



County Council Presentation

LAC Women's Army Corps Dormitory

07-12-2022



LOS ALAMOS
NATIONAL LABORATORY



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MHA and the County met with the community and stakeholders. The following project mission statement was developed from the feedback received:

PROJECT MISSION STATEMENT

First and foremost, the W.A.C. Dorm is a piece of Los Alamos history; it is one of two authentic Manhattan Project era buildings still standing and relatively unaltered. While some site improvements are needed for accessibility, rehabilitating the building exterior with the intention of achieving National Historic Register status and inclusion in the MNHP and walking tour are the highest priorities for Los Alamos County. The County intends to have the building listed on the NRHP either individually or, preferably, as a contributing resource to the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory National Historic Landmark District.

The interior of the building will be updated to accommodate the modern, mixed-use functions. The interior renovation will strike a balance between modern efficiency and historical sensitivity, preserving the nostalgia of the W.A.C. Dormitory while serving the needs of a 21st century community. This mixed-use, flexible approach will transform the W.A.C. Dormitory into a national tourist destination, acting as a hub for the community; the W.A.C. will be a place for possible neighborhood gatherings, educational activities, and local exhibit space.

Project Mission Statement

LAC Women's Army Corps Dormitory

WAC DORM (CURRENTLY OUTSIDE PARK)

EXISTING MANHATTAN PROJECT NAT'L HISTORICAL PARK WALKING TOUR

FULLER LODGE

1 This grand building was built in 1947 as the Ranch School dining hall. It also served as mess, staff, and guest quarters. Named for Edward P. Fuller, a staff member at the Ranch School, it is made of massive pine logs, personally selected by architect John Gun Allen and Ranch School director A.J. Condit. Fuller Lodge still serves as a public cultural space center.

MEMORIAL ROSE GARDEN

2 In 1947, the rose garden was started here by members of the Los Alamos Garden Club. At that time there was no cemetery, so some burials were placed in memory of those who died in Los Alamos. The garden hall serves to maintain the Rose Garden. It also serves as a popular place for wedding and other ceremonies. A Blue Star Memorial is on site, and Los Alamos National Laboratory memorial to those killed in the line of duty are located here.

ROMERO CABIN

3 Home steward to gain on the Pajarito Plateau in the late 1800s. The Romero family built this cabin in 1913 on a private mesa. Like all homes in the Manhattan Project, it was acquired by the U.S. government for the Manhattan Project. In 1944, the cabin was moved down onto and built in 2000. It is open to the public on select dates and during guided tours.

FIRE CACHE

4 Local homesteader Severo Gonzalez Sr. built this stone building in the 1920s for the Los Alamos Ranch School to house firefighting equipment. Fires have always been a danger on the Pajarito Plateau due to droughts, log construction, and even scold burning stoves. The building is made of stone from the nearby Ancestral Pueblo Site.

THE BIG HOUSE

5 Across the street from the Romero Cabin was the site of the original main building for the Los Alamos Ranch School. The Big House design inspired the style of Fuller Lodge and other Ranch School structures. Students kept their year round on several porches as part of 1930s life, as well as with murals, chullo, and relaxation. The Big House contained a library and, during the war years, the non-atomic radio station, KEN. In 1945, it also housed some of the first scientists who shared a one bathroom.

ANCESTRAL PUEBLO SITE

6 In roughly 1225 CE, this site was home to a group of 1500 people, including 1000 of the Pueblo groups now living along the Rio Grande. They built with blocks of mud, the world's oldest adobe common to this area. Some rooms were for cooking and sleeping, while others were for storage.

BATHUB ROW

7 These cottages were built for the Ranch School as residences and classrooms. Having the only bathroom in town, these homes quickly acquired the name "Bathub Row." E. Roberts' apartment was located in the house at the corner of Bathub Row and Peach Street. This home is a private residence and visitors are not allowed.

BATHUB ROW (CONTD.)

7 The house next to the Oppenheimer house, now known as the Hans Bethe House, displays Cold War exhibits as part of the History Museum campus.

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

8 The building near the corner of 19th and Nectar Streets was built as the Manhattan Project East Cafeteria. It is one of the few GI buildings left from WWII. Used by the growing post-war community as a recreation hall, it started serving as a playhouse in 1971, operated by the Los Alamos Little Theatre, a non-profit drama troupe.

POWER HOUSE

9 The building housing the design center for the Los Alamos Ranch School was built in the early 1930s. In 1944, George Kristalowsky, an explosives expert, and his new bride moved into it. As a job, his friends started a half-moon in the door of the attached shed that they built. It is now used as administrative office space for the National Park Service.

HOPPER FIREPLACE

10 These rocks were part of the fireplace in the homestead cabin of William Mackwood "Mack" Hopper, who settled here in 1906. The chimney, probably made of stone from an Ancestral Pueblo site and put together with a mud-clay mortar, was rebuilt in 2016 for the Los Alamos Historical Society as an Eagle Scout project.

TOUCH THE SKY SCULPTURE

11 In May 2000, the county and adjacent lands were devastated in the 400-acre Cerro Grande wildfire. Nearly 100 Los Alamos homes were destroyed. This sculpture was created a year later, commemorating the fire and community re-building.

ASHLEY POND

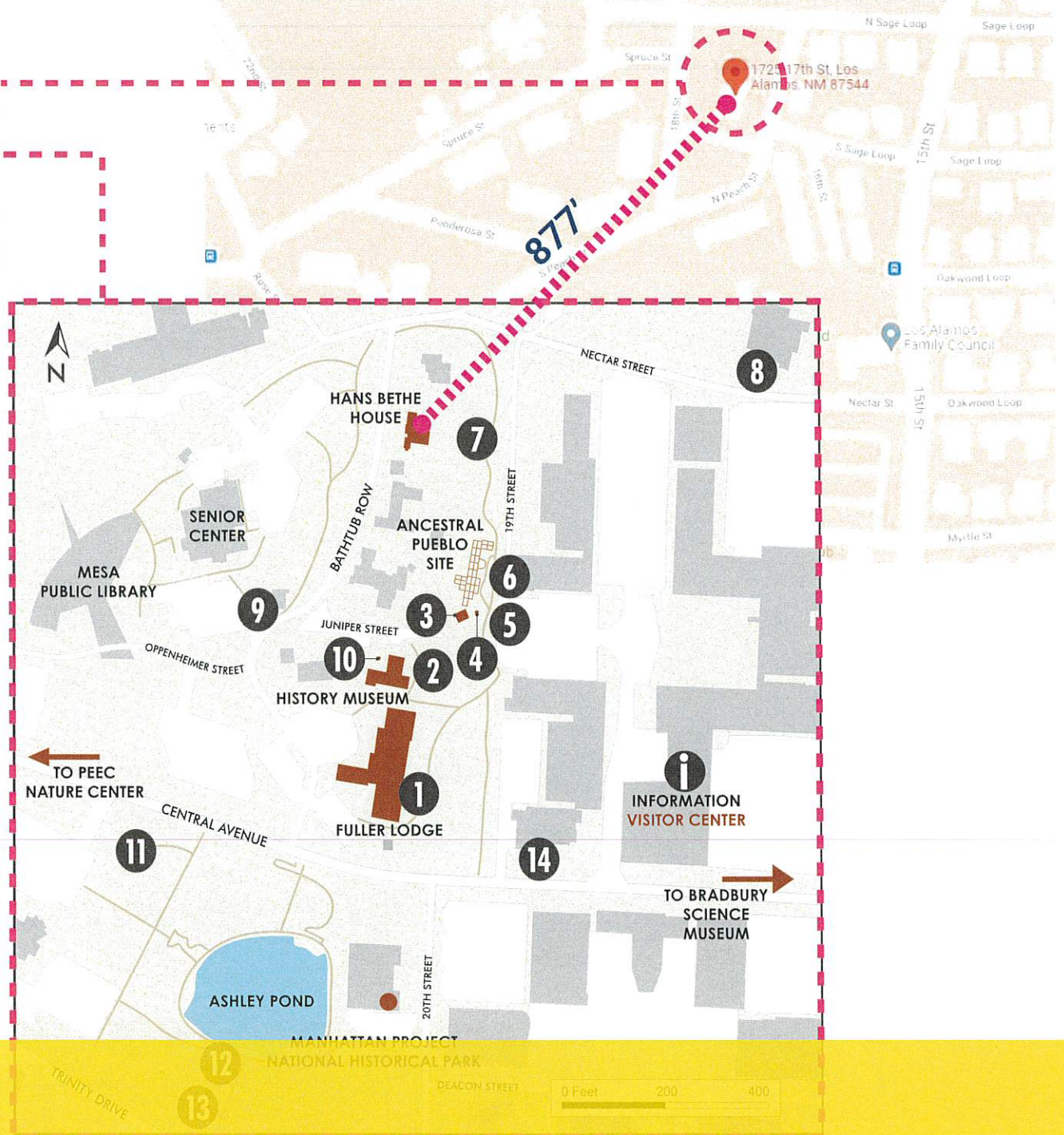
12 Ashley Pond began as a natural depression in the landscape. The Ranch School ensured its water supply by constructing a pipeline from a dam in Los Alamos Canyon. It was named for Ashley Pond Jr., the founder of the Los Alamos Ranch School, whose students could not resist the geographical pun. The boys used it for summer and winter sports. Blocks of ice were cut from the pond in the winter and stored on the Big House. Ashley Pond Park contains a number of sculptures that are part of the county art collection created by the Art in Public Places Board.

ICE HOUSE MEMORIAL

13 Today, a memorial stands at the site of the Ranch School Ice House. During WWII, the nuclear core of the "Gadget" site prototype atomic bomb was assembled here, and then transported to Trinity Site, 200 miles south near Socorro, NM. It was successfully detonated on July 16, 1945. During the Manhattan Project and for many years after, the biological laboratories surrounded Ashley Pond received phosphorus. These buildings were removed in the mid-1970s.

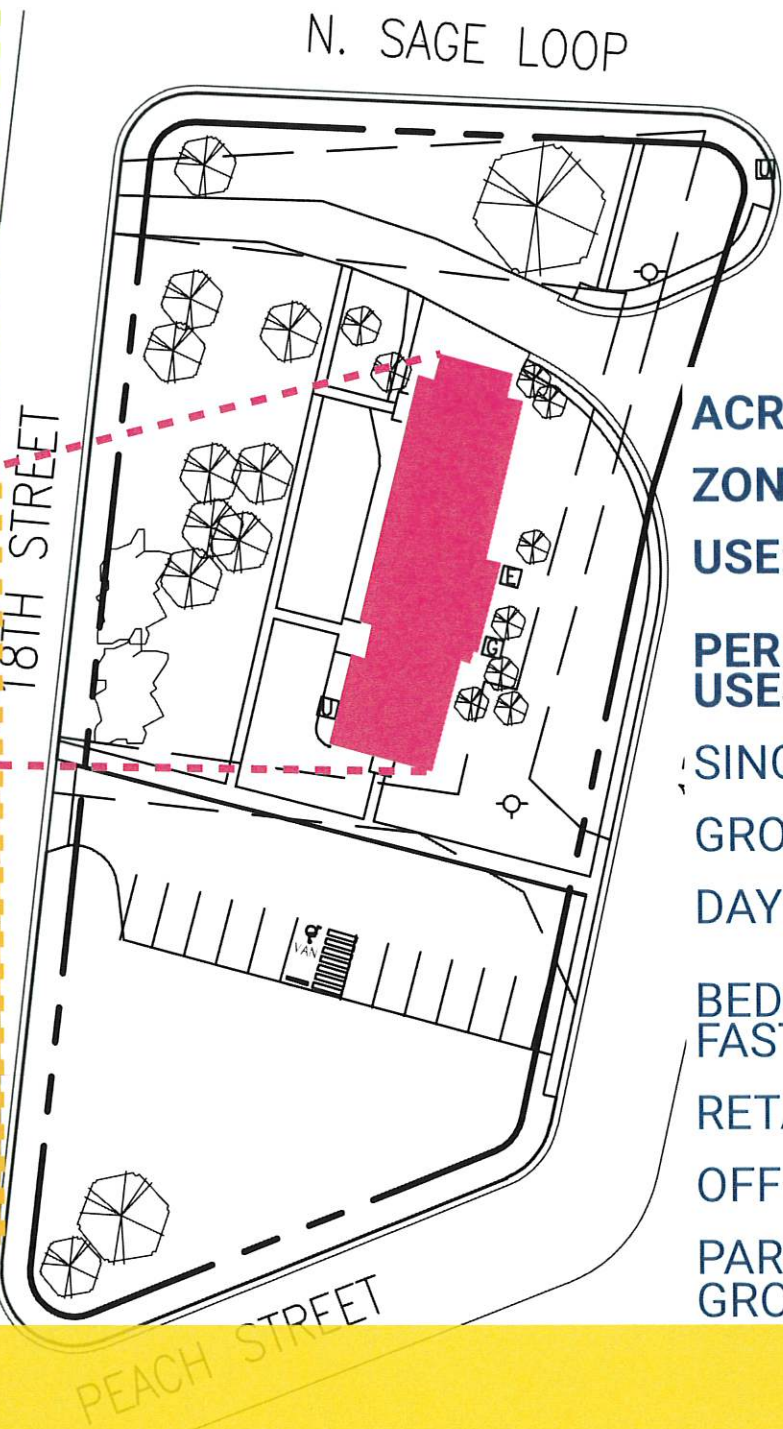
POST OFFICE

14 During WWII, mail to Los Alamos residents was simply addressed to P.O. Box 462, Santa Fe, New Mexico. This Post Office, designed and built as part of the Community Center, opened at this location in 1947 on the site of the Ranch School Trading Post. Recently the Post Office was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Site Context

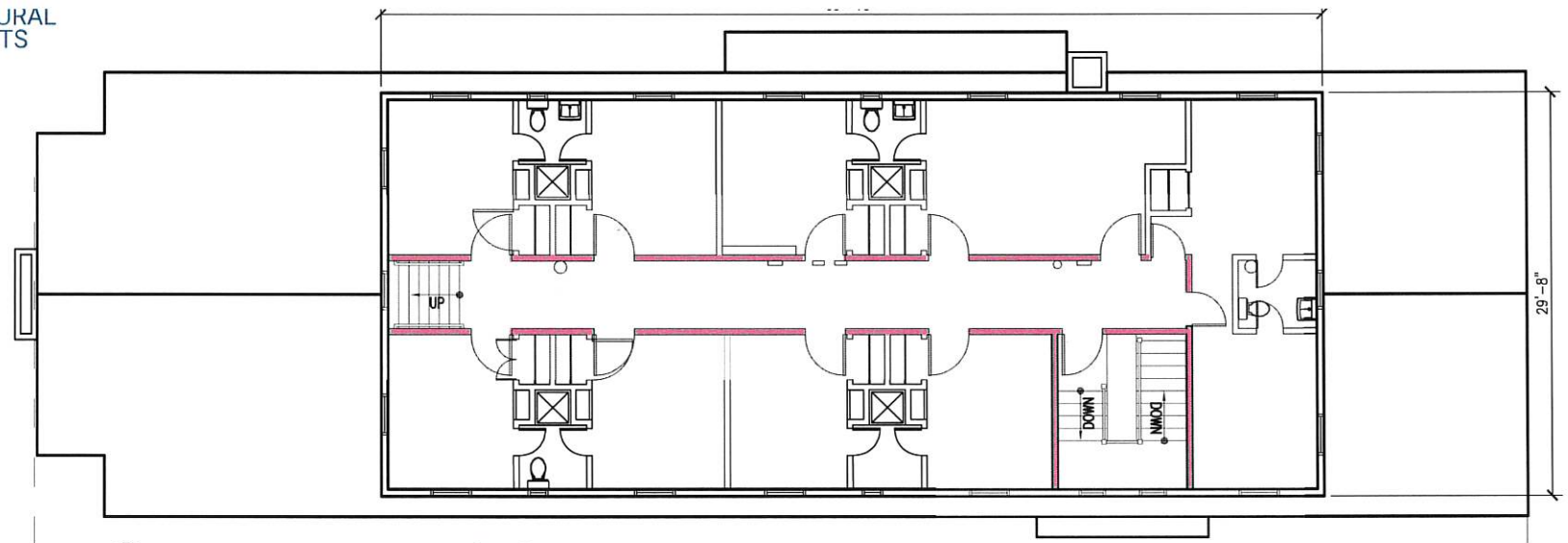
LAC Women's Army Corps Dormitory



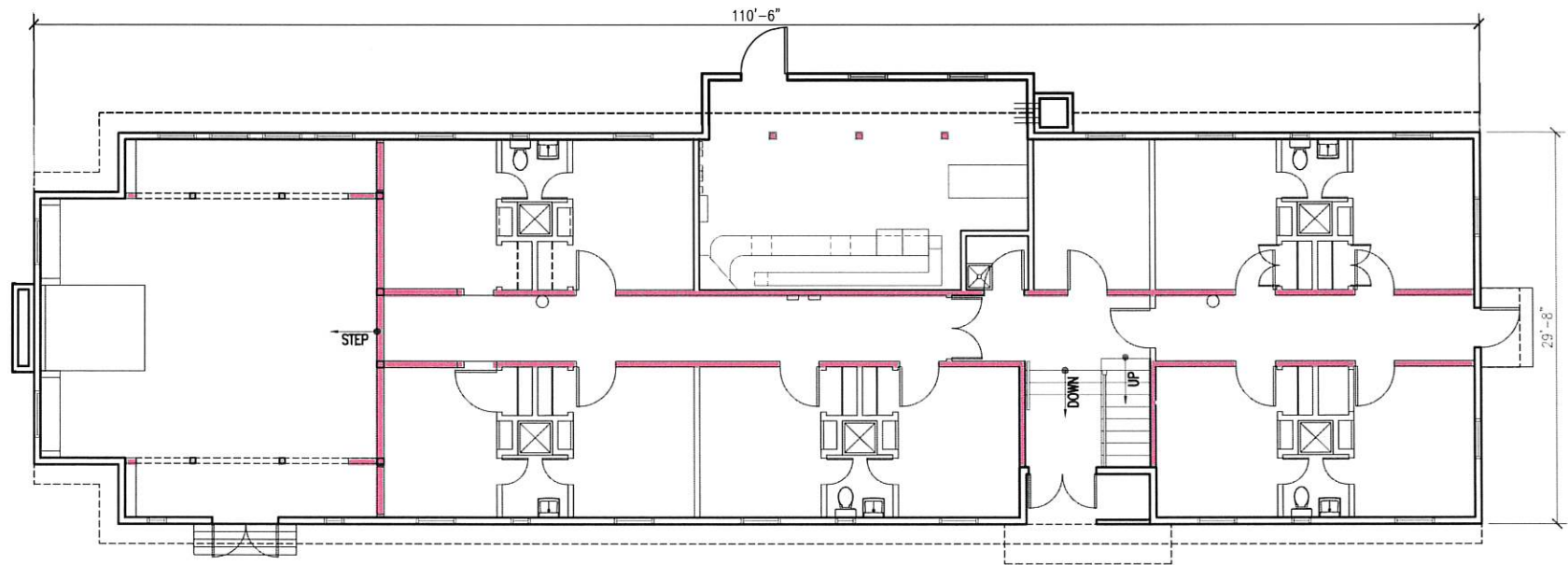
- ACRES:** 1.01
- ZONE:** R-1-8
- USE:** ASSEMBLY
- PERMISSIVE USES:**
 - SINGLE FAMILY
 - GROUP HOME
 - DAY CARE
 - BED & BREAKFAST
 - RETAIL
 - OFFICES
 - PARKS & PLAY-GROUNDS

Site Context

LAC Women's Army Corps Dormitory



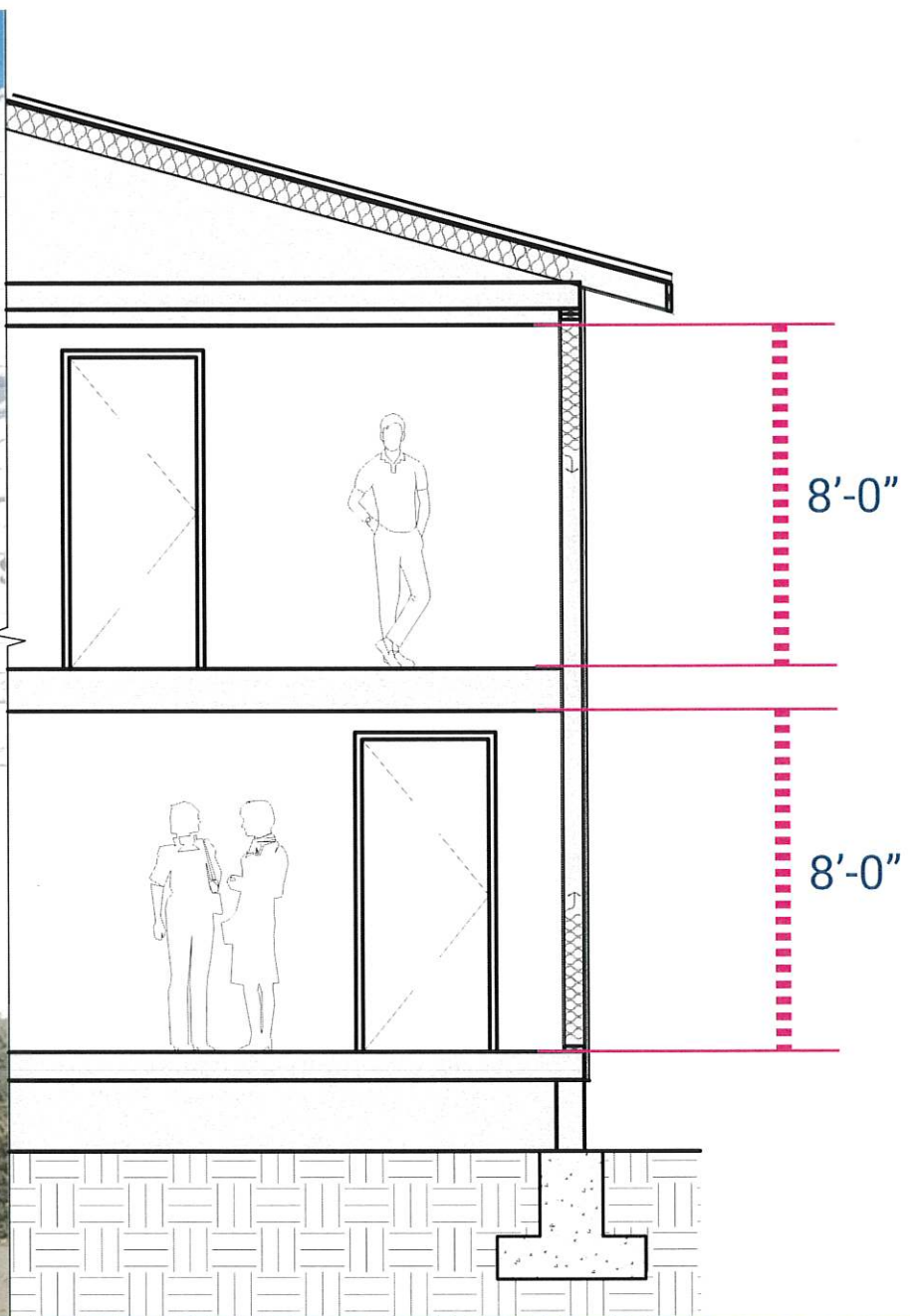
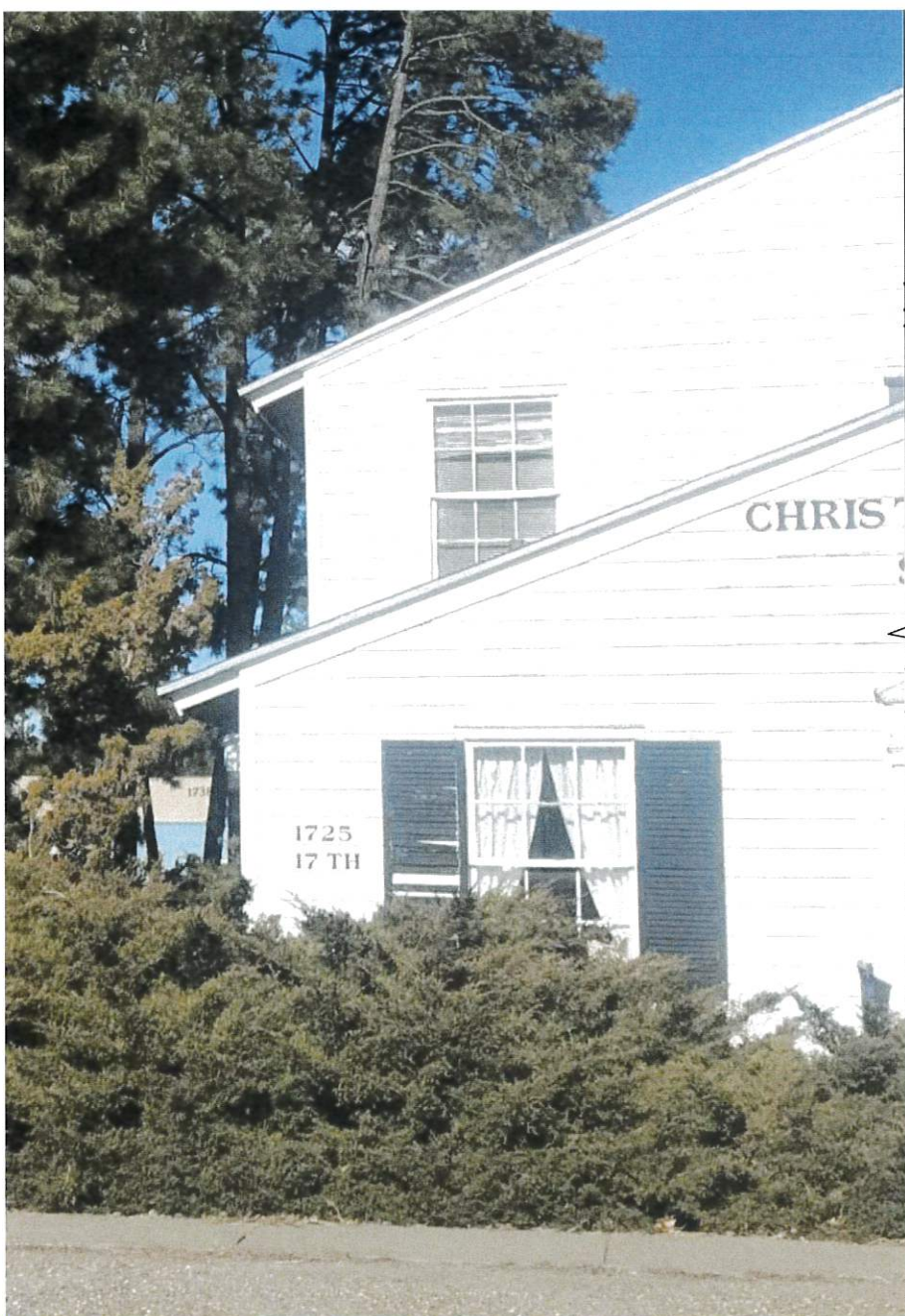
Existing Second Floor 2,073 sf



Existing First Floor 3,300 sf

Existing Conditions

LAC Women's Army Corps Dormitory



Existing Conditions

LAC Women's Army Corps Dormitory

CONCLUSIONS

The best way to preserve a building is to occupy it.

Giving the WAC Dormitory a new use and purpose is the best preservation strategy. The historical integrity should be maintained as much as possible, but providing a functional space for occupants will allow the building to last another 80 years.

- **The WAC Dormitory will be seeking National Register of Historic Places status under**
 - Association with an event(s) that made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history, specifically with the Manhattan Project.
 - Design/Construction that has remained standing designed World War II Temporary housing unit built for the Manhattan project at Los Alamos.
- **This project will be a Rehabilitation**, under the Secretary of Interiors Standards for Treatment.
- **When considering conceptual floor plans**, note that not all original design elements must be saved. However, removal should be as minimal and purposeful as possible such that alterations do not destroy the overall character defining spaces, materials, and finishes.

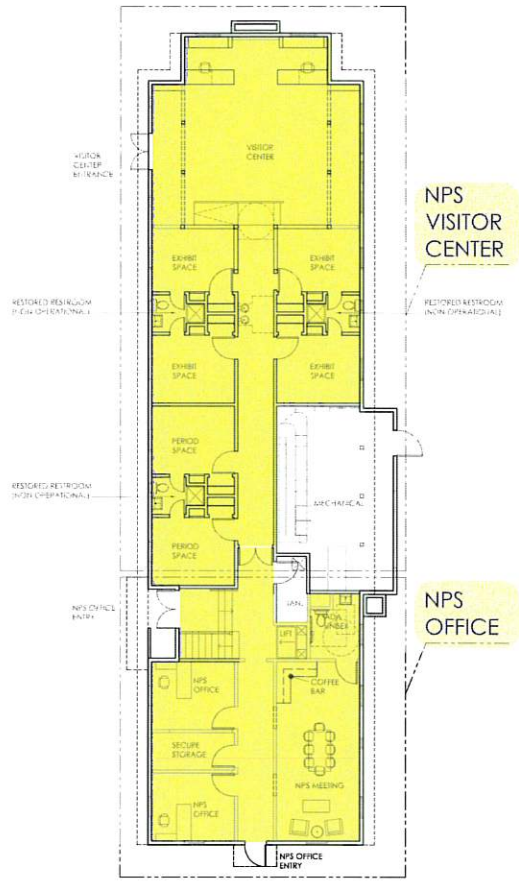
Historical Preservation Findings

LAC Women's Army Corps Dormitory

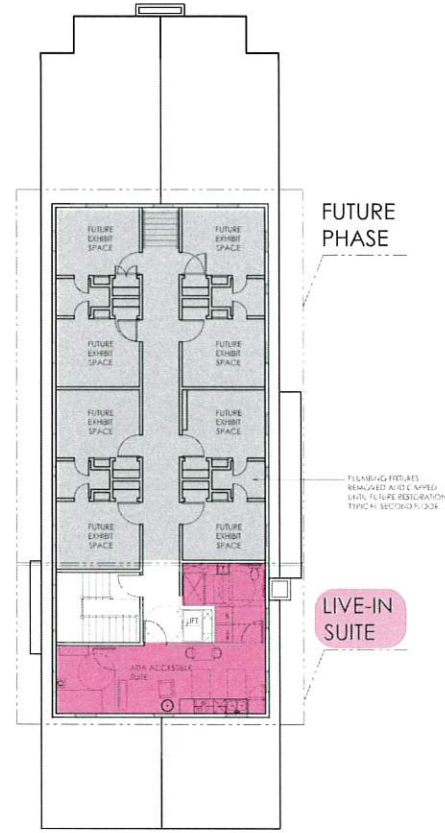
OPTION 1a | NPS + VISITOR CENTER

EXTERIOR RESTROOMS

PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COST: \$3,100,000



1 First Floor Renovation Plan
Scale: 1/8"=1'-0"



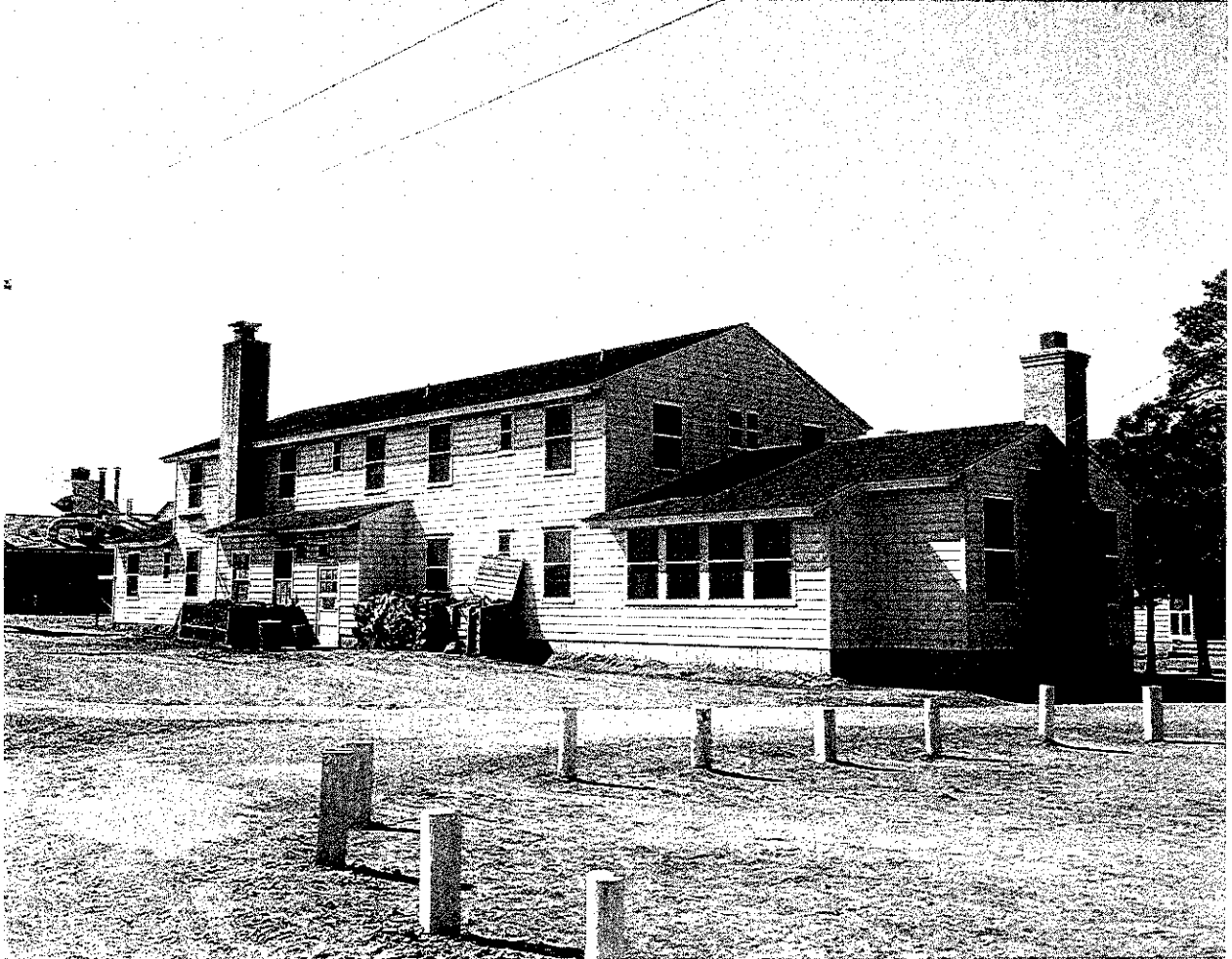
2 Second Floor Renovation Plan
Scale: 1/8"=1'-0"



3 First Floor Site Renovation Plan
Scale: 1/16"=1'-0"



**National Register of Historic Places Evaluation and Preservation
Plan for Los Alamos County Women's Army Corps (WAC)
Dormitory**



Final – September 2022



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

BATAAN MEMORIAL BUILDING
407 GALISTEO STREET, SUITE 236
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501
PHONE (505) 827-6320 – NM.SHPO@state.nm.us

November 16, 2022

Wayne Kohlrust
Los Alamos County, Project Manager
1000 Central Avenue, Suite 160
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Dear Mr. Kohlrust:

Thank you for submitting the Determination of Eligibility for the WAC Dormitory in Los Alamos County, entitled "National Register of Historic Places Evaluation and Preservation Plan for Los Alamos County Women's Army Corps (WAC) Dormitory," prepared by Mullen Heller Architecture, September 2022.

The Historic Preservation Division concurs with the findings in the report that the WAC Dormitory is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. We believe that it is eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion A and C in the areas of military, women's history, and architecture.

It is also useful to note that this building may be a rare survivor because most military installations have demolished their wood buildings from World War II.

The review of the assessment of effects for proposed work will be evaluated separately. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,

Steven Moffson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven Moffson".

State and National Register Coordinator

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECT FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE LOS ALAMOS COUNTY WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS DORMITORY

Introduction

The Women's Army Corps (WAC) Dormitory is one of two authentic Manhattan Project era buildings still standing and relatively unaltered. Los Alamos County (county) intends to have the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) either individually or as a contributing resource to the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory National Historic Landmark District. In order to re-use the dormitory, the building would need modifications to bring it up to building safety and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) codes, as well as other changes to accommodate new uses; therefore, some alterations would be required.

Project Description - Conceptual Plans for the Dormitory.

Los Alamos County intends to repurpose the dormitory to provide space for an extension to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park (MPNHP) in Los Alamos. The building would serve as the MPNHP visitor center and office space. The dormitory would serve as a history museum and exhibit space with one or more dorm rooms restored to their original condition to serve as a demonstration exhibit and homage to the women that lived there. Alterations to the interior would be made to accommodate the new use, including larger gathering spaces, reception area, office space, conference room, and visitor restrooms. However, any changes made would be purposeful and as minimal as possible, preserving the original character of the overall space. There would also be exterior exhibits free to the public to visit at any time of day.

A single occupant live-in suite maybe be included in the WAC Dormitory to provide a transient lodging space for a county or National Park Service employee. The single-occupancy suite would have a bedroom, bathroom, and small living area including a kitchenette, all of which would be ADA compliant. Despite the modernization, the new live-in suite would consider and reflect the original character of the dorms, preserving the nostalgia and attraction of staying at the dormitory.

Overall, this renovation would aim to restore and preserve the exterior of the building as a historical structure while updating the site and interior to accommodate the modern mixed-use functions. All interior renovations would strike a balance between modern efficiency and historical sensitivity. The MPNHP visitor center and exhibit space being in a historical building would bolster the user experience. This mixed-use, flexible approach would transform the WAC Dormitory into a national tourist destination, acting as a hub for the community, a place for neighborhood gatherings, educational activities, and local exhibit space.

Prior Survey/Area of Potential Effect

Los Alamos County had the building evaluated for listing in the NRHP (Evaluation and Preservation Plan for Los Alamos County Women's Army Corps (WAC) Dormitory, September 2022). Through this evaluation, the WAC Dormitory has been recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under criteria A and C. As noted in the evaluation, the character defining features of this building include:

- Original circulation patterns indicated by the placement of the sidewalks
- Mature trees
- Rectangular shape of the building, with smaller second story
- Gabled shingle roof (shingles not original)



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March 27, 2023

Wayne Kohlrust, Project Manager
Los Alamos County
1000 Central Avenue, Suite 160
Los Alamos, NM 87544

VIA EMAIL ONLY

RE: 30% drawings for the proposed Women's Army Corps Dormitory rehabilitation, Los Alamos, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Kohlrust:

Thank you for submitting the 30% design drawings for the proposed rehabilitation of the Los Alamos Women's Army Corps Dormitory. As requested, the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed the proposed project under the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

SHPO staff would like to set up a site visit with county and architecture firm personnel to evaluate the building and answer any questions about our comments. Please feel free to contact me with suggested days and times. An on-site discussion at this stage in the process can be very useful.

Ground disturbance

Due to proposed ground disturbance, an archaeological survey of the site is needed by a qualified archaeologist, who holds an active New Mexico General Archaeological Investigation permit for State Lands. A list of [Cultural Resource Consultants](#) is available on our website at <https://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/programs/review-compliance.html>

We recommend survey-level testing (less than 0.05% of the project area), according to CPRC Rule 4.10.15 NMAC, focusing this testing at locations for areas of future trenching and new buildings/structures. The results of the survey-level testing will determine if the undertaking has the potential to affect intact, significant cultural resources. For more information, please contact Andrew Zink, Archaeological Review and Permits, at andrew.zink@dca.nm.gov or 505-827-4040.

Proposed new use of the historic building

The proposed project will rehabilitate the WAC building for use as a visitor center and office space for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. NM SHPO is reviewing the proposed work according to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Guidelines for Rehabilitation](#) (Standards) to maintain National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of the dormitory.

SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING ENCLOSURE

VISITOR DROP-OFF

MAIN ENTRANCE WITH RAMP & STAIR

MAJOR HISTORICAL FACADE

LOW PATH LIGHTS & EXHIBIT SIGNS

HIGH DESERT MEADOW GRASS

NEW RESTROOM PAVILION WITH COVERED TABLES

CONTROLLED ACCESS & SECURITY

ART / FOCAL MARKER

SIDEWALK CONNECTIONS TO CROSS THE STREETS



SIDEWALKS AROUND SITE PERIMETER

PROTECT HEALTHY EXISTING PINES

IMPROVED DRIVEWAYS

LANDSCAPING FOR SHADE, SCREENING, & SITE ENHANCEMENT

EXISTING BUILDING

FENCE & LANDSCAPING TO SCREEN GROUND MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

BIOSWALES WHERE FEASIBLE

SIGN & FLAG

GATHERING

PARKING LOT SCREENING



SITE LOCATION

The site improvements, design of a new accessory building and the rehabilitation of the original 1940's Women's Dormitory will follow the Los Alamos County Development Code Standards, including:

- Off-Street Parking
- Landscaping and Screening
- Neighborhood Protection Standards
- Outdoor Lighting
- Walls Fences and Gates
- Signage
- Building Design

WOMEN'S DORMITORY SITE

LOS ALAMOS
 where discoveries are made





WOMEN'S DORMITORY SITE

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