

Schopper-Guerrera House
518 Kuenzli Street
Reno
Washoe County
Nevada

HABS No. NV-31

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16-RENO,
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 518 Kuenzli Street
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U.S.G.S. *Reno, Nev.* 7.5' Quadrangle (1967, photo revised 1982)
UTM Coordinates: 258980mE/4378930mN

Significance: This building is an example of Reno bungalow architecture, which is representative of a type of housing stock common to Reno. Bungalow style architecture has been described as simple and modest, and this building is representative of one of the simplest forms of bungalow present in the Reno area. Although overall architecturally undistinguished in detail and form, it still embodies the distinctive characteristics of the bungalow style (one story, rectangular massed plan, offset door, offset gable porch, overhanging front-gable roof with rafter ends visible, exterior wood cladding, and one-over-one windows). This building, although in fair to deteriorated condition, still clearly 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 is a scaled-down version of the popular bungalow style from the early twentieth century, and represents an example of 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 front-gable roof frame bungalow. The gable entrance faces Kuenzli Street. The building measures 22 by 34 feet. The normal pitch roof (40° slope) has a central chimney (metal pipe), and the roofing material is plain composition shingles below composition sheeting. The facade presents a single offset entry door and window arrangement. The doors are replacement solid-core wooden and the windows are principally one-over-one, double hung. Paired one-over-one windows are present on the east side of the building. The offset front porch consists of a small gable roof with decorative wrought iron supports, over a small concrete porch and steps with wrought iron handrail. There is a shed addition at the rear which spans the entire width of the house. The house rests on a concrete foundation and there is a full basement under the core of the house.

The floor plan (Attachment 1) is a massed design divided into six primary cells or units – the living room, and a bedroom with associated bathroom in the front part (north end); a kitchen and large bedroom in the central part; and a hall, small bedroom and closet space in the rear addition (south end). The hall gives access to both the rear entrance and basement steps. The simple concrete back stairway has no railing, porch, or other features.

Interior flooring is simple wood plank in the living room and front bedroom (and connecting hallway). The central bedroom and back bedroom have been carpeted. A modern (but deteriorated) vinyl flooring is utilized in the kitchen, bathroom and back hall. Walls appear to be plastered and painted, and although the interior generally displays no distinguished design elements, the living room does have rounded junctions between the walls and ceiling. A simple elliptical arched doorway is also present between the living room and entrance to the front bedroom/bathroom area. This type of doorway is a California or Spanish style design influence commonly seen in bungalows. Doorways are original (simple wood panel), except for the addition. The kitchen cabinets, fixtures, and hardware all appear to be original. However, the bathroom services (bathtub, toilet, sink, cabinet and counter) are all non-original modern units. Light fixtures in the living room are also modern replacements.

This bungalow's integrity is considered fair to deteriorated and it also displays limited characteristics vaguely reminiscent of the craftsman style (i.e., exposed rafter ends; Poppeliers et al. 1983; McAlester and McAlester 1984). Although not documented, the building's general appearance also suggests it may be a prefabricated version. Bungalows were ubiquitous throughout the country and architectural plans were frequently published in building magazines. The popularity and economic affordability of these homes also encouraged the sale of simple prefabricated bungalows that could be shipped via mail-order companies (Grow 1984).

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 section of land called the Haydon-Shoemaker Southeast Addition was surveyed and mapped. The area that includes the *Schopper-Guerrera House* is identified as Block H, and this house is located on Lot 5 (Attachment 3). The 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 both 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 plan of the *Schopper-Guerrera House* displayed on the 1947 Sanborn map indicates that the shed addition to the house was constructed after 1947 as it does not appear on this map.

Although early descriptions of the 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 the 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 of the lots on Block H, built structures on these lots, and later sold all but one of the lots by the end of the 1920s. Periodically, between 1920 and the 1960s, members of the family resided at a residence adjacent to the buildings at 518 and 524 Kuenzli Street (526 Kuenzli Street) until that property was sold.

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 - 524 Kuenzli Street and 518 Kuenzli Street - were not built until 1920 (Washoe County Tax Assessor Records 1998). Schopper sold Lot 5, which contains both 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, where they had been residing since ca. 1935 (the first listing for that address in *Polk's Reno City Directory*), to 518 Kuenzli Street (*Schopper-Guerrera House*). The Guerreras continued to reside at 518 Kuenzli Street until 1979, when the lot was sold to Arthur G. Lindley (Washoe County Deeds, Book 1361, Page 845; *Polk's Reno City Directory* 1946-1975).

Examining the *Polk's Reno City Directory* during the 1920s and 1930s for owners and residents of the *Schopper-Guerrera House* indicates that the early owners either lived in the house or nearby. Schopper and his family did not live in the *Schopper-Guerrera House*, but lived at a nearby residence on 526 Kuenzli Street in the early 1920s before moving to Park Street near their nursery. O'Connell lived on Scott Street (later East Second Street) during the period he owned the property on which the *Schopper-Guerrera House* stood.

Uccelli lived with his family on Park Street when he and Guerrero purchased the property in 1930. There is no listing for Guerrero until 1935 when he and his wife are listed as residents in the *Joseph P. Schopper House*, which was during the period of joint ownership with Uccelli. The Guerreras then moved to the *Schopper-Guerrera House* after he bought out Uccelli in 1939. After that move, Guerrero rented the *Joseph P. Schopper House* (524 Kuenzli Street) until he sold the property to Arthur G. Lindley in 1979. Both houses 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 Guerrero). 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, it can be argued that 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 of the structures 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 structures in the neighborhood has occurred, particularly with the Creamery Building. Other structures have experienced changing use from nursery to apartments and single family dwellings to 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 to govern development of the city and

surrounding area, mixed land use became the norm rather than the exception. Therefore, industry, farming, and residential structures coexisted 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.

Grow, Lawrence (1984). *Classic Old House Plans*. The Main Street Press, Pittstown, New Jersey.

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.

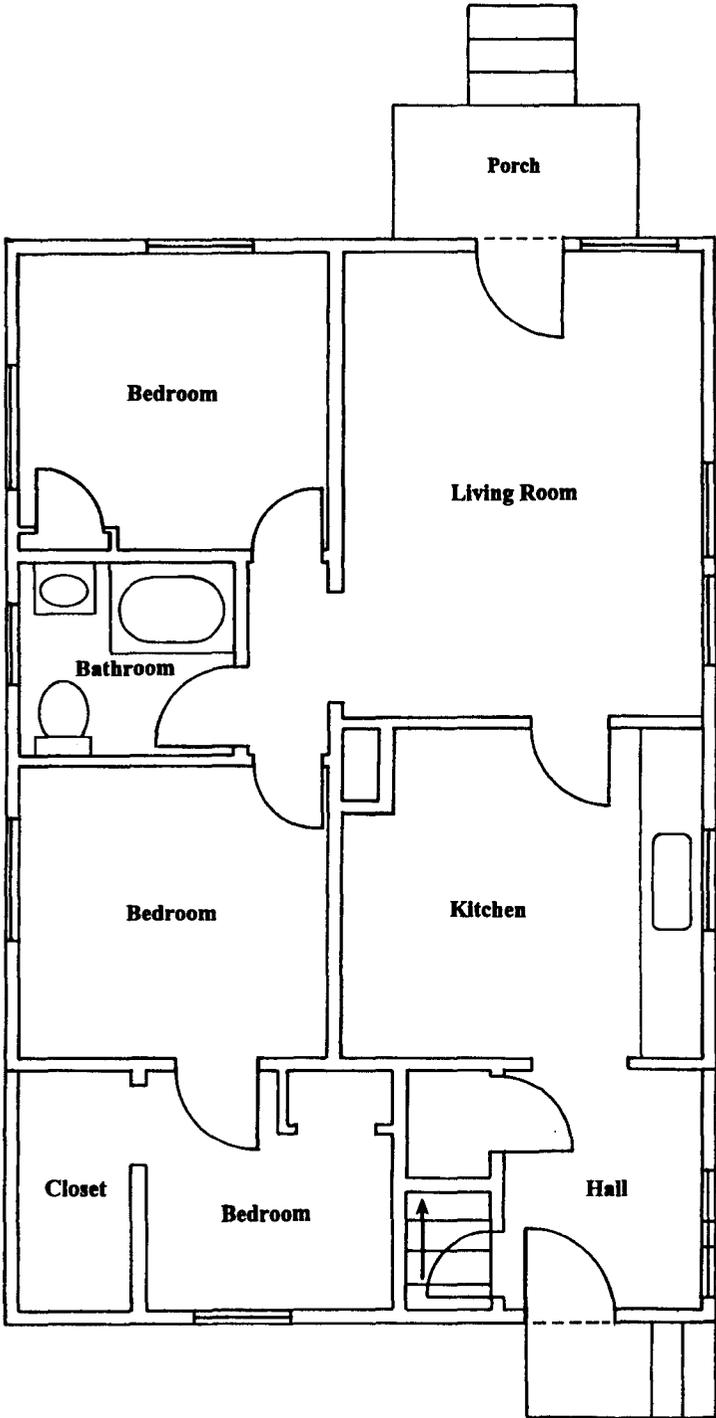
Project Information:

This HABS documentation is an outgrowth of a cultural resources assessment project performed by Kautz Environmental Consultants, Inc. (KEC) of Reno preparatory to the construction of a HUD-assisted low income apartment complex. This building, and two others situated on the proposed construction site – 524 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 were taken by Ms. Kristi Hager, of Missoula, Montana, and 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



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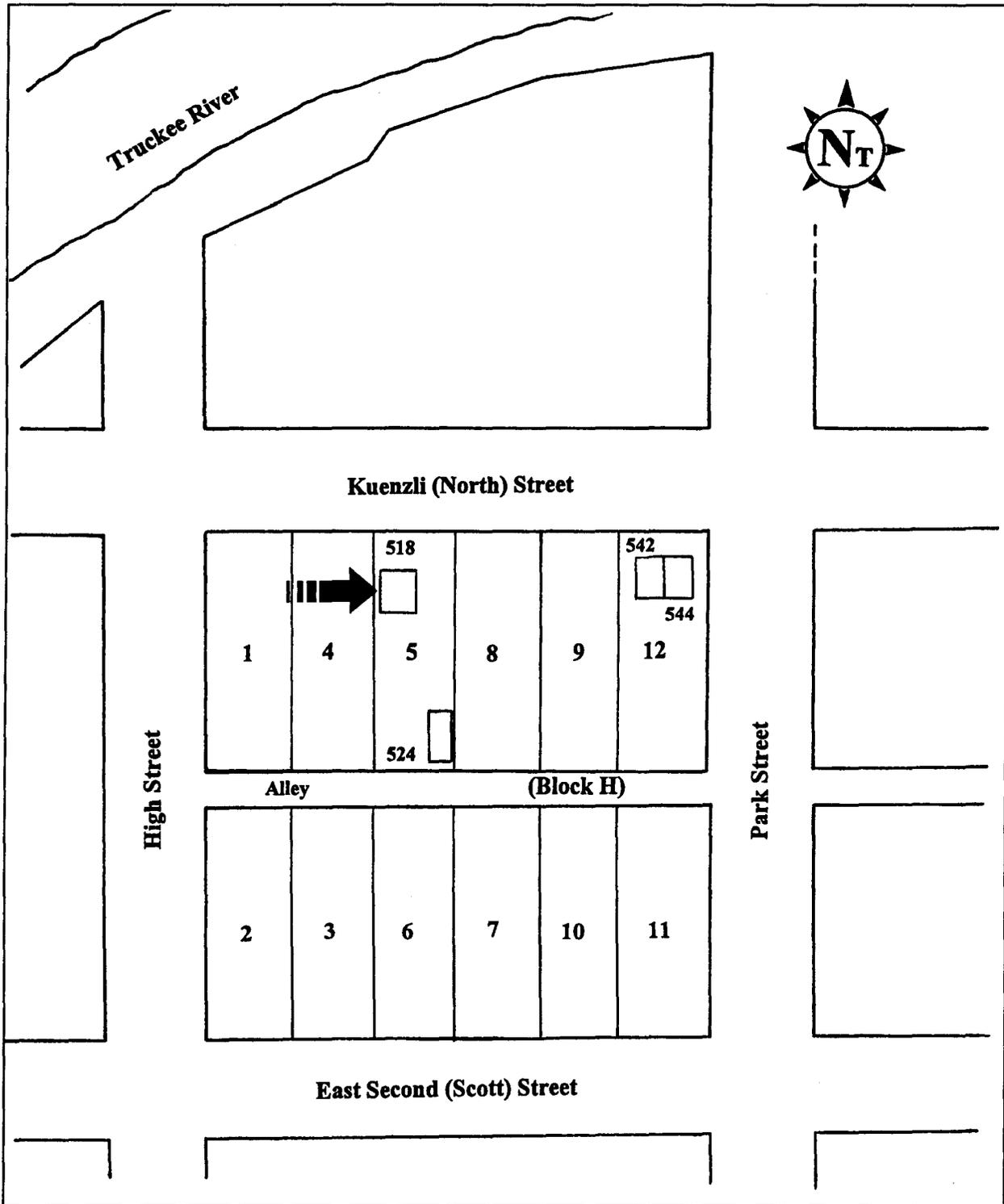
Attachment 2



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.