

**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.



**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Osuna, Juan María, Adobe

Other names/site number: Osuna Adobe #1; Leandro Osuna Adobe

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: 16332 Via de Santa Fe

City or town: Rancho Santa Fe State: California County: San Diego

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

**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

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></span></p>	

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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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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>8</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>3</u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COLONIAL: Spanish Colonial/Adobe

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Adobe

### 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.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Juan María Osuna Adobe is a one-story Spanish Colonial Adobe home located within the boundary of the original Rancho San Dieguito land grant, now known as Rancho Santa Fe, CA. It is situated on relatively flat high ground well above the San Dieguito River at an approximate elevation of 60 to 80 feet above sea level. The residence occupies an 18.4-acre property with adjacent horse keeping facilities such as stables and sheds and surrounding horse pasture. The seven-room adobe exemplifies the Spanish Colonial style with its simple I-shaped plan and side gabled roof with clay barrel roof tiles and cement plaster coating over wire lath cladding. A shed roof porch entry is located along the southwest façade. Fenestration consists of wood casements with wood framed screens, wrought iron hardware. Two-inch thick, rough sawn wood doors are extant throughout with original bronze hardware. The residence was originally constructed circa 1831 by the Silvas family as a two-room adobe with mud plaster and whitewash finishes and a gabled roof. Alterations have been made to the adobe throughout the years. Early renovations include the addition of the living room and sleeping porch sometime between 1865 and 1906. The most notable alterations were completed by Rancho Santa Fe architect Lilian Rice in 1924-1925. In keeping with the aesthetic of Rice's Spanish Colonial Revival architecture proclivities for the planned community of Rancho Santa Fe, the changes to the building continued to exemplify the early Spanish influences such as white adobe wall construction complemented by red-tiled roofs, porches, patios, and courtyards. The property contains eleven noncontributing resources scattered throughout the property. The eight buildings and three structures, including stables, maintenance facilities, horse stalls, horse washing sheds, and gazebo, appear to be in good condition. The noncontributing resources were constructed after the property's period of significance. The adobe retains a high degree of architectural integrity and is in good condition.

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## Narrative Description

### Setting

Just north of San Diego, located in Rancho Santa Fe along the meandering Via de la Santa Fe, the Juan María Osuna adobe is one of the oldest in California. Built during the early 1830s and situated in the heart of Rancho Santa Fe on a knoll overlooking the San Dieguito River Valley, the adobe stands as a historic link and exemplar of California's political, military, and architectural history during the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods. The Juan María Osuna adobe site consists of one contributing building and eleven noncontributing buildings on 18.4 acres. The adobe was once part of the original 116-acre Rancho San Dieguito land grant. In 1917, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company purchased the land and completed a rehabilitation of the adobe completed by architect Lilian Rice in 1924-1925. Throughout the years, the property was sold and subdivided multiple times. In 2006, only 27 acres remained and was purchased by the current owners, the Rancho Santa Fe Association. In 2013, the southern portion of the property was sold leaving the adobe building and remaining acres which are utilized for equine care and shelter..

### Juan María Osuna Adobe

The Juan María Osuna Adobe is a one-story Spanish Colonial adobe home, built circa 1831. The building has evolved throughout the years in at least three distinct stages within the building's period of significance: 1831, 1865-1906, and 1924-1925. The original circa 1831 building consisted of a simplified two-room residence designed and built by the Silvas family. Between circa 1865 and 1906, changes to the dwelling during the occupancy and ownership of the Osuna family included a living room that was added to the west end of the residence and a sleeping porch at the northeast portion of the building, all of which were of adobe construction. The 1924-1925 Lilian Rice rehabilitation included adding clay mission style tiles to the wood covered roof, an adobe site wall and fountain/cistern to the south side as well as a tiled shed roof at the main entry. The fountain is in use as a planter. Historic photographs reveal a portico beside the fountain that had been covered in mission style tiles. The top of the portico is missing and the tiles are no longer present.

The site wall and outdoor courtyard, no longer extant, were also included to the east end of the north side of the building during this period. The courtyard had a cement floor and unstablized adobe brick wall. The courtyard wall began where the porch addition ended and continued east for approximately the same length, turning southward at the end of the house and running several feet. The area was added by Lilian Rice for use as an outdoor kitchen. A wall of clay slump block was later added to close the courtyard to the edge of the house. Changes to the building after the Lilian Rice rehabilitation include adding a kitchen and porch to the north façade in the 1930s.

The majority of the adobe is constructed of unstabilized adobe brick. The kitchen and porch addition on the north side of the house are constructed of clay slump block (a stabilized adobe brick). All of the walls, inside and outside, are coated with cement plaster applied over wire lath.

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The thickness of the unstabilized adobe brick walls varies throughout the building. The area of the adobe containing the two bedrooms and bathroom is the oldest, with walls about 26 inches thick. The walls of the living room and sleeping porch, which were later additions, are only about 14 inches thick.

All of the windows and doors are wood frame with screens that were added during the Rice rehabilitation, with the exception of the aluminum window in the kitchen and the wood frame windows in the porch addition. The decorative wood shutters were removed in 2015.

In 1921, Lilian Rice was hired by A.H. Barlow, a prominent La Jolla businessman, to rehabilitate the dilapidated Osuna adobe, which he had acquired earlier that same year. Rehabilitation work completed under Lilian Rice in 1924 and 1925 involved manufacture of new adobe bricks to replace missing or damaged wall sections and construct new enclosure walls. New windows, doors, shutters, and hardware were installed and the original porch along the south elevation was removed and replaced with a smaller porch at the living room entrance. The work also included replacement of the roof framing, replacement of the wood-shingled roof with clay barrel tiles (reportedly salvaged from Mission San Luis Rey) and construction of a new fireplace in the living room. Her rehabilitation also included installation of a bathroom. An interior kitchen was not part of the scheme.

Subsequent to the Rice-designed improvements, the Juan María Osuna Adobe was again renovated sometime in the 1930s when the north porch was expanded and enclosed and an internal kitchen was added.

Major interior features that contribute to the architectural significance of the building include plastered wall surfaces, exposed roof structure, clay tile flooring, fireplace, built-in cabinetry, door and window hardware, fireplace, and attic vents. The living room's plaster finish undulates to reflect the variation of the adobe walls beneath. The north wall includes built-in cabinet with wood doors and wood knobs. The wood is rough sawn with a stain and varnish finish. The cabinet and hardware are from the Lilian Rice rehabilitation. The floor consists of clay tile pavers set in a random bond pattern. The wood roof framing and sheathing are exposed in the living room ceiling. The most prominent feature of the living room is the massive fireplace located on the east wall.

The sleeping porch's wall finishes are similar to those found in the living room. The floor finish is rose-colored scored concrete. The pattern approximates the appearance of clay tiles set in a random bond pattern. The paving appears to date from the Lilian Rice rehabilitation. The two original rooms of the adobe are bedrooms each with wall finishes similar to that in the living room. The floors are rose-colored scored concrete with the pattern approximately the appearance of clay tiles set in random bond pattern. The paving dates to the Lilian Rice rehabilitation. The kitchen was added after the Lilian Rice rehabilitation and remodeled after 1975. The bathroom wall includes a cement plaster finish over wire lath. The bathroom retains the Lilian Rice era sink, toilet, and tub.

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### Noncontributing Resources

To the west of the adobe is the maintenance yard complex that includes a hay shed, feed shed, and horse pen. Each of the maintenance yard buildings was constructed circa 2002. The hay shed is a two story open shed building with corrugated metal walls, gabled roof, and metal posts. The feed shed is a one story, wood framed, open shed building with horizontal wood siding, and a corrugated metal gabled roof. The horse pen is metal framed with a gabled roof and metal stall gates. Each building is in good condition.

To the east of the Osuna adobe is the barn complex and includes the barn and tack room, stable, Spanish barn, wash racks, a gazebo, and wood shed. The barn and tack building was constructed circa 1937, according to the County of San Diego's building records. The building includes horse stalls, offices, storage, and a meeting area for events. This building is constructed of standard wood frame construction on a concrete foundation. The roofs include shed roofs and a high-pitched gabled roof with overhanging eaves. The exterior finish is board and batten and vertical wood siding. Two large sliding barn doors are located along the south façade. The wood steps at the barn door entries lead up towards an open space utilized for special events.

The north façade includes access to several stalls with metal stall doors with yokes. Each of the stalls has a skylight. The west façade includes various offices. The offices are accessed through flush wood doors. Office fenestration is vinyl and aluminum framed sliders. The barn's east façade includes wood framed divided lite windows. A separate small storage shed, also of wood frame construction with horizontal wood siding and gabled roof, is located adjacent to the barn's east façade. The building appears to be in good condition.

The stable, also constructed circa 1937, is wood framed with a low-pitched gable and shed roofs and board and batten exterior siding on a concrete foundation. The gable roof includes a skylight for each stall. The north façade includes a wood covered porch over concrete walkway that provides access to each of the stalls. These horse stalls have wood door frames with metal stall gates with yoke. The south façade has a large sliding wood door. An addition in 1958 to the south façade of the stable includes an office area with a shed roof, vertical wood siding, paneled wood entry door, and aluminum sliding windows with wood shutters. The building appears to be in good condition.

Constructed in 1995, the Spanish style barn is a framed monitor barn style building with a tiled gable and hipped roof. The tiled center hipped roof is raised and features a series of arched unglazed window openings. The exterior walls have a stucco exterior finish. The barn features large double sliding barn doors located at the north and south façades with single entry sliding doors for the horse pens located along the east façade. The west façade also includes sliding entry doors for additional pens and storage rooms. The building appears to be in good condition.

There are three 1996 wash racks used to bath the horses. They are wood structures with flat roofs located just west of the 1995 barn. The wash racks appear to be in good condition. A large 1995 tiled hipped roof gazebo over a concrete foundation is located west of the barn complex and provides shade for visitors with views to the horse training/exercising yard. The gazebo is in

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good condition. A small, open, wood shed is located just east of the adobe. It appears to be of the same circa 1937 construction period as the stable and tack shed. It is wood framed with a shed roof and vertical wood siding. The shed is in good condition.

### Construction Chronology

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1831      | The Silvas family received a provisional land grant in the San Dieguito Valley and built the first adobe building on site.                        |
| 1836      | Juan María Osuna received a provisional land grant of 8,842 acres, known as Rancho San Dieguito, and began to occupy the existing adobe and site. |
| 1851      | Juan María Osuna died. Juliana Osuna and her children claimed Rancho San Dieguito in a petition to the Land Commission.                           |
| 1853-1865 | The Juan María Osuna Adobe was mentioned in three different land transfer agreements as a house containing two rooms.                             |
| 1865-1906 | Living Room and Sleeping Porch were added by the Osuna family.  |
| 1871      | Rancho San Dieguito was granted to the Osuna family.  |
| 1906      | Several hundred acres of land, all of the rancho property that remained in the possession of the Osuna family, was sold to the Santa Fe Railroad. |
| 1922      | Plans for the development of Rancho Santa Fe were initiated.  |
| 1924-25   | Juan María Osuna Adobe was rehabilitated by architect Lilian Rice.  |
| 1930s     | The existing porch in the Juan María Osuna Adobe was expanded and enclosed and a kitchen was added.   |
| 2006      | The Juan María Osuna Adobe and remaining 27 acres of surrounding property were purchased by the Rancho Santa Fe Association.                      |
| 2015      | The southern portion of the site was sold by the Rancho Santa Fe Association leaving 18.4 acres.  |

### Integrity

The Juan María Osuna Adobe maintains a high degree of architectural integrity. The adobe retains the elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the property from its period of significance. The adobe building has not been moved and retains its original footprint with most additions made within the period of significance, and as such, exhibits integrity of location. The modest Spanish Colonial Revival design, materials, and adobe workmanship



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remain intact, exemplified through its smooth plastered walls, tiled roof, and wood framed doors and windows. The pastoral setting of the property and its surrounding site is largely intact. Use of the property as a horse ranch allows the retention of this relatively rare rural setting providing a glimpse into what this property may have looked like during its period of significance, contributing to the site's sense of feeling and association.

Photographs of the Osuna Adobe taken in 1925, soon after its rehabilitation, and in the 1930s, show a solitary building landscaped with foundation plantings, low native and exotic specimen plants and shrubs, and a single California pepper tree to the south of the dwelling. The decorative cistern/pool near the southeast corner of the house was in place, as were the existing adobe courtyard walls and southeast boundary wall. The wooden water tower had been removed and, with the exception of several additional trees and modern fencing, the immediate surroundings of the adobe appear much as they do in 2017.

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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.)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1831-1925

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1831

1924-1925

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Silvas Family

Rice, Lilian

\_\_\_\_\_

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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 Juan María Osuna Adobe is eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Under Criterion A the property is associated with the development of Rancho Santa Fe from the early Rancho San Dieguito land grant to planned community. It represents the Mexican and American periods of settlement in San Diego. After California became a state, rehabilitation of the adobe was one of the initial projects for the development of Rancho Santa Fe. Under Criterion C, the Juan María Osuna Adobe embodies distinct characteristics of Spanish Colonial and adobe workmanship and the work of acclaimed architect Lilian Rice. Rehabilitation of the residence was one of her first projects as supervising architect for the development of the area. The 1831-1925 period of significance encompasses original construction through Rice's rehabilitation.

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

#### **Criterion A**

The Juan María Osuna Adobe represents the Mexican and American periods of settlement in San Diego. The adobe was built circa 1831 on the Rancho San Dieguito land grant, one of the ranch grants issued by the government of Mexico to encourage settlement of Alta California. The rancho served as headquarters for the Californios before the Battle of San Pasqual during the Mexican-American War. After California became a state, Rancho Santa Fe was established in the 1920s along the boundaries of the old rancho, and the rehabilitation of the Juan María Osuna Adobe was one of the first projects in the new community. The architecture of the Spanish and Mexican missions and adobes, including the Juan María Osuna Adobe, was the inspiration for the architecture of the planned community of Rancho Santa Fe.

The Juan María Osuna Adobe remains one of San Diego's best examples of intact Anglo-Hispanic domestic architecture. Built on an original Mexican land grant located in the County of San Diego, it lies on a knoll overlooking the San Dieguito River Valley. The building, located on Via de Santa Fe and somewhat hidden from view, is situated within an equestrian facility. The adobe's immediate surroundings remain pastoral and rural, allowing a glimpse into what this property originally looked and felt like.

During California's Spanish period, most of the San Dieguito Valley, including the land which would become the Juan María Osuna Adobe, was controlled by the Mission San Diego padres and was likely used for grazing cattle. By 1810, the California missions came under increasing criticism and in 1822, Mexico gained independence from Spain. The first 30 houses were constructed outside the presidio, now known as Old Town San Diego in 1830. The new community consisted of 520 residents who were mostly retired soldiers and their families.<sup>1</sup> By

<sup>1</sup> Iris W. Engstrand and Ray Brandes, *Old Town San Diego, 1821-1874* (San Diego: Alcalá Press), 1976. Old Town eventually became the capitol of Alta California from 1825 to 1932.

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1833 seven land grants had been approved in the area, including the Rancho San Dieguito, which was awarded to the Silvas family.<sup>2</sup>

The land grant system in California began during Spanish rule in an effort to further colonial development beyond that of the presidios. Although a few grants were actually given during the Spanish period, these grants carried the primary stipulation that the grantee live on the land. When Mexico declared its independence from Spain in 1822, the land grant system was retained. Additional new policies actually encouraged, and resulted in, the issuance of greater number of grants. The grants specified definite conditions that were imposed on the recipients such as the grantee was required to occupy a permanent residence within one year of the grant. Also, the construction of fences was allowed under the condition that access to highways, cross roads and rights of way not be impaired. Additionally, the grantee was to take responsibility for having a local magistrate define the boundaries and mark them with appropriate markers. In the process of determining the boundaries there was to be no infringement or the rights of neighbors, such as those on adjacent grants, or those living on the land, such as the local Indian population.<sup>3</sup>

Circa 1831, José Manuel Silvas, along with his son José Antonio Silvas and his sister Balbanada Silvas, obtained a portion of Rancho San Dieguito in the San Dieguito Valley under a provisional grant issued by Governor Manuel Victoria.<sup>4</sup> Originally the Silvas grant, which was never confirmed, was one square league. Immediately upon receiving the grant, the Silvas family built an adobe home on the property, as was the common requirement of the land grants at that time.<sup>5</sup> The family continued to occupy the adobe and land until it was later transferred to Juan María Osuna.

In 1833, Juan María Osuna submitted a land grant petition on the basis of his military service and was granted a portion of the Rancho San Dieguito in 1836 from Governor Gutierrez. The land included the existing adobe built by the Silvas family, which was referenced in the *diseño* for the rancho.<sup>6</sup> A testimony accompanying his petition described Juan María Osuna's physical appearance and military career:

Juan María Osuna, son of Juan Ysmerio Osuna and María Ignacia Alvarado, a native of the Mission of San Vicente Ferrer, subject to the Government of the

<sup>2</sup> Charles Hughes, "The Decline of the Californios: The Case of San Diego, 1846-1856" *The Journal of San Diego History*. Vol. 21, Number 3 (Summer 1975).

<sup>3</sup> Roxana L. Phillips, "Survivor from the Past: A History of the First Osuna Adobe on Rancho San Dieguito" prepared for Rancho Santa Fe Community Foundation, July 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California, Vol. III and IV*, 1886 [1969], 762.

<sup>5</sup> Brian F. Smith and Associates, "County of San Diego Landmark Application for the Osuna Adobe Rancho Santa Fe, California APN 268-172-10." Prepared for the Rancho Santa Fe Association. August 10, 2009; Previous studies have indicated that the adobe was built by Librado Silvas. Later archaeological investigations in the 1990s reveal that Librado Silvas' only adobe constructed was at Gonzalez Canyon, just south and outside of the Rancho San Dieguito land grant boundary. See Vonn Marie May and Laura Burnett FASLA, "Osuna Adobe #1 Cultural Landscape Report" prepared for the Rancho Santa Fe Association and the Osuna Adobe Committee, July 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Brian F. Smith and Associates, op. cit. "As *alcalde* he had the power to select a piece of land to settle. Under the Act of Secularization of 1832, even property formerly owned by the missions was available." A *diseño* is a hand-drawn topographical map to define an area.

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Californias, and a resident of the Pueblo of Los Angeles, a husbandman, five feet one inch and one line in height, sixteen [*sic*, 17 in the original Spanish] years of age, and a Roman Catholic; his marks are as follows: hair and eyebrows black, complexion light, with a scar on his left wrist, chin smooth but with signs of a coming beard. He has enlisted for the term of ten years, voluntarily, in the Presidio of San Diego on the second day of June 1802...Promoted to Corporal on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1805. Rodriguez, San Diego October 10, 1824. On this day he received his absolute discharge---Ruiz.<sup>7</sup>

Juan María Osuna was born in 1785 in Loreto, Baja California, Mexico. He married Juliana Josepha Lopez at the San Diego Mission on February 15, 1806, soon after he was promoted to Corporal. Juan and Juliana had their first child, Julio, in September 1807. Julio's birth was recorded at the San Gabriel Mission where Juan María Osuna was a corporal of the guard. By 1809, the young couple had returned to San Diego, where the rest of their children were born. Juan María Osuna retired from the military service in 1824 and settled into a civilian life in Old Town with his growing family.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1830s, Juan María Osuna took an active role in the politics of San Diego, first serving in 1830 as district elector representing San Diego to the Mexican Congress in Monterey, then in 1831, he took part in the successful revolt against the new governor, Lt. Colonel Manuel Victoria. Chafing under the military rule of the Presidio in October of 1833, Juan María Osuna and five other residents petitioned for the establishment of a town council in San Diego. San Diego's status as a *pueblo* (town) was granted on August 2, 1834 by Governor Figueroa, and soon after Juan María Osuna was elected as the first *alcalde* (mayor) on December 21<sup>st</sup> of that same year. As *alcalde*, Juan María Osuna had "charge of the police, health, comfort, order and security" of the whole town. The position did not command a salary, yet he served as a notary republic, policeman, judge, justice of the peace, and chief administrator.<sup>9</sup>

In 1837, the population declined below what was required for a *pueblo*, and the town was placed under the control of a *juez de paz*, or Justice of the Peace. Juan María Osuna served in this capacity in 1839, 1840, and 1846.<sup>10</sup> He also served as *majordomo* (civilian administrator) of the mission from 1840 to 1843.<sup>11</sup>

Although the Rancho San Dieguito land grant was issued in 1836 and then confirmed in 1845 by Governor Pio Pico, Osuna's involvement in Rancho San Dieguito began much earlier. According to testimony given in 1852 to the U.S. Land Commissions Board, Osuna had actually received permission to occupy the land between 1830 and 1832, during the time that Arguello was Military Commandant (1830-1835) and José M. Echeandia was governor (1815-1832). In a testimony by Abel Sterns to the U.S. Land Commission Board in 1852, Sterns stated that Osuna

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Roxana L. Phillips, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

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had occupied the land since 1831.<sup>12</sup> Not too long after Osuna inhabited the land, did he build a second, larger adobe dwelling half a mile to the northeast that served as their home and headquarters of the rancho activities. The rancho's original adobe became the residence of Leandro Osuna, Juan María and Juliana Osuna's eldest son.

The Rancho San Dieguito encompassed 8,824 acres of land and included a broad river valley, ideal for cultivating and raising cattle or sheep. Although large, the area was not isolated; the route between the San Diego and San Luis Rey Missions passed through the property and an Indian pueblo had been established nearby.<sup>13</sup> According to Bancroft, the Indian pueblo at San Dieguito was "...perhaps organized in 1833...from the ex-neophytes of San Diego...and in May 1834 they were represented by the governor as in flourishing condition. San Dieguito seems to have had about 15 families at the start; and...in 1839 they were complaining that their best lands had been taken away."<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the Mexican-American War, the Osunas were supporters of the Mexican cause. Juan María Osuna provided shelter and supplies to the Californios during the Battle of San Pasqual, who utilized the ranch as their headquarters before the battle. Juan María Osuna's son, Leandro, is said to have caused the first casualty in the battle by shooting Captain Johnson, commander of the first charge against the mounted Californio lancers, and later saved the life of General Andres Pico, who led the fight against General Kearny of the American forces. Sons Santiago and Ramon were also involved in the battle and survived, however Santiago was killed a week later during the Pauma Massacres, an uprising of the San Luis Rey Indians.<sup>15</sup>

On March 5, 1851, Juan María Osuna died and upon Leandro's death in 1859, the care of the Rancho San Dieguito fell to Juliana, Juan María Osuna's widow. A claim was filed in the U.S. Public Land Commission in 1852 with the support of two witnesses: Abel Stearns and Santiago Arguello. Their testimony, given on November 5, 1852, provided support for establishing the presence of a dwelling on the property and validating the copy of a *diseño* submitted with the petition. It also provided verification on occupation of the land by Juan María Osuna. The claim was originally rejected by the Board of Commissioner on January 24, 1854. That decision was later reversed by the District and Supreme Courts. The final patent of the grant was issued to Juliana Lopez de Osuna on April 18, 1871. By 1875, only a small portion of the Rancho San Dieguito remained in possession of the Osuna family. The last parcel under their ownership, 116 acres including the two adobe dwellings, was sold in 1906 to the Santa Fe Railroad through its subsidiary, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad purchased the land comprising the original Rancho San Dieguito land grant. In 1906, the railroad planted hundreds of thousands of fast-growing eucalyptus trees as an experiment to produce timber for use in rail lines. But the railroad abandoned the eucalyptus growing experiment as a failure in

<sup>12</sup> Brian F. Smith and Associates, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California, Vol. III*, 1886 [1969], 628.

<sup>15</sup> Phillips, op. cit.

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1916. Looking to reverse their misfortune from the failed experiment, the railroad established the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company (SFLIC) and began planning a rural residential community with an emphasis on agriculture and with a thematic unity of architectural style and ambiance evocative of the Spanish Rancho era. By 1921, the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company had renamed their development project Rancho Santa Fe.<sup>16</sup>

The plotting of estate subdivisions and laying out of miles of winding rural roadways commenced in 1921. In 1922, the company hired the noted San Diego architectural firm of Requa & Jackson to design the Civic Center. Led by supervising architect Lilian Rice, the Civic Center was designed as a Spanish village-themed mixed use with public, commercial, and residential areas. Rice went on to design a number of Rancho Santa Fe residences and public buildings. She was also responsible for the design review for all new construction on behalf of the Land Improvement Company until 1928.

### Criterion C

The Juan María Osuna Adobe embodies distinct characteristics of Spanish Colonial style architecture and adobe construction with its thick adobe walls, smooth cement plaster exterior finish, tiled gabled roof, and wood framed windows and doors with wrought iron hardware. It also has a direct association with acclaimed architect Lilian Rice. Since the Juan María Osuna Adobe was constructed, major alterations have been made to the building. The majority of the additions, particularly those made by architect Lilian Rice, have acquired historic and architectural significance in their own right. What began as a two-room home is now seven rooms in all. The most notable and contributing changes are the living room and sleeping porch addition completed between 1865 and 1906 as well as the Lilian Rice rehabilitation in 1924-1925. That rehabilitation, in particular, represents the work of an important creative individual. Rice was responsible for the architectural oversight of the community of Rancho Santa Fe during its development.

Juan María Osuna Adobe provides a link to early California history and the development of Rancho Santa Fe. Although the adobe is not the only surviving adobe in San Diego County from the nineteenth century, its state of preservation has yielded important information to the history of San Diego County.

The building is associated with acclaimed architect Lilian Rice. Lilian Jeannette Rice was born in National City, California, a border town between San Diego and Tijuana, in 1888. She was born to Julius Rice, an innovative teacher in local public schools, and Laura Rice, a known artist recognized for her miniature paintings and flair for detail. Both parents encouraged her education. After earning a Berkeley degree in 1910, Rice returned to National City to nurse her invalid mother. For the next ten years she worked on her own, as a drafter for Hazel Wood Waterman, and for the local firm of Richard S. Requa and Herbert L. Jackson. To supplement her income, Rice taught mechanical drawing and descriptive geometry at San Diego High School and San Diego State Teachers College during the early 1920s.

<sup>16</sup> Rancho Santa Fe Association, "Rancho Santa Fe History." <http://www.rsffassociation.org/pages/history.html#preserving> accessed March 5, 2014.



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The early influences of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition as well as the creativity of the California architects of the day highly influenced Rice's taste for the popular California architectural idiom. In 1922, her employers, Requa and Jackson, suggested that she design and supervise Rancho Santa Fe, a small city planned by the Santa Fe Land Improvement Company, a division of the Santa Fe Railroad. The Santa Fe Land Improvement Company envisioned a planned community built around the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. From 1922 through 1927, Rice worked on the fourteen-mile tract, designing a community complete with residences, shops, an inn, school, administration building, library and other service buildings. Here, Rice was given free rein to create a miniature city, often acting as landscape architect and city planner as well as a supervisor of construction. The rehabilitation of the Juan María Osuna Adobe was one of the first projects she tackled in Rancho Santa Fe. She maintained an office on the property under her own name.

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**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 # CA-2332
- 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: Rancho Santa Fe Association

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 18.4

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 33.011327 | Longitude: -117.201796 |
| 2. Latitude: 33.013866 | Longitude: -117.198948 |
| 3. Latitude: 33.009313 | Longitude: -117.198746 |
| 4. Latitude: 33.009321 | Longitude: -117.201764 |

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

The boundary of the property includes 18.4 acres as indicated on photographs and Location Map. The property is located on San Diego County, Assessor Parcel Number 268-172-1200.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was selected to include the Juan María Osuna Adobe and its immediate surroundings that have been historically associated with the property, maintain historic integrity, and contribute to its significance.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Caitlin Kreutz/Horticulturist  
organization: Rancho Santa Fe Association  
name/title: Eileen Magno/Historian  
organization: Heritage Architecture & Planning  
street & number: 17022 Avenida de Acacias  
city or town: Rancho Santa Fe state: California zip code: 92067-0359  
e-mail caitlin@rsfassociation.org; eileen@heritagearchitecture.com  
telephone: (858) 756-4652  
date: December 2012; Resubmitted November 2016; Revised February 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: Juan María Osuna Adobe  
City or Vicinity: Rancho Santa Fe  
County: San Diego County  
State: California  
Photographer: Caitlin Kreutz  
Date Photographed: Photos 1-8 October 24, 2016; Photos 9-15 February 1, 2017

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

- 1 of 15 South façade looking north
- 2 of 15 East façade looking west
- 3 of 15 Portion of the east and north facades looking southeast
- 4 of 15 Portion of the east and south facades looking northwest
- 5 of 15 North façade looking south
- 6 of 15 West façade looking east
- 7 of 15 Portion of the west and north façade looking southwest
- 8 of 15 Portion of the west and south façade looking northeast
- 9 of 15 Living room looking north at the built-in cabinet in the wall, recessed shelf, and window
- 10 of 15 View of the original porch looking west showing the 1930s addition to the left of the posts and beam
- 11 of 15 Historic attic vents and built-in cabinet on the south wall of the porch
- 12 of 15 Front door to bedroom 2 showing the spindle grille and wood latch hardware with leather strap
- 13 of 15 Looking northeast towards the barn complex area
- 14 of 15 Looking northwest at the feed shed and hay shed buildings
- 15 of 15 Looking southwest at the horse shed

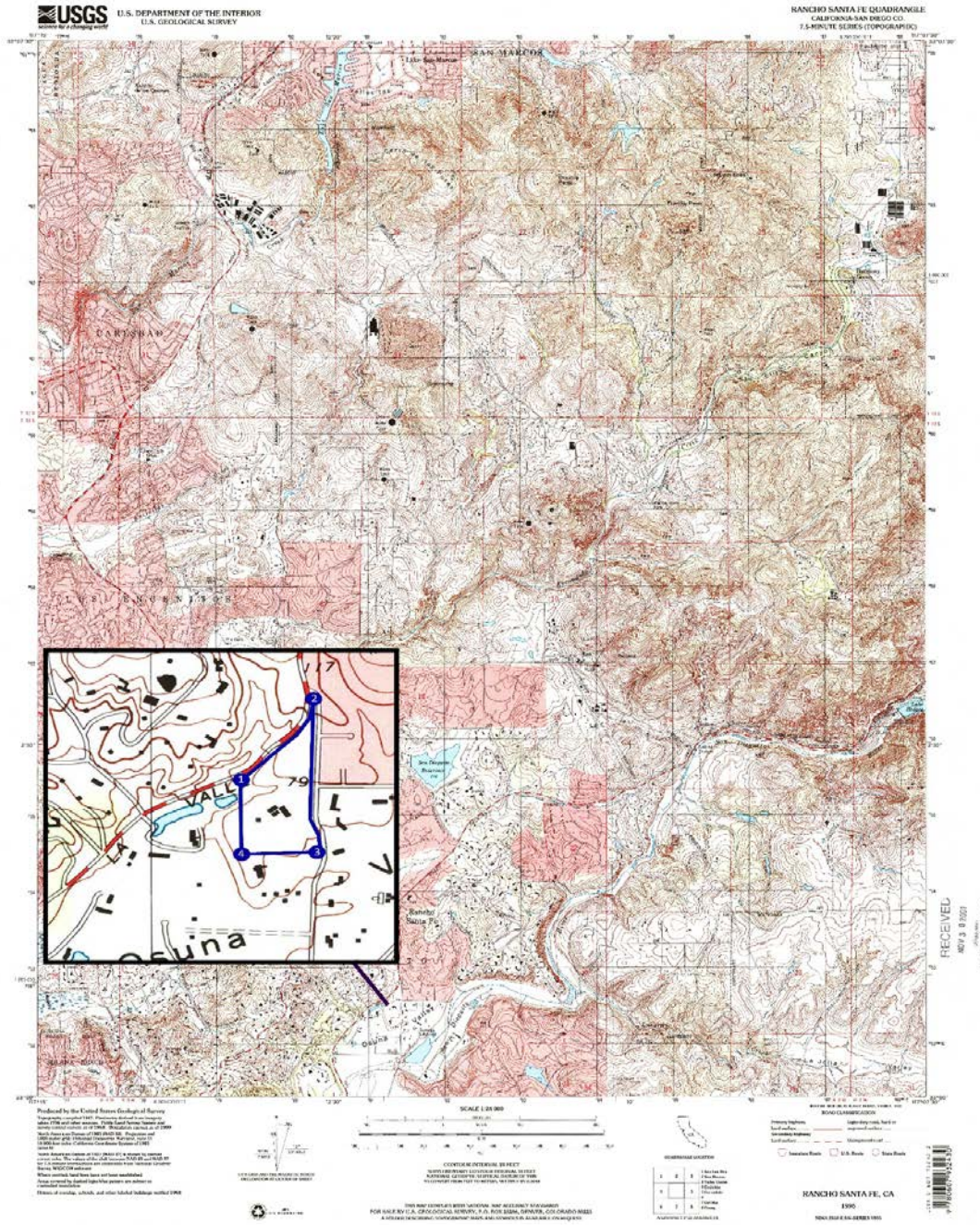
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to 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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### Location Map



1. Latitude: 33.011327
2. Latitude: 33.013866
3. Latitude: 33.009313
4. Latitude: 33.009321

- Longitude: -117.201796
- Longitude: -117.198948
- Longitude: -117.198746
- Longitude: -117.201764

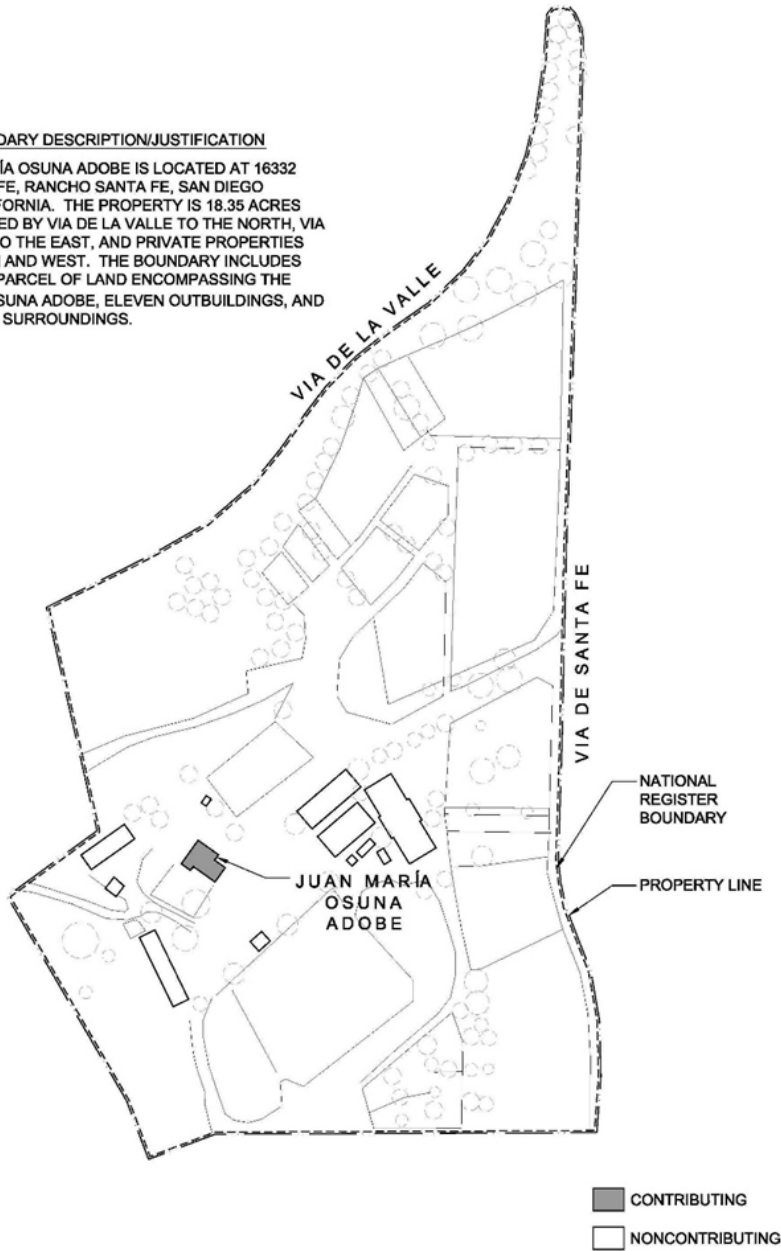
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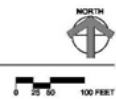
### Sketch Map

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION**

THE JUAN MARÍA OSUNA ADOBE IS LOCATED AT 16332 VIA DE SANTA FE, RANCHO SANTA FE, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA. THE PROPERTY IS 18.35 ACRES AND IS BOUNDED BY VIA DE LA VALLE TO THE NORTH, VIA DE SANTA FE TO THE EAST, AND PRIVATE PROPERTIES TO THE SOUTH AND WEST. THE BOUNDARY INCLUDES THE PRIMARY PARCEL OF LAND ENCOMPASSING THE JUAN MARÍA OSUNA ADOBE, ELEVEN OUTBUILDINGS, AND ITS IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS.



**JUAN MARÍA OSUNA ADOBE**  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

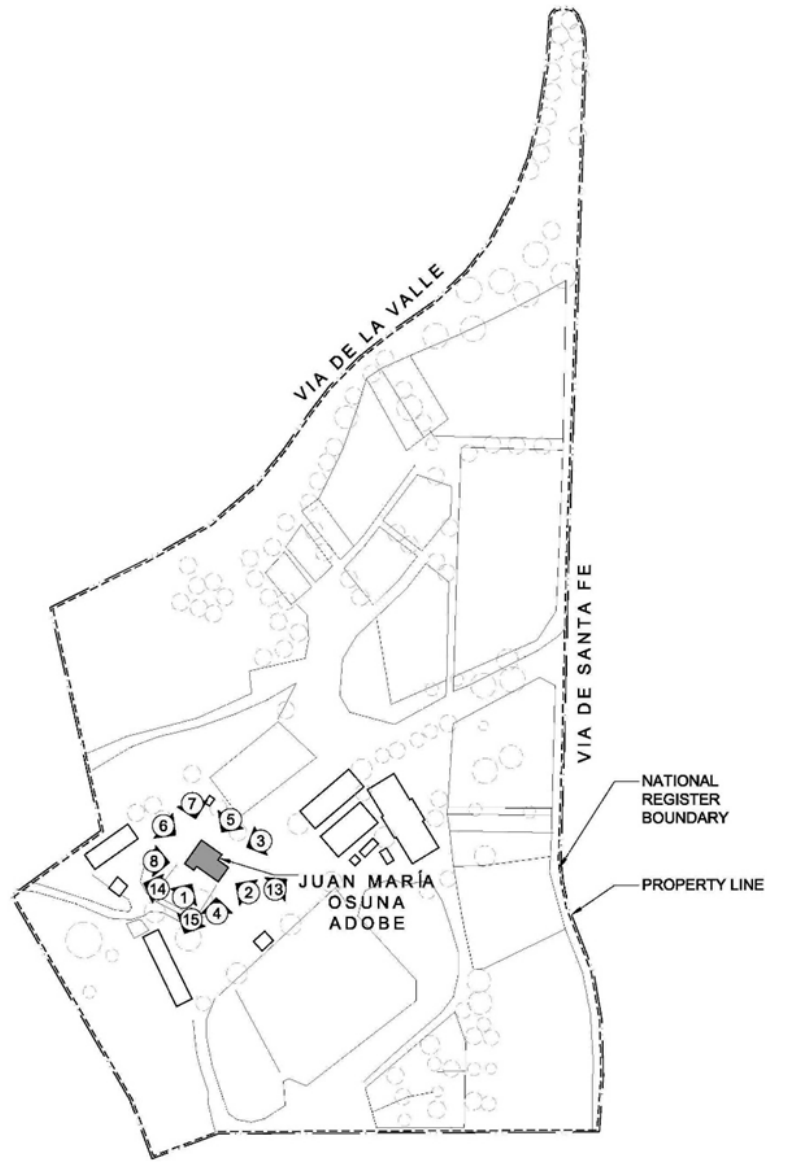




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Name of Property

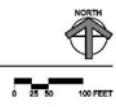
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**Photo Key 1 of 2**



**JUAN MARÍA OSUNA ADOBE**  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

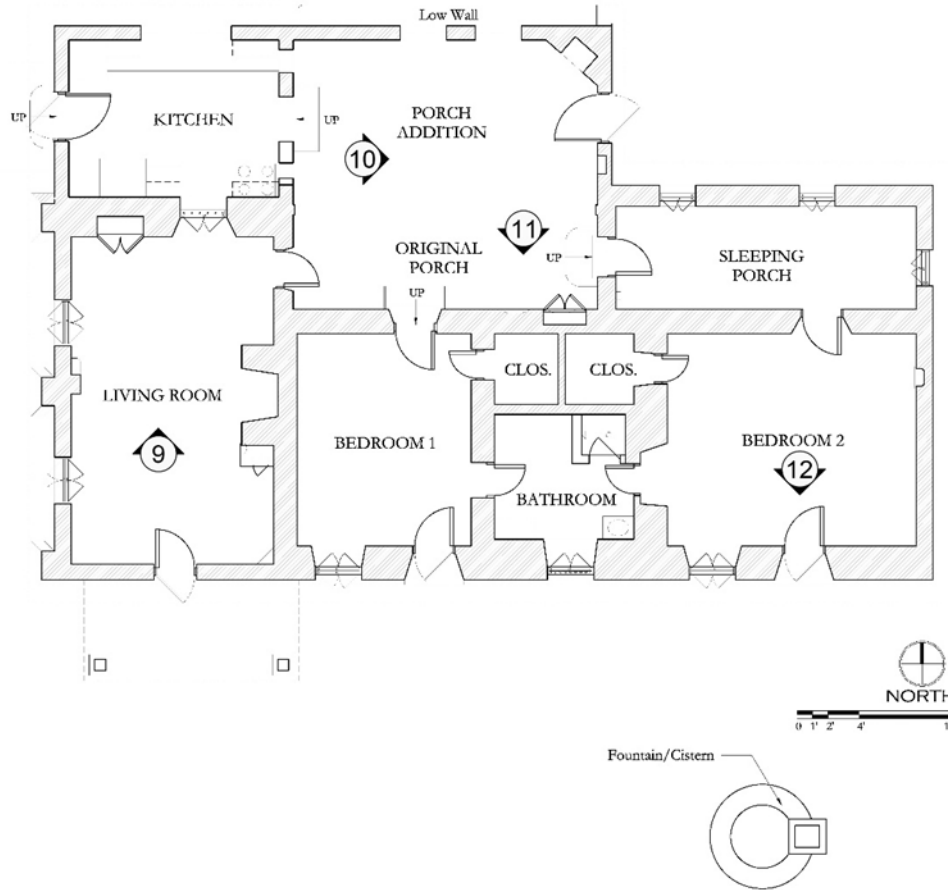
SITE PLAN PHOTOGRAPH KEY



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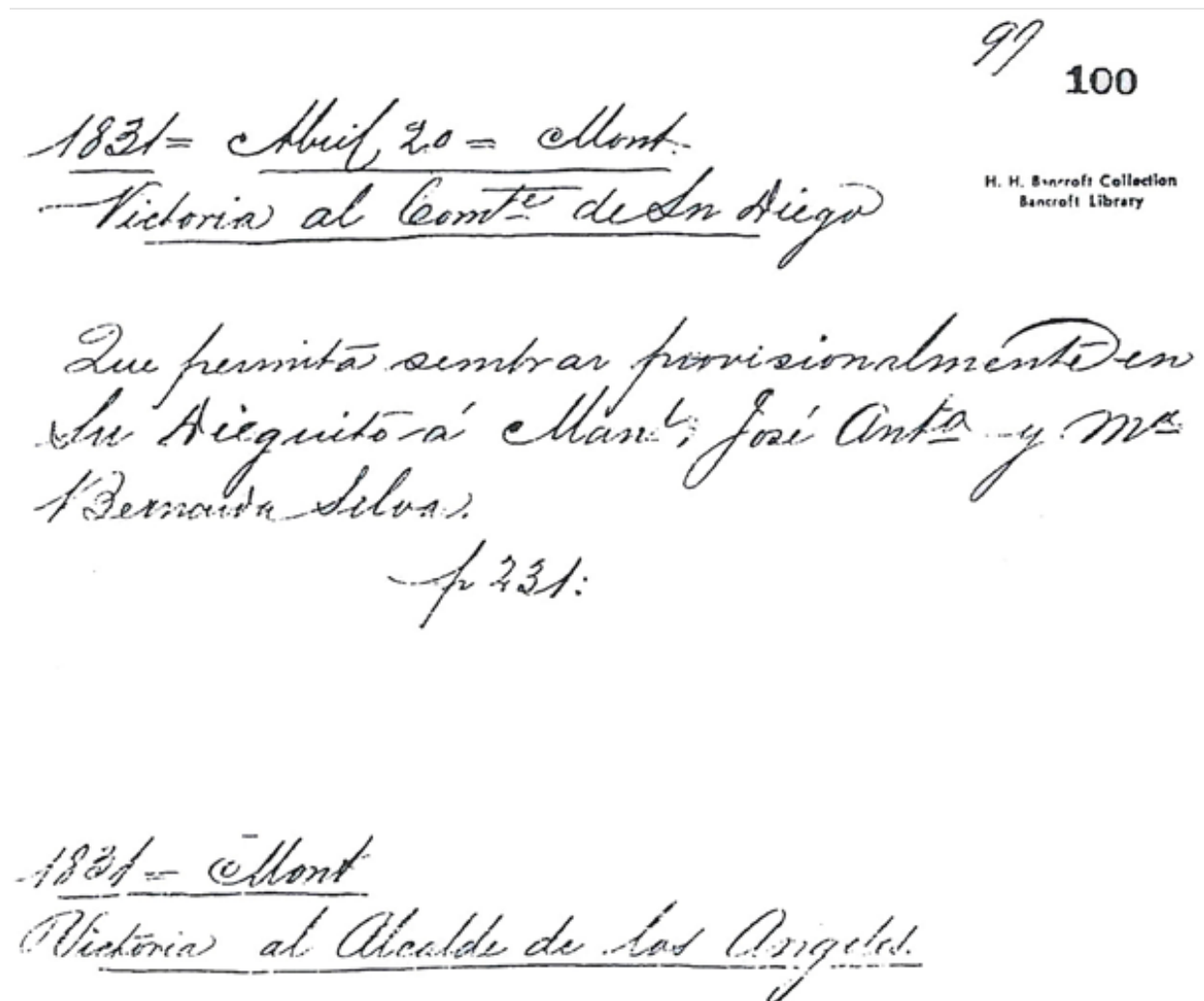
**Photo Key 2 of 2**



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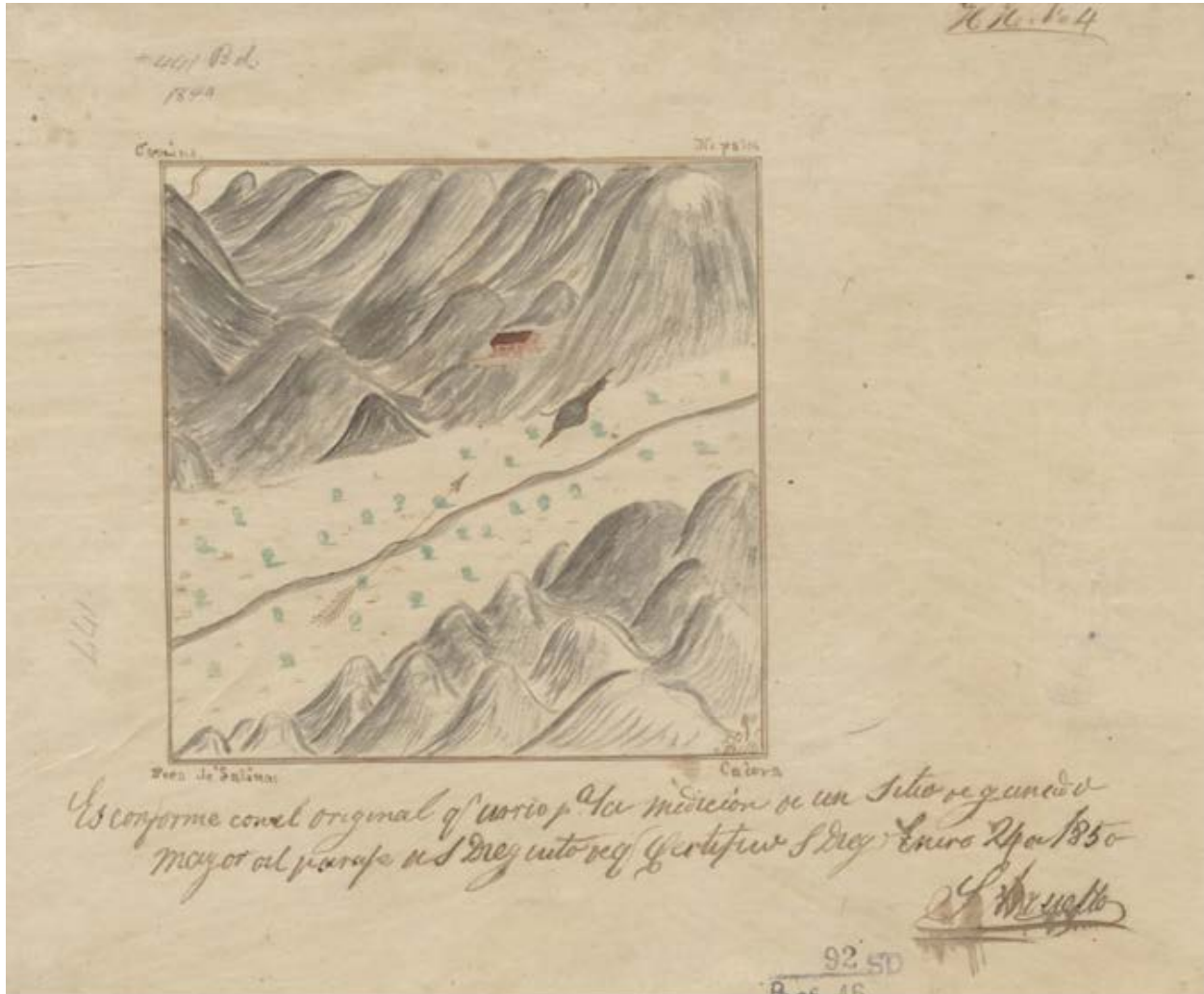
**Figure 1.** Copy of the Silvas Grant to San Dieguito, 1831. Source: Bancroft Library.



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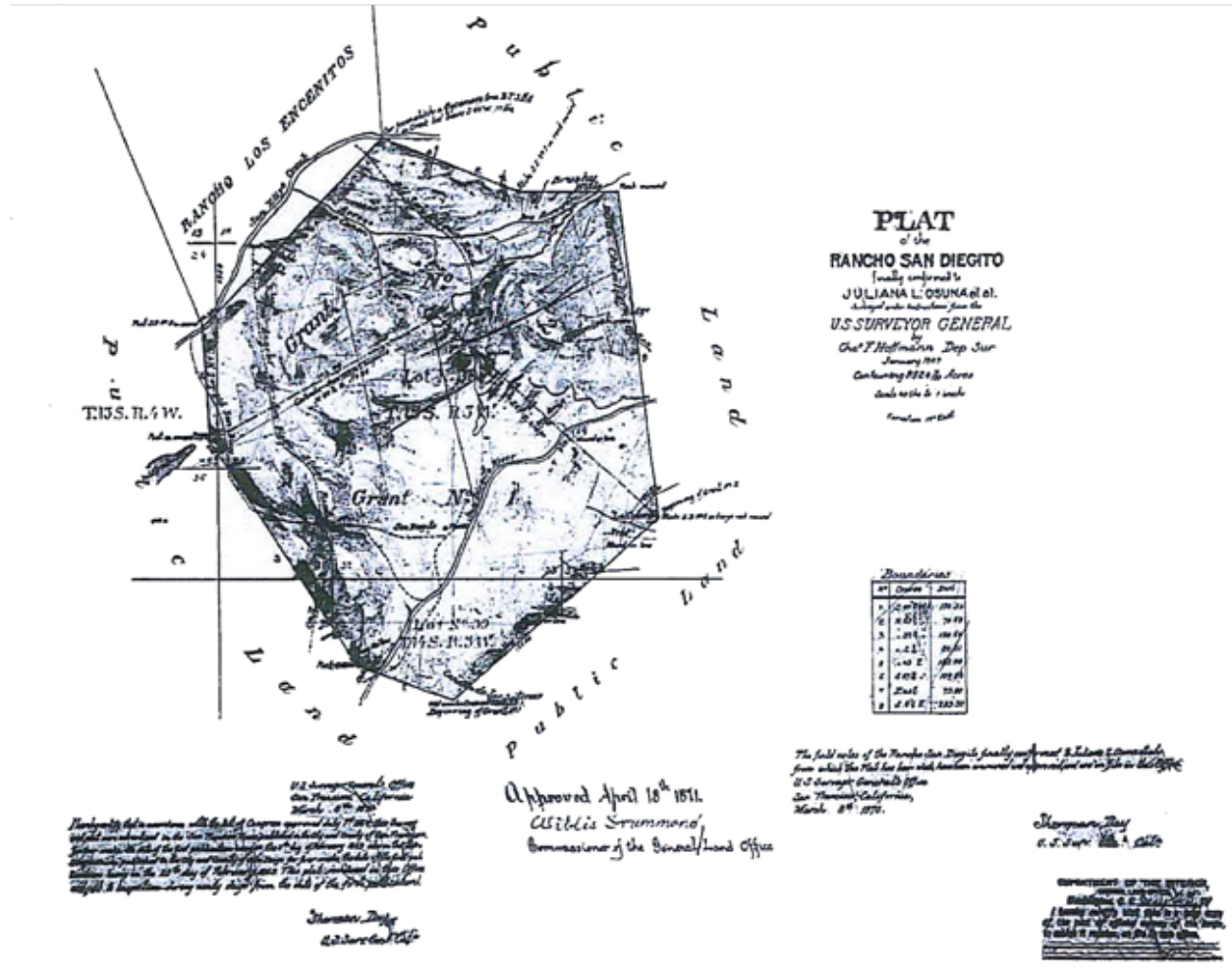
**Figure 2.** Santiago Argüello's sketch of the Juan María Osuna Adobe and the San Dieguito River Valley on behalf of Juliana Osuna, January 24, 1850. Source: Bancroft Library.



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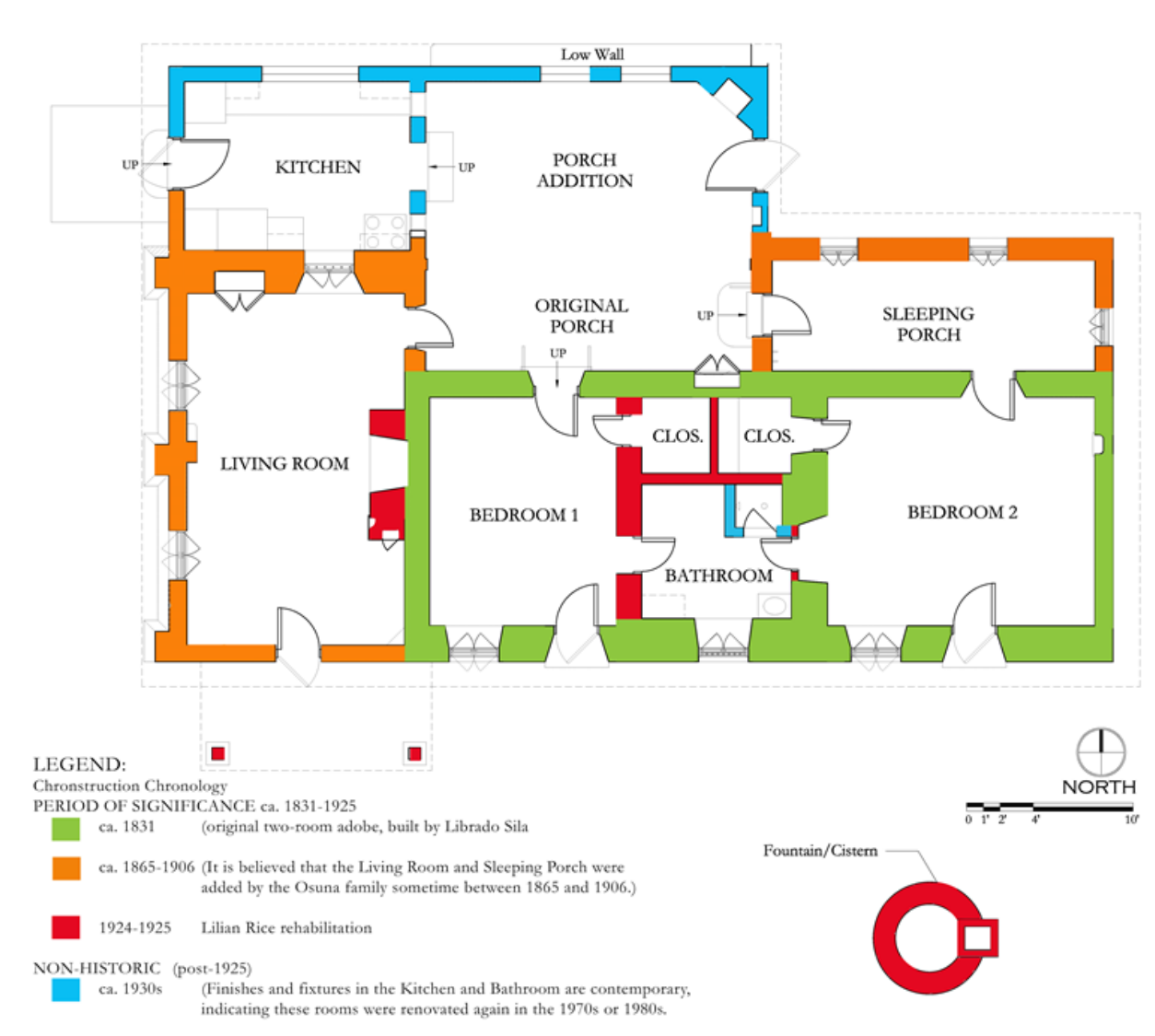
**Figure 3.** Plat of Rancho San Dieguito, 1869. Source: San Diego County Cartography and Survey Records.



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**Figure 4.** Existing floor plan showing the building's construction chronology.



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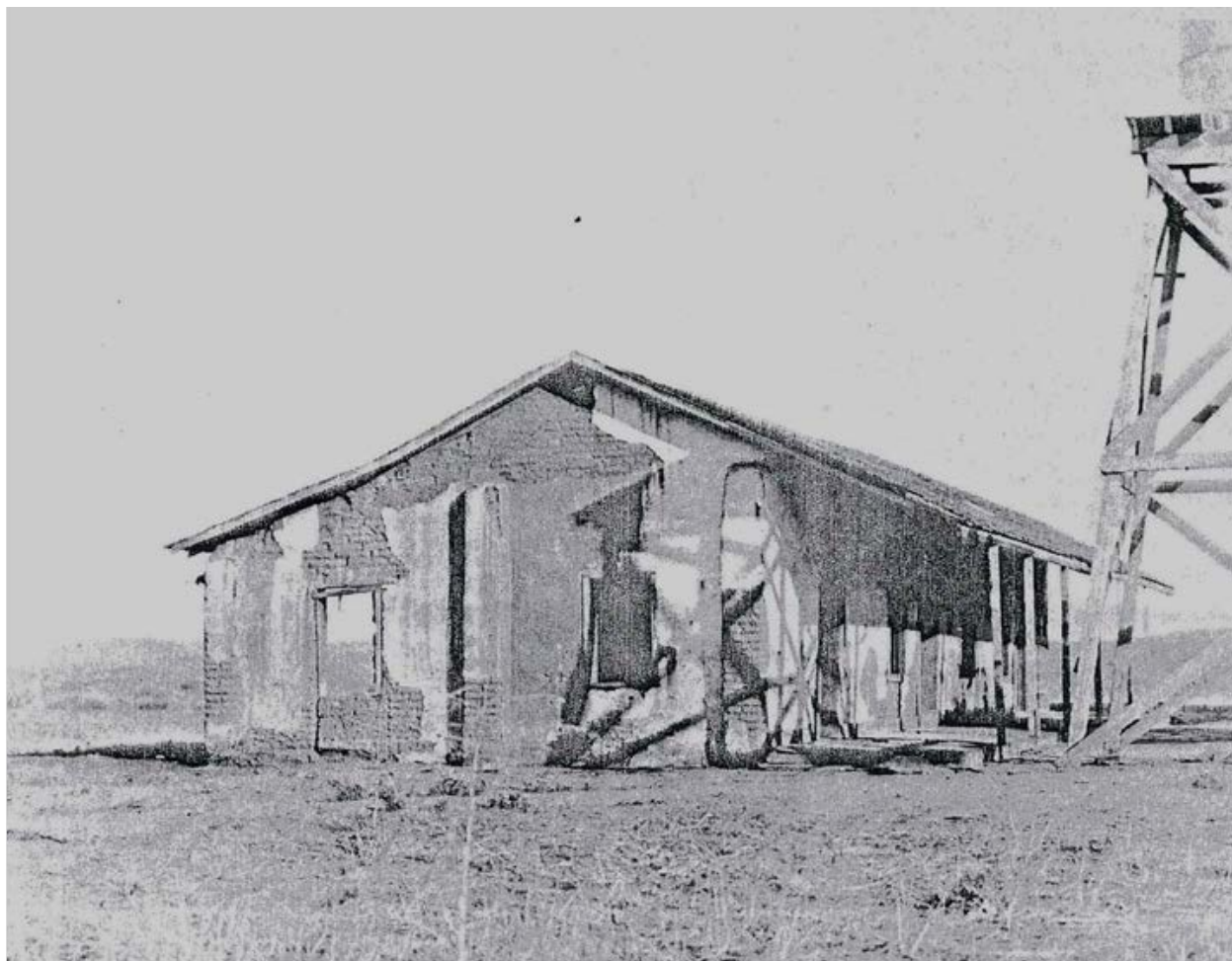
**Figure 5.** Juan María Osuna Adobe, circa 1920, prior to the Lilian Rice rehabilitation, looking south. The photo shows a wood shingle roof and no chimney. The wall finish appears to be mud plaster with whitewash. Source: Southwest Museum.



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**Figure 6.** West wall of Juan María Osuna Adobe prior to the Lilian Rice rehabilitation, circa 1924. This photo shows the original porch that extended along the entire south elevation with a raised wood porch deck. The photo also shows a wood framed water tank. There are no extant doors or windows visible in this photo. Source: The San Diego History Center.





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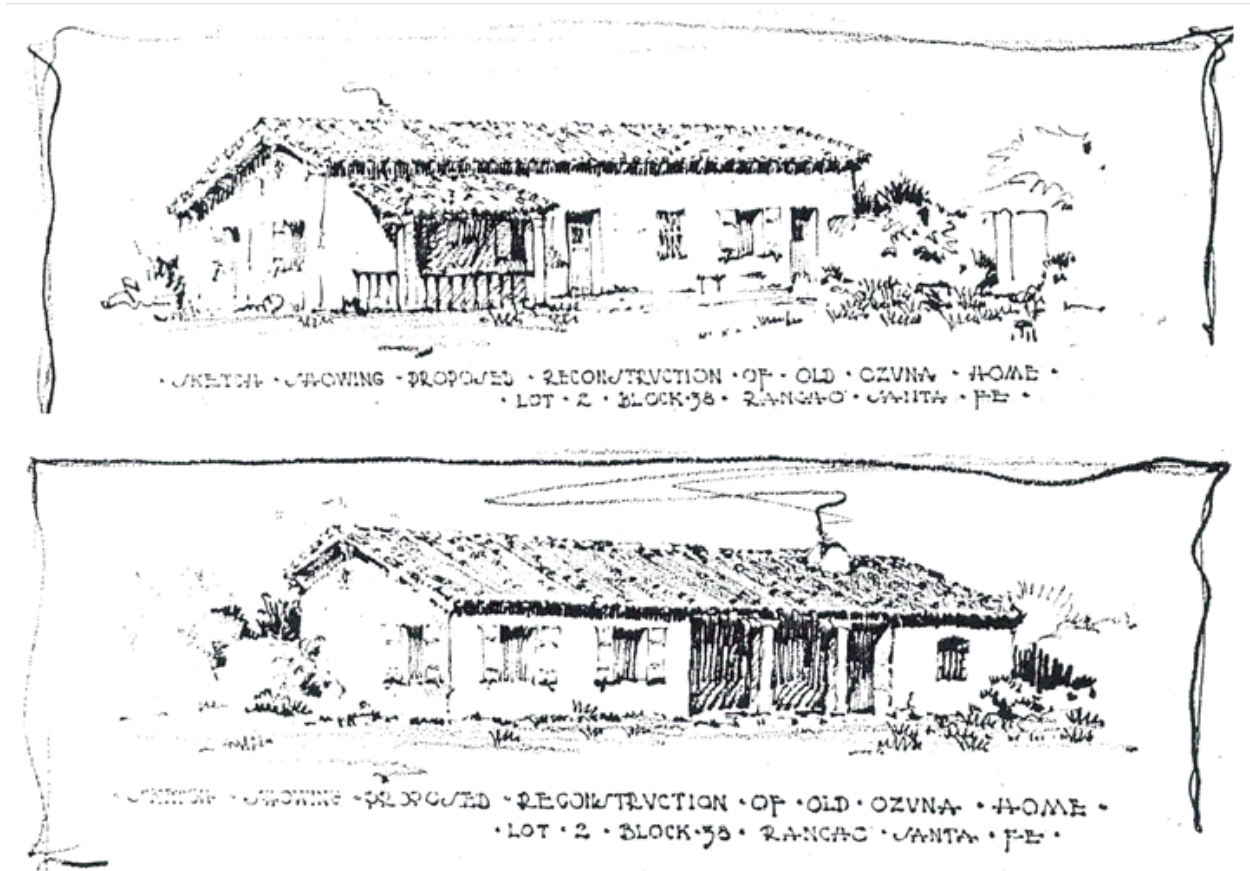
**Figure 7.** South elevation showing the original porch that extended along the entire south elevation with a raised wood porch deck. Source: Southwest Museum.



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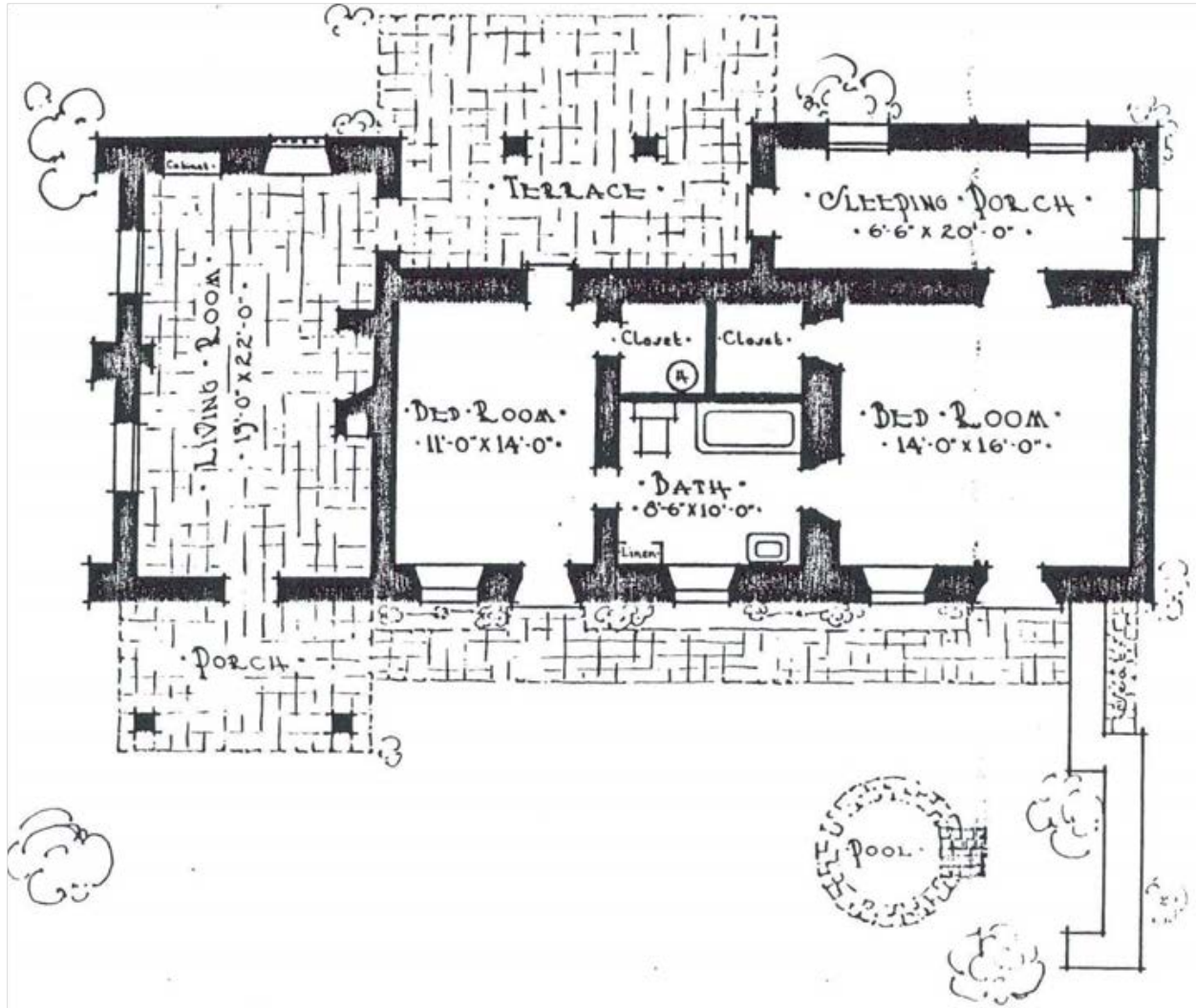
**Figure 8.** Rehabilitation sketches by Lilian Rice of the south and north elevations, circa 1924.  
Source: Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.



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**Figure 9.** Rehabilitation floor plans by Lilian Rice. Source: Santa Fe Land Improvement Company.



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**Figure 10.** Juan María Osuna Adobe looking northeast, circa 1925. The photo shows the completed Lilian Rice rehabilitation. New tile roofing, plaster, windows, wood shutters, doors, railing, and front porch have been added. Source: Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.



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**Figure 11.** Juan María Osuna Adobe looking north, circa 1930s. Source: Southwest Museum.



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**Figure 12.** Juan María Osuna Adobe looking north with a California Pepper tree in the foreground, circa 1930s. Source: Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.



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**Figure 13.** Southwest corner of Juan María Osuna Adobe, looking north at fountain and wall, circa 1930s. Source: Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.



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**Figure 14.** North façade of Juan María Osuna Adobe, looking south at the clay tile roof, chimney, and historic recessed porch covered in vines, circa 1930s. Source: The San Diego History Center.





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**Figure 15.** The rear porch shows the historic porch with a rustic wood trellis. The historic porch flooring is scored concrete matching the sleeping porch, circa 1925. Source: Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.



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**Figure 16.** Living room, circa 1925. Source: Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.



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**Figure 17.** Living room shows the interior finish after the Lilian Rice rehabilitation, circa 1925.  
Source: Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society.

