

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE New Mexico	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. Theme XX - Architecture (Colonial), IV, VIII, XVI
3. NAME(S) OF SITE San Estevan del Rey Mission Church (Acoma).	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 45 acres
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Acoma, State 23, 13 miles south of its junction with U.S. 66.	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Mr. Syme Sanchez, Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico.	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

The great church of San Estevan del Rey Mission, built between 1629 and 1642 and repaired in 1799-1800, is the finest and most impressive of the Spanish Colonial Mission churches in New Mexico. The Spanish colonial architecture of New Mexico is markedly different from that of the other mission fields in the United States. Less magnificent than the baroque architecture of Texas and Arizona, and more primitive than the missions of California, the unique character of the New Mexican missions resides in their almost perfect blend of Indian and Spanish influences. The New Mexico churches are Spanish in plan and general form, but they owe much of their construction and decorative detail to the tradition of the Pueblo Indians.

History

San Estevan del Rey mission was founded in 1629 by the Franciscan missionary, Fray Juan Ramirez, and the great church, completed about 1642, was erected under his supervision. In the Pueblo Rebellion of 1680, the Acoma Indians murdered the resident priest. Following the reconquest of New Mexico in 1692, they successfully resisted an attack in 1696 on their mesa by Don Diego de Vargas and continued to hold out until induced to surrender to Spanish authority in 1699. The mission church suffered relatively little damage during the Rebellion and, with some repairs in 1799-1800, continued to serve the Acomas during the remainder of the Spanish Period. The great church was repaired again in 1902 and 1924 by the Museum of New Mexico.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

See page 4.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, IABS, etc.)

See page 4.

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION Good	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Church and Museum	13. DATE OF VISIT March 24, 1968
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) <i>Charles W. Snell</i> Charles W. Snell	15. TITLE Historian	16. DATE April 30, 1968	

\* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

UNITED STATES  
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NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS  
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

Page 2.

STATE New Mexico	San Estevan del Rey Mission Church, (Acoma).
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7. Continued:

Present Appearance

The ancient pueblo of Acoma and the church of San Estevan del Rey mission crown a rugged flat-topped mesa that rises 350 feet above the surrounding desert. Construction of the church must have been a herculean task, for all materials were carried on the back of Indians up steep trails. Timbers for the roof, 14 inches square and over 40 feet long, were brought from the San Mateo mountains 30 miles away. Soil for a burial ground, and for the padre's garden in the mission patio was also brought up from the valley. The Franciscan padres who directed the labor of the mission Indians in New Mexico must have had recollections of the baroque architecture of Spain with its ornate and colorful carving in stone and wood, but they were confronted by unskilled laborers and had, perforce, to modify their architectural ambitions to conform to the abilities of the workmen and the materials which they could procure. It is striking that no arches, vaults, or domes were used in the mission churches of New Mexico. It was probably thought safer to avoid arched construction in so easily weathered a material as adobe, and in churches built of stone, arches were perhaps not used because the Indians did not know how to cut and trim stones into precise shapes of voussoirs. The remoteness and scarcity of lumber and the difficulty of shaping it into arched centering probably also accounts in some measure for the simple post-and-lintel structural system employed. In general, Indian women and children built the adobe walls of the churches, as they had in the pueblos; the men considered this beneath their dignity, but took readily to carpentry and woodwork. In order to raise the heavy logs for the roof structure one wall of the church was usually built thicker than the other, to serve as a working platform and possibly as a fulcrum for levering the vigas or roof beams into place. The church walls at Acoma rose to a height of more than 35 feet. Consequently they had to be much thicker than the walls of the pueblos. At Acoma one church wall is over 7 feet thick, and the other almost 5. They taper upward, diminishing as much as 30 inches in thickness to the top, giving a characteristic slanting or "battered" exterior silhouette.

At the top of the wall, heavy brackets or corbels, are set into the adobe to act as bearing surfaces for the transverse vigas. The vigas, left in the round at Acoma, are spaced a few feet apart and across them are laid ceiling boards--rough-hewn planks painted on the nether side. On these rest the adobe roof, six inches to a foot thick and weighing many tons.

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Page 3.

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
New Mexico	San Estevan del Rey Mission Church, New Mexico

7. Continued:

The roof is surrounded by a parapet several feet high, thus adding to the fortress-like appearance of the massive nave. The roof surface is pitched slightly, and drained by canales or downspouts projecting through the parapet.

The church at Acoma presents an imposing sight from the southwest with its lofty, battered walls, strong towers, and projecting vigas. The great church, measuring 150 by 40 feet, faces east and its facade consists of a bare wall penetrated only by the entrance door and a window to light the choir loft. The square flanking towers project boldly from the side walls and rise to bell-fries with rectilinear openings, reached by a winding stairway in a circular shaft in the south tower. Patches of adobe plaster have crumbled away to reveal the rough flat fieldstones of the foundation and lower wall and the large adobe bricks above. The plan of the church is coffin-shaped, with a long nave narrowed at the west end to a polygonal sanctuary. There are no transepts.

Inside, the nave is cool, dim, and spacious, the walls whitened with gypsum. Over the front entrance is a choir loft, with a great transverse beam resting on decorated corbels and supported by two posts with bracket capitals. The few windows are located high up and in the south wall opposite the convento. The corbels are cut in vigorous, heavy curves and painted to give a barbaric splendor to the roof. The Pueblo Indians, who had made mural paintings in black, white, blue-green, yellow, and red for their prehistoric kivas or ceremonial chambers, were sometimes allowed by the padres to project their ancestral art on the walls of a Christian mission. At Acoma the end wall of the sanctuary is adorned by a great original painting, simulating in crude and vigorous forms the carved and painted reredos over the altar in Spanish baroque churches. On the north side of the church is located the one-story domicile or convento, with an enclosed patio, living rooms, workrooms, storerooms, and a balcony.

The church is still used for religious purposes at festival time. The adjacent convento and other mission buildings, partially in ruins, are still largely intact. The Acoma Indians are keeping the church and their historic pueblo in good repair. They charge an admission fee to visit the pueblo, and additional fees to enter the church and to take photographs. They also provide guide service.

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Page 4.

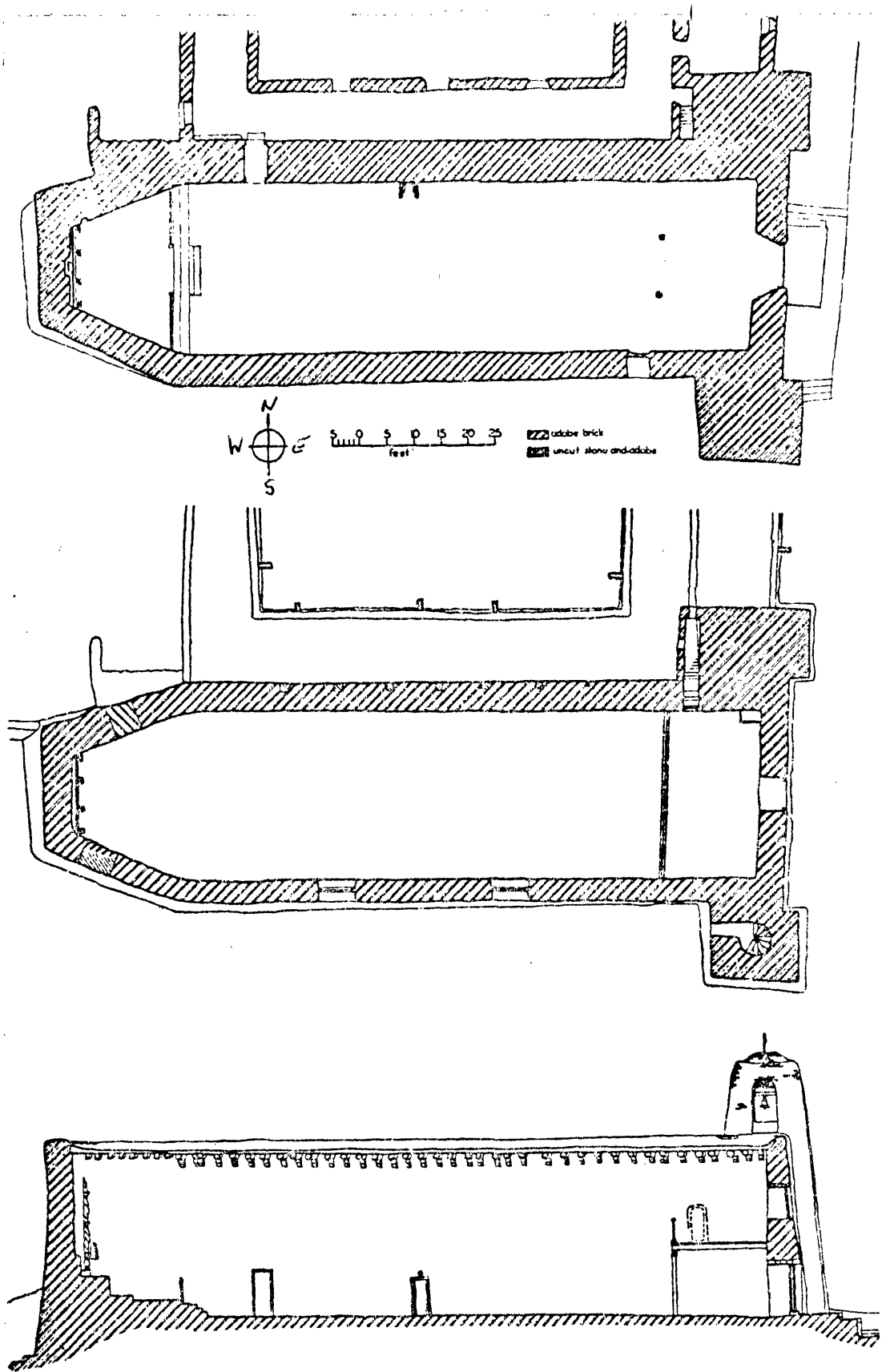
STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
New Mexico	San Estevan del Rey Mission

8. Bibliographical References.

Herbert E. Bolton, Spanish Exploration in the Southwest, 1542-1706 (New York, 1916), G. P. Hammond, Don Juan de Onate and the Founding of New Mexico (Santa Fe, 1926); George Hubler, The Religious Architecture of New Mexico (Colorado Springs, 1942); Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Arizona and New Mexico (San Francisco, 1889), ; Cleve Hallenbeck, Spanish Missions of the Old Southwest (New York, 1926), 17-37; Trent E. Sanford, The Architecture of the Old Southwest (New York, 1950), 276-277; Rexford Newcomb, Spanish Colonial Architecture in the United States (New York, 1937); Hugh Morrison, Early American Architecture (New York, 1952), 187-193; James G. VanDerPool, "Historical Development of Architecture in the U.S.A., 1632-1912," (N.P.S. Typescript, 1966), 97-98; New Mexico, A Guide to the Colorful State (American Guide Series)(New York, 1953), 331-332.

9. Reports and Studies:

Historic American Building Survey (31 sheets, 1934) (34 photos, 1934) William R. Hogan, "Brief Special Report on Acoma" (Region Three, NPS, Santa Fe, April, 1938); Erik K. Reed, "Supplementary Report on Acoma, New Mexico" (Region Three, NPS, Santa Fe, February, 1942).



32. Acoma. Above: Plan at ground level. Center: Plan at window level. Below: Longitudinal section.



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A1619-DOS

APR 13 1970

Memorandum

To: Secretary of the Interior  
Through: Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, Parks, and Marine Resources *LP 4/14*

From: <sup>Acting</sup> Director, National Park Service

Subject: National Historic Landmark recommendations, 61st meeting of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments

Enclosed herewith is the memorandum of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments summarizing its findings and recommendations on the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings partial theme study of "Colonial Architecture." This memorandum makes two principal recommendations: (1) That 77 sites encompassed by this study be declared eligible for National Historic Landmark status. These are listed under Sections A, B, C, and D of the memorandum; (2) That 41 of these sites be given further consideration in long range plans for addition to the National Park System.

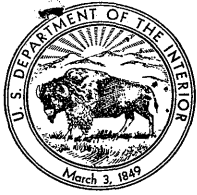
We recommend that you approve the Advisory Board's memorandum, and that it be returned to this office to become a part of the permanent record of actions recommended by the Board and approved by you.

*Harthon L. Price*

Enclosure

Approved: APR 15 1970

*Walter Hickel*  
Secretary of the Interior



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

October 8, 1969

## Memorandum

To: Secretary of the Interior

From: Chairman, Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Partial study of "Colonial Architecture" comprising sites in eighteen States and the District of Columbia

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, at its 61st meeting in Washington, D. C., October 6-9, 1969, having carefully evaluated the partial study of "Colonial Architecture," submits the following statements with recommendations:

A. Of the sites included in the study, the following are recognized as nationally significant in illustrating or commemorating the history of the United States, and it is recommended that they be declared eligible for designation as Registered National Historic Landmarks with boundaries, as appropriate, described in attachments:

### Alaska

1. Church of the Holy Ascension, Unalaska
2. Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Kenai

### California

3. Anza House
4. Jose Castro House
5. Estudillo House
6. Fort Ross Commander's House
7. Fort Ross Russian Orthodox Church
8. Guajome Ranchhouse
9. Los Alamos Ranchhouse
10. Los Cerritos Ranchhouse
11. Monterey Old Town Historic District
12. Petaluma Adobe
13. San Diego Mission Church
14. San Juan Bautista Plaza Historic District
15. San Luis Rey Mission Church
16. Vhay House

Delaware

17. Aspendale

Florida

18. Llambias House
19. Oldest House
20. St. Augustine Town Plan Historic District

Illinois

21. Church of the Holy Family
22. Pierre Menard House

Louisiana

23. Keller (Homeplace) Plantation House
24. Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop
25. Mayor Girod House
26. Madame John's Legacy
27. Parlange Plantation House
28. Presbytere

Maryland

29. Brice House
30. Chase-Lloyd House
31. Chestertown Historic District
32. His Lordship's Kindness
33. London Town Publik House
34. Montpelier
35. Mount Clare
36. Resurrection Manor
37. Tulip Hill
38. West St. Mary's Manor
39. Wye House

Missouri

40. Louis Bolduc House



New Mexico

41. San Estevan del Rey Mission Church
42. San Francisco de Assissi Mission Church
43. San Jose de Gracia Church

North Carolina

44. Chowan County Courthouse
45. Cupola House
46. Palmer-Marsh House
47. Single Brothers' House

South Carolina

48. Brick House Ruin
49. William Gibbes House
50. Hampton Plantation
51. Heyward-Washington House
52. Middleburg Plantation
53. Pompion Hill Chapel
54. St. James' Episcopal Church, Goose Creek
55. St. James' Episcopal Church, Santee
56. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Texas

57. Mission Concepcion
58. Spanish Governor's Palace

Virginia

59. Brandon
60. Bruton Parish Church
61. Carter's Grove
62. Christ Church, Alexandria
63. Kenmore
64. Sabine Hall
65. James Semple House
66. Shirley
67. Waterford Historic District
68. Wythe House
69. Yeocomico Church

Washington

70. Fort Nisqually Granary

B. Three sites included in the portion of Colonial Architecture that considered the Middle Colonies are recognized as nationally significant and it is recommended that they be declared eligible for designation as Registered National Historic Landmarks:

1. William Trent House, New Jersey
2. Christ Church, Pennsylvania
3. Carpenters' Hall, Pennsylvania

C. Two sites included in this study are recognized as nationally significant in Theme IV, "Spanish Exploration and Settlement." It is recommended that they be declared eligible for recognition as Registered National Historic Landmarks:

1. La Purisima Mission, California
2. Cathedral of St. Augustine, Florida

D. Two sites not originally included within this study are recommended for designation as National Historic Landmarks within Theme XX, Subtheme, "Architecture."

1. El Santuario de Chimayo, New Mexico
2. Peyton Randolph House, Virginia

E. Other Recommendations:

1. That the following sites be placed in the category of "Other Sites Considered:"

California

- (1) Avila House
- (2) La Casa de Cota de la Cuesta
- (3) La Casa de Eduardo de la Cuesta
- (4) Covarrubias Adobe
- (5) De La Guerra Adobe
- (6) El Cuartel
- (7) Guadalupe (Olivera) Ranch House No. 1
- (8) Hill-Carrillo Adobe
- (9) Ortega House

- (10) Plaza Church
- (11) Rocha House
- (12) San Diego Old Town Historic District
- (13) San Juan Capistrano Mission Church

District of Columbia

- (14) Alva Belmont House

Illinois

- (15) Cahokia Courthouse
- (16) Cahokia Historic District

Louisiana

- (17) Darby Plantation House
- (18) Ormond Plantation

Maryland

- (19) Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church
- (20) Genesar
- (21) Hammond Manor House
- (22) Kilmarock (Burleane Hall)
- (23) Ogle Hall
- (24) Otterbein Church
- (25) Patuxent Manor House
- (26) St. John's Episcopal Church, Broad Creek
- (27) St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Kent County
- (28) Talbot County Court House
- (29) Third Haven Meeting House
- (30) Trinity Episcopal Church, Dorchester County

Missouri

- (31) Jean Baptiste Valle House

New Mexico

- (32) San Geronimo de Taos Mission Church

North Carolina

- (33) Bath Historic District
- (34) St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Edenton
- (35) St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bath
- (36) Tryon Palace, Original (West) Wing

South Carolina

- (37) Branford-Horry House
- (38) Fenwick Hall
- (39) Medway Plantation
- (40) Thomas Rose House
- (41) Col. John Stuart House
- (42) Sword Gate House

Virginia

- (43) Berkeley Plantation
- (44) Brafferton Hall, College of William and Mary
- (45) The Glebe House
- (46) Noland's Ferry House
- (47) Pohick Church
- (48) President's House, College of William and Mary
- (49) Smithfield Plantation
- (50) Tazewell House

West Virginia

- (51) Crane (Lord Fairfax) House
- (52) Mordington (Happy Retreat)
- (53) Governor Tiffin House

2. That the following sites be given further study under this theme:

California

- (1) Olivas Adobe
- (2) San Gabriel Mission Church

Colorado

- (3) Baca House

Connecticut

- (4) Hatheway House

Delaware

- (5) Christ Church, Laurel
- (6) Prince George's Chapel

Florida

- (7) Spanish Treasurer's House

Louisiana

- (8) African House, Melrose Plantation
- (9) Creole Cottage
- (10) Louis Arceneaux House
- (11) E. D. White Memorial Cottage
- (12) Voisin Plantation House
- (13) Spanish Custom House
- (14) Erariste Blanc House
- (15) Montegut House
- (16) Bank of the United States
- (17) Absinthe House
- (18) Cathedral of St. Louis

Maryland

- (19) Carroll Mansion
- (20) Providence Plantation
- (21) Queen Anne's County Courthouse
- (22) Horatio Sharp (Rideout) House
- (23) Scott House
- (24) St. John's Episcopal Church, Hillsboro
- (25) St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Church Hill
- (26) St. Luke's Episcopal Church or Tuckahoe Chapel, Queenstown
- (27) Old Wye Church
- (28) Doughoregan Manor

New Mexico - Florida

- (29) Pascual Martinez Ranch House
- (30) Santa Fe and Albuquerque and Pensacola town plans

North Carolina

- (31) Breezeway type of Colonial House
- (32) Edenton Historic District
- (33) Hayes Plantation House
- (34) Sycamore Plantation

South Carolina

- (35) Edward's House
- (36) Edisto Hall

Virginia

- (37) Battersea
- (38) Blandfield
- (39) Carlyle House
- (40) Dulaney House
- (41) Elmwood
- (42) Hanover Tavern
- (43) Hanover Courthouse
- (44) King William Courthouse
- (45) Long Bridge Ordinary
- (46) Marmion
- (47) Powhatan Courthouse
- (48) Powhatan Tavern
- (49) Three-story wooden row houses, south side of 200 block of Prince Street in Alexandria
- (50) Smithfield Courthouse
- (51) Washington Historic District
- (52) Wetherburn's Tavern
- (53) Fincastle Historic District

West Virginia

- (54) Harewood
- (55) Sweet Springs

F. The National Park System includes the following structures that are Importantly Related to this study:

1. Tumacacori National Monument, Arizona
2. Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, Florida
3. Fort Matanzas National Monument, Florida

4. Hampton National Historic Site, Maryland
5. Nelson House, Colonial National Historical Park, Virginia
6. San Jose Mission Church, Texas

G. Forty-eight sites related to this theme have been classified as possessing national significance in other theme studies. These are:

Importantly Related to Colonial Architecture

1. Russian Mission Orphanage, Alaska
2. San Xavier del Bac Mission Church, Arizona
3. Carmel Mission Church, California
4. Larkin House, California
5. Old Custom House, California
6. Royal Presidio Chapel, California
7. Santa Barbara Mission Church, California
8. Sonoma Pueblo Historic District, California (with boundaries enlarged and defined in the attachments)
9. Savannah Historic District, Georgia
10. The Cabildo, Louisiana
11. Ursuline Convent, Louisiana
12. Vieux Carre Historic District, Louisiana
13. Jackson Square, Louisiana
14. Colonial Annapolis Historic District, Maryland
15. Hammond-Harwood House, Maryland
16. Maryland State House, Maryland
17. Whitehall, Maryland
18. Ste. Genevieve Historic District, Missouri
19. Palace of the Governors, New Mexico
20. Old Salem Historic District, North Carolina
21. Miles Brewton House, South Carolina
22. Robert Brewton House, South Carolina
23. Charleston Historic District, South Carolina (with boundaries enlarged and defined in the attachments)
24. Drayton Hall, South Carolina
25. Mulberry Plantation, South Carolina
26. St. Michael's Episcopal Church, South Carolina
27. Presidio de La Bahia, Texas
28. Alexandria Historic District, Virginia
29. Bacon's Castle, Virginia
30. Christ Church, Lancaster County, Virginia

31. Colonial Williamsburg Historic District, Virginia
32. Gadsby's Tavern, Virginia
33. Gunston Hall, Virginia
34. Mount Airy, Virginia
35. Mount Vernon, Virginia
36. St. Luke's Church, Virginia
37. Stratford Hall, Virginia
38. Adam Thoroughgood House, Virginia
39. Tuckahoe Plantation, Virginia
40. Westover, Virginia
41. Wren Building, College of William and Mary, Virginia

Also Related to Colonial Architecture

42. Erskine House, Alaska
43. St. Michael's Cathedral, Alaska
44. Commandant's House, Presidio of San Francisco, California
45. Las Trampas Plaza Historic District, New Mexico
46. Salem Tavern, Old Salem, North Carolina
47. The Alamo, Texas
48. Rising Sun Tavern, Virginia

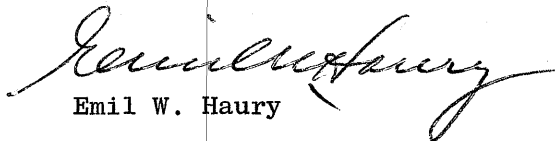
H. The Board recommends that the Old State (Colony) House in Newport, Rhode Island, a Landmark previously placed in the category of Also Related to Colonial Architecture, be noted as being Importantly Related to Colonial Architecture.

I. The following sites are judged of such prime significance as to merit further study for possible addition to the National Park System. It is recognized that many, such as Colonial Williamsburg, are being adequately preserved at present and are not available. Because unforeseen contingencies may change present circumstances, such sites should nevertheless be identified as potential units of the system and noted for long-range consideration in the evolution of the National Park System Plan.

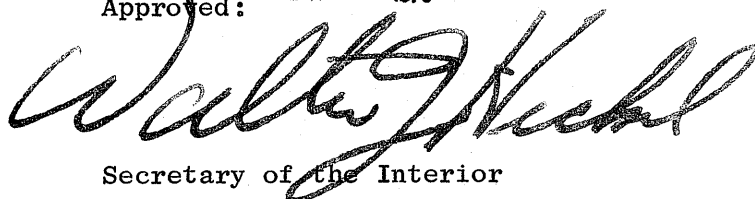
1. Russian Mission Orphanage, Alaska
2. San Xavier del Bac Mission Church, Arizona
3. Fort Ross, California
4. Guajome Ranchhouse, California
5. Los Alamos Ranchhouse, California
6. Monterey Old Town Historic District, California



7. Petaluma Adobe, California
8. Royal Presidio Chapel, California
9. Santa Barbara Mission Church, California
10. Church of the Holy Family, Illinois
11. Parlange Plantation House, Louisiana
12. Vieux Carre Historic District, Louisiana
13. Colonial Annapolis Historic District, Maryland
14. Resurrection Manor, Maryland
15. Tulip Hill, Maryland
16. Whitehall, Maryland
17. Wye House, Maryland
18. Ste. Genevieve Historic District, Missouri
19. San Estevan del Rey Mission Church (Acoma), New Mexico
20. San Jose de Gracia Church (Las Trampas), New Mexico
21. Old Salem Historic District, North Carolina
22. Charleston Historic District, South Carolina
23. Drayton Hall, South Carolina
24. Mulberry Plantation, South Carolina
25. St. James Episcopal Church, Goose Creek, South Carolina
26. St. James Episcopal Church, Santee, South Carolina
27. Mission Concepcion (San Antonio Missions Park Proposal), Texas
28. Presidio de la Bahia (Goliad Complex), Texas
29. Alexandria Historic District, Virginia
30. Brandon, Virginia
31. Bacon's Castle, Virginia
32. Christ Church, Lancaster County, Virginia
33. Colonial Williamsburg Historic District, Virginia
34. Gunston Hall, Virginia
35. Mount Airy, Virginia
36. Mount Vernon, Virginia
37. St. Luke's Church, Virginia
38. Shirley, Virginia
39. Stratford Hall, Virginia
40. Adam Thoroughgood House, Virginia
41. Westover, Virginia

  
Emil W. Haury

Approved: **APR 15 1970**

  
Secretary of the Interior