

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Olivas Adobe

AND/OR COMMON  
same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 4200 Olivas Park Drive

CITY, TOWN Ventura VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 19

STATE California CODE 06 COUNTY Ventura CODE 111

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME City of San Buenaventura

STREET & NUMBER 501 Poli Street P. O. Box 99

CITY, TOWN Ventura VICINITY OF STATE California 93001

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City of San Buenaventura City Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER 501 Poli Street P. O. Box 99

CITY, TOWN Ventura STATE California 93001

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE State Historical Landmark

DATE September 5, 1974  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State of California--Office of Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN Sacramento STATE California

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Olivas Adobe is an enclosed square complex situated on a low bluff over the old Santa Clara River on a 6½ acre site which is now a city park. The overall dimensions are: 131'11" on the north side, 136'3" on the south side, and 147'5" on the east and west sides of the courtyard. The complex includes the small adobe homestead (1837) and the larger, two-story adobe (1849) and comprises about ¾ of an acre. The original one-room adobe was incorporated into the southwest corner of the patio, while the larger structure forms the north wall.

The general architectural style of the Olivas Adobe was patterned after Northern California Monterey Adobes. The plan was an enclosed courtyard with only two gates through the wall to the outside. All windows and doors in the buildings faced the courtyard. This style of architecture was quite common in early Spanish and Mexican architecture. However, the enclosed courtyard was originally built for defense against possible Indian raiders and bandits. Later, as the need for defense lessened, windows, more doors, and the north balcony were added, making the Olivas Adobe look much like other California adobes of the period. Like the other adobes, the house was constructed with sun-dried adobe brick walls on fitted stone foundations using a mixture of wet sand and mud as mortar. Very little wood was used in the construction. Roofing tiles were made of clay shaped in molds and baked in kilns. The walls were covered with a mud mixture and whitewashed. The overhanging roofs protected the adobe walls from rainwater. The original downstairs floors were compacted dirt which were replaced with wood floors. The first floor walls were thicker than the second floor in order to support the structure. The Olivas Adobe is distinct in that it has a large two-story adobe building, and two-story structures were not that common in Southern California in the mid-19th century.

The only connecting interior doors were between the dining room and the living room. The marks on the dining room wall indicate the location of the staircase that once existed in the adobe during the early 1900's. Later the staircase was moved from the dining room to the exterior and included the south balcony. Small modern bathrooms were added to both the north and south balconies and south downstairs porch as indicated in photographs dating back to the early 1900's. These additions were removed during restoration done by the City during the late 1960's. The one-story section on the west end of the adobe was added in 1900 by Julius Alvord and was used as a milking barn.

The next owner, Fleischmann, refurbished the large adobe in the 1920's and 1930's to accommodate his family. Restoration removed most of these improvements. During the 1930's he added the brick walkways on the northside where he did other minor alterations. He also added the large arched gate on the south patio wall in red brick and repaired the eastern adobe wall. The 1837 adobe was also altered, being partitioned into a multi-room caretaker's residence with a chimney for a woodburning stove added. In 1943, a modern bathroom was affixed.

Substantial rehabilitation was required in order to preserve the Olivas Adobe. In Feb. 1972 the problems were described as: 1) The east wall and one half of the south courtyard were crumbling and otherwise deteriorating. In addition, the east wall, constructed of untied brick, was in danger of collapsing in the event of heavy winds. 2) The ground floor of the Olivas Adobe was deteriorating from dry rot and termites, to the extent that public use had been excluded and it was an extreme danger to the caretaker and others.

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The building itself had been sealed because of its unsafe condition and such sealing resulted in a more rapid spread of dry rot, due to lack of circulation. 3) The interior west wall, which had no lateral ties, was a hazardous condition and rapidly deteriorating due to mildew and lack of air circulation. 4) The mildew was occurring generally throughout the interior wall. The mildew was acting on the straw fibers in the adobe and was spreading in an increasing rapid rate. Dry rot was attacking not only the floor, but also all roof members, common doors and window frames.

To prevent further deterioration, the City applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$60,000 from the Fleischmann Foundation. The money was used to restore the adobe and to build an exhibit building. The following improvements were made to the Olivas Adobe. 1) All electrical and telephone wiring was removed and replaced with a new wiring system. 2) Wall paper was removed. 3) The downstairs wood floor was removed and replaced with a concrete floor. 4) Interior walls were repaired, plastered and prepared for painting. 5) Wrought iron gates were installed in the courtyard area. 6) A burglar alarm was installed. 7) The two bathrooms upstairs and downstairs were removed. 8) The solar heater from the roof was removed. 9) The balcony was repaired. 10) Doors, windows and trim were repaired. The caretaker's house was rehabilitated in the same manner except that the wood floor remains. The exhibit building was new construction.

The area around the Olivas Adobe was extensively landscaped during the restoration in 1971-1972. This landscaping included a large planting program of roses, junipers, and other ornamental plants. Tile and concrete walks were added at about the same time. The tile sidewalk on the south patio wall was built in the late 19th century although the exact date is unknown. In 1971 under the City's direction a new gateway was added in the patio where a eucalyptus had broken through. Some older plants and trees are still present on the property. These include some large old (perhaps 70 years or older) eucalyptus trees. Around the patio is a very old pepper tree and the last surviving vine of the grape arbor are to the north of the adobe. These can be seen in photographs of the house in the 1880's. There are also some old fuchsia plants which were planted in 1900 and a large hydrangea plant which was planted before 1900.

About 100 feet east of the Olivas Adobe courtyard is a museum exhibit building which was built in 1971 in a style similar to the adobe. A small lathouse lies just to the northeast of the adobe. A 30" high brick wall covered with plaster and painted a flat white encircles much of the complex.

# 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 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 1837, 1849

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Raimundo Olivas/builder

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Olivas Adobe is an outstanding example of a two-story adobe in Southern California. Its importance dates back to early rancho days and Mexican landgrant practices common to the geographical influences in this state. The site of the adobe has been a source of archeological diggings within Ventura County and has divulged small artifacts of the early California Rancho period. It has also been designated as California State Landmark # 115.

Don Raimundo Olivas and Felipe Lorenzana were granted Rancho San Miguel (area 4,693.91 acres) by Governor Juan B. Alvarado July 6, 1841 as payment for military service to the Mexican Republic. Retracing this landgrant, current boundaries of the old grant are Sanjon Barranca, Thompson Boulevard, the Santa Clara River and the Pacific Ocean in Ventura County.

The two partners filed a patent petition November 9, 1852 in compliance with the Mexican Claims Act (Land) March 3, 1851 in order to retain their landgrant. Land Commission Case # 475 was filed and the patent issued March 21, 1873. During the 21 year interlude, Lorenzana sold his half interest in the rancho to D. W. "Dixie" Thompson May 10, 1865. After careful survey and division the exact half interests were recorded October 3, 1873. Thompson's share was the western portion near the Sanjon Barranca, while Olivas retained the eastern share bounded by the Santa Clara River.

A small adobe structure was erected during the year of 1837 even before the landgrant was issued, to serve as the homestead of the Olivas family. That structure is still standing today. As the family grew and following the conclusion of the war, the Olivas rancho became the site of a huge cattle ranch. During the California gold rush, cattle ranchers flourished. Sale of cattle herds for hungry pioneers brought wealth to the Olivas family and the beginnings of a larger adobe house to shelter the growing family. (There were 21 children, of which only one died during childhood). The main adobe, built of adobe bricks, was constructed under the supervision of Don Raimundo Olivas. As a herdsman, he was often away from the ranch and thus his wife Theodora L. de Olivas, became responsible for the construction of the two-story homestead. Built in the Monterey style, the large adobe and original smaller adobe were joined by an adobe wall to afford greater protection to the family. A kitchen, living room and dining room occupied the bottom floor while two bedrooms and a chapel took the top floor. The smaller adobe became the servants quarters once the large adobe was completed. A description of the house in 1879 called it "an adobe mansion built in the style of the early days". The Adobe was painted a light slate-color and surrounded by gardens, according to the Ventura newspaper.

It is interesting to note the smaller houses that wind along the Santa Clara River near the adobe that are marked on the older survey maps. It is quite possible that these adobe



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structures could have housed the married children of the Olivas family. In 1879, Raimundo Olivas died, leaving the estate to this wife, which later reverted to his sons and daughters.

Little is known about Julius Alvord, the next owner of the Olivas site. Alvord purchased the rancho in 1899 and used it as a dairy farm. The room to the north of the main adobe was added to serve as the milking room.

Emile C. Bianchi purchased the adobe from Alvord in 1912, living in it until 1916 when due to financial losses the payments could not be made and it reverted to Home Savings and Loan of Ventura.

The old Adobe Gun Club, established in Ventura County in 1917, purchased and utilized the adobe for 10 years. The river and low lands made an ideal setting for the hunt club until purchased by Major Max C. Fleischmann December 22, 1927. The Major used the property for a duck hunting reserve. Upon his death the Fleischmann Foundation became the legal owner of the property.

The City of Ventura acquired the property in 1963. The Adobe is now a park with an exhibit hall and extensive gardens. The Olivas Adobe complex has been restored.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 3 ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

1. W. W. Robinson, The Story of Ventura County, Title Insurance and Trust Co., 1956.
2. Sol N. Sheridan, History of Ventura County California, Vol. 1, the S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1926.
3. John H. Morrison, "A Golden Age in Retrospect", The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. xiv, No. 3, May 1969, pp. 4-6.
4. Robert Gloss Cleland, The Cattle On a Thousand Hills.
5. Ventura County Books of Deeds.
6. Diseno, Vol. 1, pp. 648-650, No. 241-1 and No. 241-2.
7. E. M. Sheridan, "Historical Writing".
8. Rancho San Miguel, Ventura County, No. 394 and Map, Book 2, p. 105 of Miscellaneous Records, Ventura County Recorder's Office, 2387 Main St., Ventura, California.
9. "Notes on Ranchos in Santa Barbara County and Ventura County", of the William M. Kerr Collection, Serra Museum, San Diego, California.
10. Land Commission Case # 472.
11. Ventura County Star, December 1, 1930, by E. M. Sheridan.
12. Ventura County Star Free Press, March 19, 1972, by Wally Smith.
13. "The Story of the Olivas Adobe", Ventura County Historical Musuem.
14. Council Resolution No. 7338, February 15, 1972, City of San Buenaventura, CA.



SANTA CLARA

SANTA CLARA

22,000 F

24,000 E

OLIVAS PARK GOLF COURSE

OLIVAS PARK

OLIVAS PARK

DRIVE

OLIVAS PARK

NAVIGATOR DR

MANNING CENTER DR

SCHOOL R

OUTRIGGER ST

WALLEY AVE

TRANSPORT STREET

MORSE AVE

SPR

BARRANCA

ARUNDELL

CITY

COUNTY

CITY

CITY

ST

ST

ST

ST



JUN 21 1979

150'

160'

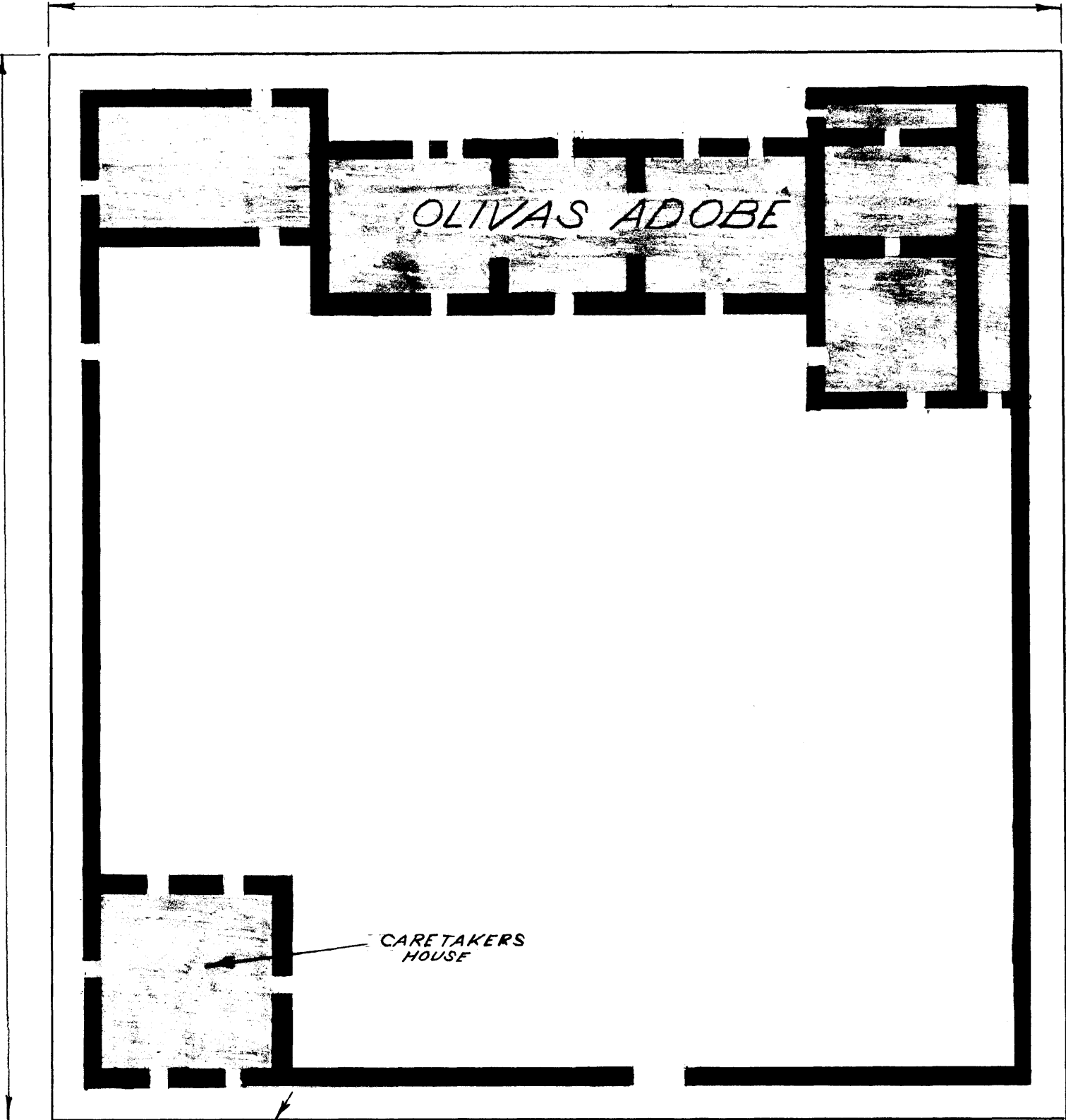
OLIVAS ADOBE

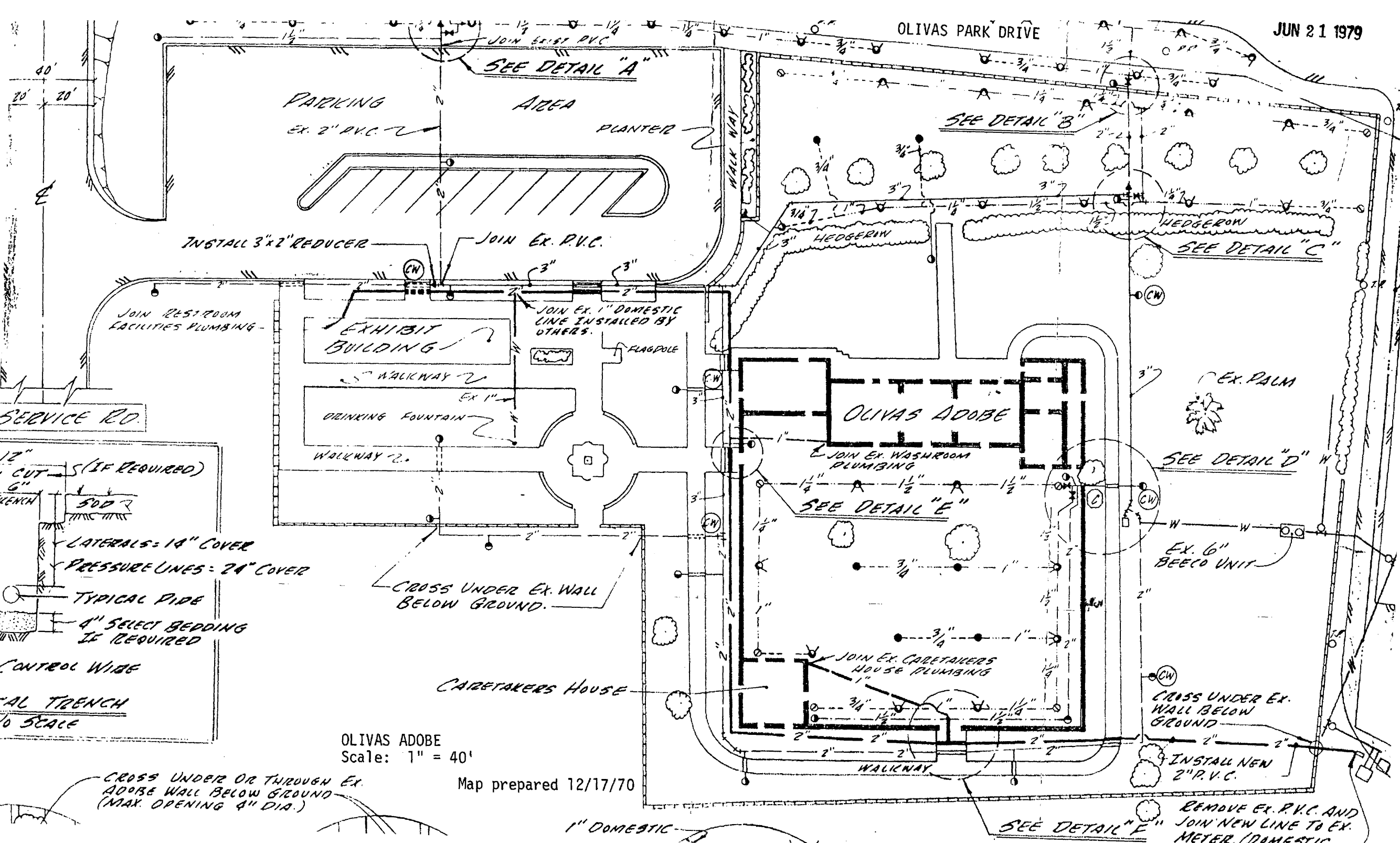
CARETAKERS HOUSE

Boundary Line

Olivas Adobe

Scale 1" = 20'





INSTALL 3"x2" REDUCER

SEE DETAIL "A"

SEE DETAIL "B"

SEE DETAIL "C"

SEE DETAIL "D"

SEE DETAIL "E"

SEE DETAIL "E"

REMOVE EX. P.V.C. AND JOIN NEW LINE TO EX. METER. (DOMESTIC)

SERVICE RD.

PARKING

AREA

PLANTER

EXHIBIT BUILDING

DRINKING FOUNTAIN

OLIVAS ADOBE

CARETAKERS HOUSE

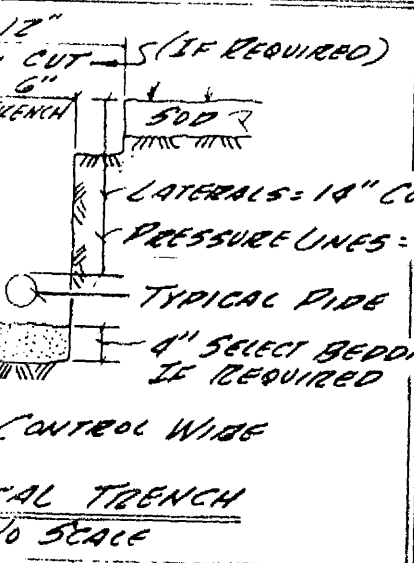
EX. 6" BEECO UNIT

EX. PALM

OLIVAS ADOBE Scale: 1" = 40'

Map prepared 12/17/70

CROSS UNDER OR THROUGH EX. ADOBE WALL BELOW GROUND (MAX. OPENING 4" DIA.)



1" DOMESTIC