

Land Use History of Madrona Ranger Station *Saguaro National Park*



Madrona Pack Base mid to late 1940's. View looking east.

***Revision 2
September 2004***

FOREWORD

Much of the history of Madrona Ranger Station has probably been lost, discarded, never documented, or just forgotten over a time span of nearly 60 years, but enough information continues to exist to provide a relatively comprehensive history of the activity in this area. Some photos do exist, as presented in this document. While little or no documentation exists as to the time of the photos there are, fortunately, vehicles present in the photos that place the photos at least in a general time frame. The monthly Superintendent's and Ranger reports and narratives are another source that provide much detailed and reliable information of the activities that actually took place monthly at Madrona. The Park Headquarters library and the Western Archeology and Conservation Center (WACC) provide a continuous record of these documents through December 1967. All other known documentation such as planning documents, drawings, proposals, reports, etc., provide only clues as to what may, or may not, have actually been realized at Madrona. Many times these clues are inconsistent and ambiguous.

EARLY HISTORY

Early settlers and current valley inhabitants have utilized the Madrona¹ area for approximately 130 years, and early Americans had been present for several centuries prior to that. This is due in large part to the water resources available in Chiminea Creek, which provide a lush riparian environment and a year-round water supply. Early ranchers used the water in Chiminea Creek to provide water for their stock, as evidenced by a check dam constructed on the creek a short distance upstream from the current structures. Late in the 19th century a trail was also constructed through Madrona to the timber areas of the Rincon Mountains which was used to haul large vigas (wood beams used for building construction) down the mountain to provide building materials for a growing Tucson.² Work crews used the Madrona area as a resting place on trips up and down the mountain, taking advantage of the many pools on Chiminea Creek and the shade of the trees. A chimney (still present today) was constructed for cooking, suggesting this area was an established and frequently used resting area.

When the area became a National Monument in 1933 there were no structures present on the Madrona site. Early maps up to and including 1939 show nothing more than a road to the area, no doubt used by local ranchers and work crews moving timber.

STRUCTURES

The first mention of any proposed structure at Madrona is to be found in a 1937 National Monument master plan.³ The structure was referred to only as a "maintenance station" on the Chiminea Trail. Since a 1939 monument map still did not reflect any structure or changes in this area, the proposed plan may have been abandoned or incorporated into plans for a more ambitious building effort that was to come later.

The next mention of structures at Madrona (also referred to as the Pack Base throughout much of the 1940's) appears on formal engineering drawings dated January 1944. These drawings provide detailed building plans for a residence (later designated as residence or quarters No. 4) and barn. No building schedules or proposals have been found, but construction did begin in June 1944.⁴ Construction apparently was an informal affair, proceeding as materials and labor availability permitted. Construction and finishing of the residence and barn took a full year: the barn was still under construction in March 1945,⁵ and residence bunks were installed and the septic tank completed in June 1945⁶ (Figure 1). The first ranger (James T. Fulton) was stationed at Madrona in October 1946² although the residence was probably used on a temporarily basis since its completion in the summer of 1945 and permanent occupation in the fall of 1946. A bedroom addition to the residence was completed in January 1951² after which the basic configuration of the residence would remain

unchanged until condemned in the 1990's, although upgrades and amenities would be periodically added.



Figure 1.
Residence shortly after completion

Following completion of the residence and barn, work began on a bunkhouse (Figure 2) located in the equipment staging area several hundred feet north of the residence and barn. Construction began in late 1946 and was completed in December of that year.⁷ Pack crews used this structure until February 1966, when the "old packer's quarters" (likely a reference to the bunk house) was removed.⁸

In January 1949 construction using salvaged materials began on a blacksmith shop across the road from the barn and was completed in March 1949⁹ (Figure 3). It is unclear how long this structure was actually used as a blacksmith shop. Later documents refer to it variously as a generator shed, garage, and by the 1970's photo evidence indicates it

had been converted into hay storage (Figures 4 and 5).

The last significant and permanent structure erected at Madrona was a metal building (Figure 6) acquired from the Civil Aeronautics Administration in late 1957.¹⁰ The building was moved from the Vail area where it was part of an aircraft navigation beacon site. It was first placed next to the bunk house, then repainted and moved to its current location adjacent to the barn. The building is currently being considered for placement on the National Historic Register due to its unique architectural details for such a small, utilitarian structure. It has served as fire cache, tack room, office, and probably anything else as needed.

A second residence was located temporarily at Madrona during the mid 1960's. A house trailer borrowed from the Western Office Division of Design and Construction (WODC) was placed at Madrona in September 1962¹¹ to provide quarters for Foreman Hanley. This trailer remained at Madrona for the winter and was replaced with a trailer from Headquarters in April 1963.¹² Water, sewer, and electrical power were hooked up, and a slab poured in April 1965.¹³ A patio was built on the slab in May 1966¹⁴ completing the residence. The trailer was removed and returned to Headquarters in May 1967.¹⁵

A number of sheds and utility buildings were also built at Madrona but there appears to be no accurate method of determining where and what they were. Monthly reports are inconsistent in that a shed may have been reported removed with only a vague description of its location, and no mention of when it may have been built. Likewise, a photo may show a utility building but nowhere in the monthly records is there a mention of its installation and/or removal. Since these buildings and sheds may be considered temporary structures and there is no remaining evidence of them today, their existence can be considered to be of passing interest only.

By the 1990's (Figure 7) structure installation/removal activities had ceased and the residence was eventually condemned for pest infestations and structural safety issues. After 50 years of continuous occupation there would no longer be a permanent resident on-site.

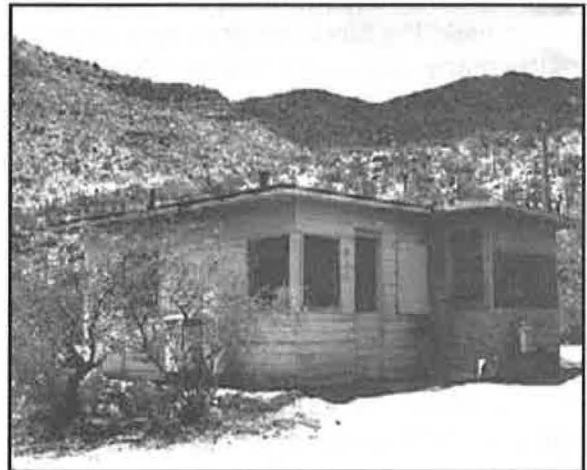


Figure 2.
Bunkhouse



Figure 3.
Blacksmith shop



Figure 4.
Madrona mid 1950's. An addition (bedroom) has been made to the residence, and the blacksmith shop is now present. The bunkhouse is visible in the equipment staging area in the upper right corner of the photo. View looking northwest.

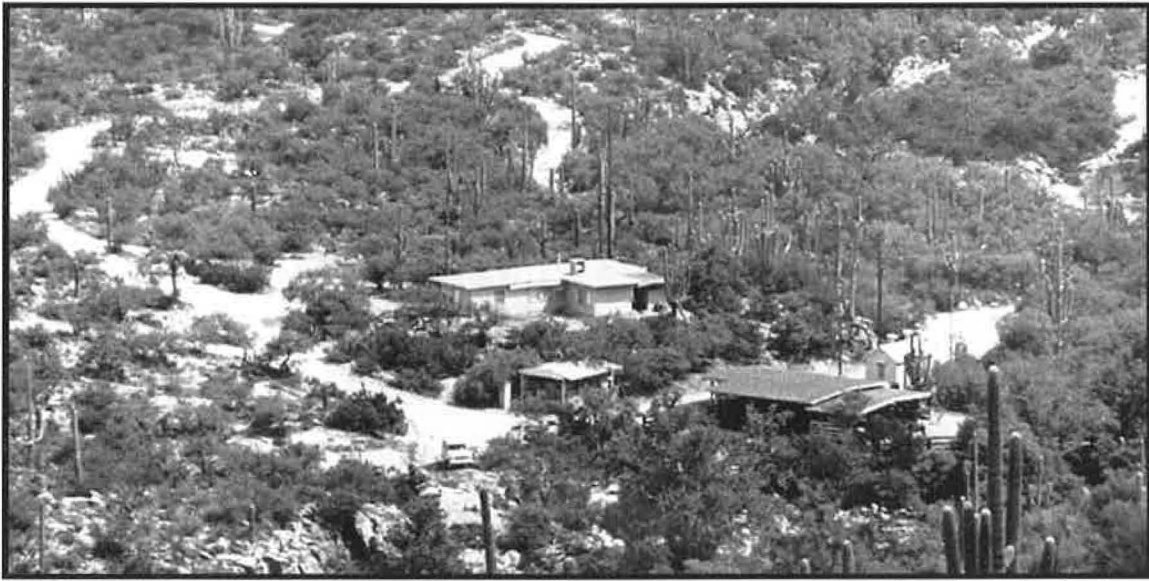


Figure 5.

Madrona early to mid 1970's. The residence has again been modified (a porch added and enclosed), an addition has been made to the west side of the barn, the CAA building is present adjacent to the barn, and the blacksmith shop has been converted to hay storage. View looking southeast.



Figure 6.

CAA building temporarily placed near bunkhouse. The building will be repainted, covering these original markings.

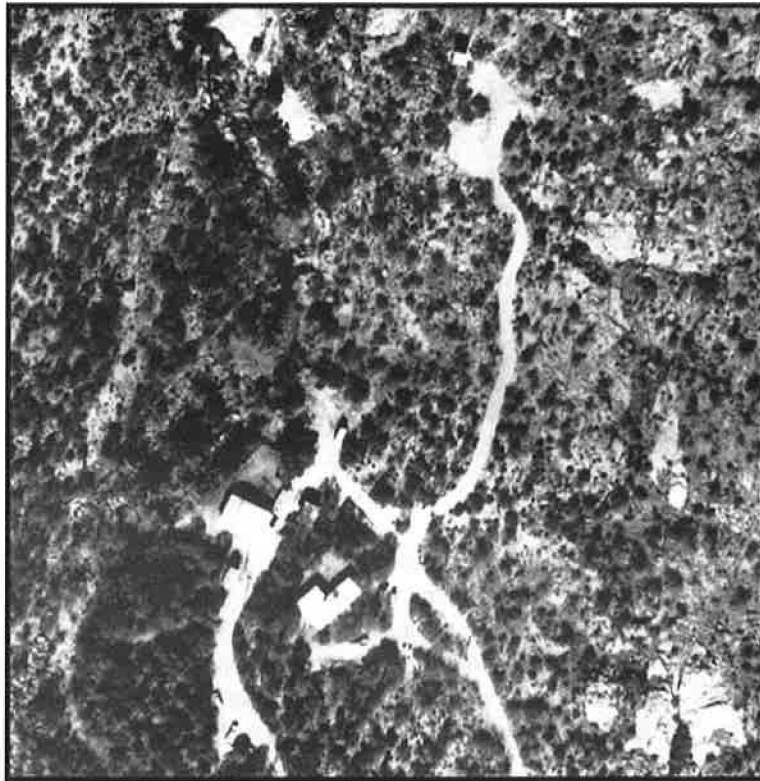


Figure 7.

This photo is dated 1994. There appear to be no structure changes since the 1970's. North is up.

UTILITIES

Telephone service between Madrona and Headquarters was established in April 1945¹⁶ with the installation of poles and wire from Headquarters across the southwest corner of the Park to the Madrona residence. Initially electric power was provided by two 3-kW Onan gasoline generators installed in April 1947.¹⁷ These generators proved inefficient and troublesome and were replaced in October 1952¹⁸ with a 5-kW Onan diesel generator installed on a concrete pad. A generator shed was erected and a 530-gallon fuel tank was buried near the shed. There is no documentation indicating where the generator, shed, and buried tank were located although it is likely that they were near the blacksmith shop. With the arrival of Tucson Gas and Electric power in April 1964¹⁹ the generator, shed, and concrete pad were removed. There is no mention that the fuel tank was removed. It has yet to be located and may still be buried.

A reliable water supply always has been and still is a problem at Madrona. Initially water was pumped from Chiminea Creek using a small, gasoline engine driven pump. Water was stored in two 3,000-gallon and two 3,750-gallon tanks installed in the equipment staging area in early 1948 (Figure 8). In March 1952 pumping capacity was increased with the installation of a 35 hp, 4-cylinder Wisconsin gasoline engine and a Gardner Denver 2-inch centrifugal water pump (120 gpm).²⁰ The pump was mounted on a concrete foundation in April 1953, and the existing one-inch water line replaced with a two-inch line, allowing all tanks to be filled in two hours when water was available.²¹



Figure 8.
Four water storage tanks in
the equipment staging area

In April 1955 two 2,500-gallon riveted aluminum tanks were secured from Davis-Monthan AFB²² to supplement still further the water storage capacity at Madrona. The tanks were on-site at Madrona in May (Figure 9), however, there is no documentation that records that the tanks were ever installed, used, or removed, nor is there any physical evidence on the ground of any installation. They do appear, however, on a field survey map dated 1958,²³ perhaps in anticipation of eventual installation. The documentation refers to the tanks as aircraft fuel tanks, which may offer a clue as to why they were never installed. Using fuel tanks (unless never previously used as such) for potable water storage seems questionable, even in those days; perhaps managers and/or utility engineers had second

thoughts.

In May 1965, one year after the arrival of Tucson Gas and Electric power, a power line on five poles was extended to the pump site and the gasoline engine pump was replaced with an electric pump.²⁴ In January 1966 a 10,000-gallon water tank replaced the two 3,000-gallon tanks.²⁵ It is probable that the two 3,750-gallon tanks were also removed at this time to provide space for the 10,000-gallon tank. There is no record of these tanks having been removed so it is likely to be an oversight in the report of January 1966. To lower the domestic water temperature, a roof was installed over the tank in May 1966.²⁶

Water flow in Chiminea Creek, however, was not reliable. In spite of pumping and storage improvements, the water supply was not adequate to guarantee an uninterrupted supply during dry months when Chiminea Creek flow was minimal. Water then had to be hauled from the X9 Ranch or Headquarters four to six months out of the year. In an attempt to supplement the low availability of water, wells were drilled adjacent to Chiminea Creek in 1964. One well was dry as it hit bedrock and another encountered water but the sides of the well collapsed. A third encountered water at 440 feet and pumping proved adequate,²⁷ however poor water quality (high iron and fluoride content) disallowed its use²⁸ and water continued to be hauled to Madrona until the residence was condemned in the late 1990's.

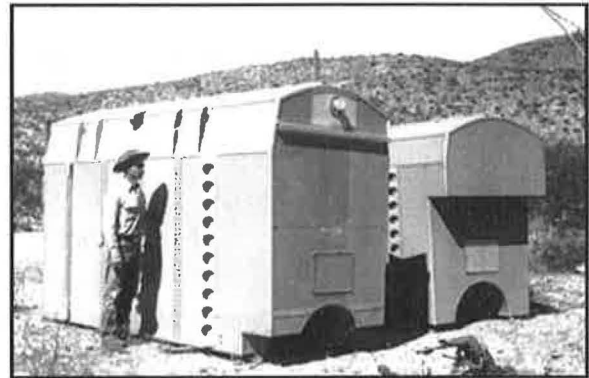


Figure 9.
Aircraft fuel tanks intended to be
used as additional water storage.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

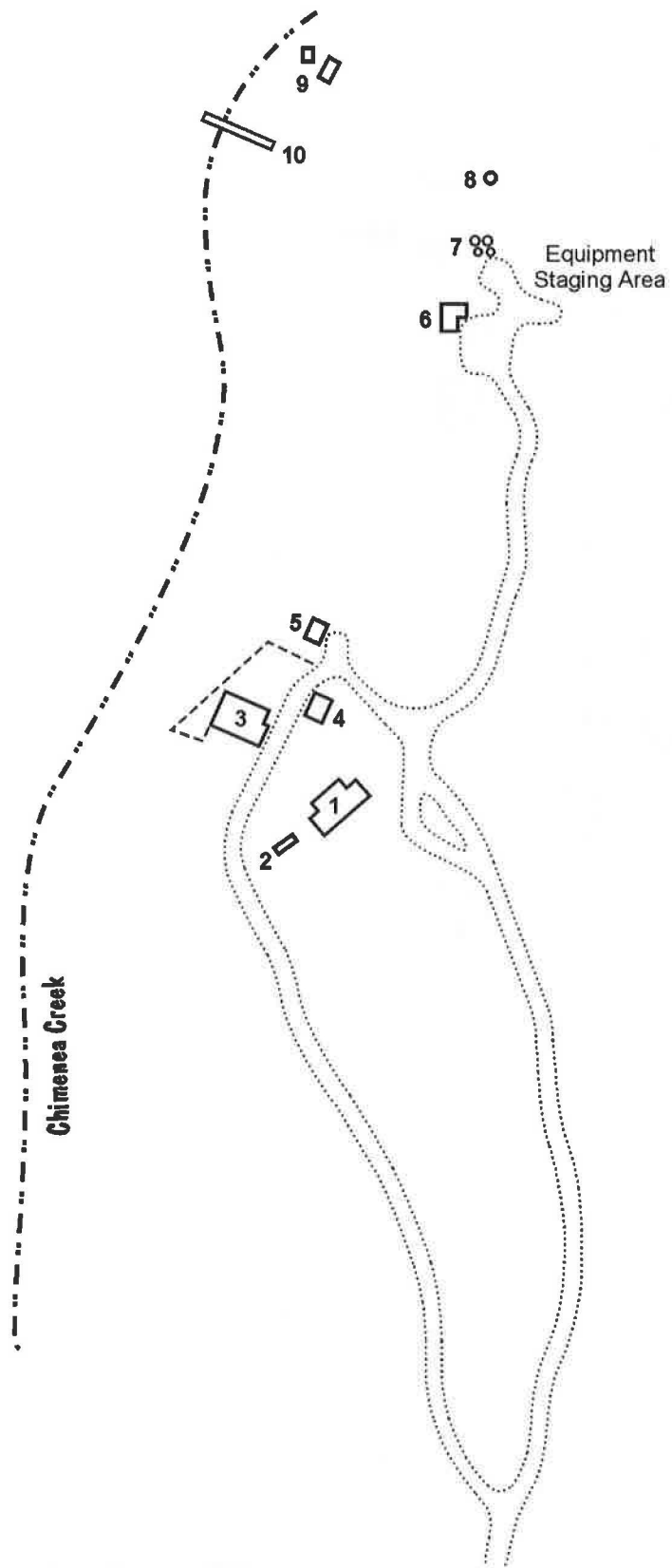
In the 1960's there was considerable public activity in the Madrona area. Parking and outhouse facilities were provided, and continuing maintenance was reported on picnic tables and fireplaces along the creek. In 1963 a master plan²⁹ was proposed to expand the facilities at Madrona to accommodate the increased public use of the area. The plan included a visitor building, two additional residences, expanded parking, and additional public facilities. While the expansion never took place (perhaps due to lack of sufficient water resources and the lack of control of the access road) Madrona continued to be heavily utilized by the public taking advantage of the picnicking and hiking opportunities in the area during the mid 1960's. In June 1967, however, the owner of the X9 Ranch, citing an unruly public and abuse of the land, installed a locked gate on the road to Madrona

(which crossed his property), effectively ending all public access to area.³⁰ Madrona remains closed to all but Park personnel and those on Park business.

Figures 10 – 13 provide a record of Madrona's configuration from the mid 1950's to the present.

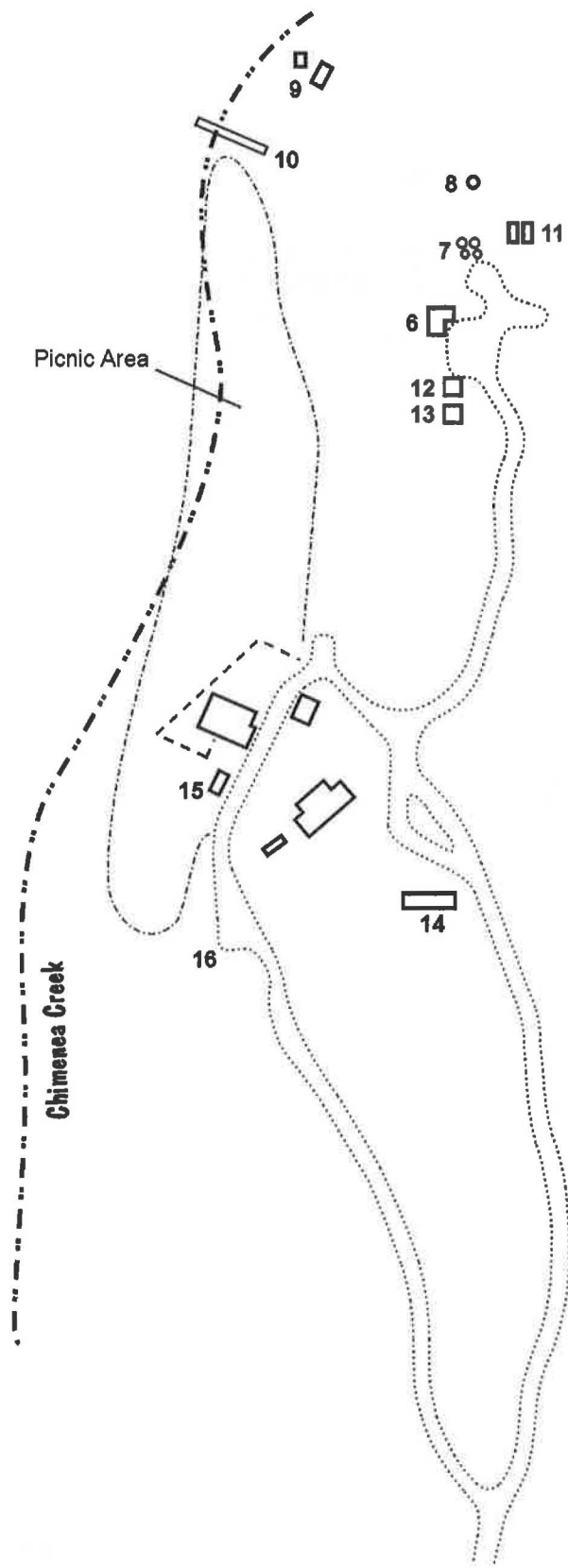
MAP INDEX

<u>Map Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Residence No. 4
2	Residence septic tank. This is the original septic tank that was excavated and built on site in January 1944. ³¹ It may have proven to be inadequate (records indicate relatively frequent maintenance actions). A second septic tank was installed in December 1955 ³² approximate 50 feet east of this location. This second septic tank was replaced again in 1992.
3	Barn and corral
4	Blacksmith shop
5	Utility shed
6	Bunk house
7	Water tanks: two 3,000 and two 3,750-gallon
8	Chimney
9	Concrete bases for water pump and motor. Water was pumped through a pipe that extended to a large pool approximately 30 feet upstream and 10 feet below the pump.
10	Check dam. This dam is constructed of concrete and local rocks, and is approximately two feet high. Construction date is unknown but it is visible in a 1929 photo.
11	Planned location for two aircraft fuel tanks (2,500 gallons each) for additional water storage. Tanks were apparently never installed.
12	Utility shed. Before being removed from the site, this shed was moved to the area just south of the present location of the CAA building. Dates are unknown.
13	Utility shed
14	Foreman Hanley's house trailer
15	CAA building
16	Public parking expanded in November 1960
17	Covered 10,000-gallon water tank
18	Concrete slab, poured next to foreman's trailer
19	Well. Six-inch steel casing with cap, 255 feet deep
20	Fire hydrant and hose. These hydrants, on a two-inch water line, were installed in May 1967 to enhance local fire protection. ¹⁵
21	Concrete trough, approximately 1' x 2' x 6'
Picnic area	This area appears in the 1963 planning document and was implemented, as evidenced by the monthly records of the installation of picnic tables, fireplaces, etc., in the mid-1960's. There were also picnicking activities in the area immediately south of the residence.



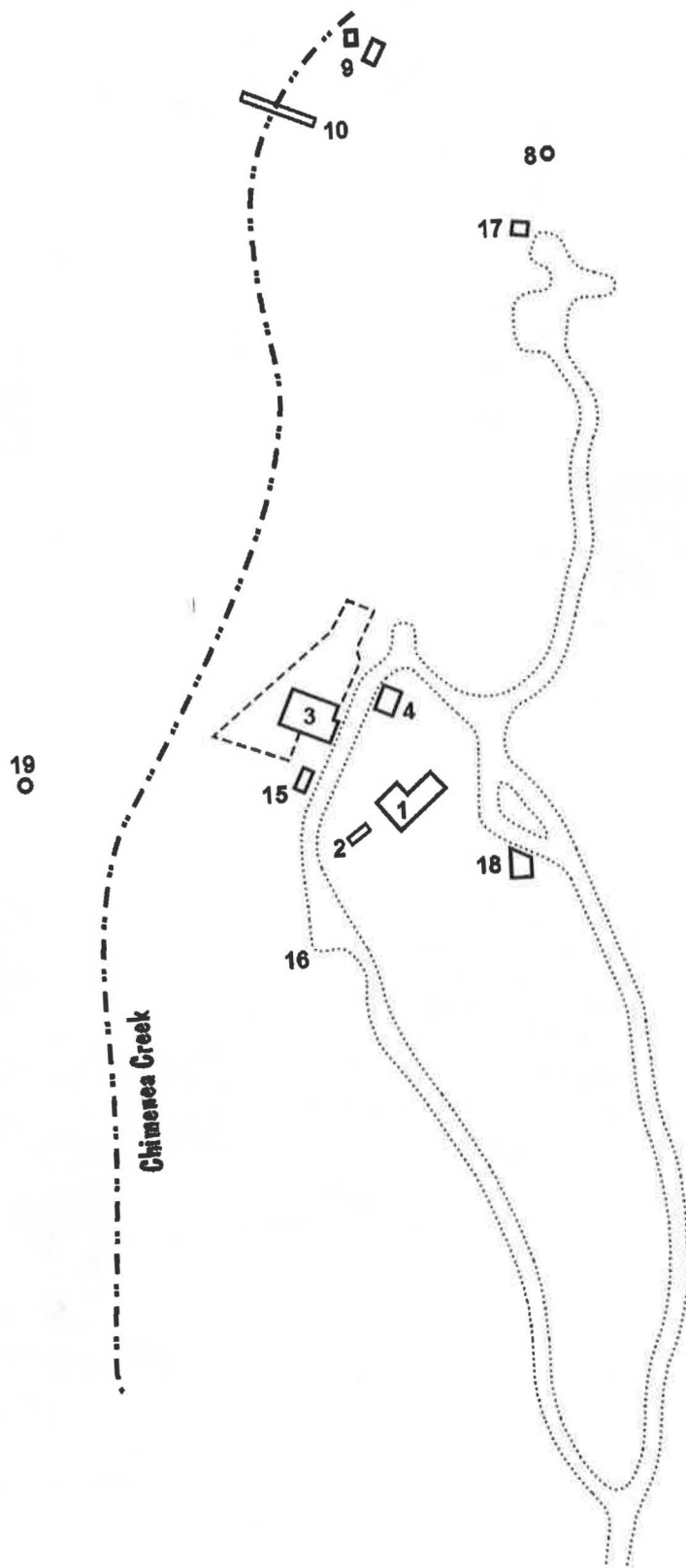
Source: Aerial photo

Figure 10. Mid 1950's Site Map



Source: Planning document²

Figure 11. 1963 Site Map



Source: Aerial photo

Figure 12. 1994 Site Map

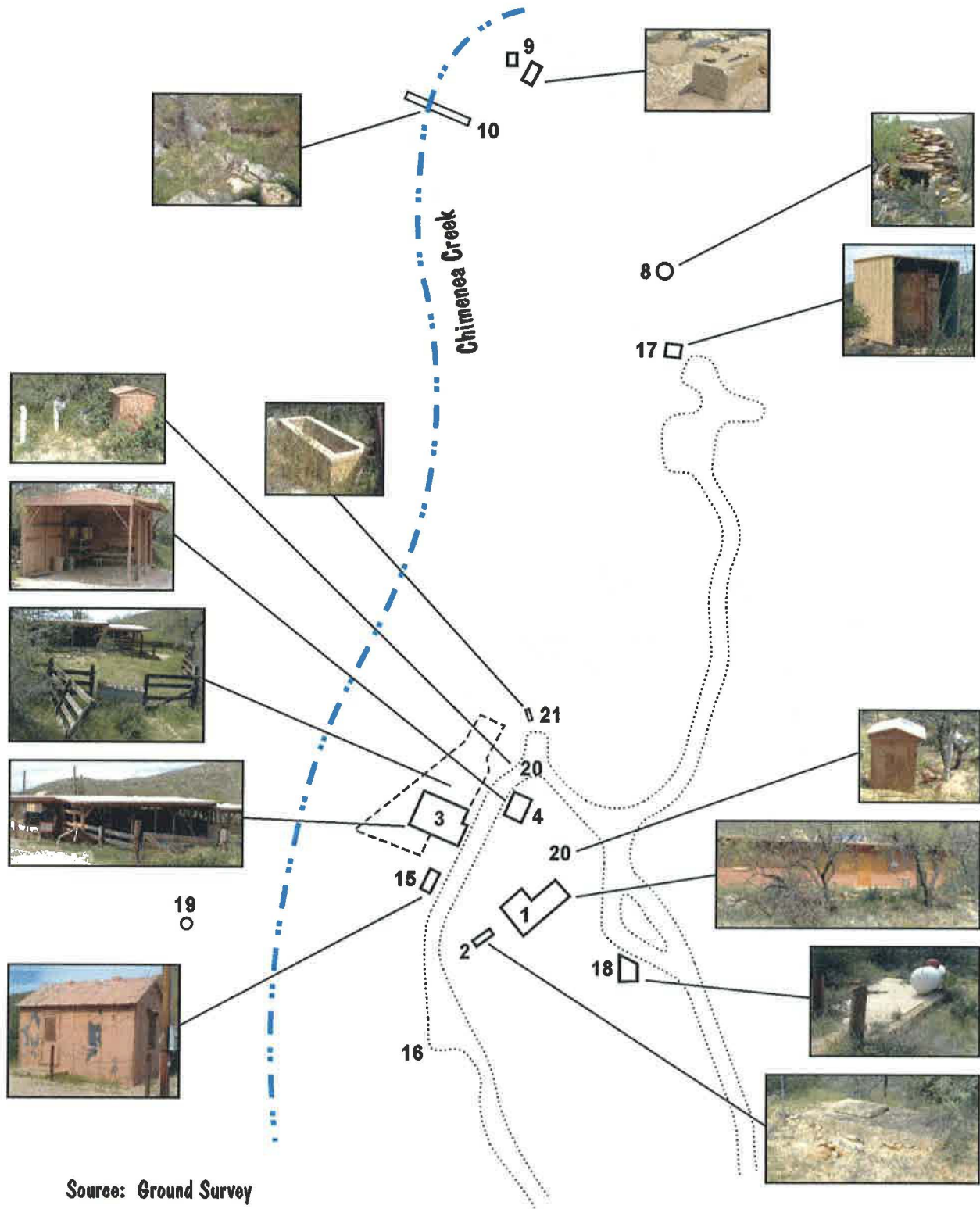


Figure 13. 2003 Site Map

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 The name Madrona was derived from Madroño, Spanish for "strawberry tree," a tree (*Arbutus menziesii*) native to the Pacific coast of North America and Mexico. (Interview with Frank Escalante, December 1969²)
- 2 *Saguaro National Monument Park Historical Reports and Rincon Narrative Reports, Chronology of Monument History (After Establishment)*, 917.9 SNM
- 3 *A Preliminary Report For The Master Plan Saguaro National Monument*, 1937, page 8
- 4 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, June 1944
- 5 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, March 26, 1945
- 6 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, June 26, 1945
- 7 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, December 26, 1946
- 8 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, February 1966
- 9 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, March 26, 1949
- 10 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, November 1957
- 11 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, September 1962
- 12 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, April 1963
- 13 *Park Ranger Monthly Narrative Report*, April 1965
- 14 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, May 1966
- 15 *Park Ranger Monthly Narrative Report*, May 1967
- 16 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, April 1945
- 17 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, April 27, 1947
- 18 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, October 26, 1952
- 19 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, April 1964
- 20 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, March 26, 1952
- 21 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, April 27, 1953
- 22 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, April 1955
- 23 *Madrona Pack Base Diversion*, Field Survey Map, March 1958, SAG-NM-7106
- 24 *Park Ranger Monthly Narrative Report*, May 1965
- 25 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, January 26, 1966
- 26 *Monthly Superintendent's Report*, May 27, 1966
- 27 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, March 1964
- 28 *Natural and Cultural Resources Management Plan, and Environmental Assessment*, May 1979, page 23
- 29 *The Master Plan For Preservation and Use, Saguaro National Monument*, 1963

NOTES AND REFERENCES (Continued)

- 30 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, June 1967
- 31 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, January 1944
- 32 *Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report*, December 1955