

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

14/1/1
AUG 16 1990

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Regulations in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Christmas Tree Lane
other names/site number Mile of Christmas Trees

2. Location

street & number Santa Rosa Ave.--both sides of street from N/A not for publication
city, town Altadena Woodbury Ave. to Altadena N/A vicinity
state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 91001

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>2</u>	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Kathryn Mattieu 8-8-90
Signature of certifying official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)
for 9/13/90
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/natural feature _____
Recreation/outdoor recreation _____

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/natural feature _____
Recreation/outdoor recreation _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A _____

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____ N/A _____

walls _____

roof _____

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Christmas Tree Lane is a six block long hilly street in Altadena that is lined on both sides with 135 Deodar Cedar trees and stone lined gutters. The lane has maintained its integrity overtime with the gradual replacement of trees lost to disease and age. The Lane, Santa Rosa Avenue between Woodbury Road and Altadena Drive (earlier called Piedmont Dr. and then Foothill Blvd.), is part of a mesa that lies at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains.

The generic name of the trees is *Cedrus deodara*. They are a member of the Pinaceae family originating in the Himalaya region of India. The trees are planted approximately 50 feet apart. The 108 mature trees are about 80 feet tall with a spread of approximately 40 feet. Their trunks measure up to 15 feet in circumference, with some of the multi-trunk specimens measuring over 25 feet in circumference just above the ground. Of the probable 160 trees originally planted, about 27 have been replaced over the years because of age or disease. Most of these replacements are less than 25 years old. Another approximately 25 trees have never been replaced.

Santa Rosa Avenue is a residential street that runs north and south across the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains just north of Pasadena. Woodbury Road is the southern boundary of Altadena where it joins Pasadena. On the northeast corner of Woodbury and Santa Rosa Avenues is a small park with a monument that states the following: "This Park is given to the public by the property owners on Santa Rosa Avenue in grateful appreciation of the planting of these *Cedrus Deodara* Trees in 1885 by Frederick J. and John P. Woodbury, 1928." The monument was given by the Woman's Circle of Altadena. The obelisk next to the monument was probably placed there at the time the park and monument were dedicated in 1928. Another obelisk was located across the street and formed an entrance to the Lane at one time. However, the road was widened and the obelisk removed. Residences line both sides of Santa Rosa Avenue. They date from about 1908 through the 1950s. The Altadena Library, built in 1967, is located at the southwest corner of Santa Rosa Avenue and Mariposa Street.

The trees, planted in 1885 by the Woodbury brothers, were laid out on poppy and chaparral clad hillside land to create an impressive drive between John Woodbury's house on the north and Frederick Woodbury's house on the south. John Woodbury's house was never built but it is said that a small lookout platform once existed on the site. Frederick Woodbury had planted shrubbery and ornamental trees to enhance the beauty of the hillside setting. His house is located about two blocks west of Santa Rosa Avenue and one block north of Mariposa Street. The ranch lands

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Social history

Settlement

Period of Significance

1920 - 1940

1885

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Christmas Tree Lane is significant as the most prominently recognized landscape feature in Altadena. The six block double row of one hundred year old Deodar Cedar trees have been an important part of the history of the community since first being planted in 1885 by Altadena's founders, Frederick J. and John P. Woodbury, as part of their ranch. The trees have attained significance because of their association with an important community event. A Christmas Tree lighting ceremony was started in 1920 as a community project and has become a major event for Altadena and the surrounding San Gabriel Valley region attracting hundreds of thousands of people from throughout Southern California and beyond for over sixty years.

The trees were started as seedlings in 1883 by Frederick J. Woodbury. Captain Woodbury, as he was commonly called, and his brother John were natives of Marshalltown, Iowa and had purchased approximately 937 acres of Rancho San Pasqual in 1882. Captain Woodbury, a Civil War veteran, built a house for his family on Madison Avenue, just two blocks east of Santa Rosa Avenue. His brother John and his family came to California in 1885, and John supervised the planting of the trees that led up the avenue to the plot of land on which he planned to build his family house. John's earlier travels to Italy, where he first saw the Deodar Cedar tree, inspired him to write the U.S. Department of Agriculture to see if the trees could grow in California. Receiving an affirmative answer, he ordered the seeds and they were planted in frames in 1883. In 1885 Thomas Hoag, ranch foreman, together with Chinese laborers, planted the seedlings and built the stone gutters.

Taking advantage of the railroad boom of 1887 sweeping Southern California, the Woodbury brothers, together with surrounding landowners, formed the Pasadena Improvement Company for the purpose of subdividing their property. They chose the name Altadena after receiving permission from Byron O. Clark, whose nearby business was called the Altadena Nursery because of its higher location above Pasadena.

The town of Altadena, conceived as an affluent community by John Woodbury, was subdivided in 1887, and several large estates were built by wealthy individuals. Among the most prominent were Andrew McNally and Colonel George G. Green who built

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

California Arts and Architecture, December, 1929
Grenier, Judson A. A Guide to Historic Places in Los Angeles County. Kendall-Hunt, 1978.
Hassler, Dorothy K. Altadena Yesterday and Today. Altadenan Publishing Co., 1969.
Ives, Sarah Noble. Altadena. Star-News Publishing Co., 1938.
Pasadena Star News. 12/3/20; 12/24/20; 12/27/20; 11/20/74; 1/13/67; 12/8/68.
Peterson, Robert H. Altadena's Golden Years. Self-published, 1976.
Sunset Magazine, "Altadena's Mile of Christmas Trees," December, 1959.
The Independent, 2/2/67; 12/10/67.
The Altadenan, 12/8/66; 2/22/68; 12/18/69; 11/27/75.
The Altadenana/Pasadenan, 12/2/70.
Time, "Christmas Celebrations," 12/20/60.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Altadena Heritage, P.O. Box 218,
Altadena, CA 91001

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 9.6 acres

UTM References

A

1	1
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3	9	5	0	2	0
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3	3	7	8	2	6	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	1
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3	9	5	5	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	8	3	7	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	1
---	---

3	9	5	2	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	7	8	3	1	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes the public right of way and County easements on Santa Rosa Avenue from Woodbury Rd. to Altadena Drive as marked by dotted lines on the enclosed map entitled "Christmas Tree Lane -- Project Boundaries."

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the public right of way and easements owned by the County of Los Angeles where the trees and stone gutters are located.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judy Triem/Historical Consultant
organization Altadena Heritage date January 30, 1989 (rev. 6/18/90)
street & number 627 E. Pleasant Street telephone (805) 525-1909
city or town Santa Paula state CA zip code 93060

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were planted to citrus and vineyards. Stones were collected from the nearby Arroyo Seco and used to create gutters next to the trees to handle the drainage during the rainy season.

The original avenue was a dirt road. Only a few houses were located on the lane after it was subdivided and the town of Altadena created in 1887 by the Woodburys. The majority of houses on the lane today were built after 1930. It is uncertain when the road was paved, but it was probably done by 1920 when Christmas Tree Lane was first established as a tree lighting event and cars traveled by to view the lights. Driveways and pathway approaches to houses on the street are cantilevered over the stone gutters. Run-off rainwater is carried beneath intersecting streets by metal culverts connecting the gutters.

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palatial residences on Santa Rosa Avenue and Mariposa Street. Mariposa Street became known as "Millionaire's Row." The McNally house still exists although the spacious grounds around it were subdivided. After the boom collapsed in 1888, John Woodbury returned to the east with his family. Frederick Woodbury moved to Pasadena in 1894. The trees remain as the visual reminder of Altadena's early development and a significant landscape feature in the Altadena community. As the city continued to grow after the Woodburys' departure, the residents who built their houses along Santa Rosa Avenue cared for the trees.

The trees are also significant as probably the oldest Southern California lighting spectacle. In 1920 the trees were lit during the Christmas holidays for the first time, and the street became known as Christmas Tree Lane. The idea was initiated by Altadenan Fred Nash, a member of the Kiwanis Club and a Pasadena merchant. The first tree lighting ceremony, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, was held every evening from Christmas Eve to New Year's Eve. The first lighting ceremony included a program that featured a performance by the Pasadena Concert Band and a community sing. Gifts were collected for the needy and distributed. Subsequent programs included a parade as well. After the ceremony, people walked down Santa Rosa Avenue to observe the colored lights. After the initial walk, automobiles by the thousands and tour buses would traverse the Lane. During 1967 an estimated 150,000 people viewed the lights.

Since 1920 the trees have attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors from throughout California as well as other states, many who had come to watch Pasadena's Annual Tournament of Roses on New Year's Day. The only dark years were during World War II, the financial transition period in 1958, and the energy crises in 1974.

From 1920 to 1958, the Altadena and Pasadena Kiwanis Clubs, the City of Pasadena and the Power and Light Department paid the cost of lighting the trees. In 1958 the Christmas Tree Lane Association was formed to undertake the financial responsibilities of lighting the lane. The Woman's Auxiliary raises money through carnivals, and donations are collected from local organizations and private donors. The community and the Electrical Union donated manpower to string the some 10,000 lights.

The tree lighting event has played a major role in fostering community involvement throughout the Altadena/Pasadena area. Each year hundreds of volunteers including individuals, organizations and businesses have contributed thousands of hours to make the event a success. Local church choirs, bands and youth groups have participated every year in the opening ceremony and parade.

The significance and popularity of this annual event has been recorded in dozens of local history books, guide books, magazine articles and newspapers. Among the earliest, California Arts & Architecture for December 1929 states, "Since 1920, a mile of Christmas trees in Altadena has given joy to thousands. Time Magazine on December 20, 1968, listed the Mile of Christmas Trees and referred to it as "the oldest of Southern California's Christmas lighting spectacles."

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Whereas the ceremony has continued to today, the property does not derive any exceptional significance from this.

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Photography

Photo Log

For all photos the following information is the same:

- 1) Property name: Christmas Tree Lane
- 2) Altadena, California
- 3) Photographer: Tim Gregory
- 4) Date of photograph: November, 1988
- 5) Negative Location: Altadena Heritage, P.O. Box 218, Altadena, CA 91001

Sixteen Photos. Following are Views, Numbered.

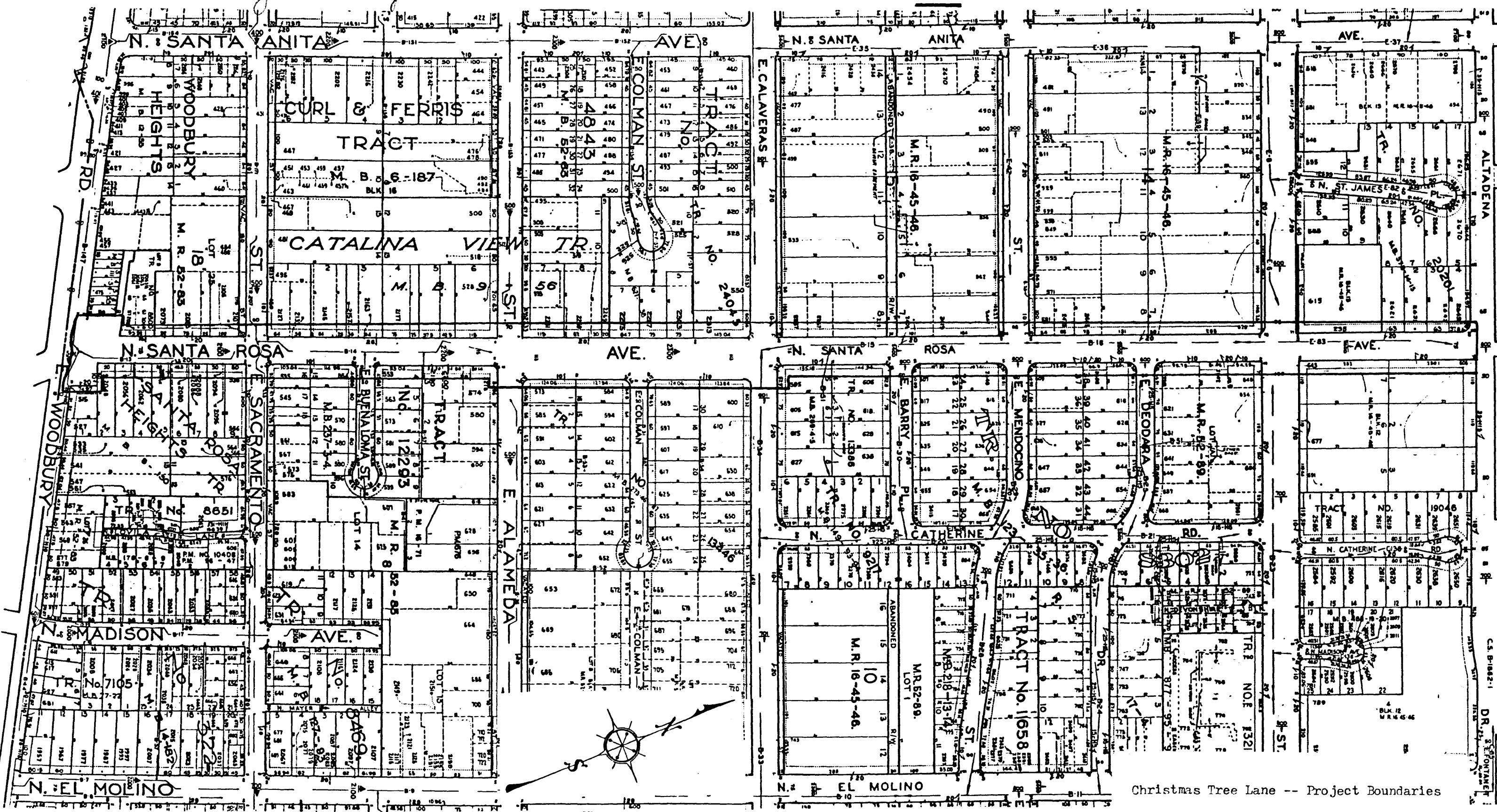
1. Santa Rosa Ave., intersection Altadena Dr., facing South.
2. Santa Rosa Ave., intersection Mariposa St., facing South.
3. Santa Rosa Ave., between Mariposa St. and Mendocino St., facing North.
4. Santa Rosa Ave., between Mendocino St. and Calaveras St., facing North.
5. Santa Rosa Ave., between Calaveras St. and Alameda St., facing South.
6. Santa Rosa Ave., between Alameda St. and Sacramento St., facing North.
7. Santa Rosa Ave., between Sacramento St. and Woodbury Rd., facing South.
8. Plaque, northeast corner, Santa Rosa Ave. and Woodbury Rd.
9. Obelisk, northeast corner, Santa Rosa Ave. and Woodbury Rd.
10. Stone gutter and culvert, Santa Rosa Ave. and Deodara Dr., Southeast corner.
11. Deodar tree, on island, intersection of Santa Rosa Ave. and Barry Place.
12. Deodar tree, Santa Rosa Ave., east side, beside 595 E. Calaveras St.
13. Stone gutters, Santa Rosa Ave. and Calaveras St., southeast corner, facing South.
14. Deodar tree, Santa Rosa Ave. and Alameda St., Southwest corner.
15. Deodar tree, Santa Rosa Ave., west side, opposite 2177 Santa Rosa Ave.
16. Stone gutters and cantilevered driveways, Santa Rosa Ave., west side, in front of 2105 Santa Rosa Ave.

Christmas Tree Lane
Santa Rosa Ave.
Altadena, CA
Los Angeles County



X = Mature tree
⊗ = Young tree (probably less than 20 years old)

Christmas Tree Lane
Santa Rosa Ave.
Altadena, CA
Los Angeles County



Christmas Tree Lane -- Project Boundaries

Dotted lines show I. A County easements where Deodar trees and stone gutters are located.