

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 19 1988  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic The John Price House

and/or common Price Anniversary House

2. Location

street & number Highland Drive near Price Canyon Road and U.S. 101 N/A not for publication

city, town Pismo Beach X vicinity of

state California code 06 county San Luis Obispo code 079

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Pismo Beach

street & number 1000 Bello Street

city, town Pismo Beach N/A vicinity of state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Luis Obispo County Recorder

street & number 100 Monterey Street, Room 102

city, town San Luis Obispo state California

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

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" 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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Price Anniversary House is a one and two story wood frame single family vernacular I-House with shed addition dating to 1893-94. Substantially intact except for its front porch, the house is located in an undeveloped canyon which runs north and south, ending at the Pacific Ocean. On a four-acre site surrounded by vegetable fields and the other remnants of the historic Rancho El Pismo of which it was the centerpiece, the Price House is a moment out of time, calling forth a clear image of the central coast of California before the 20th century brought widespread settlement and urbanization.

Situated in a canyon which runs perpendicular to the Pacific Ocean, the John Michael Price "Anniversary" House is a single family home of a vernacular, late 19th century American type. It is free-standing and is surrounded by agricultural fields, an intact remnant of the Rancho El Pismo. Originally rectangular in plan, the gabled, two-story building received a one-story, front-gabled addition at the west end of the principal (south) elevation within a year of its construction. Weathered horizontal drop siding sheathes the L-shaped, wood frame structure. Historic photographs indicate that a seven-foot attached porch abutted the addition, spanning most of the lower story facade. It was reached by three stairs, and topped by a shallow hip roof. Simple wood posts with corbelled capitals defined two unequal bays. Curved brackets created an arcade effect, with decoratively sawn woodwork utilized for the frieze and the railing. The front porch has disappeared, but the smaller rear porch is in situ in the northwest corner of the house. It is sheltered by a shed roof which extends to the east over the kitchen. While the railing, which resembled that on the front porch, has been replaced, brackets sawn in a teardrop pattern and keyhole-like wooden ornaments remain. Tall and narrow windows are regularly and sparsely disposed one above another on each elevation. Double-hung two-over-two sash, they have simple raised surrounds with inverted triangle aprons. Primary access to the house is provided by two paneled doors sited at right angles to each other where the original house and the addition meet on the south elevation. The design of the doors features pairs of slender, glazed, round-headed panels over square panels. A transom tops the north entry. A rear porch entrance leads into the kitchen and is composed of a paneled door of a different design and a wood-framed screen door. Above the kitchen a repaired brick chimney rises along the north elevation of the two-story wing. Notable decorative elements of the original design included the porch woodwork, of which a portion remains in the rear and a bracket atop an engaged post is preserved in the front, the window sills, and cresting along the ridges of the gables (removed).

The interior of the Price Anniversary House is also simple and straightforward in design. A total of six rooms, including the one room addition, are arranged on two levels. A broad front hallway separates the original parlor on the west from the dining room to the east and leads into the kitchen in the rear. When the addition was built, the new space functioned as a parlor while the old parlor was converted into a bedroom. A small, closet-like addition on the west elevation presumably served as a bathroom. The upper story contains two additional bedrooms, one to either side of the landing. Turned newel posts and a spindle railing (partially removed) characterized the staircase.

(see continuation sheet)

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Other original interior features include four panel doors, some with transoms; broad, plain baseboards and chair rails; vertical shiplap siding in the kitchen and hall; wood floors; and a fireplace in the dining room.

Although not now under single ownership, all of the flood plain between the two ridges which define Price Canyon was under Price's control as was most of the Rancho El Pismo, prior to 1884. Two buildings on the county parcel which borders the Price Anniversary House on the north (and are not part of this nomination) are of particular significance to the house's physical and historical environment. The "Three Gabled Adobe," an adobe and frame residence, was probably built in two stages, c.1846 and c.1862, by Price and was the family home until the Anniversary House was erected. Next to it, the two-story "School House Adobe," now in ruins, apparently constructed for Price c.1857, was used for classrooms, storage, and housing guests. Other elements of the historic landscape mentioned in documents but no longer extant, were a barn and two stone corrals. A windmill is located to the southwest of the house which is probably not original to the property. At the northeast corner of the building, a lean-to storage shed of unknown date has been attached to the house. The picket fence which surrounded the house has been dismantled. Three sheds, also of uncertain age but probably not original, are in the vicinity, according to a 1984 site plan; only one of these lies on the Anniversary House parcel.

The setting of the Price Anniversary House is integral to its historic character. When John Michael Price died in 1902, the buildings and the land surrounding them in parcel 10 of the Rancho El Pismo (per the subdivision map drawn by R. R. Harris in 1886) were willed to his wife Dona Andrea Carlon Price for her lifetime. Despite some further subdivision following Mrs. Price's death in 1912, the property in the canyon has remained essentially rural and agricultural. Pismo Creek lies to the west of the buildings, running roughly parallel to the bordering ridges on the east and west. The hand of man is apparent in the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks which also traverse the canyon and in the two iron trestle bridges near the south mouth of the canyon.

Occupied until the mid-1970s, the Price Anniversary House is clearly recognizable as the residence pictured in newspaper accounts near the time of its construction. A certain amount of alteration and deterioration has occurred, however. Most notable on the exterior is the removal of the front porch and nearly all of its attendant detailing. Other missing elements are the rear porch railing and the roof cresting, while small additions on the west (closet) and the northeast (shingled shed) have been made. Some glazing has also been replaced by boards. On the interior, damage due to water, termites, and foundation rot can be observed in the floors. The parlor-turned-bedroom was subsequently turned into a bathroom. Although suffering from the effects of deterioration and neglect, the Price Anniversary House has been spared major remodeling. It retains its integrity of massing, workmanship, and materials, and is notably evocative of a moment in place and time.

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Resource Count

- 1 Contributing building
- 1 Non-contributing building
- 1 Non-contributing structure
- 3 Total

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1893–1894      **Builder/Architect** L.A. Lawrence

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Price Anniversary House is the oldest building in the City of Pismo Beach and was the final home of its founder, John Michael Price. Constructed in 1893 in a valley that was the heart of Price's vast land holdings, it remains today in much the same rural setting as at the time of construction, separated from the coastal enclave of Pismo Beach. The Price historic site, comprising four acres owned by the City of Pismo Beach and including the Anniversary House, is significant historically, for its association with John M. Price, and architecturally, as the only remaining building in the City which represents the second generation of architecture in the county. Price, as one of the most influential settlers of the region, is identified with several aspects of its settlement and growth, including its agricultural economy, its political and social life, the completion of the central coast transportation system, and real estate development. The house, showing its age but still mostly intact, clearly reflects the lifestyle of ranchers in the central coast region during the pivotal last decade of the 19th century, a period which saw a transition from a sparsely settled agrarian area to the more densely developed, diverse economy of the 20th century.

Price's activities in San Luis Obispo County should be examined in the context of the development of that county. Located on the central coast of California, San Luis Obispo County was first inhabited by Native Americans of the Chumash tribe, hunter-gatherers who inhabited most of coastal California when European explorers arrived in the late 18th century. The Portola expedition, most famous of the land exploration parties, arrived in San Luis Obispo County in 1772. In September of that same year, Franciscan missionary Father Crespi founded the Mission San Luis Obispo, thus beginning the Spanish colonization of the region. The period of mission influence lasted into the early 19th century, ending as the parcelization of land into vast "ranchos" given by Spanish concession (1775-1822) and subsequent Mexican land grants (1822-1846) secularized land holding in California. The first "rancheros" were men mostly of Mexican descent who used their substantial acreage primarily for cattle and sheep ranching. One of the first ranchos in the San Luis Obispo region was known as "Pismo", and was granted to Jose Ortega in 1835. Portions of the ranch were sold rapidly, and the majority of the land acquired by Isaac Sparks, who controlled well over 25,000 acres by the mid-1840s.

British-born John M. Price arrived in California in 1830, and eventually worked as a foreman or overseer on various ranches, including that of William G. Dana at Nipomo, before going to work for Sparks in 1842. In 1844, he married Maria Andrea Carlon, accepting the Californio lifestyle with its

(see continuation sheet)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

\_\_\_\_\_. "A Look into the History of Pismo Beach", Five Cities Times-Press Recorder, February 18, 1976.

(see continuation sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4.0 acres

Quadrangle name Pismo Beach

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

(see continuation sheet)

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

state N/A code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Johnson Heumann Research Associates for

organization City of Pismo Beach date January 28, 1988

street & number 1000 Bello Street telephone (805) 773-4657

city or town Pismo Beach state CA

## 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 Kathryn Maltieri

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 8/29/88

For NPS use only

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

Beth Boland  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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Mexican traditions and Catholic religion. Price acquired his portion of "Rancho Pismo", two square Spanish leagues or approximately six square miles, in 1852 from Isaac Sparks. At the time of acquisition, the property apparently contained an adobe home and outbuildings. Price came into possession of more acreage in 1854 and 1861, and by 1867, had added to the house, built a dairy barn nearby, and built a second adobe containing schoolrooms, storage and guest accommodations. He raised sheep and cattle, planted wheat and barley fields, and also maintained an orchard.

Between 1848 and 1873, he was active in county-wide politics, serving in a variety of capacities, including alcalde, county judge, public administrator, and on the Board of Supervisors. These were volatile years in the new state of California, and Price's considerable involvement in county politics reinforces his contributions to the area. In the mid-1870s, he participated in numerous San Luis Obispo city real estate transactions, buying and selling lots, constructing and remodelling buildings, and renting property. A notable achievement closer to home was the erection of a two-story hotel in 1875 on the county road which linked the town of Arroyo Grande to seaside wharves; in 1884, he moved that structure (known for a while as the Pismo Beach Hotel) closer to the ocean as he prepared to subdivide a portion of his rancho. The year before (1883) a wharf and warehouse were constructed by others at Pismo Beach under an agreement with Price. In October 1890, Price and his sons deeded to the Southern Pacific Railroad a strip of land through Price Canyon, enabling the connection of the railroad from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo to take place.

The first appearance of the town of Pismo Beach was in 1886, when Price commissioned a survey and town plat from R. R. Harris. On April 30, 1886, Price filed a map for the subdivision of a town to be called "El Pismo" with the County Recorder. The sale of the first lots in the new town followed shortly thereafter. In 1887, Price sold his holdings in what is now the town of Pismo Beach to A. E. Pomeroy and development of the town proceeded under the auspices of the Pismo Beach Company.

Price and his wife Maria Andrea Carlon had 15 children, of whom 13 survived and were raised on the ranch. In 1884, Price began to divide his substantial holdings amongst his heirs, retaining the heart of the rancho for his wife and himself. This parcel (number 10, according to the subdivision map) contained the adobe house which had been modified over the years to accommodate a large family (the "Three Gabled House"), the "Schoolhouse Adobe", and other ranch buildings.

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In 1894, Price built for Maria the first frame house on the site as a present for their 50th anniversary. The two-story home was a simple wood-frame Victorian with a large porch which faced the town of Pismo Beach and the sea. A newspaper account published in 1893 states, "J.M. Price is having a comfortable two-story house built on his ranch at Pismo. The building is 26 x 32 feet in size. On the lower floor are a parlor, dining room, and kitchen with a wide hall leading from front to kitchen and separating the dining room from the parlor. A stairway leads from the hall to the kitchen to the second floor where there are two commodius bedrooms and the necessary closets. A seven-foot porch runs nearly full length of the front of the building and another off from the kitchen. L.A. Lawrence is the contractor and builder." With the exception of the front porch, the account remains an accurate depiction of Price Anniversary House today as it continues to exemplify the home of a county pioneer in his later years. The house typifies the trend of the later 19th century away from Mexican adobe construction towards more Anglicized styles.

John Price died in 1902 at the age of 91, having been a resident of San Luis Obispo County for over five decades. During those decades, he helped to shape the future of the area through his participation in agriculture, building of a transportation system, the subdivision of local communities, and local government. British by birth, Price was one of the first Anglo settlers in the area who integrated into the Mexican-American population and adopted some of the customs and lifestyles of the region. Maria Andrea Carlon Price occupied the Anniversary House until her death in 1912, when title to the property passed to her children.

The Price Anniversary House, the only building directly associated with Price in the City of Pismo Beach, was recently acknowledged by the City Council. In a resolution dated November 23, 1987, the Council recognized the landmark house as the "oldest standing structure in the City of Pismo Beach" and as "a unique historical structure relating to the founding and development of the City."

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Ditmas, Madge C. "Pioneers of Our Valley: John Michael Price." The Herald-Recorder, June 2, 1933. (see continuation sheet)

Leonard, Ralph J. John Michael Price, A California Ranchero. Unpublished manuscript, 1981.

Loud, Lachlin, et al., Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo. Price Historical Park Master Plan Report, June 1984.

Morrison, Mrs. Annie and John L. Haydon. History of San Luis Obispo County and Environs. Los Angeles, Historical Record Co., 1917.

Olsen, Doris. "Pismo's Oldest Structures to be Open for Public Tour Sunday." Santa Maria Times, May 5, 1972.

Olsen, Doris. "Price." Santa Maria Times, April 19, 1976.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Pismo Beach has Long, Colorful, History." Five Cities Times-Press Recorder, February 24, 1982.

Woodward, Emily. "Price Adobes: A peek into Pioneer Life." Five Cities Times-Press Recorder, May 11, 1972.

Collection of Susan Desmond, Parks Commissioner, City of Pismo Beach.

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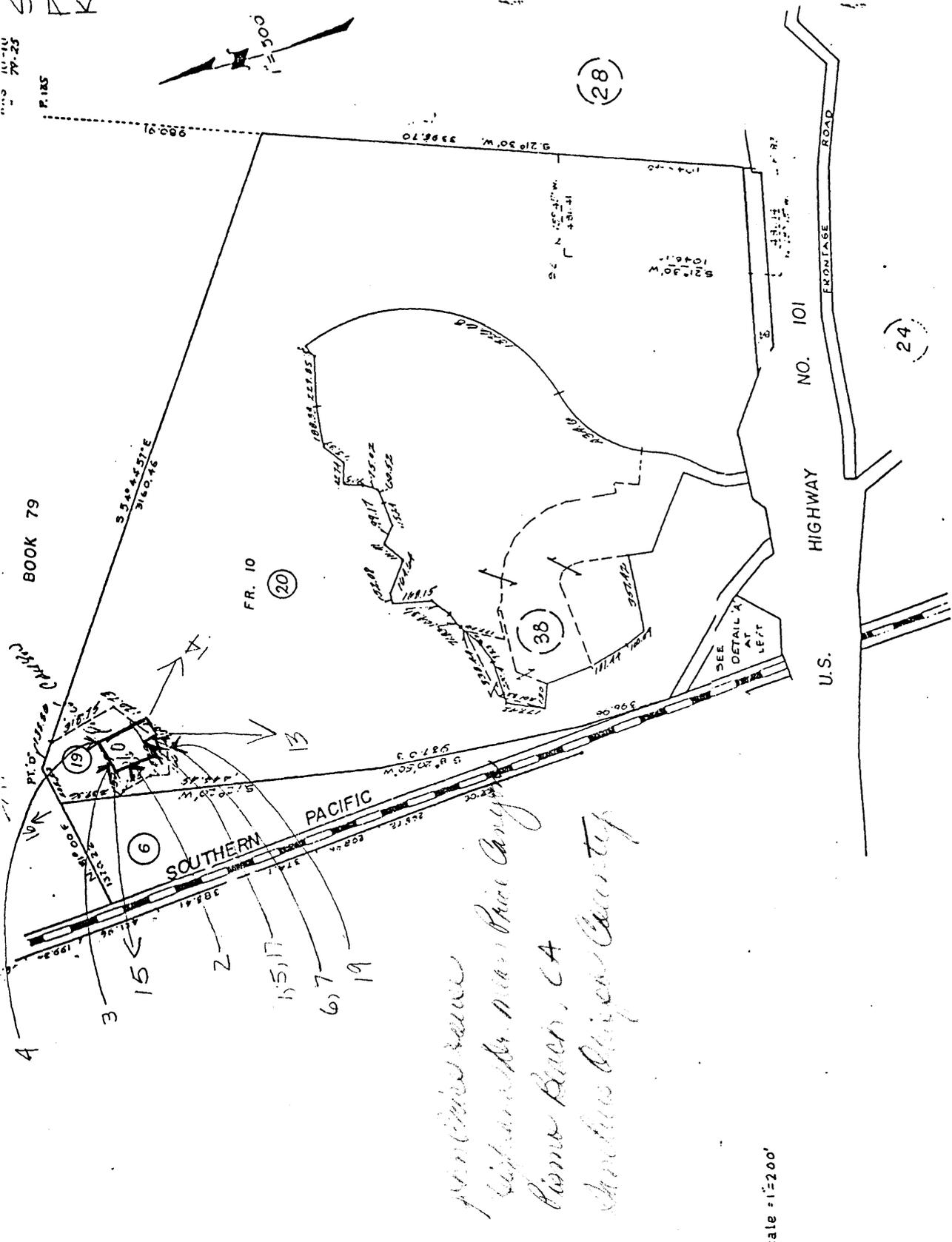
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Beginning at the intersection of the City limit line of the City of Pismo Beach and a line bearing North 81c00' East as shown on the map of Tract 814 as recorded in Book of Maps at Page in the office of the County Recorder, County of San Luis Obispo. Thence, South 54c44'57" East along said City limit line a distance of 138.86 feet to a point; thence leaving said City limit line South 13c41'45" East a distance of 318.75 feet; thence South 57c39'49" West a distance of 120.73 feet; thence Westerly along a tangent curve concave to the Southeast having radius of 530.00 feet, a central angle of 17c59'37" and an arc length of 166.43 feet; thence North 78c46'16" West a distance of 166.10 feet; thence North 13c31'00" East a distance of 83.97 feet; thence North 13c20'30" West a distance of 145.00 feet; thence North 37c30'24" West a distance of 53.29 feet to the Westerly line of the remainder of Lot 10 of Rancho El Pismo and San Miguelito as shown on the map of said Tract 814; thence North 11c13'40" East along said Westerly line a distance of 239.36 feet; thence North 81c00'00" East a distance of 202.23 feet to the true point of beginning containing 4.0 acres.

SITE MAP/  
PHOTOGRAPH  
KEY

APR 20  
79-25

P. 185



*portion same  
within the San Luis Canyon  
Pismo Beach, CA  
San Luis Obispo County*

scale = 1"=200'

RANCHO EL PISMO  
CITY OF PISMO BEACH  
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
CALIFORNIA

NOTE—ASSESSOR'S BLOCK & LOT NUMBERS SHOW IN CIRCLES

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1. Name: Price Anniversary House  
Location: Pismo Beach, California  
Photographer: C. McAvoy  
Date of Photograph: September, 1987  
Location of Negative: City of Pismo Beach Planning Department  
View: Northeast  
Description: Southeast elevation.
2. View: East  
Description: West elevation.
3. View: South  
Description: North elevation.
4. View: Southwest  
Description: Northeast elevation.
5. View: Northeast  
Description: Entry.
6. View: East  
Description: Entry porch detail.
7. View: East  
Description: Window detail.
8. View: Interior  
Description: Stairway.
9. View: Interior  
Description: Entry.
10. View: Interior  
Description: View from original parlor across hall into dining room.
11. View: Interior  
Description: Dining room.
12. View: Interior  
Description: Second floor west bedroom.
13. View: Southwest  
Description: Context.
14. View: Southeast  
Description: Context.

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15. View: Northwest  
Description: Context.
16. View: North  
Description: Three-Gabled Adobe.
17. View: East  
Description: Ruins of Schoolhouse Adobe.
18. Name: Price Anniversary House  
Location: Pismo Beach, California  
Photographer: Unknown  
Date of Photograph: c.1894  
Location of Negative: Susan Desmond, City of Pismo Beach  
View: Northeast  
Description: Southwest elevation; J.M. Price seated at right.
19. Name: Price Anniversary House  
Location: Pismo Beach, California  
Photographer: Unknown  
Date of PHotograph: c.1894  
Location of Negative: Susan Desmond, City of Pismo Beach  
View: North  
Description: J.M. Price seated in entry.