

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 instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Christian Science Society

Other names/site number: Overlook Hall

Name of related multiple property listing
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 209 East Whittley Avenue

City or town: Avalon State: California County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national **statewide** **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A **B** **C** **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, plaster, used brick, terra cotta tile, glass

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Christian Science Society is a brick-and-mortar building located almost exactly in the geographic center of Avalon, Santa Catalina Island. It faces the Catalina Channel and is flanked by residential units to the north and south. Across the street on East Whittley are additional apartments and single-family homes. Beyond that is the commercial section of Avalon, Avalon Bay, and the southern California mainland, all clearly visible from the building's attached deck. East Whittley Avenue is steeply sloped and jogs sharply upward to the southeast just past the property's eastern boundary. Built in 1929, the 1,792 square foot building was patterned after an Italian chapel without the more ornate classical features. In this simplified form, the building more closely followed the Spanish Colonial Revival that ultimately reshaped many of California's coastal cities, and was Catalina's first example of the style. Built under difficult conditions, successful completion of the church was pivotal in helping to spark the Spanish Colonial Revival theme that would define Avalon's character for the next fifty years. The property retains all aspects of historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

The building was designed by the architectural firm of Weber & Spaulding and constructed by DM Renton.¹ Both companies were brought into being by William Wrigley, Jr., prominent Chicago industrialist and owner of Catalina Island since 1919. Wrigley knew that Catalina was the last of the Spanish land grants and sought to create a community with the look and feel of old California.² The design of the Christian Science Society was patterned after Chapel San Croce near Florence, Italy, a thirteenth century Franciscan church. Without the pilasters and columns of the Italian Renaissance style, the building more closely follows the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The property remained in use as a Christian Science church until the early 1990s when it was closed due to a shrinking local congregation. Sold to a professional renovator by the First Church of Christ, Scientist in 2011, it has since been rehabilitated without major alteration.

The architects were clearly challenged by a relatively small (2,439 square feet) lot with a substantial slope downward towards the west. Form was combined with function to create a simple two-story building with open gable roof. The first floor is street level and accessed through an arched double-door on the eastern side of the building's facade. To the right of this entry is a 19-step external stairway leading up to a spacious patio and the original church sanctuary. Between the stairway and the street is a small garden encircled in red clay brick that serves to soften the severity of the large façade. The façade is all of the same brick and extends upward to create a waist-high barrier enclosing the deck.

Entry through the arched double doors on the first level—accented at top with Roman arch brickwork—leads to a small brick-enclosed foyer. A concrete slab extends from here through the building's footprint, and another stairway along the building's east side leads up to the rear of the sanctuary. Across the foyer are two smaller double-doors that provide entry to the first floor interior. The first room entered is 22' x 20' with concrete floor, 8' plaster ceiling, and two large multi-paned double windows set into both the east and west walls. It was here that Sunday school was conducted each week at 9:30 am for more than 60 years. A bathroom accessed through a doorway at the northwest corner of the room was enlarged during the 2012-2013 rehabilitation. The work was done by a professional contractor and is believed to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. That was the only significant modification made to the building's original layout and had no impact on the building's exterior. Across the room to the south is another set of doors leading to a smaller 10' x 22' room. Unlike the plaster finish to the walls of the larger space, this room features exposed brick walls to the east and west along with a small crawl space to the north, likely for storage.

Returning outside to the exposed stairway, a 19-step climb upwards leads to an expansive concrete deck that runs the width of the building and provides largely unobstructed 180-degree views. Three oversized exterior-molded double doors, each with original wrought-iron hardware

¹ David Renton, personal interview and correspondence, Fall 2016.

² William Sanford White and Kim Lianne Stotts, *The Wrigley Family: A Legacy of Leadership in Santa Catalina Island* (Glendora, CA: White Limited Editions and White Family Trust, 2005).

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and Roman arch accents, open outward to allow access to the upper sanctuary floor. A circular skylight or dormer window with decorative crosspieces that divide the panes adds symmetry and light. Originally, the 4' outside space between the top of the doorways and the skylight was taken up by massive block letters reading CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY (since removed). The exposed brick masonry with its soldier layering extends without obstruction to the gently sloping roofline.

The sanctuary is simple and elegant. Running the entire length of the floor is old growth Douglas fir, complete with golden patina. Like the lower floor, the walls are plaster over brick with three large clerestory windows on the east side and four more on the west side. These are all original multi-paned windows with chicken-wire glass and wrought iron hardware. Overhead is an open-beam ceiling of the same Douglas fir along with four massive cross-trusses with iron detail. At the far (south) end of the sanctuary is a raised stage framed by a three-sided open wall at rear. Through the wall opening is at left an emergency exit leading to the east stairway and at right a small bathroom, all with planked wood floors and plaster walls. Five windows opening to the south and west provide light and ventilation. Topping the sanctuary is a terra-cotta tile roof with brick bell tower at the west end of the roofline.

Integrity

The building has not been moved and retains integrity of *location*. Its *setting* in the center of Avalon continues to be a defining element of the property, and the building's Spanish Colonial Revival *design* remains a shining example of architectural excellence with character defining features including the heavy use of brick, clerestory windows, and arched doorways beneath an expansive tile roof.

Catalina owners William Wrigley, Jr. and his son Phillip were keen observers as well as worldly industrialists. Both men were anxious to populate the island with a distinctive and popular architectural look. In this building, they were also looking to create a beacon of permanence in a community with a highly seasonal feel. The *materials* and *workmanship* utilized in construction were the best available at the time and remain wholly original and evident. Other than signage, the building's exterior is virtually indistinguishable from its original appearance. The interior also retains all of its major character defining features.

Island residents recognize the building for its *association* with the Wrigley family in the 1920s and the difficult conditions under which it was built. As such, the Christian Science Society continues to serve as a lasting imprint of the Wrigley influence and impact on Avalon, and retains integrity of *feeling*.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1929

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Weber & Spaulding

Renton, David M.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Christian Science Society is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for the type and period of its construction. Its Spanish Colonial Revival design was precedent setting for the island and served as a template for the cohesive feel that later defined Avalon during its golden age of the 1930s. In 1934, a complete redesign of downtown Avalon incorporated many of the same Revivalist elements, erasing what had previously been an undistinguished and inconsistent look and adding architectural character to the community. The building's successful completion—on time and on budget despite the trying conditions of both location and period—inspired confidence among island developers, and became a thematic touchstone for the entire community. The church also came to be regarded as a beacon of temperance in a township otherwise lacking in same. The property satisfies Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties because it derives its primary significance from architectural distinction as evaluated under Criterion C. The period of significance corresponds with the building's date of construction, 1929.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Having purchased remote Santa Catalina Island in its entirety in 1919, Chicago industrialist William Wrigley, Jr. spent the ensuing decade laying the groundwork for a vibrant tourist industry. Wrigley spent millions in creating cross-channel transportation, hotel and residential housing, business development, education, public utilities, communication infrastructure, and more. With the municipal work largely done, he turned to beautifying Avalon. His early death in 1932 left that job to his eldest son Philip K. Wrigley. Two years later, Philip Wrigley initiated a massive downtown renovation effort that included dozens of palm trees, new fountains, signage, distinctive serpentine walls, and a vibrant color palette with an early Spanish feel. At that time, there were only two buildings with that kind of style in Avalon: the large Avalon Casino and the much smaller Christian Science Society. Wrigley was looking for an architectural theme to define the island, and with the completion of these two buildings he now had one. Insofar as Wrigley-dominated architects and builders had been responsible for both, he also knew his team understood and could deliver what he was looking for. As a result, a wide variety of work was successfully undertaken and the results redefined Catalina for generations of visitors.

In the late 1920s, construction challenges on Catalina Island were legion. Local craftsmen and building materials were in short supply, transportation was expensive, and the Wrigley casino project had priority on virtually all construction-related services. The small lot had been selected mostly due to its central location and view, and also because the steep climb up East Whittley Avenue to the church was thought to instill humility in its congregants. The sharply sloping lot on one of Avalon's narrowest and most steeply inclined streets added considerable complexity to the construction process. All the same, the building was completed within a year at the originally budgeted cost of \$20,000. It was dedicated as scheduled on August 18, 1929, replacing a wholly

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inadequate bungalow that the Christian Science congregation had long outgrown. Over the years, First Readers at the regular Sunday services included many of Avalon's most prominent women.

In addition to serving as a stylistic touchstone for Avalon's future growth, the symbolic value of the new edifice was soon apparent. Throughout the 1920s, Avalon had been a frontier town with gaming establishments, houses of ill repute, and liquor barges anchored nearby. Rum-runners with fast boats utilized the island's remote windward side as a jumping-off point to their mainland customers. It quickly became known that the Wrigleys had little tolerance for vice. No alcohol was served at any of the Wrigley establishments, and divorce among their employees was grounds for dismissal. Phillip Wrigley's wife Helen, herself a devoted Christian Scientist, participated in church services when present and all Wrigleys viewed the Christian Science Society as permanent testimony to their conservative ethos. The church thus served as a permanent Wrigley fingerprint on the island in a way no other Wrigley building did. It was an ethical statement as well as an architectural beacon of things to come.

By the mid-1930s, Avalon had become much more attractive, drawing all-star acts to the Casino and celebrities to frolic on its shores. Thanks to Wrigley's architectural vision and financing, the town was now a harmonious blend of tile, stucco, colorful foliage, and balconies overlooking the water along Front Street. A budding travel press extolled Catalina's clean air and charming feel, and new cross-channel transportation was initiated to handle the growing crowds. The boom lasted until World War II when the island was closed to tourism and largely taken over by the United States Maritime Commission. After a long period of recovery following the war, Avalon slowly modernized and razed many of the pre-war buildings. Those that remain—especially the few that came to define the architectural character of the town—have become symbols of Avalon's past. The Christian Science Society played a significant role in that pivotal era of transformation.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Angle, Paul McClelland. *Philip Wrigley: Memoir of a Modest Man*. Chicago, New York, and San Francisco: Rand McNally & Company, 1975.

Catalina Islander. Various articles. 1928-1929.

Doran, Adelaide LeMert. *The Ranch That Was Robbins': Santa Catalina Island, California*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963.

Gleason, Joe Duncan. *The Islands and Ports of California: A Guide to Coastal California*. New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1958.

Hall, Thorne. *Odyssey of The California Islands*. Santa Barbara, CA: Pacific Coast Odyssey Publications, 1962.

Hagenah, Blanche Wrigley. Personal Correspondence. July 2016.

Holder, Charles Frederick. *Santa Catalina, An Isle of Summer: Its History, Climate, Sports and Antiquities*. San Francisco: C.A. Murdock & Co., 1895.

Liddell, Chuck, Catalina Island Historian. Personal Interview. Avalon, July 15, 2016.

Mary Baker Eddy Collection. Archives of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts.

Maxwell, Patricia, Bob Rhein, and Jerry Roberts. *Catalina A To Z: A Glossary Guide to California's Island Jewel*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014.

Moore, Patricia Anne. *The Casino: Catalina Island's "Two Million Dollar Palace of Pleasure."* 2nd ed. Avalon, CA: Catalina Island Museum Society Inc. and Philip K. Wrigley Publishing Fund, 2002.

Overholt, Alma. *The Catalina Story*. Avalon, CA: Catalina Island Museum Society Inc., 1962.

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Renton, David. Personal Interview and Correspondence, Fall 2016.

Robinson, W.W. *The Island Of Santa Catalina*. Los Angeles: Title Guarantee and Trust Company, 1941.

Windle, Ernest. *Windle's History of Santa Catalina Island (With Map). Second Edition*. Avalon, CA: The Catalina Islander, 1940.

White, William Sanford and Kim Lianne Stotts. *The Wrigley Family: A Legacy of Leadership in Santa Catalina Island*. Glendora, CA: White Limited Editions and White Family Trust, 2005.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Avalon Public Library, Catalina Island Museum

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.344118

Longitude: -118.328227

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property is located at 209 East Whittley Avenue, Avalon, Los Angeles County, California. There is approximately 40 feet of street frontage. Its legal description is as follows:

That parcel of land in the City of Avalon, county of Los Angeles, State of California being a portion of Lot 11 and all of lot 12, Block 7, in the official map of the city of Avalon, on Santa Catalina Island recorded March 3, 1930 in Book 1, Pages 31 to 46 inclusive of maps, in the office of the county recorder of said county, is more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the northwest corner of said lot 12, said point also being on the southerly right-of-way of Calle de Sol as shown on said official map, thence northeasterly along said right-of-way North 55 degrees 27 minutes 53 seconds east a distance of 52.71 feet; thence leaving said right-of-way South 52 degrees 59 minutes 0 seconds east a distance of 140.00 feet to a point on the northerly right-of-way of Metropole Avenue as shown on said official map; thence southwesterly along said right-of-way South 37 degrees 2 minutes 0 seconds a distance of 50 feet to the southwest corner of said lot 12; thence leaving said right-of-way North 52 degrees, 59 minutes 0 seconds west a distance of 156.67 feet along the westerly line of said lot 12 to the point of beginning.

This legal description is made pursuant to that certain certificate of compliance recorded January 6, 2009 as instrument number 2009-13052 of official records.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Christian Science Society of Avalon, 209 East Whittley Avenue.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Anna Dira, General Manager
Organization: Overlook Hall
Street & number: 209 East Whittley Avenue, PO Box 2679
City or town: Avalon state: California zip code: 90704
E-mail: info@overlookhall.com
Telephone: (310) 427-2450
Date: July 2016, Revised March 2017

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Christian Science Society

City or Vicinity: Avalon

County: Los Angeles

State: California

Photographer: As indicated

Date Photographed: As indicated

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 4 Primary façade, camera facing north

Photographer: Shana Cassidy

Date Photographed: June 17, 2015

2 of 4 Detail, upper primary façade, camera facing north

Photographer: Anna Dira

Date Photographed: July 18, 2016

3 of 4 Sanctuary interior, camera facing north

Photographer: Glen Gustafson

Date Photographed: October 4, 2016

4 of 4 Aerial image of building

Photographer: drone camera

Date Photographed: October 31, 2016

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Location Map

Latitude: 33.344118

Longitude: -118.328227



Google earth



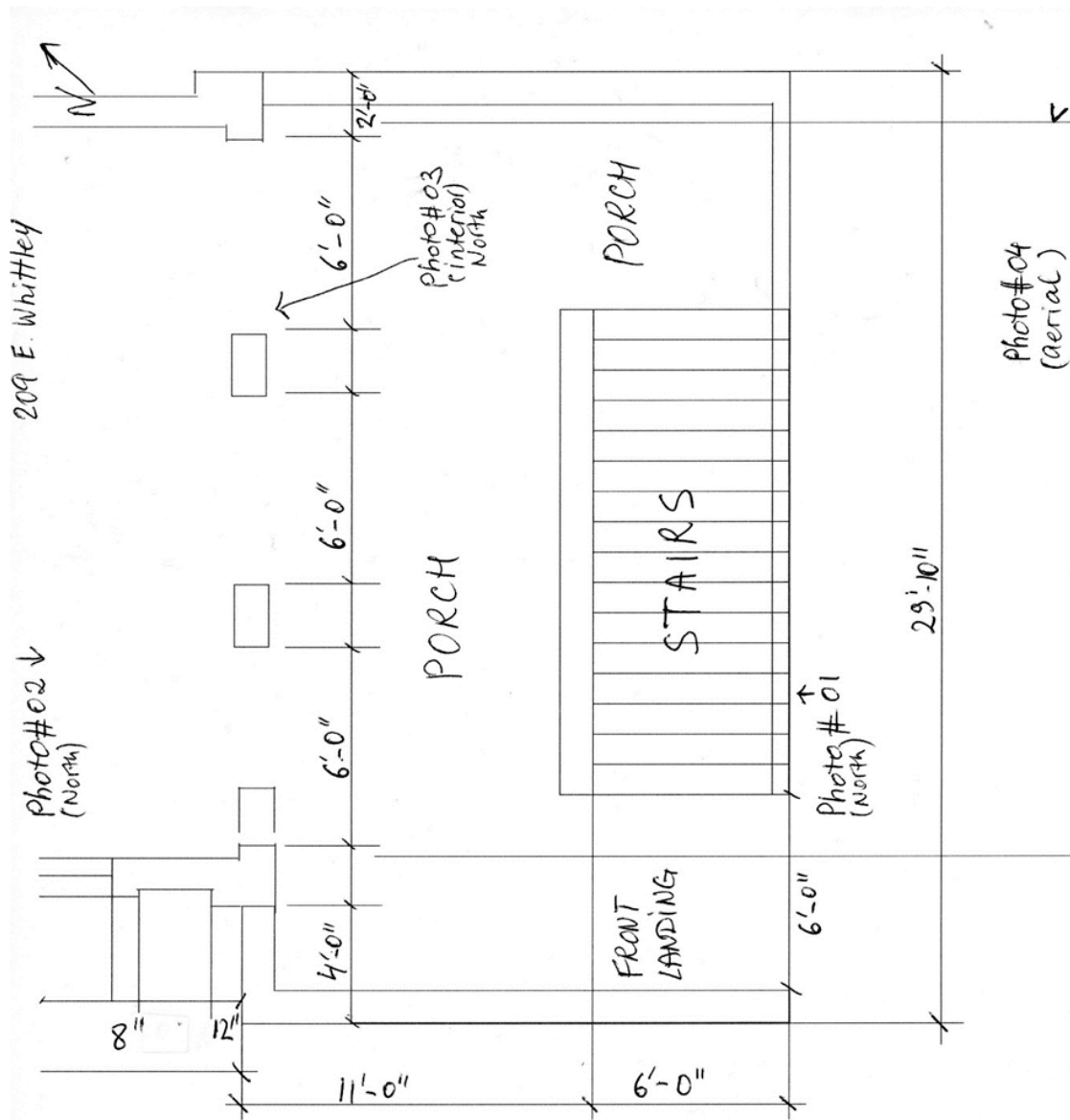
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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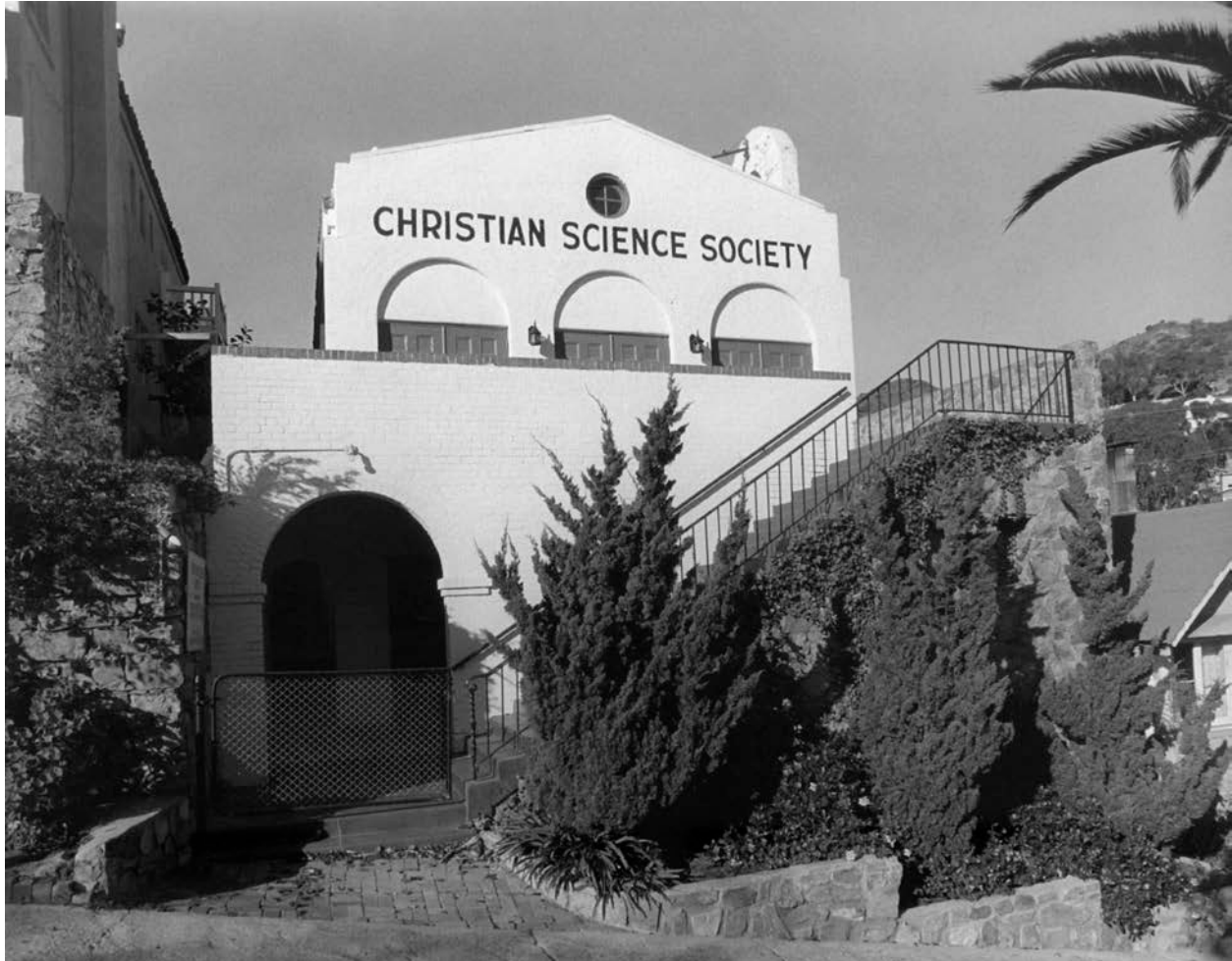
Sketch Map/Photo Key



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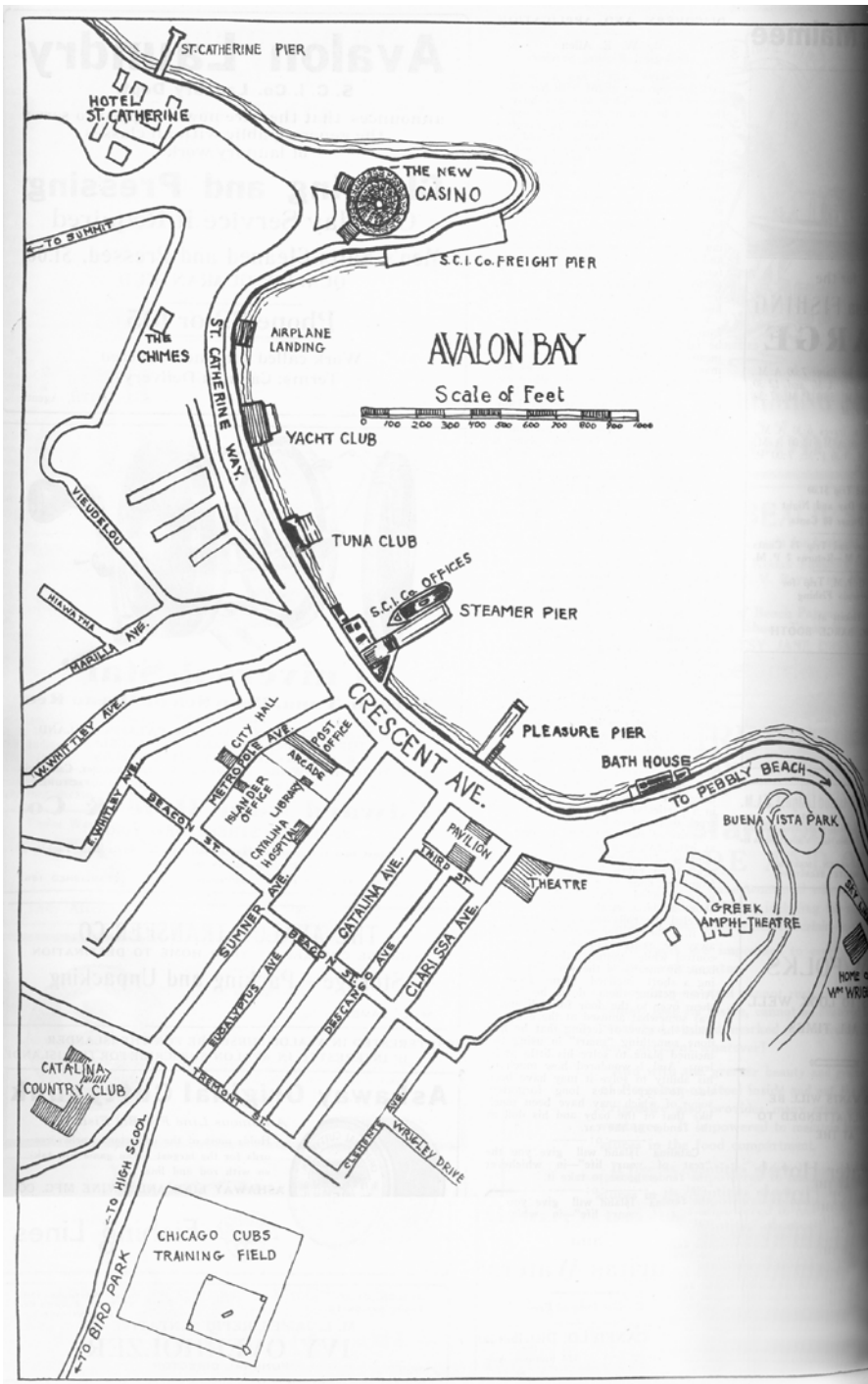
Figure 1. Christian Science Society, 1930. Source: Mary Baker Eddy Collection. Archives of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts.



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Figure 2. Avalon Map, Catalina Island, 1933.



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Figure 3. Crescent Avenue, Avalon, Santa Catalina, California. Historic postcard.



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Figure 4. Overlook Hall Plot Plan, courtesy City of Avalon, date unknown—likely prepared by David Zeller Construction circa 2012 in association with rehabilitation

