

ITEM: 517 La Farge Avenue Probable Cause Determination

APPLICANT: Andy Johnson
DAJ Design
992A Main Street
Louisville, CO 80027

OWNER: Lauren Gifford
517 La Farge Avenue
Louisville, CO 80027

PROJECT INFORMATION:

ADDRESS: 517 La Farge Avenue
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Surf Lots 12 & 13 Blk 2 Acme Place
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: ca.1950

REQUEST: A request to find probable cause for a landmark designation to allow for funding of a historic structure assessment for 517 La Farge Avenue.

VICINITY MAP:



SUMMARY:

The applicant requests finding probable cause for landmark designation to allow for funding of a historic structure assessment for 517 La Farge Avenue. Under Resolution No. 17, Series 2019, a property may be eligible for reimbursement for a historic structure assessment (HSA) from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) if the Historic Preservation Commission finds *“probable cause to believe the building may be eligible for landmarking under the criteria in section 15.36.050 of the Louisville Municipal Code.”* Further, *“a finding of probable cause under this Section is solely for the purposes of action on the pre-landmarking building assessment grant request, and such finding shall not be binding upon the HPC, City Council or other party to a landmarking hearing.”*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Information from Gigi Yang, Louisville Historical Museum

The history of 517 La Farge contributes to our understanding of residential development around the Acme Mine, the fluidity of work and residency between Marshall, Superior and Louisville, and the growth of Louisville in the 1950s. The LeComte-Helart family ownership illustrates family relationships in Louisville’s early French community and generational land ownership. Both the Helart and King family histories demonstrate the role of small businesses and how they strengthen local connections to Louisville over decades.

August P. LeComte and Nellie Bodhaine Helart LeComte Ownership, 1946-1950

The earliest deed for the sale of Lots 12 & 13, Block 2 of Acme Place was from the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company to August P. LeComte and Nellie Bodhaine LeComte in 1946. August worked at the Centennial Mine as a track layer until he retired in 1948. From 1909 through the 1930s, August LeComte purchased and sold other Louisville properties that were adjacent to other members of the LeComte family and all within the vicinity of the Frenchtown neighborhood. The LeComte, Bodhaine, and Helart families were numerous and prominent members of Louisville’s early French community.

Arthur Helart and Louise McKee Helart Ownership, 1950-1964

Arthur Helart (1910-1989) grew up in Superior with his sister Martha Helart and stepsister Alice LeComte. After acquiring Lots 12 & 13, Block 2 in 1950, Arthur Helart built the house that is currently located at 517 La Farge. The Boulder County Assessor lists the date of construction as a new build in 1951. Louise was active in the Baptist Church, organized projects making clothing for different missions and visited a mission in Brazil. They raised their two children, Keith and Gloria at 517 La Farge. In the 1960s-70s, Keith Helart joined the newly formed Parks and Recreation Board and was instrumental in the formation of numerous parks and the Memory Square Pool. Keith Helart Park was named after him in 1982 and he was awarded the Pioneer Award in 2020. The Helarts lived at 517 La Farge until 1964 when they sold it to Gerald and Julie King.

In 1998, Gerald and Julie King sold the property to Eric and Patricia Tussey. The Tusseys lived there until 2019 then they sold 517 LaFarge to David Roche and Lauren Gifford who are the current owners.

Please see the attached Social History Report for a more detailed history.



Photo of 517 La Farge Avenue from the Boulder County Assessor card from 1952.



Present day image of 517 La Farge Avenue.



Present day image of 517 La Farge Avenue.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY:

517 La Farge Avenue is not included in the PaleoWest "100 Architectural Inventories for the City of Louisville" (2023). "Stories in Places: Putting Louisville's Residential Development in Context" (2018) identifies 517 La Farge Avenue as a Ranch Architectural Type constructed in 1951. No further analysis is included on the building. The Ranch Architectural Type is described as:

Ranch Form (1950–1970) The Ranch form was developed from by Spanish Colonial forms in the American Southwest and inspired by the Craftsman and Prairie styles. Although it originated in California in the 1930s, it did not become popular elsewhere until the post-WWII housing boom in the late 1940s. This was the primary house form in the 1950s and 1960s. Ranch houses are one story and often feature a garage or carport attached to one end, such as at 1101 Front Street (Figure 128), reflecting the importance of the automobile in post-WWII American culture. Many Ranch houses are constructed of brick and have decorative wrought iron porch supports and non-functional shutters although their porches are usually very small, as the residential focus shifted to the backyard.

Defining characteristics seen on Ranch houses in Louisville include the following (Colorado Historical Society 2008):

- *One story with a low, horizontal orientation*
- *Long, asymmetrical façade*
- *Side-gabled, low-pitched roof*
- *Wide overhanging eaves*
- *Small front porch with decorative, wrought iron porch supports*
- *Picture window in façade*
- *Decorative, non-functional shutters*

- *Low chimney*
- *Attached garage or carport*

The structure appears to have maintained much of the original building footprint since the Boulder County Assessor Card from 1952. Building permit records include a re-roof in 2018.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS AND CRITERIA FOR FINDING PROBABLE CAUSE FOR LISTING AS LOCAL LANDMARK:

Under Resolution No. 17, Series 2019, a property may be eligible for reimbursement for a historic structure assessment (HSA) from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) if the Historic Preservation Commission finds “*Probable cause to believe the building may be eligible for landmarking under the criteria in section 15.36.050 of the Louisville Municipal Code.*” Further, “*A finding of probable cause under this Section is solely for the purposes of action on the pre-landmarking building assessment grant request, and such finding shall not be binding upon the HPC, City Council or other party to a landmarking hearing.*”

Staff analysis of the criteria is as follows:

<i>CRITERIA</i>	<i>FINDINGS</i>
<i>Landmarks must be at least 50 years old</i>	517 La Farge Avenue was constructed ca.1950 making it approximately 76 years old. Staff find the age of the structure meets the criteria.

<i>Landmarks must meet one or more of the criteria for architectural, social or geographic/environmental significance</i>	<u>Social Significance</u> - <i>Exemplifies cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the community.</i> The social history of 517 La Farge Avenue includes association with: • Housing for community members that contributed to Louisville through mining, social, and cultural activities, including development of City amenities. Staff find that the structure meets the cultural and social heritage of the community and there is probable cause to meet the criterion for social significance. <u>Architectural Significance</u> – <i>Represents a built environment of a group of people in an era of history that is culturally significant to Louisville.</i> • Reflects the mining history and immigrant community at the time. Staff find that the location of the structure does have probable cause to meet the criteria for architectural significance in its current form.
<i>Landmarks should meet one or more criteria for physical integrity</i>	<u>Physical Integrity</u> - <i>Shows character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the community, region, state, or nation.</i> • Interesting building character shaped by its social history. <i>Remains in its original location, has the same historic context after having been moved, or was moved more than 50 years ago.</i> • 517 La Farge Avenue appears to have maintained its historic footprint from 1952, possibly earlier. Staff find probable cause that the structure meets the criteria for physical integrity.

PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN:

The [Preservation Master Plan](#) was adopted in 2015 and includes goals and objectives for the historic preservation program. A finding of probable cause would meet the following goals and objectives:

Goal #3: Encourage voluntary preservation of significant archaeological, historical, and architectural resources

Objective 3.3 - Encourage voluntary designation of eligible resources

Objective 3.4 - Promote alternatives to demolition of historic buildings

Goal #5: Continue leadership in preservation incentives and enhance customer service

Objective 5.1 - Promote availability of Historic Preservation Fund grants and other incentives

FISCAL IMPACT:

The finding of probable cause allows for a grant of up to \$7,500 for a Historic Structure Assessment (HSA) from the Historic Preservation Fund.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends a finding of Probable Cause under the criteria in section 15.36.050 of the LMC, making the properties eligible for the cost of a historic structure assessment. The current maximum amount available for an HSA is \$7,500. Staff recommend HPC approve a grant not to exceed \$7,500 to reimburse the costs of a Historic Structure Assessment (HSA).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 517 La Farge Avenue - Social History



517 La Farge History

Legal Description: SURF LOTS 12 & 13 BLK 2 ACME PLACE

Year of Construction: 1951

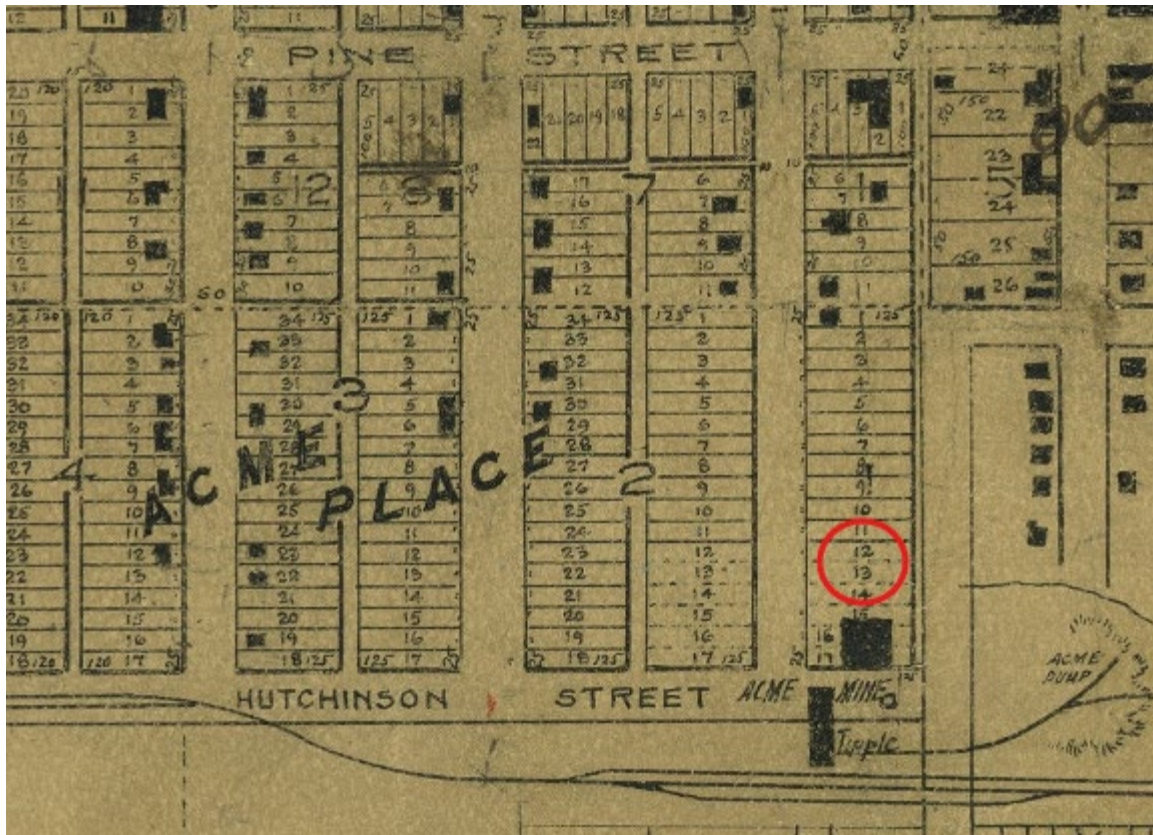
Summary: The history of 517 La Farge contributes to our understanding of residential development around the Acme Mine, the fluidity of work and residency between Marshall, Superior and Louisville, and the growth of Louisville in the 1950s. The LeComte-Helart family ownership illustrates family relationships in Louisville's early French community and generational land ownership. Both the Helart and King family histories demonstrate the role of small businesses and how they strengthen local connections to Louisville over decades.

Development of the Acme Place Subdivision

The Acme Place subdivision was the fourth addition to Original Louisville. John Connell platted it and recorded it with Boulder County in 1893. The area of Acme Place can best be described as covering what are now the 500 blocks of Lincoln, Grant, Jefferson, and La Farge Avenues.

Acme Place was developed due to its proximity to the Acme Mine that was started in 1888 near what is now the corner of Roosevelt and Hutchinson. With the success of the Acme Mine, John Connell developed Acme Place in 1893, which extended Louisville's boundaries farther to the west than it had ever been. Boulder County Property records indicate that the land that Connell used to establish Acme Place had been acquired directly from the Acme Coal Mining Company.

The Acme Mine was in operation from 1888-1928. By the time of its closure, it was one of numerous local mines owned by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company led by Josephine Roche. Due to changes in demand for coal, Rocky Mountain Fuel went bankrupt in 1940, and Josephine Roche began disbanding property from the different mine sites. It is probable that due to this activity, the lots in the Acme Place subdivision that had previously been within the boundaries of the Acme Mine site became available for sale.



1909 Drumm's Map of Louisville shows the proximity of Lots 12 & 13, Block 2 to the Acme Mine.

August P. LeComte and Nellie Bodhaine Helart LeComte Ownership, 1946-1950

The earliest deed for the sale of Lots 12 & 13, Block 2 of Acme Place was from the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company to August P. LeComte and Nellie Bodhaine LeComte in 1946. The LeComtes had previously purchased the neighboring Lots 14 & 15 and in 1943 were living at what is today 509 La Farge in a house they had moved from Superior.

August Paul LeComte (1886-1951) was born in France and came to the U.S. in 1888 when he was two-years old with his parents, August L. LeComte (1859-1923) and Louisa Helart (1859-1912), and two sisters, Fannie and Louisa. The family settled in Marshall where the elder August LeComte worked as a coal miner. The LeComtes had four more children, Julia, Flora, Leah, and Victor. Growing up, August moved with his family between Marshall, Louisville, and Superior. He attended school at least through age 14 and was working as a coal miner by 1910. He eventually settled in Superior after marrying Nellie Bodhaine Helart in 1918.

Nellie Bodhaine (1888-1962) was born in Marshall, the youngest child of Frank Bodhaine (1848-1910) and Evodie Bodhaine (1856-1908) and the only one of their children born in Colorado. Frank and Evodie were both born in France and married in 1878. They had five children before coming to the U.S. in 1887. Nellie grew up in Marshall and in 1909 married Emile Helart. They had two children – Arthur and Martha

before Emile died in 1915 at age 32. Three years later in 1918, Nellie married August LeComte and they had their only child, Alice Lecomte in 1919.

August and Nellie LeComte lived in Superior until 1942 when they purchased property in Acme Place in Louisville. August worked at the Centennial Mine as a track layer until he retired in 1948. From 1909 through the 1930s, August LeComte purchased and sold other Louisville properties that were adjacent to other members of the LeComte family and all within the vicinity of the Frenchtown neighborhood. The LeComte, Bodhaine, and Helart families were numerous and prominent members of Louisville's early French community. Descendents of the LeComte and Helart family recall that August LeComte and Louisa Helart never spoke English and also that all of the French families celebrated New Years Day with special foods and a tradition of visiting relatives and giving children quarters. It is not surprising that a few years after moving to Louisville, August and Nellie purchased Lots 12 & 13 next to their home and transferred ownership to their son Arthur Helart in 1950.

While living on LaFarge, August and Nellie LeComte were active members of the Apostolic Church located a few blocks away on LaFarge and Walnut. August contributed to the construction and labor of the new church building in 1950-51. He passed away in 1951 and his was the first funeral held in the new building.

Arthur Helart and Louise McKee Helart Ownership, 1950-1964

Arthur Helart (1910-1989) grew up in Superior with his sister Martha Helart and stepsister Alice LeComte. Like his father, he became a coal miner and was working at the Industrial Mine in 1934 when a rock fall broke his leg in three places. He recovered and was working as a miner in Longmont in 1935 when he married Louise McKee.

Louise McKee (1914-2005) lived in Alabama and Illinois before coming to Longmont in 1930 where her father, William McKee worked as a coal miner. She graduated from Longmont High School in 1932. After marrying Arthur Helart, they lived in Longmont and their son, Keith, was born in 1936. By 1939, they are listed as living on a ranch in southeast Louisville with Arthur's sister Martha. Indicative of the small population of Louisville and the close-knit community, Martha Helart and her stepsister Alice LeComte married two brothers – Aaron Morrison and William Morrison. The Morrison brothers were miners who then became carpenters. At around this time, Arthur Helart also began working as a carpenter.

Shortly after Arthur's parents (August and Nellie LeComte) moved to Louisville in 1946, Arthur and Louise moved to a house on Rex St. in Louisville. Advertisements in the Louisville Times starting in 1948 show that Arthur had gone into the construction business with Elmer Hilton and Frank Varley.



After acquiring Lots 12 & 13, Block 2 in 1950, Arthur Helart built the house that is currently located at 517 La Farge. The Boulder County Assessor lists the date of construction as a new build in 1951.



The above photo is from the Boulder County Assessor card from 1952. The newly constructed house had 3 bedrooms, kitchen, living room, and bathroom and a basement apartment with a separate bathroom.

In the 1950s, Arthur continued working in the construction business and also worked at Dow Chemical (Rocky Flats Plant) as a janitor. Louise was active in the Baptist Church, organized projects making clothing for different missions and visited a mission in Brazil. They raised their two children, Keith and Gloria at 517 La Farge. In the 1960s-70s, Keith Helart joined the newly formed Parks and Recreation Board and was instrumental in the formation of numerous parks and the Memory Square Pool. Keith Helart Park was named after him in 1982 and he was awarded the Pioneer Award in 2020.

The Helarts lived at 517 La Farge until 1964 when they sold it to Gerald and Julie King. The Helarts moved to Boulder but maintained their close ties to Louisville. Arthur Helart continued to work on various construction projects in and for the City of Louisville throughout the 1970s. In 1987, over 130 members of the Warembourg, LeComte, and Helart families held a family reunion in Louisville.



Oldest living relatives

THE SENIOR MEMBERS of the Warembourg-LeComte-Helart family pose for a photo outside the St. Louis Church last Sunday. All pictured are siblings or first cousins and are of the same generation. Front: Arthur Warembourg, Klubert Warembourg,

Emeline Kersey, Euval Wattelet, Olga Schreiter, Alice Morrison and Arthur Helart. Rear: Albert Warembourg, Edward Warembourg and Orpha Bernardon. Arthur Warembourg, Klubert Warembourg and Olga Schreiter all live in Louisville.

Gerald W. King and Julie Dhieux King Ownership, 1964-1998

Prior to purchasing 517 LaFarge from the Helart family, Gerald and Julie King lived next door at 509 La Farge (the old home of August and Nellie LeComte). Gerald "Jerry" W. King (1938-2015) lived in Illinois and Wisconsin before moving to Louisville in 1950 at age twelve with his parents, James and Helen King and his four siblings Michael, Judy, James, and Daniel. Julie Dhieux grew up in Louisville; her parents Henry Dhieux (1915-2006) and Juliene Michel Dhieux (1920-1991) having moved to Louisville in 1930. The Dhieux family was also well established in the French community and the establishment of Frenchtown.

Both Jerry King and Julie Dhieux graduated from Louisville High School in 1957. After high school, Julie briefly worked as a stenographer for the FBI in Washington DC and Jerry worked for the telephone company. They married in 1958 and had three children. Jerry soon took up work as a barber and eventually owned several hair salons including Jerry's Place at 912 Main, The Hair Factory at 811 Walnut, and Village Square Barbers at 591 South Boulder Road. He partially retired in 1981 when he sold Jerry's Place and The Hair Factory but then returned to work at the Village Barber until officially retiring in 2006.

Cutting it short

By Leslie Wilber
Colorado Hometown
Newspapers

The chair, in some ways, resembles the man who stands behind it eight hours a day.

Both are older, but age appears not to have weakened them.

They have a hefty bulk. They remain sturdy.

"You don't find chairs like this anymore," said Jerry King, sitting in his barber chair and bouncing his palms against the armrest.

The same could be said of 68-year-old King: There aren't that many old-fashioned barbers anymore.

"Everyone goes to cosmetology school," King said on Tuesday, May 23, at Village Hair Care in Louisville. King

After nearly 50 years, Louisville barber to retire

It's not just age and gender that separates them, King said, the technique is different.

One of the women cuts King's hair.

It's not how he would do it himself.

"I want it shorter," he said. King and his chair each

have an unexpected story as to how they came to the South Boulder Road shop.

King found the chair only eight years ago, about 40 years into his career.

"I found it metal detecting, that's a hobby of mine," King said. "I have to explain it."

The explanation, is not, as

\$2,500," King said.

King, for his part, came to the profession in 1959.

In high school, he broke some of the bones in his back playing football.

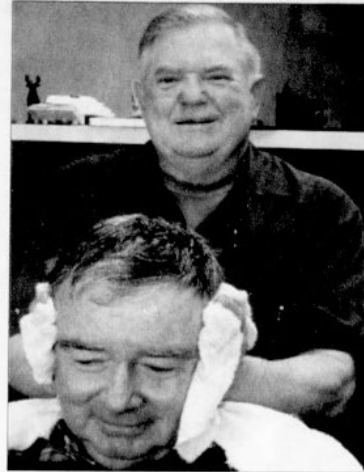
He tried working for the phone company, but the labor turned out to be too back-breaking.

He had no college education, and with a pregnant wife, a lot of pressure to find a job.

He went to barber school.

"I struggled in barber college," he said. "I was a construction worker. I had heavy hands. There was no finesse in my hands."

In the beginning, King was



Jerry King puts a hot towel on Jerry Burneson's neck after shaving. King will retire for the barber business this week.

By Leslie Wilber
Colorado Hometown
Newspapers

Current Ownership

In 1998, Gerald and Julie King sold the property to Eric and Patricia Tussey. The Tusseys lived there until 2019 then they sold 517 LaFarge to David Roche and Lauren Gifford who are the current owners.



Current Boulder County Assessor photo of 517 La Farge.

The preceding research is based on a review of relevant and available online County property records, census records, oral history interviews, Louisville directories, and Louisville Historical Museum maps, files, and obituary records.