

MISSION SAN LUIS OBISPO DE TOLOSA
(San Luis Obispo Mission)
782 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo
San Luis Obispo County
California

HALS CA-86
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

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MISSION SAN LUIS OBISPO DE TOLOSA (San Luis Obispo Mission)

HALS NO. CA-86

Location: 782 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, San Luis Obispo County, California

Comprised of three parcels:
Main Mission Entrance – 782 Monterey Street,
Old Mission Parish – 751 Palm Street,
Rectory – 941 Chorro Street.

Latitude: 35.280567, Longitude: -120.664442 (The center of the bell table in the central courtyard, Google Earth, Simple Cylindrical Projection, WGS84).

Significance: The chain of 21 missions built in California between 1769 and 1823 represents some of California's earliest European habitation. Mission construction began while California was still controlled by Spain – long before Mexico gained control in 1821 or the United States took possession in 1846. As each mission was dedicated, it formed the core of a new community, many of which grew into major California cities – San Diego, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and San Rafael all began as missions. Some mission sites were abandoned.

On 1 September 1772, Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa (“Mission”) was the fifth mission to be founded by Father Junipero Serra within Alta California. It is located midway within the mission chain stretching from San Diego to Sonoma and was the first to be founded among the Native Chumash people within what is now referred to as Central California.

The present Mission structures were built between 1792-1794, altered in the late 1870s, and restored to near-original condition during the extensive restoration that swept through California with 20th Century Spanish Revival/Romanticism. Evidence also suggests work onsite completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, gaining significance in its own right as an early example of the American historic preservation movement. The Mission was listed as State Historical Landmark No. 325 in 1966, noted also for John C. Fremont having quartered here with his California Battalion in 1846 during the war with Mexico.

While it retains several characteristics of early Mission-style architecture, Mission San Luis Obispo remains unique in the combination of belfry and vestibule on the primary façade, the long secondary nave in the chapel which creates an L-shape in plan, and the eleven distinctive round pillars with square pedestals along the front portico. The Mission was also one of the first to

experiment with producing roof tiles reminiscent of the materials used in Spain, which were used extensively throughout the site and ultimately became a distinctive component of most California missions.

As the Mission remains in its original location, remnants of the original structures seem to be embedded throughout the Mission landscape, such as a crumbling stone wall across Broad Street to the west that supposedly dates from the 1790s. Historic plant material may also be found onsite – for example, two Vino Madre grape plants originating from the San Gabriel Mission were re-introduced to the Mission, as well as several cuttings from the original outlying fruit orchards.

Within a larger context, Mission San Luis Obispo embodies the aforementioned vital civic growth that surrounded the chosen mission locations during the California Mission era. It still functions as a Catholic church and museum within the heart of the City and follows historic ritual, as one of the only missions that has continued to hand ring their bells for special events and holy days. Together with the adjacent plaza, the Mission remains an integral thread within the historic fabric of downtown San Luis Obispo.

Description: The traditional Mission quadrangle is roughly 313' x 350' and encompasses one city block, bound by Palm Street, Chorro Street, Monterey Street, and Broad Street. The three legal parcels that comprise the Mission are skewed at roughly a 45-degree angle from a northerly direction, with the main Mission entrance and façade located to the SE on Monterey Street, which is now closed to vehicular access and is the Mission Plaza public park space. The Mission falls within the Downtown Historic District and is within walking distance of several other historic sites, including the San Luis Obispo Carnegie Library County Museum, the Ah Louis Store, and the Murray Adobe. Site elevation ranges from 213.5 ft near the corner of Chorro and Monterey Streets, with a high point of 225 ft running through both the crown of the parking lot and around the edges of the central courtyard.

The Mission Plaza itself is delineated by the base wall and bottom of the first set of Mission stairs, where the edge of the street cut originally occurred when Monterey Street was open to vehicular traffic. The San Luis Creek, upon which the Mission was originally founded, lies just to the SE of the Plaza and includes a series of meandering terraces, lawns, and overlooks surrounding the creek path. The City maintains this entire Plaza space between the Mission and the creek, as well as the urban street trees surrounding the Mission, which include carrotwood (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*), Chinese pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*), Brisbane box (*Tristania conferta*), *Melaleuca spp.*, etc. Numerous eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus citriodora*) trees are well established along the entire length of the main Mission façade within the Plaza, thereby creating a strong axis that not only draws you through the park space, but also functions aesthetically and physically as an

extension of the Mission landscape. While these trees provide great sensory interest, as well as dappled shade, they've also become a source of conflict for the City and the Mission – the root systems are now pulling up the concrete near the base walls and tree litter is clogging and destroying the integrity of the tile roof. Throughout the Plaza, the City has generally made efforts to plant drought-tolerant Mediterranean or native plant species as new material is installed or the old is replaced. The City and Mission often coordinate on special events such as weddings, festivals, and concerts in the space immediately outside of the main entrance to the church. The initial site visit found this space to be in good condition with a strong amount of use by tourists, downtown business employees, local families, as well as a small urban homeless population. Children were observed climbing all over the grizzly bear sculptures in the fountain dedicated to Portola's first expedition through the area. The Plaza and Mission appear to mostly be mutually beneficial, drawing a large number of people into the heart of the City and the neighboring site.

The front entrance and façade serve as a grand entry to the Mission, with a combination of vestibule and overhead belfry housing five replica Mission bells (three in the front, two along the side) that are rung manually at certain times of day. From the Plaza, two small ascending sets of stairs with iron railings brings you to the stone entrance platform, measuring roughly 54' x 16'. At the top of the stairs to the left, is a corner retaining wall planter that once housed a floss silk tree (*Chorisia speciosa*) that was designated a City Heritage Tree. According to a local historian, a patio once existed under the space that the tree was planted and where the ground sloped down to the creek. The Mission backfilled this space, however, when Monterey Street was cut, so the roots of the floss silk tree hit the historic tile patio and were deflected back into and through the stairwell and retaining wall. This area is now filled with creeping rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) and agave (*Agaves spp.*), Japanese boxwood (*Buxus microphylla*) flanking the stairs, as well as several succulents and tropical plants, such as birds of paradise (*Strilizia spp.*) in decorative pots. The Mission's State Historical Landmark plaque is located just below the planter retaining wall, facing the Plaza.

To the right of the Mission entrance platform is a life-sized bronze sculpture of Father Serra, as well as a large wooden cross. The retaining wall planters contain the same combination of rosemary and agave facing the plaza, in addition to sage (*Salvia spp.*) interspersed with a few other perennials. Past a medium sized Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) and through a set of low stone mounds, the garden opens towards the current annex, which forms a perpendicular "L" shape to the chapel. This area once functioned as the cemetery, which did not customarily contain plants in the California missions – as neophytes usually perished in large numbers with epidemics that swept through the village, the gravesites often functioned as burial pits. With annex construction and expansion at Mission San Luis Obispo, several graves were

relocated to the newer Catholic cemetery in town. According to a local historian, though, three 55-gal barrels of remains were also collected by a professor with the Lloyd Museum of Anthropology at UC Berkeley during the 1950s and, in the early 1960s, slices of historic bone material were analyzed to study past disease and epidemics, which was always in conflict with Native belief systems and would no longer be allowed by standards today. If you pass through this area towards the annex, a meandering concrete path surrounded by grass lawn, camellia (*Camellia spp.*), blue potato bush (*Solanum rantonnetii*), a small European white birch (*Betula pendula*), and two large jacaranda trees (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) leads to a round fountain. The fountain, roughly 12' in diameter and most likely constructed during the last annex expansion of 1947, has a stone base with a round two-tiered concrete tower in the center.

As you pass through the back of the annex garden along Chorro Street, back towards the plaza, you descend another two sets of concrete steps surrounded by concrete retaining wall planters filled with ivy (*Hedera helix*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), and other evergreen hedges. At the bottom of the stairs is a set of bike racks that were observed to be in use with several bikes. Before you reach the stop light at the corner of Chorro Street and the Plaza, there is a small decorative planting bed with an El Camino Real bell and monument sign for the mission. While the canopy and foliage colors in the annex garden provide visual interest, the eye tends to sweep past the main entrance façade of the Mission along the strong axial line of the eucalyptus in the plaza.

The tall vertical stature of the eucalyptus trees, in fact, mimics and accentuates the eleven distinctive round colonnades that rise from square foundations in the portico to the left of the main entrance to the chapel. While the colonnades are a character-defining feature of the Mission, the portico was cordoned off with chains at each opening so as not to allow general public access. Several homeless people were gathering near the bathrooms just across the Plaza from the portico, which may account for this restriction.

Turning right onto Broad Street from the portico and Plaza, the Mission extends as a clean, uninterrupted wall with no access openings all the way to Palm Street. Towards the corner, there is a small etched concrete plaque in the wall that reads "W.P.A. 1939". A point of interest noted by a local historian is that the lower stone wall seemingly constructed by the government CCC program also bears a small, distinct pattern of rocks in the shape of a cross, blurring the separation of church and state. As you stand on this SW side of the Mission and look back across Broad Street to the historic Carnegie Library, there is also a stone rubble wall remnant from the 1790s measuring roughly 6' high by 12-15' in length. This cyclopean wall is believed to have served as dormitories for the Franciscan monks within the original Mission complex.

The eponymous Palm Street borders the backside of the Mission, an appropriate

reminder that the Franciscan padres planted long rows of palms in the approach to the Mission for guidance and visual impact from a distance. The lower stone wall from Broad Street extends from the Mission out to the corner, with retaining wall planter beds of Pride of Madeira (*Echium candicans*), agave, and other evergreen hedges. Within the Mission quadrangle on the other side of the wall, there is a small reflection lawn lined with evergreen hedges, red hibiscus (*Hibiscus spp.*), pink hydrangea (*Hydrangea spp.*), yellow roses (*Rosa spp.*), fortnight lily (*Dietes bicolor*), lily of the Nile (*Agapanthus africanus*), and other perennial plants. Between the quadrangle wall and behind the Youth Center, a small crop garden in raised beds was also started this year by a local grammar school with the help of California Polytechnic State University. The garden appears to be well kept and successful thus far, with several varieties of lettuces established and tall sunflowers along the perimeter.

The main driveway into the central courtyard from Palm Street was recently paved with a concrete patch to support the larger maintenance trucks that access the trash enclosure to the right of the drive. The remainder of the parking lot is asphalt, lined with small 1" granite curbs and wooden pitching rails to prevent a tripping hazard. Two larger olive trees (*Olea europaea*, taken from cuttings that were three generations down from original groves planted nearby) were removed in the last few years from the central parking lot area, as they were constantly being struck by reversing cars and had a large amount of dry rot. Olives were not historically planted near the Mission, at any rate, according to a local historian, due to their high allergenic qualities. Garages, public restrooms, and the Youth Center comprise the building that lines the back of the parking lot along Palm Street, which was historically used as the padres' kitchen.

The central courtyard measures roughly 198' x 163' (including the parking area), with the complete planting area nearest the parish hall, museum, and church measuring roughly 198' x 107'. From the parking lot, the view is dominated by a large Canary Island Palm (*Phoenix canariensis* – though it's believed by local historian to have traces of cross-breeding), a tall beaked yucca (*Yucca rostrata*), the wisteria vine (*Wisteria spp.*) over the trellis to the parish offices, several small to medium trees in the foreground, a large oak tree (*Quercus spp.* – perhaps *Q. agrifolia*) in the mid-ground, and the eucalyptus trees from the Mission Plaza in the far background. The view from the courtyard back towards Palm Street is dominated by the street tree canopy on the opposite side of the wall and the mountains in the background. The courtyard historically provided a contained place of refuge and an area for Missionary work. According to a local historian, there would have been little planting here, aside from a few roses obtained from the hide and tallow trade and the extensive herbal gardens created by Father Martinez. The planted area may now be roughly broken into the patio area, bell table garden, and wishing well garden, divided by an asphalt access drive and an arbor walkway that lead from the Mission to the parking lot.

The patio area is paved with red concrete and contains a small round concrete fountain, measuring roughly 8' in diameter and containing a two-tiered ornamental tower in the center. The perimeter of the space is lined with low retaining beds with capped walls for seating, several moveable picnic tables, and a variety of benches. Small trees in this area include a Chinese pistache, pittosporum (*Pittosporum tobira*), and yucca (*Yucca spp.*), as well as numerous smaller herbs and perennials, such as pink alstroemeria (*Alstroemeria spp.*), lavender (*Lavandula spp.*), red valerian (*Centranthus rubra*), bear's breech (*Acanthus spinosus*), rosemary, hydrangea, lily of the Nile, yellow roses, hibiscus, fortnight lily, etc. Near the old convento (now the parish hall), there is also a covered barbecue area, measuring roughly 23' x 23', with matching low walls, a metal roof, and several barbecue islands. Although this feature is not historic, it is now regularly used for parish picnics and group gatherings.

The access path that leads from the parking lot to the parish hall aligns with the barbecue area and is lined by several planting beds of large trees, such as what appears to be a yew pine (*Podocarpus macrophyllus*). This path is now deteriorating, with fissures and lifting in several areas. Plans are currently in review with the City to make parish hall renovations and update this ADA path, which the Mission is hoping to complete by the end of the year. If plans are approved, the proposed changes would re-align the path to a right angle with the parish hall, extend the covered walkway area from the museum towards the parish hall, extend the planters to the new walkway alignment to give the larger trees more root space, and create a circular path with seating surrounding the bell table in the center of the courtyard garden.

The bell table garden currently suspends three second and third generation Mission bells over a small table, constructed with a stone base and overhead wooden trellis. This garden also contains a hive oven, which is a concrete replica of the Spanish backyard ovens, used for interpretive purposes only. Small brick pathways meander through the planted lawns and lead to the brick path that lines the perimeter towards the parking lot. The planting beds are comprised of a nectarine tree (*Prunus spp.*), numerous roses, orange gladiolus (*Gladiolus spp.*), dahlia (*Dahlia spp.*), and a good show of yucca, cacti, agave, and other drought-tolerant species closer to the parking lot.

The covered walkway houses two 1977 cuttings from the San Gabriel Vino Madre closest to the parking lot, with several concord grapes from Portugal covering the remainder of the arbor. All of these plants have been reintroduced here for modern purposes, as the original vineyards were about one mile from the Mission quadrangle and covered a 158-ac area. The original cuttings from this vineyard were neglected during the 1920s and 1930s and did not survive.

The red brick path leads from the arbor to the final courtyard garden that houses the wishing well. This feature, clad in matching tile roof and brick base, was

added in the 1920s or 1930s with the intention of raising money for the Mission. The gardens appear to be most full in this space, with a wide array of colorful flowering trees and plants and the large oak tree overhead. The oak was apparently planted 60-70 years ago and currently sustains a termite infestation. In addition to the cacti and succulents near the parking lot, plantings include several roses, an Australian tree fern (*Cyathea cooperi*), a small fig tree (*Ficus spp.*), canna (*Canna spp.*), shrimp plant (*Justicia brandegeeana*), lily of the Nile, fortnight lily, birds of paradise, blue and pink hydrangea, bear's breech, etc.

Towards the entry/exit of the parking lot, there is also a small gate that leads to the private rectory gardens. This intimate lawn area with a sweeping red concrete path is dominated by a large avocado tree (*Persea spp.*) in the center, two large secondary trees toward the periphery, and low growing lily of the Nile against a surrounding 6' white washed brick wall. Other plantings include a peach hibiscus tree, red trumpet vine (*Distictus buccaratoria*), and star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*). Glimpses of the surrounding mountains can be seen under the tree canopy. From the rectory garden, a secondary path brings you to a covered storage area with an exposed thatched roof underside, worthy of study in its own right. This space leads to a small alter flower staging area and cutting garden, overgrown mostly with red valerian and curiously containing another remnant rubble wall.

The front garden of the rectory facing the street is separated by a low wall and contains somewhat sparse plantings of a false fruit tree (*Osmoxylon talandense*), violet trumpet vine (*Clytostoma callistegioides*), bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea spp.*), a small citrus tree (*Citrus spp.*), New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*), roses, etc. While this garden that extends around the rectory does soften the border, it doesn't appear to be an active space within the site. Initial site visit found this space to be in fair condition, dry, and somewhat neglected, as opposed to the vital spaces of the front façade and central courtyard.

History: On 8-9 September 1769, Don Gaspar de Portola first traveled through Central California in search of Monterey Bay during the Spanish conquest of Alta California. His military expedition, along with the appointed Franciscan missionaries (padres), discovered an abundance of grizzly bears along the way, which prompted diarist Padre Juan Crespi to record the description Llano de los Osos (Plain of Bears), often interpreted as La Canada de Los Osos (Valley of the Bears).

Having already founded Mission San Diego, the Spaniards went on to establish the Monterey Presidio, as well as the San Carlos, San Antonio, and San Gabriel Missions. With supplies limited in the outposts to the north, Father Junipero Serra, head of the Franciscan missionaries, ordered a hunting expedition to return to the Valley of the Bears in Spring 1772. The expedition yielded 9000 lbs (25 mule loads) of dried bear meat that was sent to relieve nearby

missionaries, soldiers, and neophytes (baptized Natives). The local Chumash in the village of Tilhini were impressed with how easily the Spaniards were able to fell the grizzlies with their weapons and soon began trading seeds for meat. Favorable conditions, abundant resources, and friendly Natives prompted Father Serra to found his fifth mission there. Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, named for St. Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, France, was founded on 1 September 1772, when Father Serra erected a cross near a creek, rang a bell hung in a tree, and held the first mass. The following morning, Father Serra continued on his journey to San Diego, leaving Father Jose Cavaller as head of the Mission, along with five soldiers and two neophytes to begin construction.

As directed by Father Cavaller, the Native Chumash began constructing a few brush shelters along San Luis Obispo Creek (where Higuera and Marsh Streets intersect beside Hwy 101 today). The shelters were relocated twice before 1776, when a hilltop location was chosen as the ideal place to construct a new mission. Under the guidance of the padres, the Chumash began construction of the traditional quadrangle with temporary buildings made of brush pole palisades, thatched reed roofs, and adobe infill. A chapel and priest dwelling quarters were established first, followed by the barracks and stockade constructed by the soldiers. Although the Natives were considered indifferent to gifts and had ample local food sources, the padres were successful in baptizing the first neophyte within one month of the Mission founding. The neophytes (locally referred to as Obispeno) were expected to accept the missionary way of life and trained to become self-sufficient, at least in the eyes of the Spaniards.

Natives set fire to the Mission several times in early years. In 1776, one fire caused by a flaming arrow shot into the dry thatched roof nearly destroyed several buildings, which led to experimentation in tile production. Though initial research was conflicting, Mission San Luis Obispo was either the first or second mission to produce and install tile roofing, which was subsequently used on most of the missions throughout California. Not only did tile protect the structures from the elements, but it also rendered the Missions less vulnerable to attack.

Skilled artisans from Mexico were later sent to the Mission and the first permanent structures – the long, narrow church, the priest living quarters (convento), a workshop, and family dwellings – were constructed between 1792-1794. Unique to the California Missions, a belfry and vestibule were combined into a singular grand façade at the church entrance. A portico of eleven pillars also became a defining feature of the Mission across the front wing to the left of the church, symbolizing the twelve apostles, excluding Judas. Following the death of Father Cavaller, Father Miguel Giribet was appointed senior missionary, with Father Luis Antonio Martinez as assistant. Father Martinez, an exuberant man who effectively led the mission for 34 years, also directed the building of a kitchen, granary, mill wheel, weaving room, corrals, and adobe houses. In order

to help support the Mission population, several orchards and outlying agricultural settlements were then established nearby, such as Rancho de la Playa and the Santa Margarita Asistencia. Growth continued steadily with the onset of the Mexican War for independence in 1810. Between 1811-1819, the complex was expanded into a full quadrangle and renovations such as re-plastering and paving occurred. Research suggests that, during this time, the original portico columns (which were seemingly square in shape) were updated to their current round form with square bases. In 1820, mission bells cast by Manuel Vargas arrived from Lima, Peru.

The Mission reached its height of prosperity in the early 1800s, with a recorded population of 832 in 1804. According to the annual report of mission events from the padres, Mission San Luis Obispo produced 167,000 bushels of wheat, barley, corn, beans, peas, and lentils during the years 1804-1832. The Mission had the fourth highest production of wheat in the entire chain, despite relatively small population. The livestock herd was relatively stable, with twice as many sheep as cattle in most years. 2500 cattle and 5422 sheep were recorded in 1832, the final year of detailed Mission records.

As Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, however, supplies from overseas were cut and the Mission was slowly beginning to decline. By 1829, the neophyte population had dipped to 310, which was followed by a recorded earthquake in 1830. Father Martinez was banished from the country on trivial matters by the new Mexican governor, at which time Father Luis Gil y Taboada took over the role before he, too, passed three years later. By the time of the Mexican Secularization Act in 1834, the Mission was in a great state of disrepair and the population continued to drop until a recorded 170 neophytes were left in 1838. The Mission era had come to a close. In 1845, Governor Pio Pico sold the remaining Mission lands and rancho to Captain John Wilson and partners Scott and McKinley for \$510, and the buildings, in turn, were appropriated for any required civic use (referenced uses include a courthouse, jail, and school). The Mexican-American War lasted from 1846-1848, after which California became a state in 1850. Joseph Sudoc Alemany, as first Bishop of Monterey, then petitioned the government to return Mission lands to the Catholic church, which was upheld by the U.S. Land Commission in 1855. The Mission continued to suffer through the next decade with drought, lack of funding, and another earthquake in the early 1880s.

Almost parallel to incorporation of the City of San Luis Obispo in 1876, however, renovations began in an effort to “modernize” the Mission. Several character-defining features were altered in the late 1870s, which included adding wooden clapboard siding and shingles over the existing adobe structure (1872), constructing a New England-style belfry to house the Mission bells (1880), and removing the damaged portico and bell loft weakened by the latest earthquake (1883). In 1893, an annex was built to the right of the sanctuary, near the old

cemetery, which brought the church to an L-shaped form in plan. As the Mission improved, so did the City – the Southern Pacific Railroad Coastal Line reached San Luis Obispo in 1894, followed by the arrival of California Polytechnical Institute in 1901, and the City became a leader in the dairy industry.

In 1920, while the clapboard siding created a highly combustible condition by preventing the adobe walls from breathing in hot temperatures, the resultant fire in the Sacristy revealed glimpses of the original beams and walls, which had been protected under the siding and shingles for close to 50 years. As Californians were beginning to develop nostalgia for the past and placed value again on the aesthetic qualities of the Mission era (later known as 20th Century Spanish Revival/Romanticism), plans for extensive restoration began. La Fiesta de las Flores (The Festival of Flowers) was created during this time in effort to raise money for restoration. William Randolph Hearst also made generous donations to Mission restoration. Though delayed by the Depression, Mission restoration was finally completed in 1933-1934, led by Father John Harnett. As the wooden siding, roofing, and belfry were removed, the tile, portico, colonnade, and the original vestibule and belfry were reinstalled. The Civilian Conservation Corps was also active in the restoration of several missions throughout California, as well, including evidence in San Luis Obispo of restoring the lower stone wall on the SW exterior side of the quadrangle in 1939. With heavy plaster and white paint on the adobe walls, Mission San Luis Obispo had been returned to near-original condition.

Since that time, an addition was made to the annex in 1947. In 1953, after a runaway egg truck smashed into a garage on the corner of Chorro and Monterey Streets, the views to the surrounding mountains and the nearby creek were suddenly unobscured. After 10-20 years of public scrutiny on how to proceed with planned growth in downtown San Luis Obispo, the Mission Plaza was installed along the front façade of the Mission as an alternative to the Postmodern practice of widening streets for vehicular efficiency. Instead, the San Luis Obispo Creek floodways were widened and naturally re-contoured, while the historic cut of Monterey Street was closed off for pedestrians only. The Plaza is now one of the most cherished public spaces within downtown San Luis Obispo and complements the experience of moving through the main entrance of the Mission, which opens directly onto the Plaza. The gardens within the Mission have also been improved for public enjoyment and historic interpretation. Several fountains, garden features, and plant donations have been added to the outdoor spaces. Plans are currently underway to re-align an ADA path through the central courtyard, as well, while widening some of the planting beds and extending the low retaining walls and benches. Though plans have not yet been approved by the City, the Mission is hoping that improvements will be complete by end of 2012. In regards to building interiors, while the church is still an active branch of the Diocese of Monterey, the old convento now

functions as a museum and gift shop with historic relics and good descriptions of what life was like during the Mission era. Following an active life of 63 years, Mission San Luis Obispo continues to play a central role within the City.

Sources: General Mission information taken from www.missionsanluisobispo.org and www.missionscalifornia.com/keyfacts/san-luis-obispo.html.

General city zoning, mapping, and tree information taken from www.slocity.org.

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Mission façade, with Mission Plaza and grizzly bear fountain in foreground, demonstrates unique combination of belfry and vestibule over the chapel, as well as the eleven round columnnades with square foundations along the portico to the left (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Strong axial line of eucalyptus trees in the Plaza extends from Chorro Street past the front of the Mission, with annex garden tree canopy to the right (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Annex garden fountain looking back towards the main façade and belfry, with a canopy of jacaranda trees overhead (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Tree canopy from the parking lot in the central courtyard (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Red concrete patio with fountain, moveable picnic tables, a variety of benches, a covered barbecue area, and eucalyptus trees in the background (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Asphalt access path to be re-aligned, with covered barbecue area in the corner and a large podocarpus overhead (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Cactus and succulent garden along the path as seen from the parking lot (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Covered walk with Vino Madre plants originating from San Gabriel Mission in foreground and glimpses of the bell table (right) and wishing well (left) (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Colorful interest near wishing well, as seen from the parking lot (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Large avocado and red concrete path in private rectory garden (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).



Small crop garden started by local school behind Youth Center (Larkin Owens, 25 June

2012).



Stone rubble wall dating from 1790s along Broad Street outside of the Mission quadrangle (Larkin Owens, 25 June 2012).