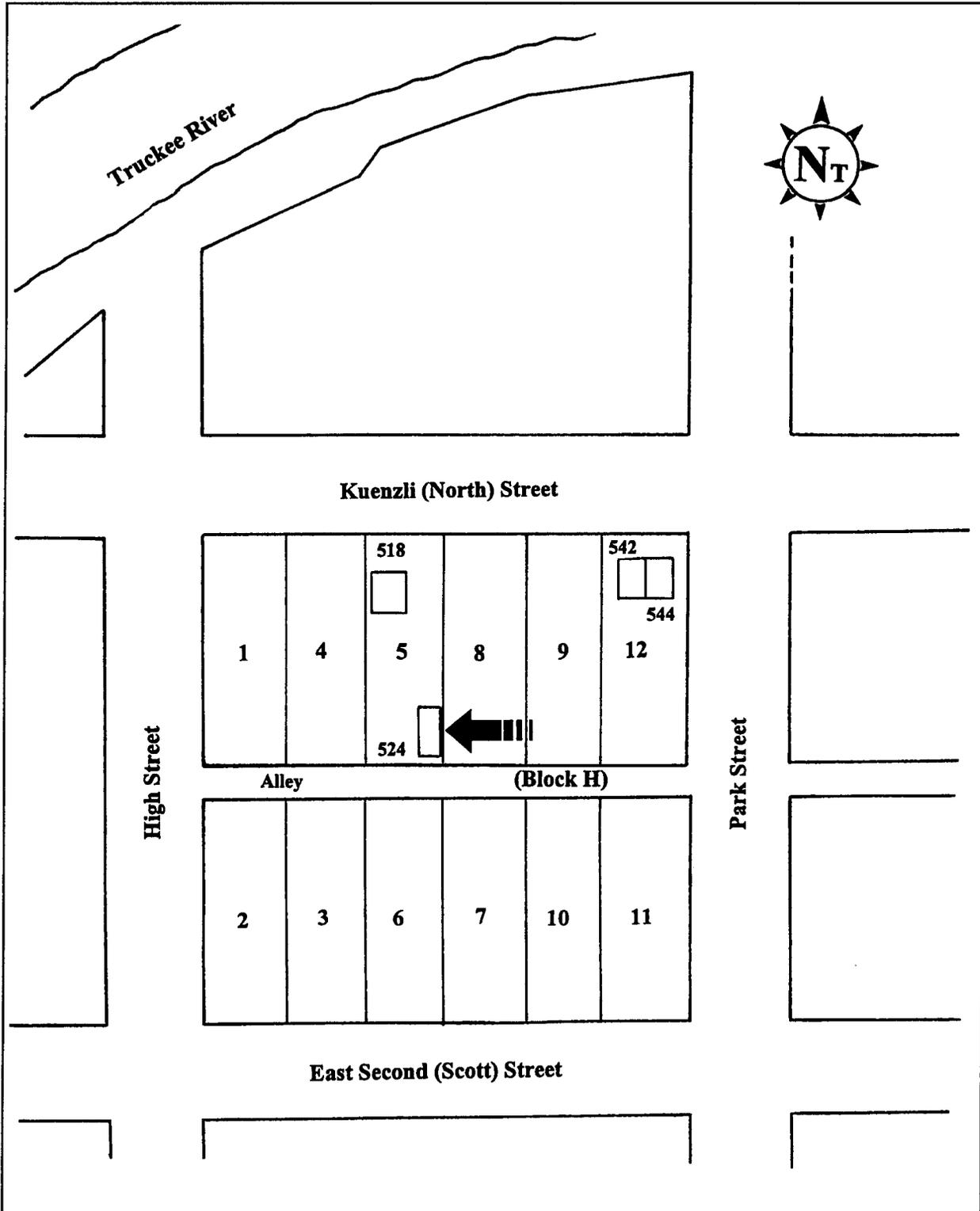
Attachment 2



Project Location Map

Base Map, Reno, Nev., 7.5' USGS Topographic Quadrangle, 1967
(Photorevised 1982).

Attachment 3



House Location Map

After *Sanborn Map of Reno, August 1947*, Sanborn Map Company, New York.

Attachment 4

References to the Chain of Title to the land upon which the structures known as the *Schopper-Guerrera House* (518 Kuenzli Street) and the *Joseph P. Schopper House* (524 Kuenzli Street) stand are in the Office of the Recorder, Washoe County Administrative Complex, Reno, Nevada.

- 1895 Deed, December 6, 1895, recorded in Book 18, p. 253. Daniel Hutchinson, Julia H. Tracy, Hiram T. Hutchinson, Charlotte E. Morgan, Ellen N. Cook, LeRoy Hutchinson, Mary Adelaid Phelps, with attorney Mary H. Sibley, to W. O'H. Martin.
- 1917 Deed, July 5, 1917, recorded in Book 50, p. 416. Estate of W. O'H. Martin (Louise W. Martin, president, and Margaret Martin Mackay, secretary) to Joseph P. Schopper.
- 1929 Deed, July 2, 1929, recorded in Book 76, p. 557. Joseph P. Schopper to Elbert W. O'Connell.
- 1930 Deed, September 11, 1930, recorded in Book 83, p. 520. Elbert W. and Viola May O'Connell to Robert Uccelli and Philip P. Guerrera.
- 1939 Deed, April 25, 1939, recorded in Book 121, p. 531. Robert Uccelli to Philip P. Guerrera.
- 1939 Deed, April 25, 1939, recorded in Book 121, p. 532. Philip P. and Lorene C. Guerrera to Edith L. Ramelli.
- 1939 Deed, April 25, 1939, recorded in Book 121, p. 534. Edith L. Ramelli to Philip P. and Lorene C. Guerrera.
- 1979 Deed, February 23, 1979, recorded in Book 1361, p. 845. Philip P. Guerrera to Arthur G. Lindley.
- 1985 Deed, March 21, 1985, recorded in Book 2145, p. 241. Arthur G. Lindley to Wanda M. Dowdy.
- 1985 Deed, December 5, 1985, recorded in Book 2261, p. 311. Wanda M. dowdy to Robert F. and Marilyn L. Rusk.
- 1986 Deed, December 24, 1986, recorded in Book 2466, p. 510. Robert F. and Marilyn L. Rusk to F.C.Barnego.
- 1996 Deed, May 15, 1996, recorded in Book 4572, p. 585. Robert F. and Marilyn L. Rusk to Robert F. and Marilyn L. Rusk, Trustees of The Rusk Family Trust.