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Wasatch-Grant Subdivision

Wasatch-Grant Subdivision was developed by Albert Smith in 1953. It is located in Midvale, Utah just west of State Street at approximately 8000 South.

Mr. Smith was educated at Jordan High School in Midvale. He continued his schooling at the University of Utah, receiving a bachelor's degree in Business Management. He served on the Salt Lake County Suburban Sanitary District No. Two Board as well as the Midvale City Council for 12 years. He is credited with subdividing a great deal of Midvale City. Mr. Smith developed the subdivision directly west of Wasatch-Grant which is one of three phases of the Jim Reed Subdivisions in Midvale totaling roughly 60 homes. To the south of Wasatch-Grant is Wasatch-Grant Subdivision No. Two, also developed by Mr. Smith. Additional Midvale subdivisions for which he is responsible are the Maple Wood Subdivision comprising approximately 150 homes and the Padjan Subdivisions Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 containing about 80 residential lots total.

Today Wasatch-Grant Subdivision maintains its original boundaries and basic characteristics. It contains 24 residential lots. See map! Its boundary on the east is Monroe Street which is equivalent to 605 East Street in Midvale's separate coordinate system. The west boundary is Jackson Street (515 East). The surrounding areas were made up of both old homes and undeveloped land. The property on the south and west sides were subdivided by Smith shortly thereafter. The

original subdivision was not enlarged, but some physical changes were made during construction.

The most obvious change is on Jackson Street between Cornell and Washington. The street in this stretch is only 38 feet wide as opposed to the normal 50 feet for the surrounding streets. This modification had to be made to accommodate an old, existing house north of lot eight which the developer intended to remove. (See picture no. 1.) When the home couldn't be moved, lot eight was extended on the west side to meet the boundaries of the existing house. This created the one way road shown.

Another unforseen variation in the subdivision was made on lot number 20. The Buck Family purchased the lot and ordered a home to built, however, the developer made an error on the placement of the foundation: it was poured directly on the south property line. The Engineer's son, David B. Gardner (also an Engineer working on the project) noticed the error and informed Mr. Smith. This could have been a very costly mistake, resulting in the readjustment of all other properties. Fortunately for Mr. Smith, the lot was adjacent to vacant property. It was decided that the lot should be widened an additional eight feet to accommodate the driveway and side-yard. (See pictures 2-5.) The developer had to pay for the additional land which was a benefit for the Buck family.

The last physical change which was made to the proposed

and recorded subdivision is at the south end of Van Buren Street. Since the land directly south of the subdivision was unplatted at the time of recording, a temporary turn-around was planned at the termination of the dead-end street. When the adjacent property was purchased by Mr. Smith, he planned for the road to continue through to the new subdivision thus eliminating the need for the circular turn-around. The street is still a dead-end after a few houses into the Wasatch-Grant No. Two subdivision. (See picture 6.) Property at the end of Van Buren was sold to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for a church, the parking lot for which backs into that road.

The subdivision and surrounding areas are all laid out in a grid iron pattern for both economy of space and to coordinate with Salt Lake City's grid system. All road widths are 50 feet including the sidewalks and parkways. The lot sizes average 120 feet by 64 feet with the exception of the Buck residence which is 120 feet deep by 72 feet wide. The gutter system is a two and one-half high-back gutter supplied by the developer.

Midvale City required that developers paid for other improvements including sewer and water, street lighting and curbs. Fences were not supplied by the developer, but the residents eventually installed them in all lots except the side yard of lot number nine which faces Cornell Street.

The developer did not in any of his subdivisions plan for

any parks or common areas as Midvale City did not require them at the time. Mr. Smith was more concerned with economy of space and his investment than contributing to the city.

He did however dedicate the streets of his subdivisions to the city at the time of recording as is customary. The civil engineer, David I. Gardner, named the streets after United States Presidents and Universities which is a tradition in Midvale City.

Mr. Smith generally offered four different floor plans for all of his subdivisions, all of which were his own designs, no Architect was used. For the Wasatch-Grant subdivision he built four spec homes for potential buyers to experience. The four house styles can all be classified as ranch style which was the dominant house style throughout the country during the decades of the fifties and sixties.[1] The ranch house which originated in California in 1935 was based on the idea of a "spread out" design as the necessity for compact houses dwindled as a result of advances in transportation. House lots became much larger and the ranch house took advantage of the land with extended facades. The style evolved from the early Spanish Colonial style, further influenced by Craftsman and Prairie styles.

The homes all had similar plans and facades. The roofs are all low-pitched, three styles are side-gabled and one

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[1] Virginia and Lee McAlester, "A Field Guide to American Houses" (New York:Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 479.

style is ridge-view hipped, both with moderate eave overhangs.

The following characteristics are common to all four floor plans in this subdivision. They are all one story above ground with full-size, unfinished basements. The construction of the homes is wood framing with brick veneer exteriors. Wrought iron porch supports and railings were another material used on most of the units. The footprint of each home (with the exception of two atypical styles) is rectilinear with front massing and the floor plans are two units deep. Large picture windows in the main living areas were made possible by the standardization of window sizes and pre-fabricated units[2]. Eight foot ceilings are common throughout the subdivision as is the approximate square footage of 780 square feet on the main level. Optional extras offered to the home-buyer included fireplaces, porches (for some plans) and detached garages which were built to the side and rear of the home. Only a few garages were built during initial construction, even though there were no restrictions against doing so.

The individual lots and home styles were both chosen by the buyer, resulting in the random pattern of their locations within the subdivision. (See the plat map for the locations of the four different styles as well as two unclassified styles.) The first style, which will be referred to as "Type A" is a ranch house which is three units wide across the

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[2] Clark, Clifford Edward Jr. "The American Family Home", (Chapel Hill and London:The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 195.

facade. (See pictures 6 and 7.) They all have large picture windows and cross-gabled roofs over the entrance. The entry is close to the center of the structure and easily identified in comparison to Type B.

"Type B" homes are designated by their corner porch entry on the facade. (See pictures 2 and 8.) This style is just two units; a living room and the master bedroom. (See Main Floor Plan for Buck Residence.) Most of Type B homes in the subdivision include a fireplace located at the front of the house which seems to break up the facade and present a less formal appearance. Those homes which do have the extra fireplace apparently sacrificed large picture windows in exchange for two smaller windows. The Buck residence for instance, does not include a fireplace anywhere in the home and has considerably large (eight feet wide) windows on the facade. (See picture 2.)

The third, "Type C," appears at first to have a somewhat symmetrical quality as the central, front entry is balanced on either side by windows. (See pictures 9-11.) The front facade is only two units across; a bedroom and the living room. All but one of these examples utilize a cross-gabled porch covering. (See picture 9.)

There is only one example of the "Type D" plan in this subdivision, clearly not one of the most popular plans offered by the developer. It is located on lot number two. (See picture 12.) It is not unlike the Type B plan, but with an

exaggerated corner porch, backed by a large picture window. The other windows on the facade, however, are rather small. The entry is not accessed perpendicularly to the facade as is the case with all the other plans, but rather from the side. Another difference between this style and Type B is that it is three units long. The buyer opted for the additional fireplace which is located on the west living room wall.

There are two homes in the subdivision which do not fall into any of the above described categories. One is located on the corner of Van Buren Street and Cornell (lot number 16.) This house was a "custom" home also designed and built by Smith for the Fergus Family. (See picture 14.) It was constructed along with the other homes at the time of development. It is oriented at a 30 degree angle from Cornell Street with the driveway accessible from Van Buren. It has a large picture window on the south east corner of the house, unlike any others in the subdivision. It is also distinguished by its use of siding which is particular only to this house.

The other house which deviates from the standard plans is located on lot number one. It is the only cross-gabled plan in the subdivision. (See picture 19.) ? Don't have this one. The reason for its originality within the subdivision is unknown. It adheres to the typical materials used throughout the subdivision (brick veneer), but includes a decorative brace element constructed of wood on the facade and a modest amount of wood siding.

Only one resident attempted to incorporate their garage into the original structure, although several built attached carports. On lot number 23, the residents extended the roof of garage which was a separate structure. (See picture 17.) It is the only garage in the subdivision which lines up with the main structure. (See Site Plan of the Buck Residence for typical location of the garage.) The addition was not very successful however, as the roofing materials are different and the two separate roofs don't match up well.

Surprisingly, no living space additions to the main house were made on any home in the subdivision. Because of this and the fact that the landscape and exteriors are well maintained, the neighborhood looks clean and orderly.

Changes were made to many interiors though, especially kitchens. Many have been updated in the last few years, including the kitchen in the Buck Residence. (See picture 4; the aluminum kitchen windows have been replaced with vinyl windows.)

The floor plan illustrated was taken from the Buck Residence which has been classified as a Type B home. The plan is straightforward and rather simple, which is to be expected since no architect was employed and the homes were designed with economy in mind. The front entry opens to the living room comprising 275 square feet, behind which is the kitchen. There is no formal dining room, just an extended section of the kitchen allowing approximately 58 square feet

for a dining table. This plan is fairly open and flows well. It even starts to utilize the then new idea of transitional spaces in the Living/Dining room. The bedrooms are of average size (105-150 square feet) for the time period, with an slightly larger master bedroom closet than usual. Many of the unfinished basements were completed by the residents years ago. overall square footage?

The average price of the homes in this subdivision was $13,000 at the time of construction. Thus, the families who lived there could be classified as medium income families. There were no racial restrictions, however, no minorities purchased homes in this subdivision. Since many of today's residents are original owners (they purchased their homes during the initial development) there are still no minority groups represented in the subdivision. The houses that have been sold were bought primarily by established, young families, which creates a pleasant mix of generations. The current price for these homes in 1994 averages upwards of $100,000; a difficult price for young couples just starting out to pay.

While it is unfortunate that the developer did not plan any interesting public spaces or even unusual street patterns, the subdivision is successful in that it is well maintained and the owners are proud of their homes, many of whom have made the subdivision a permanent home for most of their lives.

Bibliography

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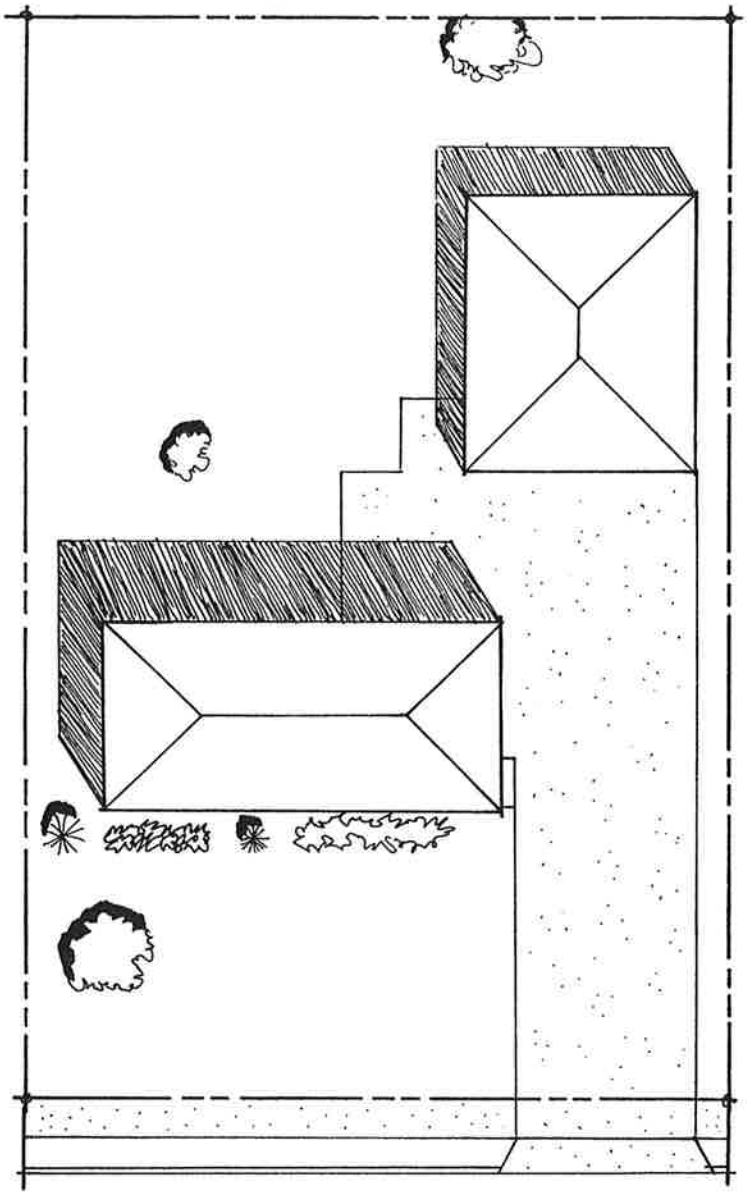

SITE PLAN
SCALE 1" = 20'

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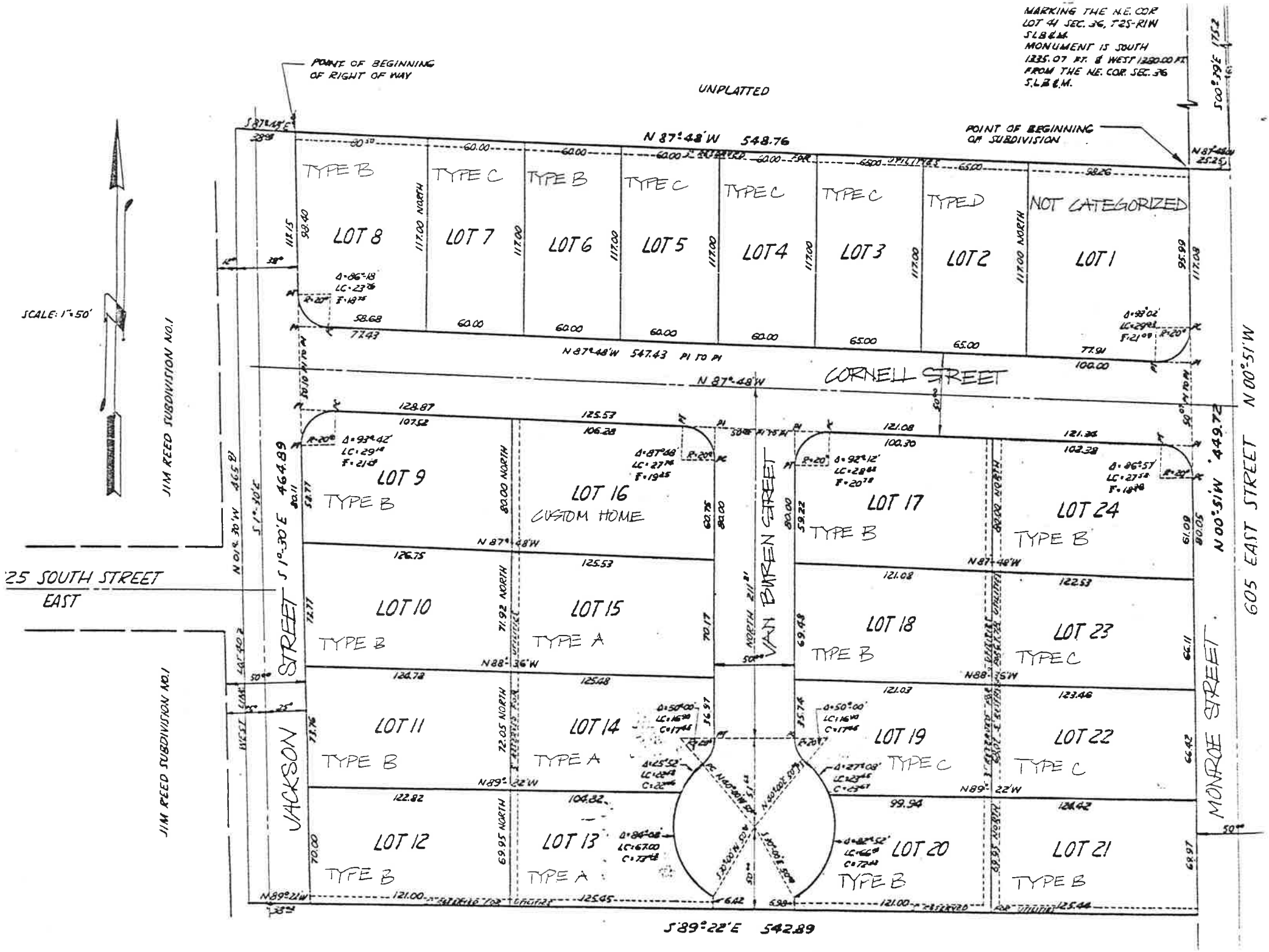
MARKING THE N.E. COR LOT 41 SEC. 36, T25-R1W S.L.B.&M. MONUMENT IS SOUTH 1235.07 FT. & WEST 1280.00 FT FROM THE N.E. COR. SEC. 36 S.L.B.&M.
POINT OF BEGINNING OF RIGHT OF WAY
UNPLATTED
POINT OF BEGINNING OF SUBDIVISION
N 87°48'W 548.76
SCALE: 1"=50'
JIM REED SUBDIVISION NO.1
TYPE B
TYPE C
TYPE B
TYPE C
TYPE C
TYPE C
TYPE D
NOT CATEGORIZED
LOT 8
LOT 7
LOT 6
LOT 5
LOT 4
LOT 3
LOT 2
LOT 1
N 87°48'W 547.43 PI TO PI
CORNELL STREET
N 87°48'W
LOT 9
TYPE B
LOT 16
CUSTOM HOME
LOT 17
TYPE B
LOT 24
TYPE B
25 SOUTH STREET
EAST
JACKSON STREET
S 1°30'E 464.89
VAN BUREN STREET
N 00°51'W 449.72
605 EAST STREET
MONROE STREET
LOT 10
TYPE B
LOT 15
TYPE A
LOT 18
TYPE B
LOT 23
TYPE C
LOT 11
TYPE B
LOT 14
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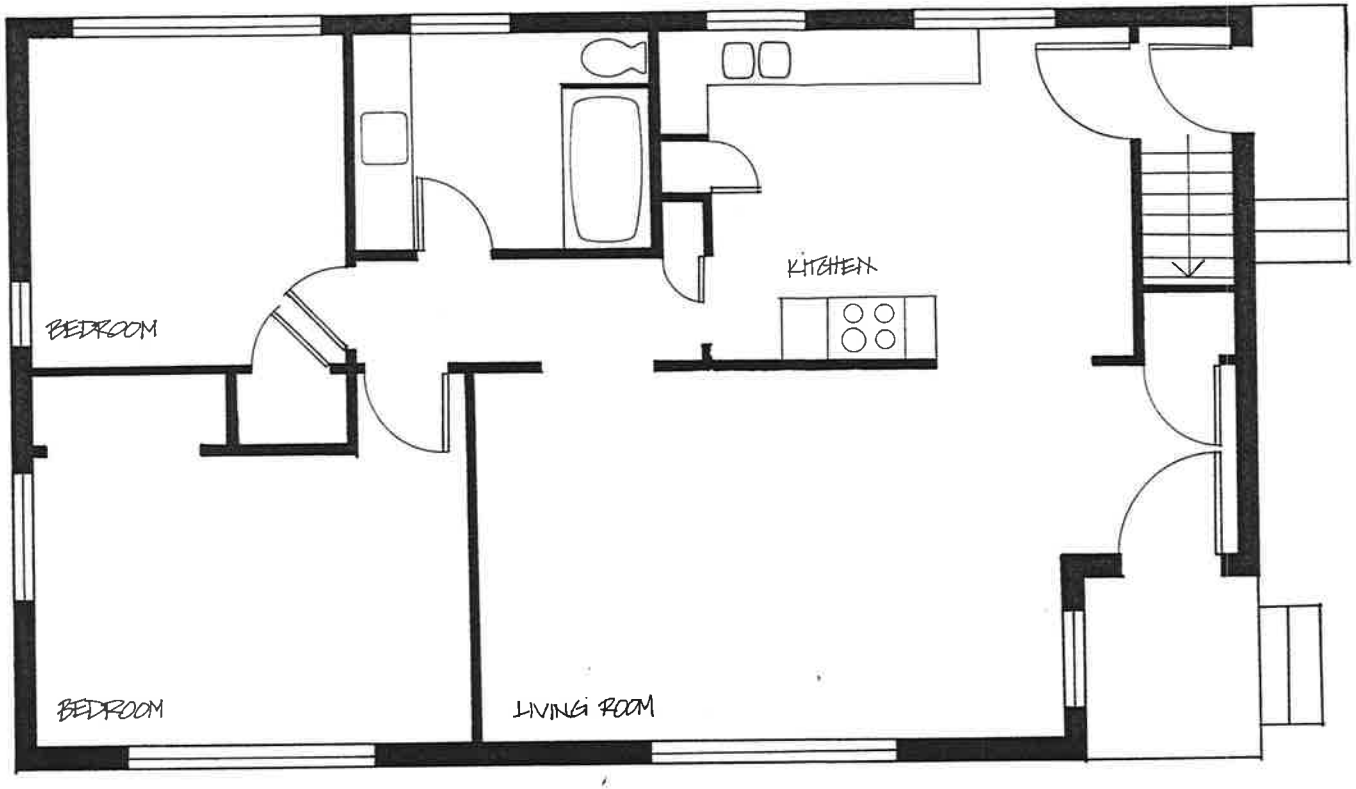

MAIN FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1/4" = 1'