

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: McKibbin, Dorothy, House

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1099 Old Santa Fe Trail

City or town: Santa Fe State: NM County: Santa Fe Zip Code: 87505

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide **X** local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A **X**B **X**C ___D

<p>_____</p> <p>Michelle Ensey, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title: Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official: Date</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic: single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Courtyard house

Other: Territorial Revival style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Adobe, Stucco, Wood, Glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Dorothy McKibbin House, built by McKibbin and completed in 1938, was her home until her death in 1985. During World War II, Manhattan Project administrator J. Robert Oppenheimer hired McKibbin to provide logistical support to the hundreds of newly arriving scientists in Santa Fe. The McKibbin House served as a social center where Manhattan Project scientists could mingle away from their clandestine work “up the hill” in Los Alamos. Designed by McKibbin friend and designer, Katherine Stinson Otero, the house is located on Old Santa Trail, one mile southeast of downtown, adjacent to the National Park Service Southwest Regional Office and the cultural institutions on Museum Hill. The one-story, U-shaped house is built with thick adobe walls and is covered with a flat roof. Most windows and doors include Territorial Revival style, which is characterized by Greek-style pediments and symmetrical fenestration and portals (porch) supported by posts and corbels. A courtyard (placita) is formed on the north side, enclosed on three sides by the main house and two wings. The interior plan is organized around a large dining room/living room, also called a sala, flanked by a bedroom wing on the west and a service wing to the east. The wooded property includes an attached single-car garage and free-standing single-car garage, built in 1940.

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Narrative Description

The Dorothy McKibbin House is located approximately 1.5 miles south of downtown Santa Fe on Old Santa Fe Trail near its intersection with Camino Rancheros in a lower elevation of the Sangre de Cristo Mountain range, on a slightly irregular, rectangular shaped approximately one-acre lot. A dirt and gravel driveway leads to the entrance portal on the south side and the east-side kitchen entrance. The gravel court provides access to the attached one-car garage and a detached one-car garage (photo1). The house is constructed of adobe hand-formed adobe bricks made on the site by local workers. The adobe is covered in a smooth, earth-colored cement plaster. The surface is molded and battered to resemble the region's ancient, adobe buildings. The front and rear portals protect walls covered in mud in plaster. The one-story, flat-roofed house with parapet walls, is constructed in a U-shape around a north-facing courtyard. The property is covered in piñon and juniper trees.

The McKibbin House includes Territorial Revival-style elements, including the symmetrical main façade and Greek-style windows throughout. Most window include a Greek or obtuse head casings that forms a point and curvilinear side casings. The house also includes a small Territorial Revival-style window on the west side that features an unusual three-point head casing (photo 6).

The front (main) elevation of the Dorothy McKibbin House includes a front portal that measures approximately 65 x 10 feet, paved in flagstones (photos 2-4). The heavy wood lintels, supported by wood posts called vigas, square-cut canales, and hand-carved corbels, also called zapatas. A paneled set of wood doors leads from the front portal directly to the living room/dining room.

The east elevation of the house contains a side entrance door to the kitchen, a wall containing two double-hung windows and an attached one-car garage (photo 5). The west elevation of the house contains three double-hung windows. The north elevation contains the U-shaped courtyard flanked by separate east and west side wings and a covered, portal paved in flagstone which extends across the main (north) façade (photo 7).

The U-shaped interior plan of the Dorothy McKibbin House is organized around the dining room/living room, called a sala, which appears like a traditional New Mexican hacienda because of its large size (photos 9-10). The sala in the center of the house provides access to the public functions of the living room and dining room. The sala provides access to the front and rear portals. The private functions are provided in the west wing, which contains two bedrooms and a bath. A service wing to the east contains a kitchen, bath, laundry, and a former servant's room, now used as a spare room.

The ceilings are composed of log vigas topped by latillas, which are made of peeled aspen saplings in a herringbone pattern, and supported by wood corbels carved in a stepped design. The heavy two-to-three-foot-thick adobe walls are plastered white. The floors in the sala are covered in bricks supported by a wood subfloor and wood joists. A crawl space is located under the sala

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floor, which lies approximately two feet below grade. Double-hung, two-light sash windows are recessed into the thick adobe walls, two flanking the entrance door overlooking the front portal and one, east of the rear door, overlooking the rear patio. The wood windows are pedimented in a modified regional version of the Greek Revival style.

The sala features decorative details, including a white-molded fireplace, featuring a curved U-shaped opening set on a low hearth on the west wall. Other details include built-in bookcases, and a small, recessed closet with upper-and-lower paneled wood doors hand-carved with rectangular designs dating to the Spanish Colonial period with milled-back pieces. A set of wood multi-light French doors with a pedimented-molding lead from the sala to the north facing portal and courtyard garden. An antique pine Spanish Colonial-period mortice-and-tenon wood door leading from the sala to the private wing of the house was acquired as a salvaged piece from rural New Mexico. The door is set on a raised threshold and opens on a wood hinge called a pintle.

The public portion of the building includes a pair of wood entrance doors with wood panels that lead from the front portal into a substantial seventy-by-thirty-foot rectangular room that combines dining-living room, or sala. Designed by McKibbin as a home for entertainment, the sala was used to host scientists, scholars, and military officials associated with the Manhattan Project. The large room was intended to accommodate large numbers of people within the house and outside in the front portal and rear courtyard patio.

The private wing remains intact, with two principal bedrooms located on either side of the bathroom. The ceilings of both bedrooms comprise log vigas and hand-split boards. The bathroom ceiling is constructed of coved plaster between vigas. Floors in the private wing are constructed of 10 3/4-inch untreated pine boards. The two bedrooms contain molded adobe corner fireplaces, called fogones (photos 11, 13-14). The design of the fireplaces was based on photographs of fireplaces taken by McKibbin in Galisteo, New Mexico. The corridor between bedrooms includes bookcases and cupboards and is covered with vigas (photo 12).

Windows in the private wing of the house are deep set into the two-to-three-foot-thick adobe walls. Some are decorated with pediments: one is divided into four lights and another is designed in a zig-zag pattern.

Doors in the private wing are mostly historic elements, purchased as salvage by McKibbin. The mortice and tenon, raised-panel door leading to McKibbin's southwest corner bedroom is hand-planed in a linen-fold style with iron-brackets and square wood pegs. Its styling indicates that the door may date from the eighteenth century.

The door leading to the bathroom is composed of milled lumber with decorative geometric pieces cut out of wood and applied to the door's interior, white-painted surface. The side facing the hallway is decorated with a series of thin hand-carved vertical grooves. It also contains a large built-in iron lock.

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The small hand-carved mortise-and-tenon wood door of the hall closet measures fifty-five by twenty-seven inches. The four sections of the door are form a hand-worked cross decorated with small crosses that suggest the door was once part of a Spanish Colonial religious building. The hall is also lined with a bank of built-in storage cabinetry.

The service wing includes a doorway to the east that leads from the dining area of the sala into a hallway connecting a kitchen, bathroom, furnace room, maid's room, storage room, and attached garage. The kitchen is located in the southeast corner, representing the beginning of the service wing. This room was renovated by the current owners. Fitted-pine upper-and-lower cabinets surround the room (photo 15). Walls are plastered white and the floor is pine. A wood door on the east side of the kitchen opens to the gravel parking area. A 2/2 double-hung window overlooks the front portal.

The bathroom is located north of and adjacent to the kitchen. The maid's room, now used as a spare room, is next in line to the north. A mechanical room contains the furnace. A storage room, now serving as a laundry room, follows the maid's room. At the end of the hall is a door that leads to a one-car-attached garage with a viga-and-plank ceiling. A driver could enter the house from the garage, a modern feature of a house that appears like old adobe homestead.

The service wing contains multiple decorative details. Ceilings in the kitchen and bath are composed of plaster coving between exposed vigas. The hallway between the kitchen and the bath contains a set of built-in storage cabinets and a built-in bookcase, both painted white. Hammered-tin light fixtures, other tin decorative items and several antique doors are used throughout the wing. The door leading into the kitchen from the side yard and driveway is another salvaged piece comprised of milled planks, panels forming geometric designs and assembled with square-cut nails. The door leading from the sala to the service hallway is also made of milled lumber and square-cut nails. It is decorated with small carved crosses. The door located at the end of the hallway leads to the storage room/laundry room, and the garage. The garage comprises rough planks with raised panels decorated with applied geometric wood designs (photo8). The set of hinged-wood garage doors is decorated with a diagonal beaded molding.

A second detached one-car garage was constructed when Dorothy McKibbin's son, Kevin, began to drive in the late 1940s. This building is located northeast of the house. The garage is formed by concrete stucco over wood frame. It is accessed through a set of hinged wood doors.

Ms. McKibbin, in anticipation of the completion of her new house, collected Hispanic tin-light fixtures, decorative art, and wrought-iron hardware. Doors include paneled, glazed, French doors and, in the case of the garage, inlaid with wood starbursts. The interior includes built-in cabinets, closets, bookcases, and wood-plank floors.

The McKibbin House faces south and sits approximately thirty-five yards north of Old Santa Fe Trail, a busy throughfare on the south side of Santa Fe. The house sits at the end of a gravel-and-dirt drive, which cuts through the juniper-sprinkled landscape. Comprising less than one acre of

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land, the site rests on a flat plain level with nearby Old Santa Fe Trail. The surrounding land is sandy and natural with a combination of mature planted flora near the house that includes clumps of yellow chamisa, ponderosa pine, cedar, juniper, pinon, and cottonwood. Ornamental plantings are arranged around the north-facing courtyard and include blue grass, clover, roses, and bulb plants. A gravel drive on the east side of the house is adjacent to the kitchen door, attached one-car garage, the detached one-car garage, and the elongated front portal. The gravel parking area lies to the east of the service wing. A rose garden is located to the northeast side of the rear courtyard. Remnants of old tracks from the wagon trains that brought goods and settlers along the Santa Fe Trail remain on the northwest side of the property. A post-and-wire fence encloses the west side of the property along Camino Rancheros. McKibbin commissioned a wrought-iron street sign that reads, "1099 Old Sant Fe Trail," and includes the image of an adobe house (photo 16).

Integrity

The Dorothy McKibbin House maintains a high degree of integrity. It remains in its historic location, and the setting has changed little since Dorothy McKibbin resided in the house. The property includes native chamisa, sage, juniper, and piñon pine. The house maintains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship because the exterior and interior of the house appear much as it did shortly after it was constructed in the 1930s. The plan, massing, materials, and coloration are historic. The floorplan and interior spaces of the house remain intact with architectural details that convey the McKibbin period of residency. The houses reflects its significance as courtyard type house built in the Territorial Revival style. Interior materials, such as wood flooring, wood trim, doors, windows, and cabinetry are preserved. Ironwork, doors, and Hispanic tinwork remain in the ceiling lights and scones. Several square-cut canales were replaced. Additional changes to the property include the conversion of the maids' room to a spare room. The storage room was converted to a laundry room, and the kitchen cabinets were replaced with new pine cabinets. The house retains integrity of feeling associated with McKibbin's residency in the 1930s through 1963. The house also retains integrity of association because it evokes the life and work of Dorothy McKibbin.

Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Dorothy McKibbin House is counted as one contributing building.
Garage that adjoins house is part of the main house.
Garage (free-standing) is counted as one contributing building.

There are no noncontributing resources associated with this nomination.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Science

Women's History

Architecture

Period of Significance

1938-1963

Significant Dates

1938—McKibbin House completed

1963—McKibbin retires from the Army

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

McKibbin, Dorothy

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Otero, Katherine Stinson (designer)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Dorothy McKibbin House is significant under National Register Criterion B at the local level because of its association with Dorothy McKibbin, and administrator for the Manhattan Project under Robert J. Oppenheimer during World War II. In 1943, Oppenheimer offered her a position of secretary at 109 East Palace Avenue in downtown Santa Fe, where she greeted, assisted, and processed scientists who arrived to work on the secret Manhattan Project in Los Alamos, thirty miles northwest of Santa Fe. McKibbin, who provided the documents that permitted scientists to the remote research site, was described as the “Gatekeeper of Los Alamos.” Scientists and their families, who, under top-secret restrictions, met and socialized at McKibbin’s House, including J. Robert Oppenheimer. Several scientists were married at the house. The office at 109 East Palace is no longer extant, so the McKibbin House is the most appropriate place to recognize McKibbin’s contributions to the Manhattan Project and the war effort.¹ The McKibbin House is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of science because McKibbin’s house was among the few places outside Los Alamos where scientists were permitted to socialize. McKibbin hosted scientists, including Robert Oppenheimer, for parties and weddings. The house became an important location for scientists to relax and escape the high security at the Los Alamos laboratory. The McKibbin House is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of women’s history because of McKibbin’s association with the Manhattan Project. She worked independently in Santa Fe to ensure that arriving scientists were prepared to travel to Los Alamos. Oppenheimer understood that her organizational skills and her ability to quickly adapt to changing situations enabled her to make a unique contribution to the Manhattan Project. The McKibbin House is eligible at the local level under National Register Criterion C in the area of architecture because it is an excellent example of a courtyard house built in the Territorial Revival style. The courtyard house type and the Territorial Revival style derive from regional building traditions.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Dorothy McKibbin and the Manhattan Project

During World War II, physicist, Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, hired Dorothy McKibbin to be the face and organizational checkpoint in Santa Fe for the U.S. military top-secret Manhattan Project, located on the top of the Pajarito Plateau in Los Alamos, New Mexico. McKibbin was specifically selected for the position. She was a Smith graduate and a local working woman with accounting and office skills. She came highly recommended and possessed a wide social circle in the small town.

¹ The door and door frame of 109 East Palace Avenue was installed in the Los Alamos History Museum in the 1990s.

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In her office at 109 East Palace Avenue and acting with little oversight from her boss, Robert Oppenheimer, McKibbin processed the hiring paperwork for scientists and their families. Called the “gatekeeper of Los Alamos,” she oversaw the practical arrangements for new arrivals, including transportation “up the hill.” McKibbin was also in charge of quickly managing housing needs for a burgeoning, top secret workforce. Primary scientists, such as Oppenheimer, and military officials were assigned to the former Los Alamos Ranch School faculty and staff housing. The school dormitories housed unmarried scientists and other essential workers. Desperate to attract more scientists, many of whom were married with young families, various forms of temporary housing were set up such as portable cabins and Quonset huts. McKibbin also arranged housing for scientist families to live at local guest ranches, located between Santa Fe and Los Alamos. The government took over the ranches to maintain security and McKibbin arranged for vehicles to transport the scientists to the site each day.

As work progressed, additional accommodations were acquired. McKibbin took over the management of the nearby Frijoles Canyon Lodge, part of the Bandolier National Monument, for use by the Manhattan Project during the war. The property provided eighty beds for scientists, military, and private contractors. It also became a weekend retreat for staffers where Dorothy maintained her usual flair for hosting. It was the first time had Dorothy relocated for her work. Oppenheimer offered Dorothy high level positions at the Los Alamos site, but she didn’t want to uproot her son, Kevin, from his local school and move from their beautiful home.

McKibbin also managed meals for Los Alamos workers and domestic necessities for their families. Before appropriate facilities were set up, McKibbin arranged prepared meals from local Santa Fe restaurants to be delivered to the site for workers. She also arranged for food and household supplies to be delivered to the families of scientists. McKibbin took orders from spouses and eventually worked with a Santa Fe-based shopping consultant to make purchases delivered to her office, where arrangements were made for shipping to the various family lodgings.

Socializing outside of authorized government facilities was strictly limited for the scientists, staff, and their families. McKibbin held a Q clearance, the Manhattan Project’s highest security authorization. Based on Dorothy’s clearance, the military designated her home on the Old Santa Fe Trail for a time as the only secure private residence in Santa Fe and it became a much-needed get-away and respite from the mud and endless construction-site conditions at Los Alamos. Military security was stationed at the end of her driveway during certain events and meetings. McKibbin hosted countless parties, and more than a dozen weddings for scientists and staff in front of her fireplace.² The house, its portals, and courtyard were frequently covered in sleeping bags. Robert Oppenheimer also became a frequent guest at her home. McKibbin became a confidant, a friend, and a helper to the Oppenheimer family. Later, Oppenheimer’s son, Peter, was married in Dorothy’s living room in.

² During the war, numerous Manhattan Project weddings were held in the McKibbin House, including the wedding of Priscilla Greene, Manhattan Project secretary, and Robert Duffield; Greene's bridesmaid, Marjorie Hall, to Hugh Bradford, and the wedding of Robert Oppenheimer’s son, Peter.

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McKibbin hosted other important events. In July of 1945, days after the Trinity Site test, Enrico Fermi assembled other top scientists from Los Alamos at her house, including Sam Allison and Cyril Smith. Three scientists from the University of Chicago came in by train for the secret conference. During this meeting they developed plans for a research institute, the Institute for Nuclear Studies, to be located at the University of Chicago to further the work of the Manhattan Project in an academic setting led by Fermi. Today the renamed Enrico Fermi Institute honoring the Nobel laureate was founded at that meeting in 1945 on McKibbin's back portal. The Chicago Institute remains one of the nation's premier interdisciplinary nuclear research facilities.

Dorothy McKibbin was an indispensable part of the development and management of the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos. Working from her office at 109 Palace Avenue, she excelled at both the administrative and practical domestic arrangements, which allowed scientists to relocate, care for their families, and engage in a scientific effort to win the war. McKibbin loved her work and remained in her position until the office closed in 1963. By that time, local management for the site moved "up the hill" and most housing was privately owned.

Dorothy maintained a close personal friendship with J. Robert Oppenheimer during the Manhattan Project and throughout their lives. She sometimes traveled with him, served as support for his wife, Kitty, and a familial friend to his two children, Peter and Toni. In 1952, Oppenheimer became the subject of an investigation by the FBI into supposed communist ties, which eventually resulted in the revocation of his security clearance. McKibbin came to his aid with her typical efficiency and offered a detailed accounting of his whereabouts. Her information gathered through documentation and some detective work around Santa Fe refuted claims that he had hosted a meeting of the communist party, when he had been visiting his private ranch in the Sange de Cristo Mountains about 30 miles east of Los Alamos. Her home on Old Santa Fe Trail continued to be a comfortable retreat for Oppenheimer through the years.

Science

The government restricted scientists, staff, and their families from socializing outside of authorized facilities. McKibbin held the highest security, which allowed the military to designate her home on the Old Santa Fe Trail for a time as the only secure private residence in Santa Fe. It provided scientists with a needed respite from the mud and endless construction-site conditions at Los Alamos. Military security was stationed at the end of her driveway during some events. McKibbin hosted countless parties, and more than a dozen weddings for scientists and staff in front of her fireplace.³ Robert Oppenheimer became a frequent guest at McKibbin's house. McKibbin became a confidant, a friend, and a helper to the Oppenheimer family. Later, Oppenheimer's son, Peter, was married in Dorothy's living room in.

³ During the war, numerous Manhattan Project weddings were held in the McKibbin House, including the wedding of Priscilla Greene, Manhattan Project secretary, and Robert Duffield; Greene's bridesmaid, Marjorie Hall, to Hugh Bradford, and the wedding of Robert Oppenheimer's son, Peter.

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In July 1945, McKibbin hosted Enrico Fermi and other top scientists from Los Alamos at her house, including Sam Allison and Cyril Smith. Three scientists from the University of Chicago came in by train for the secret conference. During this meeting they developed plans for the Institute for Nuclear Studies, to be located at the University of Chicago to further the work of the Manhattan Project. The meeting at the McKibbin resulted in the founding of the Enrico Fermi Institute.

Women's History

Dorothy McKibbin was an indispensable part of the development and management of the Manhattan Project. Her work at 109 Palace Avenue enabled her to excel at both the administrative and practical domestic arrangements to enable scientists and their families to travel to Los Alamos lab. McKibbin had an important role in the scientific effort that allowed scientist to covertly move from Santa Fe to the Lab. Her work included issuing scientists passes to relocate "up the hill," and myriad sundry tasks to accommodate the scientists and their families. McKibbin remained in her position until the office closed in 1963.

The Design and Construction of the Dorothy McKibbin House

Courtyard (placita-centered) houses can be found in Muslim-ruled Spain, where wealthy property owners constructed courtyard houses in the Andalusian region in in southern Spain. Farmers embraced open courtyards, which they used as corrals and other agricultural purposes. The enclosed courtyard house was constructed in both urban environments as oasis from city life and as the center of rural haciendas, which served as expansive farming operations.

Courtyard houses in New Mexico, beginning in the nineteenth century, emerged from the Hispanic linear house in the house was begun with one or more rooms. Later rooms are added so that house may remain in single file of rooms or may become L- or U-shaped, or fully enclosed. The courtyards provided rural houses with a workplace sheltered from sun and wind. Courtyards enclosed on all sides provided fortification against raiding nomadic tribes. The 1846-1847 Map of Santa Fe by Lt. Gilmer, Corps of Engineers, illustrates scores of courtyards in downtown. In the 20th century, the courtyard house remained a popular house form. John Gaw Meem, Santa Fe master architect, designed numerous houses and buildings, including his personal residence, with a courtyard and, later architect Santa Fe architect William Lumpkins, produced numerous pattern books with courtyard houses for suburban living.

McKibbin and Otero combined many of the significant features of traditional Spanish Colonial architecture with a floor plan and courtyard, construction materials, amenities, and storage that create the appearance of an earlier house. The two friends created a contemporary house in the Territorial Revival style reflecting the historic architecture of the region.

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The Territorial Revival derived from the mid-nineteenth-century Territorial style, which was popular from the 1850s through 1870s. The style was important in New Mexico because it showed the state was current with the popular Greek Revival style. Many features, especially Greek-style window surrounds and brick cornices, were added to existing adobe houses. The Territorial Revival style was popular in New Mexico from the 1920s through the 1940s and is characterized by brick cornices, pedimented window and door lintels, wood porches, and sharp corners. The Pond-Kelly House in Santa Fe is among the first Territorial Revival houses. Designed by master architect John Gaw Meem in 1925, the house breaks with the Spanish Pueblo and Pueblo revivals with its white plaster walls, sharp corners, and brick cornice.

Territorial Revival-style details include the Greek-Revival styles window and door frames and the symmetry of the main façade. Elongated portals stretch across the front and rear of the house. Portland cement plaster coats the exterior walls except under the portals, where traditional mud plaster is mixed with straw and protected from the direct impact of the elements. Two wings, one housing the two bedrooms and a bath, the other containing the service areas and kitchen, are arranged in a U-shape around the north-facing rear portal and placita, in the traditional New Mexican rural hacienda form. This area, filled with perennial plantings reminiscent of McKibbin's Midwestern roots, constitutes the only non-native landscaped green space on a property surrounded by natural pinon and juniper.

McKibbin and Otero designed the house with attention to detail. Built-in bookcases, floor-to-ceiling storage cupboards, and deep closets are placed throughout, allowing the compact home to operate like a much larger one and offering an orderly backdrop for McKibbin's cache of decorative art pieces. Many carefully installed carved wood doors and other wood pieces were purchased during her time working at the Spanish and Indian Trading Company's shop on Santa Fe's Sena Plaza. McKibbin recounted that when a truck carrying salvage arrived, she would sometimes choose pieces for herself. According to McKibbin's notebook, the set of oversize wood front doors came from a descanso, or resting place for a coffin before burial, in Mora, NM.

The McKibbin House is filled with handcrafted details. Wood elements include carved paneled doors, built-in cabinets, and cupboards. The rear portal contains an alacena, a recessed wood cabinet. Exposed vigas are seen in most rooms in the main house. Antique salvaged wood doors, in various panel configurations with distinctive carving details and attached with zaballos, or wood pintle hinges, which are found throughout the house. The rooms of the home were designed to highlight the small historic doors, including raised thresholds and low-clearance doorways. Locally handmade, hammered-tin lights and sconces that reflect traditional Spanish Colonial motifs are present in every room of the house.

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Developmental history/additional historic context information

Dorothy Scarritt McKibbin, the “Gatekeeper of Los Alamos”

Dorothy Scarritt (1897-1985) first came to Santa Fe to recuperate from tuberculosis at Sunmount Sanatorium in the 1920s. After Dorothy graduated from Smith College, she returned to her family in Kansas City. She soon contracted tuberculosis, a disease that killed her sister a few years earlier. After learning of the treatments curing TB in New Mexico, Dorothy and her mother headed to Santa Fe where they lived at the La Fonda Hotel while waiting for a vacancy at Sunmount Sanatorium.

During McKibbin’s recovery at Sunmount Sanatorium, she purchased a lot on the Old Santa Fe Trail that was owned by sisters Amelia and Martha Root White. She and her friend and fellow patient, former aviator Katherine Stinson Otero (1891-1977), collaborated on the design and construction of her new house. Otero lived and worked in Santa Fe from 1920 until her death in 1977. Otero worked as a designer and real estate developer in Santa Fe from the 1920s to the 1950s. The McKibbin House was completed in 1938.

Dorothy recuperated at Sunmount for years before returning to Kansas City and her husband, a young businessman, Joe McKibbin. After her husband died of ALS disease in 1931, Dorothy McKibbin was soon widowed with a young son, Kevin. McKibbin chose to return to Santa Fe rather than remain in the Midwest with her family. For several years, she made a modest income working as a bookkeeper for the Spanish Indian Trading Company. She indulged in a study of regional decorative art, architecture, and furnishings and began to slowly compile a collection of items from the shop’s inventory and from her excursions in the countryside.

Dorothy and Kevin McKibbin lived in Santa Fe. For a time, they resided in one of the small apartments for single women at El Zagan on Canyon Road. McKibbin began to sketch out a permanent house in her favored rural New Mexico. She filled notebooks with ideas, drawings, and plans, later with help from her father.

During World War II, physicist Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer hired Dorothy McKibbin to be the face and checkpoint in Santa Fe for the U.S. Army’s top-secret Manhattan Project, located on the top of the Pajarito Plateau in Los Alamos, New Mexico. McKibbin processed the paperwork for scientists and their families arriving in New Mexico from her office at 109 East Palace Avenue. Called the “gatekeeper of Los Alamos,” she oversaw the practical arrangements for new arrivals, including their transportation “up the hill,” as the plateau was called. She coordinated their housing and managed communication between the scientists and the outside world. For a time, McKibbin’s home was the only secure private house in Santa Fe where project scientists could socialize in Santa Fe. Oppenheimer was a frequent visitor to the house. McKibbin hosted numerous weddings for scientists in her sala.

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McKibbin and her son formed a close friendship with Sturbridge, Massachusetts artist Cady Wells, who lived in a home in Jacona, New Mexico, between Santa Fe and Los Alamos. In the juniper scrub near the house, Wells built an enclosure of cedar boards pounded into the ground to serve as a home for Kevin's pet tortoise.

McKibbin lived the rest of her life in the house. Kevin lived and worked as a National Park ranger in nearby White Rock, New Mexico. Neighbors who admired McKibbin, purchased and restored in the 1980s. Dorothy McKibbin died in her house on December 17, 1985, at the age of 88.

Dorothy McKibbin House
Name of Property

Santa Fe, New Mexico
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Books and articles:

Bellmore, Audra. *Old Santa Fe Today*. Santa Fe, NM: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2022.

Conant, Jennet. *109 East Palace: Robert Oppenheimer and the Secret City of Los Alamos*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005.

Hoddeson, Lillian; Henriksen, Paul W.; Meade, Roger A.; and Westfall, Catherine L. *Critical Assembly: A Technical History of Los Alamos During the Oppenheimer Years, 1943–1945*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

McKibbin, Dorothy in *Los Alamos Housing: The Housing Manual*. Los Alamos, New Mexico: Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory of the University of California, September 1, 1956 (23-24).

Stark, Gregor and E. Catherine Rayne. *El Delirio: The Santa Fe World of Elizabeth White*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research, 1998.

Steeper, Nancy Cook. *Dorothy Scarritt McKibbin: Gatekeeper to Los Alamos*. Los Alamos, New Mexico: Los Alamos Historical Society, 2003.

Archival Materials:

“Dorothy McKibbin House” Photographs. Collection of Curtis and Mary Brennan.

“Dorothy McKibbin House” SWA Stinson Otero Drawings and Plans, John Gaw Meem Archives of Southwestern Architecture, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

“Katherine Gay House” SWA Katherine Stinson Otero Drawings and Plans, John Gaw Meem Archives of Southwestern Architecture, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Otero-Stinson Family Papers, MSS 506-BC, Center for Southwest Research,
University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New
Mexico.

Katherine Stinson Pictorial Collection, PICT-000-506, Center for Southwest
Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque,
New Mexico.

Interviews:

Brennan, Curtis, interview by Cindy Kelly, October 17, 2027. Voices of the Manhattan
Project, Atomic Heritage Foundation, National Museum of Nuclear Science &
History.

Brennan, Mary, interview by Cindy Kelly, October 17, 2017. Voices of the Manhattan
Project, Atomic Heritage Foundation, National Museum of Nuclear Science &
History.

Conant, Jennet, interview by. October 12, 2017. Voices of the Manhattan Project, Atomic
Heritage Foundation, National Museum of Nuclear Science & History.

McKibbin, Dorothy, interview by Martin J. Sherwin, July 20, 1979. Voices of the Manhattan
Project, Atomic Heritage Foundation, National Museum of Nuclear Science &
History.

McKibbin, Dorothy, interview by Stefane Groueff, March 10, 1965. Voices of the Manhattan
Project, Atomic Heritage Foundation, National Museum of Nuclear Science &
History.

Quintana, Frances, interview by Cindy Kelly, February 4, 2027. Voices of the Manhattan
Project, Atomic Heritage Foundation, National Museum of Nuclear Science &
History.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.72 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 35.66867 Longitude: -105.92481

2. Latitude: Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary appears on the sketch map as a red line drawn to scale and corresponding with the point of latitude and longitude in Section 10.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The National Register boundary includes the intact property historically associated with the Dorothy McKibbin House.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Audra Bellmore
street & number: 9221 Palm Beach NE
city or town: Santa Fe state: New Mexico zip code: 87111
e-mail: gabellmor@unm.edu telephone: N505.231.4393
date: December 10, 2023

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title: Steven Moffson, State and National Register Coordinator
organization: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division
street & number: 407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236
city or town: Santa Fe state: New Mexico zip: 87501
email: steven.moffson@dca.nm.gov telephone: 505.476.0444
date: September 15, 2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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Figures

Figure 1. McKibbin House under construction with workers making adobe bricks and using them to form walls.

Figure 2. Dorothy McKibbin and her son, Kevin, late 1930s. Courtesy Curtis and Mary Brennan.

Figure 3. McKibbin House, rear courtyard. n.d. Courtesy Curtis and Mary Brennan.

Figure 4. McKibbin House, interior, sala, n.d.

Figure 5. McKibbin House, main bedroom, n.d.

Figure 6. Dorothy McKibbin, Los Alamos Security Badge photo, circa 1940s.

Figure 7. 109 East Palace Avenue, Santa Fe, where McKibbin administered transportation, housing, and communications for newly arrived scientists on their way to Los Alamos.

Figure 8. Katherine Stinson Otero in airplane. circa 1910s. Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico.

Figure 9. Dorothy McKibbin, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Victor Weisskopf at a dinner party at Oppenheimer's house in Los Alamos, 1944. National Security Research Center at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Figure 10. Dorothy McKibbin, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Oppenheimer's sister-in-law, Jacqueline Oppenheimer, at a ranch in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, circa 1960.

Figure 11. Dorothy McKibbin in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1963.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Dorothy McKibbin House

City or Vicinity: Santa Fe

County: Santa Fe

State: New Mexico

Photographer: Harvey Kaplan

Date Photographed: June 2, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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- 1 of 16. Gravel court with main house (left) and free-standing garage (right), photographer facing southwest.
- 2 of 16. North (main) portal, photographer facing southwest.
- 3 of 16. Main portal, photographer west.
- 4 of 16. Main portal, paneled door, photographer facing south.
- 5 of 16. East façade, kitchen entrance, photographer facing west.
- 6 of 16. West façade, Territorial Revival window, photographer facing east.
- 7 of 16. Rear courtyard, photographer facing north.
- 8 of 16. Attached garage, with paneled door, photographer facing west.
- 9 of 16. Sala (living/dining room), photographer facing northeast.
- 10 of 16. Sala (living room/dining room), photographer facing west.
- 11 of 16. Northwest bedroom, photographer facing southwest.
- 12 of 16. Bedroom corridor, photographer facing north.
- 13 of 16. Northwest bedroom, photographer facing northwest.
- 14 of 16. Northwest bedroom with corner fireplace, photographer facing northeast.
- 15 of 16. Kitchen, photographer facing northeast.
- 16 of 16. McKibbin sign that reads "1099 Old Santa Trail," photographer facing west.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).


Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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National Register boundary 


Approximate scale: one inch = 125 feet

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Dorothy McKibbin House
Santa Fe County, New Mexico

National Register boundary 

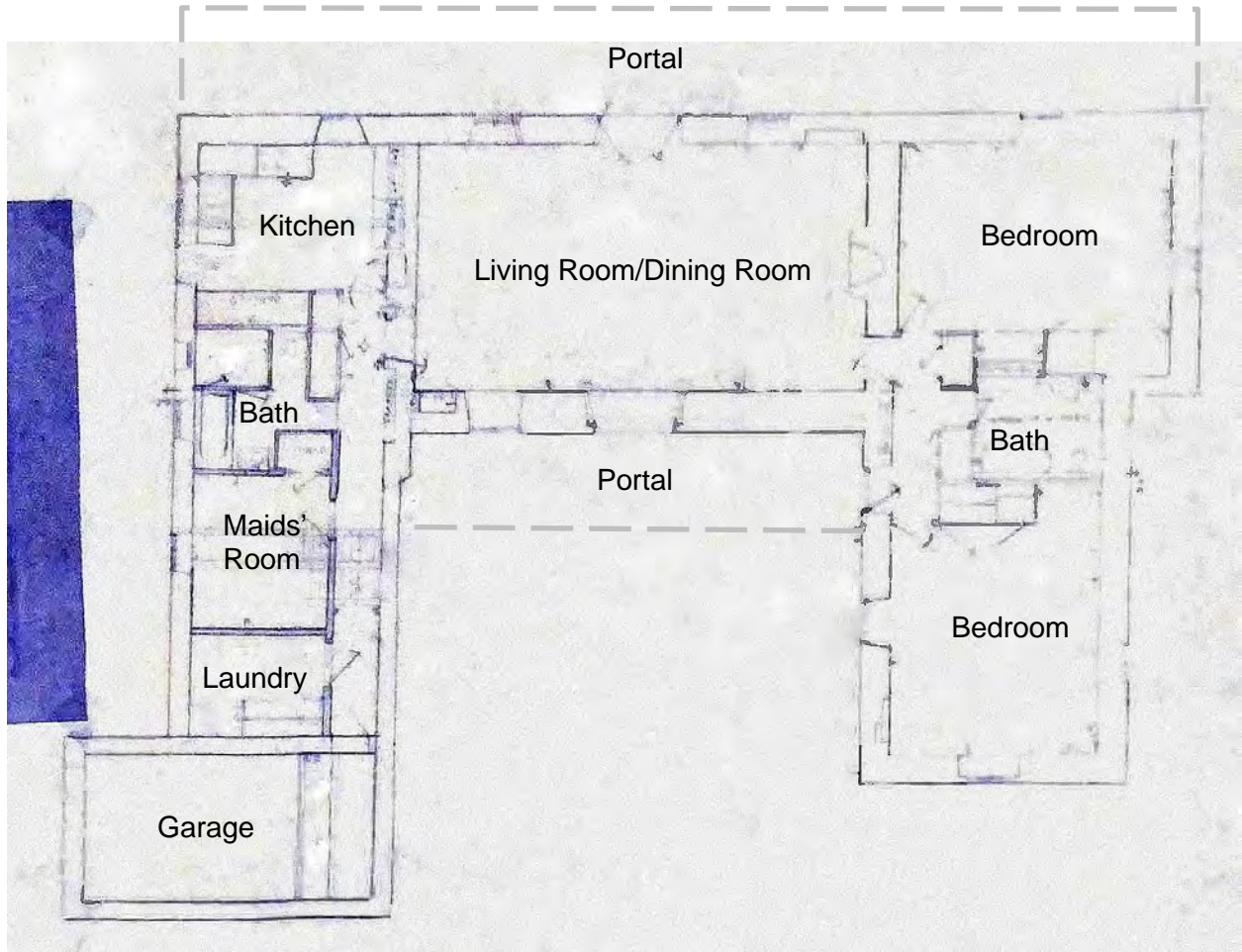


Approximate scale: one inch = 90 feet

Latitude: 35.66867 Longitude: -105.92481

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Floor Plan

No scale



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Figures



Figure 1. McKibbin House under construction with workers making adobe bricks and using them to form walls



Figure 2. Dorothy McKibbin and her son, Kevin, late 1930s. Courtesy Curtis and Mary Brennan.

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Figure 3. McKibbin House, rear courtyard. n.d. Courtesy Curtis and Mary Brennan.



Figure 4. McKibbin House, interior, sala, n.d.

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Figure 5. McKibbin House, interior, main bedroom, n.d.

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Figure 7. 109 East Palace Avenue, Santa Fe, where McKibbin administered transportation, housing, and communications for newly arrived scientists on their way to Los Alamos.

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Figure 8. Katherine Stinson Otero in airplane. circa 1910s. Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico.

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Figure 9. Dorothy McKibbin, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Victor Weisskopf at a dinner party at Oppenheimer's house in Los Alamos, 1944. National Security Research Center at Los Alamos National Laboratory.



Figure 10. Dorothy McKibbin, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and Oppenheimer's sister-in-law, Jacqueline Oppenheimer, at a ranch in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, circa 1960.

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Figure 11. Dorothy McKibbin in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1963.

Dorothy McKibbin House
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Photographs



Photo 1. Gravel court with main house (left) and free-standing garage (right), phtographer facing southwest.



Photo 2. North (main) portal, phtographer facing southwest.

Dorothy McKibbin House
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Photo 3. Main portal, photographer west.



Photo 4. Main portal, paneled door, photographer facing south.

Dorothy McKibbin House
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Photo 5. East façade, kitchen entrance, photographer facing west.



Photo 6. West façade, Territorial Revival-style window, photographer facing east.

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Photo 7. Rear courtyard, photographer facing north.



Photo 8. Attached garage with paneled door, photographer facing west.

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Photo 9. Sala (living/dining room), photographer facing northeast.



Photo 10. Sala (living room/dining room), photographer facing west.

Dorothy McKibbin House
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Photo 11. Northwest bedroom, photographer facing southwest.

Dorothy McKibbin House
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Photo 12. Bedroom corridor, photographer facing north.

Dorothy McKibbin House
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Photo 13. Northwest bedroom, photographer facing northwest.



Photo 14. Northwest bedroom with corner fireplace, photographer facing northeast.

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Photo 15. Kitchen, photographer facing northeast.



Photo 16. McKibbin sign, that reads "1099 Old Santa Trail," photographer facing west.