

TONEY RESIDENCE
(Ranger's Residence)
Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park
10700 Escondido Canyon Road
Agua Dulce
Los Angeles
California

HABS CA-2808
CA-2808

HABS
CA-2808

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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Location: 10700 Escondido Canyon Road, located within the northern portion of the 932-acre Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park in the unincorporated community of Agua Dulce in County of Los Angeles, California.

U.S. Geological Survey Los Angeles Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
34°29'19.199"N; 118°19'15.786"W

Present Owner / Occupant: County of Los Angeles

Present Use: Storage

Significance: Constructed between 1933 and 1938, the Toney Residence is associated with William H. Krieg; his nephew, Ray A. Toney; and great-nephew, Edward A. Toney, a pioneering family of Agua Dulce. Krieg settled in the area in 1919, and his nephew and great-nephew constructed the residence. Edward A. Toney spent his childhood at the Toney Residence and later aided in the development of the City of Valencia as vice-president of the Newhall Land and Farming Company. The residence is significant for its association with agriculture, recreation and tourism, and entertainment as set locations for the film industry in the early 20th century. It is the last remaining resource associated with these industries in Vasquez Rocks Natural Park Area. The County of Los Angeles leased the property from the Toney family in 1964 and eventually purchased it in 1967. It was occupied by the park ranger until February 2005 when it was vacated and is currently used for storage.¹

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. **Physical History:**

1. **Date of erection:** Between 1933 and 1938
2. **Architect:** None
3. **Original and subsequent owners:** Toney Family (circa 1933–1967), County of Los Angeles (1967–present)

¹ Del Rosario, Sheryll, Sapphos Environmental, Inc., Pasadena, CA. 28 October 2005. Telephone conversation with Sandy Dininger, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, Los Angeles, CA.

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4. **Original and subsequent occupants:** Toney Family (circa 1933–1964), County of Los Angeles (1964–present)
5. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** Ray A. Toney and Edward A. Toney
6. **Original plans and construction:** No original plans could be located.
7. **Alterations and additions:** In the 1960s, the original east-facing front porch was enclosed, and a porch with a shed roof was added to the north elevation, reorienting the front entrance of the residence to the north elevation. Also in the 1960s, an acoustical ceiling was added in the living room as well as wood paneling to the north wall of the room, and parquet flooring was laid down in the bedrooms and hallway.

B. Historic Context:

Toney Residence

The Toney Residence is a single-family residence situated on a 240-acre homestead acquired in 1919 by William H. Krieg, a miner who purchased the land for farming. When his farming efforts proved to be unsuccessful, he constructed cabins for tourists and encouraged the use of the property for filming by Hollywood movie companies. The Toney Residence was constructed in this area between 1933 and 1938 by Krieg's nephew, Ray Alvin Toney, and great-nephew, Edward A. Toney, by using wood from leftover movie sets.² The Toney family built the Toney Residence as their primary residence during the Depression. The County of Los Angeles (County) leased the property from the Toney family in 1964 and purchased it three years later in 1967. It was occupied by the park ranger until February 2005 when it was vacated.³ Currently, the house is being used for storage and restroom facilities for County employees.

As the last remaining resource associated with tourism and the film industry in Vasquez Rocks, the Toney Residence—including the house, garage, stone wall, stone feature, and mature trees—represents the historical uses of the park in the early 20th century: agriculture, recreation and tourism, and set locations for the film industry. Constructed between 1933 and 1938 by Edward and Ray Toney, members of an original homesteading family, the house also represents an era in the early 20th century during which Vasquez Rocks was used by homesteaders for settlement (the land on which the residence is located was granted as a homestead to William Krieg in 1919). In addition, the Krieg/Toney family, as one of the early residents of the Agua Dulce area, are of local interest; Ed Toney, son of Ray Toney, spent his childhood at the Toney Residence and went on to play an important role, as a vice-president of the Newhall Land and Farming Company, in the development of the City of Valencia.

² Rismanchi, Jo Ellen. 3 March 2002. "Notes from Interview with Edward Toney, Agua Dulce Pioneer." In *Santa Clarita Valley History in Pictures*. Santa Clarita, CA. Available at: <http://www.scvhistory.com/scvhistory/rismanchi-toney-notes.htm>

³ Del Rosario, Sheryll, Sapphos Environmental, Inc., Pasadena, CA. 28 October 2005. Telephone conversation with Sandy Dininger, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, Los Angeles, CA.

Spanish Era

The Historic Period in California began with the arrival of Spanish navigator Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and his party, who anchored in San Diego Bay on September 28, 1542. In August 1769, a Spanish expedition led by Don Gaspar de Portolá crossed the Newhall Pass into the Santa Clarita Valley, thus initiating the Historic Period within the region including the Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park (located in the northeastern portion of the Santa Clarita Valley).⁴ The growth of the Santa Clarita Valley owed much to the 1797 founding of the Mission San Fernando de Rey de España in the southern portion of the valley. Plans for founding the San Fernando Mission had been initiated in 1784 by Father Fermín Francisco Lasuén, who had become the Father-President of California's system of missions after the death of Junipero Serra the same year. Noting a large distance between the missions in San Gabriel and San Buenaventura, Father Lasuén sought to establish a mission between the two. Just more than 20 years after its founding in 1797, the holdings of the San Fernando Mission were considerable, with more than 12,000 head of cattle, 7,800 head of sheep, 780 horses, and 140 mules. Agricultural holdings included 32,000 grapevines, 1,600 fruit trees, and other crops including olives and dates. The San Fernando Mission also became known for fine leather work and enjoyed an active trade in hides and tallow.

Mexican Era

With Mexican independence in 1821 and the 1833 law passed by the Mexican congress to secularize California's missions, the San Fernando Mission was dismantled in 1834. At the San Fernando Mission, orders from Governor José Figueroa to secularize—which entailed scaling back the mission to the size of a parish church and confiscating the mission's lands, livestock, and crops—were delivered by Lieutenant Antonio Seferino del Valle in 1834. Valle stayed on to take an inventory of the mission's holdings and, in 1839, was granted a 48,000-acre rancho near the junction of the Santa Clara River and Castaic Creek by Governor Juan Alvarado. In the wake of the U.S.-Mexican war, the 1848 signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded California, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to the United States. Vasquez Rocks and the surrounding area became public land administered by the U.S. government. The area that included Vasquez Rocks was never part of a land grant under the Rancho system.

In the mid- to late-19th century, settlement in the Vasquez Rocks area was influenced by four major developments. The first was the 1842 discovery of gold in the creeks of present-day Santa Clarita, near the San Fernando Mission, less than 15 miles from Vasquez Park.⁵ This discovery precipitated California's first documented gold rush in 1849 and brought widespread mining to the area.⁶ Other similar discoveries followed continuing to attract prospectors throughout the mid-19th century. The second was the nascent development of transportation. Beginning in the 1850s with

⁴ Reynolds, Jerry. 1992. *Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream*. Granada Hills, CA: World of Communications, Inc., p. 13.

⁵ Perkins, Arthur B. 29 April 1954. *The Story of Our Valley: The History of Santa Clarita Valley, The Crossroads of Southern California*. Santa Clarita, CA: Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society.

⁶ Reynolds, Jerry. 1992. *Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream*. Granada Hills, CA: World of Communications, Inc., pp. 13, 21.

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stagecoach service and later eclipsed by the arrival of railway travel in the 1870s, improved methods of transportation contributed significantly to the development and population of the area. The third was the 1862 passage of the Homestead Act. Individuals who were heads of household and at least 21 years old were granted up to 160 acres of undeveloped land. Specific conditions had to be met to permanently secure their claim: settlers had to reside on the land for at least five years and make certain improvements to the property. Settlement of the American West exploded as a result of the Homestead Act and brought the first permanent settlers to the Vasquez Rocks region.⁷ Fourth, the establishment of California's first commercial oil well in Newhall in 1876 brought attention to the area's natural resources and potential for industrial and economic development.⁸

Vasquez Rocks gained notoriety in the 1850s when Tiburcio Vasquez, a bandit from Monterey, California, purportedly staged his first robbery in the Santa Clarita Valley in a horse-stealing raid. Vasquez ultimately earned himself the moniker of "The Scourge of California"⁹ and became renowned for not only his bold robberies but also his skill at evading law enforcement. In 1873, California Governor Newton Booth offered an \$8,000 reward for his capture. By the time Vasquez was executed in March 1875, he had led a crime spree spanning nearly two decades and left an indelible mark on the region. While a direct connection between Vasquez Rocks and Tiburcio Vasquez does not appear to exist in available literature, local tradition holds that the bandit and his gang hid in the crags of Vasquez Rocks. (Evidence does exist to suggest that Vasquez and his gang used the La Cantua Canyon in the New Idria mines and Soledad Canyon east of the present Vasquez Rocks as a hiding place.) Vasquez's reputation in the area was such that when the film industry started using Vasquez Rocks as a site for film locations, the name of the infamous bandit lent it an aura of romance.

The Southern Pacific railway line extending from Los Angeles east to the main north/south line between Sacramento and Phoenix was established in the final quarter of the 19th century. Stations in Castaic and Saugus (west and southwest of Vasquez Rocks, respectively) served the Santa Clarita Valley and Vasquez Rocks areas. With this increased accessibility, population in the area grew, and it became a recreation and tourist destination for residents from Los Angeles. Early settlers mined for gold or attempted to earn their livelihoods from agriculture or raising livestock. One of the first homesteaders in the area of Vasquez Rocks was William H. Krieg. Krieg acquired 240 acres in 1919 in what would become the Natural Area Park through the 1862 Homestead Act. After unsuccessfully attempting to use his homestead for farming, Krieg built cabins for tourists and encouraged the use of his property for location filming by Hollywood studios from Los Angeles. With urbanization spreading in Los Angeles, Vasquez Rocks provided a rural, rugged setting for film companies but was close enough to the burgeoning entertainment industry to remain accessible. In 1917, William Mulholland, the "father of the Los Angeles municipal water system,"

⁷ National Park Service. Accessed 18 September 2006. "The Homestead Act." Available at: http://www.nps.gov/archive/home/homestead_act.html

⁸ Reynolds, Jerry. 1992. *Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream*. Granada Hills, CA: World of Communications, Inc., p. 130.

⁹ Reynolds, Jerry. 1992. *Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream*. Granada Hills, CA: World of Communications, Inc., p. 44.

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bought 235 acres in Hauser Canyon northeast of Agua Dulce to develop a cattle ranch and large house.¹⁰

During the 1930s, Santa Clarita Valley was the beneficiary of infrastructure projects carried out by the Civilian Conservation Corps, established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Two additional factors provided economic activity in the area during the Depression: a second gold rush and the film industry. The possibility of finding gold in Placerita, Piru, and Soledad Canyons brought prospectors from all over Southern California to the valley. Gold was mined with some success but also boosted the local economy through the need for food and supplies. The natural features of Santa Clarita Valley and Vasquez Rocks' rugged scenery proved to be an economic boon as a virtual "back lot" of the Los Angeles film industry, one of the few industries that remained solvent during the Depression.¹¹

In the post-World War II period, suburban expansion and subdivision transformed Southern California with its population boom. In the Santa Clarita Valley, even though the population doubled from 4,000 in 1940 to 7,500 by decade's end, the character of the valley remained largely agricultural.¹² In subsequent decades, however, development of suburban tract homes and shopping malls spread throughout the valley, facilitated by the mid-1960s construction of Interstate 5, which linked Santa Clarita Valley with Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley. In the 1960s, the County began acquiring land in the Agua Dulce area to assemble the Natural Area Park. The former Krieg property was leased in 1964 and later purchased in 1967. An adjacent property, the Triple A Ranch (AAA Ranch), was owned by the Asher family for much of the 20th century and was operated as a cattle ranch. The County acquired the 40-acre Asher property in December 1970, concluding the series of 22 transactions through which the County assembled the 932-acre Natural Area Park. With the exception of a standing stone barbecue, no buildings or structures on the Asher Ranch property are extant. Similarly, only foundations of other cabins once located in the Natural Area Park remain. The most recent park land acquisitions at the Natural Area Park were a 155-acre addition in 2001 and the 2.1-acre Sergeant property in 2002.

PART II. ARCHITECTURE INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural character:** The Toney Residence is a one-story, square-shaped, 1,044-square-foot house located on the south side of West Escondido Canyon Road, facing northeast. The wood-framed, vernacular-style building has a low-pitched, hipped roof with exposed rafters in the overhanging eaves. The roof is covered with nonoriginal brown composition shingles. Resting on a concrete slab foundation, the lower 2.5 feet of the exterior walls are faced with stretcher bond brick. The top

¹⁰ Reynolds, Jerry. 1992. *Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream*. Granada Hills, CA: World of Communications, Inc., p. 77.

¹¹ Reynolds, Jerry. 1992. *Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream*. Granada Hills, CA: World of Communications, Inc., p. 95.

¹² Reynolds, Jerry. 1992. *Santa Clarita: Valley of the Golden Dream*. Granada Hills, CA: World of Communications, Inc., p. 106.

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portion of the walls is clad in wide horizontal wood siding. An attached brick chimney bisects the north (street) elevation. Fenestration on all elevations consists primarily of wood-framed, double-hung windows, framed by molded trim. An enclosed porch is located on the eastern elevation.

- 2. Condition of fabric:** The current condition of the Toney Residence is good. The building is currently used for storage and restroom facilities and is generally being maintained. Exposed building materials are weathered and need repair. Although the layout is primarily untouched, it has had some alterations in the circa 1960s that include the addition of parquet flooring, acoustic ceiling tiles, and the enclosure of the porch.

B. Description of Exterior:

- 1. Overall dimensions:** The Toney Residence stands at approximately 8 feet in height. The exterior building measurements are 30'3" wide by 33'1" deep. The total square footage for the enclosed condition space calculates to 1,044 square feet.
- 2. Foundations:** The Residence rests on a concrete slab foundation.
- 3. Walls:** The exterior walls of the Toney Residence consist of 2.5 feet of stretcher bond brick on the bottom half, and the top portion of the walls are clad in wide horizontal wood siding. The building generally reflects the vernacular aesthetic of sparse architectural ornamentation, emphasized by exposed structural elements and materials.
- 4. Structural system, framing:** The Toney Residence is a wood-framed structure.
- 5. Porches:** The original partial-width front porch located on the east elevation was enclosed in the 1960s. Also at this time, an additional partial-width porch with a shed roof and wooden porch supports was placed on the north elevation, reorienting the primary entrance to the north elevation. A second partial-width porch that is located on the west elevation is capped by a shed roof extension projecting from the main roof.
- 6. Openings:** The window fenestration for the Toney Residence can be characterized as asymmetrically arranged, wood-framed, one-over-one double-hung windows set in a linear configuration that provides a continuous rhythm across the building. The windows are surrounded by molded wood casings and have slightly projecting sills.

The north elevation contains a single-paneled and glazed door covered by a wooden screen door. The west elevation has a single-wood-paneled and glazed door with a wooden screen door. Facing Escondido Canyon Road, the east elevation has a single-wood-paneled and glazed door that originally served as the front door and a wooden screen door that gives access to the 1960s enclosed screen porch.

7. **Roof:**
- a. **Roof shape, covering:** The Toney Residence has a low-pitched, hipped roof and is covered with nonoriginal brown composition shingles.
 - b. **Cornice, eaves:** The roof on the Residence has exposed rafters in the overhanging eaves.
- C. **Description of Interior:** The interior of the house consists of a living and dining room, kitchen and utility room, hall, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and the now-enclosed porch. Original features and finishes include stained window and door casings, the living room fireplace, bathroom tile, the exposed wood planks and rafters of the ceiling of the now-enclosed east porch, the wood-paneled former front door leading into the living room from the east porch, and other paneled wood interior doors. Alterations include the floor and ceiling finishes, knotty pine paneling in the living room, and a partially remodeled kitchen.
- D. **Site:**
1. **General setting and orientation:** The Toney Residence is set within a rural setting, in an unpaved area surrounded by vegetation and rock formations to the south and east. The natural rock formations are an important element of the setting. It is located in the northern portion of the Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park and faces north toward Escondido Canyon Road. The Residence originally was oriented east toward the rock formations until the east facing porch was enclosed and the primary entrance was changed to the north elevation. Also on site are mature trees, a rock formation located north of the Residence, and a pair of stone pillars that were moved from the Asher Ranch and placed northwest of the Residence.
 2. **Historic landscape design:** No formal landscape design is present; however, the Toney Residence was constructed to take advantage of unobstructed views of natural rock formations within the area now known as Vasquez Rocks.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. **Architectural Drawings:**

A set of as-built drawings were prepared for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation in 2007 by Tetra Design Architectural Planners, Inc. for the County of Los Angeles.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

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C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

None

D. Supplemental Material:

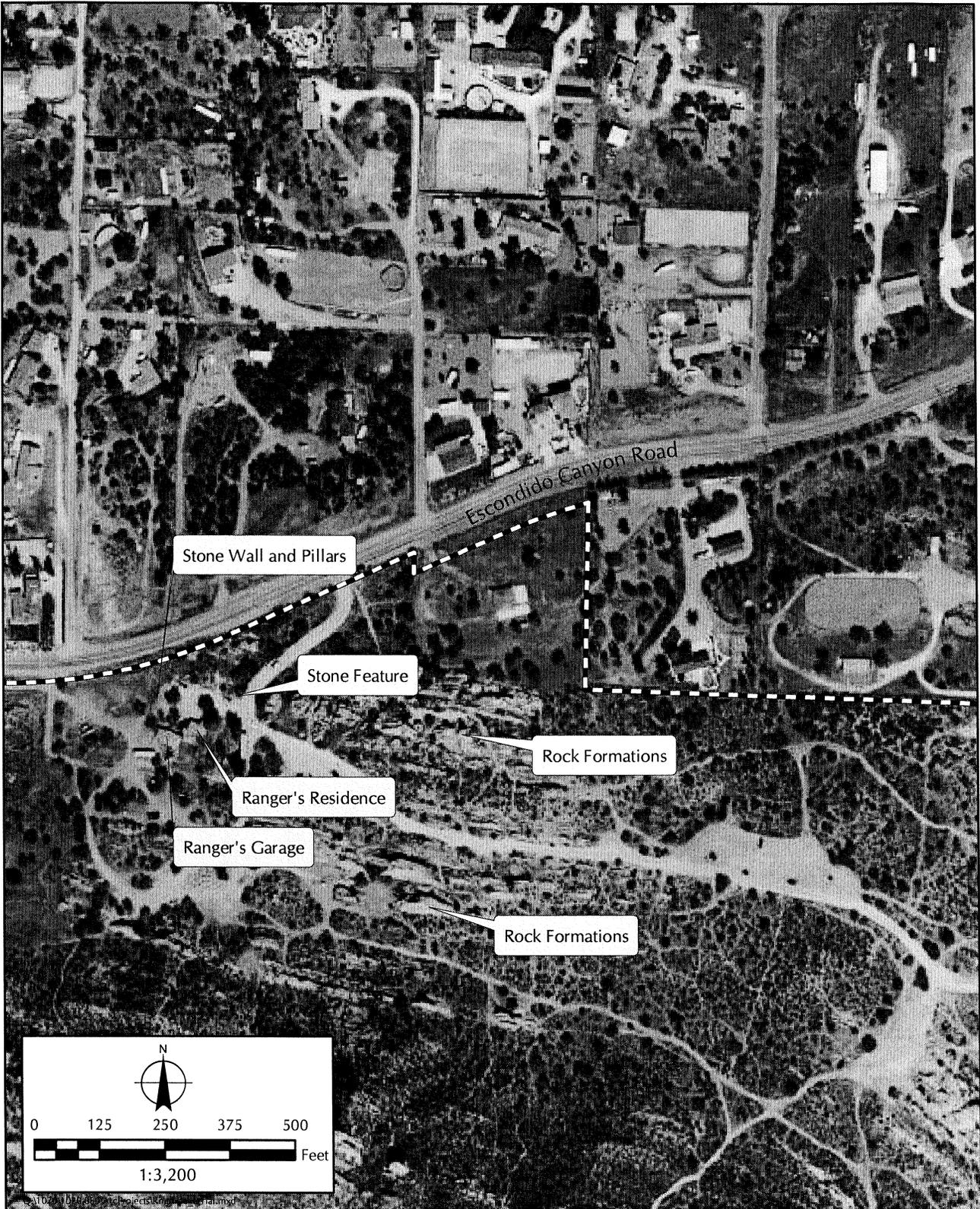
Reduced copies of 2009 as-built architectural drawings
Aerial map

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

HABS documentation for the Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Toney Residence was prepared by Sapphos Environmental, Inc. staff April–September 2009 on behalf of the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office (CEO). The HABS documentation serves as mitigation to comply with the 2008 certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Interpretive Center project. Survey work and the creation of as-built drawings were carried out in 2007

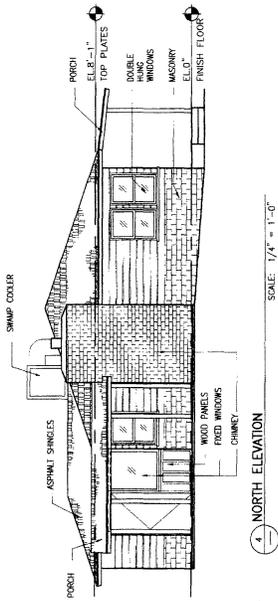
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by Tetra Design Architectural Planners, Inc., Los Angeles, California. Photographs were taken in July 2009 by Mr. Clarus Backes, senior resources specialist, and in August 2009 by Mr. David Lee, production manager, Sapphos Environmental, Inc. This HABS report was prepared by Ms. Laura Carias, cultural resources analyst, Sapphos Environmental, Inc., and Ms. Rebecca Silva, senior resources coordinator, Sapphos Environmental, Inc. Ms. Leslie Heumann, manager of cultural resources, Sapphos Environmental, Inc., reviewed the final report and supporting documents and provided research, writing, and project oversight.

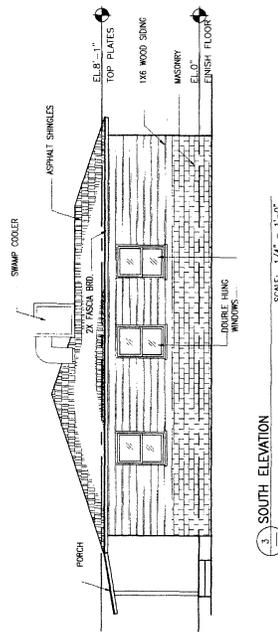


SOURCE: Tetra Design

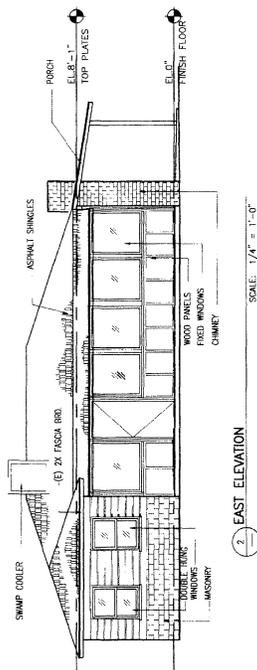
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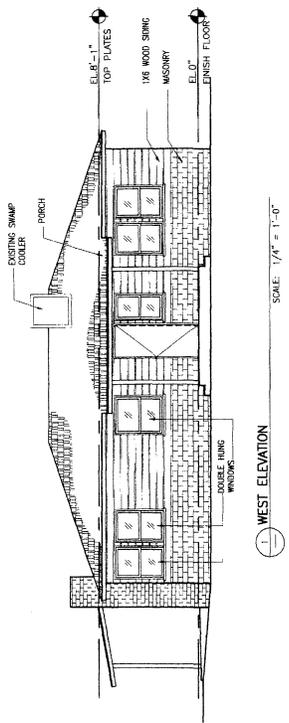
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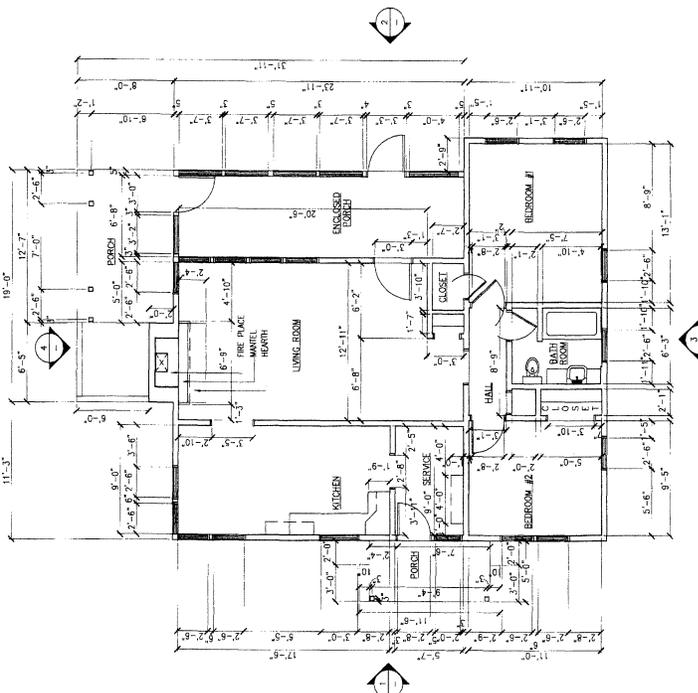
2. SOUTH ELEVATION SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



3. EAST ELEVATION SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4. WEST ELEVATION SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



5. EXISTING FLOOR PLAN SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



