

Form 10-300
(July 1969)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: TEXAS	
COUNTY: Bexar	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 23 1972

1. NAME				
COMMON: Mission San Francisco de la Espada				
AND/OR HISTORIC:				
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER: At the end of Espada Road, .4 miles off Loop 410				
CITY OR TOWN: San Antonio				
STATE Texas		CODE 048	COUNTY: Bexar	CODE 029
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS
☐ District ☐ Building ☒ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object		☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both		☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress
		Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered		Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
☐ Agricultural ☐ Government ☐ Park ☐ Transportation ☐ Comments				
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Private Residence ☐ Other (Specify) _____				
☒ Educational ☐ Military ☒ Religious _____				
☐ Entertainment ☐ Museum ☐ Scientific _____				
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER'S NAME: Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio				
STREET AND NUMBER: Chancery Office, P.O. Box 13190				
CITY OR TOWN: San Antonio		STATE: Texas		CODE 048
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Bexar County Courthouse and Chancery Office, Archdiocese				
STREET AND NUMBER: P.O. Box 13190				
CITY OR TOWN: San Antonio		STATE: Texas		CODE 048
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS				
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey				
DATE OF SURVEY: 1934 ☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Washington		STATE: DC		CODE 008

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☒ Ruins	☒ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mission San Francisco de la Espada, located in southeast San Antonio, stands partially in ruins, partially reconstructed and partially restored.

Initially, the mission complex was made up of temporary buildings. By 1745 though the building of permanent stone structures had begun. One building in progress at this time was the small chapel, part of which has survived and is still used today. The south and north walls had collapsed when Father Francis Bouchu arrived as parish priest in 1858. It is due to his efforts that the church is rebuilt and standing today. Ruins of a later church (1762) are located on the south of the compound adjacent to the convent. It was demolished in 1777 because of faulty construction.

The mission complex follows a similar arrangement to that of other missions, particularly San Juan Capistrano. That is, rooms and buildings arranged in a rough quadrangle around a central courtyard. Entrances to the rooms are made through those walls facing the courtyard leaving the exterior protected. The main entrance to the mission compound was through a gate on the south.

The Espada church is a small, rectangular building whose main facade faces east. Transepts on the south and north elevations give the building the traditional cross-shape. A two-tiered espadana the width of the east facade is pierced by two bells on the lower tier and a third at the top. Finials at either side of the tiers and a wrought iron cross at the top complete the decorations of the wall belfry. The arrangement of this espadana is virtually identical to that of San Juan.

Attached at right angles to the rear south wall is a covered arcade with rooms in back of it creating the west wall. The convent is built onto this arrangement at right angles at the south end of the arcade. The convent is a rectangular building with the greatest length on an east/west axis. This complex of three contiguous buildings, convento, arcade with rooms and church, has a flat roof surrounded by a parapet and drained by canales.

The fortified bastion in the southeast corner, of rubble construction, is part of the early construction at the site. It is unique in that no other missions here have surviving remains of any fortified section of the wall.

Efforts are now being made by the Archdiocese of San Antonio to maintain and perhaps, in the future, to restore the buildings which comprised the original complex.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☒ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1731

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal

☐ Prehistoric☒ Historic☐ Agriculture☒ Architecture☐ Art☐ Commerce☐ Communications☐ Conservation☐ Education☐ Engineering☐ Industry☐ Invention☐ Landscape☐ Architecture☐ Literature☐ Military☐ Music☐ Political☒ Religion/Phi-

losophy

☐ Science☐ Sculpture☐ Social/Human-

itarian

☐ Theater☐ Transportation☐ Urban Planning☐ Other (Specify)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The mission system, a vital part of Spanish conquest and control, was designed to extend, hold, Christianize and civilize the frontier. This system is exemplified by the chain of missions established in the 1730s along the San Antonio River. The farthest south in this chain, Mission San Francisco de la Espada, is the successor to the first East Texas mission, San Francisco de los Tejas (1690).

Initially, the Espada complex consisted of temporary buildings; however, by 1745, more permanent stone structures were being erected. Those remnants of the early buildings are: the chapel, convento, the fortified tower in the southeast corner, several ruins of Indian quarters and the foundations of a large church (1762) and a granary.

One of the early missionary priests at Espada, Father Bartolome Garcia, made a significant contribution while he was there. In 1760 his Manual para Administrar los Sacramentos a confessional manual, was published in Spanish and Coahuiltecan. This remains as the only record of the language of those mission Indians.

Espada Aqueduct, nearby the mission complex, is the sole extant Spanish aqueduct in the United States and is still in use.

Espada's history did not end with the secularization of its mission lands though. In 1835 the mission buildings were occupied by Bowie, Travis and their Texas Army and used as a fortification against the Mexican Army.

Primarily, though, Espada Mission stands as a vital and living reminder of the Spanish colonial past in the southwest, as well as an architectural and symbolic continuum of this special kind of religious institution.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bolton, Herbert E. 1970. Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century. Texas History Paperbacks TH-8. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Castaneda, Carlos E. 1936. Our Catholic Heritage in Texas. III. Austin: Von Boeckman-Jones.
- Webb, Walter P., ed. 1952. The Handbook of Texas. 2 vols. Austin: Texas State Historical Association.
- (See continuation sheet #1)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	29° 19' 06"	98° 27' 05"	0		
NE	29° 19' 06"	98° 26' 54"			
SE	29° 18' 58"	98° 26' 54"			
SW	29° 18' 58"	98° 27' 05"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 10 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Wayne Bell, Project Director Marsha Jackson, Research Associate	
ORGANIZATION Texas State Historical Survey Committee	DATE 9-30-71
STREET AND NUMBER: 108 W. 15th Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Austin	STATE Texas
	CODE 048

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☒ State ☒ Local ☐

Name Shelley Salinas

Title State Liaison Officer

Date 10-26-71

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ernest A. Connolly
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

FEB 23 1972

Date _____

ATTEST:

William J. Quinter
Keeper of The National Register

JAN 27 1972

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet) #1

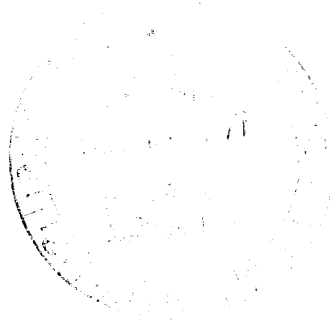
STATE	
TEXAS	
COUNTY	
Bexar	
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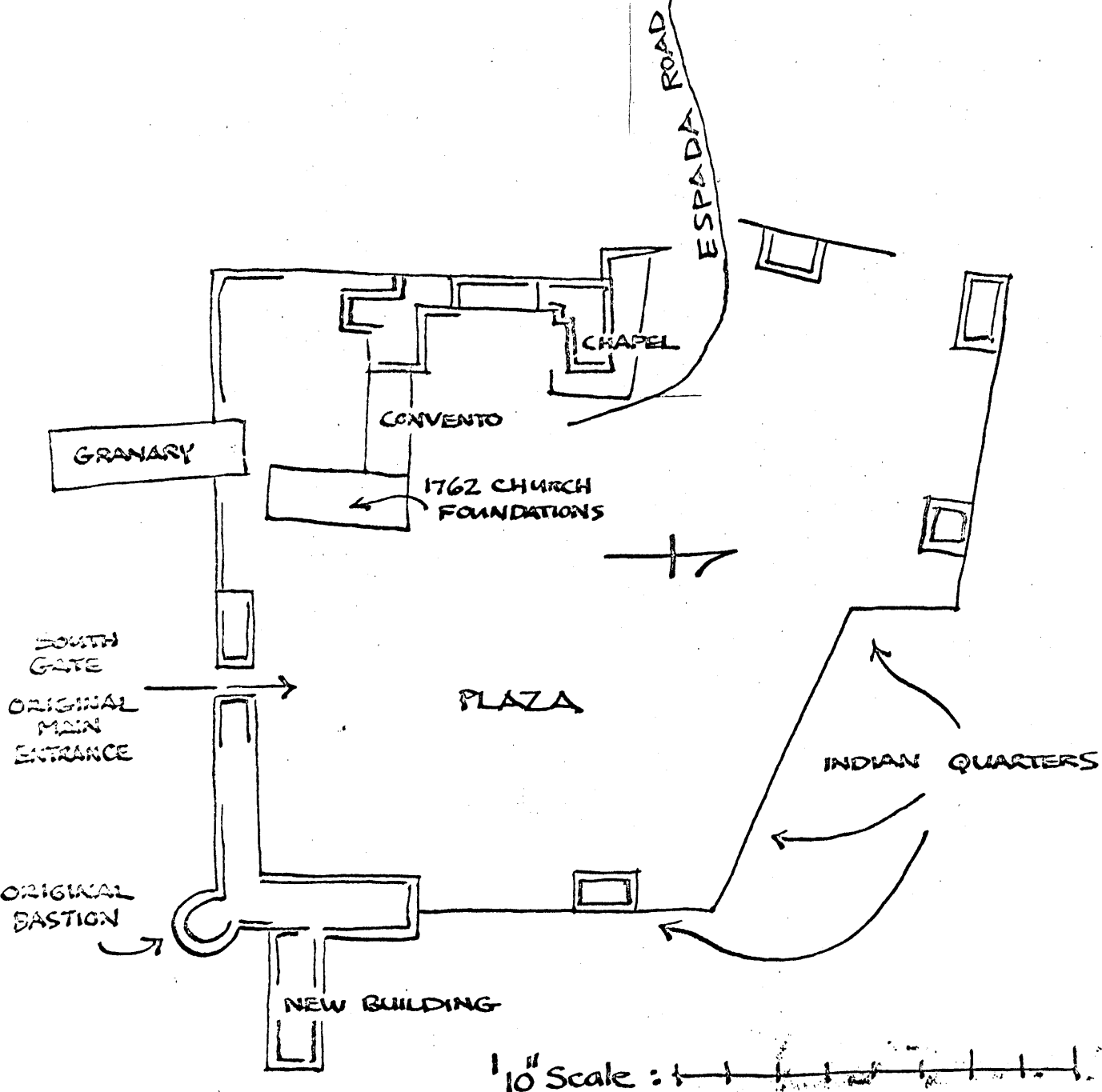
(Number all entries)

FEB 29 1972

9. (contd.)

Winfrey, Dorman. 1965. San Francisco de la Espada. In Missions of Texas. Waco: Texian Press.





MISSION SAN FRANCISCO DE LA ESPADA SITE PLAN

ADAPTED FROM HABS

TEX 320

1934

= EXISTING WALLS

- " "



NPS Number 2.23.72

Title: Mission San Francisco
de la Espada

Loc. East facade of chapel.
View southwest.

①



NPS Number

2.23.72

(2)

Title:

Mission San Francisco

de la Espada; Bexar County, Texas

Loc.

West face, Chapel & compound

wall. View from west entrance

off Espada Road. View east-southeast.



3

NPS Number 2.23.72

Title: Mission San Francisco de la Espada
Bexar County, Texas

Loc. View across mission compound
courtyard toward north wall.
Note house. View north.



④

NPS Number 2.23.72

Title: Mission San Francisco de la Espada

Bexar County, Texas

Loc. S. wall + original main
entrance on south.

View northwest.



NPS Number 2.23.72

Title: Mission San Francisco de la
Espada; Bexar County, Texas

Loc. S. wall. & entrance, interior
view. View southeast.



⑥

NPS Number 2.23.72

Title: Mission San Francisco de la Espada
Bexar County, Texas

Loc. View across mission
compound toward north wall,
view northwest.