

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received SEP 30 1982  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Old Santa Rosa Catholic Church and Cemetery

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number ~~2300 Block, Main Street~~ N/A not for publication

city, town Cambria N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county San Luis Obispo code 079

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Roman Catholic Church - 1 Diocese of Monterey

street & number Post Office Box 2048

city, town Monterey N/A vicinity of state 93940

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, San Luis Obispo County Courthouse

street & number 1000 Monterey Street, Room 107

city, town San Luis Obispo state CA 93408

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_X no

date N/A \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Santa Rosa Catholic Church and cemetery occupy a prominent hilltop location overlooking the old village of Cambria. A narrow road leads from Main Street directly up the steep slope to the old church. The small, wooden frame building is positioned so the main entrance looks out over the townsite. The old cemetery is located behind the church. The hillcrest is covered with native grasses and mature pines.

The church is a simple, rectangular wooden building with a medium gable roof with wooden shingles covered by composition roofing. This one-room country church is built of pine, with three-clapboard exterior siding. Detailing is based on Classical design sources popular at the time of construction. The building is symmetrical in composition. The south-facing facade is dominated by the centrally placed entrance. The entrance is a large round-headed arch which encloses two four-paneled doors with a semi-circular fanlight above. Doorway surroundings are simple, and the arch is capped by curved drip molding. Above the entrance the facade rises to its apex in a medium gable with boxed cornice and simple frieze. The corners of the building are marked by end boards. There are no windows or porch on this elevation.

The rear of the building is simple, with no fenestration. It is a blank wall rising into a medium gable with simple Classical boxed cornice, frieze and endboards.

The sides of the building are also symmetrical. The west elevation contains four simple rectangular windows with squared hood moldings. The simple frieze and boxed cornice are repeated at the eaves, and endboards terminate the design at each end. The east elevation is identical, with the addition of a small doorway at the right end, and an exterior metal chimney at the left.

At the present time the old church is in a state of disrepair due to neglect and vandalism. All the windows have been broken out and are now boarded up. The front and back doors have been damaged and are nailed shut. All furnishings have been removed. A composition roof was added over the shingles in the 1950s, and an interested long-time local resident has helped to preserve the exterior by painting. The restoration committee is projecting a restoration plan for the old church to bring it back, inside and out, to its original appearance. It will be known as "Old Santa Rosa Chapel" for use by the entire community. Local organizations, businesses, service clubs and private individuals are assisting in this project.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1870-71      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The old Santa Rosa Catholic Church was the first church to be built in the village of Cambria, and remains as one of the oldest surviving structures in the town as well as in the county. It is an excellent example of the simple, Classically-inspired church architecture which was used in many rural California communities in the mid-19th century.

In 1869 the San Luis Obispo newspaper reported a fund-raising party, in San Luis Obispo, for a projected place of worship in Cambria. The new community had been founded several years earlier; it was originally called Slabtown, but soon became known as Santa Rosa, named after the land grant, Rancho Santa Rosa, upon which it developed. In 1870 Bishop Amat paid one hundred dollars to Jeffrey Phelan, and Phelan transferred a small piece of land to church ownership, partially as a donation. In the winter of 1870-71, a machine was provided to one of the local lumber mills for turning out the three-clapboard siding which had the appearance of 1" x 12" lumber, and construction began. This was the first (aside from the earlier Spanish Missions) in the county.

The old church is remarkably unaltered, making it an important example of early church architecture. It is a simple, one-room county church utilizing a Classical vocabulary popular in California in the early years of American dominance. It represents the persistence of earlier building traditions transported to and recreated on the frontiers of settlement in the new state. With its attendant cemetery, it is a strong statement of the prevailing social and religious attitudes of that period and their manifestation in the cultural landscape.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Hamilton, Geneva. Where the Highway Ends.

Correspondence. Paul Squibb, local historian, to Margaret May Soto. July 23, 1981

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.48 acres

Assessor's # 13-241-22

Quadrangle name Cambria, CA.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	0	6	7	4	0	1	0	3	9	3	7	3	2	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

C 

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D 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification Assessor's Parcel # 13-241-22.

Church building and cemetery occupy original site. North and east perimeter bounded by Phelan Ranch, west perimeter by rear lines of lots facing on Bridge St., and south by Main Street as shown on attached assessor's map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clementine M. Newman, Assist. Chairman (OHP Staff Revision, July, 1982)

organization Old Santa Rosa Church and Cemetery Restoration Committee

date March 24, 1982

street & number 4802 Windsor Blvd.

telephone (805) 927-4077

city or town Cambria

state CA 93428

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9-29-82

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 10/29/82

Keeper of the National Register

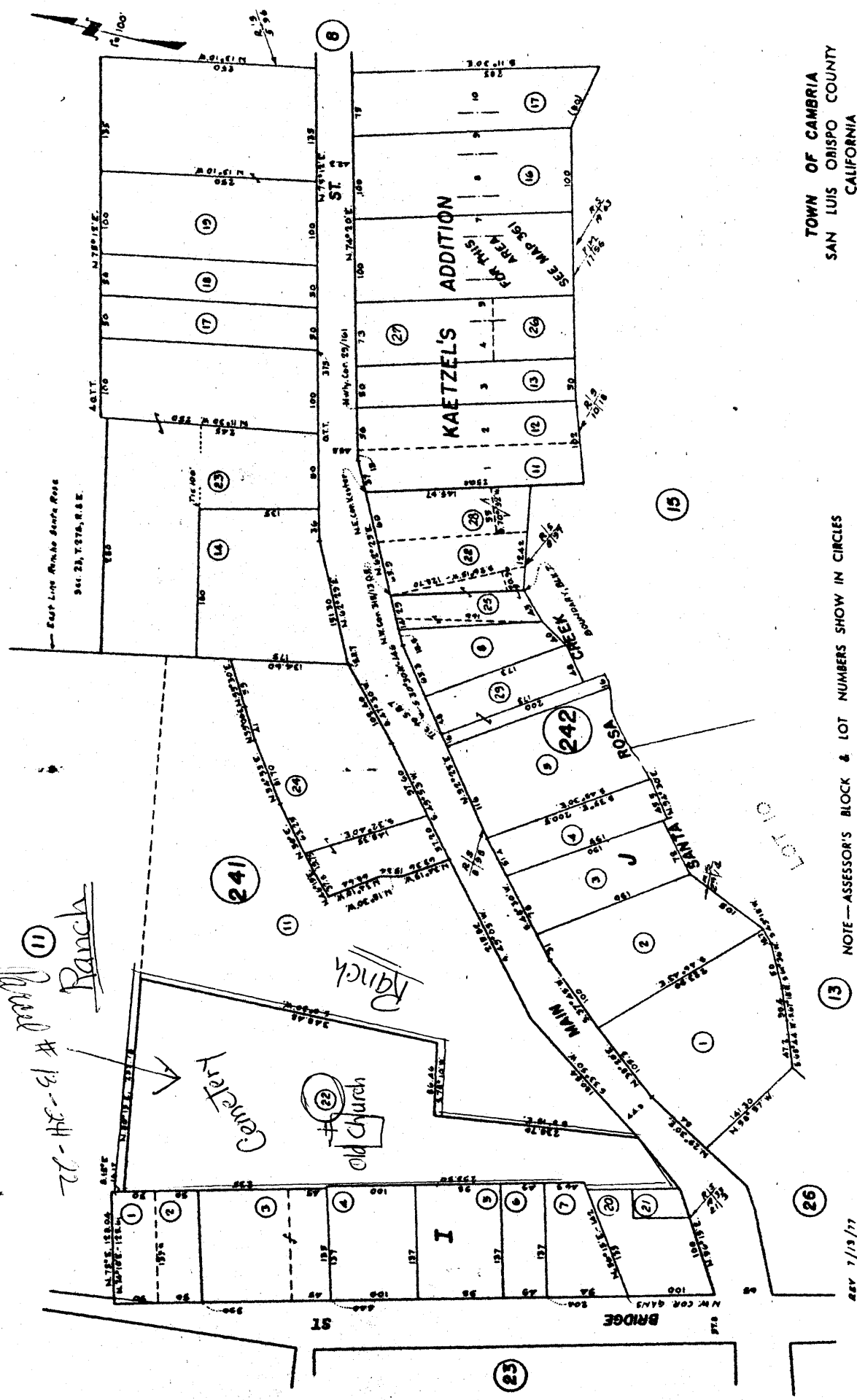
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

3 Old Santa Rosa Catholic Church Cemetery

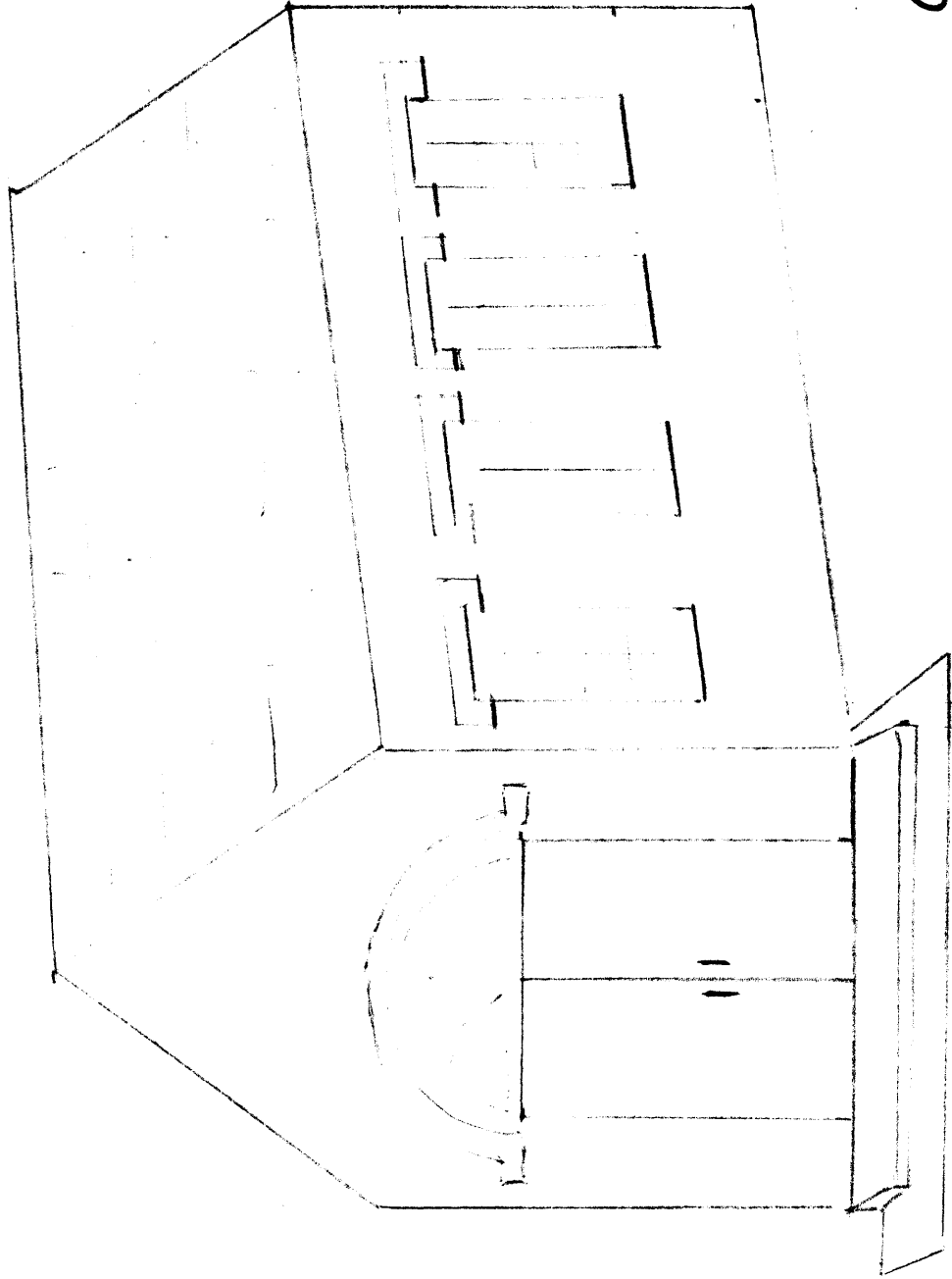
TAX AREA CODE NO. 13-24



TOWN OF CAMBRIA  
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
CALIFORNIA

NOTE - ASSESSOR'S BLOCK & LOT NUMBERS SHOW IN CIRCLES

13-243  
LEASE MAP



Old Santa Rosa  
Catholic Church &  
Cemetery  
San Luis Obispo Co.,  
California

$\frac{1}{4}'' = 2\frac{1}{2}'$