

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 2 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Sacred Heart Catholic Church

and/or common Catholic Church

2. Location

street & number 507 E. Fourth Street N/A not for publication

city, town Alturas N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county Modoc code 049

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 type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Catholic Bishop of Sacramento

street & number P. O. Box 1706

city, town Sacramento N/A vicinity of state California 95808

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Modoc County Court House - Records Office

street & number 200 Court Street

city, town Alturas state CA 96101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

In Alturas, California, at the corner of East 4th and "B" Street in a residential part of the city, the Sacred Heart Catholic Church building stands on a rocky hill facing west. This simplified Gothic Revival building is constructed of a local, light grey welded andesitic tuff. Construction began in 1883, but completion was delayed until 1910. Since that time, alterations have been minor. The major alteration was the addition of the sacristy at the rear in 1928; it is also of stone construction and is compatible with the original building. A two story brick rectory, built in 1929, and a garage stand behind the church.

The church is rectangular in plan, the outside dimensions being thirty feet wide by sixty-one feet long. The stone walls are two feet thick, with stone buttresses at the corners. The buttresses pierce the roofline and are surmounted by Celtic crosses at each corner. From ground level to the peak of its gabled shake roof, the single story structure is thirty-eight feet and two inches high. The unfinished basement is one-third the area of the main floor.

The facade of the building is symmetrical with a central entrance through a lancet archway in a shallow entrance pavillion flanked by lancet windows. A belt course reaches from one corner to the other above the arches. A circular stained glass window in the gable is five feet and ten inches above the belt course. Two stone Celtic crosses flank the gable, with a wooden cross at the apex. There are five windows of beautiful stained glass embedded in lead with pointed arches on each side of the building. Gothic Revival architecture is evident in the pointed arches and corner buttresses.

Construction of the building began in 1883, but a shortage of funds to complete the building led to its abandonment. It stood for more than 26 years as a partially completed shell. In 1910, sufficient funding was raised to allow the completion of the church. The original design included a projecting narthex

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input 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 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 1883–1910 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church is significant for its association with the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in the northeastern corner of California, and its role as the major center of Catholic worship in Modoc County. It is the oldest church in Alturas, and is the only survivor of the early ecclesiastical architecture of the community. Built of local stone in Gothic Revival styling, it is the only example of its type and period in the community.

The construction of Sacred Heart Catholic Church was begun in 1883 when a Father Patrick Kirley came to Modoc County from Reno, Nevada, and founded the Roman Catholic parish of Alturas. However, the church was not completed during that year, and the unfinished building with its four Celtic crosses remained a lonely and somber sentinel on the prominence overlooking the town of Alturas for the next twenty-six years.

During those years, Alturas was served by priests from the Truckee parish, 200 miles to the south. In 1909, after surveying the state of Catholicism in the area, Father T. E. Horgan was determined to complete the "Old church on Catholic Hill". With the aid of the predominately Protestant Alturas community, the Sacred Heart Church finally was completed in 1910. This undertaking demonstrated not only the faithful perserverance of the Catholic pioneers who settled the small frontier town, but also the dedication and concern of the entire community in seeing this project completed. In a real way the completed construction of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church was an act of religious tolerance.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Gloster, Dorothy V., A History of the Catholic Church in Alturas, 1930
2. Information from members of the Sacred Heart Church 1930-1973
3. Henry L. Walsh, S.J., Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails, Univ. of S. Clara Press, 1946
4. Whiffen, Marcus American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles, The MIT Press, 1969

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Alturas

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is a rectangular lot approximately 300' x 90' bounded on the north by East Fourth Street, the east, south and west sides by private ownerships as shown on attached Assessor's Map. Boundaries are drawn on lot lines to encompass the church and rectory. The County of Modoc Assessors Parcel Numbers are 3-210-06 and 3-210-12.

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 Ray Brennan

organization Sacred Heart Mens Club

date (OHP staff revision, 4/83)
February 1, 1983

street & number 403 West 4th Street

telephone (916) 233-2146

city or town Alturas

state California 96101

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 *W. M. McEllen*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5/16/83

For NPS use only

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

date 6/30/83

fn/ *W. M. McEllen*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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at the front; this feature was omitted when the building was finally constructed.

In 1928, a small stone sacristy of three hundred eighty four square feet was added to the rear of the church building and is an integral part of the whole structure. Aside from the 1928 addition, the outside of the building remains virtually unaltered. The only changes have been the replacement of the original window glass with more elaborate stained glass in 1956. In 1982, clear protection glass was installed on the outside to prevent damage to the stained glass windows.

Inside the building the entire floor is carpeted wall-to-wall in an off-red textured fabric. On each side of the center aisle there are eleven pews made of solid clear pine. A wooden cross, six inches by four inches, is added to the outside end of each pew. Also curved arm rests, most of them made from a solid single piece of pine, add to the beauty of each pew. All the pews were refinished in July of 1982.

The choir/organ loft with a metal spiral staircase, contains three more pews. The metal spiral staircase was donated to the church and replaced the existing wooden stairway in 1942. The metal staircase came from the E. Lauer and Sons General Store.

The inner walls are wainscoted up forty-five inches from the floor with three and one quarter inch tongue and groove lumber. The confessional is built of the same material as the wainscoting on the walls.

There are fourteen multi-colored stained glass windows with dominating colors of blue, amber and green. Each window's center depicts a different religious scene or event. The two circular windows in each end of the building are two feet

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six inches in diameter; they are of beautiful colors of magenta, blue, green and red. The pattern is somewhat like a multi-petaled open flower.

The ceiling is twenty-six feet at the peak of its Gothic arch. In 1981 the walls and ceiling were refinished with sheetrock, textured and painted white. This change basically did not change the interior appearance of the building, as the walls had previously been covered with sheets of beaver board painted white. Twenty semi-recessed electric lights were installed. Adorning the walls are fourteen plaster-molded "Stations of the Cross."

The Altar is located in the front (east interior) of the church in a raised area 9 inches from the main floor. The Tabernacle is in the extreme front of the church and is on a platform eight inches above the Altar. The front wall was remodeled in 1981 and paneled with tongue-in-groove solid oak, each piece two and one quarter inches wide with varying lengths in a "V" and inverted "V" pattern. On the center of this wall, about two feet below the circular stained glass window, is an oak cross upon which hangs a nearly life-sized figure of the crucified Christ. On either side of the crucifix are two statues mounted on pedestals eight feet above the Altar floor. One statue depicts the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The other depicts the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus while crushing a serpent with her feet.

In the early summer of 1951, the church yard was leveled and terraced. A portion of the rocky hill was broken up, hauled away and replaced with good fertile soil. Also, white pumice building brick retaining walls, along with the shrubbery, lawn and sprinklers were added at this time. The property also includes a rectory

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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and garage located behind the church. Constructed in 1929, the rectory is a two story brick house with a hipped roof. Although not architecturally distinguished, it has served as the priest's residence for the past 54 years. The garage is of recent construction and does not contribute to the significance of the property. A modern social hall on an adjacent parcel at the rear of the property does not contribute and has been excluded from the nomination.

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In 1911, the altar, pews and confessional were installed and the first marriage in the church was solemnized. Services in the church were discontinued for a time after a fire on Easter Sunday in 1916. Again, the non-Catholics of this small town came to the aid of the Sacred Heart Church by sponsoring a benefit dance to help defray the cost of the repairs. The church has continued to remain an important part of the religious life/^{of}the community and surrounding area.

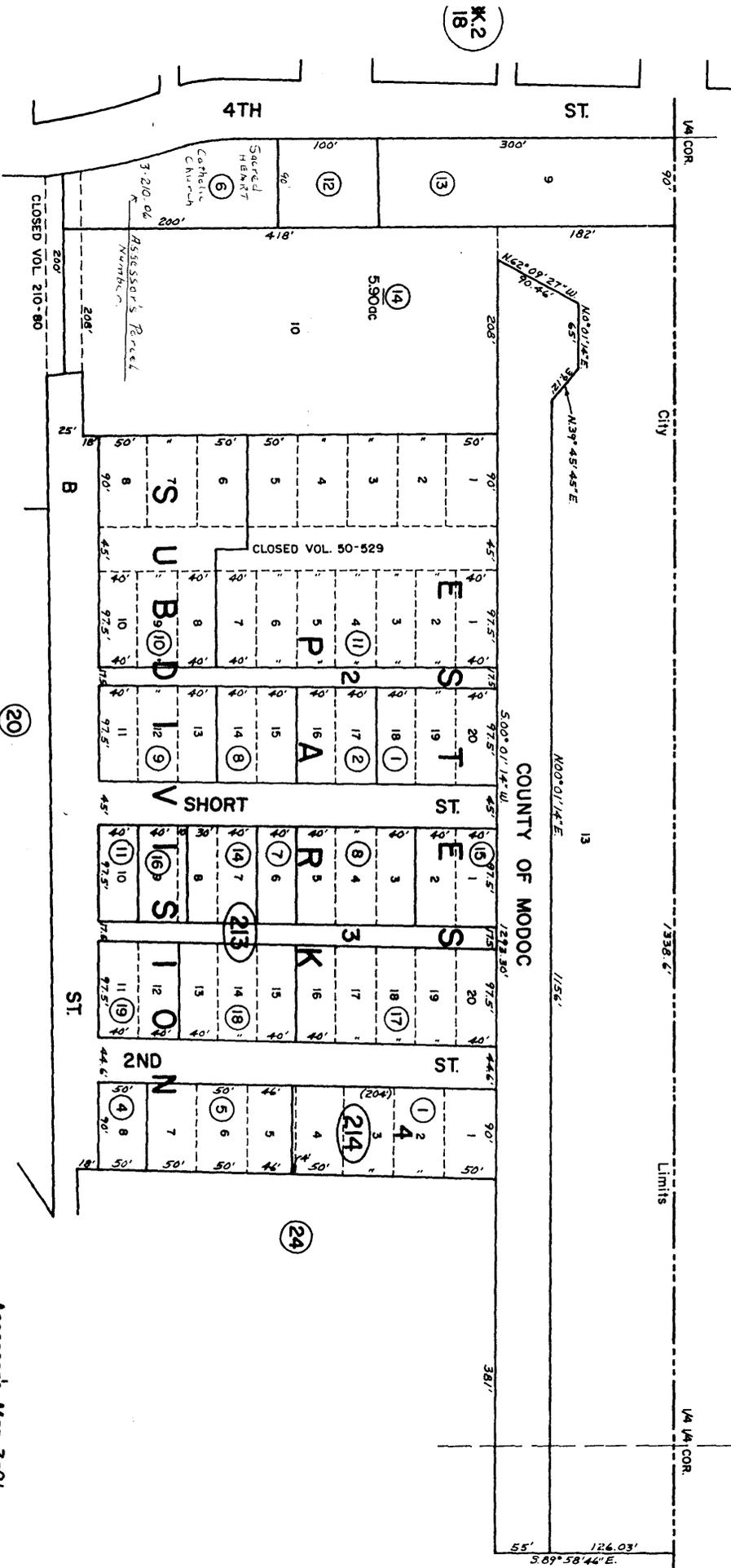
Sacred Heart Catholic Church is the last remaining historic church building in Alturas, and one of the last in the county. All other early churches in the community have been lost to fire and demolition within the last 50 years. Sacred Heart is the only example of its type and period in the county. With its buttresses and lancet windows, the small stone church is a notable example of Gothic Revival styling. Since its beginning in the 1880's the church has stood as a symbol of stability for the entire community. The holding of joint church services with four denominations participating, in recent years, proves it as a focal point of community life in Alturas. This year marks the centennial of the founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Modoc County with the start of the construction of Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

POR. E1/2 E1/2 NW1/4, SEC. 13, T42N, R12E, M.D.B&M.

Tax Area Code 1-00

3-21

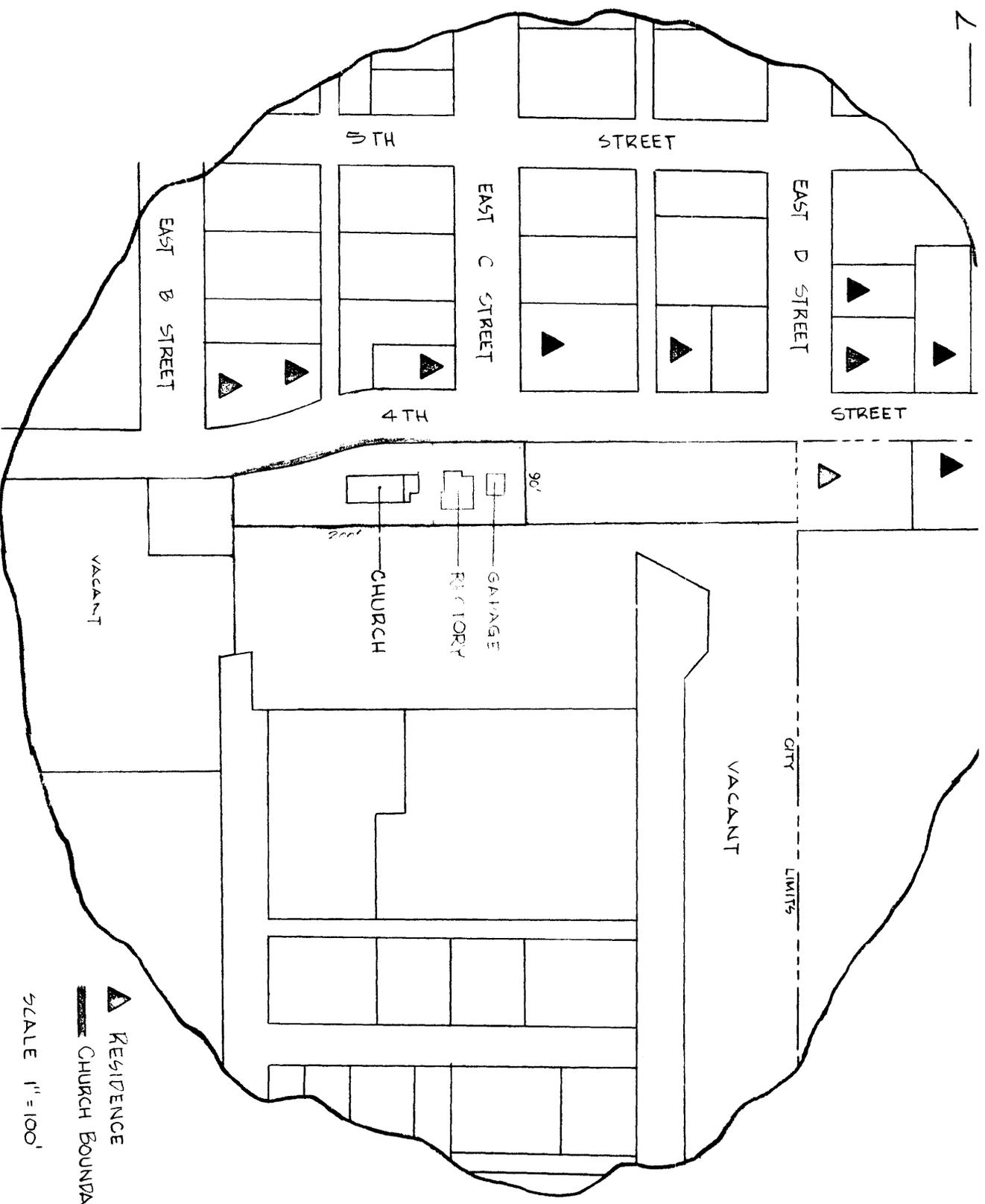
BK 22
17



Estes Park Subdivision

NOTE - ASSESSOR'S BLOCK
A LOT NUMBERS
SHOWN IN CIRCLES

Assessor's Map 3-21
City of Alturas
County of Modoc, California
Mar. 1982



▲ RESIDENCE
▬ CHURCH BOUNDARY

SCALE 1" = 100'