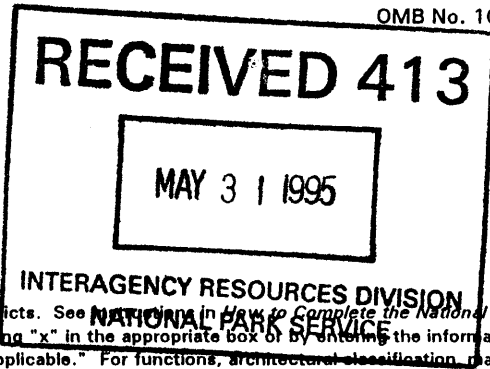


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking an "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, wordprocessor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 130 West Ojai Avenue NA  not for publication

city or town Ojai NA  vicinity

state California code CA county Ventura code 111 zip code 93024

### 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.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official/Title

5/12/95  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or 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 certifying 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

[Signature]

6/29/95

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
2	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register  
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Religion: Church

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Recreation and Culture: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:  
Mission Revival

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation  
walls stucco  
roof red tile  
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 to prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

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Period of Significance

1918

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Significant Dates

1918

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Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

---



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Architect/Builder

Requa, Richard; Mead, Frank

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite 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 37) 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:  
Ojai Museum

St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel  
Name of Property

Ventura, CA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on continuation sheet.)

1 11 293560 3813920

3 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

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 Alexandra C. Cole, Principal

organization Preservation Planning Associates date January 13, 1995

street & number 519 Fig Avenue telephone (805) 962-1715

city or town Santa Barbara state CA zip code 93108

## 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 SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Ojai

street & number 401 South Ventura Street telephone (805) 646-5581

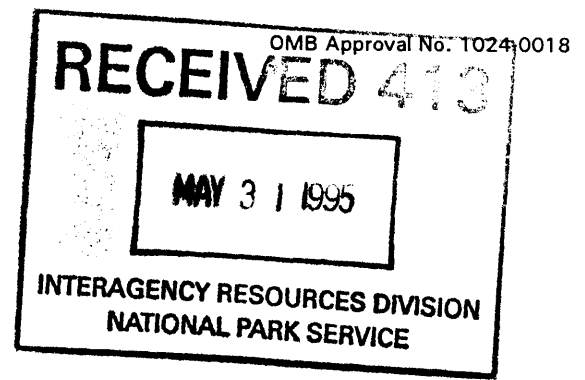
city or town Ojai state CA zip code 93024

**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, 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.*).

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Continuation Sheet**

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

**Narrative Description**

St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel is a small Mission Revival style building located on a corner lot along the main street of Ojai, a small town inland from Ventura, California. Designed in 1919 by the San Diego architectural firm of Mead and Requa, it is constructed of hollow clay tile plastered with stucco and has a red tile roof. It is set back behind an original hollow clay tile wall with an elaborate Mission Revival entry arch. A 1951 parish hall is situated to the west of the chapel with its roof connected to the bell tower. The property includes the chapel, a contributing building, the exterior wall, a contributing structure, and the parish hall, a non-contributing building. With the exception of the parish hall and alterations to the secondary (west) elevation of the wall to meet the needs of the new parish hall, the property looks very similar to its original configuration. The south wall with its formal front entrance is original and unchanged.

**Buildings**

**1. Chapel**

One contributing building

The rectangular one-story main block of the chapel, facing south, is balanced by a three-story terraced bell tower, with lantern and keyhole window openings, attached to its southwest corner. The three bay by three bay main block is topped by a red-tile gable-front roof. Several smaller sections jut from the rear of the main block: a gable-roof wing, forming the sanctuary; two small flat-roof sections to the east and west of the sanctuary, forming the original side altars and now used for storage; a flat-roofed sacristy attached to the west side of the sanctuary; and a shed-roof storage area attached to the east side of the sanctuary. The chapel is topped by a red-tile roof resting on 4' x 6' rafters that in turn rest on log beams.

The walls consist of unreinforced hollow clay tile. In the chapel, the walls are 8 inches thick, and in the sacristy they are 6 inches thick. The first floor of the bell tower has 8 inch thick walls; the piers and arches in the upper stories are of brick, with cast-in-place concrete floors. The surface of the walls is rough-plastered. The roofs are of wood framing. The chapel's gable roof is topped with red tile, and the sacristy has a flat roof. Concrete buttresses, overlaid with hollow clay tiles, support the long walls, with two on the west and four, on the east. Additional narrow buttresses have been laid up next to four of these original buttresses, two on the east and two on the west, for further support.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

**Narrative Description (continued)**

The long north/south walls are lit by two stained glass windows and a door with stained glass pane and transom on each side, inset within recessed peaked-arch openings of a Moorish/Mudejar design. The stained glass windows, depicting St. Augustine, St. Francis, the Annunciation, and the Crucifixion are set in fixed wood frames. The hollow-core doors in the chapel have stained glass inserts in their upper panes and transoms. The bell tower door has a stained glass upper pane. An oriel window with a decorative wood grille extends from the west wall of the sacristy.

The Moorish front facade has a scalloped door surround topped by three urn-like designs and flanked by two engaged columns with snake patterns. The large metal-studded wooden double door is decorated with the River of Life pattern. The quatrefoil stained glass window above the doorway depicts Mary and Jesus. The roof itself does not join at the front gable but has a small false front surmounted by a simple cross. Similar crosses adorn the bell tower and entrance gate; a smaller Celtic cross is mounted over the front door on top of the urn-like design.

The architects Mead and Requa derived specific design details for the chapel from a number of different missions. The bell tower is reminiscent of the Santa Barbara Mission in terms of design and of the San Luis Rey Mission in terms of its decorative arched windows. The "River of Life" snake-like motif on the front doors is a common design in Mission doorways. The arched entry gate is similar to the false fronts seen on such missions as San Diego and San Luis Rey. The door designs with swags are reminiscent of the side door surrounds on the San Buenaventura Mission.<sup>1</sup>

The interior consists of a seven foot by nine foot vestibule with double doors, leading to a long nave, with a raised sanctuary or altar at the rear. A door leading from the west side of the sanctuary opens onto the sacristy. A choir balcony, cantilevered above the vestibule, spans the south end of the nave, and is supported by two large square wooden posts with ornate corbelled caps. Incised crosses decorate the posts, and the date "Anno Domini MCMXVIII" is cut into the face of the large beam supporting the balcony. A door in the west wall leads to the tower. A barrel-vaulted ceiling springs from the walls; two boxed beams, enclosing steel cross-ties, span the vaulted ceiling. The sanctuary has a similar barrel vaulted ceiling.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

**Narrative Description (continued)**

**2. Parish Hall**

One non-contributing building

The parish hall, built in 1951 and a non-contributing building, is a long L-shaped side-gabled building attached by a roofed passageway to the tower and church. Of wood frame construction, its walls are plastered and its roof is of red tile. An attached wing to the west, forming the base of the L houses a kitchen and bathroom. The street side of its roof is tiled and the courtyard side has red asphalt roofing. Presently it is undergoing alteration for new use as a museum and Chamber of Commerce office.

**Structures**

**3. Exterior Perimeter Wall and Piers**

One contributing structure

A 4-foot high hollow clay tile wall, stuccoed and painted off-white, surrounds the chapel grounds on the south and west sides, and partially on the east side. This wall is topped by canted bricks laid in a soldier pattern. Piers with small buttresses and hipped brick caps punctuate the wall at intervals. The formal front (south) entrance arch, faced with red tile and set between two tall piers, has an espadana topped with a simple cross. The entrance arch serves as the focal point of the wall. A secondary entrance on the west side, a simple cut in the wall flanked by two piers with hipped caps, provides access to the parish hall. The wall was constructed in 1919, with the original parish hall.

The wall was remodelled on the west side in 1951 to meet the needs of the new parish hall. The original entrance passageway, a small gap in the wall flanked by two piers with hipped caps, was bricked over and a new similar entrance and pier constructed slightly south. An original pier and two sections of the wall were removed to access side doors in the parish hall, and another section of the wall was removed at the extreme rear of the property to allow vehicle access.

**Alterations.** A number of changes have taken place over the years since the chapel complex was finished in 1919. Originally the complex consisted of the chapel, an attached arcaded parish hall, and the surrounding wall with decorative entrance completed in 1919. The parish hall was torn down in 1943, and the present one built in 1951. In 1944 the original windows, 4/4 milky pink opaque stained glass, were replaced with the present stained glass windows. The wood grill on the quatrefoil window has been removed. The east and west doors leading to the chapel, that according to the

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

**Narrative Description (continued)**

original plans were wood plank with the River of Life design, were replaced with the current ones in 1944. Possibly the original wood door on the sacristy was replaced at this time as well. In 1965, as a result, of a 1954 report documenting the unsafe condition of the chapel in terms of earthquake safety, four narrow buttresses were added adjacent to the current buttresses and were tied to a top steel bar anchored to the walls. Additionally tie rods enclosed by hollow beams were added to the interior ceiling. The roof tiles were replaced at this time as well. Possibly the side altars were infilled at this time. At some time a yellow louvered window ventilating the confessional booths replaced the window to the right of the door on the front facade.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

Contextually St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, built in 1918, relates to town planning in Ojai between 1916 and 1922, when the small main street of town was transformed from a varied collection of wooden commercial and public buildings into a unified Mission Revival streetscape. One of five major downtown buildings and structures planned by philanthropist Edward D. Libbey, and executed by the San Diego architectural firm of Richard Requa and Frank Mead, the Chapel meets Criterion C in the area of Community Planning and Development at the local level. As a contributing building to Libbey's plan, that encompassed three blocks of the main street and included an arcade, post office, park, hotel and church oriented along an east-west axis, the chapel was part of an amateur plan inspired by the ideals of harmony, order, and beauty promulgated by the nation-wide City Beautiful movement. The Chapel meets Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties, because the property is significant for its architectural design in the area of community planning and development, and not for religious doctrine.

**History of the Property**

The St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel was a replacement for the first Catholic church in Ojai, a small wooden building constructed in 1905, which burned in the great fire of 1917 that destroyed over seventy buildings in Ojai.<sup>2</sup> Built in 1918, it was one of five Mission Revival buildings and structures developed by Edward Drummond Libbey, a Toledo financier, as part of his plan to renovate downtown Ojai in the Mission Revival style. Libbey approached the priest in charge of the Catholic congregation, Father Ylla, offering his help to rebuild the church. He suggested hiring Frank Mead and Richard Requa, the architects for the remainder of Libbey's planned downtown, to design the church as well as a new rectory/parish hall in the Mission Revival style. The parishioners raised most of the money for the chapel and parish hall, but were aided by a challenge grant of \$1000 from Libbey as well as an additional \$5000 to pay for the wall, walkway, planting and



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### Continuation Sheet

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

#### **Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)**

painting.<sup>3</sup> The church was finished in 1918 and dedicated in January 1919; the perimeter wall and an arcaded rectory/parish hall attached to the chapel at the southwest corner were finished in 1919.

The original rectory/parish hall was torn down in 1943 and replaced on the same site by the present parish hall in 1951. The church served the local Catholic community until 1961, when a larger church was constructed in the adjoining town of Meiners Oaks. At that time the chapel continued in use for daily Mass, while the parish hall was used for parish functions. The Catholic church celebrated its final Mass in the chapel in 1992 and sold it to the City of Ojai in 1993. Currently the chapel and parish hall are vacant, awaiting new use by the Chamber of Commerce and the Ojai Historical Society and Museum.

#### **Context: Ojai Community Planning and Development and the City Beautiful Movement**

The heyday of the City Beautiful movement, from about 1900 to 1910, saw middle and upper-middle-class Americans attempt to refashion their cities into beautiful, functional entities. Their effort involved a cultural agenda, a middle-class environmentalism, and aesthetics expressed as beauty, order, system, and harmony. The ideal found physical realization in urban design. Public and semi-public buildings, civic centers, park and boulevard systems, or extensions and embellishments of them, were the tokens of the improved environment.<sup>4</sup>

Located in an inland valley near Ventura, California, the town of Ojai (called Nordhoff until 1917), was settled in the 1870s by those seeking a health cure for tuberculosis in its pleasant dry climate. Over the years it developed a downtown district on Ojai Avenue; this single main street, a dirt path, was lined with a row of wood false-front commercial buildings, linked by a plank sidewalk and shaded by large oak trees. Such a beautifully situated small town began attracting winter visitors, who built homes in the area.

One of the most influential of these men to move to Ojai in the teens was Edward Drummond Libbey, millionaire owner of the Libbey Glass Company in Toledo, Ohio. Libbey first came to Ojai at the suggestion of a boyhood friend, Standard Oil executive

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Harry Sinclair, who had already built a winter home in Ojai designed by architect Richard Requa of San Diego. Although enchanted enough by the Ojai Valley to develop his own winter estate, Libbey came to view the town of Ojai as in need of aesthetic improvement. Wanting to transform its typical western main street into something that in his eyes would have distinction and character, he began to discuss town renovation with Ojai leaders, forming in 1914 the Ojai Valley Men's League as a vehicle for change. Libbey hired the San Diego architectural firm of Mead & Requa to help improve the aesthetics of the town, choosing the then-popular Mission Revival as a unifying architectural style.

His plan to transform Ojai into a town of beauty, order, and harmony developed in four phases (See sketch Map: "Ojai, Calif. c. 1922). The first concentrated on the single downtown commercial block, between Signal and Montgomery Streets, and consisted of the construction of a Mission Revival arcade enclosing the sidewalk on the north side of the street and a large central park enclosed by a low wall and pergola on the south side, connected to a Mission Revival post office with a three-story bell tower and sidewalk arcade at the corner.

The second phase was the construction of the el Roblar Hotel on the north side in the next block west of the Arcade, with colonnaded pergola and surrounding low masonry wall with a large Mission Revival entrance arch. The third phase was the construction of the St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, in the block further west; complete with bell tower, arcade, and surrounding masonry wall with Mission Revival entry arch.

The fourth phase was the completion of the Mission Revival Arcade to the east of that completed in the first phase, made possible when the creek that bisected Ojai Avenue and the downtown block, was channeled. The buildings and structures thus built were linked visually by the bell towers, arcades, pergolas and low masonry walls punctuated by large Mission Revival entrance arches. As a result of implementing this plan, Libbey transformed the town from a "commonplace ugly little village with few improvements, no consistent architecture, and no distinction of any kind" " into the distinctive Mission Revival town known as Ojai today.<sup>5</sup>

The plan did not adopt the more conventional City Beautiful layout involving large open spaces whose axes were anchored by imposing Beaux Arts public buildings and broad avenues, but rather was based on City Beautiful ideals of harmony and order translated into a Mission Revival vocabulary consistent with the scale of a small town in rural California.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Libbey asked Richard Requa, a San Diego architect who had designed Sinclair's house in Ojai, for suggestions on improving the downtown image. With the architect he chose first to build a Mission Revival style arcade to unify the block of wooden shops along the north side of Ojai Avenue. Plans were developed in July 1916, and Libbey underwrote the cost of the arcade construction while the merchants contributed \$10.00 a running foot.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time Libbey bought property opposite the arcade on the south side of Ojai Avenue, removed the buildings, and created a Civic Center Park with tennis courts. The stretch of sidewalk fronting the park was edged with a low wall, connected by stucco arches with two large Mission Revival entrances, a fountain, and a pergola providing shade to the sidewalk in front of the park, all designed by Requa with his partner Frank Mead to complement the arcade across the street. In his role as "benevolent godfather", Libbey then hired Requa and Mead to build a post office at the west end of the park to complete the grand design. The post office, also in the Mission Revival style, contained a 65 foot campanile and small arcade that connected to the walls of the park, unifying the south side of the street as the arcade unified the north side of the street. In April 1917 Libbey donated the park and the post office to the community, giving the deed to the non-profit Ojai Civic Association, formed for this purpose.

Libbey was instrumental the following year in the financing and construction of the El Roblar Hotel, on the north side of Ojai Avenue, also designed by Requa and Mead. It was surrounded by a low masonry wall with a Mission Revival entrance arch. The chapel was the next building designed as part of the continuation of Libbey's downtown remodeling plan. Libbey was instrumental in persuading the priest to follow his plan, choosing Mead and Requa and the Mission Revival style, and underwriting parts of its construction. Libbey prepared sketches for another building to be constructed on the property behind the chapel, but these plans were never realized because he was unable to purchase the land.<sup>7</sup>

Libbey's desire to beautify the town was very much in keeping with urban planning ideas in the early twentieth century. By this time it was realized that good urban planning and design would be necessary to counteract the rampant disorderly growth of towns and cities at the end of the nineteenth century. The careful plan of classical buildings presented as the White City at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, with its harmony between buildings and landscaped grounds, stood in stark contrast to the generally unplanned nature of American cities and towns, and provided a model for

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

concerned architects and civic-minded citizens to use in improving their cities. Further expositions in Buffalo, St. Louis, San Francisco and San Diego, between 1900 and 1915, introduced to America the City Beautiful movement, with its focus on promoting aesthetically pleasing cities through the addition of planned parks, main streets, and civic centers. This movement led to the establishment of planning commissions, the building of museums, libraries, public buildings, and parks, and the development of urban planning as a profession.<sup>8</sup>

It is within this context that Libbey's contribution to the planned development of Ojai may be seen. In southern California, as was the case in Ojai, the City Beautiful movement often was initiated by well-educated and financially successful easterners attracted to California's climate and Spanish past. Rather than pursue the Beaux Arts classicism of the Columbian Exposition, these entrepreneurs used their influence, and often their money, to transform their adopted towns into romantic versions of a Spanish theme. Libbey's planning role in Ojai during the years from 1916 to 1922 is reminiscent of the role the eastern architect Francis Underhill played in Santa Barbara, organizing a Civic League in 1907 with the purpose of public betterment through "good roads, boulevards, parks, preservation of objects and buildings of historic and romantic interest, and the beautification of the city and its environs." The Civic League hired Charles Mulford Robinson, a nationally prominent city planner from Rochester, New York, who suggested that Santa Barbara capitalize on its Spanish past when redesigning the city center.<sup>9</sup>

Libbey's speech at the completion of the downtown beautification projects indicates the common sentiment of early benefactors inspired by City Beautiful ideals:

There has been too little attention to things aesthetic in our communities and in our homes. The time has come when we should encourage in ourselves thoughts of things beautiful... We must today decry with contempt and aversion all that is cheap, vulgar and degrading... The communities that listen to the call of the artistic must be the better. Thus we are today celebrating in the expression of this little example of Spanish architecture in Ojai Park, a culmination of an idea and the response to that spark of idealism, which demands from us a resolution to promote those things which go to make the beautiful in life, and bring us all happiness and pleasure.<sup>10</sup>

One of Libbey's great contributions to the redesign of Ojai was his choice of the San

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Diego architects Mead and Requa, whose firm is recognized as one of the influential southern California architectural firms of the early twentieth century. Trained in Irving Gill's office, Requa later joined Frank Mead, also of San Diego, to form their firm in the teens. Requa was familiar with the Mission Revival style, having used it in his own house in San Diego (1911) and in the Palomar Apartments (1914-15, with Mead), as well as a number of residences in the San Diego area.<sup>11</sup> No doubt the Mission Revival style was chosen not only because it would serve as a unifying element in the town plan but also for its versatility. Its design elements - low-pitched red tile roofs, massive-looking walls, stepped bell towers, quatrefoil windows, elaborated front doorways, and curved espadanas - were easily incorporated into whatever type of building was required.

It was a style that had been used since the 1890s, not only for ecclesiastical buildings but also for virtually every other type of building from residences to train stations, garages, schools, gas stations, hotels, civic buildings, hospitals, and bridges from the 1890s to the 1920s. (Indeed a Mission Revival theater and a garage, designed by others than Mead and Requa, were later built near Libbey's buildings on Ojai Avenue). It became a distinct regional California style capable of evoking the romance of the ruined missions for the viewer.

Until Libbey's intervention, the buildings in downtown Ojai, as with many California towns, had been constructed without a unified plan or style, when owners could afford to erect wooden buildings to house their commercial enterprises. The Mission Revival motif, established by Libbey in the teens, set a tone for the town that has continued to this day. The chapel is significant within this context as one of the five major downtown buildings and structures designed as part of Libbey's unified Mission Revival plan, and must be viewed as one of an architectural trio - with the arcade and post office tower - remaining from Libbey's original plan. (The pergola was demolished in 1977 and the el Roblar Hotel was remodeled in the 1960s). The chapel, set on the corner within its enclosed Mission Revival wall, continues to dominate the downtown area visually and to serve as a tangible reminder of Edward Libbey's dream.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

#### Endnotes

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2. Sanders, John R. *Before All Else*. Villanova, PA: Augustinian Press, 1987, p. 193.
3. Sanders, p. 19; "Balance Sheet Showing the Financial Statement of St. Thomas Church, Ojai, California" [n.d.].
4. Wilson, William H. *The City Beautiful Movement*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, p.1.
5. Wenig, Ed. "The arcade, the park, the Oaks, the arbolada: the Libbey saga." *Ojai Valley News* August 30, 1970.
6. Wenig, Harriet. "The Story of the Man Who Transformed Ojai." *Ojai Golden Anniversary 1921-1971*, Ojai: Ojai Valley News, 1971, p. 4.
7. Pierpont, Austen. *Ojai Golden Anniversary 1921-1971*. Ojai: Ojai Valley News, 1971, pp. 56-61; Gulliver, 1924, p. 16y.
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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

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Maps

"Nordhoff, California". Sanborn Map 1918

"Ojai, California". Sanborn Map 1929

Plans

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July 9, 1918. Op 161, Sheets 2, 3 (Exterior Elevations, Interior Elevations)

July 22, 1918. Op 161, Sheet 5 (Elevation of main and sacristy doors)

July 23, 1918. Op 161, Sheet 6 (Window details)

July 31, 1918. Op 161, Sheet 8 (Cross, main door details)

1918. Op 161, Sheet 9 (Interior details)



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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the property is Assessor's Parcel APN 21-0-10-08, as shown on the accompanying Assessor's Parcel Map.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all the property that has historically been associated with the Chapel.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA

The photographs were taken by Alexandra C. Cole in July and December 1994. The negatives are in the collection of Preservation Planning Associates, 519 Fig Avenue, Santa Barbara, CA 93101.

Photographic information.

1. View of the chapel (#1) and exterior perimeter wall with front entrance gate (#3) facing north.
2. Close-up of the chapel (#1) facing north, showing Moorish details at front door and quatrefoil window.
3. View of the rear of the chapel (#1) facing southwest, showing altar wing, side altar to the left with shed roof addition, and sacristy to the right.
4. View of the parish hall (#2) and the exterior perimeter wall and piers (#3) facing northeast.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA



St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel 1919, facing north, showing original milk glass windows and wood grille in the quatrefoil window. The front decorations have not yet been applied.  
Courtesy Ojai Valley Museum.

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St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA



St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel. 1919, facing northwest, showing buttresses and milk glass windows. Courtesy Ojai Valley Museum.

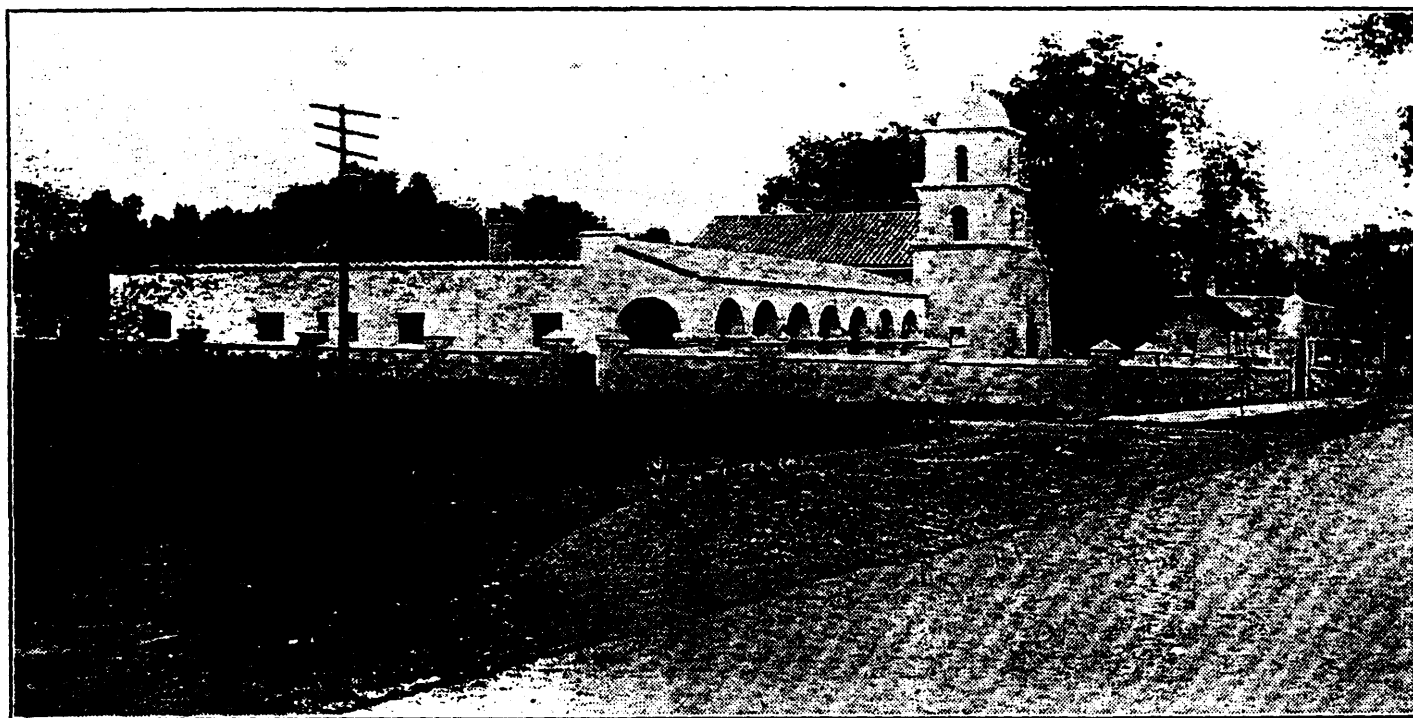
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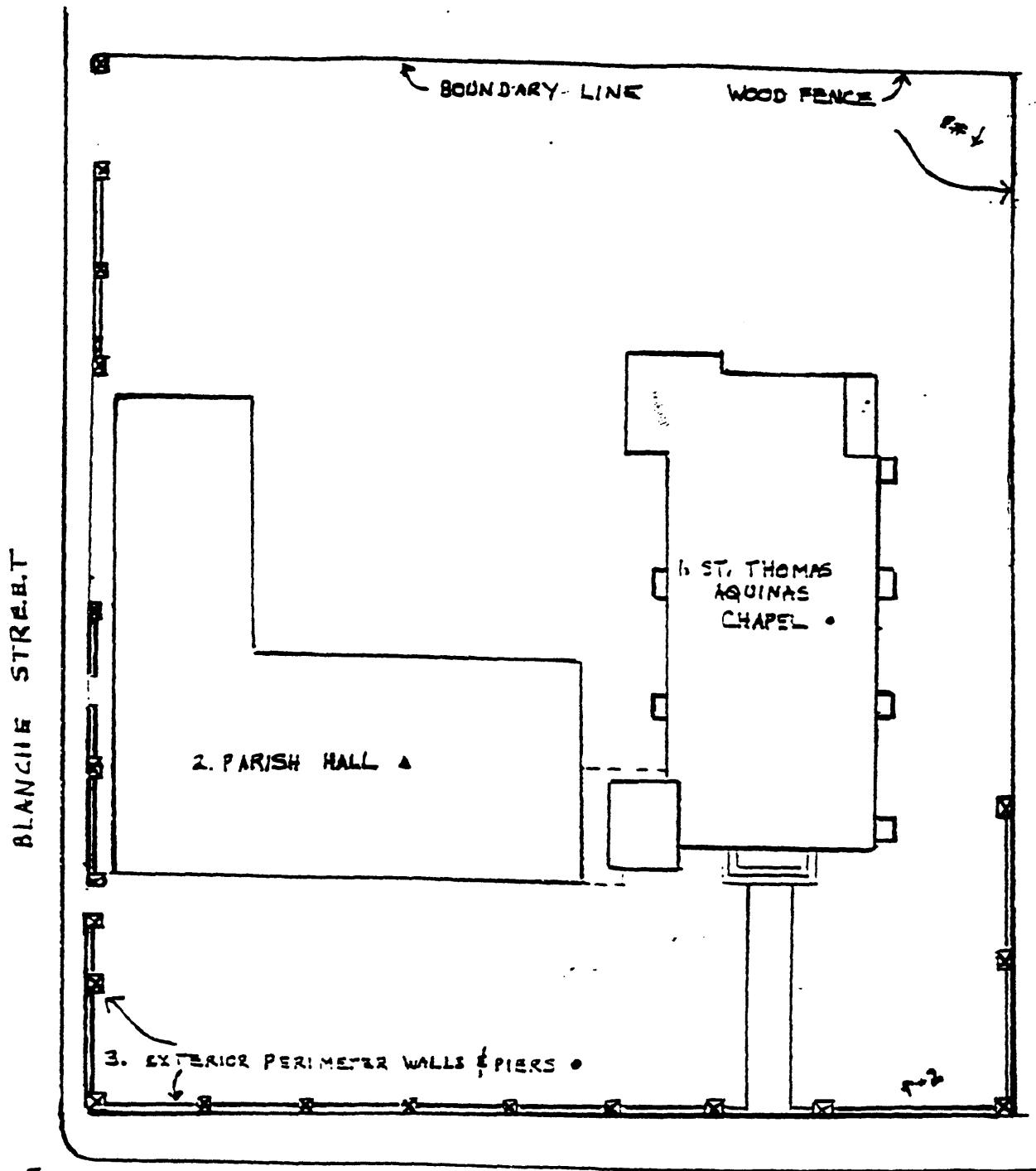
St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel, Ventura County, CA



NEW CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel 1922, facing northeast, showing original parish hall and arcade. In *Pictorial Edition of the Ojai*, December 1922. Courtesy Ojai Valley Museum

# SKETCH MAP & KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPEL  
 130 W. OJAI AVENUE  
 OJAI, CA 93024 APN 21-0-10-08  
 VENTURA COUNTY

OJAI AVENUE

- CONTRIBUTING
- ▲ NON-CONTRIBUTING
- ↑ \* KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS

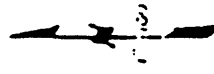


↑ 21



21-10

Tax Rate Area  
02000  
02004



CONTRACTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF OJAI

(Blk. 20)



CITY OF OJAI  
Ventura County Assessor's Map

Assessor's Office  
Assessor's Office  
Assessor's Office

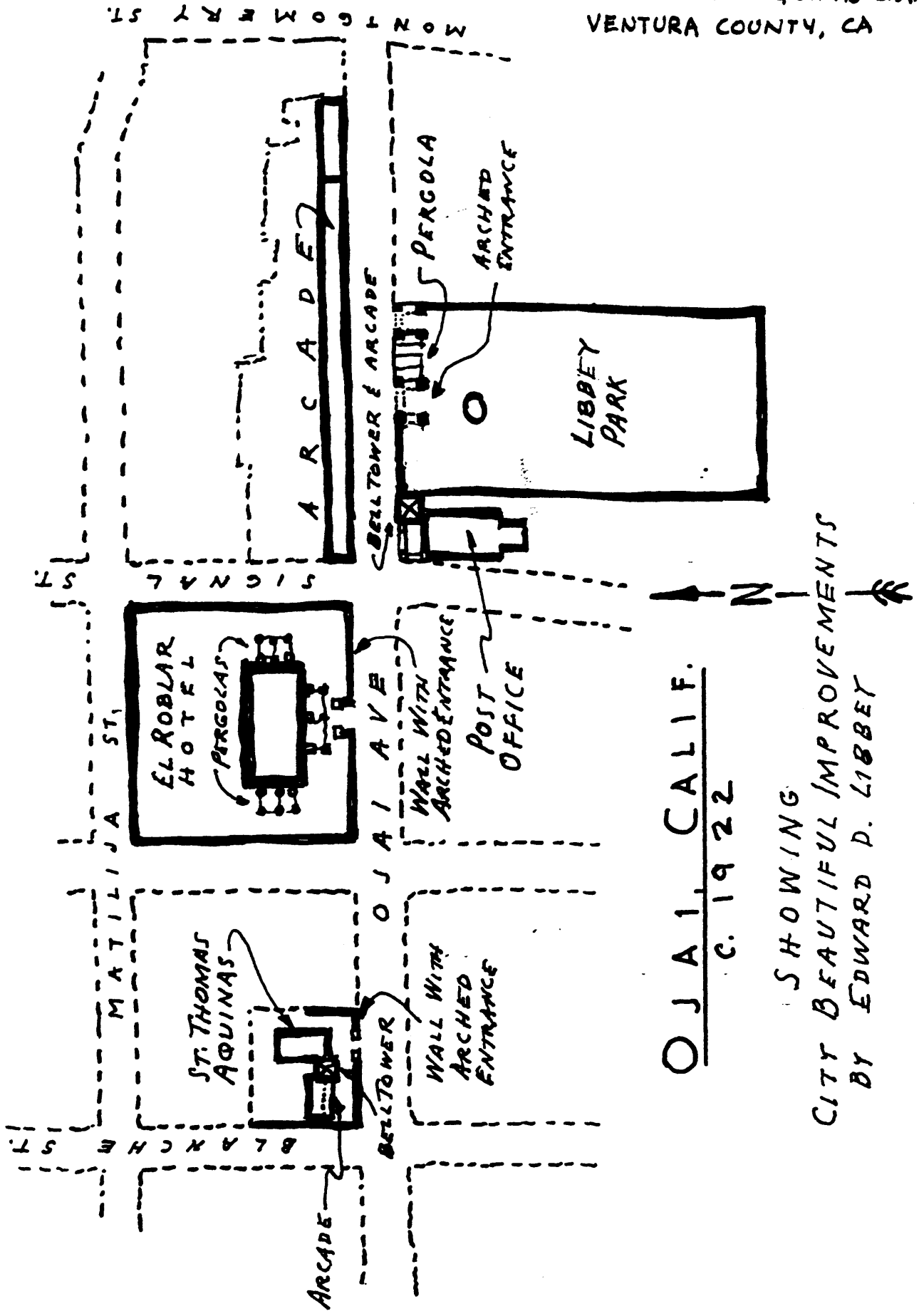
DATE	2/11/10
APPROVED	[Signature]
PREPARED	[Signature]
BY	[Signature]
FOR	[Signature]

(Blk. 23)

THIS MAP IS A PRELIMINARY MAP  
AND IS NOT TO BE USED FOR  
LEGAL PURPOSES WITHOUT  
THE APPROVAL OF THE  
ASSASSOR'S OFFICE

(Blk. 20)

ST THOMAS AQUINAS CHAPEL  
VENTURA COUNTY, CA



O J A I, CALIF.  
c. 1922

SHOWING  
CITY BEAUTIFUL IMPROVEMENTS  
BY EDWARD D. LIBBEY