

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Los Rios Street Historic District

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 31600-31921 Los Rios Street n/a not for publication

city, town San Juan Capistrano n/a vicinity of congressional district 40

state California code 06 county Orange code 059

**3. Classification**

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Category</b>                              | <b>Ownership</b>                            | <b>Status</b>                                       | <b>Present Use</b>                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                  |
| <input 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 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 checked="" 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 (See Continuation Sheet)

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Orange County Hall of Records, Recorder's Office

street & number 630 North Broadway

city, town Santa Ana state California

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title (See Continuation Sheet) has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local \_\_\_\_\_

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

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|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   | date <u>n/a</u>                                   |

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

The Los Rios Historic District includes 31 historic structures dating from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth century, situated chiefly on the east side of Los Rios Street along four blocks between Mission and Del Obispo Streets. These structures represent several distinct phases of settlement in this area, which has been continuously occupied since the founding of Mission San Juan Capistrano in 1776. Three adobe homes in the proposed district date from the 1790s, one, the Montanez Adobe, being presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The most numerous structures on Los Rios Street are small homes built in the period 1887-1910, generally board-and-batten vernacular. The district also includes a small number of homes built since 1920, as well as one late nineteenth-century home recently moved within the boundaries of the proposed district from across the railroad tracks. The district boundary is also extended to include River Street, a narrow dirt road whose history is inextricably linked to that of Los Rios Street, having served as a path for Indians associated with the nearby mission toting water from Trabuco Creek to their homes on Los Rios Street. Finally, the district includes the Santa Fe Railroad depot, which has served as a vital element of the community since its construction in 1894.

Although constructed over a long period of time and, in some cases, substantially altered, the small homes of the Los Rios Historic District possess a striking unity, held together by similarities in lot size, setbacks, and the unassuming quality of their vernacular design. This unity is the more striking in contrast to the eclecticism of modern structures elsewhere in San Juan Capistrano and surrounding Orange County.

Los Rios Street is a cohesive neighborhood which retains the feeling of the small town character of San Juan Capistrano at the turn of the century. The mature landscaping and lush growth of vegetation provide a verdant setting for the collection of small-scaled cottages and adobes. Many of the houses are surrounded by exotic plantings so characteristic of the Southern California landscape of the early 1900s, including mature eucalyptus, pepper and olive trees, palms, loquats, and a variety of species of cactus. The area is a remarkable survivor in a city which has seen substantial growth and development in recent years.

Structures in the proposed district include the following, keyed to numbers on the district map:

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Combs House     | Date: Circa 1870            |
| 26720 Verdugo Road | Owner: Frederick Sutherland |

One-story residence, vernacular board-and-batten, gable roof of composition paper, attached shed roof garage and porch.

(continued)

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–     | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                          | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                         |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)    |

**Specific dates** n/a **Builder/Architect** n/a

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Los Rios Historic District is significant for its representation of settlement patterns in eighteenth-century California (exploration/settlement) and as a statement of nineteenth- and twentieth-century vernacular residential design (architecture). It conforms to National Register eligibility criteria in that: it is associated with events contributing significantly to the broad pattern of local history, particularly the founding of Mission San Juan Capistrano; sites within the district possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association; district structures embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction, cumulatively representing a significant entity even though some components lack individual distinction; and buildings yield information important to history.

The eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century history of the Los Rios Historic District is at once representative of and an exception to the dominant pattern of mission settlement in Southern California. Mission San Juan Capistrano, only a few blocks from Los Rios Street, was founded in November 1776. Historians, including Father Zephyrin Engelhardt, contend that in 1794 some 40 adobe structures were constructed to house Indian neophytes not confined to the mission grounds. The existence of the adobes is corroborated by the testimony of Alfred Robinson, who visited the area in the early 1820s. Both Engelhardt and Robinson remark upon the uniqueness of this residential accommodation of neophytes, most mission Indians being housed in reed huts.

Los Rios and River Streets, contained within the proposed district, are clearly situated in response to the two major factors affecting early settlement in the area, the mission and Trabuco Creek. Los Rios Street parallels both the creek and the west wall of the mission grounds, the latter of which was constructed in 1795 and apparently visible until the early twentieth century. River Street leads from Los Rios Street to the creek and probably served as a path from the residential cluster to the valuable source of domestic water.

Los Rios Street was incorporated into the plans of the secular pueblo San Juan Capistrano, created in 1841, a few years after the general secularization of mission holdings in California. Originally called Calle Occidental, or West Street, indicating its orientation to the western edge of the mission grounds, Los Rios Street was given its present cognomen by Juan Bandini, an early civil administrator of the new pueblo.

(continued)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 6.2 (Approx.)

Quadrangle name San Juan Capistrano; Dana Point

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 1 | 4 | 3       | 8 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 3        | 7 | 0 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

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|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet)

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 Mrs. Ilse Byrnes

organization San Juan Capistrano Historical Society date 12/27/76

street & number P.O. Box 1027

telephone (714) 493-4222

city or town San Juan Capistrano

state California 92675

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J. C. Miller

title

date 2/15/83 (Letter note)

For HCRS use only

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

Sandra McClelland  
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/4/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4

PAGE 1

1. Combs House  
26720 Verdugo Road  
Owner: Fred Sutherland  
717 Balboa Blvd.  
New port Beach 92660
2. Ramos House  
31752 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Robert L. Jones  
31752 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, Ca 92675
3. Soto House  
31730 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Ygnacio Soto  
P.O. Box 32  
San Juan Capistrano, Ca 92675
4. Velasquez House  
31720 Los Rios St.  
Owner: David Chorak  
31720 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
5. Lobo House  
31712 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Ronald Lee Jones  
31712 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
6. Railroad Utility Bldg.  
Owner: Santa Fe Land Co.  
121 E. 6th St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90014
7. Blank House #1  
31600 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Cliff Blank  
P.O. Box 867  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693
8. Blank House #2  
31631 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Cliff Blank  
P.O. Box 876  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693
9. Labat House  
31661 Los Rios ST.  
Owner: Claudia Hirsch  
1400 Benedict Canyon  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
10. Olivares-Meza House  
31665 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Eloisa Meza/  
Victoria Rerez  
31665 Los Rios  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
11. Stanfield House  
31701 Los Rios  
Owner: Earl J. Stanfield Jr.  
31701 Los Rios  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
12. Trulis House  
31711 Los Rios  
Owner: Thomas Trulis  
9882 Theresa  
Anaheim, CA 92803
13. Rodman House  
31731 Los Rios  
Owner: Thomas Trulis  
9882 Theresa  
Anaheim, CA 92803
14. Montanez Adobe  
31735 Los Rios  
Owner: Forrest Dunivia  
26982 Ortega  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

(Con't on next page)

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PAGE 2

- 50 Year Lessee:  
City of San Juan Capistrano  
32400 Paseo Adelanto  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
15. Montanez Adobe  
31735 Los Rios  
Owner: Forrest Dunivia  
26982 Ortega  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
50 Year Lessee:  
City of San Juan Capistrano  
32400 Paseo Adelanto  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
16. Montanez Adobe  
31735 Los Rios  
Owner: Forrest Dunivia  
26982 Ortega  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
50 Year Lessee:  
City of San Juan Capistrano  
32400 Paseo Adelanto  
San Juan Capistrano
17. Rios Adobe  
31793 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Steve Rios  
31793 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
18. Rios Adobe Utility Structure  
31781 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Steve Rios  
31781 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
19. Olivares House  
31791 Los Rios  
Owner: Gilbert Jones  
31791 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
20. Olivares Accessory Bldgs.  
31791 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Gilbert Jones  
31791 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
21. Rios Adobe Utility Structure  
31781 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Steve Rios  
31781 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
22. Oyharzabal House  
31851 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Eugenie Oyharzabal  
31871 Camino Capistrano  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
23. Silvas Adobe  
31861 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Domingo Senchez  
4911 Mt. Casas Dr.  
San Diego, CA 92117
24. Becerra House  
31881 Los Rios  
Owner: Bernard Papel  
14957 Lodosa Dr.  
Whittier, CA 90605
25. Renal Brown House  
31891 Los Rios  
Owner: Rena Brown/Earl Lowry  
2543 Karen  
Long Beach, CA 90808
26. Reyes House  
31901 Los Rios  
Owner: Belle Reyes  
31901 Los Rios  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

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27. Olivares House #1  
31911 Los Rios  
Owner: Laurence/Allen Olivares  
1611 E. 52nd St.  
Long Beach, CA 90805
28. Olivares House #2  
31921 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Joseph/Louis Olivares  
P.O. Box 421  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693
29. Old Shed  
31793 Los Rios St.  
Owner: Steve Rios  
31793 Los Rios St.  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
30. Santa Fe Depot  
Owner: Jim & Pete Tyson  
26701 Verdugo, San Juan Capistrano  
Owner: Santa Fe Railroad  
80 East Jackson  
Chicago, Illinois, 60604
31. Pryor House  
31831 Los Rios  
Owner: San Juan Capistrano  
P.O. Box 81  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693
32. (Ownership unclear on tax records.  
Abandoned right-of-way. Either  
public land or reverting to  
private ~~lands~~ 20 and 31 above.)

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Silvas Adobe  
Montanez Adobe  
Rios Adobe  
Santa Fe Depot  
Pryor House  
Combs  
Labat

All are in the San Juan Capistrano  
Inventory of Historical and Cultural  
Landmarks  
City Hall  
32400 Paseo Adelanto  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Silvas Adobe  
Montanez  
Santa Fe Depot  
Rios Adobe

California Inventory of Historic Resources  
Office of Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, CA 95811

Montanez Adobe

National Register  
Office of Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, CA 95811



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2. Della Ramos House  
31752 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1918  
Owner: Della Ramos  

Vernacular with composition siding, one-story residence, gable roof with asphalt shingle, and porch addition.
3. Ygnacio Soto House  
31730 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1921  
Owner: Ygnacio Soto  

Vernacular one-story residence with stucco walls, gable roof with asphalt shingle. Alterations include addition of attached bedroom and garage on north side of house.
4. Frank Velasquez House  
31720 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1922  
Owner: Frank Velasquez  

Vernacular one-story residence, gable roof with composition roofing, addition of utility room to east side, with asbestos shingle siding.
5. Clarence Lobo House  
31712 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1910  
Owner: Clarence Lobo  

One-story residence, vernacular clapboard, gable roof with composition roofing, addition of utility room on east side of house.
6. Railroad Utility Building  
(no number) Los Rios Street  
Date: 1920s  
Owner: Santa Fe Railroad  

Wooden frame building with wooden siding and composition roofing.
7. Cliff Blank House #1  
31600 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1908  
Owner: Cliff Blank  

One-story residence, vernacular board-and-batten, gable roof with composition roofing and hip-roofed porch with cylindrical porch posts. Addition of bedroom and bathroom to north and west side of house.
8. Cliff Blank House #2  
31631 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1946  
Owner: Cliff Blank  

One-story residence with stucco siding, gable roof, addition of lean-to ramada on north side of building.

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9. Labat House  
31661 Los Rios Street

Date: Circa 1887  
Owner: C. Hirst

Vernacular one-story residence with shiplap siding, addition of board-and-batten siding on southwest end. Alterations include cement porch and iron railing and window grills.

10. Olivares-Mesa House  
31665 Los Rios Street

Date: Circa 1900  
Owner: Eloisa Olivares-Mesa

Vernacular one-story residence, board-and-batten, gable roof with porch extension, square porch posts. Additions include bedrooms and bath on west side of house.

11. Stanfield House  
31701 Los Rios Street

Date: 1925  
Owner: Dora Stanfield

One-story residence with composition siding. Additions include bath and bedroom on west side of house.

12. Trulis House  
31711 Los Rios Street

Date: Circa 1910  
Owner: Thomas Trulis

Vernacular one-story residence with asbestos and wood shingle siding, gable roof of composition roofing, addition of bath on south side of house.

13. Rodman House  
31731 Los Rios Street

Date: Circa 1925  
Owner: Solag Disposal Co.

Vernacular one-story residence, board-and-batten, with intersecting gable roof of composition roofing, addition of bath to south side.

14. (Destroyed)

15. Montanez Adobe  
31735 Los Rios Street

Date: Circa 1794  
Owner: Forrest Donivin

Already listed on National Register (4-21-75).

16. (Destroyed)

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17. Rios Adobe  
31793 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1794  
Owner: Dan Rios  
Vernacular one-story adobe residence with wood shingle gable roof, additions of bath and bedroom.
18. Rios Adobe Utility Structure  
31781 Los Rios Street  
Date: 1900  
Owner: Dan Rios  
Small utility structure associated with Rios Adobe.
19. Victor Olivares House  
31791 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1900  
Owner: Victor Olivares  
Vernacular one-story residence, board-and-batten, gable roof with shed roof porch and horizontal siding on gable end, addition of bedroom and bath on side.
20. Olivares Accessory Building  
31791 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1935  
Owner: Victor Olivares  
Vernacular board-and-batten, one-story residence, hip roof of wood shingles.
21. Rios Adobe Utility Structure  
31781 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1920  
Owner: Dan Rios  
One-story residence, board-and-batten, gable roof with shed extension.
22. Oyharzabal House  
31851 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1900  
Owner: Mrs. Eugenie Oyharzabal  
Vernacular one-story residence, board-and-batten, gable roof of composition roofing.
23. Silvas Adobe  
31861 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1794  
Owner: Mrs. Eugenie Oyharzabal  
Vernacular one-story adobe residence, gable roof with extensions to form porch and rear addition.
24. Antonio Becerra House  
31881 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1890  
Owner: Mrs. Eugenie Oyharzabal  
Vernacular one-story residence, board-and-batten with clapboard siding on addition. Gable roof with shed porch.

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25. Renal Brown House  
31891 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1920  
Owner: Renal Brown  
Vernacular wood frame one-story residence with elements of craftsman bungalow, composition roof, asbestos siding.
26. Belle Reyes House  
31901 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1890  
Owner: Belle Reyes  
Vernacular wood frame with asbestos shingle siding, one-story residence, gable roof with shed roof extension to form front porch and enclosed patio, addition of bedroom and bathroom to west side of house.
27. Olivares House #1  
31911 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1890  
Owner: Rose Olivares  
Vernacular one-story residence, board-and-batten, hip roof of wood shingle.
28. Olivares House #2  
31921 Los Rios Street  
Date: Circa 1890  
Owner: Rose Olivares  
Vernacular board-and-batten, one-story residence, hip roof of corrugated metal.
29. Old shed -- ill repair. Circa 1895.
30. Santa Fe Depot  
Los Rios Street  
Date: 1894 construction  
Owner: James and Peter Tyson  
1,600 square foot Mission style depot, made of red brick with tile roof, arched colonnade and 40-foot high dome. Rehabilitated 1974.
31. Pryor House  
31831 Los Rios Street  
Date: 1880  
Owner: San Juan Capistrano  
Historical Society  
Vernacular one-story residence with elements of stick style-Eastlake in decoration, shiplap siding, hip roof with wood shingles, central gable decorated with stick work. Relocated from original site across Los Rios Street in 1979. Tests were conducted at the time to determine whether the new site, the suspected location of an earlier adobe, contained historic archeological resources. Tests revealed no surface or subsurface cultural resources at the site.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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32. River Street

River Street is an unimproved road 600 feet long and 25 feet wide. It starts at Los Rios Street and goes west to Trabuco Creek. It used to cross Trabuco Creek and extend all the way to Dana Point, approximately four miles west. Early settlers of the Los Rios District used this road to go to the beach. Today, only 600 feet of the original road are left.

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Generally removed from the development pressure of a major metropolitan area, nineteenth-century Los Rios Street was allowed to evolve naturally, new structures emerging as the older adobes decayed. Thus, the proposed district offers a unique opportunity to visualize various stages of vernacular architecture in this area of Southern California, all structures being working-class housing not aspiring to higher stylistic expression.

The first phase is represented, of course, by those remaining adobes: the Montanez Adobe (#15), already listed on the National Register; the Rios Adobe (#17), which has been owned and occupied by the same family for more than a century; and the Silvas Adobe (#23). Adobe clay for these houses came from the area near the creek, was mixed with water from the creek, and bound with straw from nearby fields.

The deterioration of the bulk of adobes in the area coincided with the 1887 building of the Santa Fe Railroad through San Juan Capistrano, the tracks of which form the eastern boundary of the proposed district, except for the inclusion of the historic Santa Fe Depot. The railroad introduced wooden building materials for the first time in this relatively treeless section of California, changing dramatically the building technology of the proposed district.

In addition, the railroad created an important boundary which divided Los Rios Street from the remainder of the town. The main business section was located east of the tracks, and subsequent commercial growth and development was concentrated in this area, while Los Rios Street remained residential. The depot, constructed in 1894, was one of the earliest uses of Mission Revival in railroad architecture, and remains one of the oldest surviving buildings of the style in California. A conscious effort was made to relate the design of the structure to the Spanish heritage of this small mission town. It soon became a major focal point in the community, and was often pictured in promotional literature produced to advertise Southern California for tourism and settlement in the period around the turn of the century.

Small vernacular board-and-batten houses began to spring up along Los Rios Street in the period 1887-1910, due to the availability of milled lumber. These structures, however, were functionally equivalent to the adobes they replaced, being generally small, simple rectangular structures with shed roof porches. The single-wall construction of many of these structures is substantially similar to styles found in many Southern California beach areas. Those of Los Rios are distinctive, however, in that they were never designed as vacation homes for occasional occupation, but were from the outset designed as homes for working-class residents, many of them of Mexican-American descent.

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The significance of the Los Rios Historic District is that it provides a sense of historic, cultural, and architectural cohesiveness. The influence of the mission period is present in the layout of the street and its remaining adobes. The more numerous board-and-batten structures document the coming of the railroad and the resulting development of a new architectural expression. Despite the passage of time, Los Rios Street is today essentially what it always has been, a narrow residential street without sidewalks or other improvements, lined with working-class homes with even setbacks and ample yards, graced with subtropical vegetation characteristic of Southern California mission towns.

The cultural significance of the Los Rios Historic District is to be found in the fact that it documents and represents a lifestyle which has to this point been substantially overlooked in the quest for identifying monumental architecture. The buildings of the district are small, vernacular structures which represent the blue-collar lifestyle of the residents, the integrity, setting, workmanship, and feeling of which are all present.

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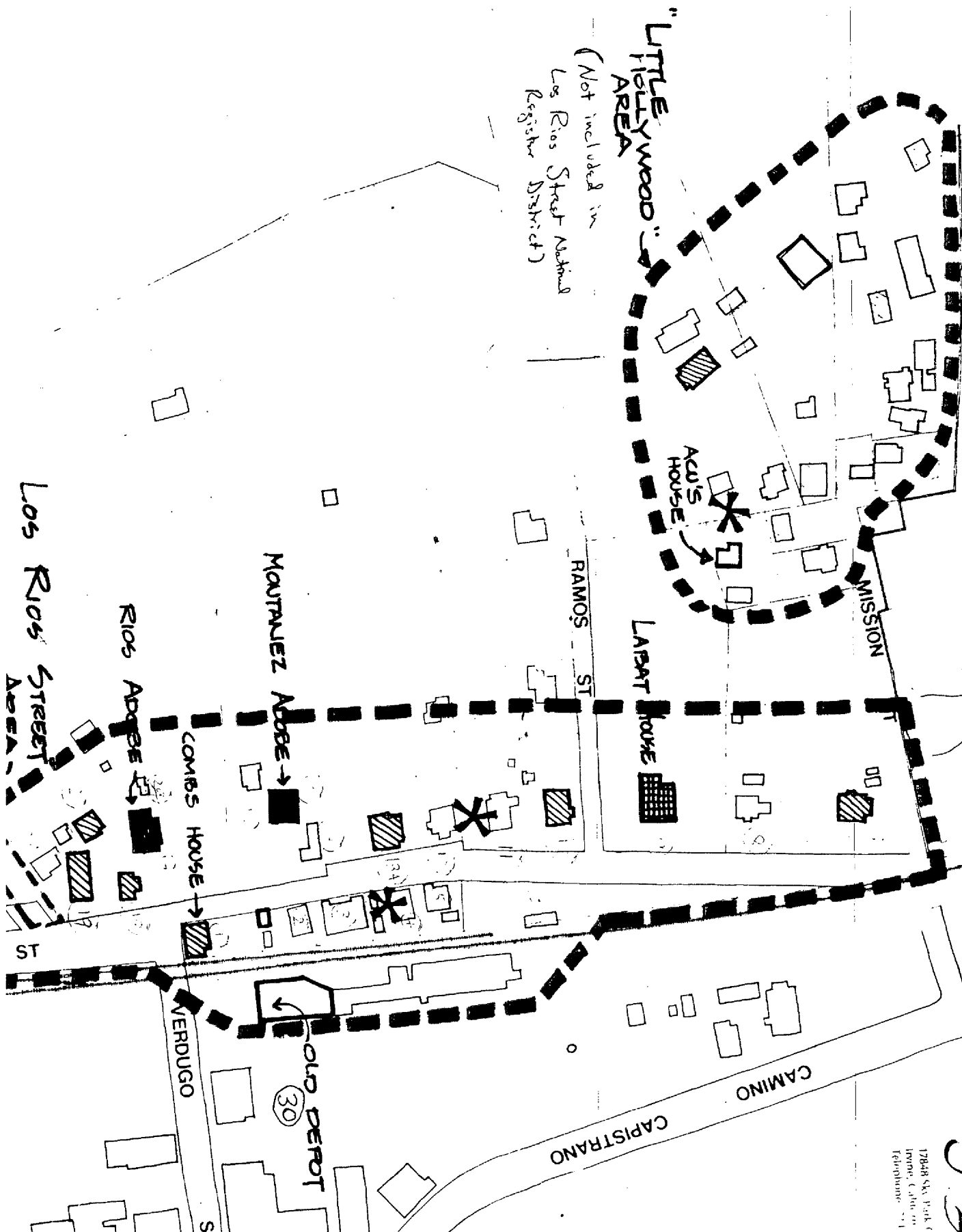
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


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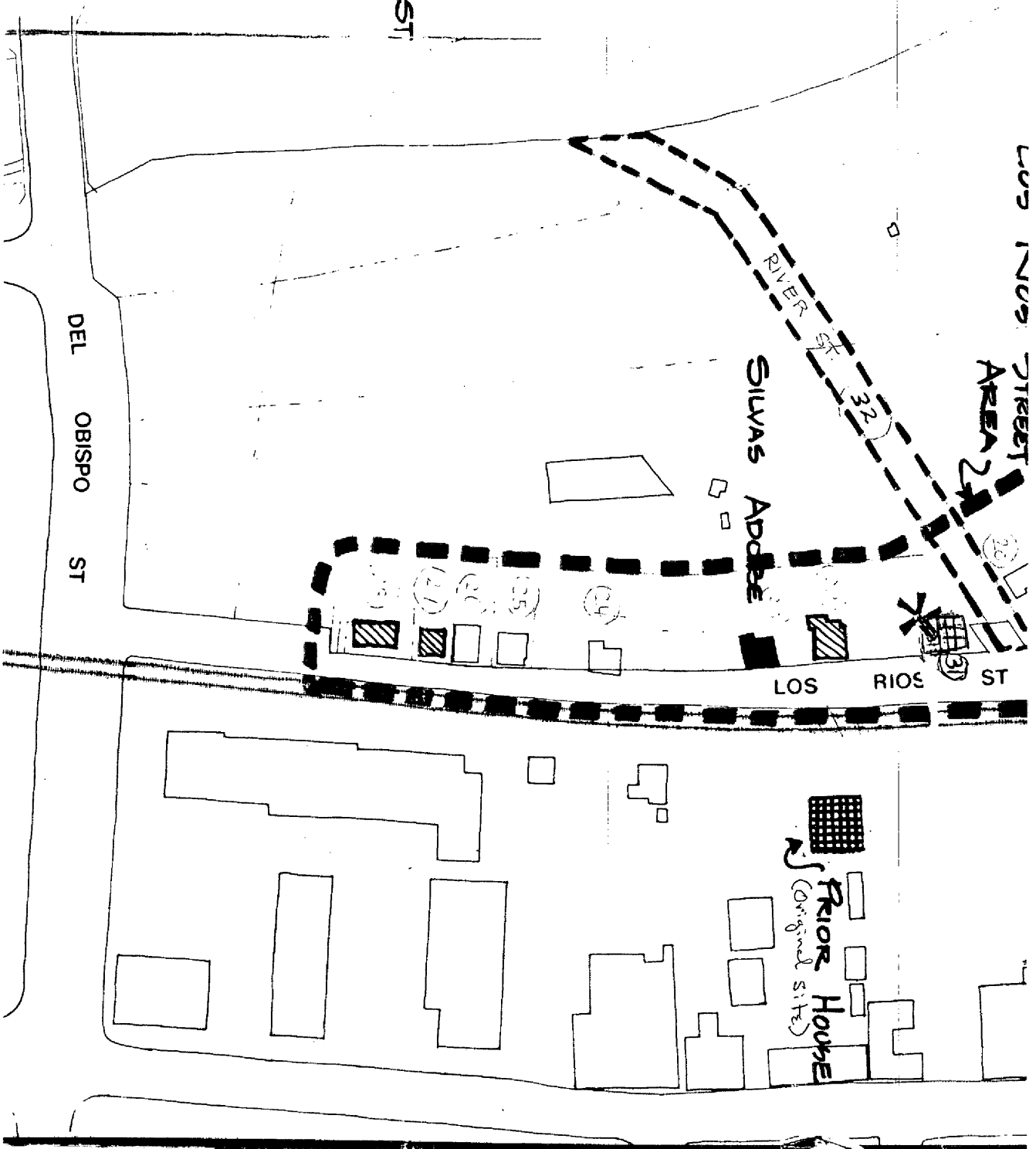
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The boundaries of the Los Rios Street Historic District are precisely delineated on the enclosed to-scale site map. The north-south boundary, as indicated, extends from Mission Street on the north to the southerly edge of that property identified as Structure 28. The eastern boundary of the district is defined by the Santa Fe Railroad tracks, except for the inclusion of the grounds of the Santa Fe depot, which is east of said tracks. The westerly district boundary is defined by the westerly property line of nominated parcels, except for the inclusion of River Street, which extends to the Trabuco Creek Flood Channel on the west.



-  DISTRICT OF INTEREST
-  SITE OF ADOBE
-  ADOBE
-  VICTORIAN/WOOD
-  BOARD & BATTEN
-  OTHER INTEREST



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Los Rios Street Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Orange

DATE RECEIVED: 4/22/99 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/06/99  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 83001216

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 5/27/99 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM. / CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER Beall

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DISCIPLINE Historian

DATE 5-27-99

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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Los Rios Street Historic District, San Juan Capistrano, Orange County, California  
Placed on the National Register of Historic Places , April 4, 1983

Amendment to the Albert Pryor House #31

This house, is now the site of the San Juan Capistrano Historical Society and the O'Neill Museum. It was originally built by Jose Dolores Garcia, in the 1870s. Records show, that Jose Dolores Garcia was born in San Juan Capistrano. His family was of Juaneno Mission Indian and Spanish descent. He was well respected in the community as an inn keeper and businessman.

After he married Maria Refugion Yorba in 1862, he promised her a home that would be viewed as exceptional. At that time, the center of San Juan Capistrano was principally occupied by adobes. Jose Dolores Garcia wanted something different for his bride. So in planning his house, he took it upon himself to explore other types of architecture by travelling on horseback to the North County. This in itself is truly remarkable, Garcia was a man ahead of his time..

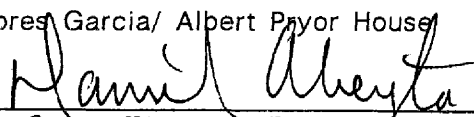
A house of Victorian Design had not been seen in San Juan Capistrano, it was the very first of it's kind.

Obtaining the supplies for this Victorian House was a major undertaking. Since the railroad did not come until 1887, it ment that supplies for the structure had to be hauled in by horse drawn carts.

The Garcia Family lived in the house until 1897, when Jose Dolores Garcia was murdered. In 1904 the house was sold to Albert Pryor.

Jose Dolores Garcia played an important part in the architectural development of San Juan Capistrano. For this reason. It is most appropriate to change the name on the National Register of Historic Places from Pryor House to:

The Jose Dolores Garcia/ Albert Pryor House



Acting State Historic Preservation Officer  
California Office of Historic Preservation

4-15-99

Date