

EXP. 12, 31, 84

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Historic Resources of Albuquerque's North Valley  
Continuation sheet Individual Properties

Item number

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received

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Page 1

1. NAME: Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church (State Register Site 414)
2. LOCATION: 7813 Edith N.E.  
Albuquerque, New Mexico
4. OWNER: Archbishop Robert Sanchez  
Archdiocese of Santa Fe  
c/o Emiliano Saiz  
202 Morningside Drive S.E.  
Albuquerque, NM 87108

7. DESCRIPTION:

Located two miles to the east of the Rio Grande on the old Highland Road, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church was probably constructed by 1870 as a private chapel and since then has long been a landmark in the 19th-century El Rancho Plaza. In 1940, after a period of disuse, a pitched corrugated metal roof was added over the existing flat roof and the church's entry was reversed to face Edith Boulevard on the east. Today the church can be described as a vernacular Pueblo Revival style building that has seen change but is characteristic of the proportions and detailing of the region's churches. Although remodeled it retains its integrity since it still conveys its vernacular quality and continues to function as a chapel and the pivotal structure in this important 19th century north valley plaza.

Past a new massive arched gateway at Edith Boulevard, the church's main eastern facade includes a curved Mission-style parapet and a shingled hip-roofed and louvered bell tower with an ornamental iron cross. The church's double wood doors are new. Behind this facade and bell tower is a 50-foot-long single ridged corrugated metal roof. In the rear, or west, of the building two transepts have been added. The side windows are 6/6 wood sash and are deeply set in the thick terron walls. The entire building is stuccoed and in excellent condition.

The church's present appearance is the result of the 1940 remodeling, when the entry was moved to the east end of the building, where a choir loft, new facade and bell tower were added, and the transepts and a sacristy were built onto the west end. The original building was a one-room structure with the sanctuary at the east end, set off by a slight tapering of the walls. A clerestory lit the sanctuary. There was no transept or sacristy.

EXP. 12/31/84

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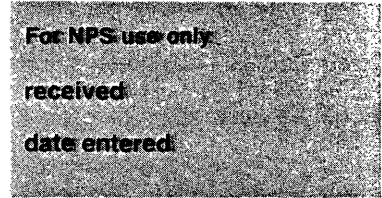
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Continuation sheet Individual Properties

Item number Mt. Carmel Church

Page 2



8. SIGNIFICANCE:

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, built possibly before 1870 and certainly before 1894, is locally significant because it still conveys its nearly 100-year-old function as a religious and community center for this "high land" section of Albuquerque's north valley. Its 1940 remodeling, a rare Hispanic contribution to the wave of predominantly Anglo "puebloization" remodeling which swept New Mexico in the 1930's and 40's, did not obscure the building's traditional massing, thick walls, and few window openings. The single bell tower, simple choir loft, and small transepts and sacristry, all added in 1940, resemble these elements of traditional Hispanic chapels throughout northern New Mexico. This remodeling was done by the people of the community using plans probably drawn by the parish priest, thus following the traditional way of building a plaza church. Thus in every respect the remodeling enhanced its significance as the historic and religious center of El Rancho Plaza.

The original chapel may have been built as early as the late 1860's by Maria Gregoria Candelaria de Garcia. She and her husband, Juan Antonio Garcia, were prominent residents of El Rancho Plaza (see National Register nomination for the Juan Antonio Garcia House). In Gregoria's will, she states that "my body shall be buried in the church of Our Lady of Carmel in the same place where my deceased husband Juan Antonio Garcia is buried." Garcia died in 1870, suggesting that the chapel was standing in that year, although his body may have been moved there later. Gregoria died in 1894 and not many years later the private chapel she had built was used by the citizens of both Los Ranchos and Alameda after their chapels were destroyed by the flood of 1903. It is still frequently called the Los Ranchos Chapel. After the new Alameda church was built in 1911 the little chapel was used infrequently until 1940 when Father Pelzer from Alameda had the building rehabilitated and remodeled to face Edith Boulevard which had been rerouted to the east. After Father Pelzer left the Alameda area the church again fell into disuse until 1973 when it was renovated but not altered by Greek Catholics united with Rome. Recently it has been returned to use as a Roman Catholic church.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

The chapel is located on less than one acre of land, being Tract 77a on MRGCD Map 28.

UTM references: Alameda, NM Quad./13/352700/3892760.