



## City of Florence

Florence Municipal Center  
600 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Florence, Colorado 81226.  
(719) 784-4848 Fax (719) 784-0228  
Email: [planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)  
[www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov](http://www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov)

Members:  
Brandon Angel  
Millie Wintz  
Fran Black  
John Dixon  
Sue Kinzer  
Scott McMillin  
Sherry Skye Stuart

CITY OF FLORENCE  
FLORENCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
FLORENCE MUNICIPAL CENTER, CITY HALL CHAMBERS  
*Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.*

### AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of the minutes of February 24, 2026, meeting
- IV. Discussion –
  - a) Local Historical Plaque
  - b) Local Nominations
  - c) America 250/150
- V. Next Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 @ 4:30 p.m.
- VI. Adjourn



# City of Florence

600 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
 Florence, Colorado 81226  
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 Email: [planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)

FLORENCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
 Tuesday, February 24, 2026  
 4:30 P.M.

| Members                          | Present | Absent |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Chair Angel                      |         | X      |
| Vice Chair Wintz                 | X       |        |
| Member Black                     | X       |        |
| Member McMillin                  | X       |        |
| Member Dixon                     |         | X      |
| Member Kinzer                    |         | X      |
| Member Stuart                    | X       |        |
| Council Representative MacKinnon | X       |        |

| Staff Present         | Present | Absent |
|-----------------------|---------|--------|
| Planning Director Fox | X       |        |

- I. **Call to Order**  
 Vice Chair Wintz called meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.
  
- II. **Roll Call**  
 Member Dixon, Kinzer and Stuart absent.  
 All the other members present.  
 Council Representative MacKinnon present.  
 Member Stuart arrives at 4:40 p.m.
  
- III. **Approval of minutes of the September 30, 2025 meeting**  
 Member McMillin makes a motion to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2025, meeting.  
 Second, by Member Black.

Roll Call 4 Ayes



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## IV. Discussion

### a) **Local Historical Plaque -**

- Planning Director states Chair Angel has been in contact with the high school and that they are continuing to work on the plaques.

### b) **Local Nominations –**

- Planning Director states two local historic nominations have been submitted for review. One for the Bell Tower and the other is for the Pioneer Museum Building. A nomination committee is needed to review the submittals and potentially interview the applicant in order to help facilitate the process. Member Wintz has volunteered to be a part of the committee, and two other members are needed. Members Black and McMillan also volunteer to be on the nomination committee.

### c) **America 250/150**

- Planning Director reported that the Fremont County Consortium developed children's passport books featuring activities tied to the county's history, which were distributed to all local 5th-grade classes. Students can visit designated passport centers throughout the county to help complete activities and receive stamps.
- Planning Director also noted that "Tavern Talks" will take place from May through September, with the Florence Archives and Pioneer Museum collaborating to host events in Florence.
- Planning Director shared that the Florence Archives is pursuing a project to recreate the City flag and present it to property owners listed on the City's local historic registry.
- Member Wintz suggests an entry into the Pioneer Day Parade, a group, carrying a banner that would represent the Historic Preservation Commission.

Member McMillin makes a motion to make an entry into the Pioneer Day Parade for the Florence Preservation Commission.

Second, by Member Black.

**Roll Call 4 Ayes**

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Preservation Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FLORENCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: APRIL 28, 2026

STAFF REPORT

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Agenda Item: Local Historic Registry Nomination Discussion – 201 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

Department: Planning

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## Property Information:

Name of Structure: Bell Tower Cultural Center

Year(s) of Original Construction: 1898

## Staff Comments:

- For local historic designation in Florence, a building must possess distinctive character, be at least 50 years old, and meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - History:
    1. Has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or
    2. Is the site of a historic event with a significant effect upon society; or
    3. Exemplifies the cultural heritage of the community; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important prehistoric information.
  - Architecture:
    1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
    2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering; or
    3. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City; or
    4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.
  - Listed on another historic registry:
    1. The property is listed on the Colorado Register of Historic Places.
    2. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The nomination submittal suggests that the Bell Tower meets the criteria for local historic designation due to its historical and architectural significance.
- The Nomination Review Committee met to evaluate the Bell Tower nomination and determined that the application is complete and accurately reflects the information provided.
- The Committee further finds that the Bell Tower meets the criteria for both historical and architectural significance and has no further recommendations.

## Attachments included:

- Bell Tower application.

## Motions:

I move that the Historic Preservation Commission find the application for local historic designation of the Bell Tower at 201 East 2nd Street to be complete and eligible, and that it be scheduled for a public hearing at the next regular meeting.



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## LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION APPLICATION

### Eligibility:

A building, object, monument, structure or site may individually be designated as a Landmark, or one or more buildings, objects, monuments, structures or sites which are united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development may be designated as a Historic District. **The building, object, monument, structure, site or district must have distinctive character, more than 50 years old and meets one of the following categories:**

#### • History:

- ① Has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or
2. Is the site of a historic event with a significant effect upon society; or
3. Exemplifies the cultural heritage of the community; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important prehistoric information.

#### • Architecture:

- ① Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering; or
3. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City; or
- ④ Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

#### • Listed on another historic registry:

1. The property is listed on the Colorado Register of Historic Places;
2. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

(Note: County Register of Historic Places: See Attached.)

### Statement of Significance:

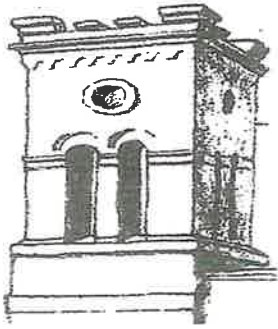
Describe how the building, object, monument, structure, site or district being nominated meets one of the criteria listed above. Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

Architectural Significance: See attached.

1898 Commercial Patternbks., Western Stained Glass windows

Historical Significance: See attached.

City cultural development as evidenced in "Church Row" of 2nd St. Florence.



## *The Bell Tower Cultural Center*

### **Florence Arts Council**

201 E Second Street, Florence Colorado, 81226

### **Community Centered Reuse for a Fine Old Building**

The First American Baptist Church was completed in 1898 (the large church building) by a local congregation that had organized the previous year. A plaque on the south-west corner of the building, near the double doors, commemorates the event. The acoustics in the Performance Hall, former sanctuary, have been praised by many a speaker and musician, while the original ceiling and light fixtures captivate those interested in architectural details.

Church records report that in 1927 the congregation went into debt to dig a basement for "educational facilities" which included a kitchen. When the basement was nearly complete, heavy rains caused the sidewalks to cave in and damage was done to the upper structure. However, "the roof held strong". The record states that the walls were quickly repaired and the basement was completed. The west end of the basement is narrowed slightly by a small buttress to the wall on the north side and a slightly slanted wall on the south which acts as buttress to the stairs and bell tower. This is the end where the sidewalks decided to attend church dinners.

The church bell and bell tower were dedicated in 1939. The bell had been donated by a church in Pagosa Springs. The bell is not currently resting in its cradle and unfortunately cannot be rung.

In 1957 the three-story education building was added. The design plans were done by a local high-school senior, Faye Essmieir (now Gordon). Faye visited the building in 2017 and was delighted to see its current use.

The Baptist congregation thrived and the church served the community for many years but by the early 2000s had dwindled to a handful of people who were no longer able to maintain the buildings. In 2013 the remaining members of the church decided to donate the buildings to the Florence Arts Council which had been established in 2004 for the purpose of serving artists and the community. The names of the donating parishioners are proudly displayed on a plaque in the performance hall under the wonderful western-facing stained-glass windows. Mid-afternoon of a sunny day is prime viewing time for these original windows.

The "church" part of the building has been transformed to a performance hall for concerts, plays, lectures, and to house art exhibits. As a community gathering space, it is available for meetings, weddings, movies, or Sunday church services. The basement is available for receptions, meetings, exercise and other classes.

The Education Building (aka the Annex) now houses an art gallery, reception room, office and two floors of studios and teaching spaces for art, weaving, pottery, music, needlework, crafts and more.

The courtyard to the south and the garden to the north of the building are home to a variety of public art works ranging from community-made mosaics, to statuary and installations. Volunteer labor continues to enhance the building and grounds for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.



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If property is a building, object or structure, has it be moved?  Yes  No

If yes:

Where was its original location? \_\_\_\_\_

When was it moved? \_\_\_\_\_

**Year of Construction:** 1898

Source of Information: Fremont County Assessor Record Card

**Original Builder, Architect, and / or Designer:** Commercial Pattern Book 1898

Source of Information: B. Little: History of 1st Baptist Church Stained Glass Windows

**Original Owner:**

Source of Information: Fremont County Assessor Record Card

### Narrative Description:

Please describe the current appearance of the property and any alterations that have occurred since its original construction.

Attach additional sheets if needed.

The First American Baptist Church was completed in 1898 by a local congregation that had organized the previous year. A plaque on the south-west corner of the building, near the double doors commemorates the event. The acoustics in the Performance Hall, former sanctuary, have been praised by many a speaker and musician, while the original ceiling and light fixtures captivate those interested in architectural details.

Church records report that in 1927 the congregation went into debt to dig a basement for "educational facilities" which included a kitchen. When the baseent was nearly complete, heavy rains cause the side walls to cave in and damage was done to the opper structure.

(Continued: Attached sheets.) Community Centered Reuse for a fine Old Building: B. Andrews

**Photographs:** Attach current photographs of the property. For buildings, structures and objects the photographs should show the property from all directions. Attach historic photographs if available.

See attached.

**Maps:** Include an 8.5 x 11 location map showing the property and footprint of the building or structure.

See attached.



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## Section I

### Current Owner(s) of the Property:

Name: Bell Tower Cultural Center  
Mailing Address: 201 East 2nd Street  
City: Florence State: Colorado Zip Code: 81226  
Phone Number: 719-784-2038  
Email Address: FlorenceArtsCouncil@yahoo.com

(For Multiple Owners - list names, addresses and phone numbers on an additional Sheet)

See attached: President: M. Piltingsrud  
Treasurer: L. Lemmon-Oliver

### Address of Property:

Street Address: 201 East 2nd Street, Florence, CO, 81226

### Name of Property:

Historic Name (if any): First Baptist Church of Florence

### Legal Description of Property:

LOTS 1, 2 & 3 BLK 2 PERCIVAL SUBDIVISION

### Preparer of Nomination:

Name: M. Wintz Date: 11-14-2025  
Organization (if applicable): Florence Preservation Commission  
Mailing Address: 600 W. 3rd Street  
City: Florence State: Colorado Zip Code: 81226  
Phone Number: 719-784-2486

## Section II

### Category of Property (check on box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Object
- Site
- Structure

### Number of Resources within Property

- X Buildings
- District
- Object
- Site
- Structure

# Property Record Card

Fremont Assessor

**FLORENCE ARTS  
COUNCIL**

201 E 2ND ST  
FLORENCE, CO 81226-1518

**Account: R029639**

Tax Area: 23A - 23A  
Acres: 0.000

**Parcel: 3939164306001**

Situs Address:  
201 E 2ND ST  
FLORENCE

## Value Summary

| Value By:         | Market           | Override         |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Extra Feature (1) | \$280            | N/A              |
| Commercial (1)    | \$238,929        | N/A              |
| Land (1)          | \$45,570         | N/A              |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>\$284,779</b> | <b>\$284,779</b> |

## Legal Description

LOTS 1 2 & 3 BLK 2 PERCIVAL SUB  
TOG WITH A TR BEG AT A PT ON THE E LN OF PETROLEUM  
AVE. 20 FT NELY FROM THE N W COR OF LOT 1 BLK 2  
PERCIVAL'S SUB OF FLORENCE; TH RUNNING S 76 DEG 30'E  
ALG THE N LNS OF LOTS 1,2,3 ,4 & 5 OF SD BLK 2, TO THE  
WLY LN OF COAL CREEK; TH NWLY ALG THE WLY LN OF SD  
COAL CREEK TO A PT ON THE SLY LN OF E 3RD ST IN SD  
CITY; TH N 76 DEG 30'W TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE SLY  
LN OF SD E 3RD ST & THE ELY LN OF PETROLEUM AVE IN SD  
CITY; TH 13 DEG 30'W ALG THE ELY LN OF SD PETROLEUM  
AVE TO THE POB IN THE CITY OF FLORENCE.  
DPT #22-01214-01



## Sale Data

| Doc. # | Sale Date  | Deed Type | Validity | Verified | Sale Price | Ratio | Adj. Price | Ratio | Time Adj. Price | Ratio |
|--------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|-------|------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| 910793 | 08/18/2013 | 319       | U        | N        | \$0        | N/A   | \$0        | N/A   | \$0             | N/A   |

## Extra Feature Occurrence 1

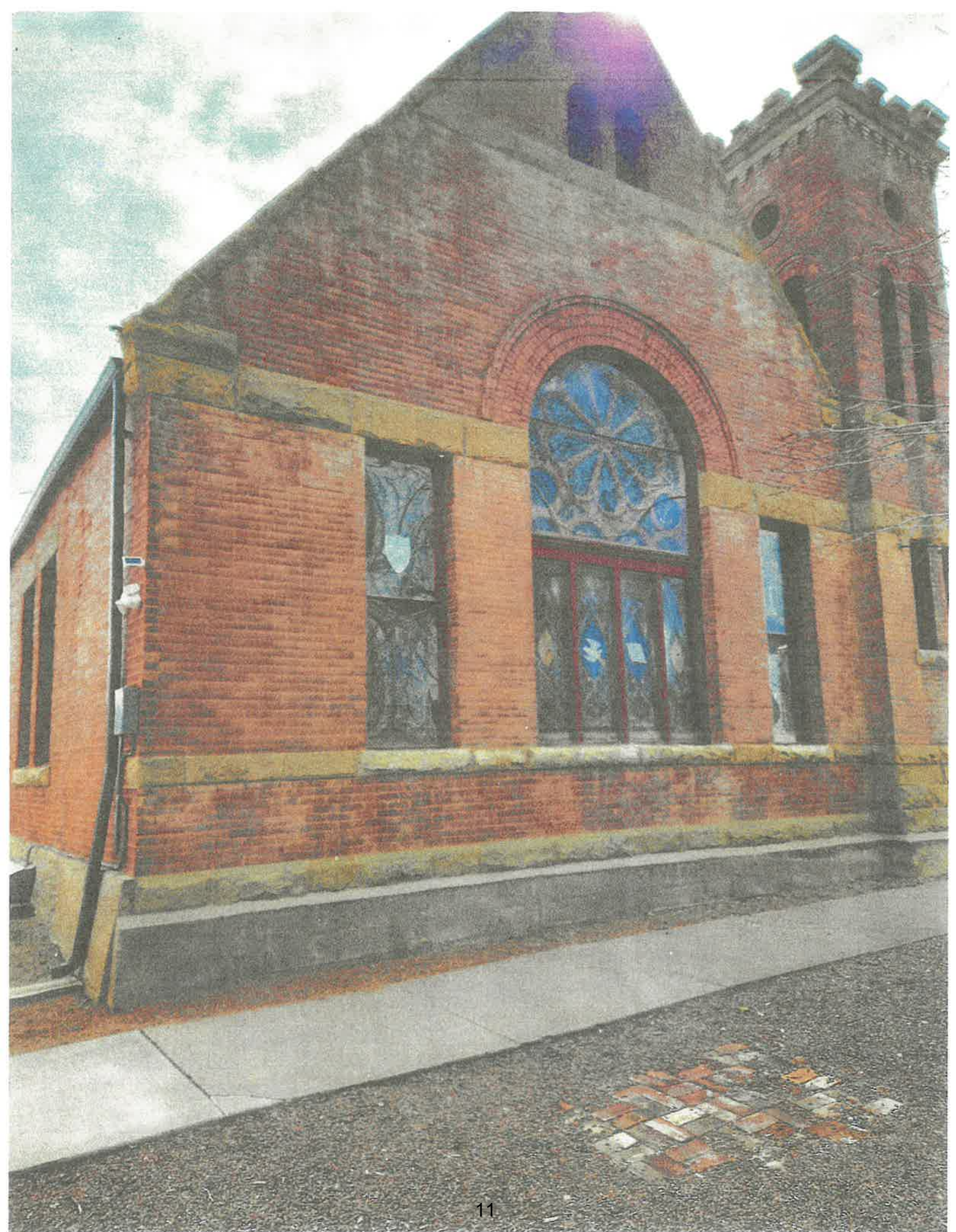
|                   |                             |                      |                       |                 |               |               |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Property Code     | 9298 - MISC-ALL OTHER EXMPT | Property Code        | 82                    |                 |               |               |                 |
|                   | 2250 - PART-EXEMPT PROPERTY | Percent              | 18                    |                 |               |               |                 |
| Actual Year Built | 1940                        | Depreciation         | 10 - 10               |                 |               |               |                 |
| Description       | 4"CON3"BAS                  | Effective Year Built | 1940                  |                 |               |               |                 |
| Building Number   | 1                           | XFOB Code            | 660708 - "4"CON3"BAS" |                 |               |               |                 |
| <b>SubArea</b>    | <b>Actual</b>               | <b>Basement</b>      | <b>Effective</b>      | <b>FinBsmnt</b> | <b>Garage</b> | <b>Heated</b> | <b>LiveArea</b> |
| Units             | 311                         |                      |                       |                 |               |               |                 |
| Total             | 311.00                      |                      |                       |                 |               |               |                 |
|                   | <b>Value</b>                | <b>Rate</b>          | <b>Rate</b>           | <b>Rate</b>     | <b>Rate</b>   | <b>Rate</b>   | <b>Rate</b>     |
|                   | \$280                       | 0.90                 |                       |                 |               |               |                 |

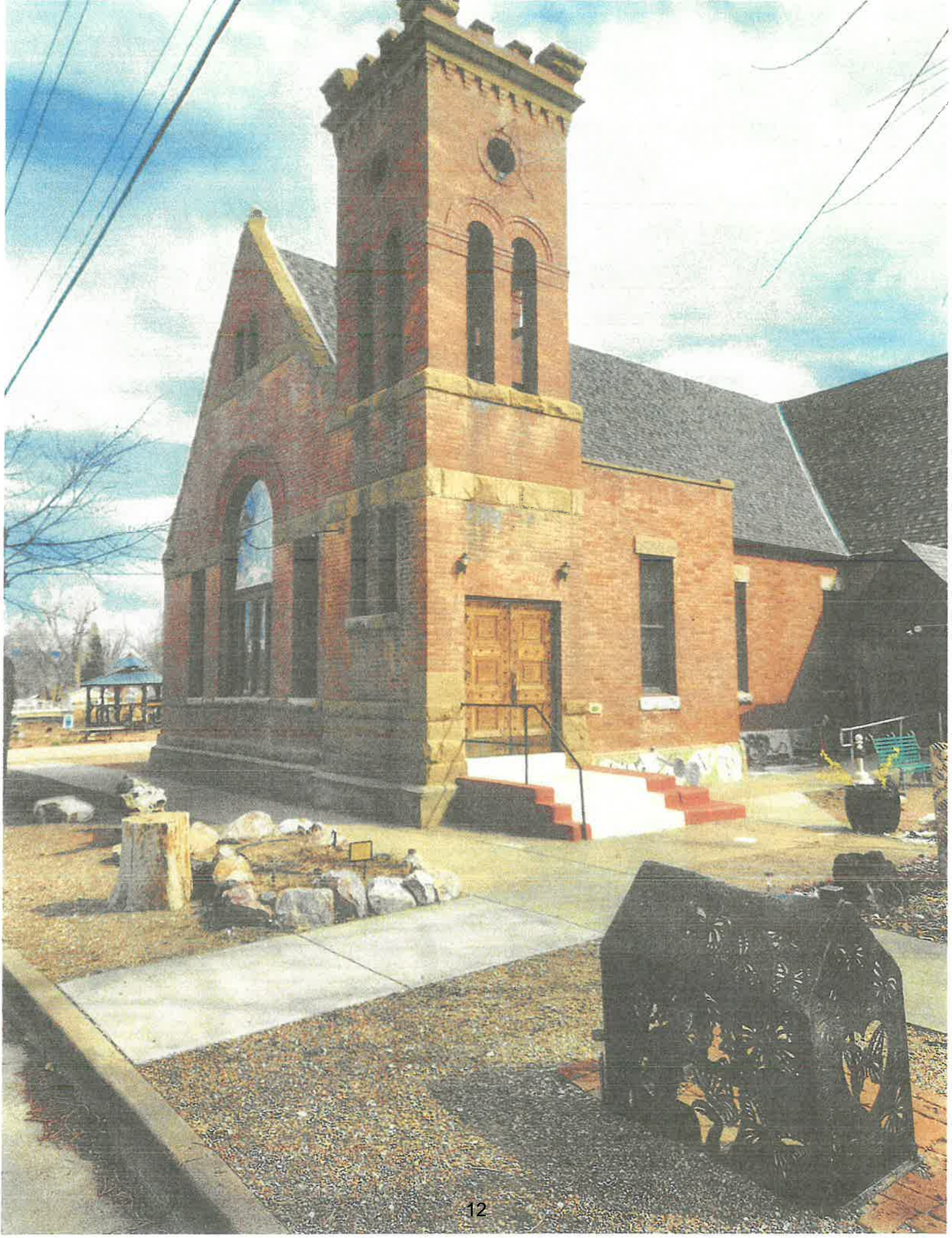
## Commercial Occurrence 1

|                   |                             |                  |                |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Property Code     | 9298 - MISC-ALL OTHER EXMPT | Property Code    | 82             |
|                   | 2250 - PART-EXEMPT PROPERTY | Percent          | 18             |
| Actual Year Built | 1898                        | Air Conditioning | 2 - REFRIG AIR |

August 8, 1958





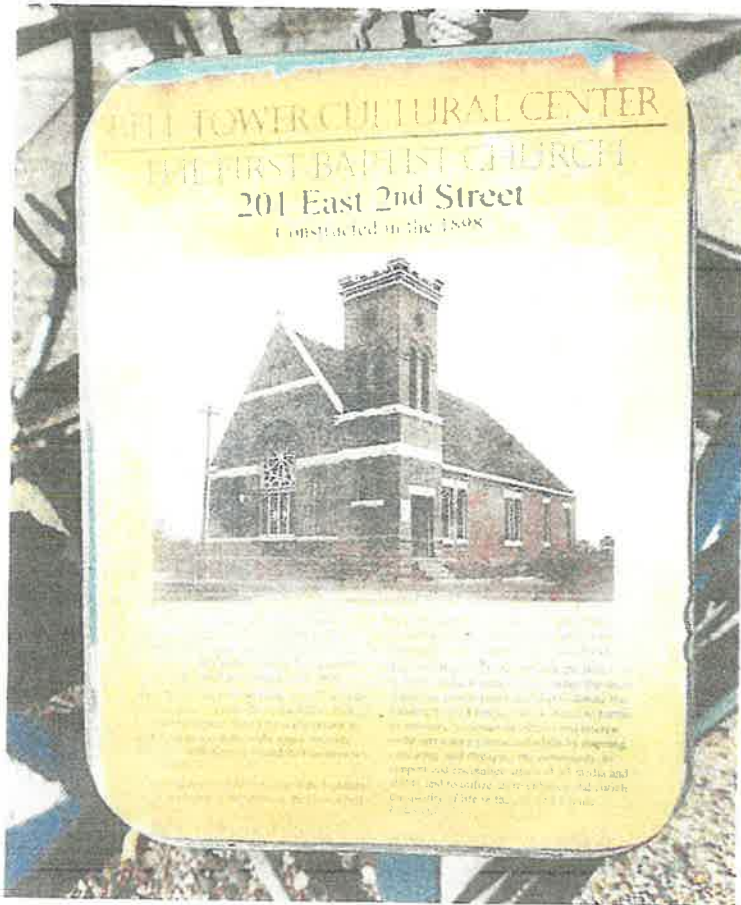




*Bell Tower*  
Cultural Center  
Florence Arts Council

ARTS COUNCIL  
201 EAST 2ND STREET 719 78-2008  
LUNCH 12:00-1:00 MONDAY-FRIDAY  
SUNDAY MORNING 9:00-11:00

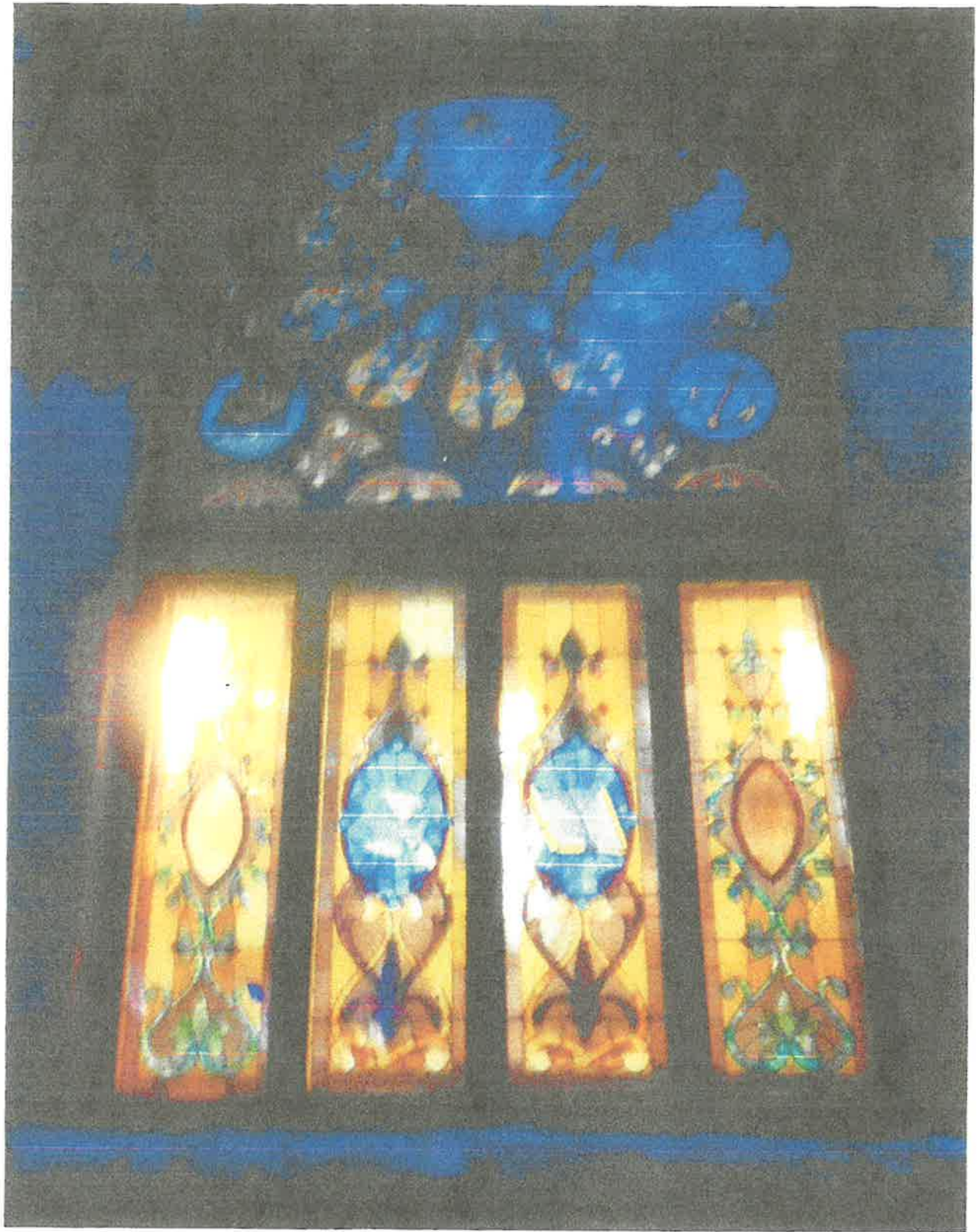
OPEN



**Left: Plaque donated to the Bell Tower**

**Below: Plaque donated to the Bell Tower  
by the Fremont County Heritage  
Commission date**

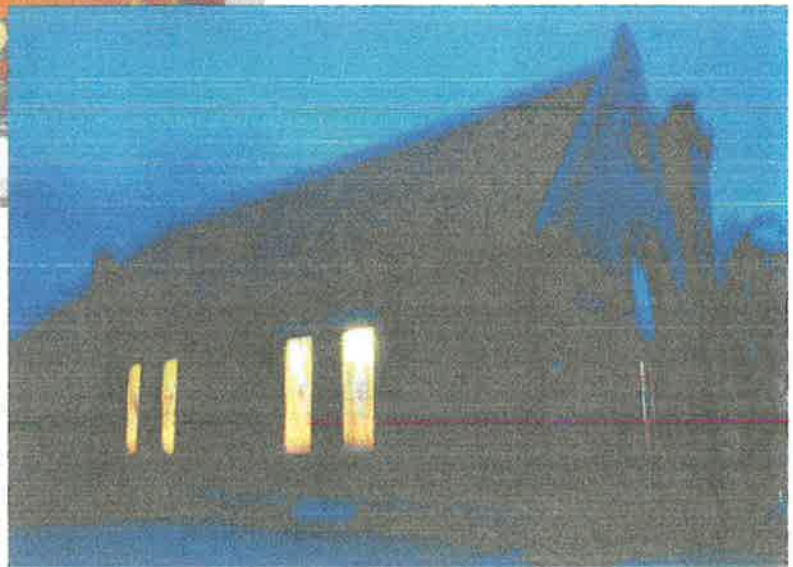




Exterior of Rose Window on West Wall



Exterior view of windows on west wall



North wall exterior view



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### Section III

#### Historical Significance:

Please describe if this property:

- Contributes to the historical development of the City of Florence, the State or our Nation,
- The site is of a significant historical event
- Has direct and substantial association with a person or group who had influence on the area or the City of Florence.

Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

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#### Architectural Significance:

Please describe if this property:

- Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
- Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering.
- Is the example of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City.
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

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## Architectural Significance:

The building plans for the original 1893 First Baptist Church of Florence Colorado was purchased from one of the many commercial pattern books popular among small congregation in selecting affordable, professional designs for new hours of worship. These books functioned as retail advertisements, providing floor plans, perspective drawings and construction estimates for various architectural styles. Most commercial books of this era predominantly marketed the Gothic Revival style in either wood, brick or stone. The Florence church was a one story, east-west sited, brick, rectangular, above grade, auditorium floor plan, of pattern book Gothic revival style, with a south-west corner square entry tower. The roof was steeply pitched while the entry tower ended in a lower crenellated parapet.

Proof of construction by local builders lies in the fact that its 6 regular bays, indicated by heavy wooden trusses, appear to be traditionally fenestrated, but in fact, the apparently symmetrical formal pattern of paired double hung windows do not conform to bay placement or size though all headers and sills line up properly. Outside brick courses accent these lines.

The “stained glass” windows (Watson Glass Co. of Denver), although all purchased at the time of the building’s construction, all match in pattern but vary in color placement and type of glass. The finer opaline panes and colors of the beautiful rose window are not to be found in the rest of the fenestrations. Explanations for these variations can be found in an interesting shared “stained glass window history” with St. Benedicts RC church history of the same era. These windows are what are unique and reflect the developmental history of Florence.

In 1927, during excavation for a basement under the main sanctuary, heavy rain caused the sidewalls to cave in and damage the upper structure. However, as “the roof held strong”, the walls were quickly repaired and the basement completed. The west end of the basement is narrowed slightly by a small buttress to the north side wall and a slightly slanted wall on the south side that act as a buttresses to the stirs and bell tower.

In 1957 a three-floor education building was added. The design plans were done by a local high-school senior, Faye Esmieir (now Gordon). The matching brick, high peaked north - south sited roof joins the main structure at its east end now forming an “L” footprint.

Due to its dwindling size, the building was donated to the Florence Arts Council by the Baptist Congregation in 2013. The building continues to serve its original purpose as well as those of the general population as an art gallery, music venue, reception room, art studios and teaching spaces.

The “Golden Era” (Victorian) of Florence’s industrial development (1880-1920) was once showcased by the string of churches along 2<sup>nd</sup> street. Clustered around each of the six churches was a small cluster of congregational homes that reflected “a sign of their times”

St. Benedict’s Catholic church marks the most western location on 2<sup>nd</sup> near the Florence Cripple Creek railroad station and Frazer Avenue. The modest 2<sup>nd</sup> street homes reflect the workers, supervisors, Mom and Pop grocery stores, that serviced the Coal Camp residents and industry workers even before Florence was incorporated. Also on western 2<sup>nd</sup>, but right on top of the F & CC railroad station at Church Street was the Methodist Church. The din and dust of the railroad roundhouse finally drove the Frazer Methodist church to sell its small building and move down 2<sup>nd</sup> street to southwest corner of Petroleum Avenue. Here a splendid, beautiful, spired, and stained glassed stone edifice was built.

On the southwest corner of Santa Fe and West 2<sup>nd</sup> was the First Presbyterian Church with its intricate tracery and pointed arched windows. In the next block on the north side, was the Church of the Nazarene. Across Pikes Peak Ave at 201 east 2<sup>nd</sup> was the first Baptist Church. On the other side of the creek on 2<sup>nd</sup> was the Episcopalian St. Albans nestled among the shop-homes of artisans and professionals that flourished off the highly commercial Main and industrial Front Streets. Across the street further east, on the south side, was the imposing Christian Science Church. As the addresses rose higher along east 2<sup>nd</sup>, so did the value and size of the residential homes.

In 2025 only St Benedict’s and Church of the Nazarene still function as churches. The Frazer Methodist Church, having been destroyed twice by fire, is now located on a small very active commercial site on Main Street.

The first Presbyterian, St Albans, and the Christian Science buildings are now all in private hands. The First Baptist church has been repurposed into an art center, community venue, performance hall, art studios and teaching spaces. Weddings, funerals and rededications are still held there in the preserved sanctuary space. All the churches had reported that dwindling congregations had led to their current circumstances. The contiguous Church records from 1898 until 2013, now archived, provide a view, not only into church affairs, but into a profile of the whole town due to its large percentage of the total population. Addresses tied to names provide a working “Town Directory” where none is to be found today. Through all the “booms and busts”, Florence has maintained a unique resiliency and flexibility that has allowed it to survive to bloom again in another form. The history of our churches is proof of that. The “Bell Tower” (1<sup>st</sup> Baptist) still rings with laughter and its pews still fill with the “new Florence” as an example of what makes Florence truly unique.



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### Section IV

#### Resources:

Please cite the articles, books, personal contacts or any other sources used in preparing the application.

- Fremont County Historical Commission: County Registry of Historic Sites: 2014
- Downtown Historical Building Survey. 2008: State Historical Fund Grant T1-001
- "Our Church History 1897-1997". 1st American Baptist Church Collection. . FHAJ Archive
- "Florence Churches: The 1st Baptist Church" Walking Tour of Florence Colorado 2023 FHAJ
- Fremont County Assessor's Office. Legal Descriptions. Record Card. 201 E. 2nd St. Florence
- GIS Authority of Fremont County contact, 2025. "How to access Eagle Website accounts"
- "Commercial pattern books for churches 1893". 2025 Google web search.
- "Stained Glass window history of Fremont County." B. Little, manuscript, 2005 FHAJ archive.
- City Directory of Florence Colorado, 1903. FHAJ Archive
- Fremont County Guide Books: Florence, 1st Baptist Church. FHAJ Archive.
- Fox Collection: Church File, 1st American Baptist Church. FHAJ
- Fox Collection: Sites. File. 201 E. 2nd St. Florence.

#### Review Process:

Please return the owner consent form, the completed application and the \$ \_\_\_\_\_ non-refundable application fee to the City of Florence at the address below in person, by mail or email. [planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)

City of Florence  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Planning Department  
600 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Florence, CO 81226

Historic Preservation and City staff will review application and be in contact with applicant to schedule a meeting for the discussion of the nomination.



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City of Florence  
Local Historic Register Nomination  
Owner Consent Form

Each owner of record must sign a separate form. Please reproduce form as needed.

I, Margaret C. Peltingsrud

Owner of Bell Tower Cultural Center


a property that is located within the City of Florence, Fremont County, Colorado, certify that I am

The sole owner

Partial owner

Legally designated representative of owner(s) President

I hereby give my written consent and approval of this property's nomination and inclusion into the City of Florence's register of local landmarks.

Signature: 

Date: 14 Nov 05

City of Florence  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Planning Department  
600 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Florence, CO 81226



# City of Florence

600 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Florence, Colorado 81226  
(719) 784-4848 Fax (719) 784-0228  
Email: [planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)  
[www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov](http://www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov)

## City of Florence Local Historic Register Nomination Owner Consent Form

Each owner of record must sign a separate form. Please reproduce form as needed.

I, Lynn Lemmon-Oliver

Owner of Bell Tower Cultural Center

a property that is located within the City of Florence, Fremont County, Colorado, certify that I am

The sole owner

Partial owner

Legally designated representative of owner(s) TREASURER

I hereby give my written consent and approval of this property's nomination and inclusion into the City of Florence's register of local landmarks.

Signature: 

Date: 11/14/25

City of Florence  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Planning Department  
600 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Florence, CO 81226

# FLORENCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: APRIL 28, 2026

STAFF REPORT

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**Agenda Item:** Local Historic Registry Nomination Discussion – 100 East Front Street

**Department:** Planning

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**Property Information:**

**Name of Structure:** Braden & Griffith Block / Price Pioneer Museum

**Year(s) of Original Construction:** 1894

**Staff Comments:**

- For local historic designation in Florence, a building must possess distinctive character, be at least 50 years old, and meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - **History:**
    1. Has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or
    2. Is the site of a historic event with a significant effect upon society; or
    3. Exemplifies the cultural heritage of the community; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important prehistoric information.
  - **Architecture:**
    1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
    2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering; or
    3. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City; or
    4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.
  - **Listed on another historic registry:**
    1. The property is listed on the Colorado Register of Historic Places.
    2. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The nomination submitted indicates that the Braden & Griffith Block may meet the criteria for local historic designation based on its architectural significance and its inclusion on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties.
- The Nomination Review Committee met to evaluate the Braden & Griffith Block nomination and recommends revising the designation category to emphasize the building's historical significance instead of or in addition to architectural significance.
- The Committee also recommends potentially recognizing the building's use as a museum in consideration of its cultural significance and incorporating additional narrative describing the building's expansion and evolution over time.

**Attachments included:**

- Braden & Griffith Block application.



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## Local Historic Designation Application

### Eligibility:

A building, object, monument, structure or site may individually be designated as a Landmark, or one or more buildings, objects, monuments, structures or sites which are united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development may be designated as a Historic District.

**The building, object, monument, structure, site or district must have distinctive character, more than 50 years old and meets one of the following categories:**

- History:

1. Has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or
2. Is the site of a historic event with a significant effect upon society; or
3. Exemplifies the cultural heritage of the community; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important prehistoric information.

- Architecture:

1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering; or
3. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City; or
4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

- Listed on another historic registry:

1. The property is listed on the Colorado Register of Historic Places.
2. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Statement of Significance:

Describe how the building, object, monument, structure, site or district being nominated meets one of the criteria listed above. Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

*See State Application*

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## Section I

### Current Owner(s) of the Property:

*City of Florence*

Name: ~~Braden + Griffith Block~~ Florence Pioneer Museum

Mailing Address: PO Box 131

City: Florence State: CO Zip Code: 81226

Phone Number: 719.784.1904

Email Address: florencehistory@charter.net

(For Multiple Owners - list names, addresses and phone numbers on an additional Sheet) City of Florence / Florence Pioneer Museum

### Address of Property:

Street Address: 100 East Front Street

### Name of Property:

Historic Name (if any): Braden + Griffith Block

### Legal Description of Property:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Preparer of Nomination:

Name: Gayle MacKinnon Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (if applicable) Florence Pioneer Museum

Mailing Address: PO Box 131

City: Florence State: CO Zip Code: 81226

Phone Number: 719.784.1904

## Section II

### Category of Property (check on box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Object
- Site
- Structure

### Number of Resources within Property

- 1 Buildings
- \_\_\_\_\_ District
- \_\_\_\_\_ Object
- \_\_\_\_\_ Site
- \_\_\_\_\_ Structure



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If property is a building, object or structure, has it been moved?  Yes  No

If yes:

Where was its original location? \_\_\_\_\_

When was it moved? \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Construction: 1894  
Source of Information: Oil Refiner Newspaper Jan-June 1894

Original Builder, Architect, and / or Designer: Hunt & Smith, Builder  
Architect could be  
Source of Information: Oil Refiner

Original Owner: Phillip Griffith & Syl Braden  
Source of Information: Oil Ref and abstract

### Narrative Description:

Please describe the current appearance of the property and any alterations that have occurred since its original construction.

Attach additional sheets if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Photographs:** Attach current photographs of the property. For buildings, structures and objects the photographs should show the property from all directions. Attach historic photographs if available.

**Maps:** Include an 8.5 x 11 location map showing the property and footprint of the building or structure.



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## Section III

### Historical Significance:

Please describe if this property:

- Contributes to the historical development of the City of Florence, the State or our Nation,
- The site is of a significant historical event
- Has direct and substantial association with a person or group who had influence on the area or the City of Florence.

Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

*See State Application*

### Architectural Significance:

Please describe if this property:

- Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
- Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering.
- Is the example of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City.
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

*See State Application*



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## Section IV

### Resources:

Please cite the articles, books, personal contacts or any other sources used in preparing the application.

*See State Application*

### Review Process:

Please return the owner's consent form and the completed application to the City of Florence at the address below in person, by mail or email.

[planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)

City of Florence  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Planning Department  
600 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Florence, CO 81226

Historic Preservation and City staff will review the application and be in contact to schedule a meeting for the discussion of the nomination.



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## City of Florence Local Historic Register Nomination

### Owner Consent Form

Each owner of record must sign a separate form. Please reproduce form as needed.

I, \_\_\_\_\_

Owner of \_\_\_\_\_

a property that is located within the City of Florence, Fremont County, Colorado, certify that I am

- The sole owner
- Partial owner
- Legally designated representative of owner(s)

I hereby give my written consent and approval of this property's nomination and inclusion into the City of Florence's register of local landmarks and by signing, I also agree to the following:

- Certify that the above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- Acknowledging that I understand that if any information is untrue or inaccurate this application may be rendered void.
- Agreeing to all requirements of the City of Florence Historic Preservation Code.
- Authorizing City Staff to inspect the property if needed.
- To provide additional information as may be required by City Staff or the Historic Preservation Commission.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

City of Florence  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Planning Department  
600 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Florence, CO 81226

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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## DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

Constructed in 1894, the Braden & Griffith Block is a two-story stone commercial building with a rectangular plan, flat roof, and an oblique corner entrance. Situated on the southeast corner of Front Street and South Pikes Peak Avenue in Florence, the building is a short block north of the former Denver & Rio Grande Western Depot, and a block south of Main Street. A concrete sidewalk runs along the north and west elevations separating the building from the streets. The building with its full basement has served as a museum since 1964, and the fenced yard on the south side of the building contains large objects from the collections, including a small building (an historic, stacked lumber jail moved to the site). A one-story, flat-roofed brick annex immediately east of the building was constructed after the museum was established. Neither the fenced yard with its collection of artifacts, nor the annex is included within the boundaries of the nominated parcel.

The Braden & Griffith Block is a 25-by-50-foot building with the long axis oriented north and south and an oblique-angled entry at the northwest corner. The walls are evenly coursed, quarry faced, cream-colored sandstone ashlar. Smooth faced stone ashlar accents the building utilized as quoining and as continuous lintel and sill coursing. This smooth ashlar also frames the entrance and storefront bays. The quarry faced sandstone walls on the north and west elevations rise up to form a parapet wall with a simple corbelled stone cornice that was recently stuccoed.

A small concrete stoop marks the entrance, a multi-light wood frame door preceded by a screen door. The entrance bay is infilled with red brick laid in a stretcher bond. A carved wooden sign that states "Price Pioneer Museum" is inset into the brick above the door. Surmounting the entrance bay is a stone lintel with a decorative crown chiseled with two rosettes flanking "1894." Centered directly above the entrance bay is a window. This window, like the other second-story windows on the north and west elevations, is a tall, narrow, wood frame, double hung sash of one-over-one surmounted by a transom light.

The north elevation facing Front Street has two large storefront bays that have been filled in with red brick and a multi-light window unit. Like the entrance bay, the brick is laid in a stretcher bond. Each window unit consists of three 8-light fixed sashes surmounted by a paired 2-light transom. On the second story above the two storefronts are three evenly spaced windows.

The storefront bay of the west elevation (facing Pikes Peak Avenue) received the same treatment of brick infill with a multi-light window unit. The smooth ashlar that frames the storefront continues upward, framing a second-story window centered directly above the storefront. Four more evenly spaced, second-story windows punctuate the expanse of the west wall. Another entrance is toward the rear of the building near the southwest corner. The recessed paneled wood door is preceded by a storm door and surmounted by a transom light. Between the storefront bay and this other entrance is the stairwell that descends from the sidewalk to a basement service entrance. The door surmounted by a transom is original. An elongated shed roof canopy supported by poles covers this stairway.

There are no door or window openings on the east elevation. With its corner location, it was probably anticipated that at some point another building would abut this one on the east. The 1900 Sanborn map shows a small building adjacent to the Braden & Griffith Block, but it is not present on the 1906 map. The one-story annex was constructed after 1964 and the expanse of stone wall not obscured by the annex has been covered with stucco.

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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The rear (south) wall was also covered with stucco, obscuring the stone construction. There is a rear entrance at the southeast corner, and its door and transom appear to be original. A double hung sash 1/1 window and a solid door surmounted by a transom punctuate the upper floor. A metal staircase with a pole railing provides access to the second story entrance that now serves as a fire escape.

The interior of the building retains fragments of the original construction, primarily in the woodwork surrounding windows and doors. The interior walls on all levels are plastered and painted. The basement floor is concrete, while the second and third floors are wood and apparently original. The basement and first floor have dropped ceilings of hardboard or painted plywood panels. The second floor has dropped ceilings of acoustical tile. Whether original ceilings exist under the later ceilings is not known. Access to the basement and second floor is along the interior south wall of the building. The stairway to the basement descends from the southeast corner of the first floor to a landing at the west wall. A short flight of stairs continues along the west wall to the basement level. A steep straight single flight of stairs ascends to the second floor from the southwest corner of the ground floor. Currently all three levels of the building are used for the display and storage of the museum's collections.

The general condition of the building appears to be sound with no roof leaks or obvious settling. Portions of the exterior masonry walls need repointing.

The building has undergone some alterations over the years. The most obvious is the brick infill of the entrance bay and the flanking window bays. It is not known when this change was done. Consensus of the museum board members (long time residents) and Olive Tripp (the current museum board president and long time Eagles Lodge member) is that the work was done prior to the Eagles purchase of the building in 1945, probably in the late 1930's. As no historic photos have come to light, the original configuration of the bays is not currently known.

The other obvious alteration is the museum annex that abuts the building on the east. (Although not included in the nomination, it is important to document this addition.) Built sometime after the museum was established in 1964, this one-story, flat roof construction fills the space between the Braden & Griffith Block and another historic building further east. It has a concrete slab floor and utilizes the existing walls of the adjoining buildings on the east and west. The north facade consists of three light colored brick pilasters framing two red brick veneer walls. The brick is laid in a stretcher bond with thin mortar joints. The south (back) wall is concrete masonry unit (CMU) construction with a metal paneled overhead garage door that facilitates moving large objects in the collection, such as buggies and hose carts. The metal roof trusses rest on concrete block piers that abut the walls of the two historic buildings on either side. A passageway was cut through the east wall of the Braden & Griffith building to allow visitor access into the annex.

In 1945, the Eagles installed a steel I-beam supported by three steel posts to shore up the second floor for dances. The beam is centered along the long axis of the building, and is painted to match the walls and ceiling of the first floor. The canopy over the basement stairwell on the west wall was constructed sometime after 1978. (Photographs in the Preservation Office narrow the date of this alteration even further, as the canopy is not present in a 1981 photo, but is in place in a 1992 photograph.)

Aluminum storm windows have been added to the second story windows. Discussions with Museum board members indicate that stucco was applied to the south wall in 1998, the east wall in 1999, and the decorative cornice in 2000. Despite these alterations, the building still conveys its method and period of construction.

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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### SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The 1894 Braden & Griffith Block meets criterion C for its architectural significance as it illustrates a period and method of construction. This two-story masonry building is typical of the commercial block buildings constructed during the boom that Florence experienced at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. The building is constructed of sandstone and while the use of this material is not unusual (sandstone was used for contrasting accents and occasionally for a whole facade), the Braden & Griffith Block is the only extant commercial building in Florence constructed entirely of sandstone.

Prominent sandstone bluffs border several sections of the Arkansas River in the vicinity of Florence and Canon City; in addition, marble, granite and alabaster deposits are nearby (*Canon City Daily Record* 3/21/1891, 2/18/1939; *Semi Weekly Clipper* 7/2/1897; *Western Architecture and Building News* 1890, p.48). Several quarries were operating by the early 1890s. Of interest were the sandstone quarries, which included the one at the Colorado State Prison, the Harding Quarry at the mouth of the Royal Gorge, and the quarries in the Coal Creek and Rockvale area. A quick survey of buildings constructed at this time in Florence and nearby Canon City suggest that sandstone was extensively used as decorative material for lintels, sills, surrounds, etc. For example, a June 15th 1911 article in the *Canon City Daily Record* reported that "Coal Creek stone is being used for the window sills, balustrades, and other places of like nature, in the new [Canon City] Elks Lodge building." The 1906 Chamber of Commerce Book shows several buildings of brick construction with what appears to be sandstone decorative elements. The Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Canon City Library (all within Canon City's National Register listed historic district) have sandstone elements incorporated into their masonry construction. Occasionally the use of sandstone went beyond detailing, as there are a few buildings where the entire facade was constructed of sandstone. Several buildings in Canon City's historic district have sandstone facades, including the Acme Block (720-722 Main), the Felter Building (518-520 Main), and the Reynolds Bank Building on the southwest corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Main. In Florence, only the 1895 Vannest building on Main Street has a sandstone facade. The buildings in Canon City made more use of the nearby red sandstone, while the buildings in Florence used the cream-colored sandstone, probably from the Coal Creek/Rockvale quarries. A driving survey of each street in Florence, including the alleys in the business area, indicates that brick is the material of choice and that the Braden & Griffith Block is the only extant commercial building constructed entirely of sandstone.

### Historical Background

The history of the Braden & Griffith Block parallels the history and changing fortunes of Florence. The construction of the building reflected the enthusiasm and optimism that prevailed in Florence in 1893-1894.

The Arkansas River Valley in the vicinity of Florence, some 30 miles west of Pueblo, attracted settlers in 1860, even as the Colorado Gold Rush was beginning. The relatively lush riverine environment and mild climate were lures, but vast coal deposits were quickly located near present day Florence. Then oil seeps were discovered on 4 Mile Creek a few miles to the west in 1862 (*Canon City Daily Record* 9/6/1972). The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) reached Pueblo from Denver in 1872, and immediately became interested in the coal fields as a source of quality locomotive fuel. The D&RG hastily extended its narrow gauge line to the coal fields in October 1872. The D&RG purchased land and platted the company town of Labran just east of present day Florence. James McCandless, an enterprising settler who arrived in the area the year before, countered with a town plat on his own land.

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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Named for his daughter Florence, MacCandless' town would become the core of the current community (*Canon City Daily Record* 9/6/1972). McCandless and his family would remain prominent and influential members of Florence for much of the early part of the 20th Century.

Following the "War" in 1878 between the rival D&RG and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) to gain control of a route through the Royal Gorge; the AT&SF built a branch from Pueblo to Florence. This also was to tap the coal fields south of Florence (Cafky 1988; Beebe & Clegg 1962:271-4). By 1881, the oil wells were producing significant amounts of oil near Florence. Growth continued, and the Town of Florence was incorporated in September 1887 (*Canon City Daily Record* 9/6/1972). Florence reached a population of one thousand in 1890 (Wilkins 1995:16) and more good fortune was on the way. By 1891, the Cripple Creek area a few miles to the north emerged as the major gold producing camp in Colorado. James McCandless and several other Florence entrepreneurs persuaded David Moffat to provide backing for a narrow gauge railroad that would connect the Cripple Creek gold fields with the D&RG mainline in Florence. The D&RG would provide support in construction and equipment. The newly incorporated Florence & Cripple Creek Railroad (F&CC) began construction in December 1893 (Wilkins 1995:33-7).

At the beginning of 1894, Florence did not share the mood of Colorado, or the rest of the nation resulting from the financial crisis of 1893. Florence had the most important fuel resources of the time, now heavily producing coal and oil. The oil fields peaked at 824,00 barrels in 1892 (Scamehorn 1979:213), and were second only to the original Pennsylvania fields. Florence was poised to tap the Cripple Creek gold lodes. The introduction to Florence in the 1894 Colorado Business Directory describes in glowing terms the opportunities in Florence.

Florence can be justly called the Oil Center of Colorado and the West as its 75 producing wells seem in exhaustible [sic]-- supplying as they do the United, the Rocky Mountain and Florence Oil Refining companies with the crude material which is refined at the home refineries, furnishing a high test illuminating oil and lubricants -- as well as the popular Lightning Axle Grease made by the Florence Oil & Refining Co. Florence is also the central point for numerous coal fields -- besides being on the lines of the Denver & Rio Grande, and Santa Fe railways, it is now the connecting link between the balance of the State and the greatest gold producing camp of the United States, Cripple Creek -- as the reduction works erected at this point for the treatment of Cripple Creek ores will furnish employment for a large number of workers. Among the improvements in the last 6 months are an Electric Street Railway, Race Course, Jockey Club, and a new system of Water Works, besides numerous brick buildings. -- the population which has nearly doubled in the past ninety days giving a census of about 4,000 in the city proper with about 4,000 more from tributary sources making this favored town their headquarters for supplies and materials. -- Before closing this brief article which is hardly sufficient to do this subject justice, mention should be made of the great bituminous coal fields which are now connected with Florence by 4 branch railroads. -- These fields are now producing between 4 and 5 thousand tons of coal per day to the trade, thereby supporting 6-8 thousand people.

Besides McCandless and his colleagues, other businessmen were active on a smaller scale in Florence. Syl Braden operated one of several saloons on Main Street by 1890 (*Florence Daily Citizen* 7/12/26). He and Phillip Griffith are listed as partners in a saloon in the 1894 business directory. Details of their partnership aren't known, but they would build the structure that is the subject of this nomination. The overall plan for the substantial two-story building is not known, but certainly the main

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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floor would house a saloon. Situated on the corner of Front Street, and Pike's Peak Ave., and less than a block from the combination D&RG and F&CC Depot, the building was at the hub of Florence commerce.

The *Oil Refiner* newspaper documented the progress of the Braden & Griffith Block, as the building would be first known:

January 11, 1894 --- "Braden and Griffith are excavating for their Front Street Block."

January 18, 1894 --- "Bids were opened Monday morning for the construction of Braden and Griffith's Block, Hunt and Smith being the successful bidders. The Block is to be situated on the corner of Front Street, and Pike's Peak Ave., will be 25 x 50 feet, and will be built of Coal Creek yellow sandstone. Work was begun today."

February 17, 1894 --- "The foundation walls of the Braden & Griffith Block were completed Wednesday, and work is in progress on the superstructure."

March 8, 1894 --- "The corner stone of the Braden & Griffith Block was laid this afternoon. A copy of the *Refiner Journal* with other papers were put in the opening left for the purpose."

Unfortunately the May 1894 editions of the weekly *Oil Refiner* newspaper that would have documented the completion of the building are missing. The last entry relating to construction is June 20, 1894 with the notice that "Mssrs. Braden & Griffith will lay a flagging sidewalk around their Block at the corner of Front Street and Pike's Peak Ave."

Several other blocks were constructed during the 1894-1895 period, including the 1894 Vannest building on Main Street. The Braden & Griffith Block stands out from other commercial buildings of the period, as it is entirely of sandstone construction. Typically, commercial structures were brick, with occasionally sandstone decorative elements.

Interestingly, the 1895 Sanborn Florence Map shows the Braden & Griffith building as vacant. The *Oil Refiner* of August 25, 1895 mentions that the Florence clothier S. Seiss was moving his stock out of the Braden & Griffith Block, and into the McCandless Block. It is not clear whether he had retailed from the building, or simply used it for storage. The Colorado Business Directories for 1895-1901 show Braden as a saloon operator with several different partners (not Griffith). The 1900 Florence Sanborn Map shows the building as a saloon. Unfortunately the directories do not list addresses for businesses in Florence. Although a Wm. Glasson advertised in directories of this period as having a saloon near the railroad depot (1894), it is reasonable to assume that Braden and his associates were using the Griffith building. The 1900 Sanborn map shows 3 other saloons near the depot.

The *Oil Refiner* of February 26, 1897 noted that "Phil Griffith is making preparations to erect another stone and brick block on Front Street, 50 by 100 feet. It will join the Braden & Griffith Block." This building was not constructed. The 1901 Special 20th Century Edition of the *Oil Refiner* (February 4, 1901) has a prominent advertisement for the Braden & Tribble Saloon.

By this time several ore reduction mills were in full operation, processing ore from the Cripple Creek mines. The population had grown to 3,728 by 1900. The F&CC showed a profit in hauling the Cripple Creek ore to Florence, and transporting supplies and passengers back to the mines. The opening of

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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the Portland Cement Plant on the Arkansas River a few miles downstream in 1897, added another important asset to Florence's economy (*Canon City Daily Record* 10/30/1972). Yet even as the F&CC prospered, competition for the railroad and Florence itself grew. The standard gauge Midland Terminal Railroad connected the Cripple Creek District with the mainline of the Colorado Midland Railroad shortly after the F&CC reached Cripple Creek (McFarland 1980:32-37). A third railroad, the Colorado Springs and Cripple Creek District Railroad (also a standard gauge), reached Cripple Creek directly from Colorado Springs in 1901. These standard gauge railroads were owned or under control of the newly formed Colorado & Southern Railroad (McFarland 1980:65-68). Much of the ore processing and general freight and passenger traffic shifted to Colorado Springs. Florence in a very real way found its fortunes controlled by the competition between the Colorado & Southern/Santa Fe and the D&RG empires.

The 1902 Colorado Business Directory no longer lists Syl Braden as a saloon keeper. Interestingly, Phil Griffith is listed in the 1902 and subsequent Florence City Directories with the occupation of "Oil Producer." Apparently from this time until 1925, the building was owned only by Griffith, and finally by his widow. After 1902 it was apparently let out for a variety of business ventures. In 1902, E. R. Millar first appears in the Colorado Business Directory (p. 534) as owner of a transfer business, in later years expanding to include fuel, feed, and storage to his services. In the December 22, 1903 edition of the *Florence Citizen*, he advertised Christmas Trees for sale. The 1905-06 Florence City Directory (p.19), shows Millar definitely in the building. The 1906 Florence Sanborn Map confirms the use of the building as a hay and feed business.

For the next few years the building housed fuel, hay, feed, transfer and storage businesses by several proprietors. Probably Brown & Son, and then Wm. Campbell operated these businesses. The 1912 Florence Sanborn Map shows the building as vacant. Directories are not available for every year. The Florence section of the 1918 Canon City Directory, shows Wm. Campbell running a feed, grain, and transfer business in the building (p. 165).

In 1912, when the building is shown as vacant, Florence suffered a significant setback in its economy. From its beginning, the F&CC was plagued with washouts of its line in the confines of Phantom Canyon north of Florence. A particularly serious flood in July 1912 spelled the end of through operations for the railroad. Faced with the expense of extensive rebuilding and declining revenues, the railroad elected not to rebuild. The company dissolved in 1915 (Wilkins 1995:56-8).

Yet another flood would erode Florence's economy. The June 6th 1921 flood of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek that wreaked havoc in Pueblo also impacted Florence. Flood waters on the Arkansas washed out tracks of both the AT&SF and D&RG RR between Portland and Pueblo. The AT&SF, rather than rebuilding, arranged for joint track use with the D&RG when the D&RG restored its line. As part of the agreement, the AT&SF agreed to stop its passenger service between Pueblo, Florence, and Canon City. Florence had passenger service with three railroads in 1912, by 1921 only the D&RG supplied the service. (Cafky 1988).

In the 1922 Colorado Business Directory (p. 522), JJ Stevin advertised that he had succeeded Wm Campbell as proprietor of the feed, grain, coal, baggage, and transfer business housed in the building. In 1925, Griffith's widow sold the building to Alva Smith of Colorado Springs. The February 5th 1925 *Florence Citizen* article described Smith as "one of the largest industrialists in the city" and continued with Smith as proprietor of the building. Campbell does not appear in the 1925

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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directories. His occupancy of the building was probably short lived. Slevin, in keeping with the times, gave up the fuel and feed business, and in the 1929-30 Canon City Directory (p.244), he is listed as the Chrysler Automobile dealer for Florence.

It is not certain who Smith's new commercial tenants were, but the 1925, 1927-28, 1929-30, and 1931-32 Canon City Business Directories (Florence Section) show the building as the Eagles Club House. The Florence Aerie No. 169 was founded July 28, 1901. Early city directories show the Eagles meeting in various other buildings, including the 1914 Orecchio Block located across the street. As a complete run of the various directories is not available, it is not known how long after 1932 the Eagles continued to use the building, but the 1937 Canon City Business Directory (Florence Section) shows the Eagles meeting at 125 1/2 E. Main Street. The 1927-28 Canon City Business Directory (pp. 237, 252) lists two disparate businesses that might have been in the building at this time. William Hein Plumbing and the P.P.O.O. Café are both shown located on the corner of Front Street and Pike's Peak Avenue. The cafe would seem to match best with the Eagle Club. Without specific addresses it is not certain which, if either, business was in the building. Neither of the businesses is listed in the 1931-32, or subsequent directories.

By 1930 Florence was feeling the effects of the Great Depression. Oil production increased dramatically in the 1920s, but drilling for new wells ceased in 1930. By 1936 the refining and cracking plants in Florence stopped operation (*Canon City Daily Record* 9/6/1972). The 1930 population was 2,475 (down from the 4,000 people at the turn of the century). The 1933 Colorado State Business Directory describes Florence (p. 592) emphasizing truck farming, dairying, and poultry raising, even though oil, coal, smelting, and cement are still listed.

It is not certain how long Alva Smith retained ownership of the building. Velma (Toni) Price, cofounder of the Price Pioneer Museum, recalls that the building functioned for one to two years as a youth center operated by the local Catholic Church in the late 1930's. It probably was at this time that the original storefront windows and entry bay were changed to their present form. Other members of the Price Pioneer Museum board, who are long time or life long residents of Florence, remember that the building served as the draft/induction center for Florence during World War II.

The Eagles Aerie No. 169 bought the building for a permanent Lodge Hall in 1945 (unidentified 1947 newspaper article in Eagles Lodge scrapbook). In addition to the meeting rooms, the Eagles operated a bar on the main floor.

In 1964, Charles(Chopper) and Velma (Toni) Price established the Pioneer Museum (now the Price Pioneer Museum). A group of interested citizens each contributed \$100 to purchase the building for \$1500. It was then deeded to the City of Florence. It is administered by a board of directors with a mission to preserve and interpret the history of Florence and Fremont County.

The population and economy of Florence remained static during the years following World War II. The establishment of several new state and federal prisons in the Florence/Canon City area in recent years has stimulated some growth in both Florence's population and economy. The Braden & Griffith Block, in its current role as the Price Pioneer Museum, continues to play an important role in Florence, as it has during its 107-year existence.

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

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**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Section IV

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Wilkins, Tivis E. *A History of the Florence and Cripple Creek and Golden Circle Railroads*. Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1995.

*Western Architecture and Building News*. Vol. 2 & 3 (1890).

**Property Name** Braden & Griffith Block

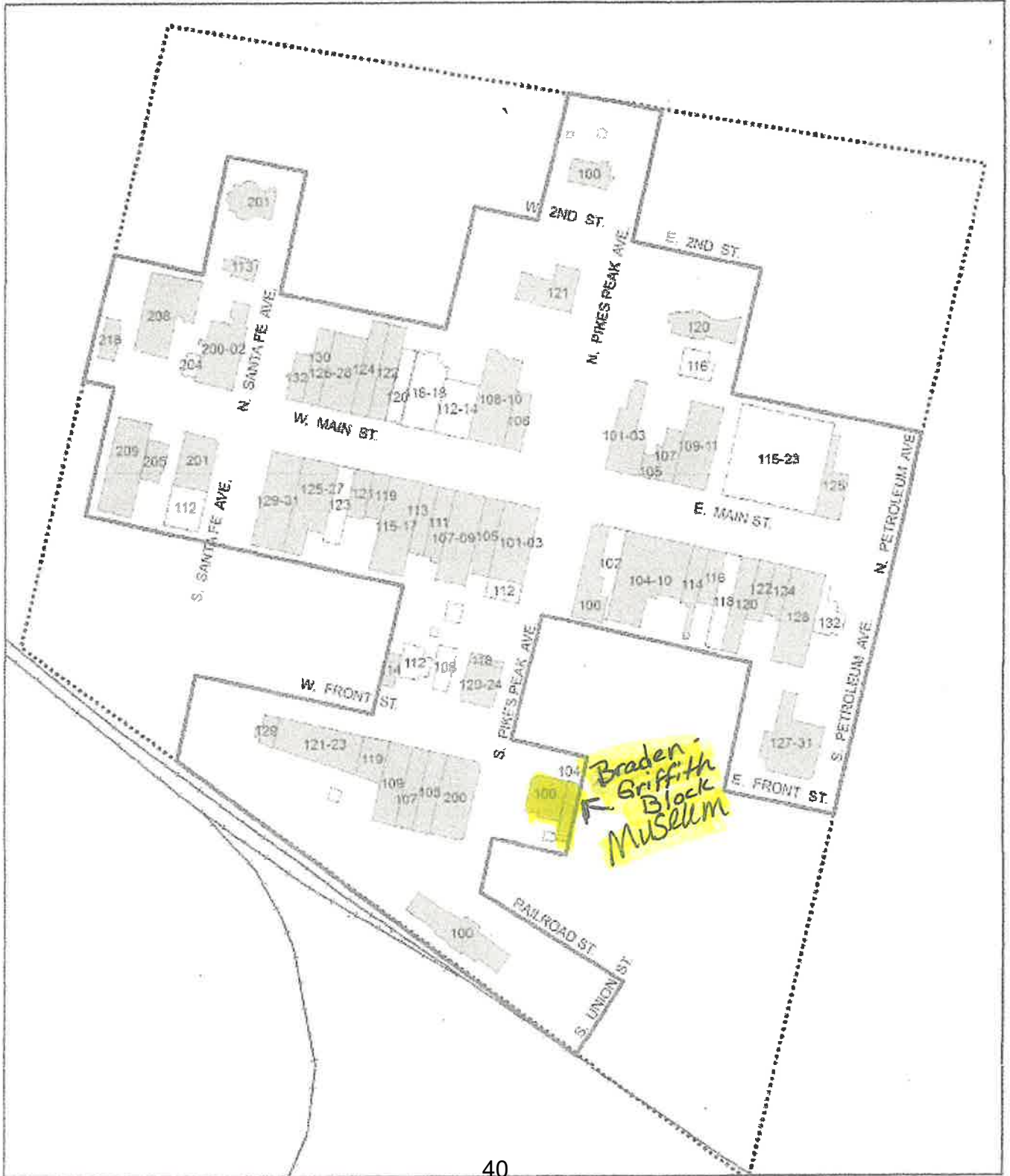
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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The north sixty feet (60') of Lot 8, Block 4, Colorado Coal and Iron Company's Addition to the Town of Florence.

(plat map)





**COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

This is to certify that

***Braden & Griffith Block***

has been included in the

**State Register of Historic Properties**

by the

**COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

under provisions of the  
**Colorado Revised Statutes, Article 80.1**  
**Register of Historic Places**

*March 13, 2002*

Date Listed

President, Colorado Historical Society

# COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

### SECTION I

#### Name of Property

Historic Name Braden & Griffith Block

Other Names Price Pioneer Museum

#### Address of Property

[ ] address not for publication

Street Address 100 East Front Street

City Florence County Fremont Zip 81226

#### Present Owner of Property

(for multiple ownership, list the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

Name City of Florence

Address 300 West Main Street Phone 719-784-4848

City Florence State Colorado Zip 81226

#### Owner Consent for Nomination

(attach signed consent from each owner of property - see attached form)

#### Preparer of Nomination

Name James C. Maxon Date October 10, 2001

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address 511 Forest Avenue Phone 719-275-1564

City Canon City State Colorado Zip 81212

#### FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Site Number 5FN597

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nomination Received

Senate # 4 House # 44

2/2002  
Review Board Recommendation  
 Approval  Denial

3/13/2002  
CHS Board State Register Listing  
 Approved  Denied

Certification of Listing: President, Colorado Historical Society

Date

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

**SECTION II**

**Local Historic Designation**

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

yes ---  individually designated  designated as part of a historic district

Date designated \_\_\_\_\_

Designated by \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of municipality or county)

**Use of Property**

Historic Commercial; Fraternal hall

Current Museum

Original Owner Syl Braden and Phillip Griffith

Source of Information Oil Refiner (newspaper) articles from January – June 1894

Year of Construction 1894

Source of Information Oil Refiner articles from January – June 1894; on building

Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer Architect - unknown; Builders: Hunt & Smith

Source of Information Oil Refiner, 18 January 1894

**Locational Status**

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION III**

**Description and Alterations**

(describe the current and original appearance of the property and any alterations on one or more continuation sheets)

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

**SECTION IV**

**Significance of Property**

**Nomination Criteria**

- A** - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- B** - property is connected with persons significant in history
- C** - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- D** - property is of geographic importance
- E** - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

**Areas of Significance**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Education                        | Architecture                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –<br>prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Law                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –<br>historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/<br>Recreation     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/<br>Settlement       | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography/<br>Community Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/<br>Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community<br>Planning and<br>Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                 |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Social History          |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation          |

**Significance Statement**

(explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

**SECTION V**

**Locational Information**

Lot(s) 8 Block 4 Addition Colorado Coal & Iron Co.

USGS Topographic Quad Map Florence

**Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property**

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Braden & Griffith Block

**SECTION VI**

**Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs**

(prepare a photograph log on one or more continuation sheets)

**SECTION VII**

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION**

**Owner Consent Form**

**Black and White Photographs**

**Color Slides**

**Sketch Map(s)**

**Photocopy of USGS Map Section**

**Optional Materials**

**For Office Use Only**

Property Type:  building(s)  district  site  structure  object  area

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial

Period of Significance: 1894

Level of Significance:  Local  State  National

Acreage less than one

P.M. 6th Township 19S Range 69W Section 16 Quarter Sections SW SE SE SW

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 489730 Northing 4248760

Site Elevation: 5190 feet



**COLORADO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

**The Colorado History Museum 1300 Broadway Denver, Colorado 80203-2137**

March 15, 2002

Re: National Register Plaques

Dear Property Owner:

Congratulations on the recent listing of your property in the National Register. You may be interested in obtaining a plaque recognizing the property's official designation. National Register plaques are available from a number of sources. The Colorado Historical Society and the State Historic Preservation Officer do not endorse any companies on the enclosed list nor can we guarantee the prices or descriptions quoted. We supply plaque sources as a service to you. We suggest that you contact companies directly before placing any orders.

Sincerely,

Sarah Chandler  
Administrative Assistant

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**OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

*The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation assists individuals, communities, and organizations to identify, protect, and preserve the State's cultural resources and to foster widespread appreciation of and respect for Colorado's cultural heritage.*