

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Guajome Ranchhouse

AND/OR COMMON Guajome Ranchhouse

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 2.5 miles northeast of Vista

CITY, TOWN Vista

VICINITY OF

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
42nd

STATE California

CODE  
06

COUNTY  
San Diego

CODE  
073

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK <i>under development</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WRK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PRDCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDEREO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME San Diego County Parks Department

STREET & NUMBER 2454 Heritage Park Row

CITY, TOWN San Diego

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE California

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC San Diego County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN San Diego

STATE California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey (11 sheets and 14 photos)

DATE 1936  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress / Annex-Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Although not built until 1852-53, this one-story adobe ranchhouse, together with its related outbuildings is a nearly perfect and unaltered example of a large Spanish Colonial hacienda with a two-courtyard plan. The thick-walled, red-tile roofed main house measures 111 feet by 118 feet on the exterior and is built around the four sides of a rectangle, thus forming a large enclosed patio or inner courtyard. The 21 rooms of residence open out under an inner corridor or veranda into the patio, which has a fountain in the center and is planted with orange trees, shrubs, flowers, and vines. The west wing contains the pantry, bakery, kitchen and dining room; the center or south section has the chief family living rooms. An arcaded veranda extends across the entire exterior facade of the south portion and its roof is surmounted in the center by a small frame lookout. The east and north wings are both occupied by numerous bedrooms. A gate or passageway in the north side, near the east corner, leads out to the large carriage or outer courtyard, which measures 118 by 85 feet on the exterior. This yard is completely enclosed by adobe service structures that are built around three sides of the rectangle on the north side of the main house. The main gate, with heavy wooden doors, is situated in the east wall of the outer courtyard. This plan of two-enclosed courtyards provided a ready means of defense in the event of an Indian attack. Unlike most other Spanish-Mexican ranchos in the United States, the numerous original Rancho Guajome service buildings have survived virtually intact. Arranged around the walls of the outer courtyard are: the jail, blacksmith shop, horse stalls, carriage house, and harness room. These buildings still have most of their original tools and equipment. Outside the courtyard is a family chapel, a servants' house, and a number of barns and sheds.

In 1868 Coutts erected the chapel dedicating it to his mother. Cave Coutts, Jr., added a wood frame second story loft in 1887. In 1924 the original adobe was covered with wood and plaster by Cave Coutts, Jr. when he renovated the main house and chapel. Surrounding vistas are a nearby lake and small stream, natural rock outcroppings, gently rolling hills and a distinctive row of casurina trees.

Only a small part of the main ranchhouse has been remodeled in any way and these changes have been limited to providing electricity and modern plumbing. The Ranch house has been boarded up pending renovation of the structure and development of the surrounding area into a County hist /rec. facility, scheduled for completion by 1978.

# 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 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

1852-53

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Guajome Ranchhouse, erected in 1852-53, exemplifies the traditional Spanish-Mexican one-story adobe hacienda with an inner and outer courtyard plan. Unlike most other Spanish-Mexican ranchos in the United States, the numerous original Rancho Guajome service buildings have survived virtually intact. Arranged around the walls of the outer courtyard are: the jail, blacksmith shop, horse stalls, carriage house, and the harness room. These buildings still have most of their original tools and equipment. Outside the courtyard is a family chapel, a servants' house, and a number of barns and sheds.

Only a small part of the main ranchhouse has been remodeled in any way and these changes have been limited to providing electricity and modern plumbing.

## HISTORY

After the revolution of 1821, the Mexican government repealed the former Spanish laws forbidding foreign trade and instead, encouraged the development of private farming and stock raising by making huge land grants. The first hide and tallow traders, chiefly from New England arrived by sea in 1822. In 1823, 9 ships visited California ports to exchange manufactured goods for cargoes of hides, and by 1841 the number had increased to 50 vessels a year. Between 1822 and 1832, 20 more land grants were made by the Mexican government for ranching purposes but development on this line was blocked by great land holdings of the 21 California missions. In 1833-1834, the Mexican government therefore secularized all of the California missions: the mission churches were converted into parish churches, the virtual enslavement of the Mission Indians was ended, the vast mission land monopoly was ended, and the great mission herds, which included 204, 403 cattle, 152, 469 sheep, and 20,857 horses, were also broken up. In the period 1833-1845 the Mexican government made 644 additional grants for ranchos that totaled more than 8,000,000 of land, thus ushering in the golden age of the rancho in California. By 1845 more than one-third of the California's white population lived on ranchos.

Guajome Rancho (or the Home of the Big Frog) comprising 2,219.41 acres and formerly a part of the San Luis Rey Mission lands, was granted to Andres and Jose Manuel, former Mission Indians, on July 19, 1845, by Governor Pio Pico. In 1852, they sold their grant for \$550 to Abel Stearns, a wealthy American merchant who had settled in Los Angeles in 1826. In 1848, Lt. Cave Coutts, a West Point graduate and nephew of Cave Johnson, Sec'y of Treasury under Pres. Polk arrived in San Diego with the 1st Dragoons.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Griffin, Helen S., Casa and Courtyards; Historic Adobe Houses of California, Oakland 1955.  
 Hoover, Mildred B., and Rensch, Hero E. and Ethel G., 3rd edition revised by William N. Abeloe, Historic Spots in California, Stanford, 1966.  
 Kirker, Harold, California's Architectural Frontier, San Marino, 1960.  
 Lewis, Oscar, Here Lived the Californians, New York, 1957.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY C 158  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	11	476650	3677090	B	11	476670	3676020
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	11	475520	3676040	D	11	476080	3677220
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary is drawn to include the Guajome Ranch House and a section of surrounding land which is part of the original grant. This area is part of a larger land area which will be developed as a County Park. The area of the landmark itself has been determined by a combination of original grant lines and land terrain features which preserve the integrity of the ranch house site within the larger park area. A plat map showing the relationship of the landmark area to the park is included as sketch map A. The property is bounded by Santa Fe Avenue on the north from UTM 11.4766503677090

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Boundary prepared by Patricia Heintzelman, architectural historian, Landmark Review Project, original form prepared by Charles Snell, 1967.

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Historic Sites Survey

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street

523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington,

D.C.

# 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/23/79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

1/15/79

ATTEST: William Labovich

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
 LANDMARKS)

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In 1851, Coutts married Ysidora Bandini, daughter of one of San Diego's most prominent citizens. Another of Bandini's daughters, Arcadia, was married to Abel Stearns, and latter presented Guajome Rancho to Cave Coutts and his bride as a wedding gift. Development of Guajome Rancho was a monumental task, but Coutts was determined not only to become a successful Ranchero but to have the finest ranchhouse in the County. He recruited 300 indians to build the 7,680 square foot house. Built for indian defence, its 2-4 ft. adobe walls had high "Airholes" instead of windows, and its ancient roof tiles came from nearby Mission San Luis Rey. It is reported among Rancho Guajome's houseguest were Gen. Lew Wallace who reputedly worked on his novel "Ben Hur" while there. Helen Hunt Jackson who was also a guest, based her novel "Ramona" on the daily life at Guajome Rancho.

Coutts was also the owner of two other nearby ranches that he operated until his death in 1876. Rancho Guajome remained in the Coutts family until 1943, when it passed to Ida Richardson. In 1973, San Diego County acquired 165 acres of the original grant and were required by court to pay Earl Richardson, final heir to Rancho Guajome \$1,021,840 for title to the historic Rancho.

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9

1

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Engstrand, Iris Wilson, and Scarf, Thomas L. "Rancho Guajome", Journal of San Diego History, Winter, 1974.

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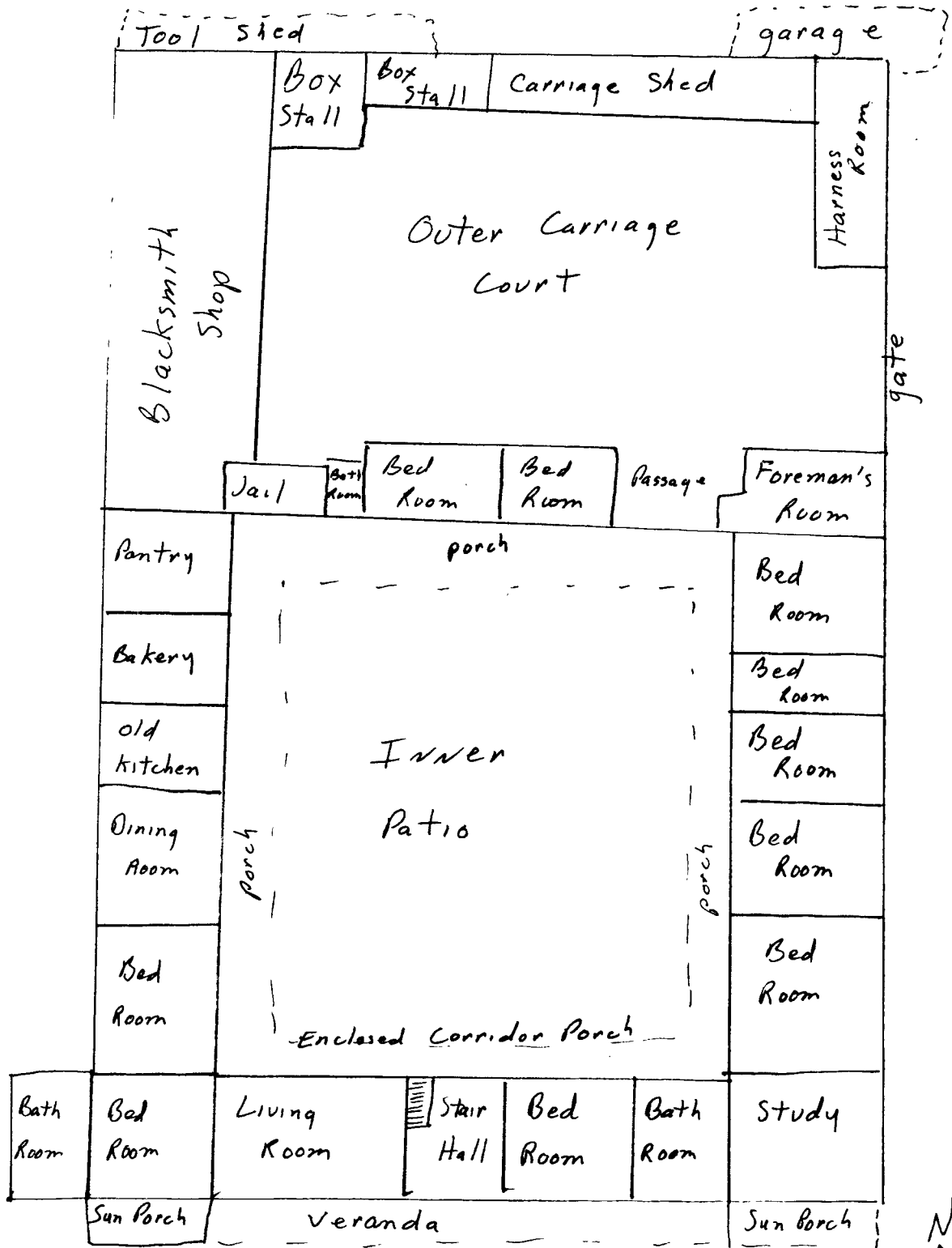
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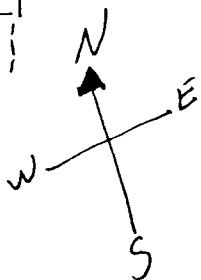
CONTINUATION SHEET Guajome Ranchhouse ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

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to the corporate body line between Vista and Oceanside by this city line on the west, the grant line on the southwest, southeast and south, to UTM 11.476660.3676290 and on the eastwest by a line drawn from the eastern points of the north and south boundaries.



Sketch Plan of  
Guajome Ranchhouse  
Vista, Calif



copy of one by CW Snell  
done 5/23/68