

OFF. NO. 1024-0018
EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only
received AUG 25 1982
date entered

1. Name

historic Kromer House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1024 El Pueblo Road, N/W N/A not for publication

city, town Albuquerque N/A vicinity of congressional district

state New Mexico code 35 county Bernalillo code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Hoshour

street & number 1024 El Pueblo Road N.W.

city, town Albuquerque N/A vicinity of state New Mexico 87114

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bernalillo County Clerk's Office

street & number 505 Central Avenue N.W.

city, town Albuquerque state New Mexico

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Landmarks Survey State Register Site #781
title of Albuquerque has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August, 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Landmarks Survey, Planning Division, P.O. Box 1293

city, town Albuquerque state New Mexico

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Kromer House is a rambling, L-shaped adobe home set along semi-rural El Pueblo Road on the east side of the Rio Grande Valley north of Albuquerque. The house lies within the boundaries of the community of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, an incorporated village with a documented existence stretching back to the early 1700's. Excavated Pueblo ruins from the late 1200's (Pueblo IV period) establish that, like much of the Rio Grande valley, Los Ranchos has seen a transition from Pueblo farming to Hispano farming, and finally to its current existence as a suburb of Albuquerque with controlled zoning to protect the rural atmosphere. The Kromer House is a major landmark of the community; with one room which dates back to the turn of the century, others added at varying points in the building's history (mainly in the 1920's and 1930's), it is an excellent representative of New Mexico Territorial and Vernacular building patterns, where the modular quality of adobe rooms allowed an organic growth (or shrinkage) of the original structure scarcely possible with the more rigid building forms of eastern architecture (see Bainbridge Bunting, Early Architecture in New Mexico, pp. 14-15). Unaltered in form since 1937, with the exception of two small rooms added by Harvey Hoshour (see plan), the house owes its present excellent condition to restoration work by Janet and Tom Kromer, from 1937 through 1960, and by Harvey and Lise Hoshour, from 1962 to the present.

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The central room of this L-shaped house is the sala, or living room, which dates back to ca. 1900. From this room, one wing extends south from El Pueblo Road with a shorter wing extending to the west along the road. Constructed of terrones, sod blocks, the Kromer House has a traditional flat roof formed by wood vigas (beams) with pine planking laid crosswise above, and--originally--an earth layer on top. As is the case in most traditional adobe construction, the earth roof has long been covered with a modern tar and gravel roofing. The smoothly stuccoed surface replicates the ground color around the house and the effect of hand-applied mud plaster (the traditional exterior coating used by the Hoshours for some years: interior walls are still hand plastered in mud). Round wood vigas (beams) protrude from the walls below the rounded parapets. The battered walls, reinforced by adobe buttresses in some areas, give the house the massive, ground-hugging quality traditional in older adobe structures.

The entry to the house is in the center of the long east facade, which is relieved by changes in parapet height and exterior wall setback, as well as by the large square buttress which supports the dining room wall. A tongue-and-groove arched door leads into an entry room with doors to the living room, study, and patio on the west.

The living room, at the northeast corner of the house, is a step down from the entry and is the original house which became the core of the current building. In their restoration, the Hoshours found some evidence that it might once have been divided into three small rooms. The ceiling, of milled pine planks supported by adzed round vigas, typifies adobe construction in the period from circa 1880 through 1910. The floor of wide pine planks is a replication of the decayed wood floor in the room when the Hoshours purchased the house. The corner fireplace in this room predates the Kromer's occupancy; Betty Colbert remembers Janet Kromer insisting that her Pueblo Indian work crew simply restore it, while they wanted to add new touches. The living room windows, like those throughout the house, are multi-paned wood casement windows framed by stucco and the interior mud plaster.

In a layout typical of traditional New Mexican adobe building, the bedroom west of the living room can only be entered from the living room or patio. Its floor level, a step higher than that in the living room, and higher parapet suggest a later construction date. All the openings from this bedroom are toward the patio on the south, leaving the north exterior

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wall traditionally blank. As throughout the remainder of the house, the wide pine ceilings are supported by wood vigas and the flooring is wide pine boards. To this room the Hoshours added a small dressing room and bath on the west in the 1960's.

South of the entry the house broadens to a two-room width, and is built at a slightly higher level than the entry. The plan suggests the possibility that the southern end of the house was built as a distinct unit and joined to the remainder by the construction of the study and entry - a typically New Mexican process of accretion. Historic evidence as well as architectural style suggests that this end of the house was built in the late 1920's or early 1930's, before the Kromer occupancy. Rooms include a study with fireplace, dining room with a centered fireplace kitchen-pantry, and guest bedroom with corner fireplace. A bathroom is entered through a hall from the dining room which also leads to the patio. All rooms have pine floors, viga and pine board ceilings. A small utility room on the west, opening only to the patio, was added by the Hoshours. Though the floor plan of this part of the house is somewhat less traditional, with windows opening to the east as well as to the patio and double files of rooms, it does reflect the one-room-at-a-time pattern of adobe construction, with an irregular layout and no central hall or corridor.

To the south of the main house a separate adobe building constructed by the Hoshours over the ruins of an old shed, houses offices. Built to fit the original house, it is entirely complementary in style. With the L of the original, it encloses the east end of a large patio containing cottonwoods, Russian olives, a bamboo and a mulberry tree. The patio grounds of raked gravel emphasize the individual form of each tree, and add to the austere beauty of the home. The patio is surrounded by an adobe wall.

The grounds contain some traces of earlier adobe building, now indistinguishable, and some pottery scatters have been found on the site, a typical occurrence in this part of the North Valley.

The beautifully maintained Kromer House testifies to the care of two generations of careful restorers, the Kromer and Hoshour families.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 ca. 1900–1937 **Builder/Architect** N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Kromer House is significant as an excellent example of traditional New Mexican adobe architecture primarily constructed in the period when a new appreciation of adobe construction called out the ancient skills of Hispano and Indian craftsmen. While the oldest portion of the house probably dates back to the early years of the 20th century, the remainder, probably constructed in the 1920's and 1930's with a few later additions, continues the detailing, technique, and feeling of the original with great fidelity. Twice fallen into decay, the house has twice been rescued by Anglo-American owners who respected and enhanced its beauty. In 1937, it was purchased and restored by Janet and Tom Kromer, and served as a retreat for the reclusive Tom Kromer, author of an important Depression-era novel, until 1960. By 1962, when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Hoshour, the house had again fallen into serious disrepair. Hoshour, an architect, supervised a meticulous restoration, using craftsmen from Santa Ana Pueblo. The house as it now stands owes its austere and simple beauty equally to the work of the Garcia, Martinez, and Lucero families, who built the house over a thirty to forty year period, and to the Kromers, and the Hoshours.

9. Major Bibliographical References

James DeLong, "An architect and his Wife Rescue an Old Adobe," House Beautiful (January, 1970), pp. 43-49.

"The garden floor is all gravel...", Sunset: The Magazine of Western Living (August, 1979), p. 152.

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .846 acre

Quadrangle name Griegos, New Mexico

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	3	4	5	0	6	7	0	3	8	9	3	9	2	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Tracts 42, 43, and 44, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy Districts Map Number 25.

These tracts include all the Kromer House structure and associated outbuildings, and represent the property owned by the Kromers and now by the Hoshours.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Dewitt, Coordinator

organization Historic Landmarks Survey of Albuquerque

date August 5, 1980

street & number 419 Central Avenue N.W.

telephone (505) 766-4720

city or town Albuquerque

state New Mexico

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

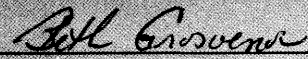


title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8-18-82

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


Keeper of the National Register

date 10/4/82

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The house is set in the semi-rural Rio Grande valley north of Albuquerque along El Pueblo Road, earlier known as "la entrada de la Placita de Los Garcias," or the entrance to the village of Los Garcias. The property now includes three small tracts of land along the road with the house set on the middle tract (#43). Traditional tracts of land in the North Valley are long strips running east and west, from the irrigation ditches to the sand hills that marked the edge of the valley. Traditional Hispanic inheritance practice was to divide lands among all the children in a family, usually by creating narrower and narrower strips. In the case of lands lying on a road, however, smaller, squarer house plots were often created, and this seems to have been the case with Tracts 42, 43, and 44. The tracts lie between the Albuquerque main canal, or irrigation acequia, and Guadalupe Trail, a major north-south passage through the valley.

The earliest record of the house appears in a 1918 deed from Anamaria Montoya to Jesus Martinez which describes a tract measuring 140 varas (ca. 420 feet) east to west along what is now El Pueblo Road, and 36 varas (ca. 108 feet) from north to south. As often happens in Spanish deeds, a description of the house is given: "inclullendo en dicho terreno una casa de terrado de doz Piezas" [including in the said land, a two-room earth house]. Deeds dating back to 1899 for adjacent properties suggest Ramon Garcia, an earlier owner, as the probable builder of this house, which remains as the sala (living room) of the current house, now a single room.

Jesus Martinez and his wife, Susanita Archuleta de Martinez, owned the house until 1930, and added to it: a 1926 deed from Jesus to Susanita lists three rooms. In 1930 they sold the small house and land to Victor Lucero, who also purchased the smaller tracts to the east and west, previously owned by the Valencia family. Lucero, who was probably related to Jacobo Lucero, owner of five acres along the south boundary of the Kromer House lands, was probably responsible for the enlargement of the house to its present size; windows in the current house are consistent with a 1930-1934 date.

In 1934, Lucero sold the three tracts to A.A. Archuleta, a merchant in the Martineztown area of downtown Albuquerque who was doing a fair amount of land purchasing and mortgaging during the Depression years. Since both long-time area residents and friends of the Kromers agree that the house had its current outlines by 1937 when the Kromers bought it, but

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was in a semi-ruinous state, a building expansion by Lucero followed by neglect on the part of Archuleta is the likeliest explanation. The Kromers spent ten years carefully restoring the house.

Tom Kromer, the son of a West Virginia coal miner, had left college in 1929 to find himself among the huge army of the unemployed and hopeless spawned by the Depression. In the course of several years of drifting, he wrote an autobiographical novel, Waiting for Nothing, which with its searing and precise description of the horrors of a life of hunger and despair has become one of the minor classics of Depression literature. During his wanderings, Tom contracted tuberculosis, and like many TB sufferers, headed for New Mexico in 1935. In Albuquerque's St. Joseph's Hospital he met Janet Smith, an easterner who had similarly come to the southwest for benefit to a rheumatic heart condition. They married at the end of 1936, and purchased the Kromer House property in 1937, where they lived until Janet's death.

Tom Kromer became a recluse at some early point in their marriage, and most of the work on the house was supervised by Janet Kromer, who hired Indian workers to repair the battered home bit by bit. She played an active part in the cultural life of the community, publishing a weekly Shopping Notes newsletter. Tom Kromer's ill health and alcoholism, as well as his reclusive tendencies, kept him largely in isolation, but Betty Colbert, who came to know him when she worked on Janet's newspaper, remembers him as a handsome man of considerable charm with pronounced left-wing views.

Janet Kromer died in 1960, after a long illness, during which the upkeep of the house had lapsed. Tom Kromer's family took him back to West Virginia in 1961, and the house continued to deteriorate until it was purchased by Harvey and Lise Hoshour in 1962. The Hoshours embarked on a careful restoration program, using workers from Santa Ana Pueblo and carefully following such traditional practices as mud plastering. The house has become a local showplace, recognized in articles in House Beautiful and Sunset magazines: the product of the work of many different people over the years, it is a beautiful example of traditional building styles.

700 3 11 1984

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The Kromer House

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Frances Gray, Waiting for Nothing: Tom Kromer, 1906-1969. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1979.

Interviews with Betty Colbert, Mercedes Garafulo, Harvey and Lise Hoshour, Anna Martinez, Ruth Schleeter (all in July, 1980).

Tom Kromer, Waiting for Nothing. New York: Hill and Wang, 1968.

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District maps, 1927.

Bernalillo County Records.