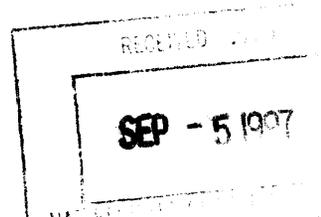


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1190

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

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historic name Alviso, Jose Maria, Adobe

other names/site number CA-SC1-155

OHP

2. Location

street & number 92 Piedmont Road  not for publication

city or town Milpitas  vicinity

state California code CA county Santa Clara code 085 zip code 95035

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Harriet Abeyta 8/28/97  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
 State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Paul B. Fungian

10/7/97

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure(s)
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	sites
<u>    </u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) OTHER: Monterey Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation STONE: rubble
- roof WOOD: shingle
- walls ADOBE
- WOOD: weatherboard
- other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1853

**Significant Dates**

1853

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.12 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

10 600060 4143880

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daryl Allen, Historical Architecture Researcher; Glory Anne Laffey, Historian

organization Gilbert Sanchez Architect, Inc. date May 9, 1997

street & number 3022 Glen Canyon Rd. telephone (408) 438-0888

city or town Santa Cruz state CA zip code 95066-4912

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Skip Evans, Maintenance Manager, City of Milpitas, Public Works

street & number 1265 No. Milpitas Blvd. telephone 408 942-2480

city or town Milpitas state CA zip code 95035-3153

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**OHP**

Alviso, Jose Maria, Adobe  
Santa Clara County, CA

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**7. Description**

The Alviso Adobe, a two-story residence with a hipped roof and a balcony carried on three sides, is a very good example of the Monterey style of architecture and the only remaining example in the Santa Clara Valley and San Francisco Bay Area. The building is the result of a major remodel completed by 1853 by Jose Maria and Juana Francisca Alviso who added a wood-frame second floor to the family's one-story adobe house. Although the residence contains historic fabric from three construction periods, the 1853 structure remains in a remarkably unaltered state both at the exterior and interior. The earliest configuration, built circa 1837, most likely as a one-story adobe, provided the thick adobe walls of the first floor. A kitchen addition added to the rear in 1922 when the property changed ownership is not visible from the front. The upgrading done at this time was minor, such as electric lighting and bathrooms, and did not change the character of the house. The residence as it stands today contains a great deal of fabric illustrating the Monterey style, such as original French and paneled doors with locksets and multipaned double hung window sash. The primary character-defining room spaces illustrate the layout of a typical Monterey style residence. The 2.12 acre site contains several sycamore and fig trees which predate the 1850s residence. Remaining from the 1920s are four unaltered outbuildings associated with an apricot raising and drying operation--tankhouse, garage, fruit cutting shed and a sulfur house--and a collection of fruit trees. To the north, there is a concrete block building built during the 1970s to house cable t.v. equipment. Although it is at the edge of high-density residential areas, the setting of the historic property at the base of the Calaveras foothills and alongside Los Coches creek retains its rural feeling.

**The Residence**

The Alviso Adobe as it was remodeled by 1853 by the Alviso family remains largely intact today. The plan of the rectangular residence (53 ft. by 23 ft.) is symmetrical, comprises three rooms downstairs and three rooms upstairs, and has a balanced arrangement of doors and windows. All six rooms open to the front with paired doors or French doors. Pre-1900s photographs show a lean-to kitchen on the rear, but this was demolished and replaced in 1922 with a new kitchen addition.

The first floor walls are 22 in. thick and constructed of unstablized adobe bricks with several inches of plaster. The plaster layers on the exterior reveal a chronology of construction practices: first soil plaster (Mexican period), then lime plaster (early American period), and lastly Portland cement plaster (1920s). The first story presents a

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**Description (continued)**

smooth white washed plaster finish on three elevations; the east or back elevation is sheathed in clapboard, consistent with the type used at the second story. There are three doors on the front or west elevation. The center front door is a paired door which is flanked by paired French doors at each side, all opening to the front. Door surrounds at this level are simple, milled boards and all doors are set almost flush with the exterior wall, leaving a deep reveal which widens at the interior to reflect the maximum amount of light, a detail typical of Hispanic design.

One example of historic fabric present in the house from the Mexican period, extrapolating from other examples dating to the period, is adobe brick in sizes consistent with the Spanish system of measurement, the vara. The walls, at 22 in. thick, were likely for a one-story dwelling. If it were going to support a second floor, the walls would likely have been 33 in. in thickness. Typically a hewn redwood plate was placed at the top of the adobe wall to support structural cross beams. A beam with broad ax marks could be seen during field investigation at the east adobe wall and several hewn cross beams were visible. Archaeology might reveal the presence of stone foundations and remnants of earthen floors or hewn floor joists, but this has not yet been undertaken.

The surface-mounted horizontal rim lock on the center front door and several interior doors exhibit representative types of hardware used in the 1850s. The center front door has double wooden screen doors; full-length shutters are installed at the other two front-facing doors. The first floor porch is presently concrete, although a pre-1900 photograph shows there was previously an earthen floor at this level.

The second floor is wood-frame construction clad with clapboard. There are three French doors, all with shutters, and seven windows with multi-paned, double-hung sash (six lights over six lights). The windows on the north and south elevations have characteristics of 19th century windows; thin muntins (1/2 in.) and pins to hold the lower sash in an open position. The three windows on the east elevation are similar in appearance, but due to thicker muntins (3/4 in.) and the presence of cord and sash weight systems, it is likely they were installed during the 1920s refurbishing. The three French doors have flat wood surrounds while the two windows at the north elevation and two windows at the south elevation are trimmed with Greek-Revival style molding with mitered corners. The French doors provide access to the second-story balcony which spans the front and two sides. Shutters painted green are presently installed at every door and window opening at the second story, except at the rear. The clapboard sheathing present on all four

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**Description (continued)**

sides is deeply weathered and is nailed with cut nails. See attached Existing Condition drawings for type and dimensions of porch flooring and ceilings.

The balcony is supported with columns fashioned from 4 in. by 4 in. redwood uprights encased in flat boards to form square columns. The columns have simple trim pieces at the base and just below the capitals. The columns support the balcony from the grade and again from balcony floor to roof, creating an appearance of double porches, although there is only a slab at the ground level. The balustrade is simple with a repeating criss-cross pattern between the columns accented with a diamond-shaped "medallion" at the intersection of crossed sticks.

The hipped roof is presently roofed with composition shingles over wood shingles. Redwood gutters remain in place on three elevations of the main residence; the other length of gutter is lying near the building. Two simple brick chimneys pierced the roof at the north and south ends of the building; the north chimney was documented and removed down to the roofline in 1991 for reasons of public safety.

At the interior of the first floor, the primary spaces are unaltered and a great deal of historic fabric from 1853 can be seen. Two frame partition walls divide the downstairs space into three rooms. Two narrow stairways, one at each end of the center room, lead to upstairs bedrooms. The stairways are identical in dimensions and are both lined with beaded tongue-and-groove siding; each exhibits cut nails in both the stringers and wall paneling. The north stairway has an unrefined railing fashioned from a pipe attached to the side wall. A closet is located under each stairwell. These doors retain surface-mounted carpenter's hardware. A small closet has been constructed adjacent to the partition wall; this may be a 1920s addition due to the fact that V-groove paneling is used on the outside west wall of the closet. This is the only location that V-groove paneling has been used on the first floor with the exception of the kitchen.

All the doors in the adobe residence on both floors--French doors, paired doors, paneled doors and batten doors--are original from the 1850s period, except for the four doors upstairs related to the 1922 and 1931 refurbishing. The paired front doors each have a panel below the two lights above and retain surface-mounted carpenter's hardware lock-set. The flanking French doors are paneled with one panel below and two lights above. Single paneled doors one-inch thick remain in the partition. The partition walls are wallpapered like the rest of the walls in the room. The French doors have sliding bars for locking at the base

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Description (continued)

and top. The stairwell closet doors are batten similar to the beaded boards used in the stairway walls. The unusual pair of doors accessing the kitchen from the living room are fashioned from beaded boards and have a pane of glass installed in the top. These were in place when the Cuciz family took ownership. See Floor Plans for door and hardware types.

The interiors of the adobe walls are concealed with furring studs, sawn wood lath and lime plaster underneath wallpaper in all three rooms. During the 1920s construction period, a varnished wood sideboard was built on the east wall of the center room. The north and south rooms on the first floor each have a shallow fireplace with simple, Greek Revival-style mantels and hearths. Pilasters frame the opening on each side with a simple shelf above; the uppermost trim piece rises to a peak at the center. This fireplace type is typical in scale and trim of those documented in 19th century Spanish Colonial houses in Monterey, California, by Hannaford and Edwards in 1931. Redwood tongue-and-groove flooring (3/4 in. by 4 in.) is laid over full dimension redwood floor joists on the first floor and a simple 9 in. wide baseboard remains in place. There is presently linoleum laid over the wood floors.

On the second floor, original paneled doors with surface-mounted carpenter's hardware are in place in each of the two partition walls. The interior walls of the three upstairs rooms were finished with boards approximately 12 inches wide. On some walls the boards were laid horizontally and on others, they were laid in a vertical manner. All three upstairs rooms are wallpapered. There are fireplaces in both the north and south bedrooms directly above the downstairs fireplaces. Both mantels are simple and faced with painted V-joint boards from the shelf to the ceiling. The walls are floored with one-by-four tongue-and-groove flooring. The ceiling of the north bedroom is of V-joint boards; one-by-four decking spans the ceilings of the center and south room ceilings.

The present kitchen on the east side of the house is 36 ft. by 14 ft. Hipped at the north and south ends, the wood-shingled shed roof is covered with composition shingles. An exterior brick chimney rises on the east wall for venting the kitchen stove. This addition consists of a large kitchen room with a small entry and pantry on the north and a bathroom and an entry on the south side. Original V-joint paneling remains at wainscot level, upper walls, and ceiling; paneling is vertical up to four feet where there is a horizontal trim board and is horizontal above that level. A varnished-wood china cupboard was built for the south wall similar to the one in the front room. On the east wall, a

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**Description (continued)**

small, painted cabinet with hopper bins was installed in the northeast corner, and on the west wall there are built-in shelves for a spice cabinet with a pull-down ironing board below.

The pantry is unaltered with original V-joint paneling, built-in cabinets and shelving. On the east wall is a cast-iron sink surrounded by original hexagonal counter and splash tiling. The entry door next to the pantry is paneled with V-joint boards. The bathroom at the south end of the kitchen retains its original paneling, but is missing the tub and toilet.

**Changes made by Cuciz Family in 1921-22 and 1931**

The following is based on the recollection of Joseph Cuciz, Jr. Joe Cuciz, born in 1910, was eleven when the Cuciz family refurbished and moved into the house and can recall many details because he helped in many aspects of the refurbishing. Mr. Cuciz recalls that his parents appreciated the antiquity of the house and endeavored "to keep everything exactly the same," with the exception of the former lean-to kitchen which they remodeled to a "modern" style. The Cuciz family hired Frank Zampieri, a carpenter and cabinetmaker from the Santa Clara Mill, and Mr. Zampieri and his crew did all the work. If it could be repaired, it was; if it was too deteriorated to keep, it was discarded and replaced in kind. The recollections of Mr. Cuciz were corroborated by the author noting whether cut nails (typical for the 1850s period) or wire nails (typical for the 1920s) were used in the construction and his recollections proved to be accurate in every case.

Mr. Cuciz said the Alviso kitchen lean-to was made of "barn boards" and was so badly deteriorated that it was demolished and replaced. The house roof framing was sagging and water was leaking through the shingles so it had to be replaced, roof framing as well as shingles. The chimneys were reconstructed because they had both been lost during the 1906 earthquake. The adobe walls were intact, but the lime plaster had cracks which were filled and a new coat of cement plaster was applied. Clapboard was applied over the adobe on the east wall to protect it from further weathering and deterioration. The mill made all new shutters, matching the existing, because they were too deteriorated to repair. Mr. Cuciz recalls that all door and window openings had shutters.

The clapboard-sheathed second floor walls were retained and cut nails throughout corroborates this. The second floor retains the same banding at top and bottom and has the same number of horizontal boards that can

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**Description (continued)**

be seen in the pre-1920s photograph. The north, south, and west windows and trim are the same in early photographs as they are at present. All the windows were saved, needing only minor repairs. The balcony and railings were very deteriorated and were largely replaced in kind. The balcony ceiling framing and decking (rabbeted, variable-width) is nailed with cut nails indicating it is original from the 1850s. Balcony flooring, railings and balusters were replicated and reinstalled. The posts were also very deteriorated. A few of the 4 x 4 posts could be reused, but all the boards applied to box them in were replaced. This would account for the slight difference in the trim pieces below the capitals at the second and first floors. Also, it appears trim pieces were added to the bases of the columns. Concrete sidewalks were poured at ground level around the house where there was formerly packed soil. Mr. Cuciz believes the criss-cross members on the balcony railing had to be largely made by the mill, but remembers that there were portions remaining to serve as a model. Wood gutters from the eaves were lying on the ground in a deteriorated state so these had to be replicated.

In the interior, all the rooms were repapered. Mr. Cuciz states that the furring and lath and plaster were there and is pretty sure that the walls were previously wallpapered. Where door hardware was not repairable or missing, a newer type was installed. Downstairs, all the doors are consistent with 1850s types and have 1850s door butts. One door in the south room partition wall--an 1850s style paneled door--and the paired door leading to the kitchen have 1920s door hardware. Upstairs the French doors were kept with their locking devices and the four paneled doors retain original 1850s hardware.

About ten years after moving in (Mr. Cuciz believes it was 1931), the family added a few modern conveniences. The bathroom was installed off the kitchen and a half-bath was installed upstairs. A closet between the center and north bedrooms and two closets between the center and south bedrooms were built with V-groove paneling. Inside the half-bath there is evidence from scars in the flooring that a wall was moved to the north. The doors and door hardware are representative of the 1920s or 1930s. The bathroom is paneled completely in V-joint paneling and hardware is consistent with the 1920-30s hardware. A corner sink is original from the 1920s-30s, but the original toilet has been replaced with a newer type. V-joint paneling above the fireplaces to cover the chimneys may have been added during this remodeling phase.

The Cuciz family had the house wired for electricity during the 1920s remodeling phase, in anticipation of electrical service becoming available in the area. Mr. Cuciz remembers coming home from working in the

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**Description (continued)**

cannery and seeing the house wondrously lit up for the first time. Of the original fixtures, a "showers" (an array of bulbs in tulip-shades) chandelier remains in the center living room and a drop cord pendant (light bulb on a cord) hangs in the pantry. These are similar to the styles introduced in the 1920s.

**Non-Contributing**

In the future, significance for the property in the area of Agriculture (Criterion A) may be established. At that time, the outbuildings (with the exception of the concrete block cable TV building) would be contributing for the role they played in the apricot raising and drying operation.

**Outbuildings**

The outbuildings were constructed during the 1925-1929 period when the Cuciz family's newly planted 25 acre-apricot orchard began to bear fruit. The outbuildings were in support of the apricot raising and drying operation and the sideline venture of fattening Hereford steers which were purchased and sold in less than a year. The outbuildings are unaltered except for missing doors and were well maintained with white-washed walls and green trim up until the 1970s.

**Tankhouse (a non-contributing structure)**

Constructed in 1925 or 1926 and located at the northwest corner of the property, the three-story tankhouse houses a redwood water tank at the top level. Water from a pump and well just west of the tankhouse is pumped into the tank for a gravity flow water system. The structure--12 ft. 4 in. square--is clad in clapboard and exhibits a variety of door types and windows possibly recycled from different eras. A wooden exterior stairway provided access to the second floor, but it is presently in a deteriorated condition. Accessed by a door, the third floor containing the tank is sided with diagonally placed lath to form screen walls. The structure is sheathed in clapboard and the pyramidal roof is covered with wood shingles. According to a Cuciz descendant, the lower floor of the tankhouse served as housing for farm workers during the height of the apricot season and for storage other times of the year.

**Garage and Tool Shed (a non-contributing structure)**

The garage and tool shed is a simple building, 24 ft. deep by 52 ft. long, built on a concrete slab. The simple gable roof is presently

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**Description (continued)**

sheathed in galvanized sheet metal laid over wood shingles. There are five door openings on the south elevation; two are closed in with sliding doors on metal tracks and three are open with no indication that they ever had doors. The front elevation is covered with clapboard while the building ends are sheathed with vertical tongue-and-groove siding. The date 1928 is inscribed in the slab floor. This building was used for working on the family Model A in the early days--there is a pit for the mechanic to stand in beneath the automobile. It was later used to store farm implements and to house farm workers during the apricot season.

**Cutting Shed (a non-contributing structure)**

The cutting shed is constructed from vertical redwood boards and has been whitewashed. It was built a few years later than the tankhouse, approximately 1928 or 1929 because it was not needed until the orchards were mature enough to bear fruit, which took a few years. The 26 ft. wide and 32 ft. long building has simple window openings with no trim; the sash are missing. The sliding doors on tracks at the west and east ends are operable. A ventilator opening present in the gable end is covered with diagonally-crossed wood lath. Running through the building is a set of narrow iron rails for small rail carts to transport boxes loaded with fruit. The apricots which were not sold to the market were brought into the shed on the rails and placed on tables where they were cut in half and the pits removed. The halved apricots were laid on trays which were stacked and placed on the rail cars and rolled east to the sulfur shed.

**Sulfur Shed (a non-contributing structure)**

Directly behind the drying shed is a utilitarian, box-like building made from poured concrete. This small building, one of three sulfur sheds originally on the property, has a flat roof and walls of 6-inch concrete. A thick wall down the center divides the building into two sections. The building is presently open on the side nearest the drying shed, but at one time had wooden doors. The concrete building is 10 ft. 5 in. wide and 9 ft. 6 in. long. The purpose of the building was to contain the sulfur fumes while the stacked trays of cut apricots were being gassed.

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**Description (continued)**

**Concrete Storage Shed (a non-contributing structure)**

The six-foot square concrete block building was built in the 1970s by a cable television company to house equipment. The utilitarian building, no longer in service, has one door and a flat roof. The building is not related to either the Alviso period or the Cuciz orchard operation.

**Site Features**

Remnants of fences and corrals of posts and horizontal redwood boards remain from the cattle feeding days. Directly east of the residence are the concrete footings of a 1920s barn can be seen. The barn (now demolished) housed the beef calves, one milk cow and at one time a team of work horses. This barn was documented before it was demolished in 1990 and interestingly, contained hewn redwood timbers with broad ax marks which were undoubtedly recycled from other adobe buildings on the property.

When the Cucizes moved into the residence, Joe Cuciz recalls the presence of two large sycamore trees--one near the creek, the other east of the garage--and four or five black Mission fig trees said to have been brought over from Spain. The two enormous sycamore trees (trunks are five feet in diameter) and two fig trees (trunks over two feet in diameter) remain today. A large redwood tree (two feet in diameter) is growing near the creek; its origin is unknown. During the 1920s, the Cuciz family planted the lemon, peach, loquat, and olive trees directly north of the residence which are presently there. There is one apricot tree east of the house, possibly the only tree left from the once extensive orchards, and a large cypress tree remains south of the house from the 1920s. Cypress shrubs along the front and sides of the house were planted during the 1920s and are now overgrown and damaging the gutters and roof.

**8. Statement of Significance**

The Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, built in 1837 and enlarged in the early 1850s, is a very good example of the Monterey style of architecture popularized throughout California in the 1830s and 1840s. Contextually it relates to American influences on traditional Mexican residential architecture in California during the years of transition from Mexican to American rule. The house meets National Register Criterion C in the

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**Significance (continued)**

area of Architecture as one of the best surviving examples of the Monterey style in northern California.

**Historical background:**

The subject property is located on what was originally Rancho Milpitas, granted to Jose Maria Alviso by Governor Castro in 1835. Granted temporary grazing rights, Alviso had occupied the rancho lands by 1828. The hacienda was sited on the bank of Los Coches Creek on top of a Native American village site (CA-SCL-155) probably associated with the Alson tribe of the Ohlone/Costanoan language group. Married to Juana Galindo in 1826, the couple had nine children. In 1834, Alviso stated in his petition to the governor that rancho improvements consisted of two adobe houses, an orchard of 60 trees, a vineyard of 600 vines, land was fenced and cultivated for wheat, and he had a herd of 600 cattle and 30 horses. Raising cattle for the hide and tallow trade was the major land use in California during the rancho period. An 1850 map indicates that the Alviso rancho hacienda consisted of several residences, a vineyard and winery, a granary and grist mill, and fields of wheat and barley. As the children married, several additional adobe or wood-frame dwellings had been constructed in the vicinity of the main residence.

By the early 1850s, the Alvisos were enlarging the original 1837 adobe residence to reflect the currently popular Monterey style. Payments for supplies and workmen to complete the roof of the house were recorded in the 1853 probate records of Jose Maria Alviso. Redwood lumber and over 4000 shingles were purchased from Charles Moody. At this time, Charles' brother Volney Moody was engaged in lumbering the Contra Costa redwoods. There are no records of the purchase of windows, doors, and other hardware; however, newspapers from the early 1850s indicate that such items were available in San Jose and San Francisco. The adobe remained in the Alviso family until it was sold by Jose Maria's granddaughter in 1922 to Joseph and Lucia Cuciz. The Cuciz family sold the property containing the adobe in the 1980s.

The Jose Maria Alviso adobe residence is a very good example of the Monterey style of architecture as compared to other extant adobe dwellings of similar style in the state. The term Monterey style, denotes a regional, vernacular style which combined Hispanic design and materials with Yankee carpentry techniques and American Colonial styles.

Present in the Alviso adobe are all the character-defining elements of the style, e.g., wood-shingled hipped roof, wood balconies on three

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Significance (continued)

sides, paired French doors opening to the outside, multipaned windows, interior fireplaces on both floors, and a symmetrical layout. With few remaining examples of Monterey style residences north of San Juan Bautista, the Alviso adobe is an important example to illustrate the influence of American ideas and materials on the traditional architecture of one prominent *Californio* family during the years of transition from Mexican to American rule.

The Monterey style bridges the gap between the dominance of Hispanic building techniques on the West Coast and the adoption of wood frame construction as the method of choice employed by the American and European immigrants arriving in California. The earliest prototypes of the Monterey style were constructed in Alta California during the mid-1830s. General Mariano Vallejo's hacienda near Petaluma, the largest example of a two-storied, balconied residence, was begun in 1834 and finished 10 years later; Thomas O. Larkin's store and home were underway from 1834-1838; Bernardo Yorba built a two-storied adobe residence about 1834 near Santa Ana (now demolished), and Alpheus B. Thompson's impressive adobe home in Santa Barbara (now demolished) was under construction from 1834-1836. While Larkin's store in Monterey is often credited as being the first to utilize the blending of Yankee materials with Spanish/Mexican architecture (hence the term "Monterey style"), it is more likely that the ideas came from more than one source and that the early examples all emerged during the same general time frame in the mid-1830s.

Attributes of the Monterey style are adobe walls, usually plastered and white washed and sometimes partially covered with clapboard; cantilevered balconies or two-storied porches on one or more elevations; paired solid or glazed French doors; milled mantelpieces, door and window moldings; multipaned casement or double-hung window sash; wood shingled hipped roofs which extended over porches; symmetrical plan and/or balanced placement of doors and windows; and interior fireplaces and stairways. All of the above characteristics are found in the prototypes mentioned above.

There is speculation as to what styles and regions inspired the Monterey style. The Spanish/Mexican builders displayed an ability to construct two-story or taller buildings with wood-supported balconies in their mission churches, yet two-story buildings were not commonly used as residences in California prior to the 1830s. Two-story residences with balconies are widespread throughout Spain and in the Spanish-settled areas of the New World such as Mexico and South America. Two-story

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buildings with balconies which date to the mid-1700s can be seen today in St. Augustine, Florida. During the 1700s, examples of buildings with double porches abounded in the British Caribbean outposts of Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Antigua. Two-story houses with double verandas were built in both cities and as rural plantation houses in coastal cities in the southeastern United States in the 1700s. In the lower Mississippi Valley, and particularly in New Orleans, it was a common building type, as can be seen in the rectangular Pitot House, built in 1799-1800, which is very similar to the Larkin House. It is probably safe to say that inspiration for the style was a synthesis of examples in many locations, with the eastern seaboard area being one.

In Alta California, the Monterey style developed as a result of economic prosperity during the 1830s and 1840s. Imported from the East Coast, milled lumber, window glass, nails, door hardware and wallpaper became more readily available. It is of interest that Thomas O. Larkin in Monterey, Alpheus B. Thompson in Santa Barbara, and John Temple who built the Rancho Los Cerritos adobe in 1844, were all merchants who operated successful trading enterprises and stores. They had set up the systems necessary for ordering and acquiring materials from the eastern seaboard. Both General Mariano Vallejo and Bernardo Yorba were wealthy land owners with extensive land and cattle holdings who had the means to order the necessary materials from commercial traders for their elaborate two-story haciendas. The Monterey style spread quickly because it was well-suited to the climate and availability of local materials. There were laborers available with the knowledge of adobe masonry and making adobe bricks. In addition, there were ample lumber supplies in the area's redwood forests. The early American immigrants to the territory introduced more advanced lumbering and milling technologies. Functionally, the broad roof overhangs and porches protected the adobe walls from heavy winter rains and kept the walls shaded in the summer while letting in summer breezes.

The remodeling of the Jose Maria Alviso residence may have commenced in the late 1840s and was completed by 1853 as evidenced by the notation of an earlier purchase of redwood boards, shingles and nails in Jose Maria's 1853 probate record. In speculating as to what may have inspired the Alviso family to upgrade their ranch home in the more "modern" style, Alviso would have seen several examples being constructed in the area. In addition to the many examples in Monterey, there was the two-story adobe state house with a front balcony in the Pueblo of San Jose which was constructed in 1849. To the south in San Juan Bautista, Don Jose Antonio Maria Castro entertained many visitors in his fine two-storied adobe house with a cantilevered balcony spanning the front. This

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residence was constructed in 1840. Undoubtedly, the Alvisos had visited or were familiar with Jose de Jesus Vallejo's large 18 room, two-story adobe constructed in Mission San Jose about 1844. It is also possible that the Alvisos visited Mariano Vallejo's Petaluma hacienda. The Pueblo of Sonoma contained a large concentration of two-story houses with balconies around the plaza.

The account that the second story was added to one of the original four adobe dwellings on the Alviso property has been handed down in the Alviso family, many who continued to live in the area and even today live across the street from the adobe. It was not unusual to add a second story onto a one-story adobe building. In Monterey, Casa Amesti was built by Jose Amesti in 1842 as a one-story residence. Sometime before 1854, Amesti added a new adobe second floor and continuous balconies along the front and back elevations. The Cooper-Molera adobe was built in 1832 as a long, one-story building and was enlarged in 1850 to a two-story building with a cantilevered wood balcony.

Even when a two-story building was built in one construction period, it was typical for the walls to step in at the top of the first floor wall and for the second-floor to have thinner walls, a technique which can be observed in the Jose Castro Adobe in San Juan Bautista. It is a logical next step to use wood for the second floor construction, especially when milled lumber is available and wood construction is less time and labor intensive. This was done at the Los Coches Ranch House (near present-day Highway 101 north of Soledad) which grew from a single-story adobe built in 1842. In 1846 a wood-frame second story was added which transformed the tiny residence into an inn which served as a stagecoach stop. Near San Jose in 1847, Antonio Suñol built a one-story house from kiln-fired brick next to the older one-room Roberto Adobe. Beginning in 1853, the next owner, a sea captain named Stefano Splivalo added a second story and balcony of frame construction. Both these examples remain today. The Plaza Hotel in San Juan Bautista began as several one-story adobe buildings from the mission quadrangle to which Angelo Zanetta added a wood second story with cantilevered balconies on three sides. Zanetta, who had earlier been a chef in New Orleans, opened the building in 1858 as a hotel with a fine restaurant downstairs.

The Jose Maria Alviso Adobe is a valuable example of the Monterey style in central California due to its high degree of integrity. The characteristics which typify the style remain clearly evident due to the fact that there have been no additions or changes to the main elevations to

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obscure the 1853 residence. The only alteration has been the addition of the kitchen on the rear which is not visible from the street. The first floor plan has not changed, remaining symmetrical with the front door opening into the center parlor and with one room to either side. Upstairs spaces have been changed only by the addition of closets and a bathroom. The blending of Hispanic and American ideas is still apparent. The adobe first floor very much typifies the Hispanic tradition of angling the thick door reveals inward to reflect the maximum amount of light into the room. The second story with its clapboarded walls and multipaned windows surrounded by molding suggests American Colonial ideas. The residence retains its unpretentious ranch house appearance today because its most recent long-term owners, Joseph and Lucia Cuciz, had no desire to modernize it, but endeavored, according to their son, to "keep everything exactly the same," replacing in kind when materials deteriorated beyond repair. Enormous sycamore and fig trees remain from the Alviso era. The lemon, olive and loquat trees from the Cuciz era still flourish next to the kitchen door.

Of the important examples of the style which remain, most have undergone extensive remodeling, particularly the interiors. The Larkin House underwent interior wall changes and reconstruction between 1910 through 1920, although most exterior features are intact. The interior of Casa Amesti, a National Historical Landmark, was remodeled in 1920 and 1953 by Frances Adler Elkins and her architect brother David Adler. While Casa Amesti's sophisticated interior finishes have attained a significance of their own, a stairway and at least one interior adobe wall was removed and several new rooms were created with frame walls. Two solariums have been added to the rear since the 1940s and the wallpapered and highly-decorated rooms recall the decorative tastes of the 1930s and 1940s. Another good example of the Monterey style is Rancho Los Cerritos, a National Historic Landmark in Long Beach which features a two-story section and two long single-story wings forming an interior courtyard. It was remodeled in 1931 removing two adobe walls and a historic ceiling to create a large living room and dining room. Several adobe walls removed from the wings, which were modified from "working" ranch rooms to comfortable heated bedrooms with bathrooms. The building remains true to much of its original footprint, but due to the addition of a tiled roof and extensive landscaping, it has lost its ranch ambience and is more reminiscent of 1930s suburban California.

There are a few good examples of single story adobes in the greater Santa Clara Valley, e.g., the Peralta Adobe in downtown San Jose, the Jose Higuera Adobe in Milpitas, and the Galindo/Higuera Adobe in Fre-

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mont; however there are no remaining examples of two-story adobe residences. The Suñol House (with the attached one-roomed Roberto Adobe) is a good example of 1850s two story house with a brick first floor and a frame second floor; however, it is an Italianate style. The only other surviving two-story dwellings in the Santa Clara Valley from the 1850s are the 27-room Casa Grande at New Almaden and the recently restored Fallon House in San Jose. The Jose Maria Alviso Adobe is the finest example of the Monterey style remaining in the geographical area which lies between the Mariano Vallejo adobe hacienda and the Sonoma adobes to the north and the San Juan Bautista and Monterey adobes to the south. The Alviso Adobe today retains the impression of a working ranch house situated at the base of the foothills, as it has for the last 140 years.

The well-preserved adobe has been a local point of historical interest from the time that the Cucizes acquired the property. Tourists often stopped to admire the well-kept building and newspapers frequently featured stories about its history and restoration. It is listed in the State of California 1976 *Inventory of Historic Resources* and in the 1979 Santa Clara County *Heritage Resource Inventory*.

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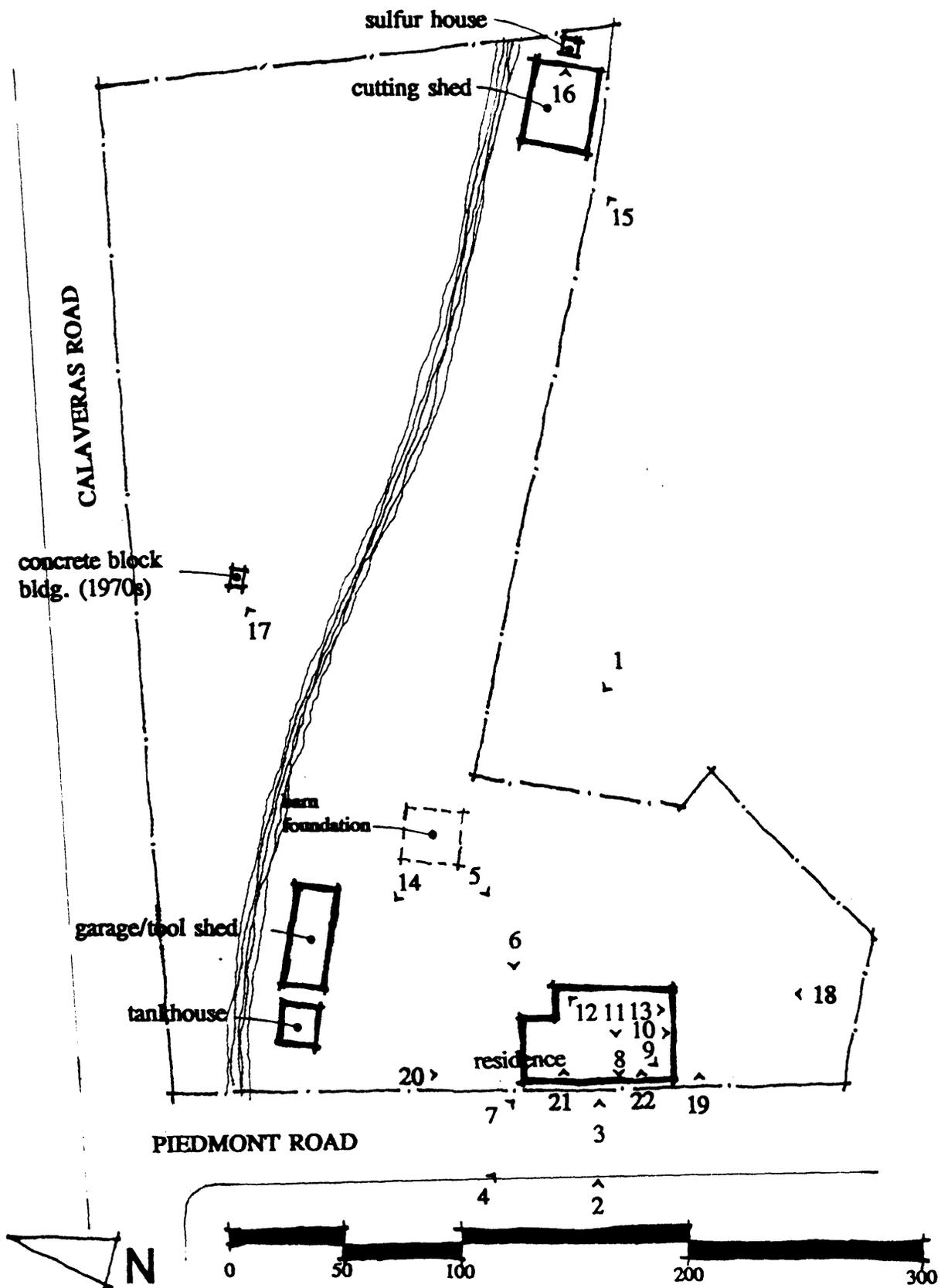
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**10. Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of Calaveras Road and Piedmont Road on the north line of Milpitas Rancho, bearing 11° southeast 290 feet along the eastern boundary of the right-of-way of Piedmont Road, 63.76 feet 98° northeast, 98 feet 33° northeast, 20 feet 56° northwest, 85.69 feet 2° northwest, 267.8 feet 89° southeast, 57.33 feet 86° southeast, 222.3 feet 17° northwest to the north line of Milpitas Rancho, 428.04 feet 75° southwest to beginning, containing 2.12 acres. (Bearings rounded to the nearest degree)

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the adobe house, outbuildings, and drying yard historically associated with the Cuciz fruit ranch and is the last undeveloped portion of Rancho Milpitas. Calaveras and Piedmont roads have historically marked the north and west boundaries of the property.



JOSE MARIA ALVISO ADOBE  
 92 Piedmont Road  
 Milpitas, Santa Clara County  
 California 95035

1 May 1997

**Photograph Continuation Sheet**

**Historical Photographs**

- a. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
Santa Clara County, CA  
Photographer: Mrs. Alice Hare,  
Date: circa 1900 (pre-1906 earthquake)  
Santa Clara Woman's Club, Santa Clara, CA  
View: Facing northeast
- b. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
Santa Clara County, CA  
Photographer Unknown  
Date: Later than 1906 and prior to 1922  
San Jose Historical Museum, San Jose, CA  
View: Facing northeast
- c. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
Santa Clara County, CA  
Photographer: Donna Sepulveda Breitels  
Date: circa 1954  
Home of Donna Breitels (408) 946-7851  
View: Facing northeast

**Contemporary Photographs**

1. Setting of Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, Tankhouse and Garage  
Santa Clara County, CA  
Photographer: Gil Sanchez, FAIA (Photos 1-22)  
Date: February 12, 1997  
Negatives at office of Gil Sanchez Architect, Santa Cruz, CA  
View: Facing northwest
2. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
View: Facing east
3. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
View: Facing east
4. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
View: Facing southeast
5. Rear view of Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
View: Facing west
6. Porch of Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
View: Facing west

7. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe  
View: Facing southeast
8. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, interior of first floor center room  
View: Facing west
9. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, interior of first floor south room  
View: Facing southwest
10. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, interior of upstairs south room  
View: Facing south
11. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, interior of upstairs center room  
View: Facing west
12. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, interior of pantry in kitchen  
View: Facing northeast
13. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe kitchen, interior view  
View: Facing north
14. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe Tankhouse and Garage/Tool Shed  
View: Facing northwest
15. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe Cutting Shed  
View: Facing northeast
16. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe Sulfur House  
View: Facing east
17. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, cable t.v. building  
View: Facing northeast
18. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, south elevation  
View: Facing north
19. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, south elevation (1991)  
View: Facing east
20. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, second floor, north window  
View: Facing southeast

21. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, north stairway  
View: Facing down, toward east
  
22. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe, south stairway  
View: Facing down, toward east

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