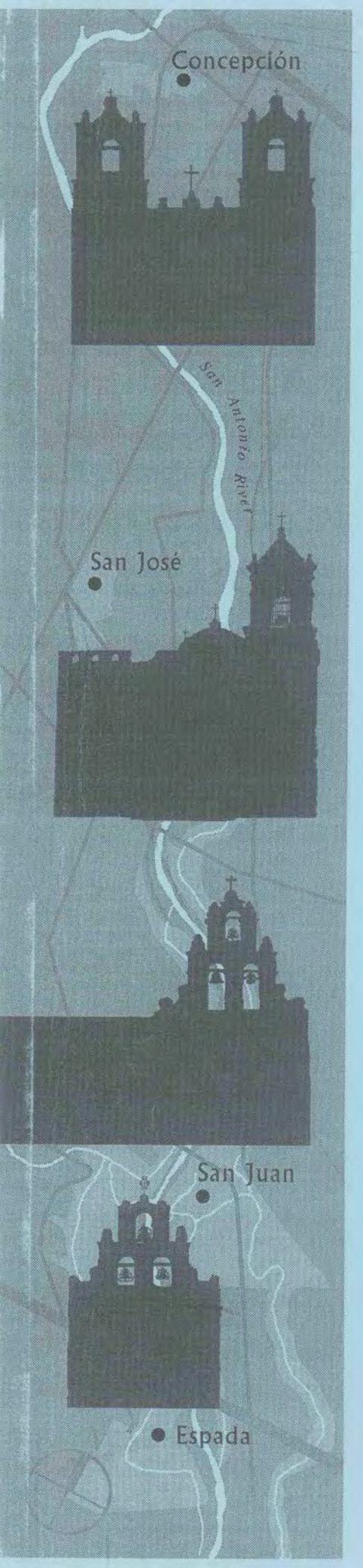
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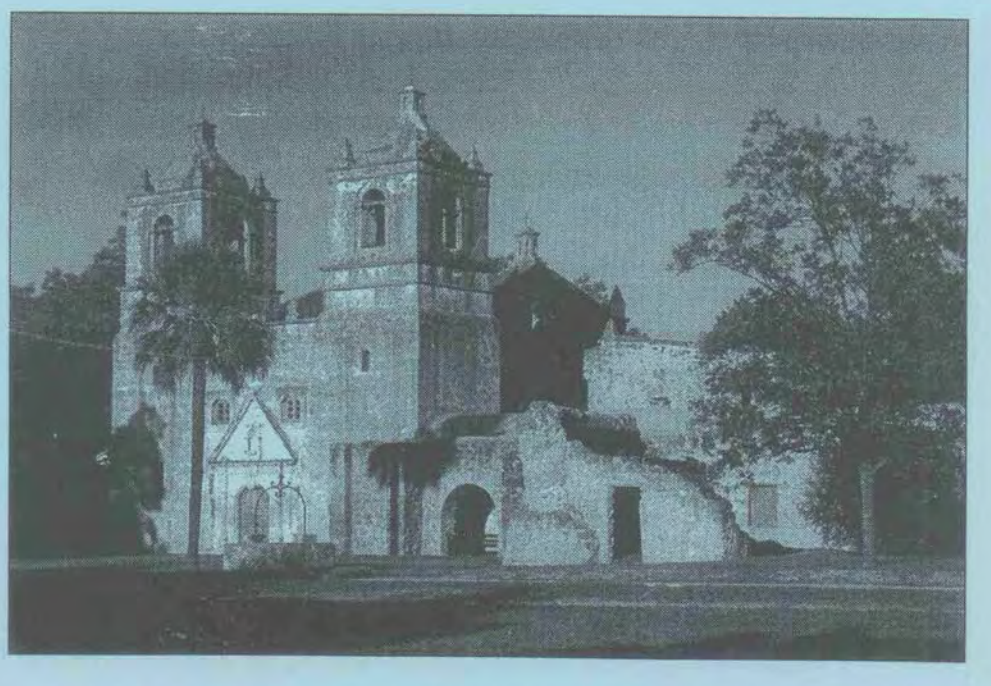
SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

San Antonio, Texas

VOLUME 3

MISSION CONCEPCIÓN

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • SOUTHWEST SYSTEM SUPPORT OFFICE

SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
San Antonio, Texas

VOLUME 3

MISSION CONCEPCIÓN CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

Contract No. 1443CX700092007

Prepared for
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Southwest System Support Office

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1 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

1 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Established by an act of the U.S. Congress in 1978, the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (NHP) began as a 475-acre parcel located primarily within the City of San Antonio *(Exhibit A)*. A 1990 boundary study prompted passage of Public Law 101-68, which increased the park's area to an estimated 870 acres *(Exhibit B)*. Most of the park lies in the southern segment of the San Antonio River Valley and consists of several overlapping but distinct entities—Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña (Concepción), Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo (San José), Acequia Park, Espada Park, Mission San Juan Capistrano (San Juan), Mission San Francisco de la Espada (Espada), Rancho de Las Cabras, and other areas—owned by a combination of groups including the National Park Service (NPS), the Archdiocese of San Antonio, local and state governments, and private citizens and organizations.[1] The missions Concepción and San José are distinctly separate parcels located north of, and physically separated from, the rest of the park *(Exhibit B)*.

The settings associated with Missions Concepción and San José have been distinctly altered by the encroachment of urban development; the impact has been less severe elsewhere in the park. Urban encroachment has created situations that may ultimately affect the resources' historic integrity and visitor appeal. Historically these missions were set in rural areas: today new development adjacent to the park detracts from the experience of visiting the park. Noise, air, and water pollution also have degraded the environment and have led to the deterioration of some historic resources.[2]

Of those missions within the current park system, Concepción retains the greatest degree of architectural integrity, and is considered "the best preserved of all Texas mission churches; there has been little human intervention in terms of reconstruction, and substantial but rapidly deteriorating portions of the original frescoes, sculpture, and masonry remain."[3] Its surrounding landscape, however, has been developed and scarcely resembles that of the eighteenth-century missions. Concepción also has lost much of its rural setting, with urbanization encroaching upon its *labores* (fields) and *acequia* (irrigation ditch) system.

Although much altered by flood control efforts, the San Antonio River plays an important role in the system's landscape.[4] Several segments of the historic river are within the existing boundary of the park; the river's waters allow continued operation of the Espada dam and aqueduct and the Espada and San Juan *acequias*, which "depict ... components of what was once a part of an elaborate complex of irrigation ditches used to water the extensive farmlands belonging to the

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[1]U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office, *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park: A Report on a Study of its Boundaries* (February 1990), 11.
[2]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park: Statement for Management* (July 1980), 7.
[3]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Southwest Regional Office, *General Management Plan/Development Concept Plan for San Antonio Missions National Historical Park* (July 1982), 10.
[4]NPS, *Statement for Management*, 9.

missions."[5] Remnants and archeological records of *acequias* still exist at many missions, including San José. The Espada dam is one of the oldest stone dams still in service in the United States; the Espada aqueduct is the only Spanish-built aqueduct still in use in this country.

Visitors have access to the park via city streets and state highways. A small section of the proposed Mission Parkway was constructed in the 1960s and is in use today. This circular road system follows the San Antonio River from Mission Road and Padre Drive to Missions San José and San Juan, and then provides access to Espada and Acequia parks. Villamain Road and Camino Coahilteca to the east and Ashley and Espada Roads to the west then lead the visitor to Mission Espada. While the parkway links some of the park's historic resources, lack of a continuous route between the southern portion of the park and missions Concepción and San José emphasizes the southern resources' isolation. The National Park Service's *Statement for Management* explains how "visitors must weave their way through streets of much variety in order to visit all of the park resources ... [and a] lack of unity to the transit corridors which tie the sites together may adversely influence the quality of the interpretive experience, as well as hampering many visitors from viewing all of the sites."[6] While portions of the route provide an aesthetically pleasing trip, access to some resources remains inappropriate and confusing.

STUDY BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Mission Concepción study area *(Exhibit C)* include Mitchell Street, Mission Road, and East Theo Avenue to the north; the eastern property boundary of St. John's Seminary to the east; Felisa Street and the property boundary of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home to the south; and Concepción Park, a San Antonio municipal park, to the west.

PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Project Scope

This Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), which commenced in December 1992, was part of a comprehensive effort designed to "document and evaluate the cultural landscape resources and existing conditions and to develop appropriate treatment guidelines and/or plans for the preservation and enhancement of cultural landscape resources throughout San Antonio Missions National Historical Park."[7] Under direction of NPS, a multidisciplinary consultant team of landscape architects, historians, and preservation specialists initiated documentation and evaluation of cultural landscape resources within the park's boundaries. Appropriate treatment guidelines and recommendations for the maintenance and enhancement of historic resources were also developed.

The project is divided into two phases with the following products: Phase I includes Volume 1 (General Overview of the Missions: Introduction and Administrative Data, Historical and Ethnographic Context), Volume 2 (Mission San José), and Volume 3 (Mission Concepción); Phase II will include Volume 4 (Mission San Juan) and Volume 5 (Mission Espada). Volume 2 was completed in 1997 and Volume 3 in 1998; Volumes 4 and 5 will be undertaken at a later date.

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[5]Ibid., 3.
[6]Ibid., 7.
[7]Maria C. Eshe, *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Proposal for Cultural Landscape Report Scope of Services* (1992), 1.

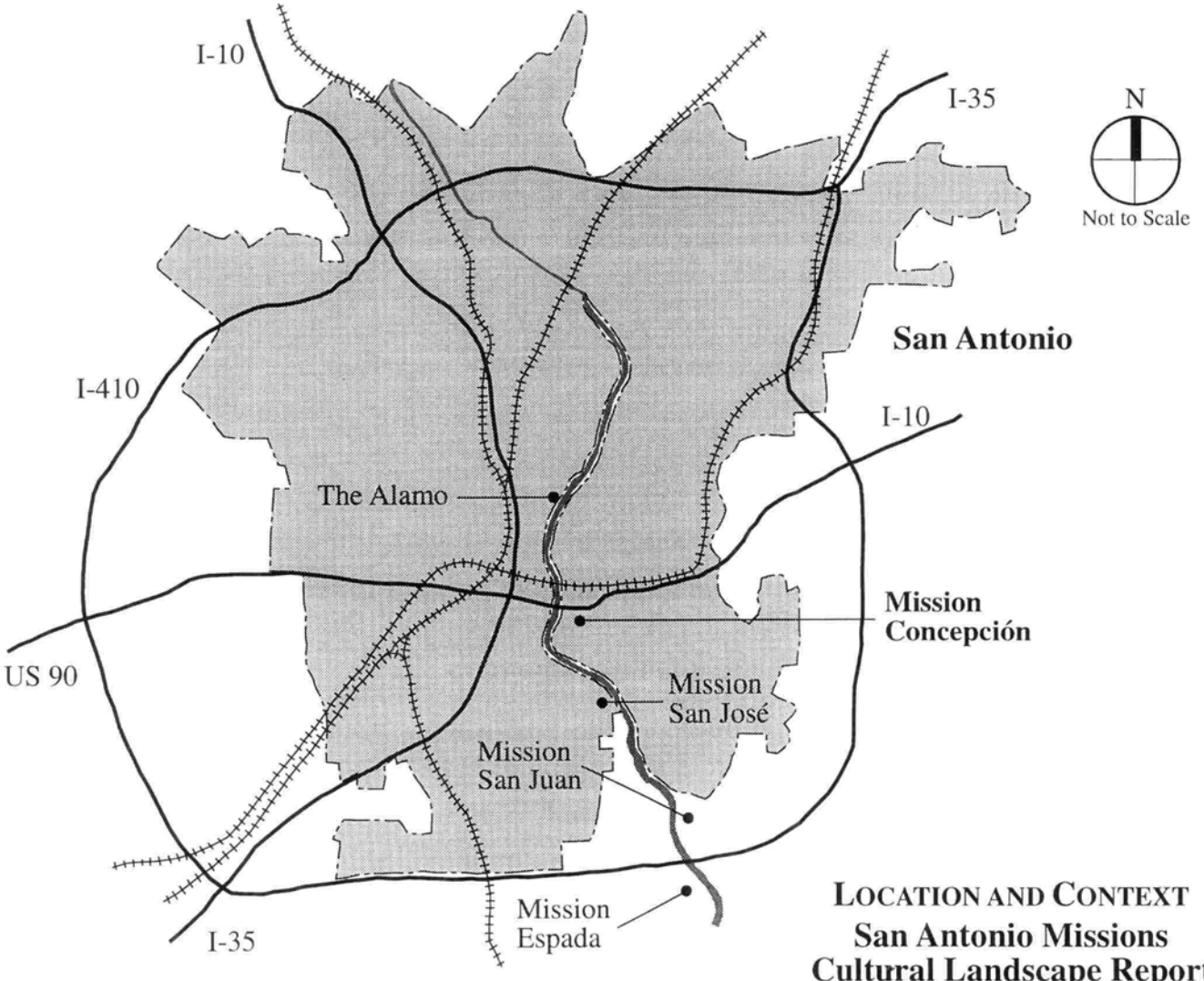


Location

Legend

- San Antonio corporate boundary
- San Antonio River
- Railroad lines
- Highways

Map Sources:
U.S. Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), *The San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, A Guidebook, Map of Texas: Mission Sites and Rivers*, 1986, p.7; U.S. Geological Survey, *Texas, Index to Topographic and Other Map Coverage*, Map 29098, June 1991; and USDI, NPS, *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Texas, Official Map and Guide*, 1992.



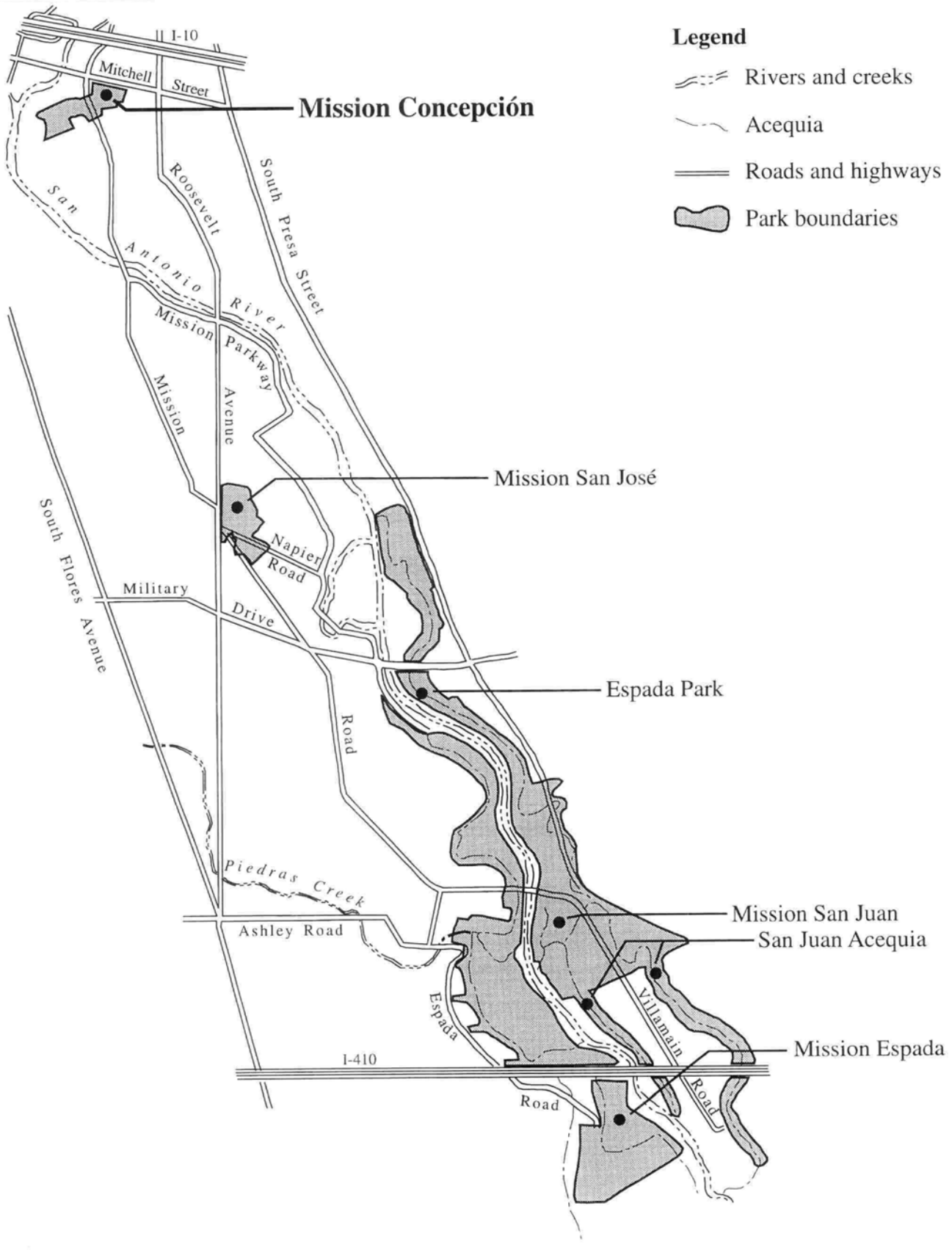
Context

LOCATION AND CONTEXT
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994; revised May 1998.

Exhibit A. Location and Context

472/20901



Map Sources:
U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Southwest Region, *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Land Protection Plan Amendment*, May 1994.

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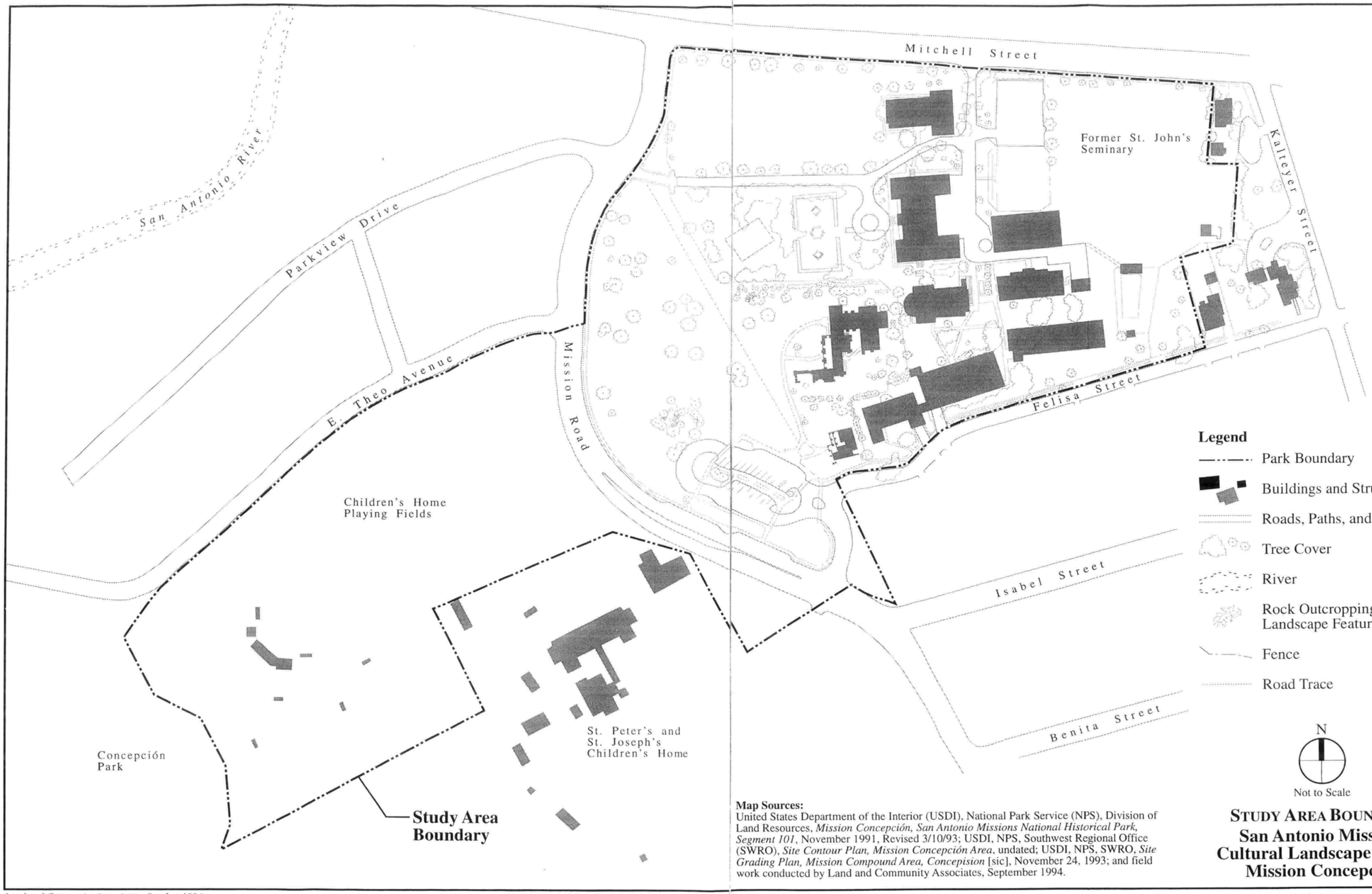
Not to Scale

PARK BOUNDARIES
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit B. Park Boundaries

472/20902



Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit C. Study Area Boundary
472/20903

A preliminary version of Volume 1 was submitted in 1998 concurrent with the completion of Volume 3. It is anticipated that Volume 1 will be revised and expanded following completion of Volumes 4 and 5. While Volume 1 of the CLR presents an overview of the administrative and ethnographic context and the collective history of the four missions, the other four volumes include specific physical histories for each of the missions as well as existing conditions documentation, site analyses and evaluations, recommendations, design guidelines, and design alternatives and treatment plans.

All work in the CLR conforms with the professional and regulatory guidance offered in *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* and *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Historic Designed Landscapes*. In addition, *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes* serves as the basis for developing the landscape characteristics, which constitute the organizational framework for the existing conditions inventory and comparative analysis of historic and existing conditions. All proposed treatment recommendations comply with NPS management policies, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation*, the Native-American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA).

Project Methodology

For Volume 3, Mission Concepción Cultural Landscape Report, project historians Jake Ivey of NPS and Maria Pfeiffer of San Antonio conducted primary and secondary research, reviewing sources such as historic maps and photographs, written records, natural and cultural resource documents, and other materials relating to all cultural landscape elements of Mission Concepción and its evolution. Deed research was also undertaken for the project. A list of the sources used is provided in the CLR bibliography.

Land and Community Associates conducted field surveys of existing site conditions at Mission Concepción in 1992, 1993, and 1994 to inventory and document existing conditions and to update existing base map information. General photographic documentation of site conditions was also completed during these surveys. JYJ Architects oversaw the progress of the project consultants and developed CAD graphics provided by the project historians and Land and Community Associates.

Information presented in the site physical history was organized and based upon the periods of landscape development identified by the interdisciplinary team of historians, architectural historians, archeologists, architects, and landscape architects. A series of landscape chronology maps delineates the key characteristics and components of the landscape during each of the periods.

Information presented in the existing conditions inventory and the site analysis and evaluation has been organized according to the twelve landscape characteristics discussed in *National Register Bulletin 30*: patterns of spatial organization, response to natural features, land uses and activities, buildings and structures, cluster arrangements, circulation systems, vegetation, small-scale features, views and viewsheds, archeological resources, boundary demarcations, and cultural traditions. The CLR provides documentation of the resources' development over time and a context within which to analyze extant features.

On-site work sessions included NPS personnel from both the park and the region, as well as representatives of the consultant team. The work sessions dealt with the complexity of developing treatments appropriate to the varied nature of resources represented, the lack of physical evidence related to the period 1794-1911, and the need to develop treatments not only to address the park's current needs but also to protect significant archeological resources. As a result of considering these concerns, the group arrived at a consensus treatment approach of *preservation* of archeological resources and *rehabilitation* of the above-ground landscape.

The group found the primary significance of Mission Concepción to lie in the Spanish colonial period. Because the significance of the period from 1911 to 1947 cannot be determined without further research on this and other mission sites outside the scope of this CLR, the recommended treatment approach for features that are extant from this period is that they be preserved *in situ* until a definitive evaluation of the significance of this period can be made. Such an evaluation may require the development of a historic context for this period and a comparative analysis of both the history and the surviving physical resources associated with Mission Concepción and with those from other missions.

Based on historic research and the field survey, team members identified features contributing to the significance and integrity of the cultural landscape and potential threats to these resources. This analysis provided the background for the CLR's design guidelines and treatment recommendations.

Upon completion of the project, all materials are to be reproduced and compiled, using the most up-to-date technology available for this project, for archival storage. The materials shall be stored together as a collection in a location to be determined by NPS.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prior to the establishment of the Spanish missions in the early eighteenth century, the people native to the San Antonio area were the Coahuiltecans, "a nomadic people who lived off the land by hunting and gathering until their way of life was severely disrupted by the northward advance of Spanish explorers and soldiers and the southward expansion of the Apaches. Consequently the missions became places of refuge for both the Coahuiltecans and other groups such as the Karankawans and the Tonkawas."[8]

The Spanish missions' primary goal was to secure the northern frontier by converting Native Americans to Christianity and assimilating them into the Spanish culture. The missions housed the community's religious, educational, and other cultural activities.[9] Several factors determined the siting of these missions. As with previous settlements, those established in San Antonio were placed near a fortification—the Presidio de Béxar—to defend the empire's borders and the region's residents.[10] The *presidio*'s location near the San Antonio River, which supported a variety of native plant and animal species and enabled agricultural lands to be irrigated, encouraged settlement in the area.[11]

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[8]NPS, *General Management Plan.*
[9]NPS, *Report on a Study of its Boundaries*, 6.
[10]Ibid., 5.
[11]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Southwest Region, *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park: Resources Management Plan* (1986), 7.

The Spanish constructed the Presidio de Béxar and two missions—San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) and San José y San Miguel de Aguayo (San José)—between 1718 and 1721. Some time between 1720 and 1727, Mission San José was relocated on the west side of the river. Because of religious, political, and military reasons, three additional missions—Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, San Juan Capistrano, and San Francisco de la Espada—were moved to the San Antonio River Valley from East Texas in 1731.[12] (Mission Concepción had previously been known as Mission Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Tejas, but its name was changed with the move.) Mission Concepción was established on what had previously been the site of the mission of San Francisco Xavier de Nájera from 1722 to 1726; this location may have been developed first by Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo in 1720. Concepción may have utilized the *acequia* system that had been built for Mission San José, and perhaps some of the mission buildings left by the previous occupants of the site.

All Spanish missions on the frontier shared a basic plan: a church and a *convento*, or priest's dwelling, within an open *pueblo*, or Native-American village. According to some sources, the Mission Concepción compound differed slightly from this model in that it was surrounded from the beginning by a low stone wall.[13] Wells within the pueblos provided drinking water. Outside the pueblos were *huertas* (gardens) and *labores* (farmlands), where a variety of crops including corn, chili, sugarcane, peaches, and cotton were grown; the dams and *acequias* (irrigation ditches); and pastures for grazing cattle, sheep, goats, and horses. Each mission had its own dam and *acequia* system for watering the *huertas* and *labores*. Surrounding the fields were the common lands, or *ejidos*, part of the mission grant, about four square leagues (twenty-seven square miles). These were used for firewood collecting, some pasturing, quarrying, and hunting/gathering. Initially, the missions maintained their livestock in the *ejidos*, but later they moved the animals to more distant ranches, or *ranchos*.

Because of a series of Apache attacks beginning in the 1750s, the Franciscans proposed that the missions in the area be converted to enclosed compounds. By the 1760s, the low stone wall at Mission Concepción had been replaced by a defensive stone wall, with Indian quarters built against it, that enclosed the *pueblo*; outside the wall were the irrigated fields, the gardens, the orchards, and farther out, common lands. Major features inside the compound included the plaza, the well, the church, and the *convento*, which included the priest's living quarters, offices, a refectory, and sometimes shops and workrooms. Indian quarters surrounding the plaza formed the inside walls of the compound. Other features included soldiers' quarters, a granary, carpentry shops, and spinning and weaving rooms.

Mission Concepción is especially distinguished by the fact that it served as the headquarters of the Father President, chief administrator of the Querétaran missions of Texas, from its original founding in East Texas through 1772 (with the exception of one interval when the Father President administered from Mission San Antonio de Valero). In 1772, when the Querétaran missionaries left Texas, authority of the mission was transferred from the Querétaran Franciscans to the Zacatecans. After the transfer, Concepción ceased to be the seat of a Father President.

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[12]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, *The Missions of San Antonio: A Historic Structures Report and Administrative History. Part I: The Spanish Colonial Missions* by James E. Ivey and Marlys Bush Thurber (December 1984), 3.

[13]NPS, *Cultural Landscape Recommendations: Mission Concepción*, 18.

In order to prepare for the transition to *doctrina,* or partial secularization of Mission Concepción, the Franciscans began to make improvements to the mission, such as the construction of a water-powered grist mill.[14] In 1794 the mission was converted to a *doctrina*, or partially secularized. This action, which allowed the mission Native Americans to conduct their own affairs, was seen by the Franciscans as the first step toward independence for the Christianized Native Americans. A lottery was held to divide the missions' quarters and lands among its inhabitants, and mission residents were left to continue their operation. One missionary remained at San José to "provide religious instruction to all of the remaining San Antonio Missions until completion of the transfer of church affairs to secular clergy." By 1824, three years after Mexico won independence from Spain, the missions were completely secularized, and the last missionary left San Antonio.[15]

By this time, the missions had fallen into an advanced state of disrepair. Few of the fields had been maintained successfully since secularization, and much of the land was abandoned. In 1824, when the mission lands and buildings were appraised, most were granted to new owners. The new Mexican government, which had declared itself patron of all public lands, did little to stabilize these resources, and their decline continued.[16]

Mexican rule lasted only fifteen years, and in 1836, the Republic of Texas declared independence from Mexico. The rapid succession of governments created an unstable environment in early nineteenth-century San Antonio, yet the missions continued operating. Although deterioration continued, the church undertook some stabilization of the mission buildings. In 1836 the Texas Revolution brought all public lands under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Texas, which recognized the right of the Catholic church to mission lands. Bishop John M. Odin bought back the *convento* buildings and much of the land around the Mission Concepción, and gave the use of the property to the Brothers of Mary whom he had brought to San Antonio in 1852. The Marianists farmed the surrounding land, used the *convento* as a seminary, and conducted religious services at the mission. The ruins of the granary and of the Indian Quarters were used by local residents as a source for building stone. After receiving title to the land in 1859, the Marianists began work on the mission buildings.

Although the missions continued operating, their deterioration continued until the church took a renewed interest in the property at the turn of the twentieth century. Some of the early restoration attempts at Mission Concepción included interior improvements to the church in 1887 and 1913. Meanwhile, urban development was changing the face of the landscape surrounding the mission. In 1913 the diocese approved the construction of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home, on land located southwest of the mission. And, in 1915, the church established St. John's Seminary on the north side of the property. In 1920 the present administration building was completed there.

Promoted by the Archdiocese of San Antonio and a realization of the missions' tourist potential, several projects to stabilize and preserve the main buildings occurred at the start of the twentieth century. The Landmark Association was responsible for stabilizing the main doorway of the church at San José; the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary renovated and reopened

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[14]Ibid., 8.

[15]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, *Cultural Landscape Recommendations: Mission San José* (December 1989), 9.

[16]NPS, *General Management Plan*, 6.

the Mission San Juan church; Mission Espada was closed in an attempt to mitigate its deterioration; and a variety of other restoration projects occurred.[17] When John William Shaw became Bishop of the San Antonio Diocese in 1911, he made the restoration of the missions a priority. In 1911 Bishop Shaw convinced the Brothers of Mary to turn Mission Concepción over to him; in addition, he oversaw the repossession of several properties adjacent to the mission. In May 1913, the church at Mission Concepción was officially reopened. Between 1912 and 1924, at Bishop Shaw's instigation, the interior of the church at Mission Concepción was renovated, exposing wall paintings that had been obscured for decades. In addition, the *convento* arches were opened and new buttresses were built along some of the church walls.[18] The Redemptorist Fathers, who arrived in 1922 to care for the parish, also made some changes to the landscape. According to the 1989 *Cultural Landscape Recommendations*, "One significant alteration to the landscape was the introduction of exotic and tropical plant species. This was, presumably, an attempt to recreate the romantic image identified with the California missions."[19]

Public works programs supported mission restoration throughout the 1930s, with the Civil Works Administration (CWA), Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Works Progress Administration (WPA), and other organizations contributing federal funds to the preservation effort.[20] Most of the building activity occurred at Mission San José; the other missions experienced a period of "documentation and research, rather than construction and restoration." At Mission Concepción, physical improvements during the '30s and '40s consisted primarily of the construction of a wall connecting the west wing of the *convento* and the workshop ruins, and the re-roofing of the church and *convento*; little other work on existing structures was necessary.[21] In 1934 the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) gathered data and created measured drawings of structures at all five San Antonio Missions (including Mission Valero); in 1936, HABS photographed the missions. At the same time, however, surrounding agricultural lands experienced development pressure from the city of San Antonio, and low-density development occurred around the missions on lands once used as *labores* and *ranchos*.[22]

By the 1950s, the idea of a parkway linking the missions was under consideration by several different groups, although a formal plan did not emerge until the early 1960s. In 1966 the City of San Antonio passed a bond providing $125,000 for the parkway; an additional $250,000 was allocated in 1970. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provided matching funds, which allowed for acquisition of Roosevelt, Concepción, Padre, and Acequia parks and the Riverside Golf Course. Extant circulation routes located in these areas were to be used to take the visitor from Roosevelt Park in the north, past each of the northern missions, and on to Espada in the south.[23] Although not implemented to the extent originally conceived, the routing promoted the idea of the missions as a single, related unit rather than distinct resources.[24] Recurrent

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[17]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, *The Missions of San Antonio: A Historic Structures Report and Administrative History. Part III: Twentieth Century Restoration* by Marlys Bush Thurber, Tom Ireland, and James T. Escobedo, Jr. (December 1984), 6-3.

[18]NPS, *Historic Structures Report, Part III*, 6-3.

[19]NPS, *Cultural Landscape Recommendations: Mission Concepción*, 10.

[20]NPS, *Resources Management Plan*, 2.

[21]NPS, *Historic Structures Report, Part III*, 7-44.

[22]Ibid., 6-2.

[23]NPS, *Report on a Study of its Boundaries*, 7.

[24]NPS, *Historic Structures Report, Part III*, 9-11.

flooding of the San Antonio River led to parallel efforts on a river channelization project *(Exhibit D)*. Following deepening, widening, and straightening of the river, only five of its original segments remained—one at the historic San Juan dam, one on the land east of Mission San José (near Symphony Lane River Loop), one at the Espada dam, one west of Mission San Juan, and the last east of Mission Espada.[25]

In 1968, in response to increased tourist visitation at the missions, the archdiocese funded additional improvements to the missions, including the installation of "tile" walkways, the construction of a cedar fence along Mission Road, and, on the east side of Concepción, ornamental landscaping and paving of the parking lot west of the church.[26] Since establishment of the national park in 1978, NPS has undertaken a variety of resource studies and preservation projects. Although years of neglect, development, and multiple ownership have taken a toll on the missions and associated resources and many features have been lost, parts of the system retain considerable integrity and the mission system as a whole remains an important historic resource. The church is still a partially active parish; the priest of nearby St. Cecilia is available to honor special requests for religious services and events at the mission.

ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUND

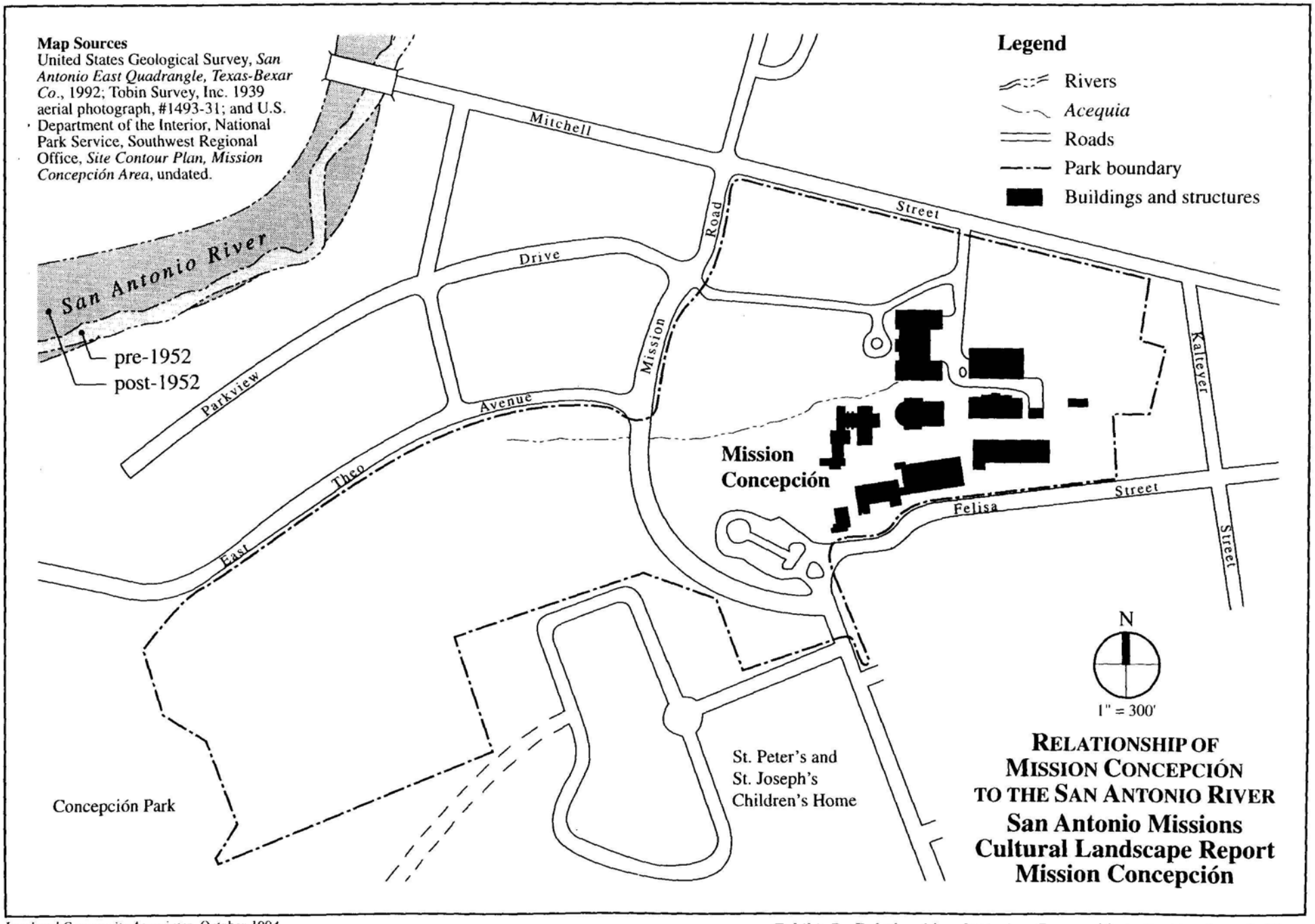
Although ownership of the San Antonio missions has changed frequently throughout the years, the Roman Catholic Church has maintained an interest in the properties throughout their history. The missions were first administered by the Spanish government and the church, but much of the system's lands and quarters were parceled off to residents at the end of the eighteenth century. The Mexican government declared ownership of unclaimed mission lands (i.e., the empty home lots, the *labores*, the common lands, and some of the ranchlands, but not the plaza) during its brief tenure in Texas, and the Republic of Texas continued this practice.

The outcome of an 1841 suit brought by Father John M. Odin against the Republic of Texas, however, confirmed church ownership of the missions and associated lands (i.e., the plaza and some *labores*). Still, many parcels containing mission-related resources remained in private ownership.[27] Odin initiated a policy of purchasing these resources and opening them up to visitors and the religious congregation, thus beginning the trend which continues today of allowing greater public access to mission resources.

Mission San Antonio de Valero, which is not part of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, was the first mission acquired for preservation when, in 1870, the State of Texas purchased it for its significance in Texas' war for independence against Mexico. Efforts continued with the San Antonio Conservation Society's purchase of the San José granary in 1928 and its subsequent acquisition of the Espada aqueduct.[28]

In 1962 the San Antonio missions, including Mission Concepción, were designated as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks by the Texas Historical Commission. Mission Concepción, as well as

[25]NPS, *General Management Plan*, 8.
[26]NPS, *Cultural Landscape Recommendations: Mission Concepción*, 11.
[27]NPS, *Historic Structures Report, Part I*, 4-6.
[28]NPS, *Report on a Study of its Boundaries*, 6-7.



Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit D. Relationship of Mission Concepción to the San Antonio River

the other San Antonio missions and the Espada Aqueduct, have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Mission Concepción was listed in 1970. In addition, Mission Concepción and the Espada *acequia* system are National Historic Landmarks. The area encompassing the missions included in the park has been recognized as a historic district by the City of San Antonio and in 1988 the area was designated the Mission Parkway Historic/Archeological National Register District.

Increasing local interest, combined with recognition of the missions' national significance, led Congress to pass PL 95-625 in November 1978. This act created the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park "to provide for the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the Spanish Missions of San Antonio, Texas, for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations of Americans."[29] The act provided for NPS to either purchase, accept as a donation, or acquire less than fee interest in four of the missions and their associated cultural resources, including the church buildings and their compounds, remains of the *acequias*, dams, an aqueduct, some *labores*, and other related features. Archdiocese, state, or local government lands were to be acquired through donation. The act authorized cooperative agreements to protect, restore, and interpret privately owned resources.[30] Mission San Antonio de Valero was not included in the park; instead, it retained its status as a state historic site under management of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.[31] In 1988 Mission Concepción was included in the Missions National Historical Park National Register District, the boundaries of which coincide with the boundaries of the National Historical Park.[32]

Current mission ownership is varied. The following is a partial listing only:

- the Archdiocese of San Antonio owns the churches and their surrounding grounds, except Mission San José, where the grounds remain under the control of the state of Texas, in accordance with the terms of a 1941 agreement with the Archdiocese which was later superseded by a cooperative agreement between NPS and the state of Texas;
- the city of San Antonio owns and maintains Acequia Park and Espada Park, the latter which is owned by the San Antonio River Authority (SARA);
- the river, technically outside the park's boundaries, is managed by SARA;
- the San Juan Ditch Water Supply Corporation and the Espada Ditch Company, respectively, own and manage the San Juan and Espada *acequia* systems;
- other parcels, particularly in the *labores* areas, remain in private ownership.

Multiple ownership of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park led NPS to underwrite a number of agreements related to a comprehensive plan for the park. According to the park's 1982 *General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan*, cooperative agreements were desirable where government purchase was prohibited by the doctrine of separation of church and state, but where federal involvement was deemed necessary to maintain, operate, and protect historic resources.

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[29]NPS, *Statement for Management*, 1.
[30]NPS, *Report on a Study of its Boundaries*, 7.
[31]NPS, *General Management Plan*, 9.
[32]Texas Historical Commission to Land and Community Associates, fax, 11 August 1994.

Cooperative agreements include those with the Archdiocese of San Antonio regarding the four missions and the city of San Antonio regarding Acequia Park, which allow those agencies to retain ownership and, at the same time, administer their properties as part of the park. Agreements with SARA regarding Espada Park and several parcels east of the river and with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at Mission San José also enable NPS to administer those resources.[33]

Additionally, NPS is a member of the Espada Ditch Company and a shareholder in the San Juan Ditch Water Supply Corporation. NPS owns a pro-rated share of water rights.[34] Easements purchased on lands north and south of Espada Park, on a strip of land along the west bank of the Espada *acequia* (between the *acequia* and Espada Road), along the San Juan *acequia*, and on the *labores* adjacent to Mission Espada also contribute to the park's successful management.[35] Other efforts, including NPS participation in the revision of appropriate portions of the San Antonio zoning ordinance, have encouraged compatible development.[36]

NPS also purchased from private owners parts of the Espada *labores* (from the river west to the *acequia*), a block of land at the northern end of Acequia Park, the Espada *acequia* north of Ashley Road, and the area surrounding Mission San Juan.[37] In 1990 the park service owned 34 percent of the park lands; 46 percent were owned by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, the state of Texas, the city of San Antonio, and SARA and administered as part of the park; and 20 percent remained unprotected in private ownership.[38]

Clarification of Terminology

According to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, 1992, restoration is "the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project." Reconstruction is defined by *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* as "the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location." According to this definition, most of the work completed at San Antonio missions in the 1930s, which was not an accurate depiction of the colonial period, cannot be called a reconstruction; nor can the total project be termed a restoration since many missing features were rebuilt. For the past six decades, however both terms—reconstruction and restoration—have been used interchangeably to apply to the 1930s work at San Antonio missions. Throughout the CLR process, the NPS staff and consultant team and NPS and SHPO reviewers have had considerable discussions regarding this terminology. Some believe that the term reconstruction is applied inappropriately to the 1930s

[33]NPS, *Report on a Study of its Boundaries*, 11.
[34]NPS, *General Management Plan*, 18.
[35]NPS, *Report on a Study of its Boundaries*, 11.
[36]NPS, *General Management Plan*, 19.
[37]NPS, *Report on a Study of its Boundaries*, 11.
[38]Ibid., 1.

work because some of the work was based on conjecture and not on documentary or physical evidence. Others believe that because the intent of the 1930s work was to recreate the colonial period, the term reconstruction should be used. To respond to the variety of professional opinions regarding the proper terminology to apply to the 1930s work, the term re-creation is used to refer to 1930s-era work that does not meet the currently accepted definitions of restoration or reconstruction. The terms restoration and reconstruction are used in Chapter 2 in a historical context as quoted and paraphrased from various sources. In those instances, the terms can be interpreted to have a more generic meaning than the current NPS definitions in use currently.

Issues, Concerns, and Approaches

During field work, regional and park NPS personnel and consultants have identified issues and concerns to be addressed in the CLR, both generally for the entire San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, and specifically for Mission Concepción. They range from broad planning concerns such as park-wide sustainability, "night sky" considerations, and circulation to site specific concerns such as courtyard drainage and interpretation of the missing compound wall at Mission Concepción. As a result of considering these concerns, the working group arrived at a consensus treatment approach of preservation for the mission's archeological resources and rehabilitation for the above-ground landscape. A preservation approach for archeological resources recognizes the overriding importance of colonial-era information to the understanding of this and related sites. It is imperative that landscape rehabilitations not disturb the still-largely intact archeological record. A preservation approach to archeological resources will present challenges as site work occurs in relation to drainage and other site management issues. When archeological resources cannot be avoided in relation to such work, documentation of existing archeological conditions, archeological excavations, and other mitigation measures will need to precede site work. A landscape rehabilitation approach for above-ground resources is consistent with existing cultural landscape conditions and the findings of the cultural landscape evaluation. Rehabilitation of the landscape is appropriate because it incorporates some aspects of the other preservation treatments—preservation, restoration, and reconstruction. A rehabilitation approach also offers sufficient flexibility to meet such interrelated but sometimes conflicting site concerns as

- continuing religious use;
- meeting visitor needs for interpretation, accessibility, comfort, and safety;
- issues of sustainability and environmental appropriateness in light of both the site's current conditions and current NPS standards and goals;
- acknowledging the historical limitations of previous work;
- strengthening historic spatial relationships;
- addressing the desire for a rural setting in the midst of urbanization; and
- meeting contemporary needs for lighting, site furnishings, site circulation, and surface drainage.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Mission Concepción is a significant cultural landscape that contributes to an understanding of the role of the mission in Spanish colonial settlement in the American Southwest and, more specifically, in the San Antonio vicinity. Mission Concepción is significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture, and possesses sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It meets the listing requirements of the National Register under Criteria A, C, and D. Mission Concepción has significant associations with Spanish colonial history; in addition, it is a significant cultural landscape on the site of a principal frontier mission, and a significant Spanish colonial archeological site.

At the same time, Mission Concepción exhibits evidence of deterioration, does not meet current NPS sustainability standards, and is in need of substantial attention to improve the visitor's experience and understanding of the site. Its once rural environment is dominated by urban encroachments and yet, within the site, many of these encroachments are not apparent. The guidelines and design alternatives presented in Chapter 5 address these and other current issues and concerns identified through the CLR planning process. Chapter 5 addresses general management concerns related to buildings and structures; roads, walks, and paths; vegetation; drainage; lighting and utilities; fencing; site furnishings; and interpretation and signage. Each topic is addressed as part of the overall landscape rehabilitation approach recommended for Mission Concepción .

The CLR treatment guidelines provide a framework and programmatic basis for preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance, and interpretation of Concepción's significant landscape features and for new construction where warranted and appropriate. Park personnel, NPS regional personnel, and the consultant team participated in a series of workshops held in San Antonio to identify topics and issues to be addressed through treatments. Recommended treatments have been developed by taking into account the degree of integrity present within the mission as a whole and within each of the landscape character areas described in Chapter 4: Mission-wide, Mission Core, Mission Foreground, Seminary, NPS Visitor Services, and Historic Labores.

The landscape character areas serve also as management treatment zones (*Exhibit T* in Chapter 4). Design alternatives have been developed in Chapter 5 for the specific high-priority issues identified in the workshops: wayside development and compound wall interpretation, site circulation, courtyard drainage, and view restoration and enhancement.

Cultural landscape preservation strategies developed for Mission Concepción take into account the sometimes conflicting goals of protecting the park's historic, cultural, and natural resources, and providing a comfortable and informative site for visitors. Objectives of the CLR include consideration of the entire site as a whole and development of guidelines that consider the inter-relationships of all existing resources. The guidance offered in Chapter 5 can be used to inform future planning for the park, including that intended to improve the visitor experience.



2 THE HISTORY OF THE MISSION CONCEPCIÓN LANDSCAPE

2 THE HISTORY OF THE MISSION CONCEPCIÓN LANDSCAPE

EARLY SETTLEMENT PRE-1731

The settlement of the Villa de Béxar and the mission of San Antonio de Valero were officially established on the San Antonio River in 1718, as a support station for missions and presidios in East Texas *(Exhibit E).* At the time of this first European settlement, the San Antonio River valley was described as being covered with "a thick wood of different trees, such as elms, poplars, hackberries, oaks and many mulberries and brambleberries, and the rest of the wood is covered with grapevines from the ground up."[1] Mission San Antonio de Valero and the Presidio de Béxar, after some preliminary moves, were placed permanently on either side of the San Antonio River in the present location of downtown San Antonio *(Exhibits E and F).* With the arrival of a group of settlers from the Canary Islands in 1731, the villa became the Villa de San Fernando de Béxar.[2]

A mission was not just a church and a group of associated buildings. Each mission was like a small town, with all the needs for field, farm, and workshops to be found in any other town. The mission's layout and construction, as well as its use of fields, farms, and workshops, made an imprint on the land where it was established, an imprint that continued to affect the land and its use long after the missionaries left.

Texas missions all had similar arrangements. The *pueblo*, or Indian village, surrounded the church and *convento*, or priest's dwelling. Outside the *pueblo*, which was enclosed by a defensive wall by the 1760s, were the irrigated fields, gardens, and orchards. Beyond these was the mission *ejido*, or common lands. The *ejido* was the collection area for firewood, small game, stone, timber, sand, clay, and lime for construction, the materials for leather tanning, close grazing land for dairy cattle, sheep, and the fattening of pigs, and innumerable other uses. All these lands together formed the *fundo legal*—the legal estate granted to a mission at the time of its establishment.

The mission *fundos legales* of San Antonio are virtually undefined. The available founding documents usually state simply that the lands were to supply the mission with "pastures, watering places, damming sites for the *acequias* (irrigation ditches), and other uses and privileges," which included farming fields.[3]

In 1731, Fray Gabriel de Vergara, Father President of the Querétaran missions, reviewed the laws which defined their legal rights to land and water for Captain don Juan Antonio Perez de Almazán, commander of the Presidio de San Antonio, *alcalde mayor* (the primary local official) of the Villa de

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[1]Fray Francisco Céliz, *Diary of the Alarcón Expedition into Texas, 1718-1719*, Fritz Leo Hoffman, tr. (Los Angeles: Quivira Society, 1935) p. 49.

[2]Fray Marion A. Habig, OFM, *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968), p. 47.

[3]Captain Juan Antonio Peres de Almazán, *Testimonio de Asiento de Missiones*, March 5, 1731, Texas General Land Office, Spanish Archives (GLOSA), vol. 50, pp. 19v-21.

Béxar, and the senior representative of the King in the province at the time.[4] Vergara stated that according to the Laws of the Indies, "the sites on which are created *pueblos* and *reducciones*[5] are to have plentiful water, land, and woods, entrances and exits, *labranzas* [cultivated lands] and *ejidos* of one league in width towards each wind, where the Indians may keep their livestock without their being interfered with by others [i.e., other livestock] of the Spaniards." A league was about 2.6 miles.[6] This law meant that each *pueblo* should have four square leagues, one league in each cardinal direction from the center of the *pueblo* (usually considered to be the front door of the church), actually granted to it.

Vergara continued that the missions were "situated a short distance one from the other in compliance with the order of his excellency the Lord Viceroy on the advice of the Brigadier Don Pedro de Rivera, as contained in the dispatch of October 2, 1730 ... which was approved because of the obvious hostility of the Apache nation, which prevented the placement of the missions at a great distance one from another." Because of the necessity to place the missions as close as possible to the *presidio* (fortress), said Vergara, and in consideration of several legal provisions which he cites, the missions might make up for a shortfall of their legally permitted lands in one direction by the addition of lands in other directions, where possible.

As the result of his review, Vergara demonstrated clearly that the laws entitled each mission to a four-square-league *fundo legal*, centered on the *pueblo* but adjustable in its dimensions to suit circumstances so that it included the appropriate range of lands; the majority of the primary subsistence and social activities of the mission would occur within this tract. This set of legal provisions was applied for the founding of all the San Antonio missions, including Mission Concepción.

First Foundation on the Site: Mission San José?

In 1719, increasing hostility by the French caused the withdrawal of the Franciscan missionaries from the East Texas missions.[7] Among them was Fr. Antonio Margil, of the Franciscan missionary college at Zacatecas, who decided to establish a second mission in the San Antonio area. The mission was founded for several Indian groups who had refused to join Mission Valero because of disagreements with the Native Americans located there.[8] At the time of the establishment of San José, Fray Olivares of Valero requested that the location of the new mission be selected so as to conform to the provisions of the Laws of the Indies: that it be placed so that the two were at least three leagues apart. The terms of Olivares's letter imply that the founders were considering a site closer than three leagues.[9] In 1745, Fray Espinosa stated that San José was originally established

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[4]Vergara to Almazán, "Escrito ... para las tierras y aguas, 1731," May 31, 1731, Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library (OSMHRL), Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas, microfilm roll 3, frames 3560-3565.

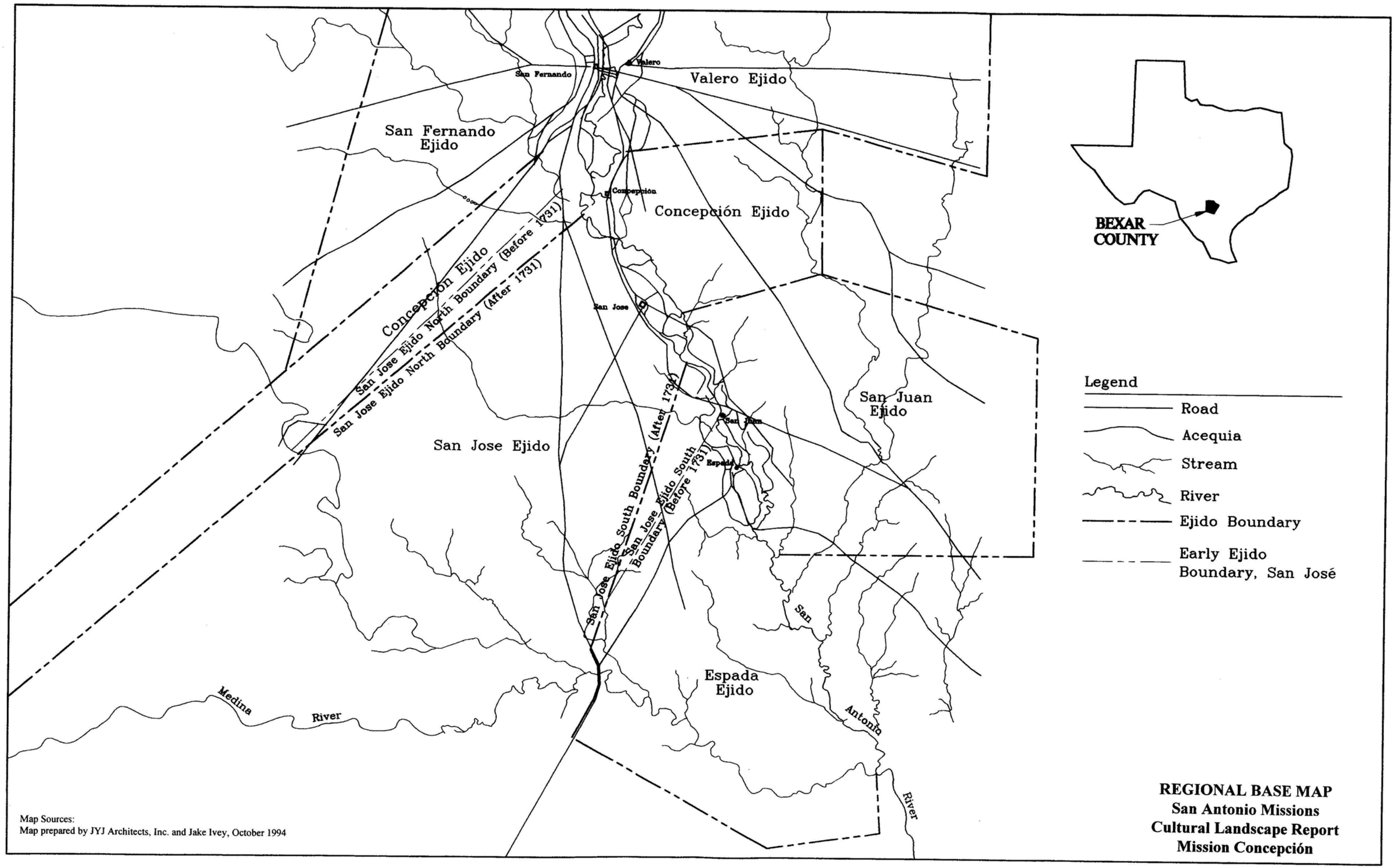
[5]*Reducciones*, or "reductions," were missions created by collecting, or "reducing," a number of Native American groups into a single community.

[6]Thomas C. Barnes, Thomas H. Naylor, and Charles W. Polzer, *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), p. 68.

[7]Habig, *Alamo Chain*, p. 4.

[8]Ibid., p. 83.

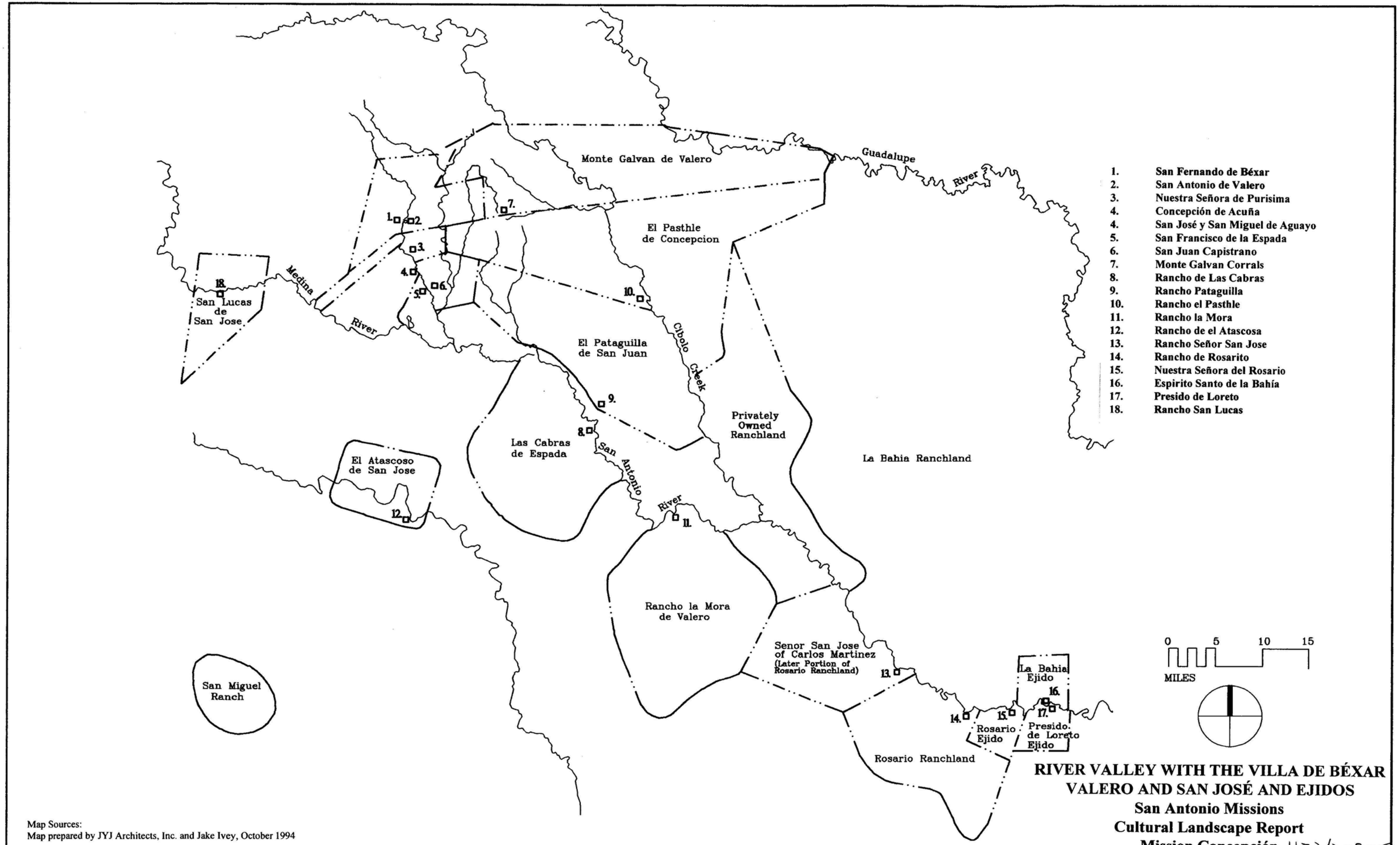
[9]Fray Antonio Olivares, "Oposición a la fundación de la Mission de San Joseph del río de San Antonio," February 23, 1720, *The San José Papers: The Primary Sources for the History of Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo From Its Founding in 1720 to the Present — Part I: 1719-1791* (San Antonio: OSMHRL, 1978), pp. 19-26.



Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and Jake Ivey, October 1994

REGIONAL BASE MAP
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Exhibit E. Regional Base Map
472/20904



Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and Jake Ivey, October 1994

RIVER VALLEY WITH THE VILLA DE BÉXAR VALERO AND SAN JOSÉ AND EJIDOS
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción 472/20905

Exhibit F. River Valley with the Villa de Béxar, Valero and San José, and Ejidos

across the river from its present site, and further upstream.[10] This would place the first site somewhere in the area of present Concepción, a short distance south of the south boundary of Valero's *ejido*. This was much closer than three leagues to Valero; in fact, it was only one and one-third leagues away, or about three and a half miles.

Fray Olivares, as the representative for Valero, was to have accompanied the group who selected the site for the new mission, but for unknown reasons he sent instead his assistant, Fray Joseph Guerra; Olivares was not present for the actual selection of the site. Despite the fact that the site under consideration was only half the distance required by Fray Olivares and the law, the other members of the granting party were able to convince Fray Guerra that it was a full three leagues from Valero, and he approved the location. Thus, on February 23, 1720, the present site of Mission Concepción—about four miles south of Mission Valero on the same side of the river—was apparently chosen for San José,[11] and the missionaries and the Native Americans were ceremoniously granted ownership.

The mission was established with sites marked out for a church, *convento*, and *casas reales* (government building) around a plaza 330 feet square, with streets running from it and the houses of the Native Americans along the streets and plaza.[12] At the same time, the missionaries quickly began construction on the *acequia* for the fields. The dam of the new *acequia* system was built on the San Antonio River about three-quarters of a league north of the place selected for the mission.[13] This is the correct distance to the later Concepción Dam, suggesting that the Concepción *acequia* originated as the *acequia* for San José in 1720-21 during its short stay on this spot.

Supporting this theory is the local idea, which can be traced back to at least the early nineteenth century, that the "Pajalache Acequia," the *acequia* of Mission Concepción, is the oldest in San Antonio, supposedly built before 1724.[14] If the *acequia* was originally built for San José in 1720-21, during its one-year stay at this location, then it would predate the San Antonio Acequia for the Presidio, the next-oldest, by perhaps two years, and the Valero Acequia by three or four years; it would, however, be about two years younger than the first *acequia* built for the Villa de Bejar in January 1719. Archeological investigation at Mission Concepción located two early sections of the *acequia*. Both had been filled, apparently intentionally, and both had anomalous artifact collections

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[10]Fray Isidro Félix de Espinosa, *Crónica de los Colegios de Propaganda Fide de la Nueva España*, Lino G. Canedo, ed. (Washington: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1964), p. 758.

[11]This hypothesis is based on the results of archeological investigations at Mission Concepción conducted in 1980-81 by James E. Ivey, reported in "Excavations at Mission Concepción," in *Archaeological Investigations at Mission Concepción and Mission Parkway*, by James E. Ivey and Anne A. Fox (ms., Center for Archaeological Research, the University of Texas at San Antonio, Archaeological Survey Report, No. 114, 1982, manuscript in the files of the National Park Service, Southwest Regional Office, Santa Fe), pp. 27-28, 45-46.

[12]Juan Valdéz, "Report of Captain Juan Valdéz," March 13, 1720, *San José Papers*, p. 35.

[13]Ibid., p. 32.

[14]Anne A. Fox and I. Waynne Cox, *Testing of the San José Mission Acequia, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Bexar County, Texas*, Center for Archeological Research, Archeological Survey Report no. 207 (San Antonio: University of Texas at San Antonio, 1991), p. 2; William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar: A Guide and History* (San Antonio: Bainbridge and Corner, 1890), p. 43. Cox has examined the original court case from which Corner drew this statement (Rhodes vs. Whitehead 27, Texas 304) and found that, according to the testimony, "the privilege to establish the acequia was granted previous to the foundation of the Alamo Church." This may be assumed to mean prior to the establishment of Valero on its present location; i. e., before 1724. Jesus F. de la Teja, "Land and Society in 18th Century San Antonio de Bexar, a Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier," dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1988, p. 175 n. 6, cites a statement by Arneson to the same effect.

that resemble the fill in the early *acequia* branch backfilled by the missionaries at Valero about 1724. The filled *acequia* at Concepción, with its odd artifact collection, may be archeological evidence of the San José presence at the site, and of the earliest mission *acequia* in San Antonio.[15]

At the same time as the construction of the *acequia*, several basic components of the system had to have been built, producing a plan fairly similar to the later Concepción system. For example, at a distance of about one-third league (4,600 feet) north of the site of the new mission, the system divided into an outer and inner *acequia*. At this location, a *compuerte*, or sluice-gate, with several gates would have been built on the line of the *acequia* to handle water control. This *compuerte* was apparently located on the boundary between the Valero and San José *ejidos*, and therefore was the northernmost point that San José could begin its irrigated fields.

The Querétaran missionaries of Valero undoubtedly began the preparation of an official protest as soon as the Zacatecans began building a dam and excavating an *acequia* across their land, if not sooner. The protest probably made the same general points as had been included in Valero's first objection to the establishment of San José nearby, filed in February 1720: San José had been founded too close to Valero, and the Pastias and Pampopas of San José were the traditional enemies of the residents of Valero—difficulties between the groups were sure to arise.[16] It is reasonable to assume that Mission Valero's protest was brought to the attention of the new governor, the Marquis de Aguayo, and that during his visit to San Antonio in 1721, he ordered Mission San José moved to a less intrusive location.[17]

The historical record suggests that about 1721 or 1722, probably as a result of the orders of Governor Aguayo, the Franciscans hauled their household goods, drove their herds, and led their animals about two and a half miles down the mission road and across the San Antonio River to the west bank to the new site of Mission San José, about where it is today. This move apparently happened after late April 1721, when Aguayo visited San José at its first location, and before March 10, 1722, when the missionaries established Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera on the same site. In late April or early May 1721, Father Juan Antonio de la Peña stated that the mission of San José was one-and-a-half leagues down river from the presidio; this matches well with the Concepción site, about 1.4 leagues in a straight line from the probable first location of the presidio, or a little over a league and a half by road.[18] A year later, at the time of the founding of Mission Nájera on March 10, 1722, Father Peña described the site of the new mission as being

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[15]James E. Ivey, "Excavations at Mission Concepción," pp. 27-28, 45-46. Daniel Scurlock and Daniel Fox, *An Archeological Investigation of Mission Concepción, San Antonio, Texas*, Office of the State Archeologist, Report 28 (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 1977), p. 56.

[16]Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, vol. 2, *The Mission Era: the Winning of Texas, 1693-1731* (Austin: Von Boeckman-Jones Company, 1942), p. 127.

[17]A map drawn in 1729 by the Marquis de Aguayo, based on his visit to the area in 1721-22, shows Mission San José on the east side of the river opposite the mouth of San Pedro Creek; see Mardith K. Schuetz, *The History and Archeology of Mission San Juan Capistrano, San Antonio, Texas*, vol. 1, State Building Commission, Archeological Program, Report 10 (Austin: State Building Commission. 1968), Fig. 2. Aguayo obviously remembered a mission at this location, but confused San José, of which he had approved the founding in 1720, with San Francisco Xavier de Nájera, which he had founded apparently on the same site in 1722. The effort to establish San Francisco Xavier de Nájera on the site had been given up in 1726, four years before Aguayo drew his map, for lack of cooperation from the Indians, who decided they wanted to go into Valero after all. So Aguayo drew San José onto the map, but could not clearly remember which site it was presently on.

[18]Bachillor don Juan Antonio de la Peña, *Derrotero de la Expedicion en la Provincia de los Texas, Nuevo Reyno de Philipinas* (Mexico: Juan Francisco de Ortega Bonilla, 1722), p. 6r.

located between Valero and San José.[19] Since Nájera was established on the site later given to Concepción,[20] and since San José was moved down river and to the west bank from its first site,[21] Peña's description leaves no real choice but to assume that San José had to have been founded first at about the present location of Concepción, and then moved to its present site by March 1722. Peña gave additional evidence that San José was on its present location by 1722: six days after the establishment of Mission Nájera on the Concepción site, Father Peña described his departure with a military expedition from the new location of the Presidio de San Antonio, marching toward the future site of the Presidio of Loreto and the mission of La Bahía: the column moved south out of San Antonio to the Mission of San José, "a distance of about two leagues," with no mention of passing through Valero or the new site of Nájera.[22] The terms of the description of the route indicate that the expedition passed San José on the west side of the river, more or less at its present location about one and three-quarters leagues south-southeast of the presidio, and then crossed the river.

The archeological information makes it fairly clear that *some* occupation occurred at the Concepción site before 1731; the historical documents strongly suggest that the previous occupants were not only San Francisco Xavier de Nájera, but also San José. The Nájera mission apparently did very little construction at the site, but San José built a temporary church, *convento*, and Indian quarters, cleared fields, and excavated an *acequia* during its apparent occupation from 1720 to 1721. It is likely that Nájera reused these structures during its tenure on the site for the next four years. The fields and *acequia*, however, were apparently left untouched: the *acequia* silted up and was partly filled with trash. Ultimately the Nájera effort was abandoned, and the mission was closed in 1726. It would remain closed only five years.

THE INITIAL PERIOD 1731-1757 *(Exhibit G)*

On March 6, 1731, Mission Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de Acuña was established on the San Antonio River south of the Villa de Béxar. Previously named Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Tejas, its name was changed when it was moved to the San Antonio River from its east Texas location in what is now Nacogdoches County. Some 300 Native Americans, Coahuiltecans of the Pajalat and Pacao groups, were persuaded to join the mission at the new location.[23] Corn and cattle were purchased from Mission San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande to provision the mission.[24]

By May 4, only two months later, the new mission had a flowing *acequia*, fields were planted, and thatched-roof *jacales* (temporary structures consisting of upright logs chinked and clad with adobe clay) for Indian quarters, friar's quarters, the church, and storehouses were all in use: as

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[19]Peña, *Derrotero*, p. 25.

[20]Captain Juan Antonio Peres de Almazán, when he granted the site to Concepción, stated that the site had been "first used for the advocation of San Francisco de Nájera, requested by the Hierbipiame Indians, who have congregated at the Mission San Antonio, and [the place] is abandoned, and exempt from contradiction by any person ... ," *Testimonio de Asiento de Missiones*, March 5, 1731, Spanish Archives of the Texas General Land Office, vol. 50, p. 20.

[21]Espinosa, *Crónica*, p. 758.

[22]Peña, *Derrotero*, p. 25r.

[23]Castaneda, *Catholic Heritage*, vol. 2, p. 241; Habig, *Alamo Chain*, p. 125.

[24]Habig, *Alamo Chain*, p. 125

suggested above, this may have happened so quickly because Concepción was able to clean and repair the structures, *acequias*, and fields left by the Nájera and probable San José occupations of the site, rather than having to construct these features anew. At this point construction on the more permanent adobe buildings could begin.[25] In 1733, work began on the adobe *convento* and church.[26] The flat-roofed stone granary may also have been built at this time.[27]

The *Ejidos* of Concepción and San José

When Concepción was established in 1731, a portion of its *ejido* was established on San José land. After the move to the west bank, San José's *ejido* was established in the angle between the San Antonio and Medina rivers. The earliest version of San José's *ejido* was bounded by Piedras Creek on the south, the Palo Quemado and the town grant of the Villa de Béxar on the north, the San Antonio River on the east, and Leon Creek on the west.[28] Palo Quemado is a place name associated with an area on San Pedro Creek three-quarters of a mile downstream from the ford of Nogalitos, and one league north of the mission. From here, the boundary ran southwest to Leon Creek at about the Aguila Crossing, a little northwest of where Loop 410 crosses the Leon. The line from the Palo Quemado to Aguila Crossing was undoubtedly the boundary between San José's land and that of the Villa de Béxar, which would have had a town grant of about four square leagues. The placement of the Concepción "Pasture" on the west side of the river moved San José's northern boundary down to the mouth of Concepción Creek. Concepción was a new Querétaran establishment, intruding on the *ejido* of a long-established Zacatecan mission. Eventually, in compensation, San José's *ejido* was increased almost two square leagues by extending it to the southwest to the Medina River, which was described as the acknowledged southwest limit in 1809.[29]

Water for the Mission

Upon its establishment in 1720, apparently on the Concepción site, San José had begun construction of an *acequia* or irrigation system. A site was selected "where water can be drained from the San Antonio River to irrigate the land ..." The route of the *acequia* was traced "down river following the direction where the irrigation ditch is to be."[30]

This *acequia*, perhaps the ditch that later became the Pajalache Acequia for Mission Concepción, provided water for irrigation of the fields and for the use of mission inhabitants, originated at a dam on the river just southeast of the Villa de Béjar and the Presidio de San Antonio de Béjar and south of the Mission San Antonio de Valero, at the ford for the Mission Road crossing. It was "all of stone ... with its *toma de agua* of lime mortar and cut stone this is of five quarters in height, and

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[25]Ibid., p. 124-25.

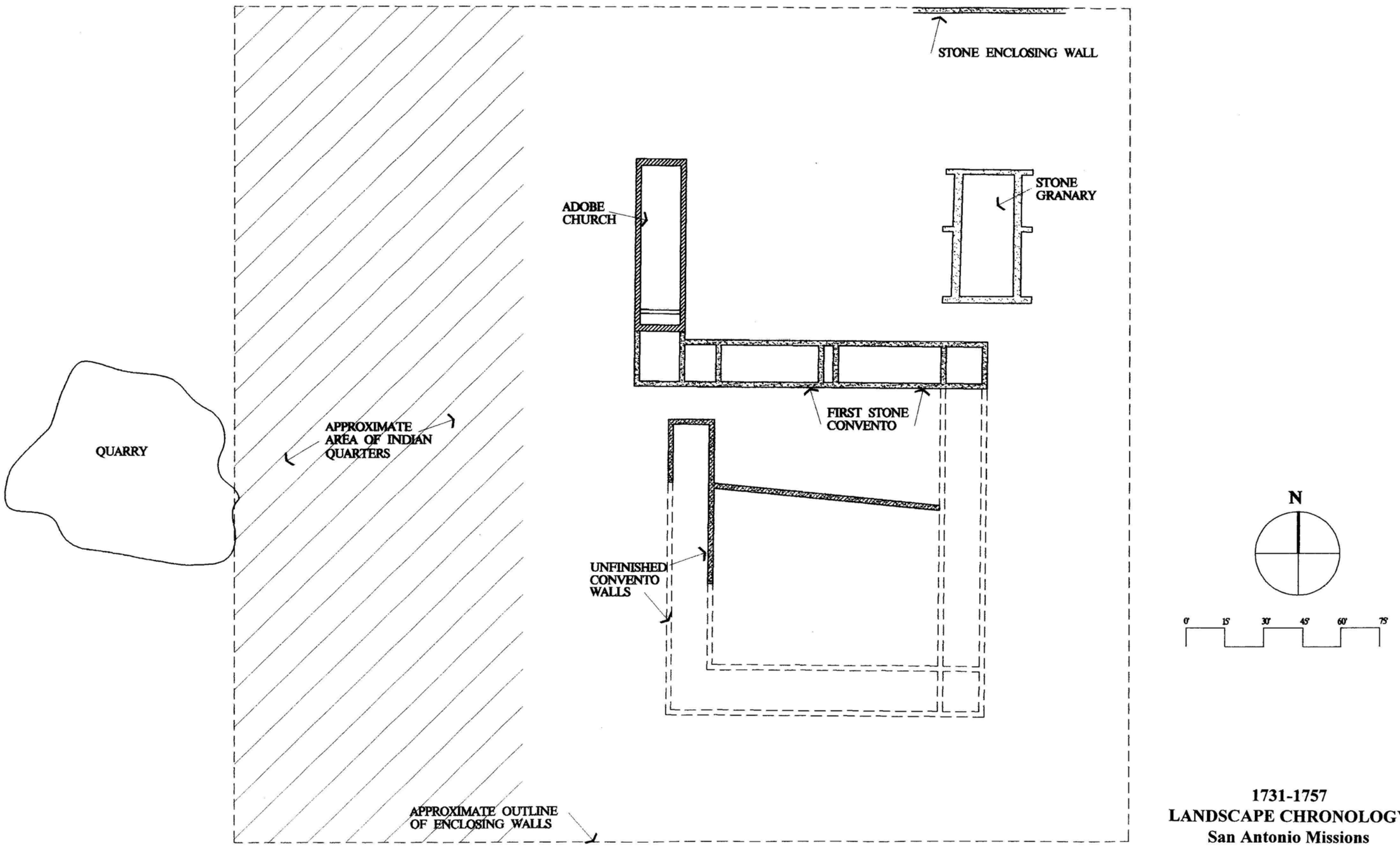
[26]James E. Ivey and Marlys Bush Thurber, "Missions of San Antonio: A Historic Structures Report and Administrative History — Part I: The Spanish Colonial Missions," manuscript on file, National Park Service, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico, part 1, p. 96.

[27]Ivey and Thurber, "Historic Structure Report," 3:99.

[28]Fray Pedro Ramirez de Arellano "Testimonio á la Letra de los autos de Denuncia de tierras hecha por D.n Domingo Castelo Vezino de la Villa de S.n Fernando Jurisdicion de las Provincia de Tejas; Remate y Merced que de dichas tierras que son onze Sitios de Ganado mayor, se hizo a Indios del Pueblo y Mision de S.or S.n Joséph," February 16, 1765. GLOSA, 50:72.

[29]Governor Manuel de Salcedo to the viceroy, June 19, 1809, AGI Audiencia de Guadalajara, 104-2-25 (Dunn Transcripts, 1809-1819), pp. 270-278.

[30]Juan Valdéz, "Report," p. 35.



Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and Jake Ivey, October 1994

1731-1757
LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Exhibit G. 1731-1757 Landscape Chronology

472/20906

one vara in thickness"[31] A *toma de agua* dam was of the "waterfall" variety; it was a massive embankment of stone rubble built on a natural limestone shelf across the river, to raise the water high enough that it flowed through a gate to an *acequia* on the south bank that ran along the shallow contours of the terrace east of the river and the main road to the missions. The *acequia* was designed to irrigate only the land between the channel and the San Antonio River and thus established the limits of the mission *labores*. Three miles below the dam, at the south edge of Mission Valero's land, and a little less than a mile from Concepción, the *acequia* divided, the *acequia media*, the middle *acequia*, branching to the west and the *acequia de afuera*, the outside *acequia*, continuing south on the east edge of the fields, to increase the efficiency of water supply to the fields around the mission.

As of 1764, and probably from the beginning, the middle *acequia* ran past the east side of the mission buildings. A side channel supplied water to the settlement for the use of the Native Americans and friars.

The Mission Ranch

The missions maintained their herds in their *ejidos* for the first years after their establishment. Soon after the establishment of the Villa de San Fernando in 1731, however, the residents began to complain about the mission cattle wandering in their fields and destroying the crops. In response, the missions moved their cattle to more distant ranches.[32] When it first moved to the San Antonio River, Concepción was granted a "pasture" west of the river somewhere in the vicinity of East Kelly Field. By *circa* 1755, Concepción also had a ranch called El Pasthle to the east beyond the Cibolo. By 1767, there were 1,220 cattle there. At the same time, the mission also shared pasture land farther north in the vicinity of Monte Galvan with missions San Antonio de Valero and San Juan Capistrano.[33]

The Mission and the Land, 1721-1761

Each of the land-use decisions and land partitions in the river valley left its mark. Many of the roads to the missions are still roads today. The *acequias* are still in use at some missions, as are the fields; in other areas the field boundaries are marked by road lines or surviving fence lines with large trees growing along them. An informed explorer could detect a large portion of the developed areas of the missions still visible in today's landscapes. The more distant parts of the mission common lands, however, made little impact on the land and have left few traces. These areas, barely recoverable even from contemporary documents, were critical to the functions of the missions, and deserve some consideration in the story of the mission landscape.

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[31]Fray Juan Joseph Saenz de Gumiel, Fray Pedro Ramirez, and don Juan Maria de Ripperda, Baron de Ripperda, *Certificac.n, e Ymbentario de la Mis.n de la Puriss.ma Concepc.n*, December 16, 1772, Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, Celaya Archives, microfilm roll 10, fr. 4254.

[32]Fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana to Fray Sevillano de Paredes, August 8, 1737, in *Letters and Memorials of the Father Presidente Fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana, 1736-1754*, Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, tr. (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, 1981), p. 29.

[33]Captain Don Toribio de Urrutia, "Combenio hecho p.r las Mis.s de S.n Ant.o, Concep.n, y S.n J.n Cap.no sobre las entradas al monte de Galvan aprobedo p.r el V.e Discretorio," October 11, 1755, OSMHRL 4:5252-5253; Missionaries of Valero, Concepción, and San Juan, "Trasumpto, o Copia literal del Convenio, o Compromisso hecho entre la tres Missiones de S.n Ant.o de Valero, la Puriss.a Concepc.n de Acuña, y S.n Juan Capistrano, sobre el Monte nombrado de Galvan," October 4, 1766, OSMHRL 4:5250-5257; Fray Saenz de Gumiel, "Certificac.n, e Ymbentario," 10:4261.

Mission Buildings

Concepción was first inventoried in 1745. This inventory listed and described the principal buildings of the mission and their more important contents, manufacturing areas within the mission, the Indian quarters, and the fields and ranches. Later inventories became more detailed, and some included the furniture within rooms, the contents of chests and boxes, the sizes of the rooms, and the materials from which walls, roofing, and floors were made. As of 1745, the mission had not developed much beyond the repair of the buildings it had inherited from San Francisco Xavier de Nájera and the probable San José occupation of the site. The Indian quarters were still simple structures of *jacal*, or vertical posts set in the ground to form walls, which were then coated with mud and roofed with thatch. However, the *convento*, the soldier's quarters, and perhaps the granary had been rebuilt in stone on their original locations. The stone wall probably built by San José in 1720-21 still surrounded the mission,[34] and a branch of what may have been the old San José *acequia* ran through the middle of the compound to supply water to the *convento* and Indian houses.

However, the Franciscans had begun a complete redesign of the mission. A master mason was brought to the frontier in the late 1730s for the purpose of designing a new stone church and vaulted *convento*, and construction began on these about 1740. The church was finished in 1755; the intended plan of the *convento* went through several changes, and was finished in the 1760s. By 1756 the Indian *jacales* were being rebuilt in adobe,[35] but this construction was never completed. Soon after the inventory of 1756, the Franciscans of Concepción decided to abandon the plan of the *pueblo* as a series of blocks laid out around a central plaza, and instead began to rebuild the Indian quarters in stone, in long rows forming a defensive wall enclosing and protecting the central plaza, the church, convento, and granary.

Mission Fields

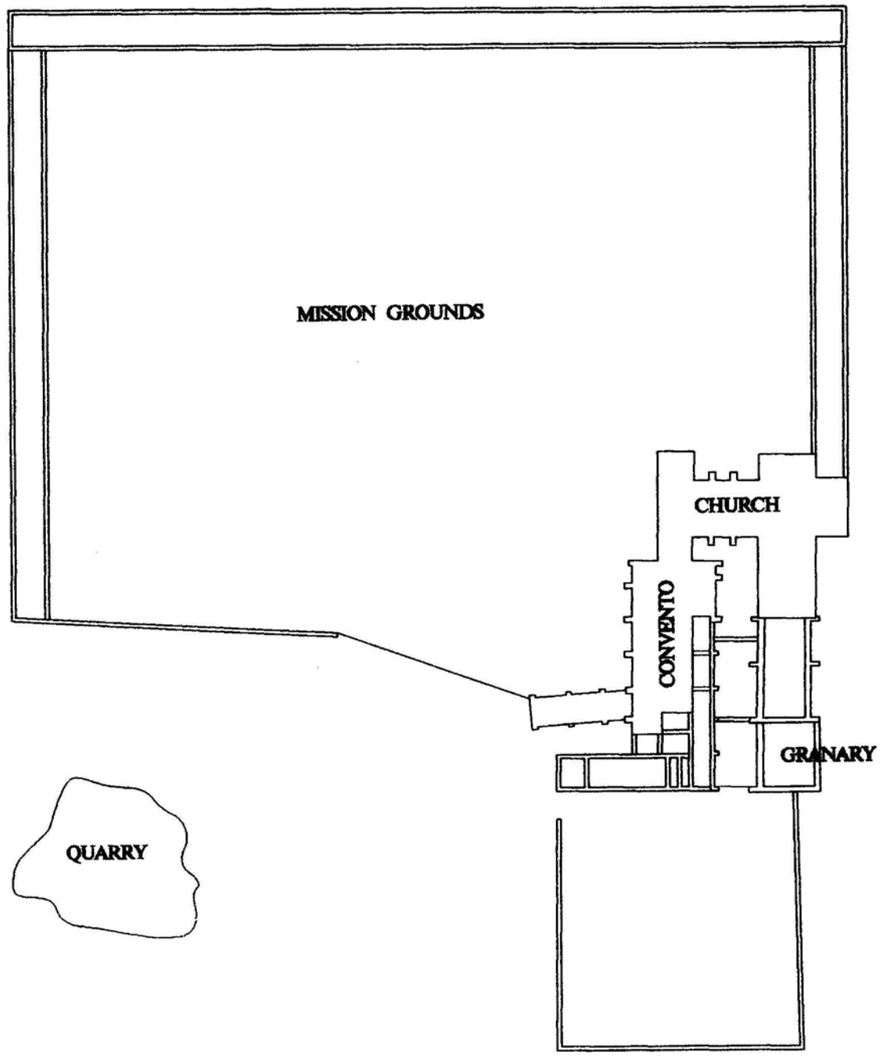
In 1745, fourteen years after its establishment on what may have been the original site of San José, Concepción was still a modest enterprise. It had only one field of corn, 43.75 acres in size, a smaller field for beans, and a large garden for melons and squash.[36] By 1756, cotton was also being grown in the fields; the garden had been enclosed with a stone wall and had fruit trees.[37]

THE ZENITH PERIOD 1757-1794 *(Exhibit H)*

Beginning about 1757, the mission was enclosed within stone walls, in response to increased Apache raids. This enclosure changed the mission's presence in the landscape, limited the view of the surrounding land from within the mission plaza, and severely restricted and simplified the accesses between the plaza and the surrounding land.

The emphasis on protection must have been extended to the fields: where before, the fields were probably placed wherever was convenient or where the best conditions were available, after the

[34]Fray Francisco Xavier Ortiz, "Visita de las Misiones de la Provincia de Texas," 1745, OSMHRL, microfilm roll 9, frame 1272.
[35]Fray Francisco Xavier Ortiz, "Razon de la Visita a las Misiones de la Provincia de Texas [1756]," 3 vols., Vargas Rea, ed. (Mexico: Biblioteca de Historiadores Mexicanes, 1955), vol. 2, p. 35.
[36]Ortiz, "Visita," 1745, 9:1272.
[37]Ortiz, "Razon," 1756, vol. 2, p. 36.



1757-1794
LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and Jake Ivey, October 1994

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enclosure the dictates of safety prompted the Franciscans to place all fields as close to the protective walls as possible. Although the location of the cultivated areas within Concepción's fields are never clearly indicated, such information is available for the other missions, and clearly show that cultivation was concentrated next to the missions.

By 1759, construction of vaulted roofs on the *convento* was halted for unknown reasons, possibly because of the expense of the work, and flat-roofed construction was ordered from that time forward.[38] Demolition of portions of the first *convento*, still being used as the residence of the friars, apparently took place sometime between 1759 and 1772, but parts of these original *convento* buildings were eventually attached to the plan of the new one; by 1772 the old *convento* rooms had become workshop rooms.[39] In 1759, two years after the enclosure effort began at Concepción, the *pueblo* consisted of "two sides of houses of stone, and some *jacales* ... ."[40] Archeological evidence suggests that the east and west rows were those that were complete in 1759. By 1762, the north and south sides had been enclosed, each with a single line of wall.[41] The third row of houses, along the north enclosing wall, was finished between 1762 and 1772; the south side was still being worked on in 1772, and in fact was never finished. These houses had flat earthen roofs supported by *vigas,* and were divided by adobe brick partition walls.[42]

In 1772, the administration of all the San Antonio missions was given to the College of Zacatecas.[43] The inventory of that year described the *pueblo* as enclosed with a wall of roughly-carved stone "with four gates to the four winds."[44] This was only a rote phrase; the compound actually had only three gates, on the west, south, and east; one of these had a postern gate, and all had keys.[45] It had twenty-four houses finished, and two under construction, probably on the south row. These lacked only their partition walls; the inventory remarked that there was space for a total of six houses in this row. Later descriptions show that only the twenty-four houses finished by 1772 continued in use; the two under construction in that year were never finished, the south wall was never completed, and the south gate was through a vertical wood palisade that filled the gap between the east end of the south wall and the west end of the *convento*.[46] There was a corral within the *pueblo* for protecting the animals from thieves; on the south side of the refectory was another small corral for the horses of

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[38]Ivey and Thurber "Historic Structure Report," part 3, p. 44.

[39]James E. Ivey, "Imported Expertise: The Master Masons of the San Antonio Missions," n.d., pp. 19-20. Manuscript on file in the Southwest Regional Office, National Park Service.

[40]Fray Mariano Francisco de los Dolores y Biana, "Testim.o de la Visita de las Missiones [etc.]," 1759, OSMHRL microfilm, roll 9, frame 1495.

[41]Fray Mariano Francisco de los Dolores y Biana, "Relacion del Estado en que se hablan todas y cada una de los misiones, en el ano de 1762," *Documentos para la Historia Eclesiastica y Civil de la Provincia de Texas o Nueva Philipinas, 1720-1779*, vol. 12, Jose Porrua Turanzas, ed. (Madrid: Coleccion Chimalistic de Libros y Documentos Acerca de la Nueva Espana, 1961), p. 255.

[42]Fray José Francisco Lopez, "Razon e Ynforme que el Padre Presidente de las Misiones de la Provincia de Texas, o Nuevas Filipinas, remite al Yll.ma S.or D. Fr. Rafael José Verger, del consejo de S. M. Obispo del Nuevo Reyno de Leon," May 5, 1786, ff. 2-2v.

[43]Ivey and Thurber, "Historic Structure Report," part 3, p. 52.

[44]Sacnz de Gumiel, Ramirez, and Ripperda, *Certificac[io]n, e Ymbentario,* roll 10, fr. 4260.

[45]Lopez, "Razon e Ynforme," ff. 2-2v; 1794; Governor Manuel Muñoz and Fray José Maria de Jesus Camarena, "Año de 1794. Ynventario de los bience de Temporalidad de La Mission de la Purísima Concepción," August 1, 1794, Bexar County Archives, Mission Records #28, pp. 17-18.

[46]Saenz de Gumiel, Ramirez, and Ripperda, *Certificac[io]n, e Ymbentario*, roll 10, fr. 4254. Excavations in 1978-79 revealed that the section of wall closing the last gap of the south side was of vertical wooden logs set into the ground to form a palisade; see Ivey, "Excavations at Mission Concepción," pp. 31-34.

the fathers and the *mayordomo* (superintendent). In this general area was a chicken coop with more than twenty birds, and adjoining it was the privy for the *convento*.[47]

By 1778, the sense of an enclosing compound was complete: "the houses of the Indians make an enclosed plaza, with the *convento* of the Franciscans and the church ... which has been built with vaults of a coarse, sandy stone, of which there is an abundant quarry at the gate of the mission compound."[48] The quarry is still visible just south of the southwest corner of the mission wall; from here, stone was quarried for construction at both Concepción and San José. By 1786 some of the Indian houses were beginning to show signs of wear and leakage, but were considered repairable; some were to be repaired that year.[49] The decay continued, however, until by the 1790s it had become a major problem.

Mission Landscape

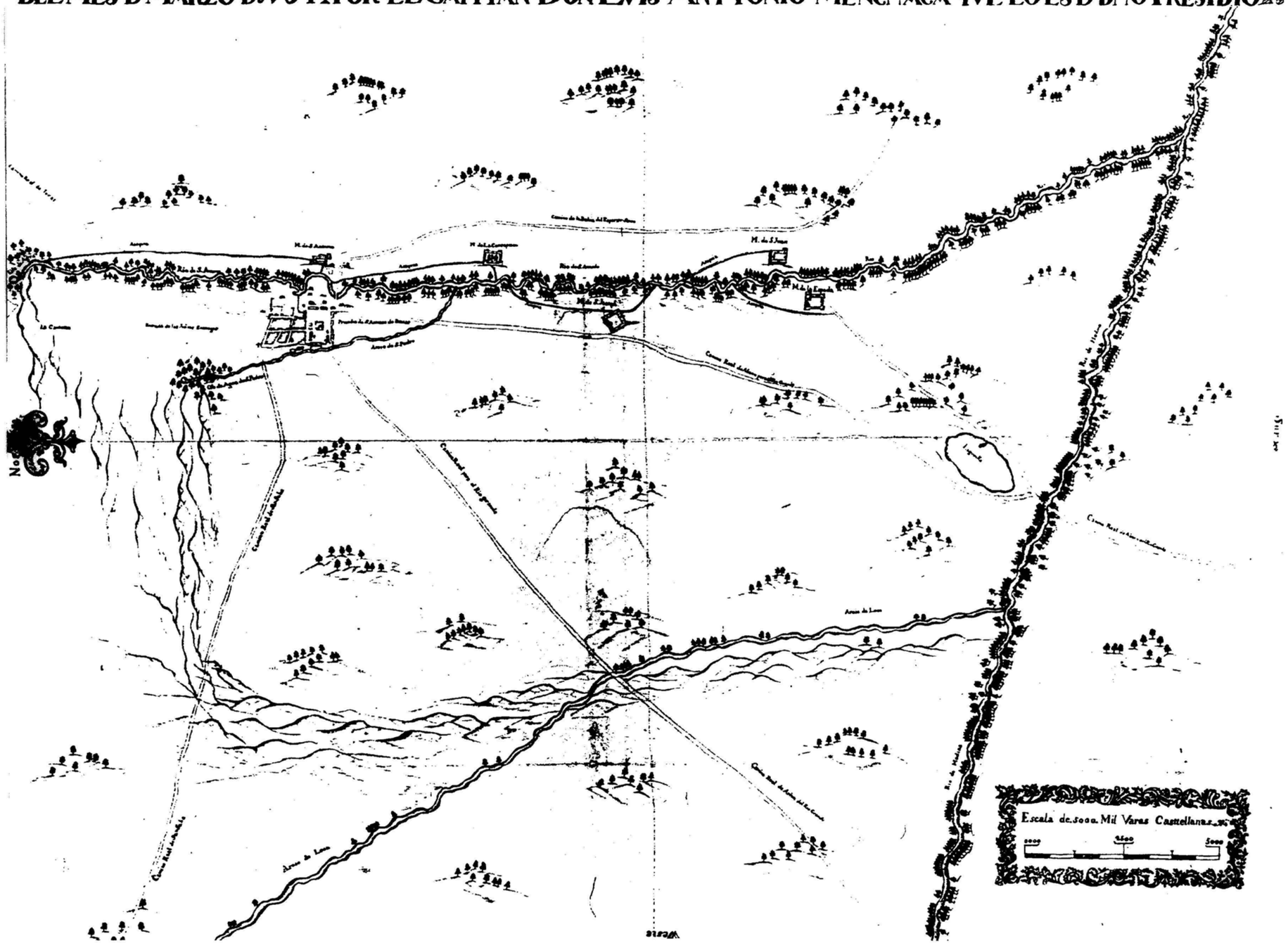
At its greatest extent during the colonial period, the mission landscape dominated the San Antonio River valley *(Figures 1 and 2)*. Most of the area between the first terrace and the road along banks of the river had been cleared and divided into fields, while trees and brush covered the banks of the river itself and the sides of the road. *Acequias* ran in long lines through the fields, generally paralleling the river. The principal road from San Fernando south through the missions (the line of travel still marked today by Mission Road) began at the river crossing at the Concepción Dam, on the south side of the Horseshoe Bend just east of the town plaza, and ran south beside the main *acequia* for Concepción through the southern fields of Valero. The trees usually mentioned as growing along the roads were junipers, cottonwoods, walnuts or pecans, mesquites, huisaches, oaks, and live oaks.[50]

The northern part of this road was (and still is) called "Presa," or "Dam," because it crossed the dam of Mission Concepción . This route was described by Fray Juan Morfí in 1778: "We went out at nine, and crossed the river near the villa, and along its banks we directed ourselves to Concepción, where we stopped for a short time without dismounting, and then, continuing our trip, again we crossed the river by a ford more tractable than the first one. We came to an arroyo where a boulder of sandstone sticks out, hard and very good for a millstone. At eleven we came to Mission San José. The road is flat, good under the feet, and enjoyable, going for the most part on the banks of the San Antonio River through a dense forest of thick mesquites, walnuts, oaks, live oaks, white mulberry, wild grapevines and many other trees and different plants; it was filled with various beautiful birds, though because of the unsuitability of the season, we found very few. The wild turkeys roam in flocks of more than one or two hundred. There were squirrels of different species; the most beautiful of them were quite reddish, with a red underside. To one side and the other of the road are the fields of the missions, and in my field of view could be seen a whole multitude of ducks, geese, and cranes, at which I marveled in those just-harvested fields, and I do not exaggerate when I say that they covered all of that plain. Many *acequias* crossed these fields, whereby, bringing the water abundantly from the river, they watered an immense area of the land."[51]

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[47]Ibid., fr. 4260.
[48]Fray Juan Agustín Morfí, *Viaje de Indios y Diario del Nuevo Mexico*, second edition, annotated by V. A. Robles (Mexico: Antigua Libreria Robledo de José Porrua e Hijos, 1935), p. 226.
[49]Lopez, "Razon e Ynforme," ff. 2-2v.
[50]Morfí, *Viaje de Indios*, pp. 140-41.
[51]Ibid., pp. 224-25.

MAPA DEL PRESIDIO D SAN ANTONIO D BEXAR. I SVS MISIONES DLA PROVINSIA D TEXAS FHO EN 24. DEL MES D MARZO D 1764. POR EL CAPITAN DON LVIS ANTTONIO MENCHACA QVE LO ES D DHO PRESIDIO

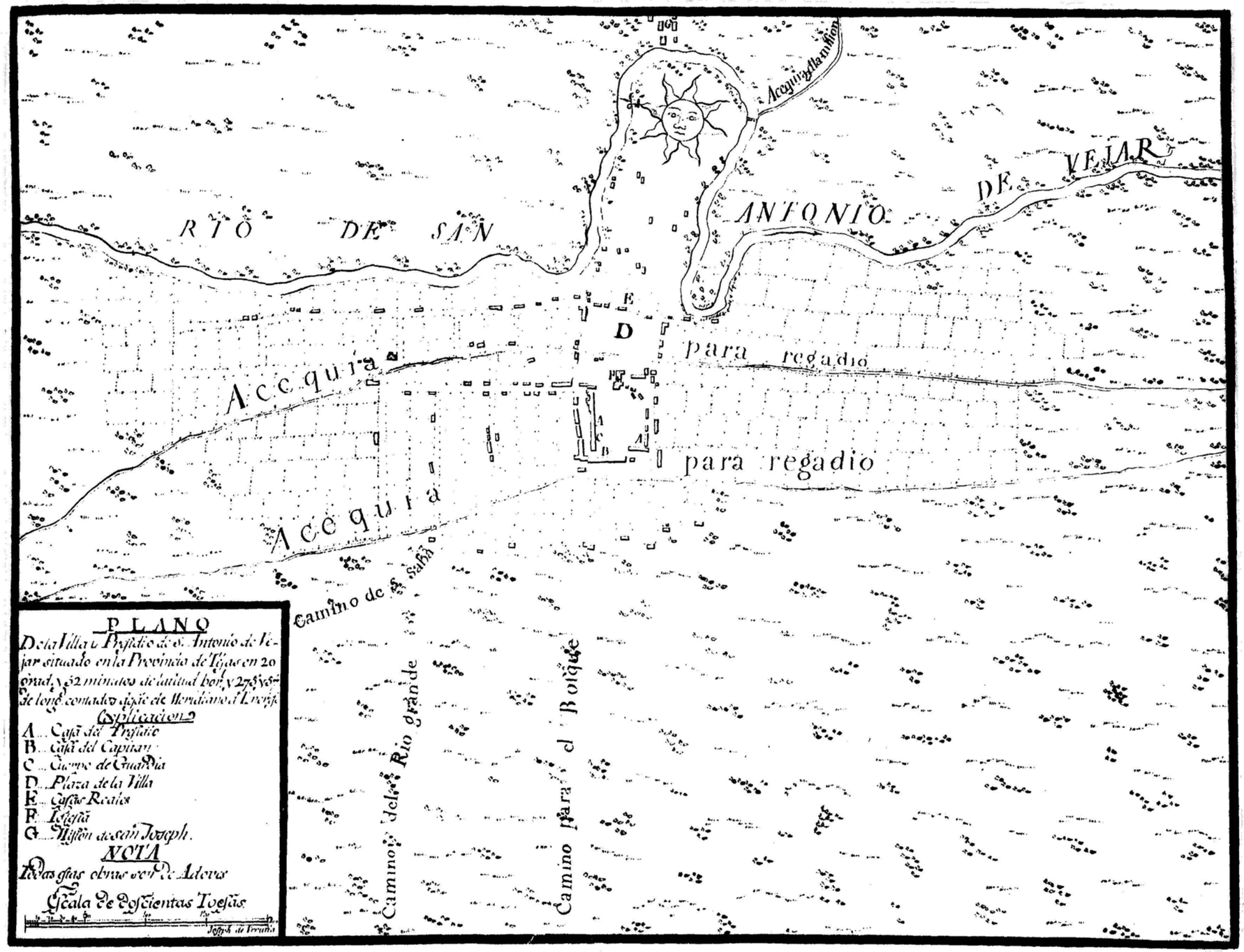


Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and Jake Ivey, October 1994

MENCHACA MAP
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Figure 1. Menchaca Map

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1764 URRUTIA MAP
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and Jake Ivey, October 1994

Figure 2. 1764 Urrutia Map

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About this time, Valero had three farm fields totaling one league in length; all three were fenced with boards or posts, and irrigated with an *acequia* that took its water from just south of Olmos Springs. Branches of the *acequia* led the water throughout the fields.[52] The area west of the mission, between it and the river, was apparently uncultivated, with the *desagüe*, supplying water for the residents of the mission, running south through the mission plaza and then southwest to the river. South of the mission was a large area that had been part of the original plaza of Valero before the enclosing wall was built, and continued to be used as an extension of the plaza; the fields began at the south, east, and north sides of the mission.

Not all of the fields of a mission were planted at any given time; at Valero in December 1772, for example, only one of its three fields was planted. It probably contained about 35 acres, and was growing late maize, and the harvest was expected to be more than 400 *fanegas*, or about 630 bushels.[53]

The road and the Concepción *acequia* crossed the Valero *acequia* on an aqueduct about a quarter-mile south of the *presa*. Upon reaching Concepción's land, the *acequia* was divided at the *compuerte*, or sluice-gate, and was directed to one of the several branches that began here. From the *compuerte*, the road continued south along the west side of the middle *acequia* and past the mission, curving around outside its west wall and continuing south to Morfí's "easy crossing" of the San Antonio River between Concepción and San José.

At its prime, Concepción stood in the center of a well-developed landscape. It was surrounded by a cleared area "on the plain, but protected from the woods that are along the course of the river."[54] The mission had a huge farm; before 1756, the field system may have been more spread out, but was probably concentrated around the mission after its enclosure, and had a total of 133 acres under cultivation in 1772. The acreage was divided into three fields, one of 83 acres, one of 30 acres, and one of about 20 acres. The first two were probably just east of the mission, between it and the outer *acequia*. They were enclosed with board fences, "except one side of the larger field," remarks the inventory.[55] About halfway along the length of these two fields, the Concepción *desagüe* branched off the central *acequia* and ran westward to the mission buildings. The third field, probably south of the mission on the west side of the road, had just been cleared and plowed, and was enclosed only with a fence of branches. The largest field was ready to be harvested, and was expected to produce 600 *fanegas*, or over thirty tons, of corn. The *desagüe* passed westward through the plaza of the mission and on westward to the river, crossed by the road near the southwest corner of the mission just west of the limestone quarry outside its south gate. Just outside the south wall of the mission was a large corral, and immediately west of the mission was a crossing of the San Antonio River that allowed cattle to be driven to the Concepción Pasture just across the river, on the north side of Concepción Creek.[56]

After the "easy crossing," the road ran south along San José's fields, passed just west of the mission, and then continued beside the fields of San José. South of the fields the road again entered woods, and divided a little southwest of Espada Dam. The east branch crossed the San Antonio again and went to

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[52]Benedict Leutenegger, trans. and ed., *Inventory of the Mission San Antonio de Valero: 1772* [December 14, 1772], Office of the State Archeologist, Special Report 23 (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 1977), p. 35.
[53]Ibid.
[54]Lopez, "Razon e Ynforme," ff. 2.
[55]1759 9:1495. 1762 pp. 253, 255. 1772 10:4254. 1778 p. 226.
[56]Saenz de Gumiel, Ramirez, and Ripperda, *Certificac[io]n, e Ymbentario*, roll 10, fr. 4260.

the north gate of San Juan, while the west branch continued south on the west side of the river, beside Espada's *acequia*, to the west gate of Espada. San Juan's main field, about 79 acres in extent, surrounded the mission on the east, south, and west, beginning "at the gates of the Mission," as the inventory says.[57] On the east side of the mission, the field was fenced with boards; on the west, part of the boundary of the field was fenced, while other parts were not because the steep bank of the river formed enough of a boundary. The fields extended south about 1,400 feet. A short distance to the north of the mission was a second, smaller field of about 17 acres.[58] From San Juan, the road continued east and south along the hilltops east of the main field, probably in thick woods again, and became the river road to the mission of Espiritu Santo and the *presidio* of La Bahia, 100 miles to the southeast.

The western branch of Mission Road continued to Espada. Here, the main field contained 122 acres, but in the 1770s only about 44 acres were actually planted. This field was apparently the north half of the large, oval area of farmland south of the mission, and was being used for corn, cotton, and beans. A smaller field near the mission also grew corn and cotton. In a garden fenced with posts near the mission were eighty-eight fruit trees, plum and two varieties of peach, and a reed-field where reeds for thatching the roofs of some of the mission buildings were grown. Like Concepción and San José, Espada had a large corral complex near the mission.[59] From Espada, a traveler could follow a road southwest to the *Laguna* and the Atascosa Road at Cassin Crossing, or take a less-traveled route south through the field to a crossing of the San Antonio to reach the La Bahia road.

THE SECULARIZATION PERIOD 1794-1860 *(Exhibit I)*

Secularization and Gradual Decline

The mission was partially secularized July 31 to August 1, 1794; that is, the resident Native Americans were determined to be capable of conducting their own lives, and the mission was reduced to the level of a parish church operated by the Franciscans. At the time, there remained only thirty-eight Native Americans, among whom the mission farm was divided. The management of the fields, households, and daily affairs was placed in the hands of the Native Americans. The Indians received the houses in which they lived against the walls of the mission. "The said wall, and various of the houses of the said Indians, need to be repaired because they leak when it rains."[60]

The town council of the *pueblo* of Concepción became the governing body for the settlement, and determined the management and disposition of those lands divided out as the town common lands. Pedro Huizar, a local surveyor and carpenter, surveyed the property and helped divide it into twenty-six individual plats, eight for common lands, sixteen to heads of families, one to Javier Longoria, a Spaniard who had assisted as overseer at the mission and would stay to supervise the farming, and one to Huizar.

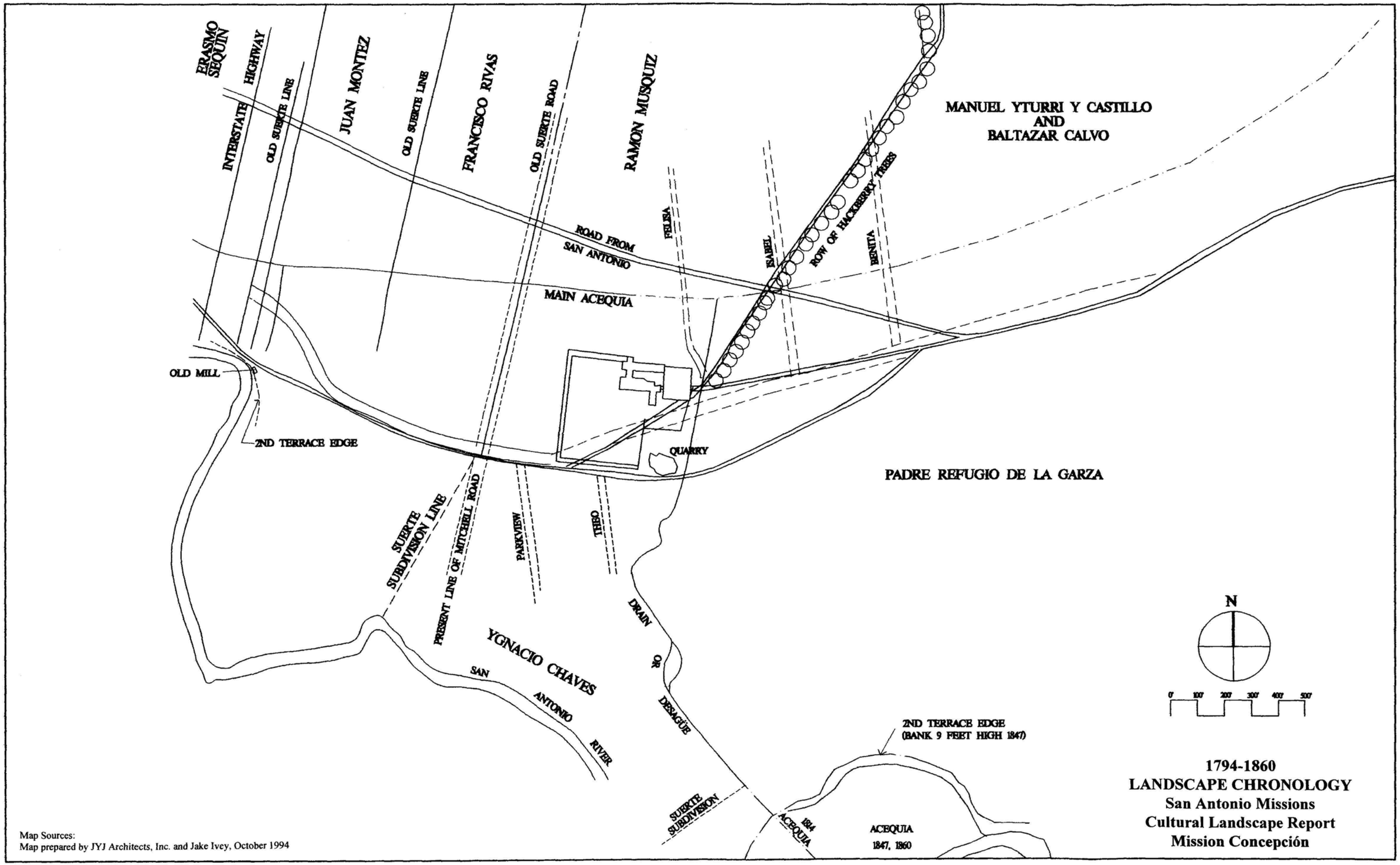
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[57]Fray Juan Joseph Saenz de Gumiel, Fray Pedro Ramirez, and don Juan Maria de Ripperda, Baron de Ripperda, *Certificacion, e Ymbentario de la Mis.n de San Juan Capistrano*, December 17, 1772, Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, Celaya Archives, microfilm roll 10, fr. 4291.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Fr. Juan Joseph Saenz de Gumiel, Fray Pedro Ramirez, and don Juan Maria de Ripperda, Baron de Ripperda, *Certificacion, e Ymbentario de la Mision de la Espada*, December 15, 1772, Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, Celaya Archives, microfilm roll 10, fr. 4222-23.

[60]Governor Manuel Muñoz and Fray José Maria de Jesus Camarena, "Año de 1794. Ynventario de los biences de Temporalidad de La Mission de la Purísima Concepción," August 1, 1794, Bexar County Archives, Mission Records #28, pp. 17-18.



Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and Jake Ivey, October 1994

1794-1860
LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Exhibit I. 1794-1860 Landscape Chronology

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The distribution of the lands of Concepción in 1794 give some information about the size of the area that could be cultivated and the actual area under cultivation in the last decade of the mission under the direct administration of the Franciscans. Eighteen tracts of farmland, each 300 x 200 *varas* (822 x 548 feet) and totaling 186 acres of farmland, were distributed among the eighteen Indian families, and an additional eight tracts, each 400 x 200 *varas* (1096 x 548 feet) and totaling 110 acres, were allotted as common lands for the *pueblo*, for a total of 296 acres of land that could be cultivated.[61]

The cows were kept in one herd to be used by the community in common, and the rest of the livestock was divided among the inhabitants.[62] The *ejido* and ranchlands received little notice in the inventory:

> I gave into the hand of the Governor of the Indians a copy of the titles of the lands that the said mission has possessed, by which act and in the presence of the Spanish Judge they were advised that they were continuing in possession of them, as they were of the assigned *suertes* of the community, and of the specifics of each one. Also the livestock which are in the said lands, with brand and mark of the said mission they should protect as is proper...[63]

The principal ranchlands along the Cibolo were not sold until years later. The fate of the *fundos legales* after 1794 is found only by tracking later landowners in the old mission lands. The Concepción Pasture, the two-*sitio* section of Concepción *ejido* on the west side of the San Antonio River, was broken up and granted to various landowners after partial secularization in 1794. The Concepción *ejido* on the east side of the San Antonio River was divided up along with the lands of Valero and San Juan, among a number of one or two-*sitio* grants, primarily along the Salado.

As a result of these changes, the lands of Concepción passed from the control of a single institution, the church, into the hands of a number of individuals. After secularization, each of the individual families could make decisions that affected only their house, lot, or field. Farming became a matter of personal choice; which fields were planted, and with what, was an individual decision depending upon the subsistence needs of the family owning the particular tract of land, rather than a determination made by the Franciscan management of the mission concerning the use of the fields as a whole; however, these new decisions may have been made with some hints and suggestions from the resident missionary, since most of the families in the mission were accustomed to asking his advice.

The land use pattern continued in this manner for thirty years, until the departure of the Franciscans with final and complete secularization in 1824. The remaining mission lands were divided among residents and any others who wished to purchase land, and the administration of the church was turned over to the pastor of San Fernando church in San Antonio. During the succeeding years that Texas belonged to the Republic of Mexico, the residents of the mission were left to go their own way.

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[61]Muñoz and Camarena, "Ynventario," 1794, p. 14.
[62]Habig, *Alamo Chain*, p. 141-142.
[63]Muñoz and Camarena, "Ynventario," 1794.

Post-Secularization Decline: 1811-1836

Concepción became a sub-mission of San José soon after 1794, essentially withdrawing the protection of the church from the lives of the inhabitants. The turmoil of the revolutionary period from 1811 to about 1821 caused many changes in the population both of the missions and of the town. The army of Bernardo Gutierrez captured the mission and used it as headquarters during the siege of San Antonio in 1813.[64] In 1809 there were twenty-one Native Americans and thirty-two Spaniards at Concepción, in 1816, there were sixteen Native Americans and twenty Spaniards.[65]

By the time of Mexican Independence in 1821, the Indian quarters had almost entirely collapsed, and the *acequia* system had silted up to uselessness. A few Hispanic families were attempting to dry-farm, with some success; few of the Native American families were left. Some had moved away to San Fernando, while others had intermarried with local Hispanic families. Final secularization in 1823-1824 saw the removal of the missionaries' influence and the transfer of the mission churches to the jurisdiction of the local diocese. This at Concepción amounted to total abandonment of the church and sacristy.

Unlike at San José, the complete abandonment and collapse of the Indian quarters at Concepción left no occupants in the mission, and no buildings to be divided and sold. The north and east walls of the mission compound and the adjacent field to the east were sold to Ramon Musquiz in 1824, along with the *convento* on the south side of the church. The west wall line was sold to Ignacio Chavez in 1823, as part of the fields west of the mission. Father Refugio de la Garza, a local clergyman, purchased the south row as part of the fields to the southwest, in 1824. In 1823, Manuel Iturri Castillo acquired three *suertes* of farmland and the granary at the southeast corner of the mission.[66] *(Figure 3)*

Republic through Statehood: 1837-1858

About the time the situation had quieted down at Mission Concepción, the Texas Revolution brought more problems. The siege of Béxar and the Battle of the Alamo caused a general exodus among the more influential families of the town. Ramon Musquiz left the country and most of the other landowners abandoned their lands.[67] Finding no impediment in this situation, the Republic began to grant these lands to still another group of later settlers. Before long, lawsuits began over the ownership of these lands, especially as they gained in value due to the sudden interest of developers in the area. In one such suit, Asa Mitchell, who had bought four large plots from Musquiz after the latter had left the country, plus the heirs and families of a number of the original 1823-1824 grantees, brought suit to retain ownership of their land which had inadvertently been sold to a developer who was poised to lay out lots in the area. It was not until 1853 that the suit

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[64]Habig, *Alamo Chain*, p. 144.
[65]Ibid., p. 143.
[66]James E. Ivey, "Excavations at Mission Concepción," pp. 67-69, in "Archeological Investigations at Mission Concepción and Mission Parkway," Center for Archaeological Research, the University of Texas at San Antonio, Archaeological Survey Report no 114, 1982. Manuscript on file at the Division of History, Southwest Regional Office, National Park Service.
[67]San Antonio Abstract Company:19.

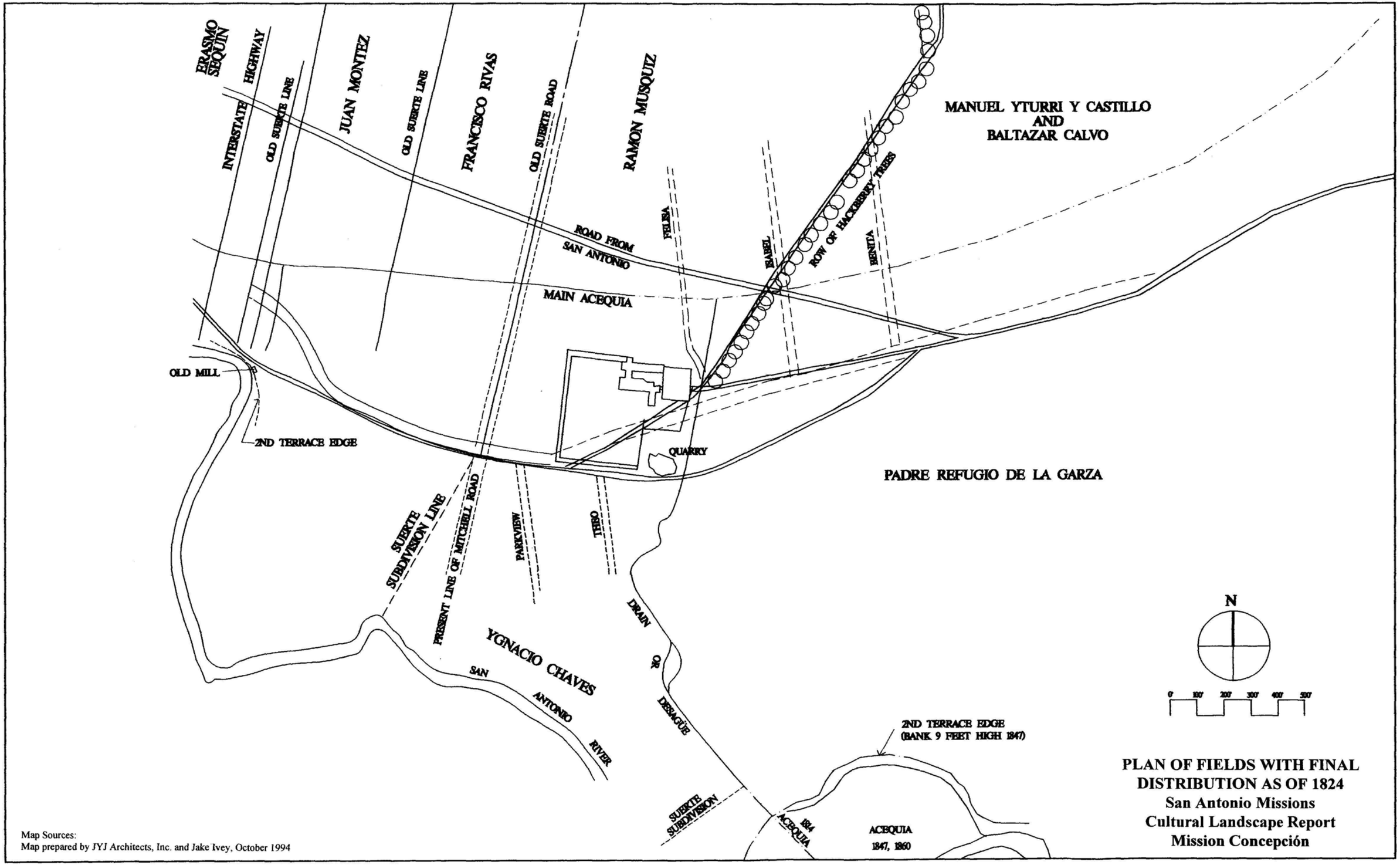


Figure 3. Plan of Fields with Final Distribution as of 1824

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was settled and the families regained their titles.[68] Soon afterward, Mitchell himself quietly acquired the rest of Musquiz' and Iturri y Castillo's land in the area.[69]

Meanwhile, visitors to the area began to decry the sad state of the buildings at Concepción. It is possible to trace the decline of the mission in these successive descriptions. In 1831:

> At Concepción, however, we found a large church, with a strong and high wall enclosing a square plat of ground of considerable extent, with a number of buildings of some size, all constructed in a substantial manner of stone, and in quite good repair.[70]

As early as 1840, the Commissioners' Court appointed a committee to coordinate the sale of "public rock" at Concepción, exempting rubble from the church.[71] Perhaps this explains what happened to the perimeter wall, which is not mentioned again in travelers' descriptions.

Visitors in the 1840s were primarily interested in the church, although one mentions that many of the rooms of the convento are still used for various purposes, including stables.[72] Another visitor in 1846 remarked that the interior of the church was darkened by bats, which is confirmed by a detailed description of two feet of bat excrement on the floor and a stench so bad that the building could not be used.[73] By 1854, cattle were being kept in the church.[74] A painting by Theodore Gentilz done *circa* 1848 shows how overgrown with trees and brush the area around the church and *convento* had become by this time.[75]

A visitor to San Antonio in 1849 observed that the city was surrounded by thickets of mesquite, ten to twelve feet high.[76] The road to Concepción crossed a wooded plain, densely covered with mesquite, and the previously cultivated farmlands were now "a complete wilderness". Until 1869-70, descriptions of Mission Concepción are based on literary and artistic accounts, not photography. Though this new technique was introduced in San Antonio as early as 1849, the first known photo of a mission was not taken until 1859 (William DeRyee's picture of Mission San José), and the earliest identified photograph of Mission Concepción is dated 1869.[77]

Artist Hermann Lungkwitz (1813-1891) completed views of Concepción in about 1855 and 1857. The first is a lithographic drawing of the mission's south side which appeared in Lungkwitz's *circa* 1855 work, "San Antonio de Béxar" *(Figure 4)*. That drawing shows grasses and a variety of

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[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid.:23; Bexar County Deed Records A2:77, Bexar County Courthouse, San Antonio, Texas.

[70]A Visit to Texas in 1831:169.

[71]Felix D. Almaraz, Jr., *The San Antonio Missions and Their System of Land Tenure* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), p. 33. 1982:33.

[72]D.R. Wood, "A Journal of Travels Out West [1846]," Joseph McKnight, ed. *El Campanario*, 1982, 13(3):12. 1982:12.

[73]Anonymous, "Notes from My Knapsack," *Putnam Monthly* 1854, 3(14):176; Samuel Chamberlain, *My Confession* (New York: Time, Inc., 1956), pp. 43-44.

[74]John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents* (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1854), p. 44.

[75]Dorothy S. Kendall, *Gentilz, Artist of the Old Southwest* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), p. 71.

[76]Environmental and Cultural Services Corporation, *Form and Environment: Historical and Cultural Landscape Study of the San Antonio Missions*, 1982, pp. 196-197; manuscript on file at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

[77]There is also an early known photograph of Mission Espada.

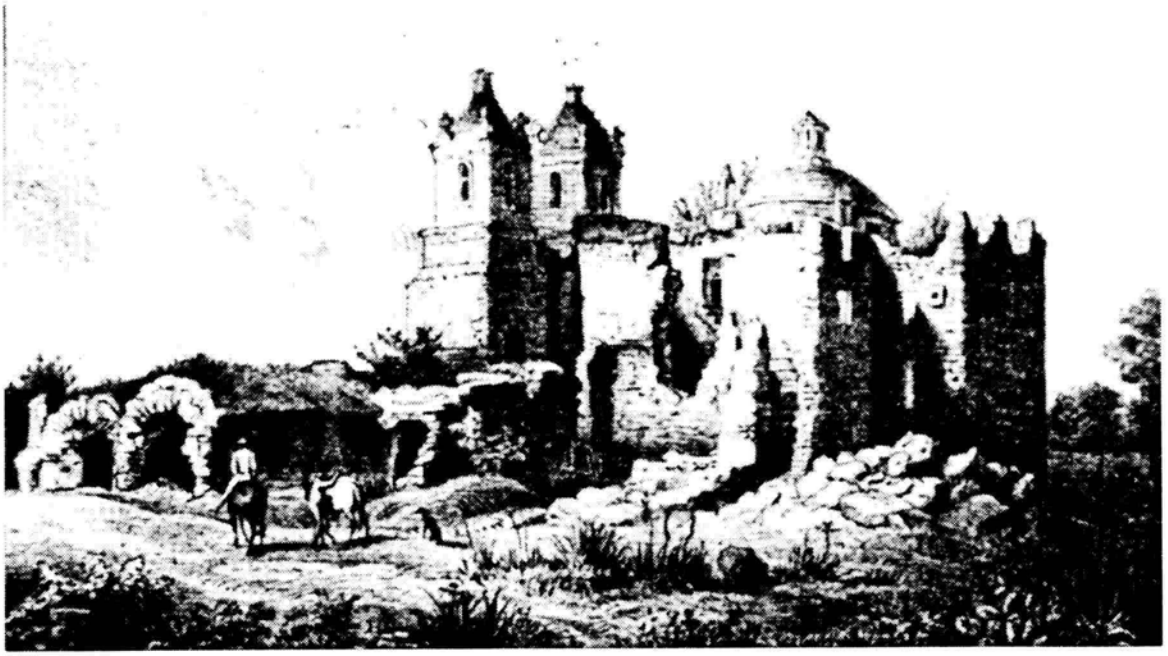


Figure 4. This drawing of Mission Concepción by Hermann Lungkwitz, circa 1850, shows agave, yucca, and a variety of cacti growing near the ruins.



Figure 5. An 1857 oil painting of Mission Concepción by Hermann Lungkwitz shows the convento in ruins.

cacti growing near the ruins. Lungkwitz's second work is an 1857 oil painting which shows the *convento* in ruins *(Figure 5)*. The courtyard has no vegetation of consequence and trees can be seen both north and south of the church. A road enters from the southwest and runs to the front of the church. Though Lungkwitz was noted for his accuracy, further investigation is necessary to determine if these renditions illustrate actual conditions or simply the artist's vision.

About the time that Lungkwitz's lithograph of Concepción was published, the Brothers of the Society of Mary were given use of the mission's lands by Bishop John M. Odin. In 1852, Bishop Odin, who was committed to using educational facilities to advance the Catholic Church in San Antonio, brought the Brothers of the Society of Mary to the city from France. They established St. Mary's School in downtown San Antonio, and soon needed additional income to support the institution. Brother Andrew M. Edel, the first principal of the new school, proposed to Odin that a farm would help the Marianists sustain their new school, and the Marianists were given use of the farmlands of Mission Concepción.[78]

Four years later, when the Provincial Superior of the Marianists expressed dissatisfaction with the San Antonio school, Bishop Odin offered the Marianists title to the school property and the buildings and lands of Mission Concepción. He stated that "if the soil be well cultivated, more corn and vegetables could be raised than a large community could consume."[79] The contract between the Bishop and the Marianists was signed on September 8, 1859. The Marianists would operate St. Mary's School in exchange for title to the properties.

THE REDISCOVERY PERIOD 1860-1911 *(Exhibit J)*

Subsequent to this agreement, the Marianists improved the mission land, added to it, and used the resulting farm to raise produce for the school. The Marianists also began to restore the mission church after signing their contract in 1859.[80] They celebrated the completion of their work on May 28, 1861. Brother Edel described the students' procession from St. Mary's School to the church and the mass and picnic that were held there. "It was a joy and pleasure for all. Father Faure intends to say mass there from time to time on Thursdays. We will probably go there next Thursday with the students."[81]

Candidates for the Brothers of the Society of Mary were trained at Mission Concepción until 1866, and from 1866 until 1896, Brother Edel and his assistants remained at the mission to operate the farm. The lands were subsequently leased to various farmers, though the Marianists retained control of the church. Boarding students from St. Mary's school spent part of the summer at the mission where they were able to hunt, fish and swim.[82]

The first known photograph of Concepción was apparently taken *circa* 1869 shortly after the Marianists stopped training their candidates there. It is attributed to A.F. Dignowity, and documents the *acequia* cutting across the mission compound diagonally. The grounds immediately surrounding the mission appear well kept, and vegetation is limited to trees along the *acequia* and

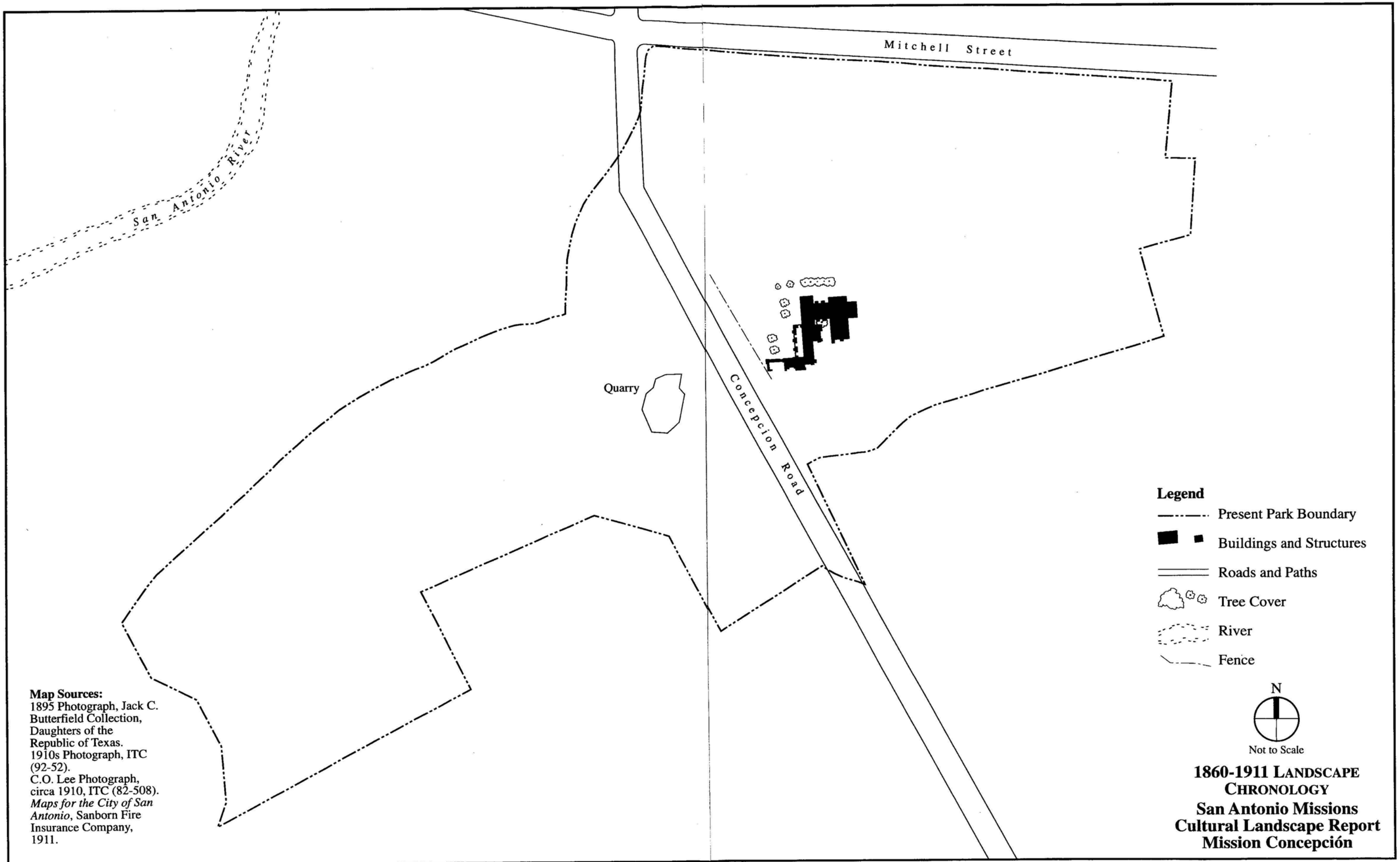
[78]Joseph W. Schmitz, *Mission Concepción* (Waco: Texian Press, 1965), 25-27.
[79]Ibid., 26.
[80]Ibid., 27.
[81]Ibid.
[82]Ibid., 28.



Figure 6. A circa 1870 photograph of the south side of the mission compound illustrates the stabilization efforts of the Brothers of Mary, which concentrated on the Father President's office (note the tin roof) and the other rooms directly next to the church.



Figure 7. This painting by Theodore Gentilz, circa 1875, shows the area around the church overgrown with trees and brush. (From the Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo)



Map Sources:
1895 Photograph, Jack C. Butterfield Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.
1910s Photograph, ITC (92-52).
C.O. Lee Photograph, circa 1910, ITC (82-508).
Maps for the City of San Antonio, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1911.

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Land and Community Associates, March 1996.

Exhibit J. 1860-1911 Landscape Chronology

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to the north and south of the compound. Unfortunately, this photograph is found in the restricted Shaffer Collection at the D.R.T. Library, and is unable to be reproduced.

Fortunately, the available photographic record begins very shortly with a *circa* 1870 photograph showing the Brothers' stabilization work of 1859-1861 *(Figure 6)*.The western portion of the mission is shown with a crude tin roof, the *convento* window openings appear to be covered, and the well is noticeable. The other buildings apparently have flat roofs that cannot be seen. Little vegetation encroaches on the mission, and trees are seen north of the church. A rail fence separates the compound from the road in the right foreground. A painting by Theodore Gentilz probably dated *circa* 1875, shows the area around the church overgrown with trees and brush *(Figure 7)*.

In a slightly later stereographic photograph (*circa* 1875) showing the full west facade of Concepción, the rail fence continues to define the area in front of the church *(Figure 8)*. No vegetation surrounds the mission, however, there is a gate in the fence leading to an "esplanade" of small trees, staked and apparently newly planted. A stereographic photo by Nicholas Winther of Concepción *circa* 1880 shows the mission grounds in much the same condition *(Figure 9)*.

Written accounts of Concepción during this same period provide a romanticized view of the landscape, though they lack any mention of the *acequia* or description of significant vegetation. Edward King, who visited Concepción in 1875, described the approach to the mission. "I was glad, toward evening, to steal away down the lovely road; past the dense groves and perfumed thickets, along the route which wound among trees and flowers, and fertile fields watered by long canals; past quiet cool yards, in whose shaded seclusion I could catch glimpses of charming cottages and farm-houses, where rosy Germans or lean Americans sat literally under their own 'vine and fig-tree.'"[83]

King further describes the view from the roof of Concepción. "For miles around, the country is naked, save for its straggling growth of mesquite, of cactus, of chaparral; the forest never reasserted itself since the fathers cultivated the fields; and one can very readily trace the ancient limits."[84]

In 1877, shortly after Edward King's visit, San Antonio's first City Directory was published. As early as 1879, the directory includes listings for residents of Mission Concepción. From 1879 until 1898, Michael H. Ross appeared in the directory as "residing at the first mission 2½ miles below the city."[85] Ross is initially listed as a farmer, and later as operating a dairy.

Ross was a tenant when the Catholic Church, after some twenty years, began additional work at Mission Concepción. Right Reverend J.C. Neraz, who succeeded John Odin as Bishop of San Antonio in May 1881, took an active interest in the mission.[86] Though architect Charles Mattoon Brooks, who visited Concepción in 1936, was critical of Neraz's efforts (writing that it consisted mostly of "cleaning out bat guano" and white washing walls), photographs of the period provide evidence of his work on the church and its site.[87]

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[83]Edward King, *The Great South* (Hartford: The American Publishing Company, 1875), 152.
[84]Ibid., 153.
[85]*San Antonio City Directory*, 1879-1898.
[86]Edward W. Heusinger, *A Chronology of Events in San Antonio* (San Antonio: Standard Printing Company, 1951), 41.
[87]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, *Missions of San Antonio: A Historic Structures Report and Administrative History*, by James E. Ivey, Marlys Bush Thurber et al (Washington: GPO, 1984), 7:45



Figure 8. A stereographic photograph of the west facade of Mission Concepción, taken before 1875, shows the rail fence with an entry gate around the front facade of the church, and newly-staked small trees flanking the approach walk inside the fence.



Figure 9. A circa 1880 stereographic photo of Mission Concepción, taken by Nicholas Winther.



Figure 10. Image produced by photographer E.K. Sturdivant, circa 1887, illustrates the mission's southern elevation and a new slat fence that was apparently constructed circa 1887. The photo also indicates that grass is growing on top of the convento walls.



Figure 11. A photograph by Mary E. Jacobson, circa 1889, shows that the convento and the shed have received a new metal hipped roof, and the buildings and grounds appear to be better tended.

Photographer E.K. Sturdivant's cabinet photograph of the mission's southern elevation shows a new slat fence that was apparently erected *circa* 1887 *(Figure 10)*. The western room is completely in ruins, and a small lean-to shed stands inside its walls. Grass grows on top of the *convento* walls. A slightly later photograph by Mary E. Jacobson, *circa* 1889, shows a new metal hipped roof on the *convento* buildings and new roofing on the shed standing within the ruined walls *(Figure 11)*. Small trees remain, but the buildings and grounds appear to be better tended.

This work was celebrated with the rededication of Mission Concepción to Our Lady of Lourdes on May 1, 1887. "It is proposed to make this a place of pilgrimage and services will be held at regular intervals." The newspaper reported that this was the first mass sung at Concepción in more than twenty years.[88]

About 1890, Concepción Road was relocated across the western portion of the old mission compound, however, no record of a land transfer has been located to confirm this.[89] The earlier alignment of "Mission Concepción Road" as it was called is seen on a map adopted by City Council on April 1, 1879, and found in the papers of G. Friesleben in the City Engineer's office *(Figure 12)*. As late as 1887, the original alignment appears on a map documenting the transfer of land immediately south of the mission.[90] The new road alignment through the mission compound is seen on the 1911 Sanborn's map, though the mission does not appear on the map *(Figure 13)*. Guided by archeological investigations, Mission Road was rerouted in 1989-1990 to once again follow roughly its original path.[91]

About the time that Mission Road was rerouted closer to Mission Concepción, local writer William Corner described San Antonio's missions in his 1890 publication *San Antonio de Béxar, A Guide and History*. Corner noted "The chapel up till recently, was in a very neglected state. To Bishop Neraz belongs the credit of having it restored to its present state of cleanliness and comfort."[92] He observed that the mission ruins were being used as storage rooms and stables. Corner, who mapped each of the missions, was only able to indicate a portion of the Concepción foundation on his plan of the mission. "The square of the Mission at this date, can very hardly be devined, but that the Mission [church] was situated in the southeastern corner of a ramparted square is without doubt."[93] The location of the church in relation to the original compound was verified by archeological investigations conducted in 1982 for the NPS.[94]

A *circa* 1890 photo continues to show a barren courtyard with the exception of the well with its wooden surround in approximately the same location as today's stone well *(Figure 14)*.

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[88]*San Antonio Daily Express* 1 May 1887.
[89]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 5-9.
[90]BCDR 54:85.
[91]Joseph H. Labadie, *Archaeological and Historical Investigations for the Mission Road Realignment Project, San Antonio, Texas, Archaeological Survey Report, No. 173* (Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1989), 1-2.
[92]W. Corner, *San Antonio de Bexár: A Guide and History* (San Antonio: Bainbridge and Corner, 1890), 16.
[93]Ibid.
[94]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 5-9.

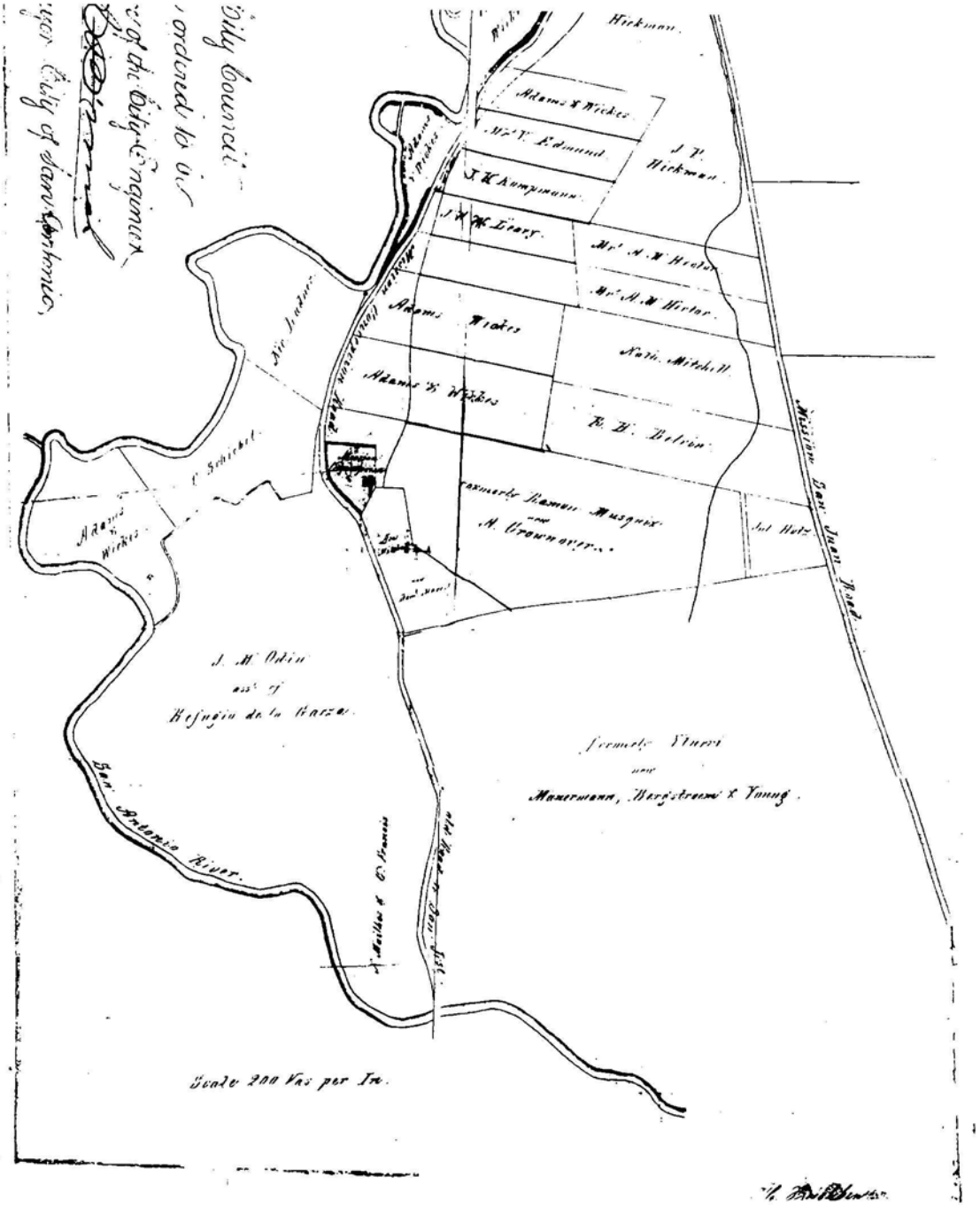


Figure 12. 1879 Friesleben Map

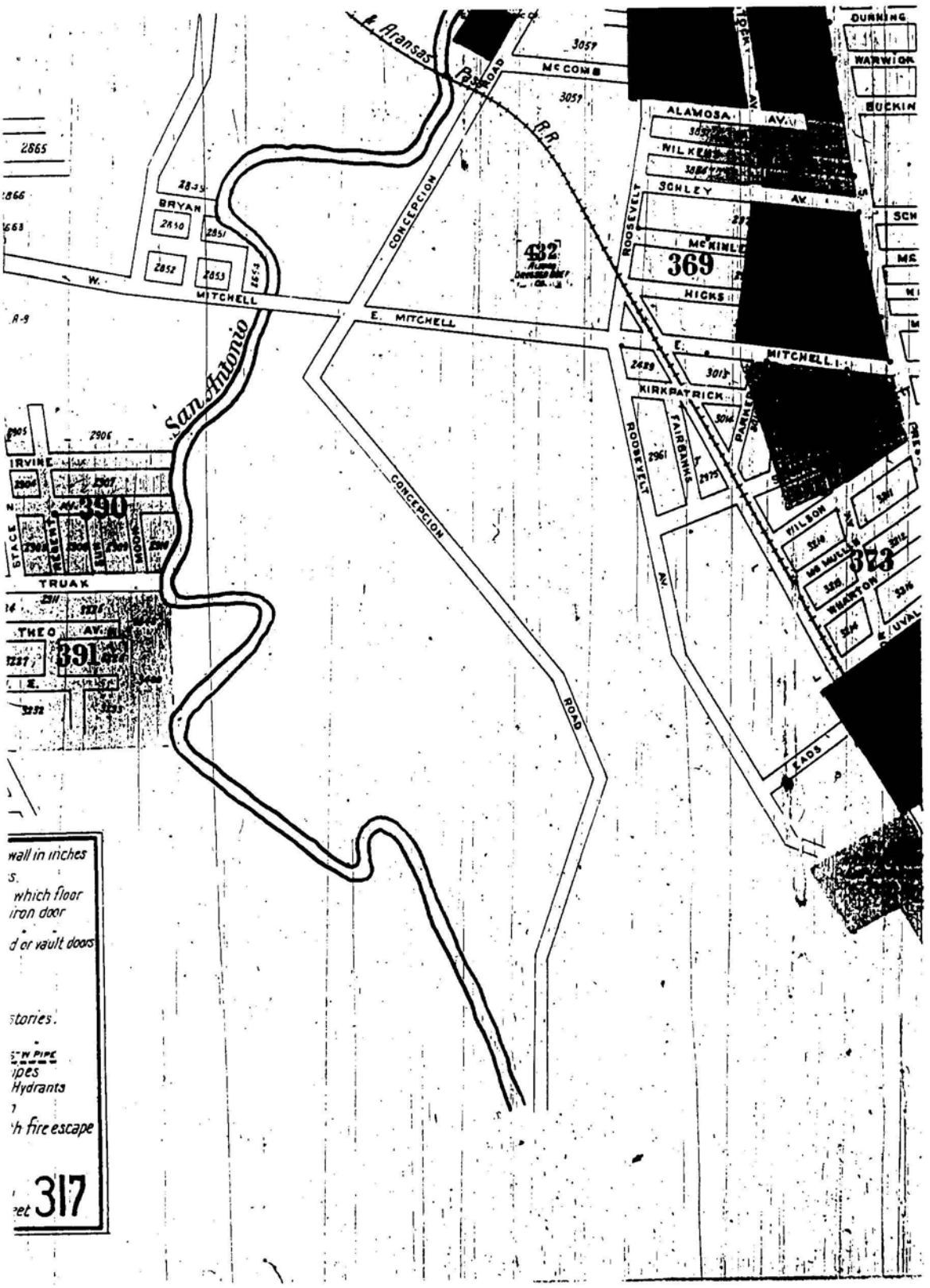


Figure 13. 1911 Sanborn Map

By 1895, other photos show small trees on the perimeter by the slat fence and a large cactus near the fence *(Figures 15, 16)*. A second well can be seen in the courtyard north of the church entrance. Ruins of the *convento* are still surrounded by weeds which also grew on top of the ruined structures.

A 1901 newspaper account describes Concepción as "in the best state of preservation ... of all these structures. ... A family resides in the mission yard in a modern frame structure and partially cares for the sacred place. Cacti ... help to form a roof over the former graneries [*sic*] of the First [mission], giving to the scene a picturesque air found nowhere else in the world."[95] In 1901, the *San Antonio City Directory* indicates that Frederick G. Hack, a florist, lived at Concepción and operated his business there. Hack remained there until 1908.

At the turn of the century, interest in saving the missions increased in San Antonio and Texas. Though the resulting preservation movement had its greatest impact on Mission San José, the other missions also benefited. Many individuals and groups were interested in this cause. Foremost among them was the De Zavala Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. "Attention has been called to the fact that San Antonio's treasured historic spots are about to pass away, and that the old missions which mark the monuments of the grand old town are fast crumbling and falling to pieces. ... Speaking on this subject, one of the Daughters said yesterday: It is to our missions all travelers turn, and it is to the interest of the business men and the citizens of San Antonio to assist in their preservation from mercenary motives if not from higher and better aims."[96]

Work was conducted by the De Zavala Chapter at San José. In 1908, following this private initiative, the Catholic Church again began to consider restoration of the San Antonio missions. The *San Antonio Light* reported that "it was announced that the old missions of San Antonio will be restored. This matter is now under consideration by the missionary fathers of the city and work will begin next month."[97] It was noted that the first work was planned for San Juan and Espada, and that "later the first and second missions will be given attention, but these are in fairly good condition and not much work will be required on them." Earle Hill Callahan, also writing in 1908, described the dilapidated condition of Concepción, but commented that it "is in a better state of preservation than any of the other Missions."[98]

Photographs bear out the relatively good condition of Concepción. A *circa* 1902 photograph shows the site in much the same condition as several years earlier *(Figure 17)*. The only change appears to be several small trees growing inside the fence in front of the church. A 1910 photo by Heber Crocker shows further growth of vegetation including trees and various types of cactus, but there appears to be no formal or planned landscaping *(Figure 18)*. A C.O. Lee picture also taken about 1910 shows the same landscape conditions on the mission's south side *(Figure 19)*.

[95]*San Antonio Light* 16 December 1901.
[96]Ibid., 19 August 1900.
[97]Ibid., 25 September 1908.
[98]Earle Hill Callahan, "The Franciscan Missions of San Antonio," *Out West* 28 (1908): 24-25.



Figure 14. A circa 1890 photograph of Mission Concepción shows a wooden well in approximately the same location as the contemporary stone well.



Figure 15. By 1895, small trees are seen growing outside the church near the wood slat fence. The photo also shows a second well north of the church entrance.



Figure 16. A second circa 1895 photograph of Mission Concepción indicates the extent of the convento ruins; there is still grass growing on top of the ruined structures.



Figure 17. A photograph of Mission Concepción, circa 1902, shows the front facade of the church, the wood slat fencing surrounding the area, and existing vegetation, including small trees, cacti, and grass.



Figure 18. A photograph of the church facade circa 1910s includes the frescoes that adorned the bell towers at one time.



Figure 19. This photograph of Mission Concepción's south elevation, taken circa 1910 by C.O. Lee, indicates the state of the convento ruins and vegetation at the time.

THE PRESERVATION PERIOD 1911-1947 *(Exhibit K)*

The Shaw Era

In March 1911, John William Shaw replaced John Anthony Forest who served as Diocesan Bishop from 1895-1910. Shaw was committed to restoration of San Antonio's missions and to the return of the Franciscans to the missions (they did not return until 1929).[99] In 1913, Bishop Shaw proceeded with restoration work at Concepción including plastering, roof work, and installation of a brick floor. His efforts culminated in another "reopening" of the mission on May 28, 1913 immediately followed laying of the cornerstone of St. Peter's and John's Orphanage across the road.[100]

Shaw was equally committed to the protection of Mission Concepción by land acquisition. Writing to Fr. Benedict Schmidt of the Franciscan Order, he urged that "some lots adjoining the land immediately around the First Mission" be acquired "so as to protect yourselves and the Mission from possibly objectionable neighbours as on the side near these lots there is only a very narrow tract of land belonging to the Mission."[101] Bishop Shaw was able to acquire two tracts of land contiguous to the mission in 1914. These included a house and lot on the south side of Mitchell between Concepción Road and Roosevelt Avenue (later the site of St. John's Seminary) from Mr. Habrecht and a house and land called "St Peter's Orphanage Farm" west of the mission (later St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home) from Joe Bianchi.[102] By acquiring this property, the diocese consolidated the original mission compound. Shaw also successfully negotiated with the Brothers of the Society of Mary to relinquish their lease on Concepción to the Bishop for ten dollars in July 1911.[103]

Shaw's work at Concepción is evidenced in two *circa* 1915 photographs that show a dramatic difference in the landscape *(Figures 20, 21)*. The slat fence has been replaced by a cedar post and wire loop fence separating the mission compound from the still unpaved road. The well is now surrounded by a stone enclosure rather than the earlier frame structure. Beds defined by wood edging and small stones contain some plant material in cans, and elephant ears are seen growing in one area. The remainder of the courtyard is an open area with vegetation limited to a few small trees and a single palm. The courtyard appears to be hard-packed earth. During this period, from 1915 until 1919, Hermann Hienering was listed in the *City Directory* as custodian of Mission Concepción.

St. John's Seminary and the Redemptorist Period

Like his predecessors, Bishop Arthur Jerome Drossaerts, who replaced Bishop Shaw in 1918, continued work on the missions. Realizing a dream expressed by Bishop Shaw in 1911, an ecclesiastical seminary for the diocese was constructed in 1920.[104] St. John's Seminary was built in the northeast quadrant of the mission's colonial compound and represented a major alteration to the Concepción site. It was dedicated on November 25, 1920.

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[99]Francis J. Furey, *Archdiocese of San Antonio 1874-1974* (San Antonio: Schneider Printing Company, 1974), 21-27.
[100]*San Antonio Light* 28 May 1913.
[101]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 6-5.
[102]Ibid., 6-7.
[103]BCDR 374:110-111.
[104]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 6-6.



Figure 20. This photograph, circa 1915, illustrates evidence of the restoration work begun on Mission Concepción in 1913, including the replacement of the slat fence with a post and wire fence, a stone enclosure around the well, and planting beds defined by wood edging and stones.

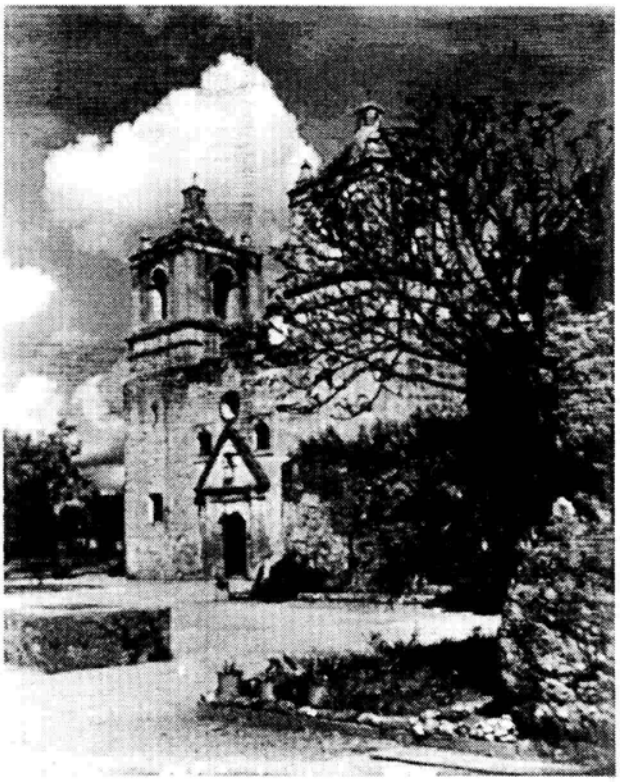


Figure 21. A second photograph circa 1915 shows the restoration work at Mission Concepción in more detail. The compound exterior consists of hard-packed earth.

Mitchell Street

San Antonio River

Drive

Parkview

Avenue

Theo

East

Mission

Road

Kalteyer Street

Felisa Street

Isabel Street

St. John's Seminary

Mission Concepción

St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home

Concepción Park

Graphic Legend

- Park Boundary
- Buildings and Structures
- Roads, Paths, and Parking
- Tree Cover
- Fence
- River
- Rock Outcropping or Stone Landscape Feature

N

Not to Scale

Map Sources
Tobin Surveys aerial photograph, 1939, Portion of 7365-155; and aerial photographs *circa* 1955, *San Antonio Light* Collection, Institute of Texan Cultures (L-3644).

1911-1947 LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Map prepared by Land and Community Associates, October 1994

Exhibit K. 1911-1947 Landscape Chronology

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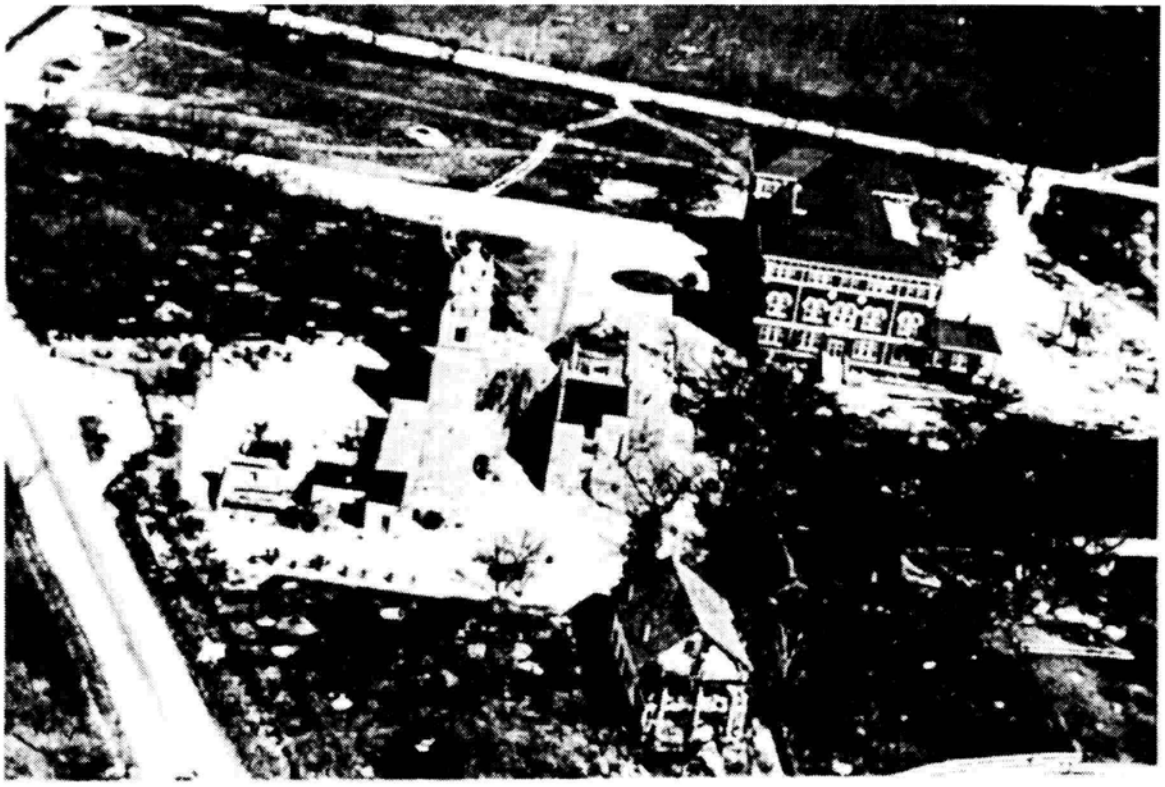


Figure 22. In 1920, St. John's Seminary was constructed behind Mission Concepción to the northeast. This structure, seen in a circa 1925 aerial photograph, constituted a major alteration to the site.



Figure 23. This mid-1920s view of the church from Mission Road indicates a pull-off that provides access to the church, and shows that palms and banana plants have been incorporated in the plantings by this time. The seminary is visible in the background. (Daughters of the Republic of Texas)

The seminary's impact on Concepción can be seen in both a *circa* 1925 aerial photograph, and a view looking northeast from Mission Road *(Figures 22, 23)*. In the aerial view, the seminary and its approach is visible at the top of the picture. A slat fence separates the seminary and mission from the surrounding neighborhood, and a house south of the mission is being demolished. There is a pullout on the road in front of Concepción that appears to provide access to the mission. Landscaping is limited, with only a few trees around the perimeter of the compound. In the photograph taken from the road, the pullout is also visible, and the visual impact of the seminary in the left background is apparent. Palms and banana plants have been incorporated in the landscaping, indicating that the photograph also dates to the mid-1920s.

In 1922, Drossaerts placed the missions under the care of the Redemptorist Fathers, a missionary order which had worked in San Antonio since 1911.[105] During the Redemptorists' era, many changes took place on the mission grounds and to the surrounding areas, including the introduction of palm trees and various exotic plants.[106] A photograph in architect Atleigh B. Ayres 1926 book, *Mexican Architecture*, and other contemporary photographs show palm trees growing in stone-lined beds and tall cacti in planting areas adjacent to the *convento (Figures 24, 25, 26)*.

By the 1920s Concepción was also affected by the new residential neighborhoods that developed immediately east of the mission. In 1909, when local bookseller Nic Tengg published his "Map of the City of San Antonio," there were no major intrusions on the mission *(Figure 27)*. Very shortly, in 1910, the Mission Park Addition was platted east of Concepción. The land south of this addition, though undeveloped, was owned by the Riverside Land Company. Tengg's 1924 map showed the Mission Grove addition platted adjacent to Concepción in February 1922.[107] By 1926, the surroundings of Concepción had changed to such an extent that Pearson Newcomb, in his book *The Alamo City*, described the mission as "... located in what is regarded as San Antonio's close-in residential section. Modern dwellings now surround Mission Concepción and occupy the land once tilled by the converted Indian."[108]

The Franciscans Return to Mission Concepción

After an absence of a century and many years of discussion, the Franciscans returned in 1929 with promises to restore the San Antonio missions. The *San Antonio Evening News* carried the headline "$200,000 is expense estimated for restoration of San Antonio's historic missions as planned by Franciscans."[109]

Photographs taken after 1930 show additional changes to the Concepción site *(Figures 28, 29)*. A *San Antonio Express-News* photograph shows the west side of the church and includes the caption: "the palm trees represent landscaping efforts by the Fathers and students stationed at St. John's Seminary." The palms are probably those dating to the 1920s. In the foreground, there appears to be a board walkway, and small, newly-planted trees are seen behind a row of palms in the compound. The *convento* still has vegetation growing on top of its walls, and has not been re-

[105]Furey, 25-27.
[106]Anne A. Fox, *Archaeological Investigation at Mission Concepción, Fall of 1986. Archaeological Survey Report, No. 72* (Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1988), 6.
[107] BCDR 642:44
[108]Pearson Newcomb, *The Alamo City* (San Antonio: Standard Printing Company Press, 1926), 133-34.
[109]*San Antonio Evening News*, 29 April 1929.



Figure 24. A photograph of the church included in a 1926 book entitled Mexican Architecture *shows palm trees and tall cacti growing in planting areas adjacent to the* convento. *(From* Mexican Architecture, *by Atleigh B. Ayres)*



Figure 25. The exotic plants introduced to the site in the 1920s by the Redemptorist Fathers are prominently displayed in this photograph taken through an arch near the church. (Daughters of the Republic of Texas)



Figure 26. This 1920s view through an arch looking toward the convento illustrates the lush, garden-like atmosphere of the plantings during this period. (Daughters of the Republic of Texas)

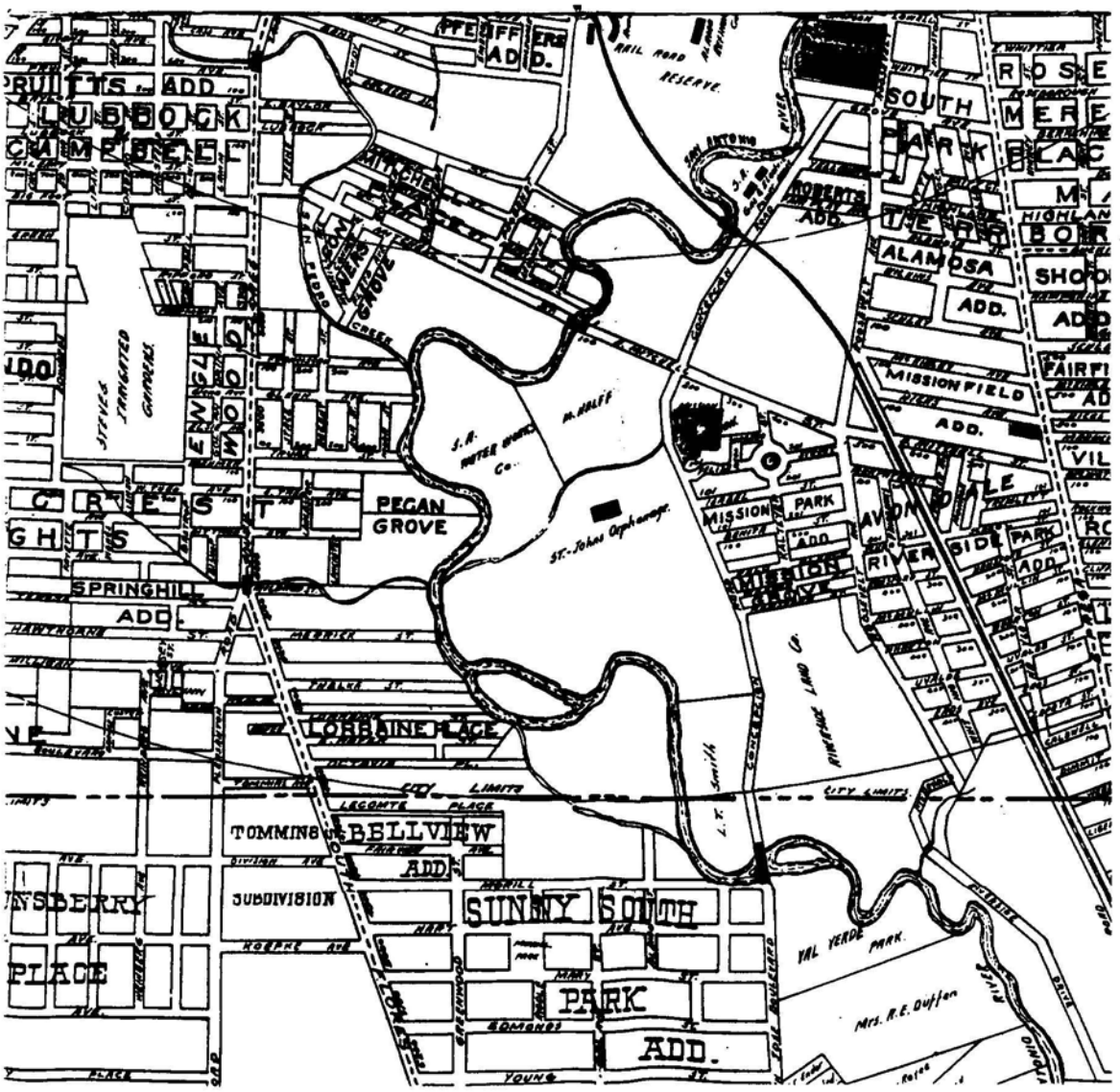


Figure 27. 1924 Nic Tengg Map of the City of San Antonio



Figure 28. A photograph of Mission Concepción, circa 1930, shows the western facade of the church and the line of palm trees planted by the Fathers and students stationed at St. John's Seminary.



Figure 29. This circa 1930 photograph of the mission indicates that many trees had been planted around this time. The young trees are set in protective wood cages.

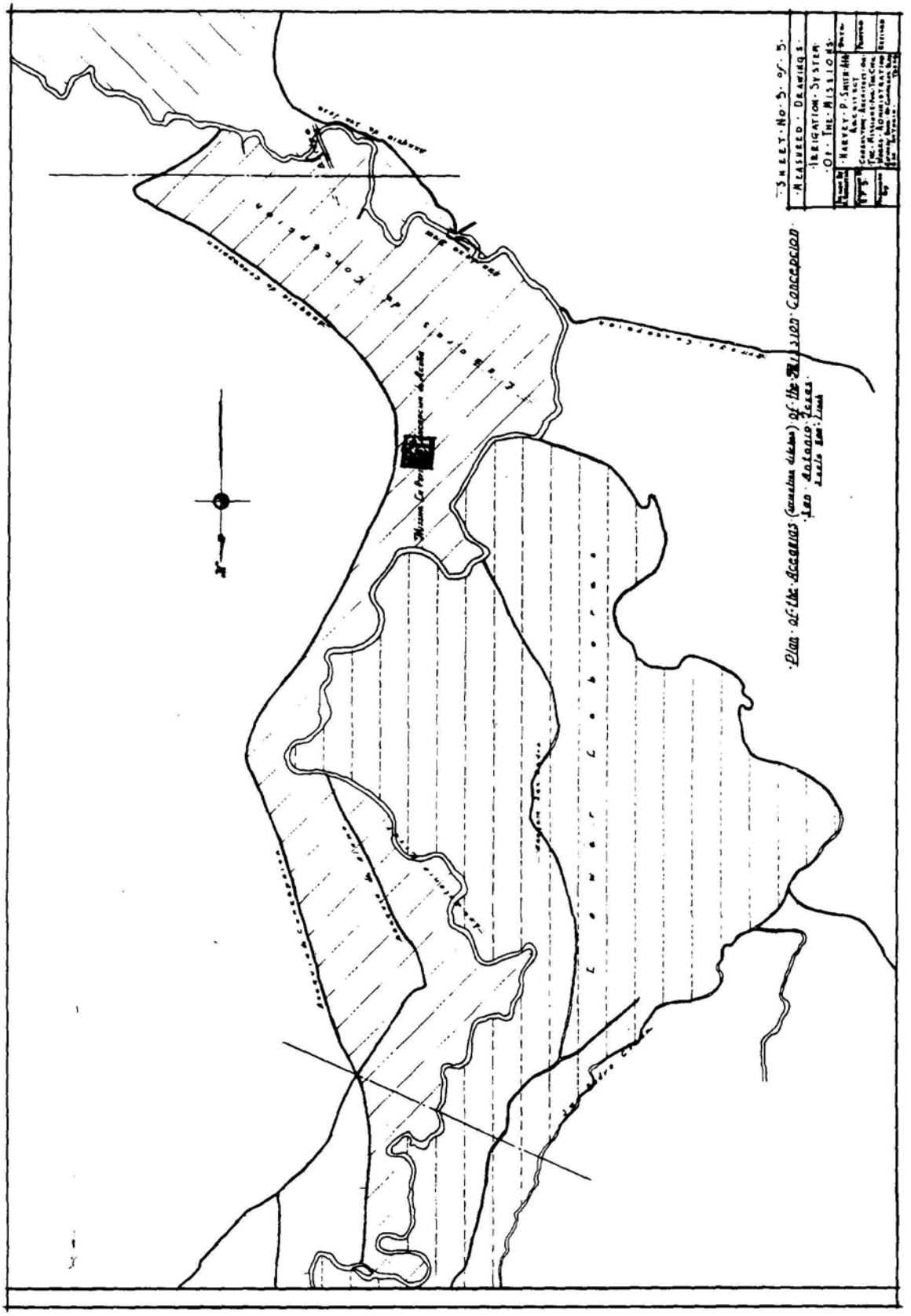


Figure 30. Circa 1936 Measured Drawing, Irrigation System of the Missions, by Harvey P. Smith

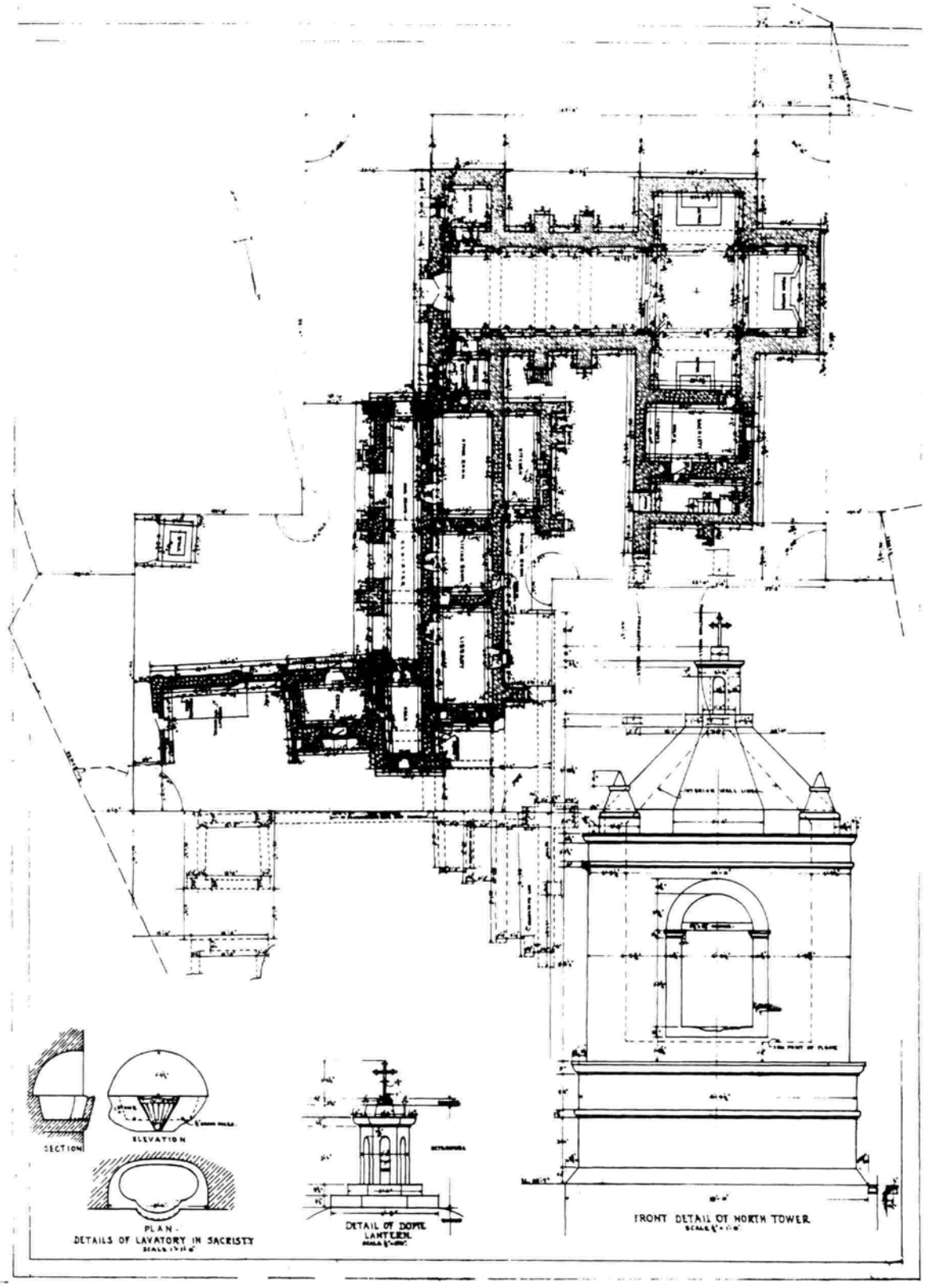


Figure 31. Circa 1936 Measured Drawing of the church, convento, and sacristy, by Harvey P. Smith

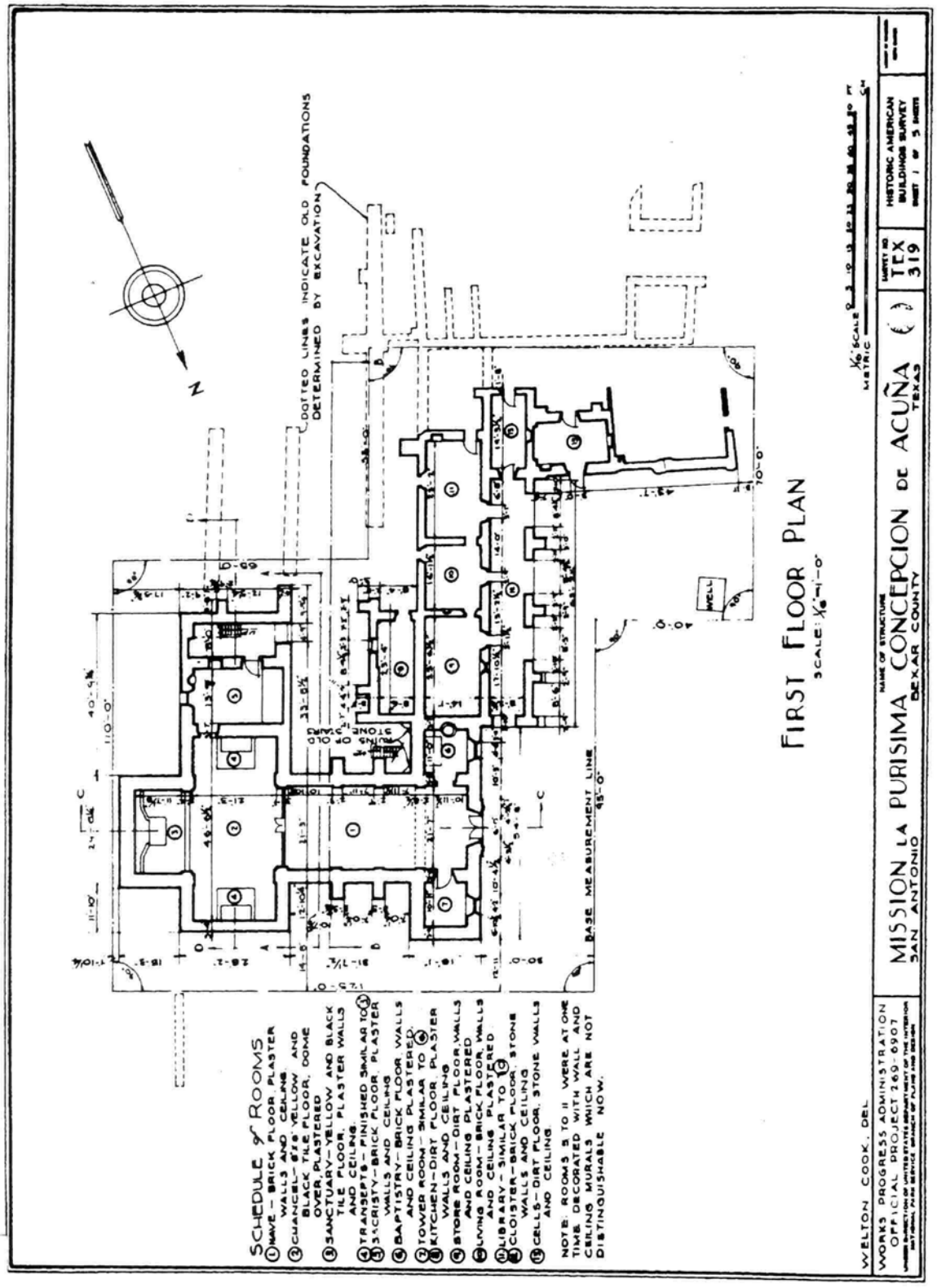


Figure 32. Historic American Building Survey, Mission la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, First Floor Plan, Survey No. TEX-319, 1934



Figure 33. This 1936 image of Mission Concepción was photographed as part of the HABS documentation of the mission sites undertaken during the WPA era. The photograph indicates little vegetation in the area.



Figure 34. Additional 1936 photographs of the church indicate the presence of such landscape features as cacti gardens around the facade of the church.



Figure 35. The area southwest of the church appears to be heavily vegetated in this 1936 HABS photograph.

roofed. Another *circa* 1930 picture taken from the road looking southeast toward the mission shows many small trees with protective cages in the foreground. A rail fence separates the compound from this area, and the *convento* appears to have been re-roofed.

During the Depression, work programs documented the San Antonio missions in drawings and photographs, and extensive restoration work was completed at Mission San José. H.E. Kincaid, who headed the Work Department of the city's Relief Program and later the county's Board of Welfare and Employment, kept a detailed notebook of his work at San José. In a copy of that notebook found in the D.R.T. Library, Kincaid indicated that six draftsmen were working under the direction of architect Harvey P. Smith to make detailed measured drawings of the four missions. Kincaid stated that reconstruction plans would be developed from these drawings. Mission Concepción, designated Works Progress Administration project 269-6907 and Historic American Buildings Survey number TEX-319, was documented in five sheets of drawings including plans and elevations. These drawings (1934) and accompanying photographs (1936), contribute some information about the Concepción site *(Figures 30, 31, and 32)*. Traces of the granary foundation were noted by Harvey P. Smith during WPA excavations, and this is documented in HABS drawings. Bartlett Cocke, Sr., who served as HABS' Deputy District Officer for West Texas, recorded this portion of the Concepción site in an April 1936 photograph *(Figure 33)*. No excavations are evident, and the only apparent vegetation consists of several trees and stone-lined planting beds adjacent to the sacristy. In the late 1940s, a restroom was constructed in this area, damaging these foundations. Today, a mound indicates the approximate outline of the granary foundations.[110]

Official HABS photographs show what appear to be cactus gardens immediately in front of the church to either side of its entrance *(Figures 34, 35)*. The cedar post and wire loop fence continues to separate the compound from the road, and palms, cactus, trees and shrubbery complete the landscaping.

Architect Charles Mattoon Brooks, writing about Concepción in his 1936 history of the Texas missions, stated that "the church proper is the best preserved among all the Texas monuments."[111] Both Brooks' work and HABS drawings designate room uses in the *convento* for the first time, though they appear to be conjectural and not based on the colonial period.[112]

THE URBAN ENCROACHMENT PERIOD 1947-1978 *(Exhibit L)*

In the 1940s, much of the attention and funds for preservation of San Antonio's missions focused on Mission San José. The cooperative agreement for San José's management was signed on May 8, 1941, and the mission was named a National Historic Site. In spite of World War II, the San José Advisory Board, established to advise on the preservation, restoration, reconstruction and administration of the mission, continued to meet. While considerable time and effort was focused on San José, the three other missions received little attention.

Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, who succeeded Archbishop Drossaerts, was committed to restoration of all of the missions, but lacked funds to accomplish his goals. In 1947, he asked for

[110]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 5:9.
[111]Charles Mattoon Brooks, *Texas Missions: Their Romance and Architecture* (Dallas: Dealey and Lowe, 1936), 115.
[112]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 7:46.

restoration estimates for Mission Concepción. Restoration of the "kitchen, refectory and infirmary" at the mission would cost $35,000. An additional $35,000 would be needed for the "cloisters, convent buildings, etc."[113]

Though Lucey accomplished minor repairs at Concepción, San Juan and Espada, his focus during the 1940s, was land acquisition to protect the missions from unwanted urban encroachment. Generally, Concepción was considered well preserved, but Lucey recognized the need for roof repairs, and after extensive consultation on different repair techniques, re-roofing of the church was completed in November 1946, for $2,491.[114] Roof work on the *convento* was then undertaken and completed by mid-March 1947 at a cost of $1,751.[115]

Archbishop Lucey continued to consult Harvey Smith about mission repairs, as well as Rufus A. Walker, a building contractor. An undated report on their inspection of Concepción includes recommendations for wall repair, re-pointing, and drainage.

A restroom was approved by the Archdiocesan Building Board on November 28, 1947 in response to the "large crowds [are] visiting Concepción Mission." It was "the same plan [that has been] presented for the public restrooms at San Fernando Cemetery". The restroom was built at a cost of $1,687, damaging the granary foundation.[116]

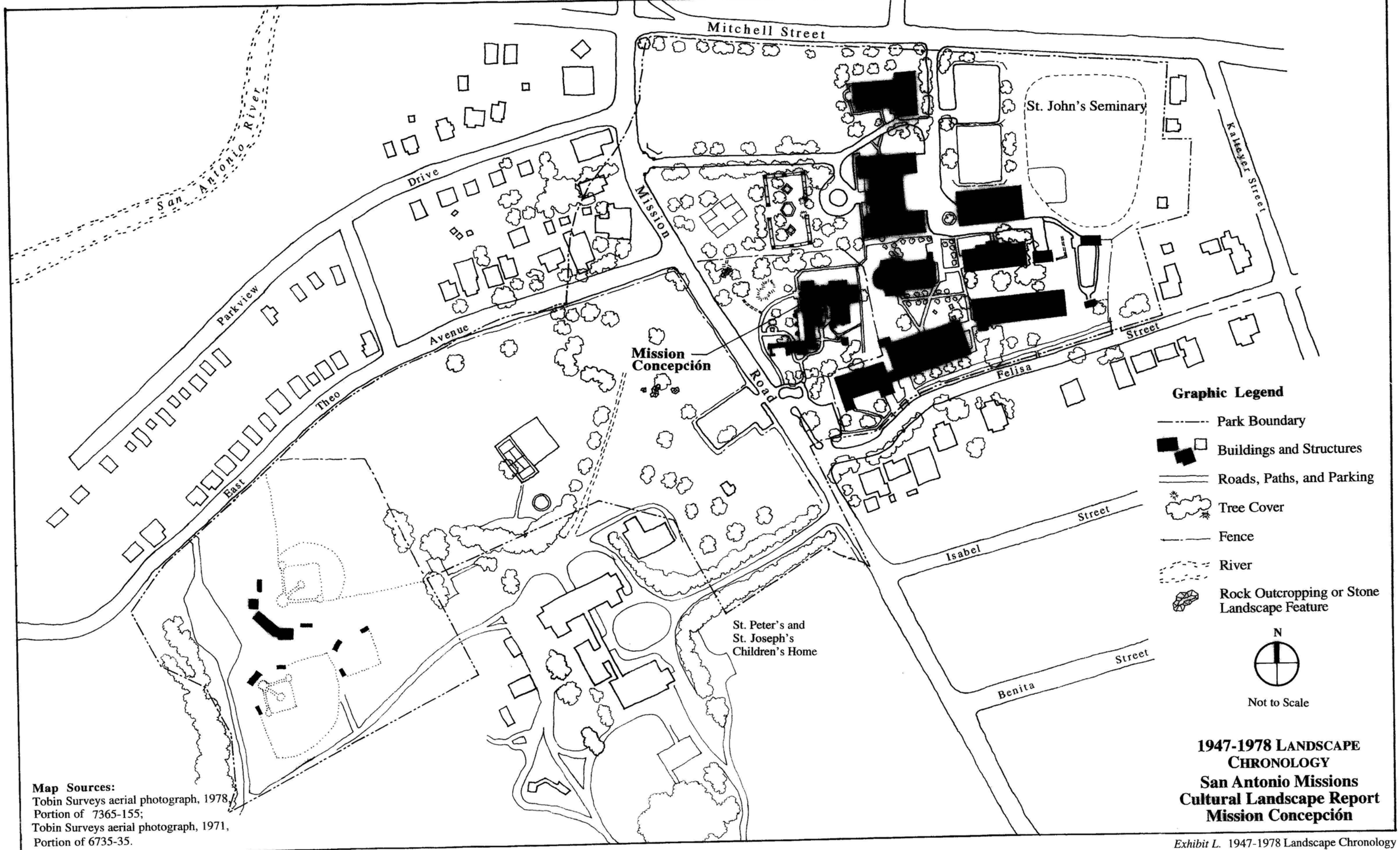
The 1952 Sanborn's map (updated from the base map of 1912), illustrates continuing development in the neighborhoods surrounding Concepción *(Figure 36).*

Mission Stadium was constructed just north of Mitchell Street in 1947, and subsequent aerial photographs taken *circa* 1955 also illustrate greater urban development. A view looking south clearly shows the residential areas both east of Concepción and west across Mission Road *(Figure 37).* A slightly later view looking north shows the new Steves Avenue right-of-way adjacent to the stadium, the amusement park west of the stadium, and residential and commercial development north and west of the mission and seminary *(Figure 38).*

Concurrent with increased neighborhood development, work continued at Concepción in the early 1950s. The west wing, the stairway, and the Father President's office (known locally at that time as the "infirmary") were repaired, and Rufus Walker requested permission to remove "the unsightly red tin roofs that cover the southwest portion of the Mission buildings" to expose the original vaulted roofs.[117] In 1953, the Archdiocese undertook a $10,000 repair program at Concepción that included mounting a new wrought iron cross on top of the church to replace the stone cross reportedly broken in 1875 by boys playing at the mission.[118] A major problem at Concepción continued to be rising damp that was unsuccessfully addressed through repainting and re-plastering.

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[113]Ibid., 8:76.
[114]Ibid., 8:81-82.
[115]Ibid.
[116]Ibid., 8:84.
[117]Ibid., 9:85.
[118]*San Antonio Light,* 28 June 1953.



Map Sources:
Tobin Surveys aerial photograph, 1978,
Portion of 7365-155;
Tobin Surveys aerial photograph, 1971,
Portion of 6735-35.

Map prepared by Land and Community Associates, October 1994

Exhibit L. 1947-1978 Landscape Chronology

472/20914

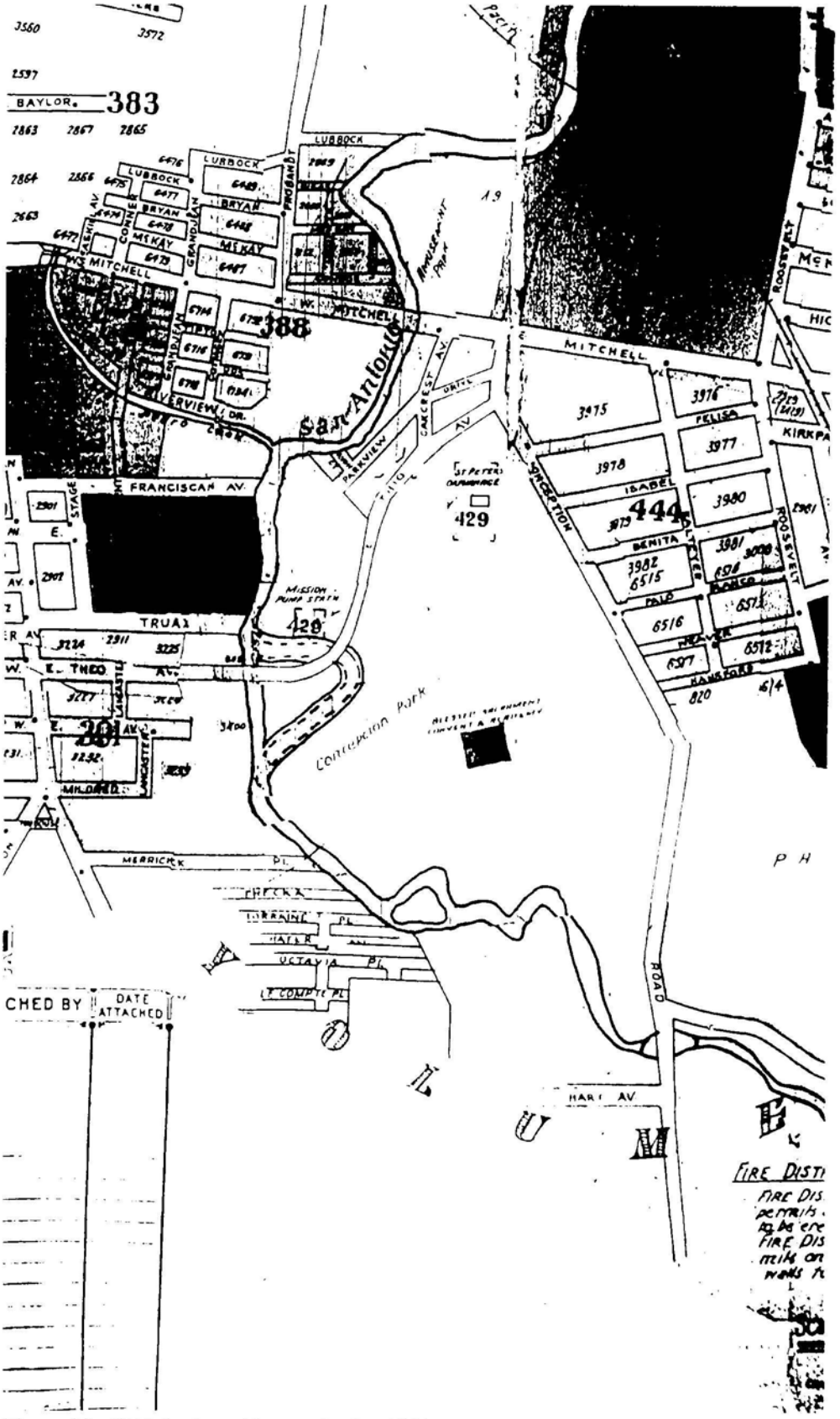


Figure 36. 1912 Sanborn Map, revised to 1951

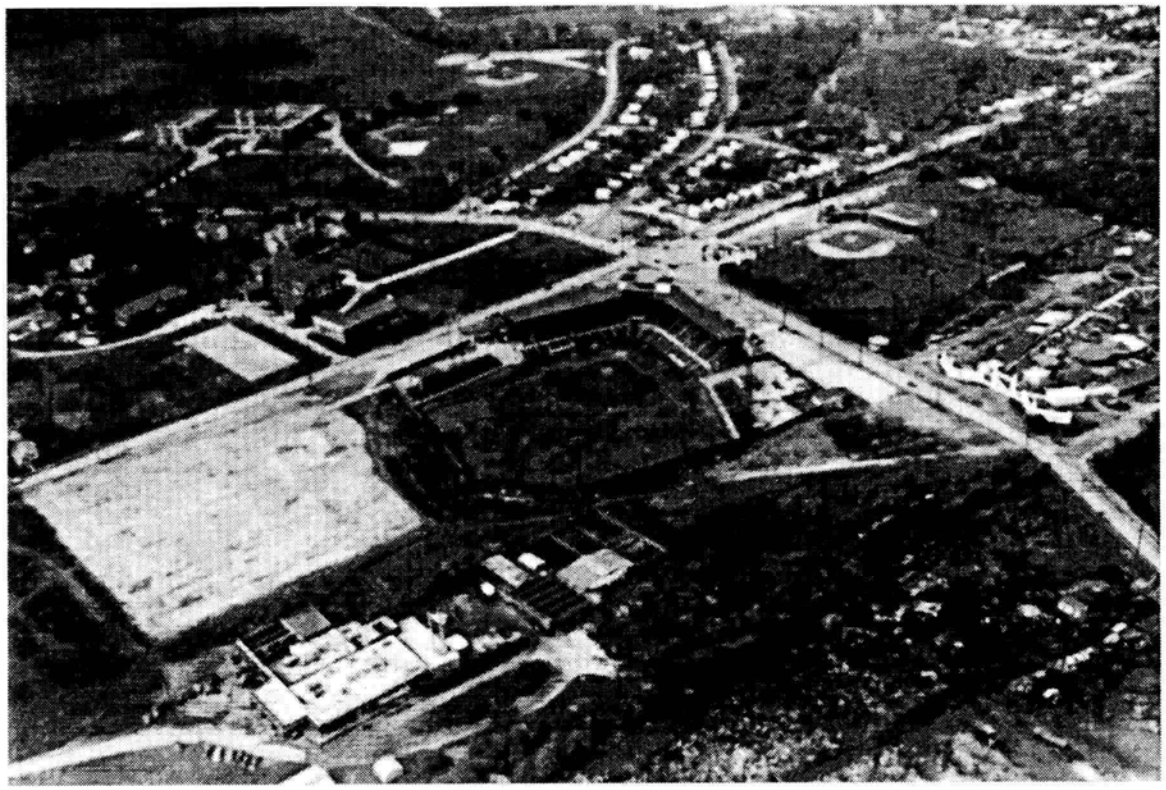


Figure 37. A circa 1955 aerial photograph looking south shows Mission Stadium, constructed in 1947, and other urban encroachment in the vicinity of Mission Concepción. (Institute of Texan Cultures)



Figure 38. A slightly later aerial view looking north shows the new Steves Avenue right-of-way adjacent to Mission Stadium. (Institute of Texan Cultures)

There is little indication of landscape changes at Concepción during this period. Plans in 1956 called for clearing of vegetation and lowering the exterior grade about a foot, as well as installation of stone floors in some rooms. Other minor repairs in 1957 and 1959 included a tiled sidewalk.[119] It was also apparently in the late 1950s that the quarry site was scraped and filled by a priest who was grading the site.

Beginning in the 1960s, Concepción did receive increasingly more attention. In 1969, a HABS survey was conducted in San Antonio by John C. Garner whose documentation included drawings, photographs, and data sheets updating work conducted between 1934 and 1937. In August 1972, Concepción was named a National Historical Landmark, only the second in San Antonio in addition to the Spanish Governor's Palace.[120]

Most concern and attention in the 1960s and 1970s centered on Concepción's buildings rather than its site. Harvey Smith and Rufus Walker made a detailed inspection of Concepción in the spring of 1960, and their recommendations outlined structural work and possible restoration of the mission's interior decorative painting by Ernst Schuchard who had performed similar work at San José. By Spring 1964, $17,000 was spent to install flagstone flooring, complete waterproofing and interior painting, and rewiring the building.[121] Grants from Galveston's Moody Foundation in the early 1970s, helped address the structural needs of San Antonio's missions, including Concepción's ongoing moisture problems and stone deterioration.

In March 1968, the Archdiocesan Building Board approved plans to landscape Mission Concepción at a total cost of about $10,000. Included was a six foot cedar log fence separating the mission from the seminary and convent, regrading of the land at Mission Road and Felisa Street, planting of trees, shrubs and flowers, new tile walks, and asphalt paving of the parking lot.[122]

In 1971 and 1972, archeological projects were conducted at Concepción, testing around the base of the church, between the office and parking lot, and near the quarry on the west side of the mission compound. In 1980, additional archeological investigations were undertaken to determine the size, location, and condition of the mission compound.

Just as with Pyron Avenue at Mission San José in the 1940s, a major concern at Concepción was the rerouting of Mission Road further to the west to consolidate more of the original compound in front of the church. Archaeological excavations of the 1980s were conducted in anticipation of the road's relocation to minimize impact on subsurface resources. Excavations in July 1982, documented remains of a church predating the building constructed beginning in 1735.[123] Prior to realignment of Mission Road, further excavations in October 1988, documented the mission's west wall, as well as a second interior wall.[124]

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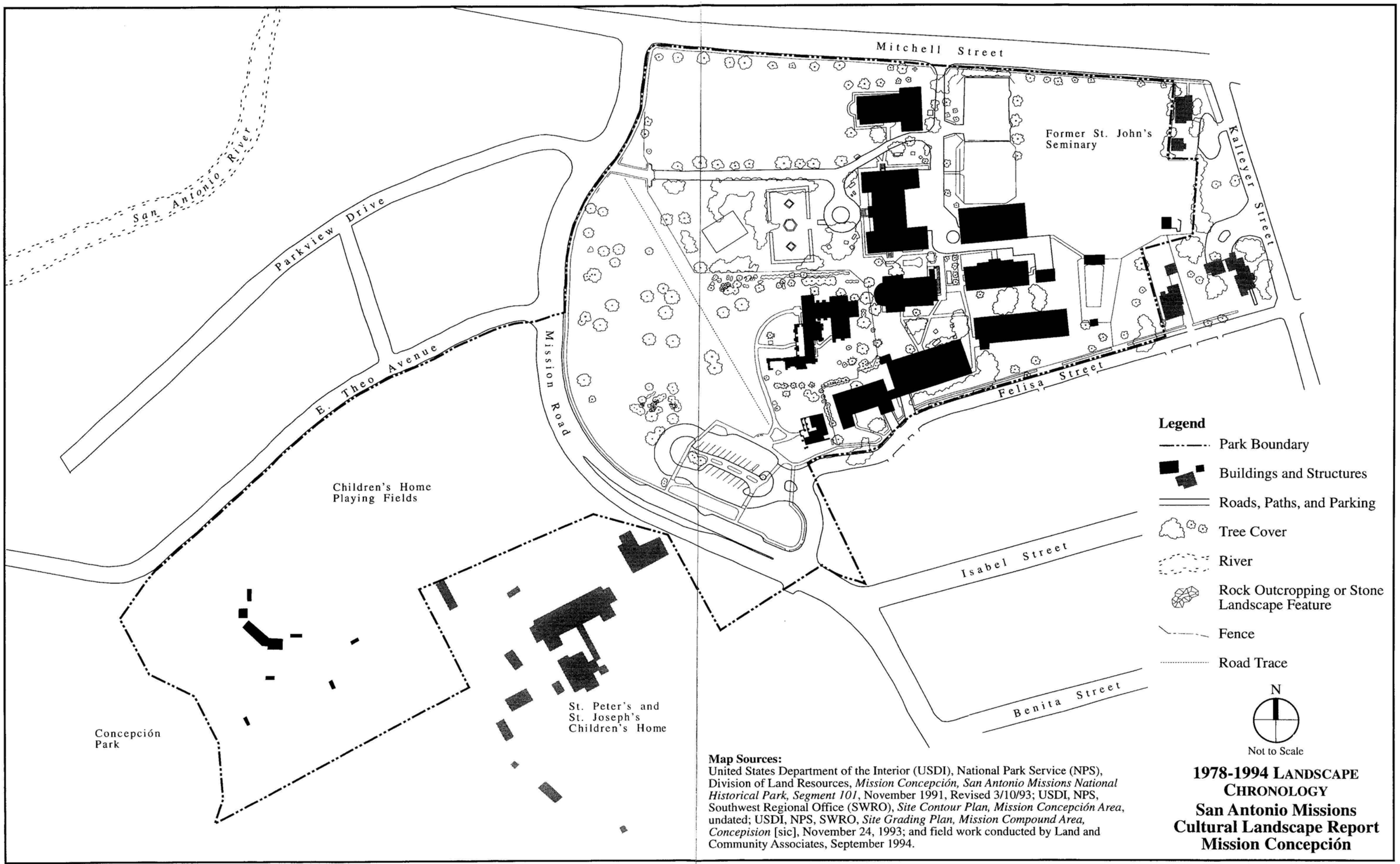
[119]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 9:86.
[120]*San Antonio Light*, 6 August 1972. San José was named a National Historic Site on 8 May 1941, and Missions Espada and San Juan were entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.
[121]NPS, *Missions of San Antonio*, 9:87-88.
[122]Ibid., 9:89.
[123]*San Antonio Express*, 21 July 1982.
[124]*San Antonio Express/News*, 18 October 1988.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PERIOD 1978-1994 *(Exhibit M)*

After many decades of efforts to create the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Senate Bill 1829 was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter on November 10, 1978. Though the NPS had participated in the planned preservation and management of Mission San José since the cooperative agreement of 1941, there was no federal involvement directly impacting Missions Concepción, San Juan and Espada. The Statement for Management of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park was finalized in 1980. In 1983, the NPS assumed full management responsibilities and began to implement its 1982 General Management Plan adopted to guide the park's operations.

The most dràmatic impact on the landscape of Mission Concepción since Mission Road was moved from its original location *circa* 1890, was its relocation to that earlier alignment in 1989-1990. This restored much of the integrity of the mission compound and improved visitor access and circulation, which was essential prior to construction of the visitor contact station in 1991.

Today, Mission Concepción has the oldest unreconstructed church and *convento* (and the least altered) on the Southwestern frontier. Because of the mission's relatively good condition and more modest scale, it did not receive the attention lavished on Mission San José during the 1920s and 1930s. As a consequence, the mission's landscape also did not receive great attention, and appears to have always been rather simple—the product of those local residents and clergy who cared for the site. The major landscape changes are those of urban encroachment that has dramatically changed the surrounding neighborhood, though the relocation of Mission Road has minimized the visual impact of this encroachment.



Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

1978-1994 LANDSCAPE CHRONOLOGY
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit M. 1978-1994 Landscape Chronology
472/20915



3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT AND SETTING

Mission Concepción is located in the southern portion of the city of San Antonio, Texas, on a level knoll less than a mile east of the confluence of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek *(Figure 39)*. The boundaries of the Mission Concepción study area *(Exhibit C)* include Mitchell Street, Mission Road, and East Theo Avenue to the north; the eastern property boundary of St. John's Seminary to the east; Felisa Street and the property boundary of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home to the south; and Concepción Park, a city of San Antonio park, to the west.

The land associated with the mission is generally flat. Historically, the site of the mission consisted of open grassland and woodland; today, much of the area has been developed for residential, commercial, institutional, and recreational uses. The largest tracts of open land lie to the west of the mission and consist of playing fields associated with St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home *(Figure 40)* and the city of San Antonio's Concepción Park, which is located adjacent to the San Antonio River *(Figure 41)*. In 1952, the river was channelized and realigned in places by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This work altered the traditional relationship between the mission and the river, and, unlike similar channelization efforts adjacent to the other missions, did not leave behind any residual flow in this portion of the river's historic channel. Although the farmlands outside the mission walls in 1772 was composed of 126 acres, in 1994 the park boundaries encompassed less than 33 acres, with a core area of just over 8 acres. In addition to Concepción, the entire non-contiguous 870-acre San Antonio Mission National Historical Park includes Missions San José, San Juan, Espada, the Espada dam, the Espada aqueduct, and the *acequia* systems of Missions San Juan and Espada.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Mission Concepción consists of a mission complex, including a church, a sacristy, a *convento*, a *corredor*, ruins, small-scale features such as a well and benches, walks, plantings, a grotto and devotional garden, and the landscape precinct of the church complex, including a grassy forecourt west of the church entrance; facilities related to National Park Service (NPS) administration of the site, consisting of a visitor contact station, a parking area, a bus stop and arrival wayside area, walks, and plantings; and a foreground area of open lawn located west of the mission complex and visitor services area and containing shade trees and an historic quarry site. Beyond this interpretive core, the park boundaries include the former St. John's Seminary grounds to the north and east of the mission, and the playing fields of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home, located west of the mission and separated from the mission foreground area by the 1989-1990 realignment of Mission Road. The park is roughly bisected by Mission Road, which, along with E. Theo Avenue and Mitchell Street, forms part of the park's northern boundary. Concepción Park bounds the park on the west, the children's home and Felisa Street on the south, and residential properties on the west side of Kalteyer Street bound the park on the east.

Overall landscape organization and patterns of spatial organization *(Exhibit Q)*

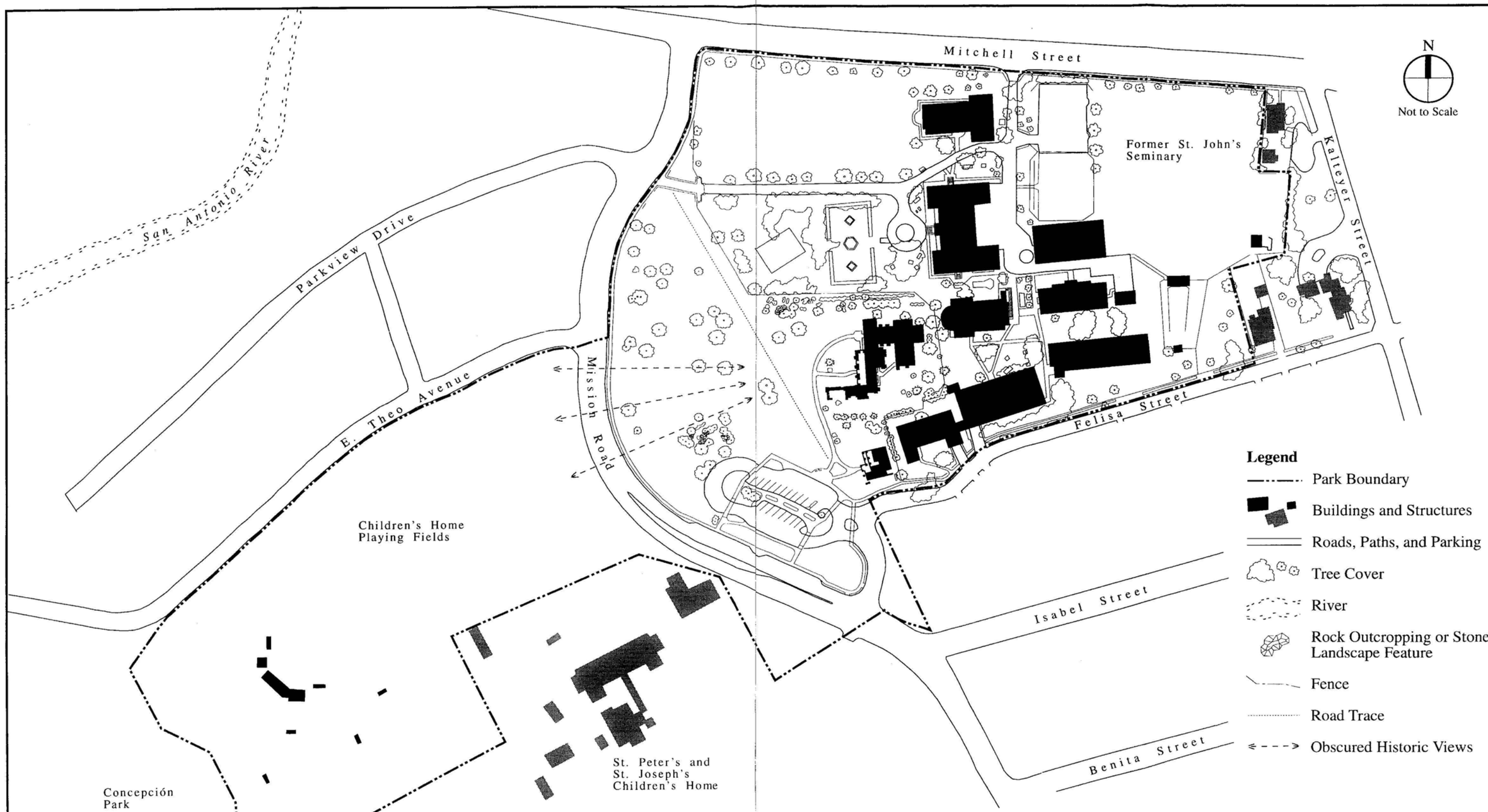
The primary features of the Mission Concepción landscape are the mission church, sacristy, *convento*, and *corredor*, which survive "almost entirely [as] the original colonial construction completed in 1755-1760."[1] These buildings are located in the eastern portion of the core area, which itself occupies a central position within the present-day park boundaries. The church is oriented east/west, with the sacristy, *convento*, and *corredor* located immediately to the south following the same orientation. The mission well is located just west of the *corredor*, in the grassy forecourt of the church; a grotto with several devotional statues and a mounted tile plaque is located along the northern edge of this forecourt, adjacent to the seminary property. The fence separating the seminary from the mission grounds was built in the late 1960s when the Archdiocese began daily interpretation of the mission to the public. The fence divided the grotto from the rest of the seminary grounds. The NPS visitor contact station, bus stop and parking area, introductory wayside exhibits, and associated curvilinear walkways are located south of the mission complex. The visitor contact station departs from the church's orientation, turning more to the southwest to maintain a tight alignment with the adjacent property line. An open area consisting of grassy lawn shaded by the spreading canopies of mesquite, pecan, and anaqua trees lies west of the mission complex. Also located in this open area is the historic stone quarry site, a depressed area with several rock outcroppings surrounded by a variety of small trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plant materials. The open area is bounded on the west by the realignment of Mission Road. To the east, a dirt footpath running generally northwest/southeast between Mission Road and Felisa Street indicates a previous alignment of Mission Road.

The open space extends west and southwestward beyond this lawn area to the baseball fields and grounds of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home, located west of Mission Road. A line of trees and shrubs separates the westernmost fields from the public recreation areas of the city's Concepción Park, located farther west, and indicates the alignment of the San Antonio River prior to channelization *(Figure 42)*. North and east of the mission complex lie the grounds of the former St. John's Seminary, now serving as a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center operated by the Patrician Movement who lease the land and buildings from the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

The seminary grounds present a distinct contrast to the spatial organization of the mission core. The boundary between the two areas is both well-defined and effectively screened by wood or chain-link fences and perimeter plantings of trees, shrubs, and vines; a line of pomegranate shrubs clearly defines the northern fenceline between the church and seminary. The character of the seminary landscape also differs from that of the mission. The seminary's thirteen buildings, many of which are significantly larger than the mission church, create a series of open spaces linked by walkways and containing mature deciduous trees.

Beyond the park boundaries to the northwest and southeast lie residential areas where the landscape development is of a smaller scale and more individual character. Houses are arranged linearly along a system of irregularly gridded streets. In contrast, further to the north along Mitchell Street lies an area of commercial, institutional and industrial uses characterized by undefined open spaces and minimal plantings.

[1] U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), National Register of Historic Places, "National Register Form: San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, San Antonio, Texas," by James E. Ivey and Marlys Bush Thurber (20 February 1983), sheet 8, page 5.



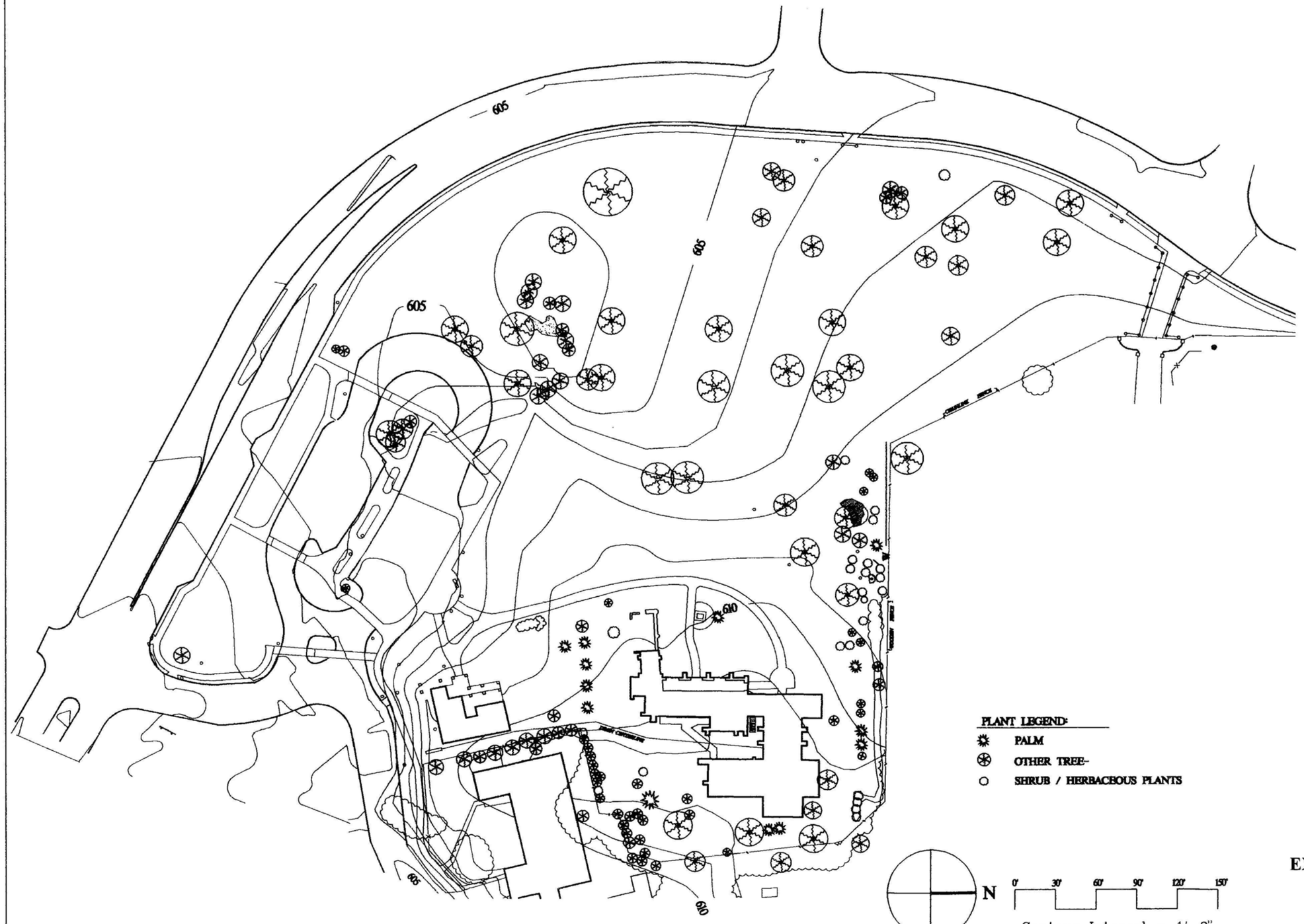
Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

1994 EXISTING CONDITIONS
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit N-1. 1994 Existing Conditions

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PLANT LEGEND:

- PALM
- OTHER TREE-
- SHRUB / HERBACEOUS PLANTS

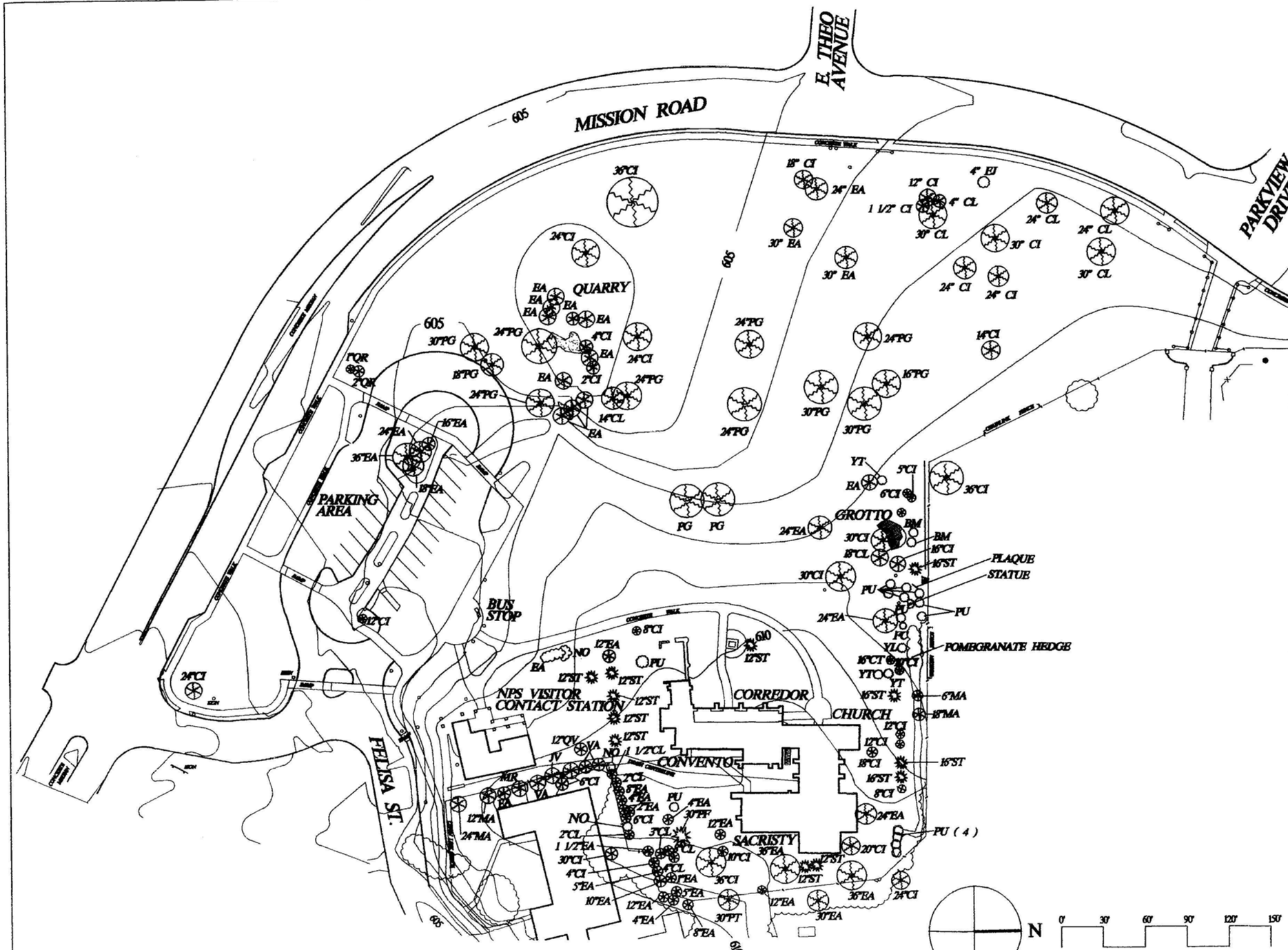
N

0' 30' 60' 90' 120' 150'

Contour Interval = 1'-0"

EXISTING CONDITIONS (1994)
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc.



PLANT LEGEND:

- PALM
- OTHER TREE-
- SHRUB / HERBACEOUS PLANTS
- 24" TRUNK CALIPER

PLANT ABBREVIATIONS

TREES:

CI	Carya Illinoensis / Pecan
CL	Celtis Laevigata / Hackberry
EA	Ehretia Anacua / Anaqua
JV	Juniperus Virginiana / Eastern Red Cedar
MA	Melia Azedarach / Chinaberry
MR	Morus Rubra / Red Mulberry
PT	Pinus Taeda / Loblolly Pine
PG	Prosopsis Glandulosa / Mesquite
QR	Quercus Rubra / Red Oak
QV	Quercus Virginiana / Live Oak
ST	Sable Texana / Texas Palmetto
VA	Vitex Agnus-Castus / Chaste Tree
PF	Fan Palm

SHRUBS:

BM	Buxus Microphylla / Little-Leaf Boxwood
FC	Ficus Carica / Common Fig
NO	Nerium Oleander / Oleander
PU	Punica Granatum / Pomegranate
SS	Sophora Secundiflora / Texas Mountain Laurel
YT	Yucca Torreyi / Spanish Dagger Yucca

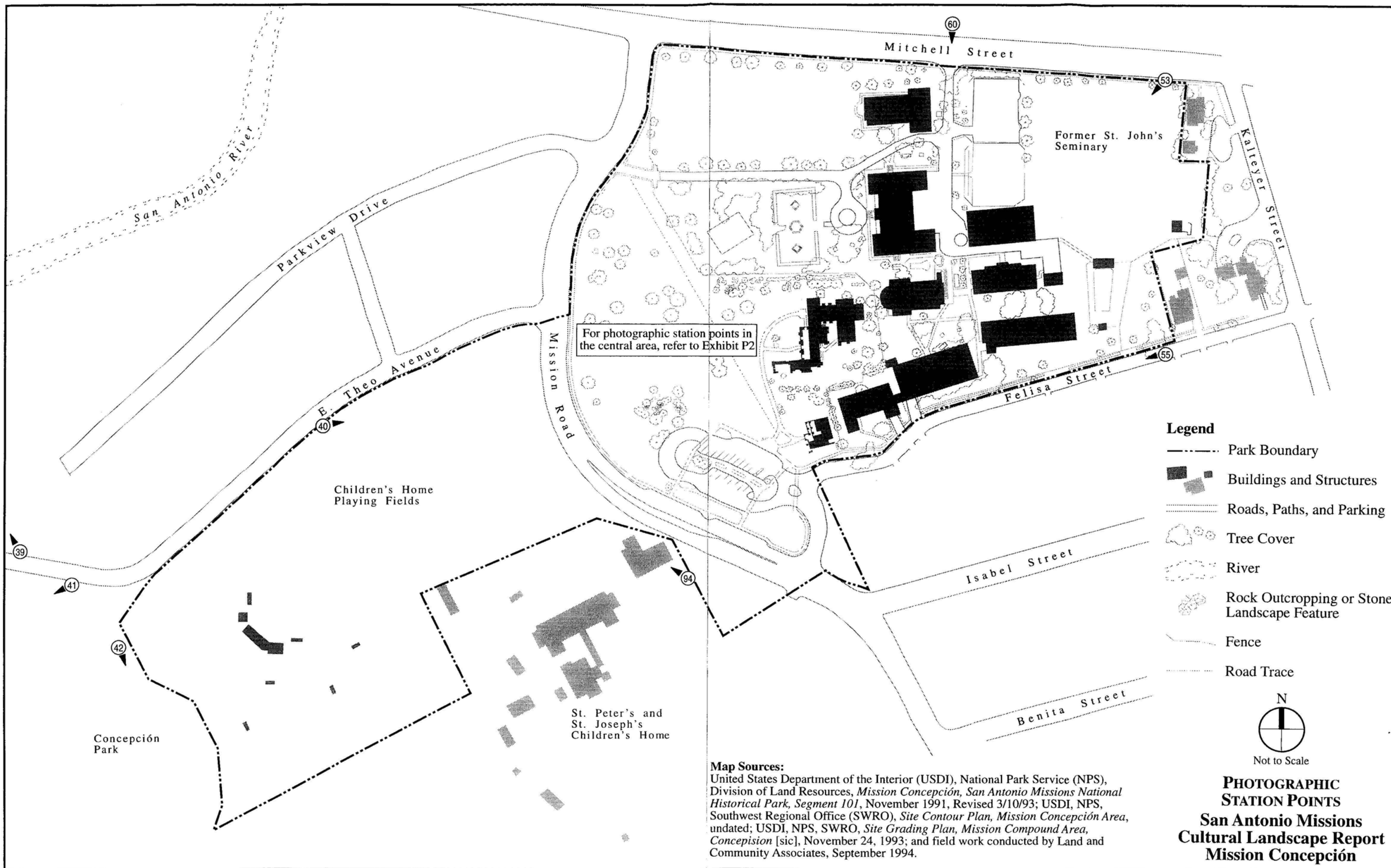
HERBACEOUS PLANTS:

EJ	Eriobotria Japonica / Loquat
LS	Lilium Spp. / Lilies

Map Sources:
Map prepared by JYJ Architects, Inc. and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, 1994

VEGETATION
San Antonio Missions
Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Exhibit O. Vegetation
472/20917



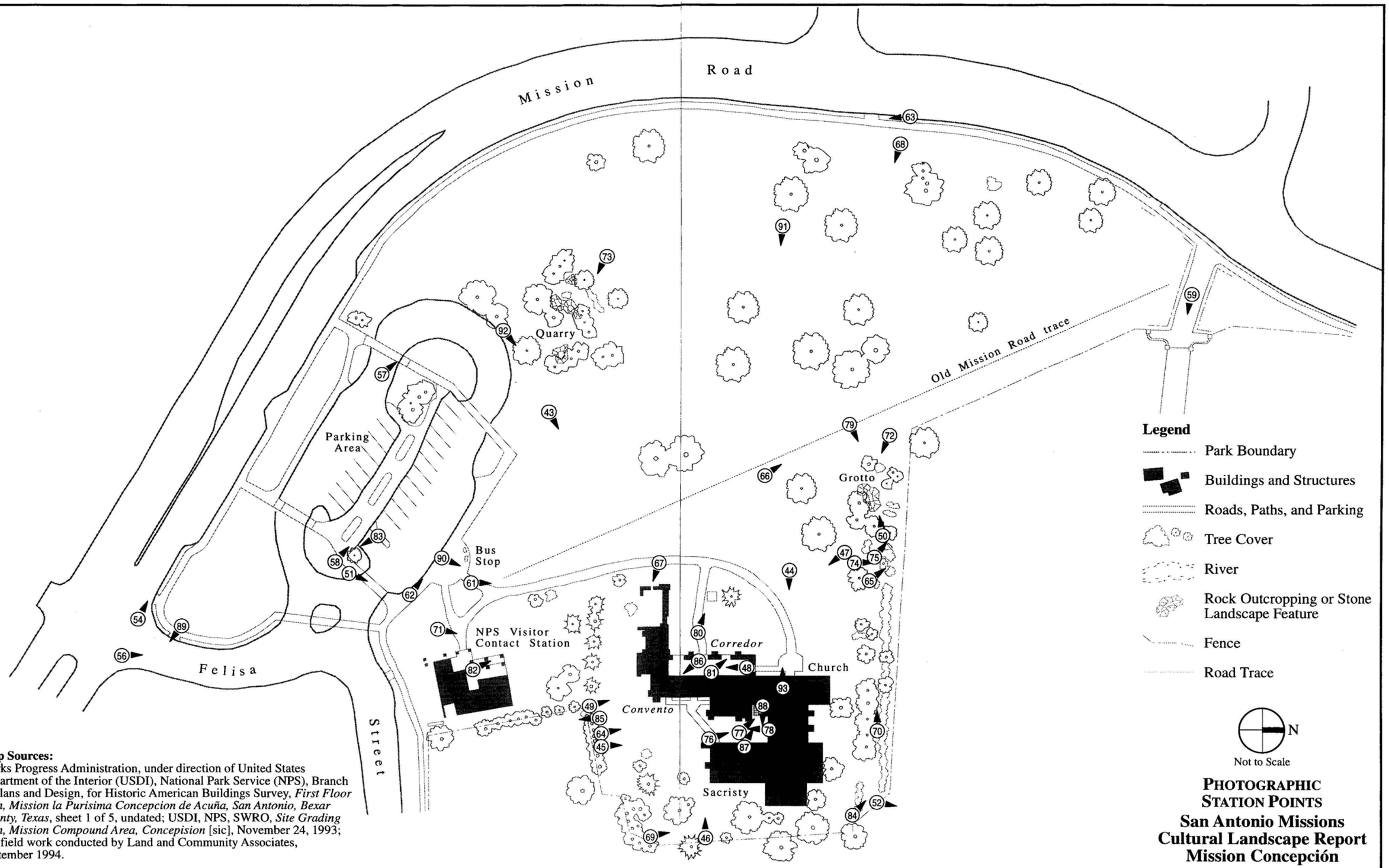
Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STATION POINTS
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit P-1. Photographic Station Points

1 of 2 472/20918



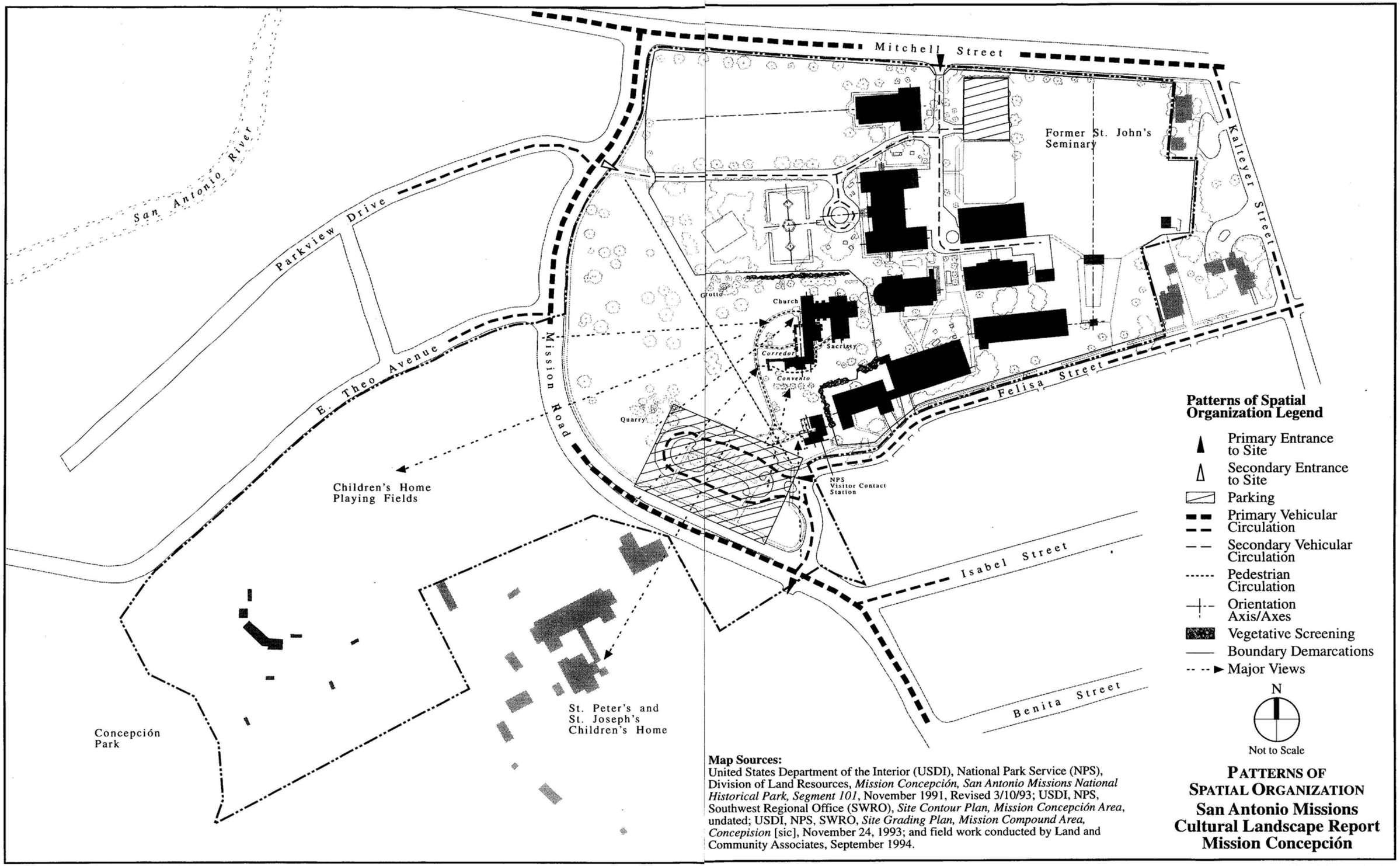
Map Sources:
Works Progress Administration, under direction of United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Branch of Plans and Design, for Historic American Buildings Survey, *First Floor Plan, Mission la Purisima Concepcion de Acuña, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas*, sheet 1 of 5, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STATION POINTS
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit P-2. Photographic Station Points

2 of 2 472/20918



Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

PATTERNS OF SPATIAL ORGANIZATION
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
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Exhibit Q. Patterns of Spatial Organization

472/20919



Figure 39. The confluence of the San Antonio River (right) and San Pedro Creek. The present alignments reflect channelization efforts undertaken in 1952.

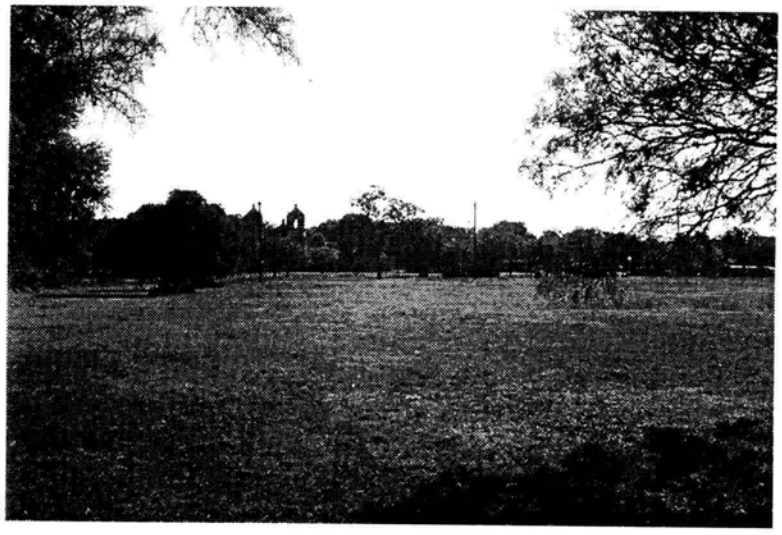


Figure 40. View of Mission Concepción looking east across the playing fields of St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home.

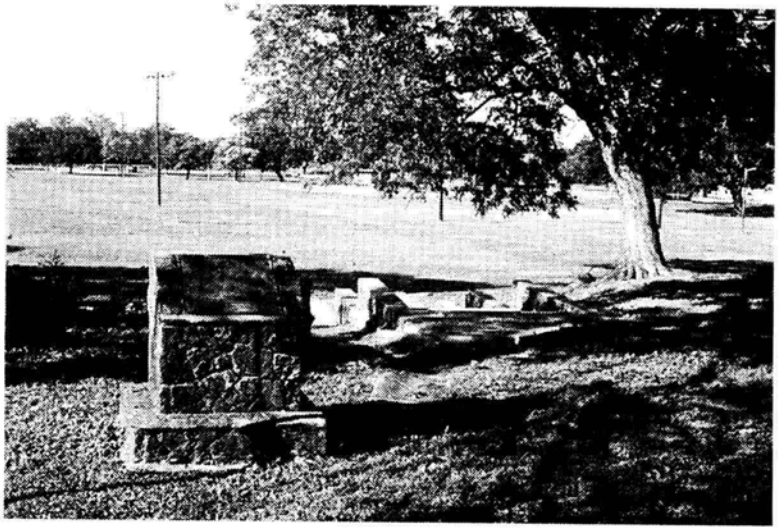


Figure 41. View of Concepción Park looking southwest across the playing fields. The marker commemorates the Battle of Mission Concepción on October 28, 1835.



Figure 42. The alignment of the San Antonio River prior to channelization is now heavily overgrown with vegetation.

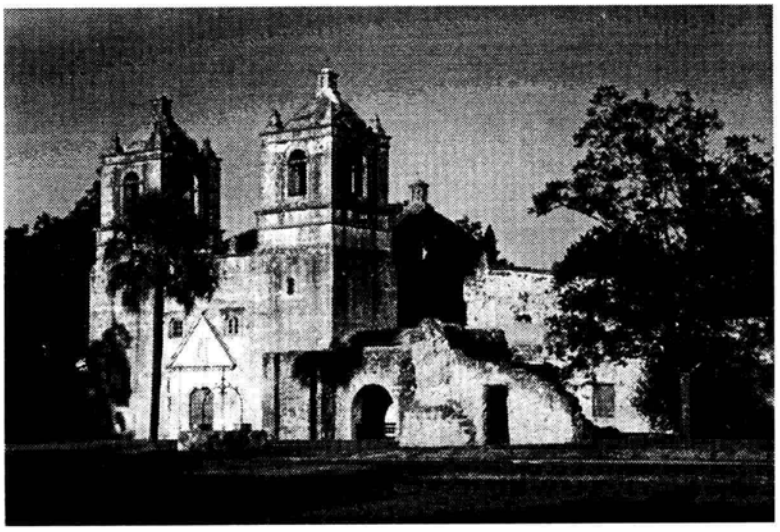


Figure 43. The mission complex as seen from the southwest.

Structured pedestrian circulation within the core area of the park is defined primarily by curvilinear concrete walkways linking the parking area, bus stop, and visitor contact station to the mission complex and to public sidewalks along the east side of Mission Road and the north side of Felisa Street. A hard-packed earthen path that has developed from informal local pedestrian use follows the former alignment of Mission Road, cutting across the site from southeast to northwest and dividing the immediate church precinct from the open lawn area to the west. Vehicular access to the core area of the park is limited to the parking area located southwest of the visitor contact station. Mission Road forms the major vehicular route providing access to the site. Secondary vehicular access occurs along Felisa Street.

Response to natural features

The siting of Mission Concepción took advantage of earlier mission developments on this site, which were themselves influenced by the proximity of the San Antonio River to the west. Today there are only a few obvious responses to natural features in the contemporary mission landscape, including a pergola-shaded open-air seating area at the visitor contact station and retention of a grouping of anaqua trees in the parking lot that provide additional shade.

Land uses and activities *(Exhibit R)*

Present-day land uses associated with Mission Concepción include religious, visitor services, interpretive/museum, garden, open space/ceremonial, open space/undeveloped, open space/recreational, institutional, service/supply/storage, and administrative. The landscape features and areas associated with each of the land uses include the following:

- Religious – church and sacristy;
- Visitor services and interpretative/museum – visitor contact station, *convento*, *corredor*, Father President's office, bus stop and parking area, interpretive signage and displays;
- Open space/ceremonial – immediate environs of mission complex, including grassy forecourt west of the church and *convento*, and courtyard south of the church, sacristy and *convento*;
- Open space/undeveloped – grassy area west of the mission complex and the former Mission Road alignment, grassy area west of water garden;
- Open space/recreational – playing fields associated with St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home, and with the drug rehabilitation center, basketball court west of water garden;
- Institutional – drug rehabilitation center;
- Service/Supply/Storage – north end of courtyard, area east and south of visitor contact station; and
- Administrative – NPS office in the visitor contact station.

Land uses adjacent to the site include residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational.

Buildings and structures

Several buildings and structures are located in the core area of Mission Concepción. They include the NPS visitor contact station and the buildings of the mission complex. Beyond the core area are located the former St. John's Seminary administration building and associated residential and institutional buildings, and buildings and other structures associated with the playing fields of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home.

The primary buildings and structures associated with the mission complex are the church, sacristy, *convento*, and *corredor (Figure 43).* All of these buildings are constructed of rubble limestone with lime mortar.[2] The church has a smooth plaster finish on the front facade and the upper portion of all four faces of the two towers; the rest of the church and the other buildings of the complex generally have a rougher form of parging. As a whole, however, the buildings present a unified appearance based on similarity of stone color and exterior finish, method of construction, and effects of weathering.

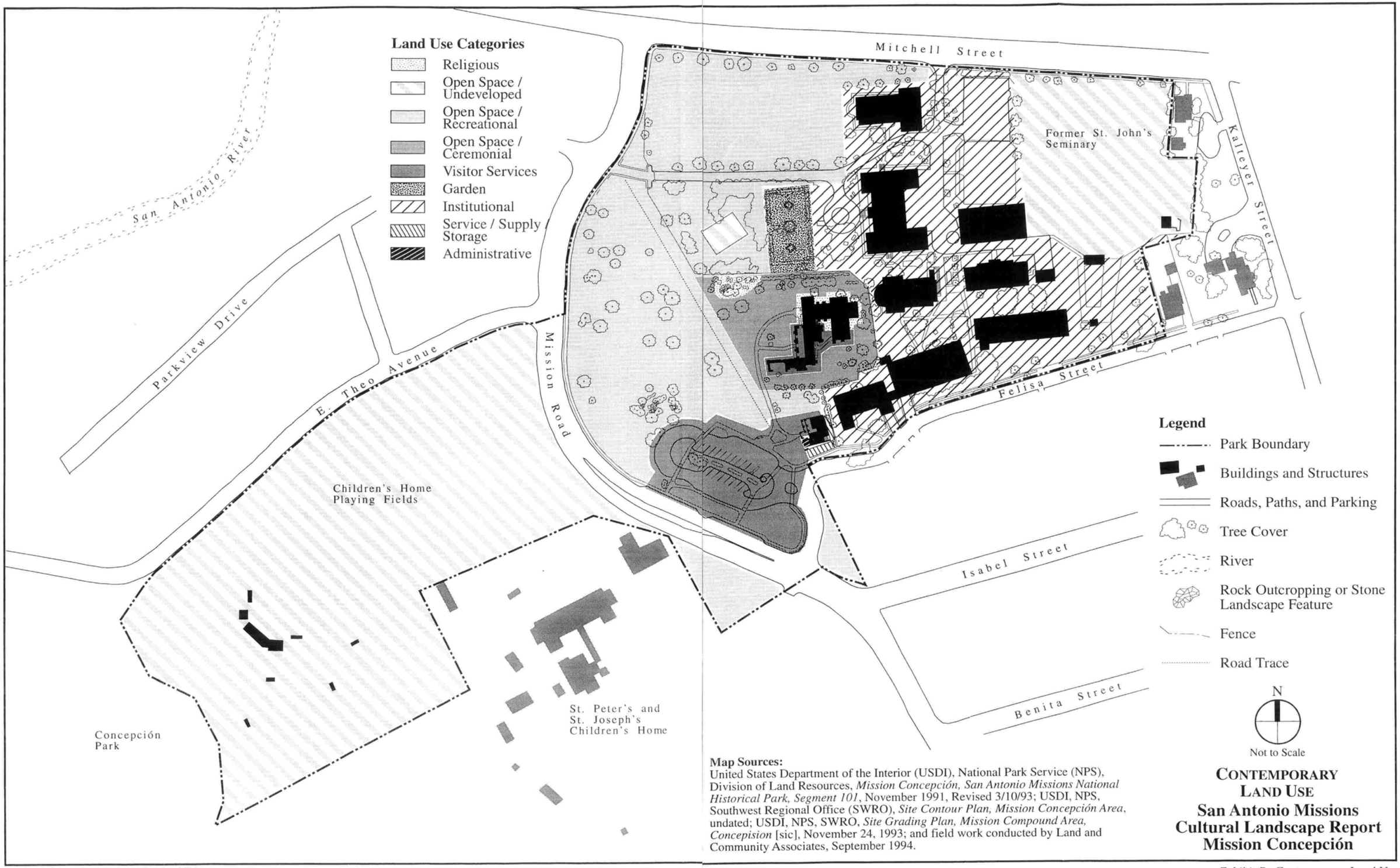
The cruciform-plan church faces west, with towers flanking a central entrance portal of carved stone *(Figure 44).* The church measures ninety-three feet from apse to portal, and fifty-three feet across the transepts. The dome rises to an interior height of forty-four feet above the crossing of the barrel-vaulted nave and transepts. Buttresses strengthen the load-bearing walls of the nave on the north and south.[3] The church remains essentially as it was constructed. "So far as is known, no major structural changes or alterations have ever been made to the church since its first dedication in 1755."[4]

The sacristy and Father President's office occupy a rectangular, two-story structure attached to the south wall of the church's south transept *(Figure 45).* The sacristy, on the main level, has a barrel-vaulted ceiling and flagstone floor. Accessible from the church by a doorway, it serves as the area where the clergy prepares for services and provides storage for vestments and sacred vessels. An enclosed stone stairway attached to the south wall of the sacristy rises to an open porch on the second floor that gives access to the Father President's office, located above the sacristy *(Figure 46).* Popularly known as the "infirmary," the Father President's office retains traces of colonial wall painting.

The one-story *convento*, located south of the church's south tower, consists of a series of interconnected, barrel-vaulted rooms arranged in an L-shaped configuration around an arcaded *corredor* which opens on the west to the church forecourt *(Figures 47 ,48).* The *convento* and *corredor*, like the sacristy, are built of limestone rubble. Several outlying portions of the *convento* have collapsed vaults and exist in a ruined state *(Figure 49).*

The grotto, a construction of tufaceous limestone rubble roughly triangular, both in plan and elevation, is located northwest of the church entrance adjacent to the seminary grounds*(Figure 50).* It is surmounted by a freestanding niche of the same construction containing a statue of the Virgin Mary; there is a statue of a kneeling woman lower on the grotto's sloping north face, amidst an overgrowth of ivy. The grotto, rising to an approximate height of twelve feet, has a shallow

[2]NPS, National Register Form, sheet 7, page 10.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Ibid., page 11.



Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

CONTEMPORARY LAND USE
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit R. Contemporary Land Use

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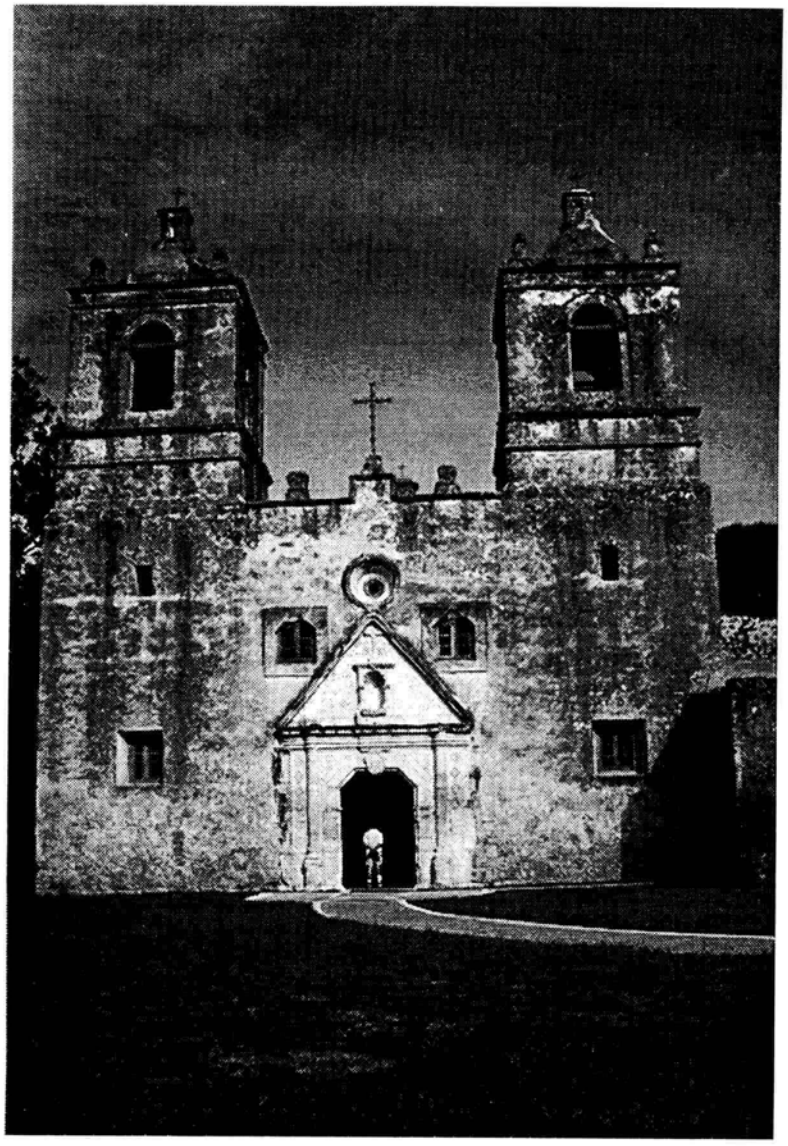


Figure 44. Front (west) facade of the church.



Figure 45. The courtyard on the south side of the church, with the sacristy and Father President's office wing (right).

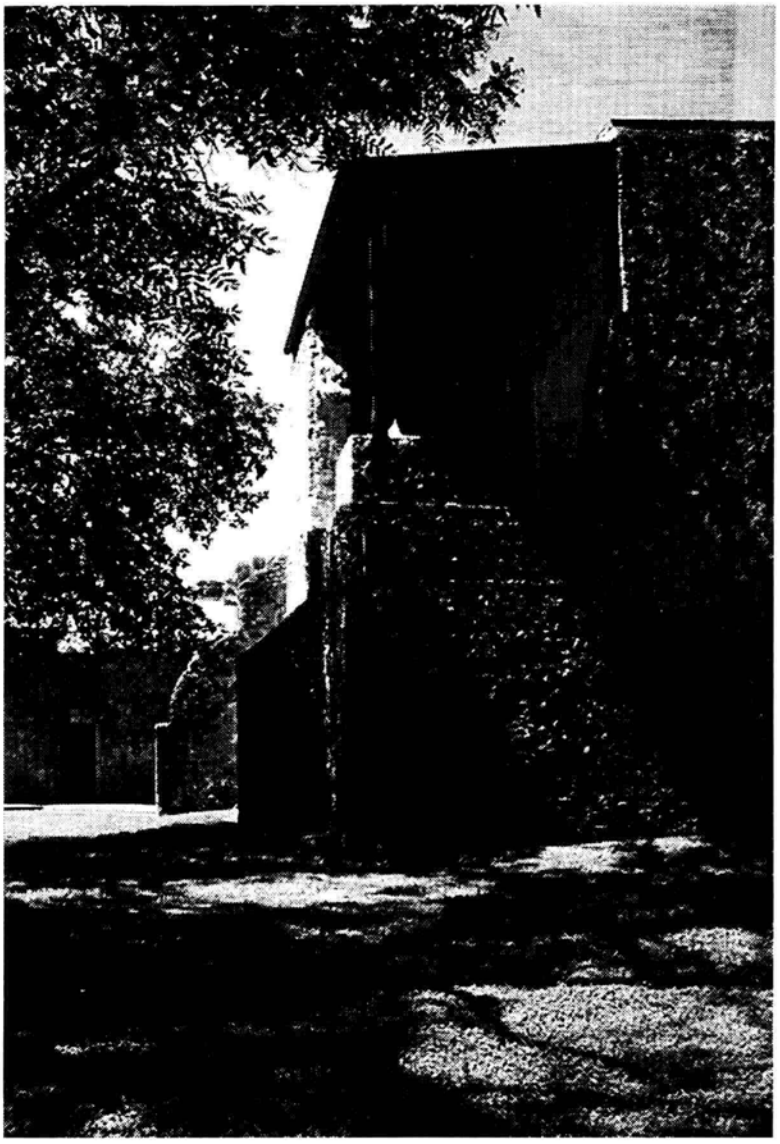


Figure 46. Enclosed stairway and open porch of the Father President's office, looking west.



Figure 47. View of convento *and* corredor *(left), looking southeast.*

semicircular concrete pool at its base on the north side and is surrounded by boxwood hedges and other ornamental plantings.

The NPS visitor contact station, constructed in 1991, is a tan brick and wood building south of the mission complex *(Figure 51)*. Adjacent to the station is an outdoor seating and meeting area sheltered from the sun by a series of wood pergolas. The visitor contact station is adjacent to the boundary with the seminary grounds on a slight knoll above and to the northeast of the parking area.

The former St. John's Seminary administration building is a three-story red-brick structure located north of the mission church *(Figure 52)*. It is symmetrical in organization, with an "H"-shaped plan, and orients to a circular entrance drive and a series of terraces containing a water garden and an unused basketball court on the west. Dense vegetation visually separates the seminary from the mission complex; the seminary's red tile roof is the only feature of the building visible above the rooflines of the mission buildings. The seminary grounds contain a number of associated religious, residential, recreational, and institutional buildings, both two and three stories in height *(Figure 53)*. Most are constructed of red brick and have flat roofs. Residential buildings often feature balconies or exterior corridors on the upper floors.

Cluster arrangements

The major cluster arrangements present at Mission Concepción include the rectilinear composition of the church, sacristy, *convento*, and *corredor*, all located centrally within the mission park, and the rectilinear arrangement of religious, residential, recreational, and institutional buildings on the former seminary grounds. The partitioning fence, which is recent, ignores previous patterns of use and ownership and gives a false historical impression of the site as more subdivided than it was historically.

Circulation systems

Vehicular circulation at Mission Concepción consists of asphalt roads and parking areas. Mission Road *(Figure 54)*, Felisa Street *(Figure 55)*, E. Theo Avenue, and Mitchell Street adjoin the park and traverse portions of it. Vehicular access to the park is limited to the NPS parking area, which is entered from Felisa Street a short distance from its intersection with Mission Road *(Figure 56)*. The parking area, which accommodates twenty cars and one bus, has a continuous curb of cut white limestone, interrupted by concrete accessibility ramps where traversed by the walkway system *(Figure 57)*. Two additional bus parking spaces are provided nearby on the east side of Mission Road. Both visitors and park staff, including rangers, and maintenance and service personnel, use the NPS parking area *(Figure 58)*, and city buses loop through the lot as part of their regular route along Mission Road. The church only conducts worship services at the mission upon special request; consequently there is no parking provided or designated specifically for parishioners. Although the park contains no designated bicycle trails, a bicycle rack is provided in the parking area for use by cyclists.

Outside the core area, two asphalt entrance drives serve the former seminary property, one leading from Mission Road that served as the original main entry drive *(Figure 59)*, and a second from Mitchell Street that serves as the present vehicular entrance and is controlled by a watch station

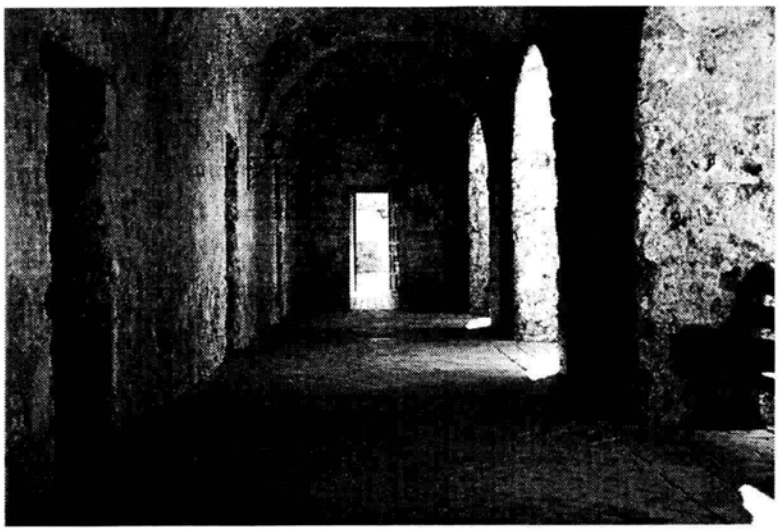


Figure 48. Longitudinal view of corredor, *looking south.*

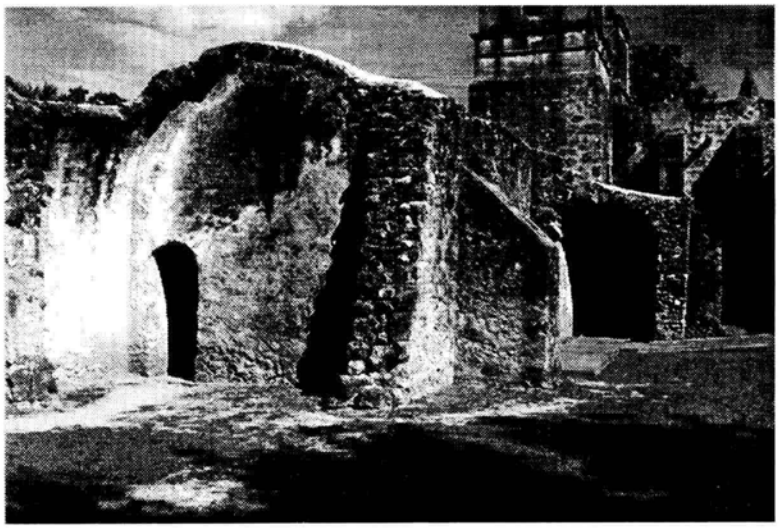


Figure 49. Ruins of exterior wall and collapsed barrel vault roof at south side of convento.



Figure 50. The ivy-covered grotto contains several statues, a shallow pool, and a variety of associated plant materials.

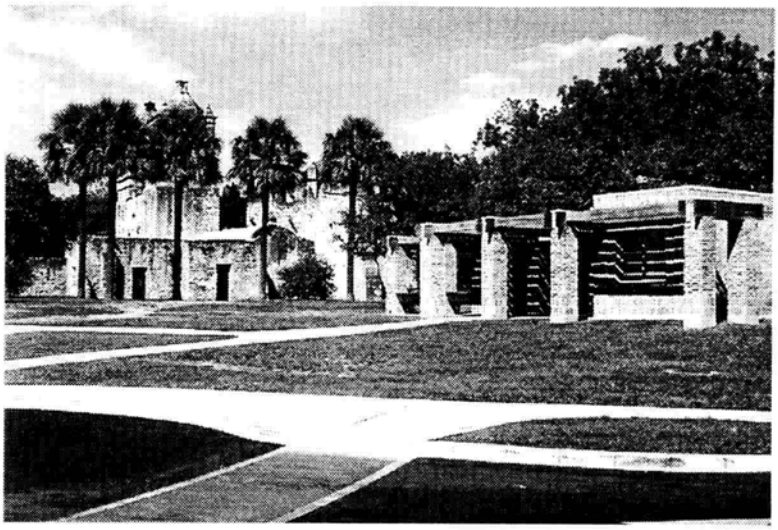


Figure 51. The NPS visitor contact station is located south of the mission complex.

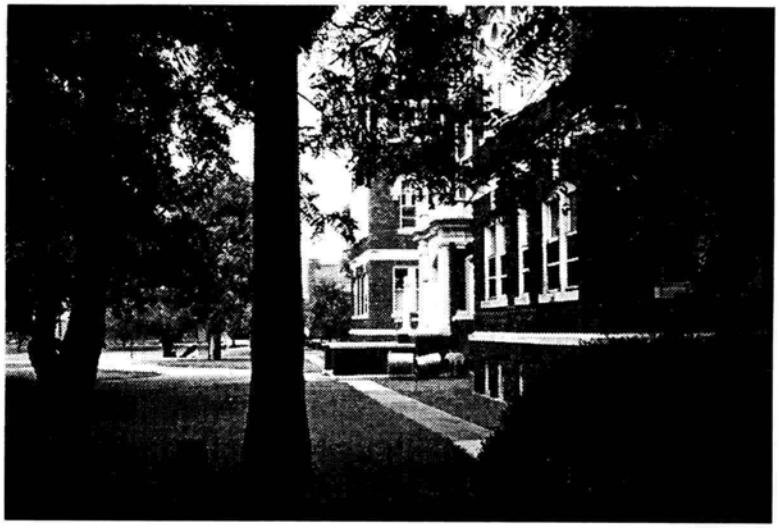


Figure 52. The front (west) facade of the main building at former St. John's Seminary, looking north.

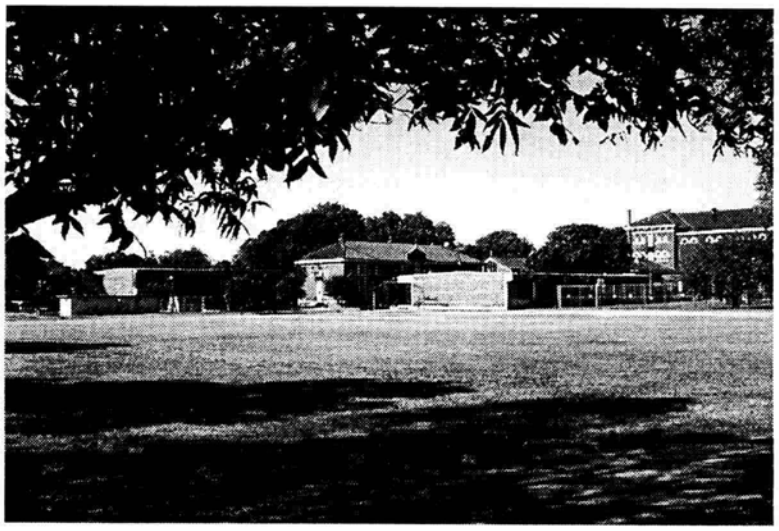


Figure 53. View of buildings at former St. John's Seminary from northeastern corner of property.



Figure 54. View northwest along Mission Road showing bus parking and accessibility ramp.

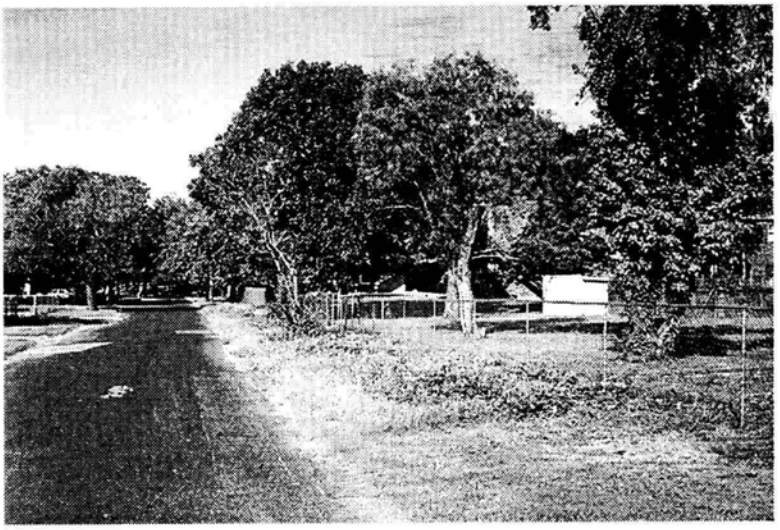


Figure 55. View west along Felisa Street, with residential buildings of former St. John's Seminary (right).



Figure 56. Vehicular approach to Mission Concepción at the intersection of Felisa Street and Mission Road.

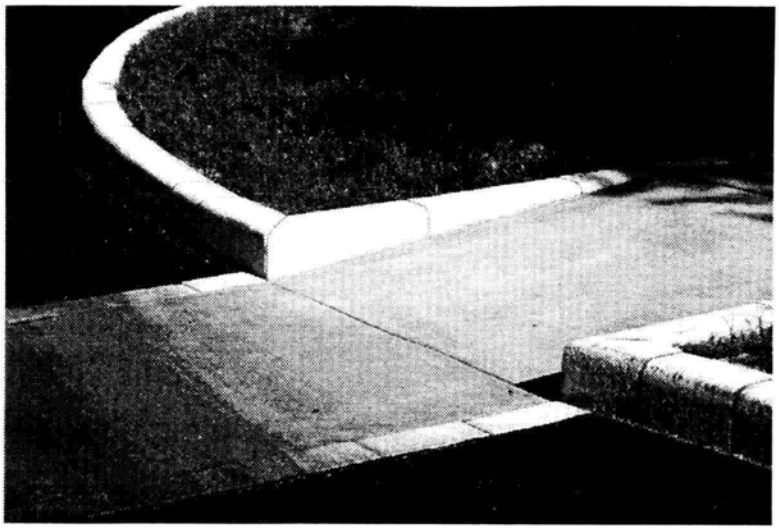


Figure 57. Detail of accessibility ramp and stone curbing at NPS parking area.



Figure 58. The parking area serves both visitors and NPS staff.

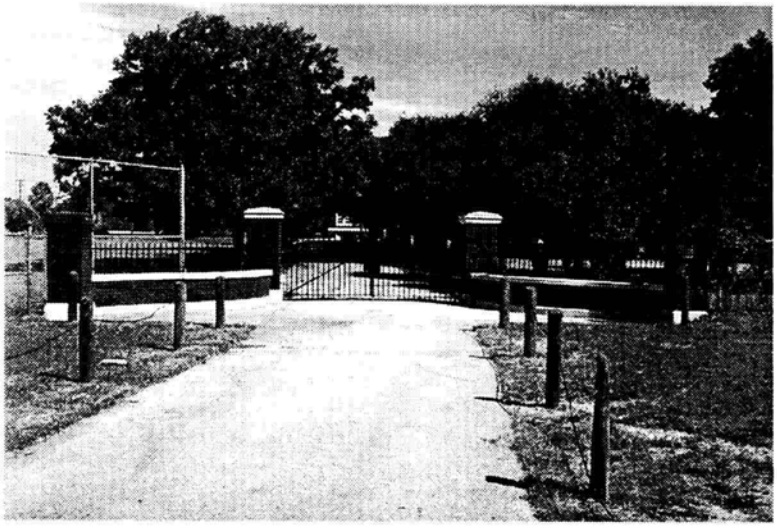


Figure 59. The old main entrance drive to St. John's Seminary from Mission Road, lined with wood bollards and cable to discourage vehicular access to the adjacent old Mission Road trace.

(Figure 60). An asphalt parking lot adjacent to Mitchell Street is accessible from this entry drive. No roads or drives within the park boundaries serve the children's home playing fields.

Pedestrian circulation at Mission Concepción includes concrete sidewalks, plywood walkways, brick walks, and informal, hard-packed earthen paths. Smooth-finished tan concrete sidewalks edged with cut, white limestone pavers provide the primary pedestrian circulation within the developed area *(Figure 61).* These sidewalks traverse the parking area, connect to and pave the outdoor areas of the visitor contact station, and lead to both the church entrance and past the well to the *corredor.* In several areas, such as at the bus stop and the central planting median within the parking area, the edging pavers are laid in a double course for visual emphasis *(Figure 62).* Unedged concrete of a similar color and finish is used for the city sidewalk along the east side of Mission Road; accessibility ramps with rumble strips are provided at crosswalks *(Figure 63).* A series of plywood walkways with pressure-treated wood curbs traverse the courtyard between the sacristy and *convento* and provide universal accessibility across the grassy area *(Figure 64).* Red brick in both a herringbone and running-bond pattern is used for the flooring of the *corredor.* Red brick, laid in several patterns and sometimes combined with feature strips of purple clinker brick, is also used for walks in the devotional garden *(Figure 65).* Pedestrian circulation of hard-packed earth is most evident along the former alignment of Mission Road, which is still used as an informal footpath and bicycle trail by neighborhood residents *(Figure 66).* Hard-packed earthen paths have been worn into the soil adjacent to the *convento* ruins between the courtyard and the main pedestrian walk leading to the front of the church *(Figure 67).* Various pedestrian walks of unknown composition serve the former seminary property; no known walks are present on the grounds of the children's home playing fields.

Vegetation

Vegetation at Mission Concepción consists of native and non-native species of trees, shrubs, grasses, forbs, and ground covers. Both deciduous and evergreen plant materials are represented. The majority of the site is planted with meadow grasses; buffalo grass has been sown in the more recently developed areas adjacent to the visitor contact station and the parking lot. Much of the mission foreground consists of grassy lawn dotted with canopy trees of mesquite, pecan, and anaqua that are remnants of the residential landscape patterns extant prior to the Mission Road realignment *(Figure 68).* The church precinct, particularly on the southeast, east, and north, contains a profusion of plant materials of various species that contributes to the visual separation of the mission from seminary portions of the park *(Figure 69).* There are many unusual specimens of plants around the grounds, including a fan palm south of the sacristy, a row of two palms and an anaqua east of the church, a row of palms and pecan north of the church, and a hedge of pomegranates along the northern fenceline *(Figure 70).* A variety of small caliper trees and vines follow other fencelines. An L-shaped arrangement of five palms prominently occupies a slight ridge between the *convento* and the visitor contact station *(Figure 71).* A variety of species, including boxwood clipped as a hedge, hosta, irises, miniature rose, Spanish dagger, and Texas mountain laurel, enhance the surroundings of the grotto *(Figure 72).* The quarry also exhibits a number of ornamental plantings that identify the area as the former site of another shrine, recently relocated to the grounds of the children's home *(Figure 73).* The parking area was specifically designed to incorporate a grouping of four existing anaqua trees into a median planting bed.

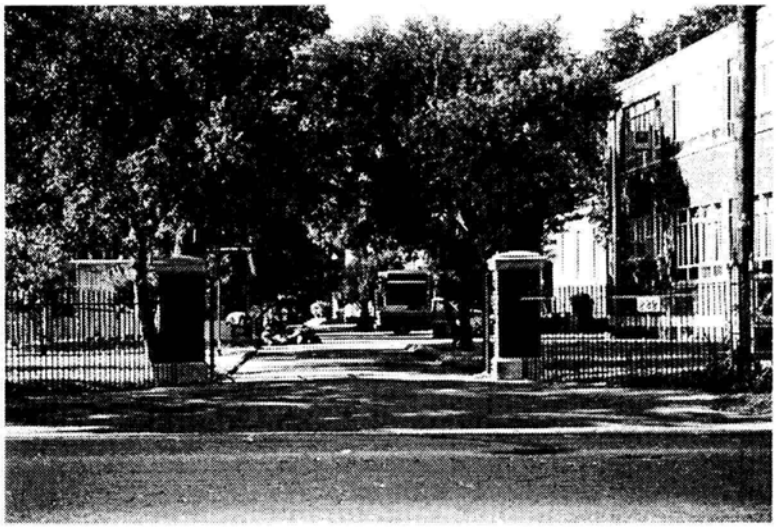


Figure 60. The present main entrance to the former St. John's Seminary property from Mitchell Street.



Figure 61. Concrete sidewalks edged with cut white stone pavers form a network of pedestrian circulation within the park.

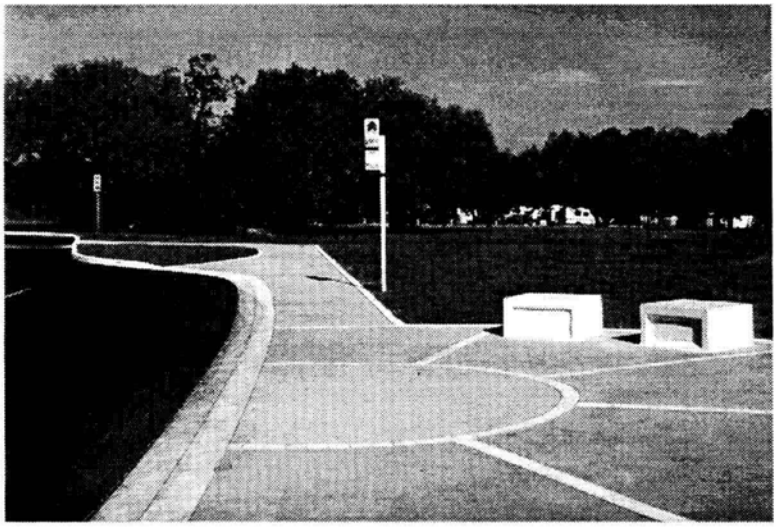


Figure 62. Feature strips of white stone pavers accentuate the concrete paving at the bus stop and visitor arrival area.



Figure 63. The public sidewalk along Mission Road includes accessibility ramps with rumble strips.

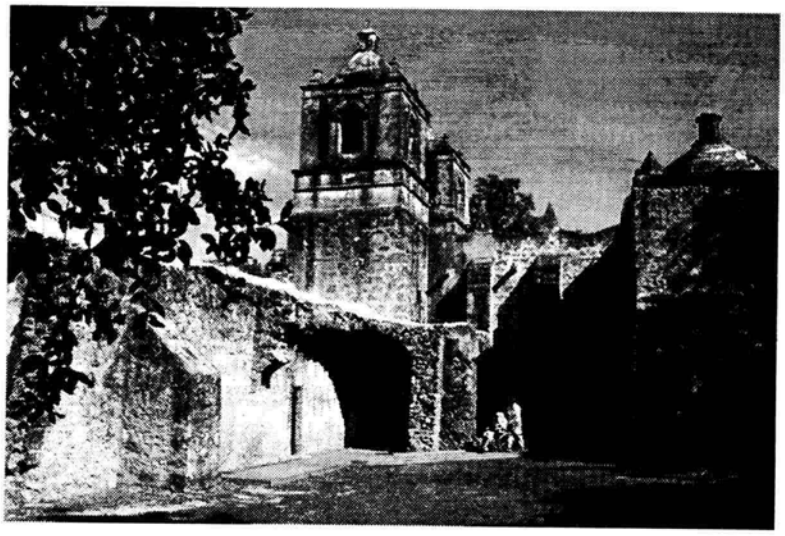


Figure 64. Plywood walkways provide accessibility across the grassy courtyard between the convento *and sacristy.*



Figure 65. Brick paving pattern adjacent to statue of St. Francis.

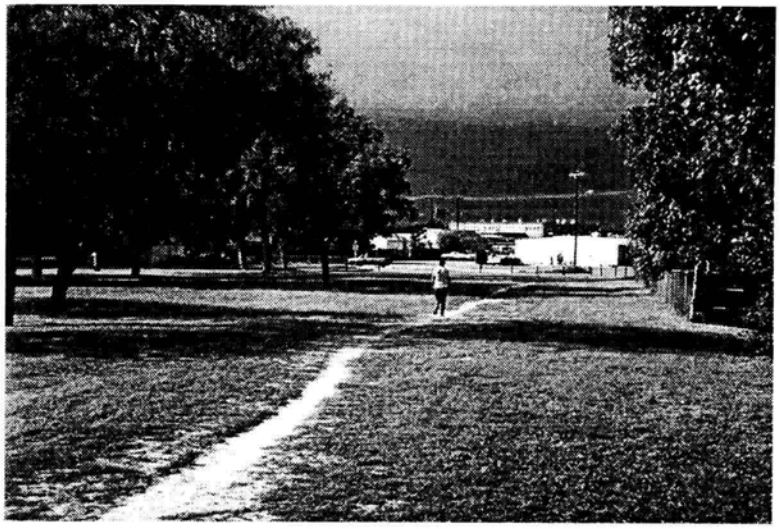


Figure 66. The former alignment of Mission Road still serves as an active pedestrian route through the park.



Figure 67. Hard-packed earth desire lines traverse portions of the convento *ruins.*

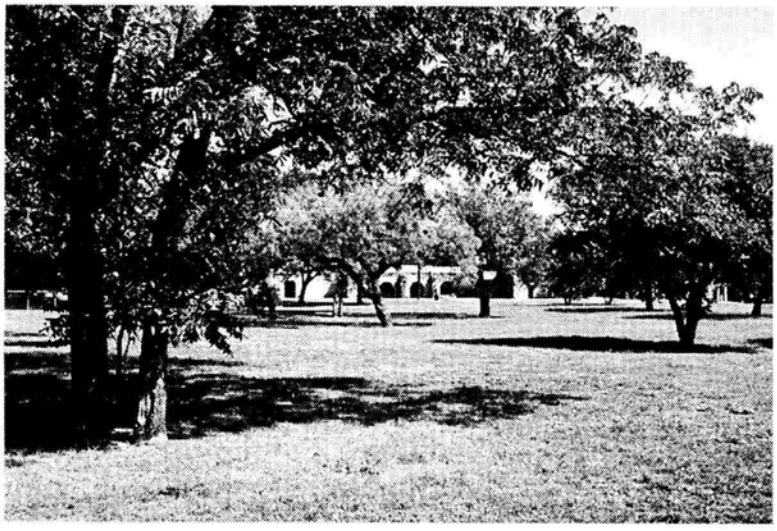


Figure 68. Trees and planting patterns in the open area of the mission foreground are remnants of the former residential landscape prior to the realignment of Mission Road.



Figure 69. The profusion of plant materials east of the church provides visual screening of the former St. John's Seminary property.



Figure 70. The pomegranate hedge north of the church creates a dense screen to the seminary property.

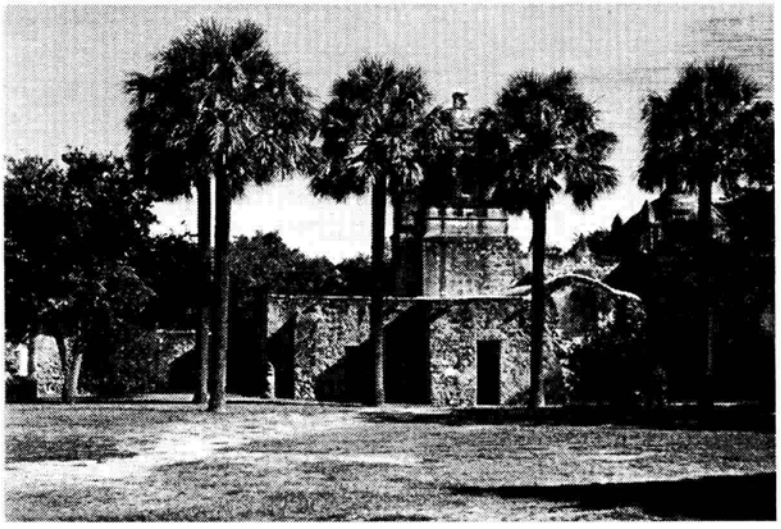


Figure 71. The row of palms south of the convento *forms a dramatic visual boundary between the visitor contact station.*

Plants identified at Mission Concepción in September 1994

Trees:

Pecan	*Carya illinoiensis*
Hackberry	*Celtis laevigata*
Anaqua	*Ehretia anacua*
Loquat	*Eriobotria japonica*
Red cedar	*Juniperus virginiana*
Chinaberry	*Melia azedarach*
Red mulberry	*Morus rubra*
Mesquite	*Prosopis juliflora glandulosa*
Live oak	*Quercus virginiana*
Red oak	*Quercus rubra*
Texas palmetto	*Sabal texana*
Chaste tree	*Vitex agnus-castus*
Afghan pine	*Pinus eldarica*

Shrubs, Vines and Herbaceous Plantings:

Boxwood	*Buxus sp.*
Coral vine	Antigon leptopus
Fan palm	*Chamaerops humilis*
Fig	*Ficus carica*
English ivy	*Hedera helix*
Hosta	*Hosta spp.*
Iris	*Iris spp.*
Lilies	*Lilium spp.*
Oleander	*Nerium oleander*
Pomegranate	*Punica granatum*
Miniature rose	*Rosa spp.*
Mountain laurel	*Sophora secundiflora*
Wandering Jew	*Tradescantia fluminensis*
Spanish dagger yucca	*Yucca torreyi*

Small-scale features

Small-scale features identified during field work in the core area of Mission Concepción are associated with religious practices, site drainage, site furnishings, boundary demarcations, lighting and utilities, and signage. Limited site access prevented determination of small-scale features in the former seminary and children's home playing fields portions of the park.

Religious features include

- statues of the Virgin Mary and a kneeling woman at the grotto *(Figure 50)*,
- statue of St. Francis *(Figure 74)*, and
- tile plaque of the Virgin Mary *(Figure 75)*.

Small-scale religious features associated with Mission Concepción are located in the devotional garden northwest of the church entrance. The grotto contains a standing statue of the Virgin Mary with outstretched arms and a statue of a woman kneeling in supplication. To the east, a white marble statue of St. Francis stands upon a pink granite columnar base. Along a nearby path surrounded by dense vegetation is a plaque of twelve painted ceramic tiles depicting the Virgin in glory, mounted in a metal frame and supported by two pipe posts.

Site drainage features include

- concrete and metal *canales (Figure 76)*,
- mortared stone splash blocks *(Figure 77)*,
- pre-cast concrete splash block,
- earthen/grass-lined swales *(Figure 78)*, and
- remnant of an *acequia lateral (Figure 79)*.

Pre-cast concrete *canales* of contemporary design, with metal flashing and liners, conduct rainwater from the roof of the church, sacristy, and *convento*. In most cases, the water falls to irregularly shaped splash blocks of mortared stone at ground level, although a pre-cast concrete splash block is placed below the *canale* in the northwest corner of the courtyard. The ground generally slopes away from the mission buildings to provide positive drainage, but in the courtyard between the sacristy and *convento* an earthen, grass-lined swale conducts water to a discharge area to the south. There are no visible extant *acequias* within the park core, but a possible remnant of an *acequia lateral*, as indicated by a linear depression, appears to run west-southwest from the grotto area to the open area of the mission foreground.

Site furnishings include

- stone well with iron wellhead *(Figure 80)*,
- wooden benches *(Figure 81)*,
- wood-slat and metal-frame benches *(Figure 82)*,
- wood and metal trash receptacle,
- concrete seats *(Figure 62)*, and
- metal bicycle rack *(Figure 83)*.

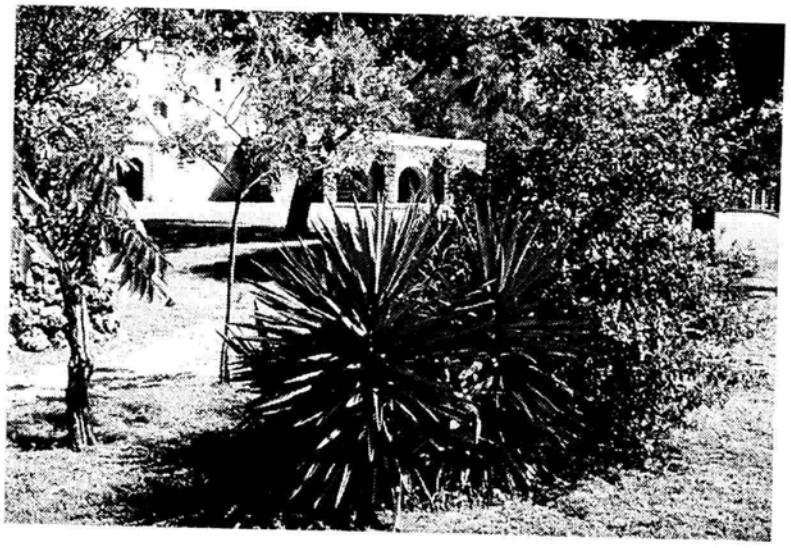


Figure 72. Texas mountain laurel and Spanish dagger are two of the many species that comprise the landscape development of the grotto.



Figure 73. The landscape treatment of the quarry reflects its character as a former shrine site.

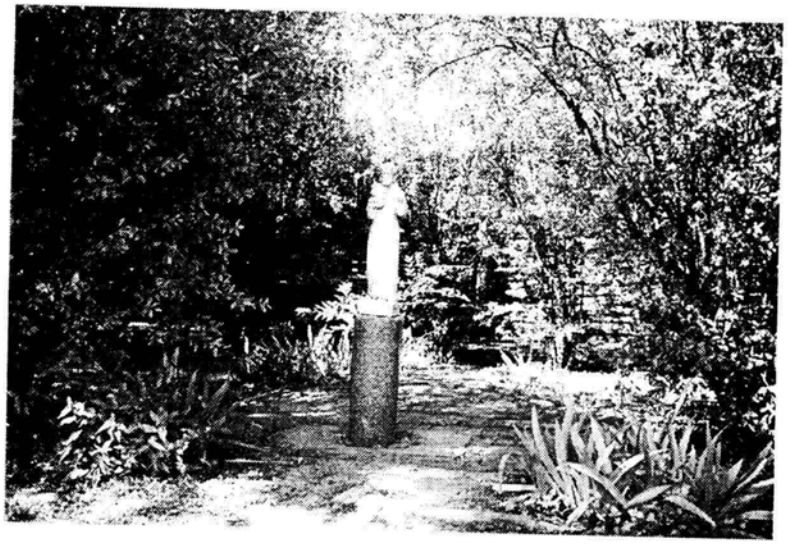


Figure 74. The statue of St. Francis beckons visitors to the devotional garden northwest of the church entrance.



Figure 75. A tile plaque of the Virgin Mary is placed aside a path leading to the grotto in the devotional garden.

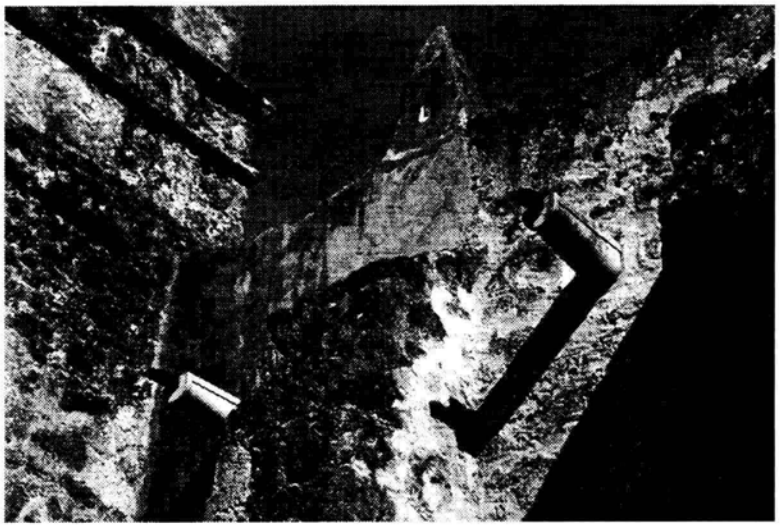


Figure 76. Concrete canales *of contemporary design discharge rainwater from the roofs of the church and other buildings in the mission complex.*



Figure 77. The majority of the splash blocks associated with the canales *are of mortared stone; many do not provide drainage away from the adjacent building wall.*



Figure 78. The courtyard is drained by an earthen, grass-lined swale; the plywood walkway that traverses the courtyard is structured to permit through-drainage.



Figure 79. The low-lying area of the grotto may indicate the alignment of an acequia lateral.



Figure 80. The mission well, with its ornate wellhead, is located just west of the corredor.



Figure 81. Wooden pews from the church were reconditioned for use as benches in the corredor.



Figure 82. Wood and metal benches of contemporary design and a compatible trash receptacle are located in the outdoor seating area of the visitor contact station.



Figure 83. Metal bicycle racks of contemporary design are located in the NPS parking area.

The mission's only extant well is located west of the *corredor*, set amid a semi-oval concrete paved area adjacent to a curvilinear park walkway. The well is constructed of rubble limestone with a smooth, Portland cement mortar cap. The well opening is protected by a grid of black-painted iron bars and wire mesh; an ornate wellhead of black wrought-iron rises from two plinth blocks at the north and south sides of the cap. Two black-painted wood benches with open slat backs—formerly pews from the church and reconditioned for use as public seating—are located in two of the *corredor*'s arched openings facing inward. Benches of a more contemporary design, with horizontal, lacquered wood slats attached to a black-painted steel frame, are located between the brick piers of the outdoor seating area at the visitor contact station. The adjacent metal trash receptacle with integral ash-tray is cylindrical and clad in vertical, lacquered wood slats. Additional seating is located adjacent to the bus stop in the NPS parking area. The stone seats are composed of two stones stacked and mortared together and then painted. Nearby in the grassy median is a linear series of five brown, tubular metal hoop-style bicycle racks arranged in a line.

Small-scale features associated with boundary demarcations include

- wood perimeter fencing *(Figure 84)*,
- chain-link fencing *(Figure 85)*,
- wooden gates, and
- wood bollards with steel cables *(Figure 59)*.

Two types of fencing mark the boundary that divides the mission core from the former seminary portion of the park. The property lines to the north and east of the church and east of the visitor contact station are marked with a wood fence approximately five feet in height. The fence is built of staggered horizontal panels of peeled logs, approximately six feet in length, that are alternately secured between the front two or back two of a series of three upright wood posts. A pair of wood gates, weathered to a dark-brown color and similar to that of the adjacent wood fencing, is located at the northeast corner of the church property. Chain-link fencing that is approximately the same height as the wood fencing and, in places, overgrown with vines, defines the property lines south and northwest of the church. Bollards of logs with steel cable threaded between them are used to discourage vehicular entry to the mission foreground at the old main entry drive to the seminary and adjacent to a crosswalk and accessibility ramp farther south along Mission Road.

Small-scale features associated with lighting and utilities include

- ornamental wrought-iron lamps *(Figure 86)*,
- overhead lighting for special events and security,
- power poles,
- steel stairs *(Figure 87)*,
- HVAC units,
- fire hydrant,
- telephone and electrical wiring structures *(Figure 88)*,
- water meters, and
- sewer manhole.



Figure 84. Wood fencing of staggered, peeled-log panels defines the mission boundary north and east of the church.



Figure 85. Wood fencing east of the visitor contact station adjoins a section of chain link fencing south of the mission courtyard.



Figure 86. Three bracketed, ornamental wrought-iron lamps are located along the east wall of the corredor.

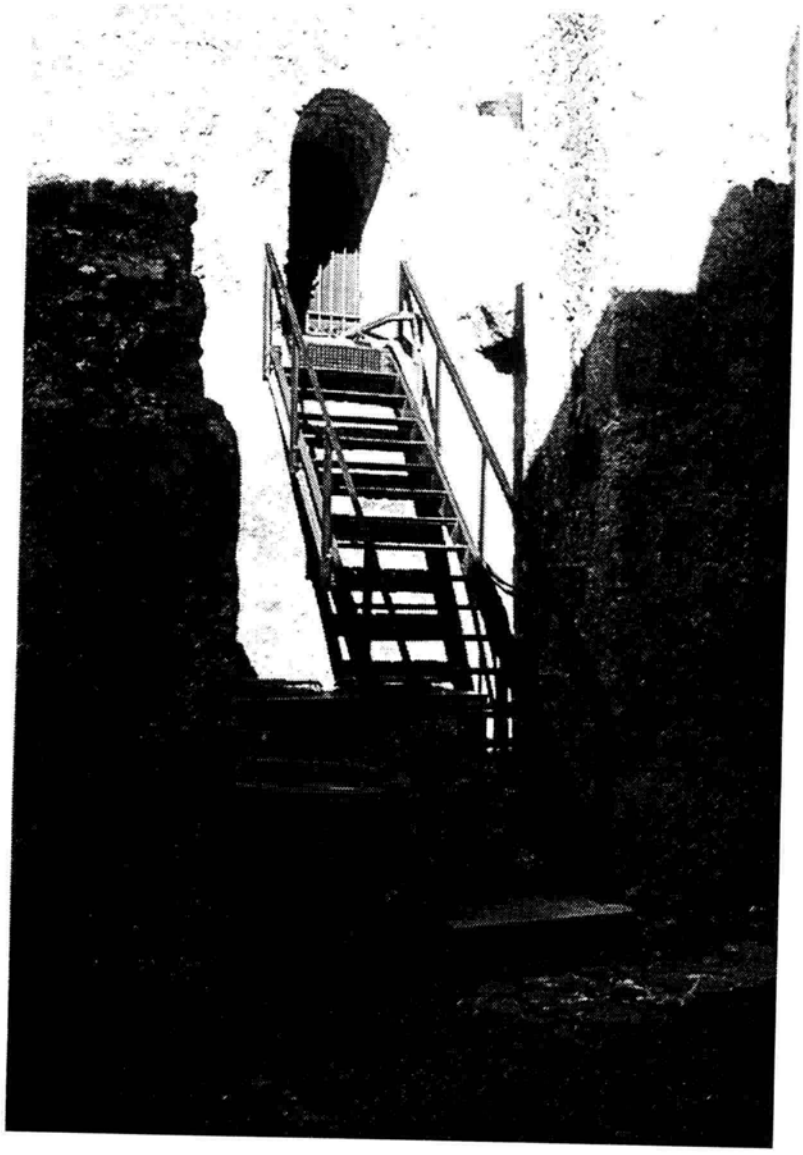


Figure 87. A flight of steel stairs leads from the northwest corner of the courtyard to the second floor of the church's south tower; air-conditioning equipment is clustered at its base.

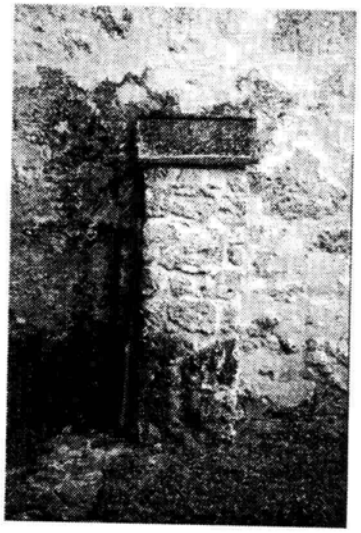


Figure 88. This buttress-like structure conceals an electrical entry in the courtyard when seen from the plywood walkway.

The only ornamental exterior lighting at Mission Concepción is a series of three black wrought-iron electrified lamps, of a bracketed design with hammered glass panels, mounted to the east wall of the *corredor*. A utilitarian floodlight/security light is mounted on a wood power pole east of the grotto, but is no longer served by overhead electric lines and is no longer in use. An additional power pole is located south of the visitor contact station along Felisa Street. A flight of black-painted steel stairs with open risers and angle-iron handrails rises from a concrete pad in the courtyard to provide mechanical access to air handling equipment located in the church choir and on the second floor of the towers. HVAC equipment serving the church is located at the base of the stairs. Opposite the stairs, underground electrical lines emerge to enter the building behind an apparent stone buttress along the west wall of the south transept to provide power to the mission complex. Additional HVAC equipment is located in an exterior alcove on the rear facade of the visitor contact station. One fire hydrant is located in the mission core south of the visitor contact station, adjacent to Felisa Street. Other nearby utility structures include a power supply box, water meter, and sewer manhole. Two additional water meters are located in the lawn of the church precinct approximately seventy-five feet northwest of the well. A telephone switching box is located at the west edge of the grassy mission forecourt opposite E. Theo Avenue.

Features associated with signage include

- park entry signs *(Figure 89)*,
- interpretive information signs *(Figure 90)*,
- bus stop sign *(Figure 92)*, and
- directional and regulatory signs.

The primary NPS identification sign for Mission Concepción is located on the east side of Felisa Street at Mission Road. The horizontal panel, which is supported by two wood posts, has white lettering on a brown background and contains both the emblem of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and the standard arrowhead emblem of the National Park Service. Interpretive sign panels of contemporary design, consisting of a rectangular metal panel with a porcelain-enamel finish supported by two black metal posts or a central pedestal, contain graphics and bilingual text. A lectern-style panel is located at the bus stop/visitor arrival area in the parking lot; upright panels with integral lighting are located within the exhibition spaces of the *convento*. Other signs located in the core area are generally limited to the parking area and road rights-of-way, and consist of a bus stop sign and traffic directional and regulatory signs.

Views and viewsheds

Views of Mission Concepción from surroundings areas are somewhat limited because of the dense screen of vegetation that borders the church to the north and east. The best views are obtained from Mission Road in the quadrant from due west to south of the mission complex. From vantage points west to southwest of the complex there is an unobstructed view of open sky beyond the church towers and dome *(Figure 91)*, but from vantage points farther to the south, the red tile roof of the former St. John's Seminary building can be seen between the towers and may be mistaken for the church roof. A longer-range view of the church towers is available from E. Theo Avenue, looking across the playing fields of the children's home *(Figure 40)*.



Figure 89. The Mission Concepción sign is located adjacent to the park approach drive, at the corner of Mission Road and Felisa Street.

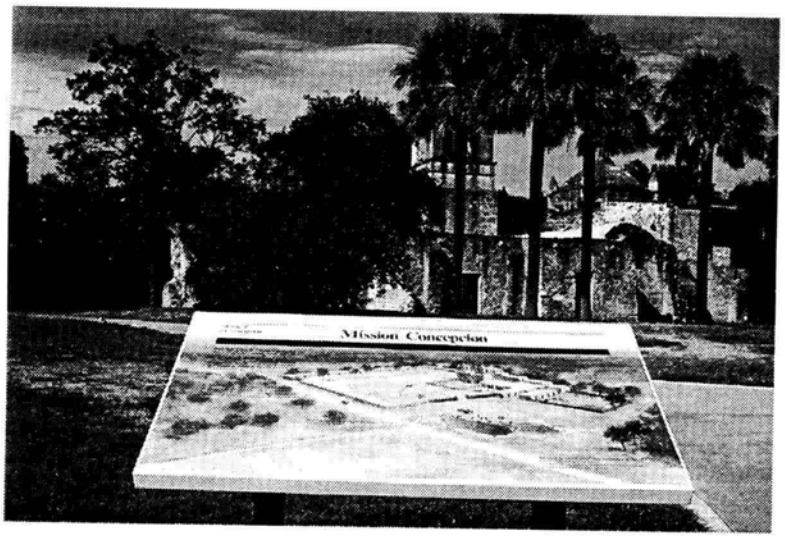


Figure 90. Interpretive panels of contemporary design incorporate lively graphics and bilingual text.



Figure 91. View of mission complex from Mission Road looking east.

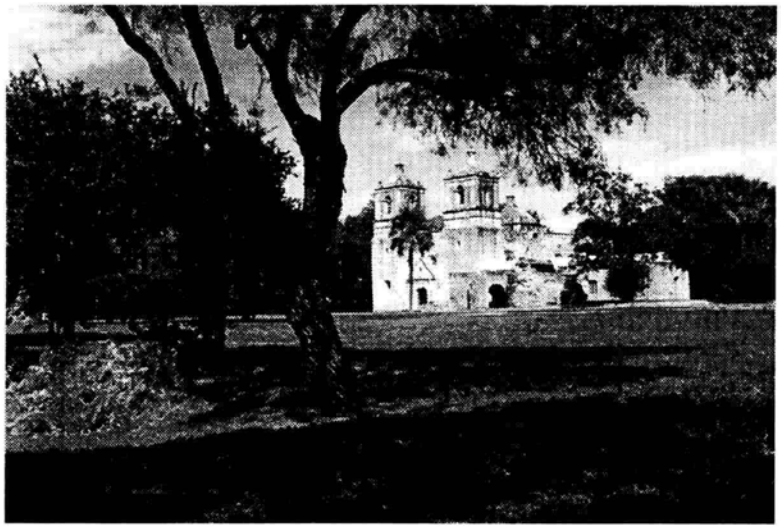


Figure 92. View of mission complex from the quarry looking northeast.

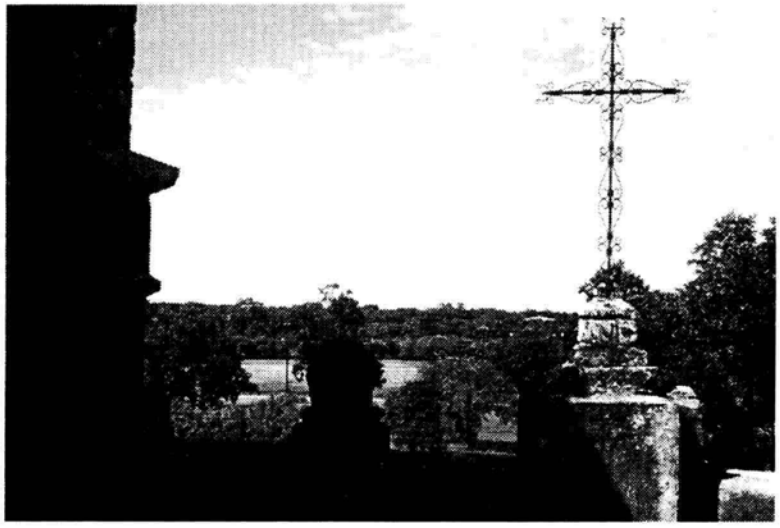


Figure 93. View west towards San Antonio River from the church roof.

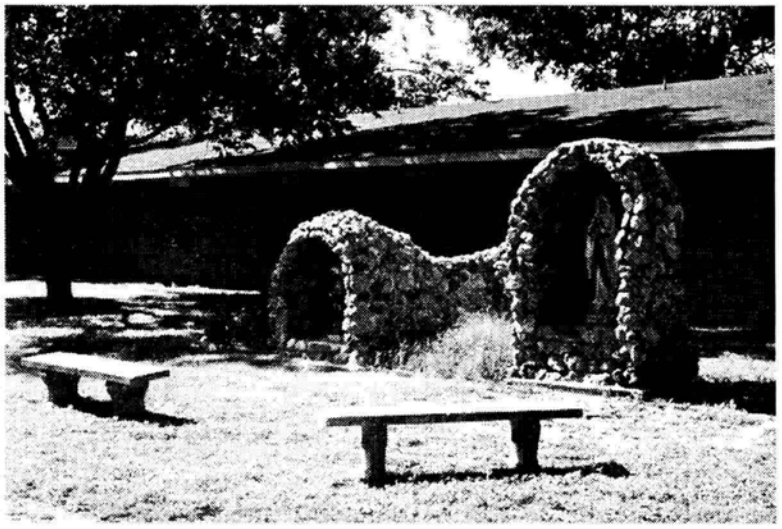


Figure 94. Reconstructed shrine on the grounds of St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home.

Within the core area of the park, the most notable views of the mission complex also occur in the southwestern quadrant. Not surprisingly, this area also provided vantage points for many historic views of the mission complex. A particularly good contemporary view of the mission is available just southeast of the quarry, adjacent to the turning circle of the parking lot *(Figure 92).* Several other characteristic historic views of the mission complex are no longer available due to development on the seminary grounds to the southeast and dense vegetation on the northwest.

Vegetation also somewhat limits views outward from the mission core. The most accessible views are southwest of the St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home complex, and west across the playing fields toward the San Antonio River. This latter view is particularly expansive from the porch of the Father President's office and from the roof of the church, from which vantage points the layers of vegetation representing the former river channel are discernible *(Figure 93).*

Archeological resources

NPS archeologists believe that although "the archeological record at [Mission] Concepción has been damaged by later construction and road work ... a significant proportion of the remains of earlier mission construction survives."[5] Known and anticipated resources include the granary, the south wall of the *convento* kitchen, the adobe church of the first Mission San José, the east, north and west compound walls, various rooms comprising the Indian *pueblo*, the south gate, the plaza, burial sites, refuse deposits, artifacts, *acequia* lines, gardens, and other features associated with mission life.

The earliest known archeological investigations at Mission Concepción occurred during the 1930s, when the locations of old foundations on the south side of the mission were determined,[6] along with evidence of the inner east wall of the compound north of the church.[7] Professional archeological investigations, however, did not occur until 1971-72, when the Texas Historical Commission (THC), under the direction of Dan Scurlock of the state archeologist's office, excavated ninety-seven test pits located primarily north of the quarry in what would have been the west part of the mission compound; these investigations revealed seventeen distinct features, 12,194 fragmentary artifacts, and 14,164 faunal bone remains.[8] Specific features recorded included (as summarized by Scurlock and Fox, 1977) the foundation of the church, a nineteenth-century infant burial, four colonial midden areas, four structural remains (one possible early mission structure remains of the west compound wall), three Anglo-American period middens, and the quarry.[9] Later investigators determined that the THC team had uncovered evidence of both the inner and outer east wall of the compound extending north from the northeast corners of the north transept and apse, as well as evidence of the location of the south wall of the *convento* kitchen.[10]

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[5]Ibid., sheet 8, page 6.
[6]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, *A Preliminary Report on the Archeological Resources of San Antonio National Historical Park*, by James E. Bradford (August 1980), 11.
[7]James E. Ivey and Anne A. Fox, *Archaeological Investigations at Mission Concepción and Mission Parkway. Archaeological Survey Report 118 (draft)*, manuscript in preparation for the Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio (1989), no pagination.
[8]NPS, *A Preliminary Report*, 11-12.
[9]Ibid., 12.
[10]Ivey and Fox, no pagination.

Additional investigations were conducted by the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at the University of Texas at San Antonio during the fall of 1981 and spring of 1982 at selected excavation sites. These investigations determined the size and probable configuration of the granary, located south of the sacristy; uncovered evidence in the south gate area of the adobe church of the first Mission San José, in use by Mission Concepción between 1730 and 1755, at which time the present church was completed; identified portions of the inner and outer north compound walls and confirmed the location of the inner and outer east compound walls, thereby determining the location of the northeast corner of the compound; and revealed additional fragments of the west wall not far from the THC excavations.[11]

Archeological investigations also conducted by CAR occurred as a result of the proposed realignment of Mission Road to the west side of the mission compound, and the construction of the visitor contact station south of the mission buildings. The first phase of investigations in 1987 determined that no Spanish colonial resources would be damaged by the road realignment, and that Mission Road "would pass over without severely damaging the *acequia* that once ran across the area."[12] In 1988, Joseph Labadie worked with CAR to examine the site of the proposed new parking area and Visitor Contact Station. He was assisted by Scott Travis of the National Park Service. The work traced the outline of portions of the first convento of Concepción, and determined that with careful siting, the parking lot and contact station would have no significant impact on the cultural resources buried in these areas.[13] In 1990, with funding provided by the park's friends' group, Los Compadres, CAR undertook a second phase of investigations intended to "find and map the section of the west wall between the old location of Mission Road and the proposed new location." This effort resulted in the determination of the northwest corner of the mission compound, approximately forty feet due west of the southernmost brick gatepost of the old main entrance to the seminary.[14]

Boundary demarcations

Several types of boundary demarcations indicate transitions between land uses within the core area of the park, between the core and adjacent portions of the park, and between the park as a whole and neighboring land uses and properties. Fencing is by far the dominant type of boundary demarcation within the park and between the park and adjacent, non-park areas. Wood fencing defines the boundary line between and separates the mission from the former seminary. It also provides visual screening north and east of the church and east of the visitor contact station. Moderate to dense vegetation, notably a line of pomegranate bushes along the northern fenceline reinforces the sense of boundary established by the fence. Chain-link fencing defines other portions of the boundary with the former seminary grounds, most conspicuously on either side of the seminary entrance from Mission Road. A shorter section of chain-link fencing occurs south of

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[11]Ibid.

[12]Anne A. Fox, *Archaeological Investigation to Locate the Northwest Corner of Mission Concepción. Archaeological Survey Report, No. 212* (Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1992), 3. The testing for the northwest corner of the compound was funded by Los Compadres, the friends group for San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

[13]Joseph H. Labadie, Archaeological and Historical Investigations for the Mission Road Realignment Project, San Antonio, Texas. Archaeological Survey Report, No. 173 with contributions by Anne A. Fox, David D. Turner, and I. Waynne Cox (Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1989).

[14]Fox, *Archaeological Investigations to Locate the Northwest Corner*, 3.

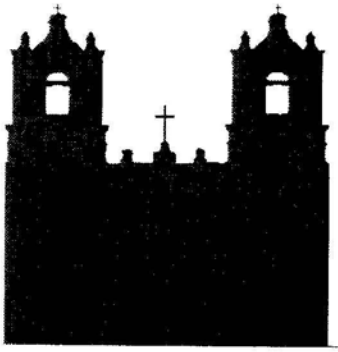
the sacristy. Chain-link fencing also defines the northern, eastern, and southern boundaries of the children's home playing fields along E. Theo Avenue, Mission Road, and the balance of the children's home property, respectively; additional chain-link fencing appears to separate the east and west baseball fields. The western boundary of the western playing field adjacent to Concepción Park is unfenced but defined by a dirt road leading to a site for dumping fill materials and by the overgrown former alignment of the San Antonio River.

The old main entrance to the seminary at Mission Road consists of four red-brick gateposts finished with brown and black-splattered paint, and accented with cut limestone caps and bases with chamfered edges *(Figure 59)*. The northern and southern gateposts are located somewhat forward of the central two gateposts. The gateposts are linked by low walls that are ogee-shaped in plan and surmounted by black-painted, wrought-iron picket fencing. Large wrought-iron gates, approximately six feet in height, span the opening between the central two gateposts. The new main entrance at E. Mitchell Street features two red-brick gateposts with similar limestone detailing and black wrought-iron gates *(Figure 60)*.

A line of palm trees defines the boundary between the *convento* and the visitor contact station, yet permits nearly unobstructed views and circulation. West of the mission complex, the dirt path of the former Mission Road alignment divides the church precinct from the more open lawn area beyond almost imperceptibly.

Cultural traditions

The design and establishment of Mission Concepción are a direct reflection of the cultural traditions of colonial Spanish settlers in the Americas and, more specifically, of Franciscan missionaries on the Texas frontier in the eighteenth century. With the secularization of the missions, much church land came under private ownership. Private owners, of Native American, Spanish, and other ancestries, established farming and property ownership patterns that influence many present-day boundaries. No subsequent cultural pattern has been identified. With urbanization, agricultural land use patterns and practices have given way to vernacular and popular residential and commercial forms. The passage of time and the consequent deterioration of many mission buildings also influenced the extent to which early cultural traditions are reflected in the landscape of Mission Concepción today.



4 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

4 ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mission Concepción, one of the five San Antonio missions established between 1718 and 1731, has contributed significantly to the broad patterns of the history of San Antonio, Texas, the American Southwest, and the nation. Mission Concepción, established in 1731 along the east bank of the San Antonio River, was part of the Spanish colonial system for the establishment and management of a defensive and settlement frontier in the American Southwest. Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña (Mission Concepción), a National Historic Landmark since 1972, is one of the four missions included in the San Antonio Missions National Register historic district. With the other three San Antonio missions (Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, Mission San Juan Capistrano, and Mission San Francisco de la Espada) in the park and Mission San Antonio de Valero, popularly known as the Alamo (and not included in the park), it contributes to a general understanding of the role of the mission in Spanish-colonial settlement in the American Southwest and, more specifically, in the San Antonio region.

Mission Concepción is significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. It meets the listing requirements of the National Register under Criteria A, C, and D. As an individual property, Mission Concepción has significant associations with Spanish colonial history, is a significant cultural landscape on the site of a principal frontier mission, has architectural significance as a rare and well-preserved example of eighteenth-century Spanish ecclesiastical architecture, is an excellent and rare example of Spanish-colonial decorative arts, and is a significant Spanish-colonial archeological site.

Criterion A

Mission Concepción, which was the headquarters of the Querétaran missions of Texas for most of the colonial period until 1772 when the Querétaran missionaries left Texas, possesses significance in the areas of the military, religious, economic, and cultural history associated with the Texas frontier. It is associated with the everyday lives, settlement patterns, and cultural traditions of both the Spanish missionaries and the Native-American residents who created and occupied the mission site during the colonial period.

Criterion B

Mission Concepción does not appear to have significant associations with specific individuals significant in local, state, regional, or national history. Instead, it is associated with the history of groups of Spanish colonizers and Native Americans, as discussed under Criterion A.

Criterion C

Mission Concepción reflects the design characteristics of an eighteenth-century Spanish-colonial mission landscape, specifically, proximity to the river, the distinct spatial organization of the core historic site, as well as exceptionally well-preserved, largely unaltered early examples of church,

convento, sacristy, and baptistery, portions of which predate and provide precedents for Spanish-colonial architecture in California. Mission Concepción, which possesses especially well-preserved examples of decorative painted plaster and carved stone details, has particular significance as the earliest known extant example of mission decorative arts in the American Southwest.

Criterion D

Mission Concepción has yielded and is likely to continue to yield important information about the Spanish colonial period, including its settlement patterns, agriculture, and landscape spatial organization. Below-ground resources have the ability to provide information concerning such non-extant above-ground features as the compound wall, the adobe church, the *convento*, the granary, *acequias*, and workrooms. Some archeological traces apparently remain of the earlier Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera as well as the first Mission San José, which also may have occupied the site prior to Nájera (see pp. 2-2 to 2-9). The site also may be expected to yield archeological information concerning the Native-American Coahuiltecans who occupied the San Antonio River valley before the Spanish arrived.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mission Concepción possesses extant above- and below-ground cultural landscape resources associated with the Spanish colonial period (1731-1794), which is a notable period in the history of San Antonio, Texas, the American Southwest, and the United States. Future archeological studies may reveal that Mission Concepción also possesses significant resources associated with Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera, which occupied the site before Concepción, and perhaps the first site of Mission San José, which may have been located here before Nájera, as well as the prehistoric period associated with the Native-American Coahuiltecans who occupied the San Antonio River valley prior to the arrival of the Spanish. (See pp. 2-2 to 2-9 for the discussion of these possible earlier occupations.)

Mission Concepción also possesses resources associated with later periods of historical development. The significance of those periods, 1860-1911 and 1911-1947, however, cannot be assessed accurately at this time given the lack of existing comparative information available for similar sites and the scope restraints of this CLR. Future work may justify the significance of these later periods of development.

The colonial mission period provided the original spatial organization and land use and land development patterns which influenced all subsequent development and uses. The spatial organization of the building cluster is still apparent today. This period gives the site its unique identity and primary significance in the Spanish colonial history of San Antonio, Texas, the American Southwest, and the nation. All subsequent periods represent the evolution of both the physical fabric and the human culture associated with the site. The years 1794 to 1911 were marked by the secularization and physical dismantling of much of the mission landscape and a subsequent reorganization to meet the changing needs of everyday secular life. Future investigations may reveal information concerning the effects of mission dissolution on both the physical environs and the cultural life of the former mission population and their descendants. This transition period, however, has not been evaluated for significance at Concepción since other San Antonio missions, notably Espada, appear to retain more of the resources that may contribute to a better understanding of the interim period.

ANALYSIS BY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTIC

Overall landscape organization and patterns of spatial organization

The spatial organization of Mission Concepción has developed and changed over time in response to both natural and cultural influences. During the period of significance, site organization reflected the layout typical of Texas missions: a church and *convento* surrounded by a *pueblo* or Native-American village, and, by 1760, a defensive wall. The land surrounding the wall was used for collective farming, gardens, and orchards, all of which supported the religious community. Beyond the farmlands were the *ejidos*, the common lands that provided land for the collection of firewood, hunting of wildlife, construction materials, and pasture for grazing animals. Before the construction of the defensive wall, the residences of the Native Americans were clustered near the church in orderly rows. The construction of the compound wall after 1755 in response to the threat of Apache raids established a geometrical boundary between inside and outside, and provided a well-ordered sense of space for the community.

Water resources played an important role in the siting and development of the mission compound. The original site selection for Mission Concepción was based upon the proximity of a level, buildable parcel of land to a section of the San Antonio River that could be dammed to irrigate the mission fields. The *acequia* system of irrigation ditches was based upon Spanish agricultural traditions. The channels irrigated the agricultural fields and provided water for the mission inhabitants; a section of the *acequia* ran through the center of the compound. Drinking water, however, came from wells located within the compound.

Circulation during the period of significance was generally informal. The primary road associated with Mission Concepción ran north/south and linked the city of San Antonio with each of the missions. The road ran parallel to Concepción's compound wall during the period of significance.

During the secularization period, the compound wall fell into disrepair, as did the Indian quarters that housed the Native Americans associated with the mission. The complete abandonment and collapse of the Indian quarters left no occupants in the mission. Adjacent farmlands were purchased by a number of individuals over time and administered separately. With the demise of the compound wall, the road parallel to the wall was realigned over time, cutting diagonally across the space which had once been enclosed within the walls. The agricultural lands were still used in part for crops, but the strong sense of organization affiliated with the mission during the Spanish colonial period no longer existed. Over time, the *acequia* filled with silt and ceased to be visible above-ground.

The twentieth century brought a renewed interest in the mission both as a religious institution and as a historic resource worthy of preservation and restoration. By the mid-twentieth century, however, much of the land around the church had undergone urban development, including two adjacent parcels that had become a seminary and a children's home.

While the church continues to reflect its original design intent, materials, and form, its associated landscape is unrecognizable. Twentieth-century alterations to the organization of the mission landscape have included an additional realignment of Mission Road; the construction of a series of institutionally scaled buildings, oriented similarly to the mission church, related to the seminary; the construction of a children's home; and additional circulation systems connecting these

developments with existing roads. Fences and bands of vegetation spatially separate these new developments from the church and the open space that remains to its west. Additional residential areas have also been developed to the northwest and southeast of the church.

Response to natural features

During the Spanish colonial period, responses to natural features included the original siting of the mission to take advantage of the level and relatively open parcel of land near the San Antonio River that provided enough natural elevation to allow detection of impending raids by hostile forces; the establishment of a system of *acequias* to irrigate the mission's agricultural endeavors; the siting of crop land in suitable soils and with suitable topography near the compound; and the siting of ranchlands on less fertile land beyond. Another response to natural features included the use of the region's native limestone in the construction of the church and associated buildings, and the compound walls. A source of stone was discovered just west of the church; a quarry was established on the site of this source as early as 1745. Drinking water came from wells. Further investigation is necessary to determine the date of establishment of the well located near the church; the well appears in photographs of the church by the mid- to late-nineteenth century. An additional response to natural features that appears during this time is the plantings of trees around the church yard. It is likely that these trees were planted to provide shade and to enhance the courtyard aesthetically. Little is known regarding compound vegetation during the Spanish colonial period.

Over time, the connection between the original responses to natural features and current land holdings and uses has been lost due to such changes as the realignment of the San Antonio River and urban encroachment. Contemporary responses to natural features include the planting of shade trees for the comfort of visitors, the siting of benches along paths and beneath existing trees, and the construction of a pergola at the visitor contact station, also to provide shade at the site.

Land uses and activities *(Exhibit R)*

Current land uses at Mission Concepción differ markedly from those that existed during the Spanish colonial period when the site was developed for land uses related to a self-sufficient community based on religious life. Eighteenth-century land uses included religious, open space/ceremonial, residential, agriculture (crop land) and agriculture (pasture / grazing land), cemetery, industrial, service/support/storage, defense, and circulation. These historic uses were clearly ordered and organized on the land. The central focus of the compound was the church and *convento* complex where religious functions occurred. Clustered around this core were a number of industrial and service structures, such as the granary and storage facilities. The cemetery was also located in close proximity to the church. Residential buildings for Native Americans comprised the interior edge of the compound wall; personnel affiliated with the church were housed in the *convento*. Elsewhere within the compound, the open space was used for work, to corral animals, and for ceremonial and community gatherings. The mission *acequia* ran through the center of the compound, providing water for livestock, kitchen gardens, cooking, and bathing. The exterior of the compound walls served a defensive purpose to protect the inhabitants from warring Apaches. Beyond the walls of the compound, the land was used to cultivate crops and pasture livestock, although most animals were relocated to a general mission ranch site during the eighteenth century. A quarry that provided much of the stone for the compound was established just beyond the compound walls in the mid-eighteenth century. Circulation during this period

included the road connecting the five missions, gates to the west, east, and south leading into and out of the compound, secondary routes south of the compound, and generally informal circulation within the compound.

During the secularization period, religious and residential functions continued to occur within the church and *convento* structures. Other land uses during this period included residential, agriculture (crop land) and agriculture (pasture), and open space/undeveloped. The residential structures for the Native Americans and the defensive compound wall deteriorated throughout the nineteenth century, however. The cemetery also fell into disrepair and actually began to be used to corral animals. Much of the land associated with the original compound became open space that was informally used for crop and pasture agriculture. The stone rubble from the compound wall ruins was reused by nearby residents during the nineteenth century to build new houses, walls, and other structures. Further investigation is needed to determine whether the quarry was still used as a source of building stone.

During the twentieth century, the focus of the site shifted again, although the church continued to maintain an active parish. Adjacent parcels were developed with institutional facilities, including a children's home and a seminary. The area around the church was developed with gardens, service areas, religious shrines, recreational facilities, and other, more formal uses, while the remainder of the land beyond the church remained undeveloped open space. Open space was, and continues to be, used for ceremonial and community functions. In 1978 NPS assumed administrative responsibility of the site as a National Historical Park, and the landscape became associated with visitor services, interpretive programs, and museum functions, although the church continues to this day to be associated with religious functions.

Buildings and structures

The first buildings constructed on the site of Mission Concepción included *jacal* and adobe residences, a small chapel, and a *convento*; some of these buildings may be associated with what may have been the first site of Mission San José. Constructed between 1720 and 1721, the buildings may have been enclosed by a stone wall during this period. Mission San José moved to its existing site in 1721 or early 1722. Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera was established on the site about 1722, and may have used the *jacal* buildings between 1722 and 1726 when the site was abandoned (see the discussion on pp. 2-2 to 2-9). In 1731 Mission Concepción was established on the site. The *jacal* buildings were again put to use by the new mission while more permanent adobe structures were built. A 1731 inventory of the mission notes the presence of thatched roof *jacales* for Indian quarters, friars' quarters, the church, and storehouses that were in use at the time. Work was begun on a flat-roofed stone granary and an adobe *convento* and church in 1733.

By 1745, Indian quarters still consisted of *jacal* structures, and the stone wall, perhaps built for Mission San José on this site in 1720, was still in use. However, a stone *convento*, soldiers' quarters, and the granary had been completed. Construction of a new stone church and a new vaulted *convento* were underway by this time. The cruciform-plan church that was constructed of rubble limestone and sandstone laid with lime mortar was based on the plans of a master mason from northern Mexico and included paintings on the front facade, the bell towers, and the interior. Completed in 1755, it has changed little from its original form and is still used today for special

functions and requests. During the mid- to late-nineteenth century, local religious personnel involved with the missions took a more active interest in Concepción; renovations during this period included cleaning out of the church and white washing of walls. The sacristy and Father President's Office, both completed *circa* 1745 and constructed of rubble limestone, closely reflect their appearance at the time of construction. The original wooden roof of the Father President's Office has been replaced by a metal shed roof. The L-shaped *convento* consisted of six barrel-vaulted rooms and an attached corridor. The front facade of the *convento* was painted similarly to the church facade. "Painted surfaces have been conserved by NPS in the *convento* library ... and have remained untouched in the west corridor of the *convento*; the baptistery in the north bell tower; the Chapel of San Miguel in the south bell tower; the exterior of the facade and bell towers; and the sacristy."[1] The building fell into disrepair during the secularization period. Although the building was renovated in 1950, "portions of a vaulted corridor on the east side have fallen, as have two walls of the southernmost room of the central row, the southern wall of a room built into the west corridor, and the western half of the westernmost room. Integrity of walls adjacent to these collapsed portions have suffered as a result and have required considerable stabilization. As a result, two new walls have been added across the ends of the vaults to enclose surviving portions of partially fallen rooms, and a buttress built against the east wall of the *convento* to prevent further wall collapse."[2] The roofs of the church and *convento* have been patched to eliminate leaking. For a few years there was a second roof built above the vaulted roof of the convento.

Historic buildings and structures that exist as archeological resources in the contemporary landscape include the Indian quarters, the first and second compound walls, three gates, the granary, a chicken coop, a privy, and industrial buildings such as a blacksmith shop. In 1757 work began on the construction of an enclosing stone defensive wall for the compound. The first mission compound was originally enclosed by a wall that had fallen into disrepair by the time the new church was constructed. Apache raids of the San Antonio missions led to the enclosure of all five missions within stone defensive walls by 1760. At Concepción, the wall was completed to the west, north, and east. To the south, the compound was enclosed with wood fencing. Twenty-four residences, the Indian quarters, were constructed along the interior of the stone compound wall by 1772. Three gates, located in the northwestern, and south and east central sections of the walls, marked entrance points into the compound. Along with the wall, most of these structures had fallen into disrepair by the beginning of the secularization period, and they were never rebuilt. Later, area residents collected the stone from these structures for their own construction uses. The granary similarly fell into disrepair; ruins of its stone walls were dismantled for use in other building projects. Temporary wood or *jacal* structures, such as the chicken coop and privy apparently were not of durable construction. It is likely they did not endure as long as the stone structures, although little historical information exists regarding these structures.

Many twentieth-century buildings constructed on the site survive in the contemporary landscape. They include the thirteen buildings associated with St. John's Seminary, buildings constructed as part of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home, the NPS visitor contact station, and the residential, commercial, and industrial development associated with San Antonio urban growth that has encroached on the lands once affiliated with Mission Concepción. The St. John's Seminary

[1]U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), *Cultural Landscape Recommendations: Mission Concepción* (March 1989), 21.
[2]NPS, *Cultural Landscape Recommendations*, 21.

administration building was constructed in 1920 and appears to have changed little since its establishment. An additional building in the area appears on a 1939 aerial; the remainder of the buildings appear to have been constructed after 1940. Construction of St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home was approved as early as 1913. Both this building and one additional structure, which are currently included in a complex of buildings on the site of the children's home, appear in a 1939 aerial photograph. The remainder of the buildings appear to have been constructed after 1940. The NPS visitor contact station was added to the mission landscape in 1991.

Cluster arrangements

Based on traditional Spanish religious community design and layout, Mission Concepción originally consisted of a tight cluster of religious and community buildings, surrounded by ordered rows of Indian quarters. The religious and community buildings, including the church, *convento*, and sacristy, formed the core of the compound. The Indian quarters were located nearby. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the compound was enclosed by a rectangular stone wall used for defensive purposes. The church complex remained the core of the compound following construction of the wall. The Indian quarters, however, were relocated to form the inner edge of the wall system. The buildings and the wall then formed the outer edge of a central common open space.

During the secularization period, the compound wall and the Indian quarters fell into ruins, and the strongly ordered mission cluster was lost. The church, *convento*, and sacristy remained standing throughout the period, however. These buildings continue in the contemporary landscape to form a tight cluster of inter-related structures and spaces.

A contemporary cluster associated with the former St. John's Seminary dates from the early to mid-twentieth century. The seven large buildings forming an edge to the mission to the east are similarly aligned, arranged into two distinct rows, and similarly massed.

Circulation systems

Important site circulation at Mission Concepción has historically consisted of the main north/south route connecting the site to the other missions and to the city of San Antonio, and secondary circulation leading from the church compound to outlying support regions such as the *labores*. During the Spanish colonial period and the *doctrina* period that followed, circulation within and around the compound was informal. Three gates allowed for passage into and out of the compound during the Spanish colonial period. These were located in the northwest corner, and in the central portion of the southern and eastern walls of the compound. The southern gate appears to have connected with a secondary road leading south from the mission compound.

During the secularization period, an important change occurred to the alignment of the road connecting the missions, hereafter referred to as Mission Road. As the compound wall fell into disrepair, a route connecting the northern portion of the early mission road and the smaller secondary road to the south of the compound were linked via the northwest compound gate, effectively establishing a circulation pattern cutting diagonally across the compound's open space. This alignment of Mission Road was used until the beginning of NPS administration of the site in 1978. In 1989-1990, Mission Road was rerouted to the west to provide the church and other historic

resources with a foreground of open space. In 1990 NPS constructed a new parking area southwest of the church and *convento* on the site of an earlier parking lot that predated the road alignment. The new lot replaced the smaller inadequate parking lot that had been in service since the 1960s.

Contemporary pedestrian circulation leading to the church occurs from the south. The approach is consistent with the direction of historic approach routes from secondary circulation systems. Contemporary circulation consists of walks, roads, and paths constructed variously of concrete, brick, asphalt, and wood. Historic circulation most likely occurred along paths and roads of hard-packed earth, possibly mixed with gravel. Informal earthen paths that local foot traffic has worn into the soil criss-cross the site; the most prominent occurs along the alignment of Mission Road that dates from the secularization period.

Vegetation

At the time that Mission Concepción was first established, upland areas were most likely dominated by meadows and grassland prairies before settlement and by farmland after settlement. Shade trees such as live oak, mesquite, and pecan may have also been associated with the uplands. In the San Antonio River valleys, the dominant vegetative composition was comprised of mixed hardwoods such as willows, cottonwoods, elms, mulberries, and hackberries. Vegetation associated with the early mission included the crops that were grown in the *labores* west of the compound, and any kitchen garden, shade tree, or fruit tree species that may have been planted within the compound walls. Further investigation is needed to determine the extent of plantings associated with the compound interior.

During the *doctrina* period, the land within the compound was often used to grow crops. Areas beyond the compound wall continued to support agriculture, although the endeavors were not as organized as during the Spanish colonial period. Further investigation is needed to determine whether ornamental gardens were associated with the church, *convento*, or other aspects of the mission during the secularization period.

The twentieth century brought many changes to Mission Concepción, including construction of new adjacent complexes, urbanization, and historic resource preservation and restoration. The seminary and children's home located northeast and southwest of the mission church included ornamental plantings and gardens. The Franciscan restoration of the church included planting programs. The line of palm trees, many of the extant shade trees, and the hedge located north of the church date from the beautification efforts of the first half of the twentieth century. Later site improvements include a cactus garden and grotto plantings. In the contemporary landscape, the site is dominated by meadow grasses and shade trees. Further investigation is needed to determine the relationship of the contemporary vegetative landscape to that which existed during the period of significance. Tracts of open space west of Mission Road, in addition to the mission foreground area, contribute to the rural character of the site. The lowered water table that occurred as a result of the 1952 river channelization has adversely affected deep-rooted trees on site, such as pecans. Maintenance efforts targeted at resource protection and visitor safety have led to over-pruning, and a park-like lawn setting that is inappropriate to the historic character of the site. In some cases, fast-growing trees and shrubs have grown up unchecked around the site. Their presence contributes to a less maintained appearance that may not have existed historically.

Small-scale features

According to known documentary sources, small-scale features associated with the Spanish colonial landscape include wells, wood fencing, and drainage *canales*. Other features may have included outdoor cooking facilities, wood barrels to collect rainwater from the *canales*, footbridges for crossing the *acequias*, and large utensils used in the industries located at Mission Concepción, such as blacksmithing and weaving. Further investigation is needed to determine whether or not the well that exists in the compound today is located in the same area as a well dating from the Spanish colonial period. The stone structure surrounding the well is known to have replaced wood staging dating from the nineteenth century. Wood fencing was used to enclose the southern end of the mission compound and the livestock corrals that existed south of the first church during the Spanish colonial period. In the 1930s, wooden *canales* were installed in the roof parapets which drained toward the inside of the compound. That installation was conjectural—based on the architect's research. During a 1960s, State of Texas re-roofing of the Indian quarters, concrete *canales*—formed to resemble hollowed-out logs—were installed; these *canales* drain to the exterior of the compound. Since that time, there have been some concrete repairs and metal extensions to the *canales*.

Early-twentieth-century additions to the landscape included stone-lined planting beds associated with the Franciscan effort to restore the mission, earthen drainage swales in areas such as the south patio, additional fencing, including wood and wire and chain link, religious statuary, and tree stakes and cages. Vernacular features added to the landscape in the early twentieth century included informally arranged potted plants, often planted in readily available containers such as re-used coffee cans. This type of potted vegetation still is characteristic of residential settings in the mission vicinity and is visible in early twentieth-century photographs of the mission. A variety of small-scale features were added by NPS to the landscape of Mission Concepción in the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park since 1978. Most of these features were associated with visitor use and site interpretation; they include lighting fixtures, signs, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, wood or wood and metal benches, wood bollards, and wood gates. Other features, such as steel stairs and HVAC units, were added by the church. Some features, such as the existing concrete and metal *canales*, and the mortared stone and pre-cast concrete splash blocks, are reminiscent of historic features but are constructed of contemporary materials.

Views and viewsheds

Although specific views to important landscape features were not well documented during the Spanish colonial period, access to long-range views of the surrounding mission lands would have been important to compound inhabitants who feared raids by Apaches. Defensive features allowing guards to keep watch over the mission were most likely incorporated into the walls. The view to the San Antonio River, likewise, would have existed outside the walls. The road connecting the missions may have provided views north to the city and south to those arriving from the other missions.

During secularization, the compound walls deteriorated. It is unlikely that views for defense were particularly important to area inhabitants. Views to the church and *convento* were most likely possible along Mission Road and from the river. From the church, views to the river and the west continued to be available.

Twentieth-century changes such as construction of the seminary and the children's home effectively blocked views to the east, and partially blocked views to the southwest. Contemporary fencing of the seminary is composed of thick, horizontally stacked logs that block views into the area from the church. Distant views of open space to the west are still possible from the church, although it is no longer possible to view the river as a result of the channelization project of 1952 whereby the river was realigned farther to the west. The new alignment of Mission Road provides good views of the church facade, as does the pedestrian path between the parking area and the front door of the church.

Archeological resources *(Exhibit S)*

Known archeological resources dating from the period of significance and later periods exist within the park boundary, including the foundations of the compound walls and the Indian quarters, the foundations of outbuildings associated with the church, such as the granary, room floors, cemeteries and other burial sites, trash pits, the stone quarry, traces of early *jacal* construction, the *acequia*, circulation systems, and, possibly, fence lines associated with corrals and agriculture. Currently, many of these resources are not interpreted for the visitor.

Extant structures such as the church and *convento* exhibit "broken vaults, arches, walls, and scars on standing fabric."[3] Many of the structures demonstrate evidence of early and sometimes inappropriate restoration or renovation efforts; in some cases, the concrete that was used to fill cracks and repair holes obscures a clear reading of the resource. Additional archeological investigations are likely to yield important new information about the landscape during the Spanish colonial and *doctrina* periods.

Boundary demarcations

Historically, boundary demarcations associated with Mission Concepción included the stone compound walls, which provided a clear domain for the community as well as a defensive structure against invaders, and fence lines delineating the cemetery, corrals, agricultural fields, and parts of the compound that were not walled. When the stone walls were no longer maintained, fencing continued to be used in and around the mission area to delineate ownership patterns for agricultural and residential areas. Fencing was used at the church to separate it from surrounding activities and from Mission Road, which, by this time, had been realigned directly west of the church. Further investigation is necessary to determine whether hedgerows of plant materials were used to distinguish boundaries or were allowed to develop naturally along property lines.

Both the children's home and seminary, which were constructed in the early twentieth century, used fencing to define their properties. In the contemporary landscape, wood and chain-link fencing mark the extent of the children's home and seminary properties. Mission Road became a boundary of sorts during the twentieth century, separating the church from the historic *labores*, and from the remains of much of the compound walls, as well as from the quarry site. Mission Road has been relocated so that portions of the original compound landscape long separated from the rest are now more easily accessible from the church. Neither the park boundary nor the extent of the historic compound is clear or evident to the visitor today.

[3]Ibid., 27.

Legend

- Park boundary
- Buildings and structures
- Roads, parking, and paths
- Tree cover
- River
- Rock outcrop or stone landscape feature
- Fence
- Road trace
- Centerline of road

San Antonio River

Parkview Drive

E. Theo Avenue

Mission Road

Mitchell Street

Former St. John's Seminary

Kalleyer Street

Felisa Street

Isabel Street

Children's Home Playing Fields

Concepción Park

St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home

Known Contributing Archeological Features Legend

1. Defensive compound wall
2. Northwest gate
3. "Indian Quarters"
4. Road leading to missions
5. Approximate location of low stone wall, possible component of Missions San José and San Francisco Xavier de Nájera
6. Approximate location of cemetery
7. East central gate
8. Approximate location of stone wall
9. Approximate location of south central gate
10. Approximate location of palisade
11. Cloisters

N

Not to Scale

Map Sources:

United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September, 1994; USDI, NPS, Historical American Building Survey, *Addendum to Mision Nuestra Señora de la Purísma Concepción Acuña*, sheet 11 of 12, Survey No. Tx-319, 1986; Fox, Anne A., *Archeological Investigation to Locate the Northwest Corner of Mission Concepción, San Antonio, Béxar County, Texas*, Center for Archeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio, Archeological Survey Report, No.212, *Figure 2. Project Map*, 1992; and USDI, NPS, SWRO, (map of the Mission Concepción courtyard archeological investigations), unpublished, Ivey, 1988.

KNOWN CONTRIBUTING ARCHEOLOGICAL FEATURES
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit S. Known Contributing Archeological Features

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Cultural traditions

Cultural traditions associated with Mission Concepción include religious and community activities and events such as religious holidays, weddings, and funerals, and architectural designs and construction practices associated with the eighteenth-century construction of the church and the mission complex. Historically, the religious events associated with Mission Concepción were much more extensive. The mission, however, has served the community continuously as a religious gathering place affording a variety of activities since its construction in the early eighteenth century. Continuing efforts, such as ethnographic studies and oral histories, by NPS and others may reveal additional information about how the landscape was used.

Architecturally, the church, *convento*, and sacristy complex reflect the training of masons in northern Mexico in the eighteenth century. The Tuscan style reflected at Concepción featured colorful wall painting on the facade. Some remnants of historic painting over colonial plasters still remain, but are barely visible. The vaulted roofs of the *convento*, however, which are not based on traditional northern Mexican baroque architecture, can be considered regionally innovative during this period. The traditional Franciscan mission spatial arrangement for Mission Concepción included the core of religious buildings, the outlying associated residential structures, and the farmlands and ranchlands expanding outward from the central community core. The central open plaza created by the building edges allowed for informal as well as ceremonial community gatherings and was also a traditional part of mission life.

The cropland organization also reflected Spanish traditions. The most important cropland features were the acequias that carried water from the dammed San Antonio River through the fields and to the compound core. The acequias were dug in a system of mains and laterals, and fields were arranged in long strips to conform to the acequia system.

Agricultural traditions, including the types of farm implements, terminology, and farming practices followed Spanish models adapted for the Spanish frontier missions. Over time, the words and practices were transposed in the new environment, establishing a new, but related, set of traditions that are still in evidence today in south Texas.[4]

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS *(Exhibit T)*

Introduction

For analysis, Mission Concepción has been divided into five landscape character areas, based on a comparative analysis of historic and existing conditions. Each landscape character area represents a discrete section of the site defined by a combination of physical landscape characteristics (such as landform, vegetation, hydrologic features), the type and concentration of historic landscape features present, and/or contemporary and historic land uses as they influence and have been influenced by cluster arrangements, circulation, views, and operational activities.

The **Mission Core** landscape character area consists of the extant buildings and structures and small-scale features that survive from the period of significance, including the church and *convento*, *corredor*, sacristy, and Father President's Office. Later additions to the core landscape

[4]Ibid., 15.

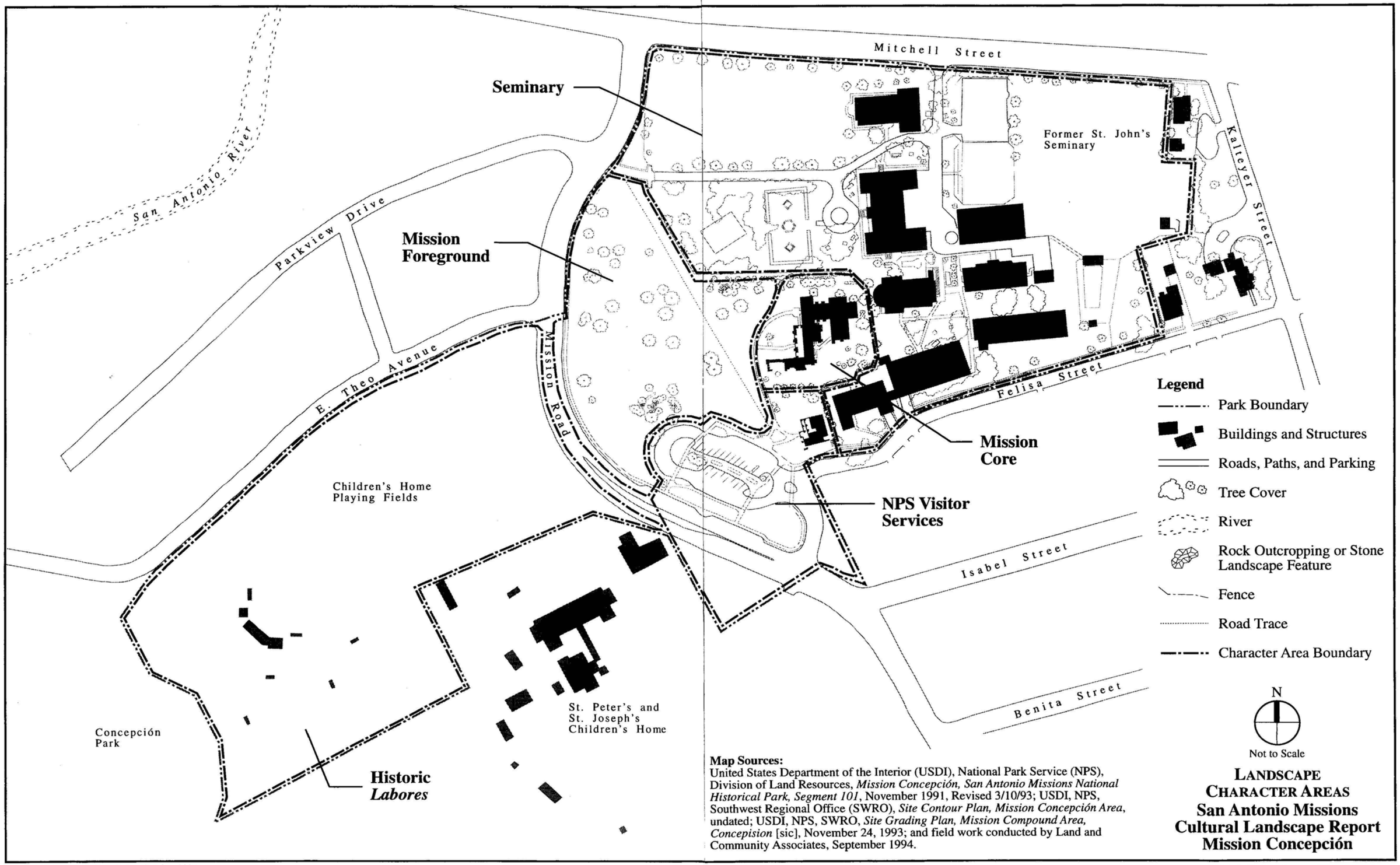
include a well and a concrete pedestrian walk. Historically this area served as the central focus for the mission community, providing sites for religious worship, housing, public gathering, and industries associated with compound life. Today, it continues to serve the needs of a local parish as a site available for special functions and is a popular visitor destination within the four mission system that comprises the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. This character area is bounded to the north and east by the seminary fence, to the south by a line of palm trees, and to the west by a concrete pedestrian walk.

The **Mission Foreground** landscape character area consists of the park-like open space west of the church that includes grass lawn, shade trees and shrubs, a large grotto and its associated plantings that were originally part of the seminary grounds, and the quarry site. Archeological resources such as the remnant *acequia*, the compound wall foundations, and the traces of the historic Mission Road are also located in this area. This character area is bounded by the present Mission Road, the concrete walk that leads from the visitor parking area to the church entrance, and the stacked log fence that marks the boundary between the mission site and the seminary area.

The **Seminary** landscape character area includes buildings and structures, vegetation, circulation systems, recreational facilities, and small-scale features related to St. John's Seminary, now used as a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility. Buildings in this area were originally constructed to house a chapel, a seminary, classrooms, and dormitories. Public access to this area is restricted. NPS currently does not administer this section of the study area. However, because archeological remains of the historic mission compound are located on the property, this area is included in the park. The Seminary landscape character area is defined by fencing on the west and south, by Felisa Street on the south and east, and by Mission Road and East Mitchell Street on the west and north.

The **NPS Visitor Services** landscape character area is composed of the visitor contact station, the parking area, pedestrian walks, small-scale features such as benches and bicycle racks provided for visitors, and vegetation. This area was developed after NPS assumed responsibility for joint management of the site, and all features post-date the period of significance. The boundaries of this character area consist of the concrete pedestrian walks that edge the parking area, the line of palm trees that stands between the visitor contact station and the *convento*, the fence that edges the seminary property behind the visitor contact station, and Felisa Street.

The **Historic *Labores*** landscape character area is located west of Mission Road. Currently maintained in open space, including grass lawn, shade trees, and shrubs, this area historically served as part of the agricultural base for the mission. NPS currently does not administer this site; St. Peter's & St. Joseph's Children's Home maintains the property rights to this parcel. Long-range plans for the mission include acquisition of this parcel and possible interpretation of the site and its contribution to the Spanish-colonial-era mission landscape. The area is bounded by E. Theo Avenue to the north, a city park to the west, the children's home to the south, and Mission Road to the east.



Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit T. Landscape Character Areas

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CONDITION ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Introduction

Condition assessments were made on the basis of September 1993 and September 1994 field investigations. Assessments were made solely on the basis of field investigations and without the benefit of materials analyses or review by a structural engineer, horticulturist, arborist, or other materials conservationist. All features were assessed according to one of the four following condition categories defined for this CLR:

• *Excellent:* applied to features that are structurally sound, that have no apparent flaws or defects, that demonstrate the evidence of conscientious maintenance, and that exhibit no evidence of deterioration;

• *Good:* applied to features that are structurally sound but may demonstrate some evidence of deterioration or lack of conscientious maintenance;

• *Fair:* applied to features that appear to be in an early or less advanced state of deterioration, or that have been damaged but whose survival is not threatened immediately;

• *Poor:* applied to features that are severely damaged or deteriorated and whose survival is threatened.

Some entries below have been annotated to clarify the evaluation.

Condition and integrity are interrelated but distinct aspects of the existing state of a cultural landscape. Condition can affect integrity evaluations but is not always the primary determinant of whether or not a feature retains integrity. In many instances, a deteriorated feature may still possess integrity. An assessment of the integrity of the Mission Concepción cultural landscape is located in the section following the condition assessment by character area.

Condition Assessment by Character Area

Mission Core

• Church — Fair

Large areas of the church still retain their original exterior finish of smooth plaster, but only rare traces of their original painted decoration survive. There has been some undercutting of the exterior walls at ground level, probably resulting from poor surface drainage associated with the *canales* and splash blocks. There is significant deterioration of the carved decoration on the entrance portal, particularly within four feet of the ground, and there are numerous examples of carved graffiti on the south face of the north tower at roof level. The surface coating of the church roof is cracked and missing in many areas, revealing the underlying sprayed-on insulation and presenting the opportunity for water damage to the interior.

• *Convento* — Fair

Rough plaster exterior finish is intact in most areas; some areas show evidence of spalled or missing stonework, with concrete repairs and stabilization efforts that exhibit poor workmanship. Also, there is some undercutting of exterior walls at ground level due to poor surface drainage, and there is evidence of plant materials rooting on parapets and buttresses. The interior walls adjacent to the metal stairs in the courtyard retain significant levels of moisture where ground elevation has been built up above interior floor level.

• Sacristy — Fair

There is undercutting of exterior walls at ground level due to poor surface drainage. The plaster exterior wall finish is very rough and mottled on east elevation, and there is possible damage to the roof surface coating.

• *Corredor* — Good

Little or no plaster parging is evident. Plant materials rooting on parapets and buttresses could damage condition in the future.

• *Canales* — Good

Some of the copper flashing is missing.

• Splash blocks — Poor

Constructed of mostly random stone paving, these features have an uneven surface and an irregular edge and form, and lack proper drainage. One of the splash blocks is pre-cast concrete construction.

• Well — Fair

The rubble stone construction is chipping in some places, some stones are missing, and portions of the concrete cap are missing, especially at the corners. The well is otherwise stable.

• Ruins/foundation remnants — Fair

Some of these features have been reconstructed and/or repointed. The double log lintel has weathered but is stable. There has been some soil erosion at the western doorway.

• Concrete pedestrian walks — Good

Some of the white stone edging pavers along the concrete walk are chipped.

• Wood pedestrian walks — Fair

There has been some gapping between wood panels, and there is a slight unevenness about the entire walk. There has been some erosion of the soil alongside the north end of the western section of the walk.

• Wood benches — Fair

Many are salvaged or reconditioned pews. There has been some weathering and splitting of the wood planks, there are raised nails, and

some pieces of molding around the legs are missing. Legs of many benches also indicate possible water damage.

• Steel stairs — Good

The paint surface remains intact, with no evidence of rust. Structural members appear stable and undeformed. Proportions are steep and uncomfortable, and the angle-iron handrail is difficult to grasp.

• Vegetation — Fair to Good

Vines such as coralberry have been allowed to grow into the branches of some trees, and ivy is overgrown around the grotto. Dead wood was observed on the ground around the trunks of some trees. The branches of many of the live oak trees have been invaded by ball moss. The weak-wooded chinaberry trees have suffered broken limbs and many appear misshapen. The majority of the anaqua trees, on the other hand, are in good condition and have well-shaped shade canopies. Anaqua shrubs on the site have a form that is much different from that of other trees located on the property. It appears that the tree form is the result of specific maintenance practices. Some of the pecans are becoming mature, and their canopies are beginning to be irregular and open. Pomegranates along the northern property line have not been properly maintained and appear unkempt. The sharply pointed leaf tips of Spanish dagger shrubs potentially threaten the safety of visitors. A number of these shrubs have been maintained by removing their sharp points. Other plants around the site have dead fronds and branches that have not been removed. Lawn in this area is more consistent as to texture and color than the foreground area, and there appear to be fewer instances of invasion by forbs. This lawn area is more manicured than the foreground lawn. The line of palms that marks the edge of this character area has been well maintained.

• Wood fencing — Poor to Fair

Some of the logs are missing, in some cases resulting in large gaps in the fence. The tie rods used to construct the fence are unsightly, especially those that show as a result of missing logs.

• Chain-link fencing — Fair

This fence is overgrown with vines in some places. There has been some displacement of the fence by tree roots. In general, chain-link fencing is unattractive and not compatible with the historic scene.

• Wrought-iron lamps — Good

These are clean, securely mounted, undamaged, and in apparent good working order.

Mission Foreground

• Quarry remnants — Fair

The rock outcropping located here has largely been restored to its pre-shrine condition, although there are still some remnants of Portland cement evident as well as plant materials associated with the quarry's former use as a devotional site. The depression has been largely filled in making its identity as a quarry site unclear.

• Grotto/pond — Fair
The statue is overgrown with ivy. The semi-circular pool is filled with stagnant water. The brick paving is unevenly edged.

• Brick pedestrian walks — Fair
The walks have an uneven edge and surface, and parts of the walk are covered with a layer of silt.

• Power pole — Fair
This power pole is no longer in use. Power lines that previously supplied the security light still mounted here are coiled up at the top of the pole.

• Tile plaque depicting the Virgin Mary — Fair
There has been some spalling of the tile work and rusting of the pipes and the frame of the plaque.

• Statue of St. Francis — Fair
This statue shows staining and other evidence of wear. The fingers of the left hand, which is held aloft, are missing.

• Mission Road trace — Fair to Good
The edge is undefined and the width varies, but the alignment is distinct. Appears well-traveled and without evidence of erosion or encroachment of plant materials.

• Vegetation — Fair to Good
Dead wood was observed on the ground around the trunks of some trees. The majority of the anaqua trees, however, are in good condition and have well-shaped shade canopies. Anaqua shrubs on the site have a form that is much different than the tree form located on the property. It appears that the tree form is the result of specific maintenance practices. Some of the pecans are becoming mature and their canopies are beginning to be irregular and open. Some mesquite trees are over-mature with hollow sections to their trunks. The grass around the property consists of a number of different species. The cover and color is inconsistent over the extent of the area. Some invasive ground covers and forbs are taking over sections of the grass lawns. The grass areas are not overly manicured which is appropriate to the historic character of the site. Social paths occur in some areas of lawn. Areas that have recently been seeded with Buffalo grass have better coverage.

Seminary

• Entrance gate — Fair
The gate exhibits some chipping and cracking of the limestone, and the caps are missing from the outermost piers.

• Wood bollards — Poor
Some of the bollards are split, the cable that links them is loose, and the system in general is unsightly.

- Chain-link fencing — Poor
  The fence is heavily overgrown with vines, and the metal mesh is deformed in areas.

- Basketball court — Fair
  The concrete paving appears solid but there is some evidence of surface unevenness and ponding of water. Grass has invaded the construction joints at the four corners of the area. The basketball goals and posts are missing.

- Water garden — Good
  The garden is heavily vegetated but appears well maintained.

NPS Visitor Services

- Visitor contact station — Good
  Brick exterior walls appear solid with pointing in good condition. Wood pergola shows effects of weathering but appears structurally sound.

- Wood benches — Good
  There has been some deterioration of the varnished finish and a subsequent deterioration of the wood.

- Trash receptacle — Good
  There has been some deterioration of the finish and subsequent weathering of the wood slats.

- Concrete pedestrian walks and ramps — Excellent
  There has been some chipping of the stone edging.

- Informational panels — Excellent
  There is no apparent deterioration and the signs appear well-maintained.

- Stone seats — Good
  Some edges are chipped, and there have been previous repairs to damage.

- Signs — Good
  Appear to be stable and well-maintained.

- Bicycle racks — Excellent
  There is no apparent deterioration and racks appear well-maintained.

- Wood fencing — Fair to Poor
  Some of the logs are missing, in some cases resulting in large gaps in the fence. The tie rods used to construct the fence are unsightly, especially those that show as a result of missing logs.

• Asphalt parking area — Excellent
Surface appears sound and able to conduct surface drainage without problems.

Historic *Labores*

• Baseball fields — Poor
Little remains of the eastern field aside from an apparent chain link backstop, now overgrown with vegetation. The central brown area of grass may indicate the infield. The western field appears to have some features remaining, such as a backstop, bleachers, and stadium type lighting, but all appear unused and in deteriorated condition.

• Vegetation — Fair
Field grass and forbs show a moderate level of maintenance, but there are brown areas of grass at the eastern field. Trees located along the E. Theo Avenue perimeter fencing appear healthy but somewhat overgrown. There is significant vegetative overgrowth between the eastern and western fields.

• Chain-link fencing — Fair
This generally appears secure and unobstructed along Mission Road and adjacent to the grounds of the children's home; fencing along E. Theo Avenue and between the eastern and western fields is overgrown, with occasional deformations.

IDENTIFICATION OF CONTRIBUTING FEATURES *(Exhibit U)*

For the purposes of this report, contributing features are those features that survive from the period of significance (1731-1794), and that retain sufficient integrity to represent their historic appearance and function. Non-contributing features are those features that have been added to the landscape since the last period of significance, as well as those that survive from the period of significance but that do not possess integrity.

Mission Core

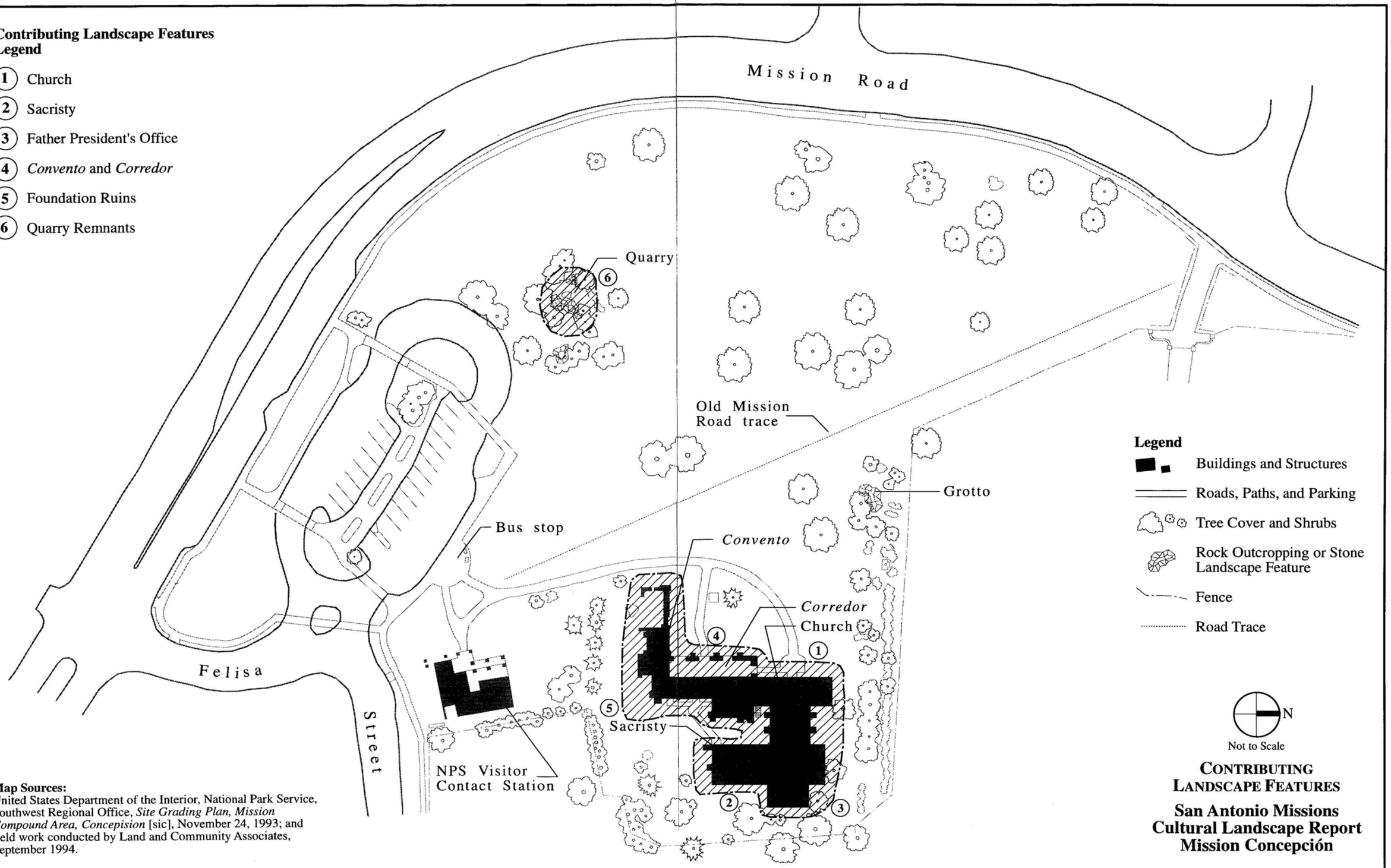
Church of Purísima Concepción de Acuña	Replaced an earlier church of adobe construction in much the same location; constructed 1740-1755, renovated mid-1800s
Sacristy	Constructed *circa* 1745
Father President's Office	Constructed *circa* 1745
Convento and *Corredor*	Constructed 1740-1760, restored 1950
Archeological remains of compound wall, cemetery, Indian quarters, *acequia*,	

Mission Foreground

Quarry remnants	Established 1740

Contributing Landscape Features Legend

1. Church
2. Sacristy
3. Father President's Office
4. *Convento* and *Corredor*
5. Foundation Ruins
6. Quarry Remnants



Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Southwest Regional Office, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

CONTRIBUTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES

San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, October 1994.

Exhibit U. Contributing Landscape Features

472/20923

Archeological remains of compound walls, acequia, compound fencing, early road to missions

Seminary

Archeological remains of compound walls, Indian quarters

NPS Visitor Services

Archeological remains of old compound wall, early circulation systems — Established 1720

Historic *Labores*

Archeological remains of fields, fencing, and other features associated with the historic *labores*

INTEGRITY ASSESSMENT BY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Introduction

Integrity has been assessed for each landscape character area by comparing the current appearance and composition of landscape features in the area with their historic appearance and composition. Integrity for each character area has been determined by evaluating the overall effect on the area of all contributing and non-contributing features according to the qualities of integrity described in the National Register of Historic Places. These qualities include:

• *Location:* the place where the significant activities that shaped a property took place;

• *Design:* the composition of natural and cultural elements, comprising the form, plan, and spatial organization of a property;

• *Setting:* the physical environment within and surrounding the property;

• *Materials:* the construction materials of buildings, outbuildings, roadways, fences, and other structures of cultural landscapes;

• *Workmanship:* exhibited in the ways people have fashioned their environment for functional and decorative purposes;

• *Feeling:* although intangible, evoked by the presence of physical characteristics that reflect the historic scene;

• *Association:* the direct link between a property and the important events or persons that shaped it.[5]

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[5]U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Interagency Resources Division, *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*, by Linda Flint McClelland et al (undated), 22-23.

Mission Core

The Mission Core area possesses some aspects of cultural landscape integrity as a Spanish-colonial mission for the period 1731-1794. A series of comparison photographs *(Figures 95 to 110, located at the end of this chapter)* illustrates change over time in the Mission Core. Although many non-contributing features have been added to the landscape in the 200 years since the mission was first secularized, the mission core retains notable examples of period architecture that have been preserved in relatively good condition. The area possesses integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. The presence of non-contributing features and the loss of other landscape features that existed during the period of significance diminish integrity of setting, feeling, and association. Given the overriding importance of spatial arrangement to Spanish-colonial mission design, the survival of this significant architectural cluster contributes a higher degree of landscape integrity than would normally be ascribed to a site where only a historic building survives with few or no adjacent cultural landscape resources surviving. The dominant siting of the mission complex combined with the survival of the courtyard contribute to the integrity of the core.

A list of non-contributing features in the Mission Core, all of which post-date the period of significance, follows:

Concrete pedestrian walks

Splash blocks

Well

Wood pedestrian walks

Wood benches

Wrought iron lamp posts

Wood fencing

Steel stairs

Vegetation

Chain link fencing

Mission Foreground

The Mission Foreground area has experienced significant change since the Spanish-colonial period. The remnant stone quarry is the only extant contributing landscape feature. Additions to the landscape such as ornamental plantings, circulation systems, and religious statuary diminish the integrity of the area. The loss of many landscape features associated with this area during the period of significance, such as the compound walls, the Indian quarters, and the *acequia*, also diminishes its integrity. Archeological resources in the area that date from the period of significance contribute to our understanding of Mission Concepción during the Spanish-colonial period and are potentially part of the interpretive value of the site.

A list of non-contributing features in the Mission Foreground area, all of which post-date the period of significance, follows:

Grotto/pond

Brick pedestrian walks

Power pole

Plaque associated with statue of Virgin Mary

Statue of St. Francis

Mission Road trace

Vegetation

Seminary

The Seminary area, which was developed following the period of significance, does not possess cultural landscape integrity. In the future, significance evaluations may be made that amend the period of significance to include the period 1911-1947. At that time, the integrity of this area should be re-evaluated. Archeological resources in the area that date from the period of significance contribute to our understanding of Mission Concepción during the Spanish-colonial period and are potentially part of the interpretive value of the site.

A list of non-contributing features in the Seminary area, all of which post-date the period of significance, follows:

Administration building

Residential, educational, and recreational buildings

Entry gate

Wood bollards

Chain link fence

Basketball court

Water garden

NPS Visitor Services

The NPS Visitor Services area, which was developed following the periods of significance, does not possess cultural landscape integrity. Archeological resources in the area that date from the period of significance contribute to our understanding of Mission Concepción during the Spanish-colonial period and are potentially part of the interpretive value of the site.

A list of non-contributing features in the NPS Visitor Services area, all of which post-date the period of significance, follows:

Visitor contact station

Wood benches

Trash receptacle

Concrete pedestrian walks

Informational panels

Stone seats

Signs

Bicycle racks

Wood fencing

Asphalt parking area

Historic *Labores*

No extant above-ground physical features survive in the character area from the period of significance. All extant features post-date the period of significance. Archeological resources in the area that date from the period of significance contribute to our understanding of Mission Concepción during the Spanish-colonial period and are potentially part of the interpretive value of the site.

A list of non-contributing features in the Historic *Labores* area, all of which post-date the period of significance, follows:

Chain link fencing

Vegetation

Baseball fields

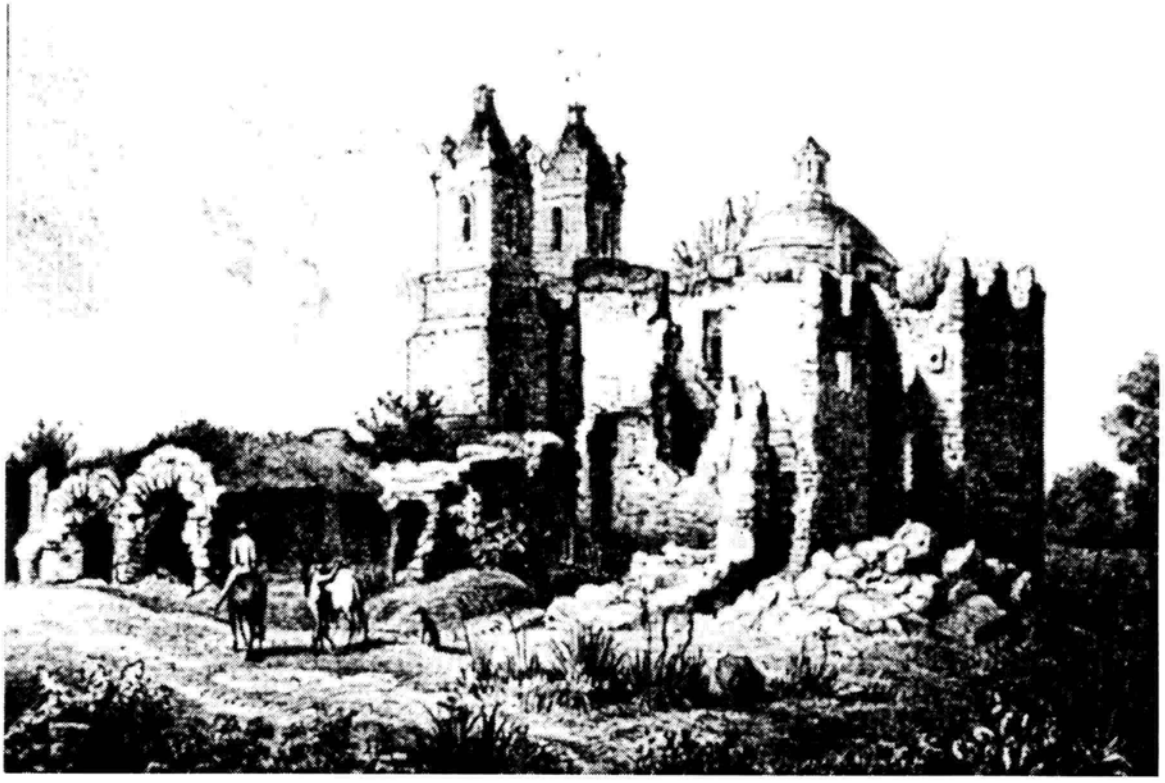


Figure 95a. Circa *1850 drawing by Lungkwitz*



Figure 95b. A comparison of the church circa *1850 and in 1994 indicates the extent to which views of the church have changed because of vegetative growth.*



Figure 96a. 1857 oil painting by Lungkwitz

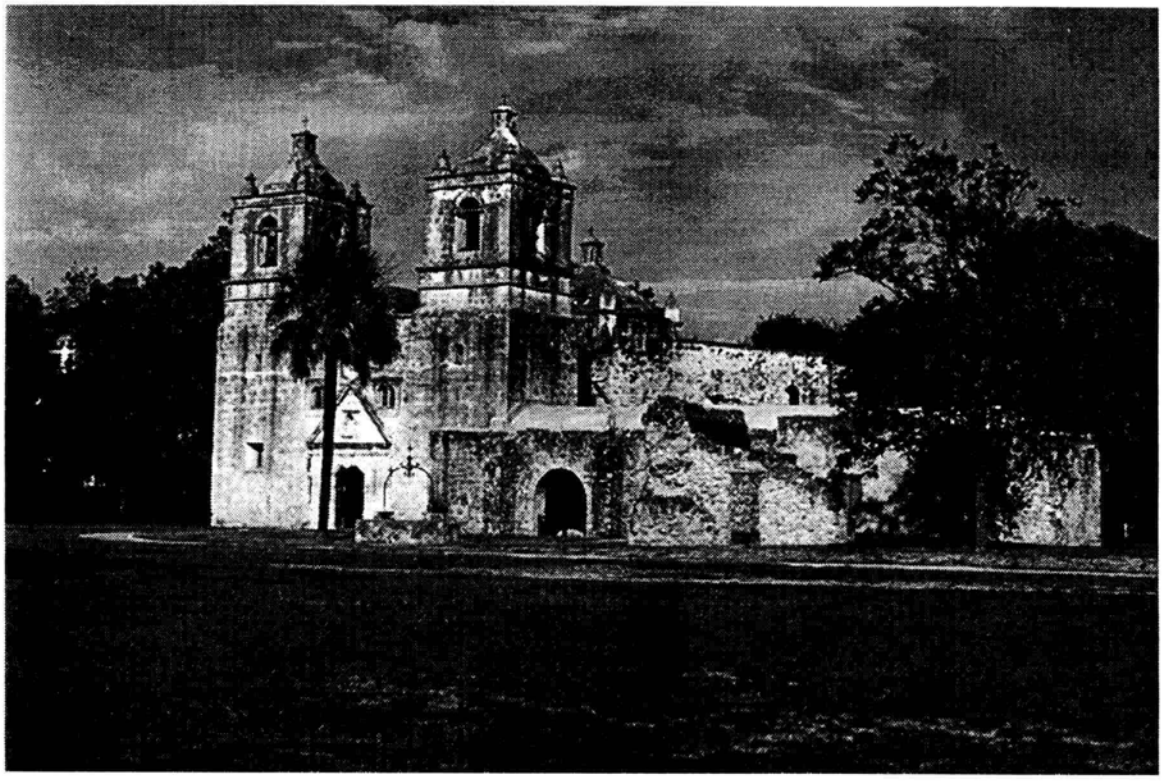


Figure 96b. These two views of the church facade, one in 1857 and one in 1994, portray a strikingly similar landscape. Visible changes to the landscape include an increase in vegetation in 1994, the presence of a stone well in 1994 that does not appear in 1857, and differences in convento *ruins maintenance practices.*

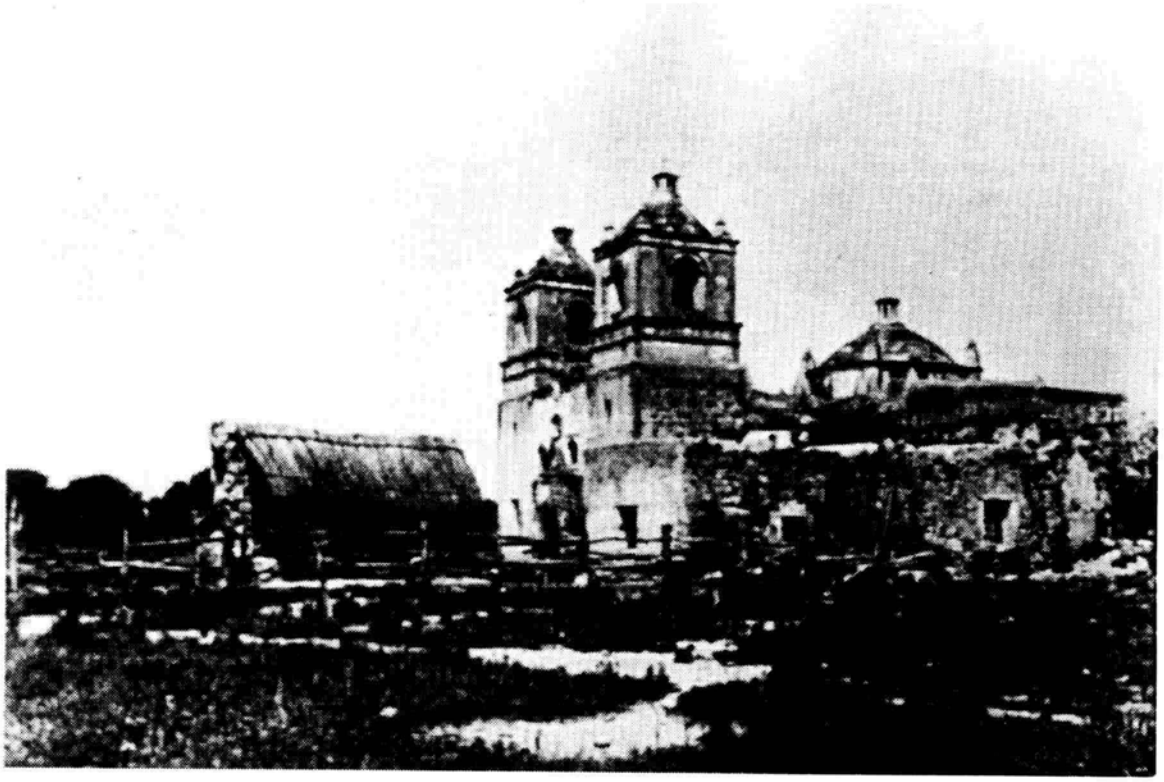


Figure 97a. Circa *1870*



Figure 97b. Circa *1887*



Figure 97c. Circa *1889*



Figure 97d. These four photographs of Mission Concepción all include the church, convento, *and sacristy. Some landscape features that were present in the late 1800s, have been removed or replaced over time: the wood fencing has been removed, the hard-packed earth has been replaced with concrete walks, and the newly planted shade trees have been replaced with palms.*



Figure 98a. Circa *1875*

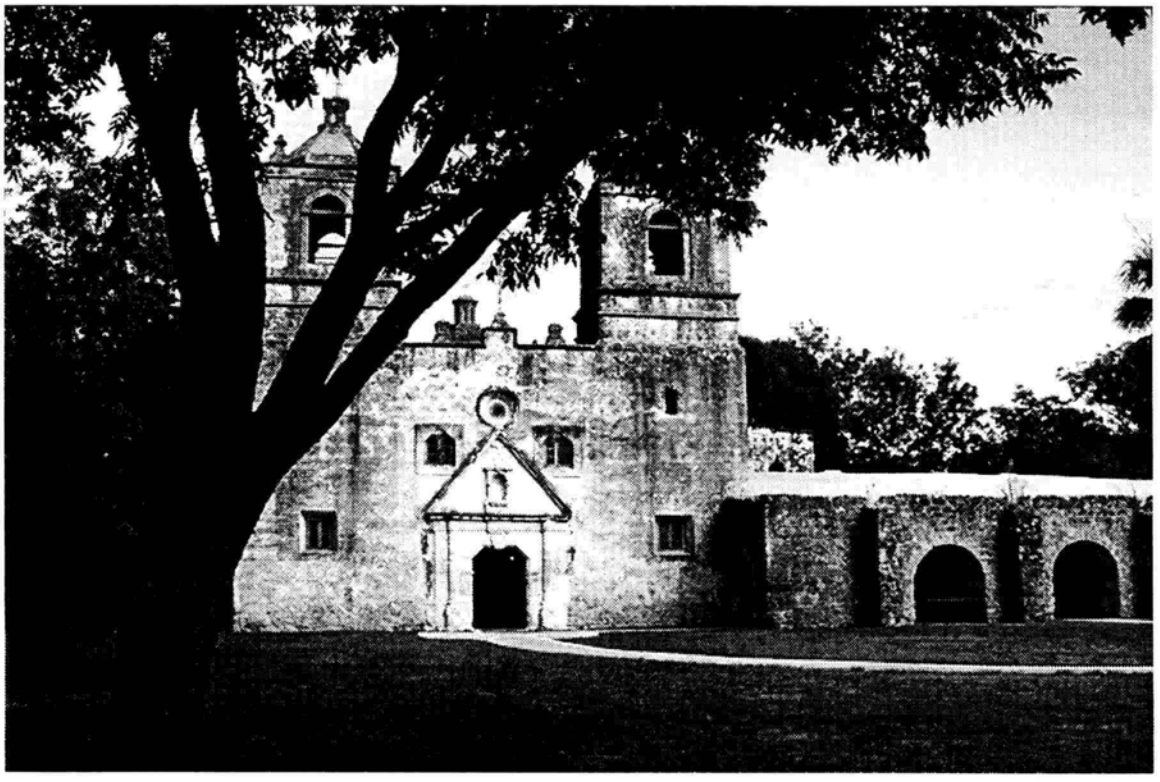


Figure 98b. A circa *1870s photograph of the church facade illustrates landscape features such as wood-rail fencing with an entry gate around the front facade of the church, and newly staked small trees flanking the approach walk inside the fence. In 1994, the fencing is no longer present, a concrete walk approaches the church, and the site appears more vegetated.*



Figure 99a. Circa *1880*



Figure 99b. Circa *1902*



Figure 99c. Circa *1915*



Figure 99d. Circa *1936*

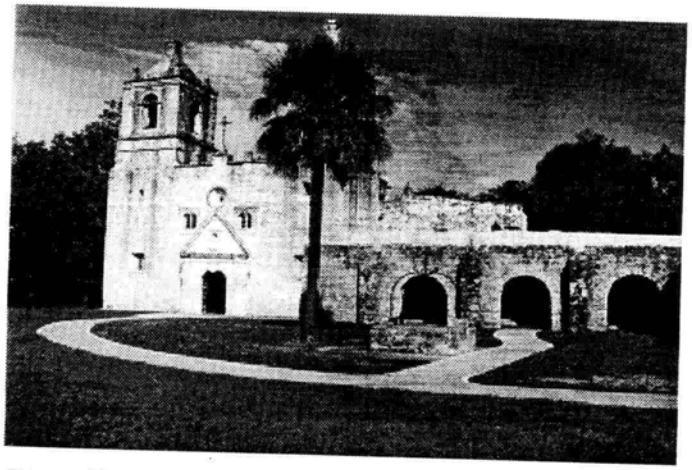


Figure 99e. These five views of the church, ranging from 1880 to 1994, illustrate a number of changes to the landscape. Wood fencing was used to enclose the area around the church facade during the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. By 1994, this area is no longer fenced. As seen in the photographs, the type of fencing used changed many times over the years. Vegetation and circulation patterns have also undergone visible changes.



Figure 100a. Circa *1890*

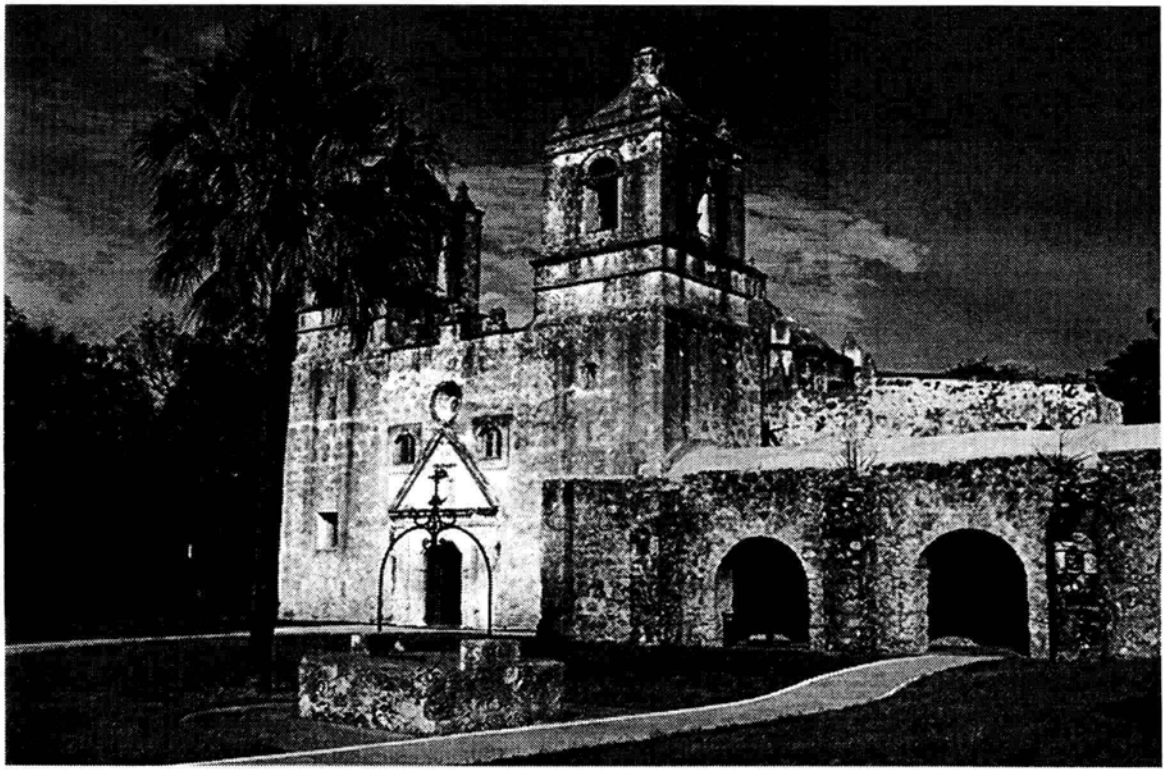


Figure 100b. A comparison of two views of the church facade, one circa *1890 and the other* circa *1994, shows that the well located west of the church was built of wood during the nineteenth century but is now constructed of stone. Grass can be seen growing on the roof of the* convento *ruins in the 1890 image, but is not present in 1994. The palm tree seen in the contemporary photograph was not part of the earlier landscape.*



Figure 101a. Circa *1895*

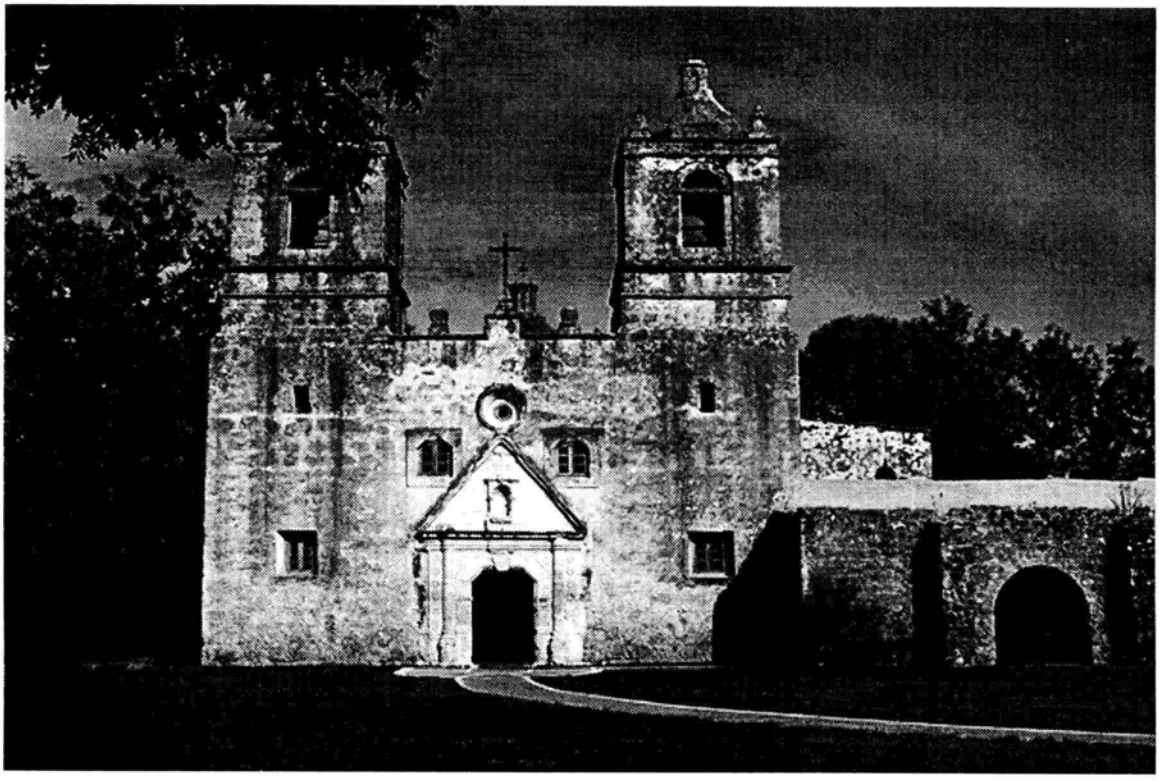


Figure 101b. The presence of two bicycles in the 1890s photograph indicate that these were a popular form of transportation during this time.



Figure 102a. Circa *1895*



Figure 102b. In 1895, there was still grass growing on top of the convento *ruins. While path alignments appear to be similar in the two photographs, path materials have changed. Concrete, a material used in the contemporary landscape, was not present in 1895. The palm tree is another contemporary landscape addition.*

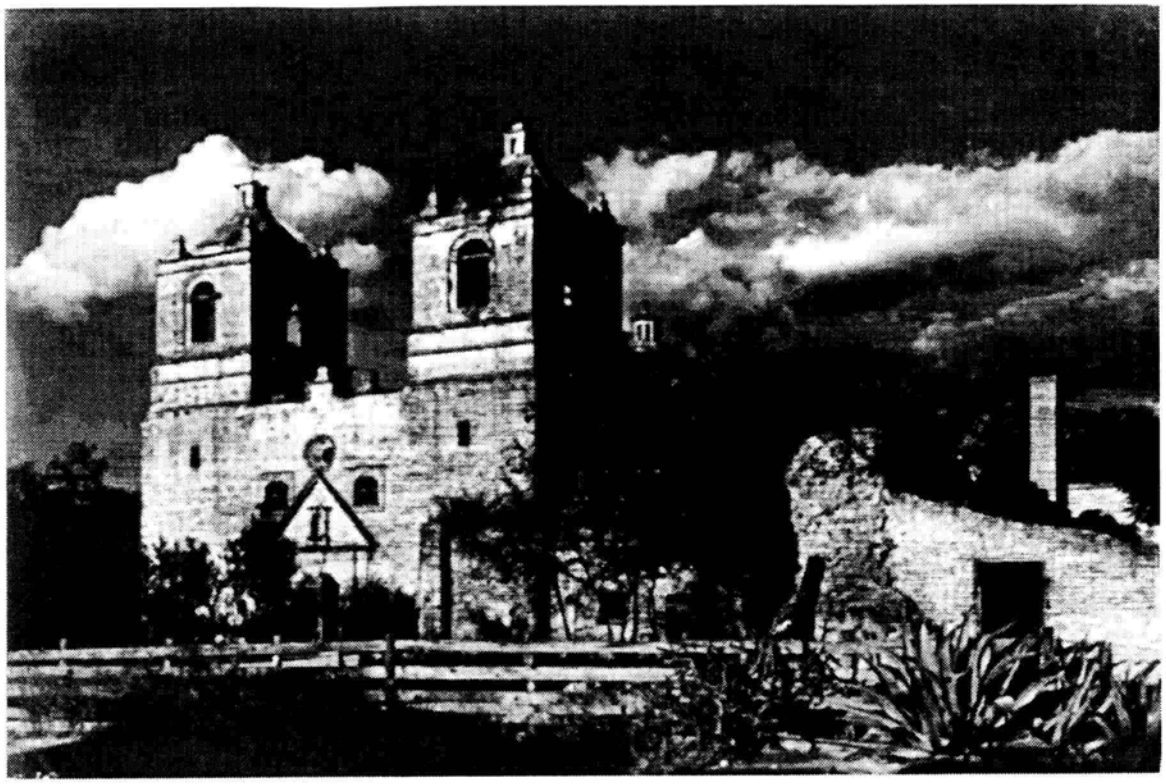


Figure 103a. Circa *1910s*



Figure 103b. Two views of the church facade again illustrate changes over time to such landscape features as fencing, vegetation, views to the church, construction materials, and circulation routes.



Figure 104a. Circa *1910*

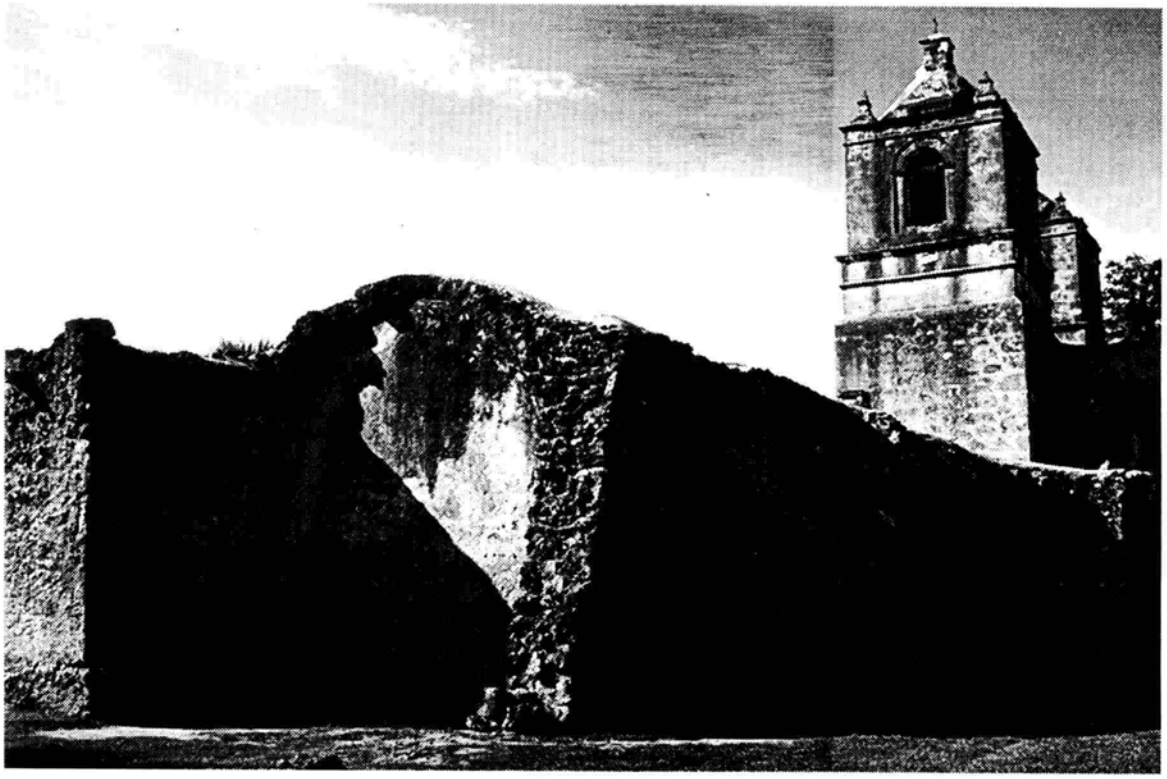


Figure 104b. Two views of Mission Concepción's south elevation indicate shrub plantings present in 1910 that no longer occur in 1994. In 1910, grass is still seen growing on the roof of the convento *ruins.*

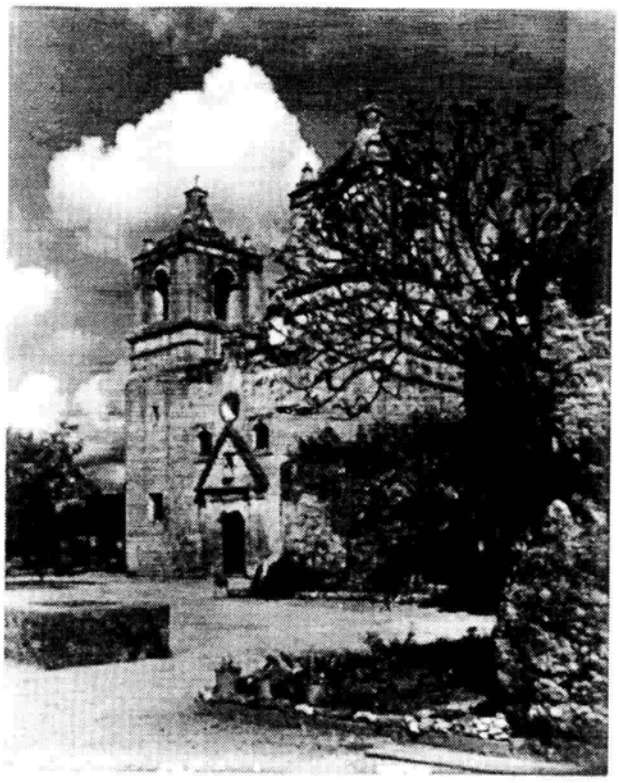


Figure 105a. Circa *1915*

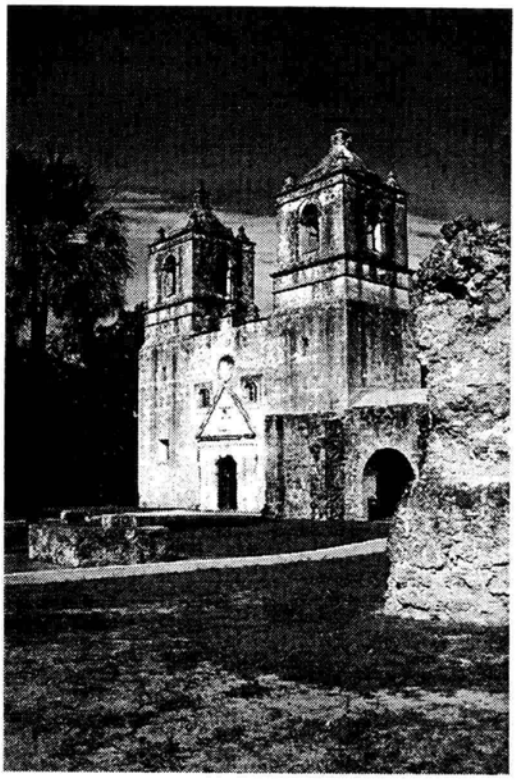


Figure 105b. In 1915, stone and wood edging was used to edge planting beds near the church, and the landscape west of the building consisted of hard-packed earth. By 1994, the planting beds have been removed and grass lawn has replaced the hard-packed earth.



Figure 106a. Circa *1930*



Figure 106b. One of the lines of palm trees planted in the 1930s by the Fathers and students stationed at St. John's Seminary is no longer extant in 1994. A line running parallel to the one shown, farther to the south, does still exist.



Figure 107a. Circa *1930*



Figure 107b. Two views looking south towards the church illustrate changes to many landscape features between the 1930s and 1994, including growth of vegetation that, in some cases ,served to obscure views of the church; the addition of chain-link fencing; and the establishment of a new social path.



Figure 108a. Circa *1936*



Figure 108b. Changes to the landscape around the convento *ruins and courtyard by 1994 include the replacement of hard-packed earth with grass lawn, the removal of stone-lined planting beds at the base of the buildings, the removal of some plant materials, and the addition of others.*



Figure 109a. Circa *1936*

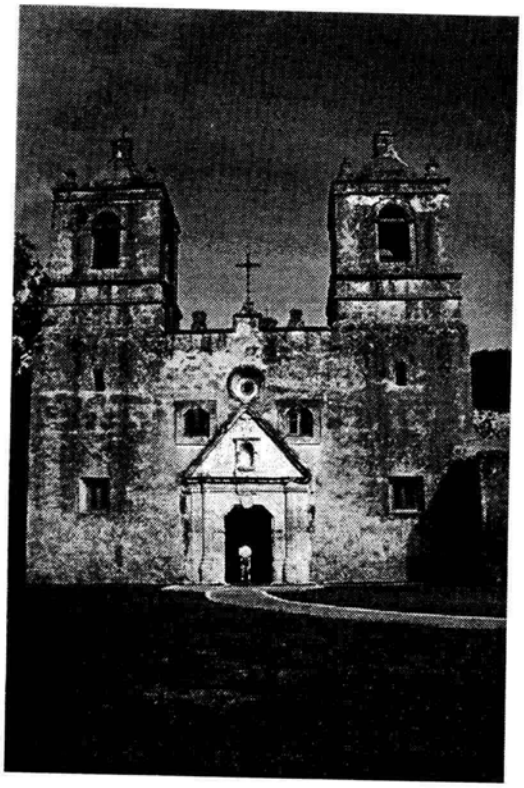


Figure 109b. In 1994 grass lawn has replaced the cacti gardens that were present at the base of the church in the 1930s, and a concrete walk has been added to provide access to the church.



Figure 110a. Circa *1936*

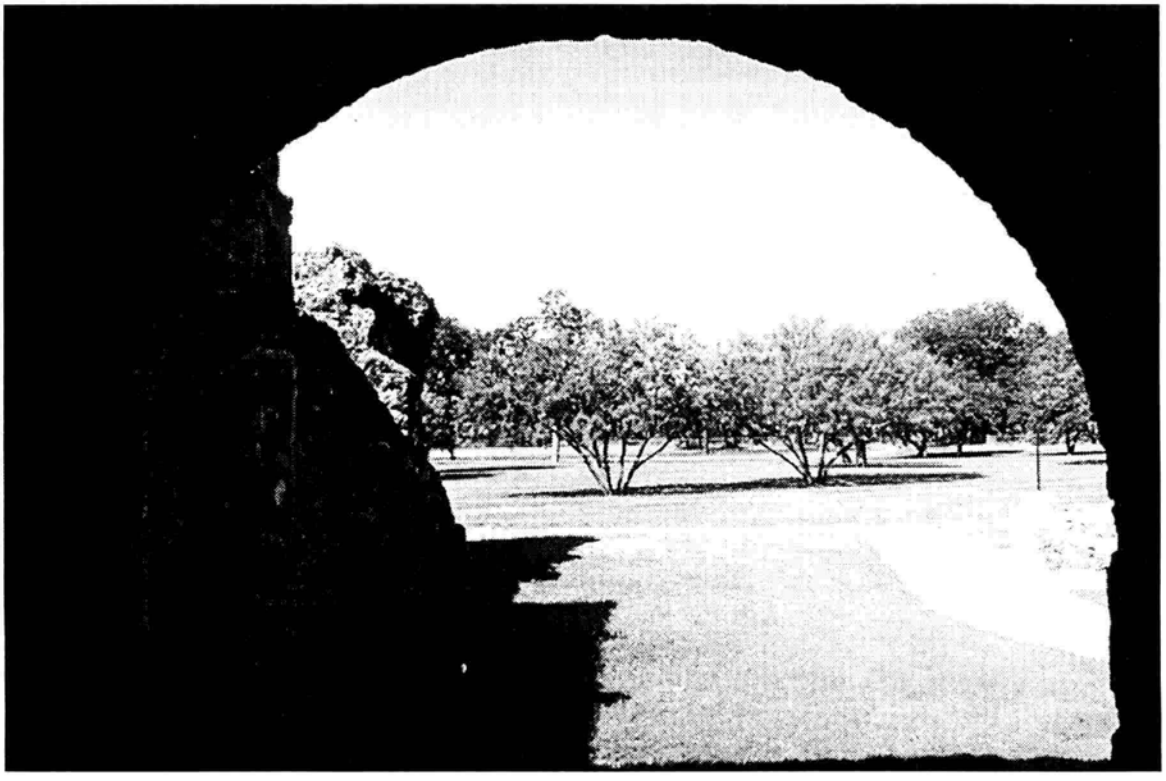


Figure 110b. The gardens that once occupied the area around the convento *and* corredor *have been replaced in 1994 with grass lawn and a concrete walk.*



5 DESIGN GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 DESIGN GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PRESERVATION APPROACH

Determining an appropriate landscape preservation treatment approach for Mission Concepción requires a thorough understanding of the nature of its above- and below-ground cultural landscape resources. In particular, the below-ground or archeological resources at Mission Concepción constitute a valuable record of the mission landscape over time. The site as it exists today primarily possesses significant above-ground and below-ground resources associated with the Spanish colonial period, 1731-1794. In fact, the entire plan of the mission at its zenith, including those buildings that have fallen to ruin and have disappeared around the standing structures, survives as an archeological resource. Resources associated with the secularization period, 1794-1860, and the rediscovery period, 1860-1911, relate to minor themes associated with the site and are not associated with the primary period of significance for Mission Concepción, which is the Spanish colonial period. Other missions included in the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park possess significant resources associated with those periods. While some features survive from the preservation period, 1911-1947, these features do not contribute to an understanding of the primary period of significance. Conflicting opinions exist as to whether the preservation period is significant in its own right. The site, for example, may not currently appear to possess historical significance for that period, but may be found in the future to exhibit cultural significance, or significance for its role in regional and community Catholic history. At this time, there is no appropriate context to use in evaluating the site's cultural significance. Treatments that pose conflicts between extant resources from these periods should be resolved in favor of preserving the Spanish colonial period resources.

The on-site work sessions conducted in the development of this CLR included a working group of NPS personnel from both the park and the former Southwest Regional Office, as well as representatives of the consultant team. The work sessions dealt with the complexity of developing treatments appropriate to the varied nature of resources represented, the lack of physical evidence related to the period of significance, and the need to develop treatments that address not only the park's current needs in the above-ground landscape but that also protect significant archeological resources. As a result of considering these concerns, the working group arrived at a consensus treatment approach of preservation for archeological resources and rehabilitation for the above-ground landscape.

The preservation approach for archeological resources recognizes the overriding importance of colonial-era information to the understanding of this and related sites. Archeological investigations will precede any ground disturbance; in addition, every effort should be made to ensure that landscape rehabilitations avoid disturbance to still-largely-intact archeological resources. It is assumed that archeological investigations also will occur as there is need to discover additional information and that their results will continue to inform landscape understanding and interpretation of the Spanish colonial missions. A preservation approach to archeological resources will present challenges as site work occurs in relation to drainage and other site management issues. When disruption to archeological resources cannot be avoided in relation to such work, documentation of existing archeological conditions, archeological excavations, and other mitigation measures will need to precede site work.

The recommended landscape treatment for Mission Concepción is landscape rehabilitation which will allow NPS to accommodate visitor and interpretive needs as well as restoration of important missing landscape features. Preservation *in situ* is the recommended treatment approach for extant resources, such as vegetation, dating from the historic period 1911-1947. Features dating from this period that are removed in whole or in part, relocated, or significantly altered are to be documented to HABS/HAER standards before disturbance or removal, but need not be replaced in-kind.

A landscape rehabilitation approach for above-ground resources is consistent with existing cultural landscape conditions and the findings of the cultural landscape evaluation. Landscape interpretation is an important aspect of landscape rehabilitation for Mission Concepción. Because of the many changes to the land surrounding the mission core, little remains above-ground to interpret the colonial period. However, the considerable archeological resources dating from the period of significance provide unique opportunities to interpret creatively the cultural landscape that existed during the period of significance. A rehabilitation approach offers sufficient flexibility to meet the interrelated but sometimes conflicting site concerns:

- continuing religious use with liturgical, ceremonial, educational, social, and other activities that enhance the cultural associations of the site;
- meeting visitor needs for interpretation (e.g., exhibits and orientation elements), accessibility, comfort, and safety;
- considering issues of sustainability and environmental appropriateness in light of both the site's current conditions and current NPS standards and goals;
- addressing the desire for a rural setting in the midst of urbanization;
- addressing needs for non-historic features such as lighting and site furnishings and for improved site circulation and surface drainage;
- addressing the need for non-historic vegetation that can be used to screen or enhance non-contributing features;
- complying with legal mandates, e.g. Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS).

Rehabilitation of the landscape is also appropriate because it incorporates some aspects of the other accepted NPS treatments—preservation, restoration, and reconstruction. Treatments for individual features, however, need to be developed and considered within the total context of Mission Concepción to ensure that individual treatments do not detract from the overall character-defining spatial organization of the mission. Most architectural features will continue to be treated with a preservation approach that is consistent with the high degree of integrity associated with many of the site's architectural resources.

Rehabilitation is a flexible treatment approach that not only provides for the protection of extant cultural landscape resources, but also allows for the introduction of new uses and features necessary to meet both protection and public use needs. As a result, a landscape rehabilitation approach also allows NPS to fulfill its mission to protect cultural resources while allowing for

public access and enjoyment. Rehabilitation of a landscape is defined in the *Draft Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes* as a process that "retains the landscape as it has evolved historically by maintaining and repairing historic features, while allowing additions and alterations for contemporary and future uses."[1] *Cultural Resource Management Guideline, NPS-28* states, "Rehabilitation improves the quality or function of a cultural landscape, through repair or alteration, to make possible an efficient compatible use while preserving those portions or features that are important in defining its significance."[2]

Most physical work in historic landscape rehabilitations is either maintenance or repair of existing features and materials. In addition to maintenance and repair, however, higher levels of intervention are sometimes necessary and appropriate. The degree of neglect that occurred prior to NPS management may necessitate replacement or removal of some features. Archeological investigations and comprehensive documentation of any features to be replaced, removed, or altered should precede actual physical work through the defined Section 106 coordination process. All physical work should be undertaken in compliance with Section 106. Possible treatments requiring additional documentation of a specific feature or features generally include the following:

- replacement of an entire feature that is too deteriorated to repair in kind;
- replacement of an entire feature that is too deteriorated to repair with substitute materials;
- reconstruction of a vanished feature based on historical documentation;
- reconstruction of vanished features with a new feature that is contemporary in design but compatible with the historic character of the landscape;
- additions and alterations for new use.

NPS-28 outlines the following rehabilitation standards for historic landscapes:

- A cultural landscape is used as it was historically or is given a new or adaptive use that maximizes the retention of historic materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- The historic character of a cultural landscape is retained and preserved. The replacement or removal of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a landscape is avoided.
- Each cultural landscape is recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features from other landscapes, are not undertaken. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve historic materials, and features is physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

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[1]United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, Technical Preservation Services Branch, Washington, D.C. *Draft Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes.* May 1992, p. 7.

[2]*Management of Cultural Landscapes*, Cultural Resource Management Guideline, NPS-28, Release No. 4, p. 104.

- Changes to a cultural landscape that have acquired historical significance in their own right are retained and preserved.

- Historic materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a cultural landscape are preserved.

- Deteriorated historic features are repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or replacement of a historic feature, the new feature matches the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Repair or replacement of missing features is substantiated by archeological, documentary, or physical evidence.

- Chemical or physical treatments that cause damage to historic materials are not used.

- Archeological and structural resources are protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures are undertaken including recovery, curation, and documentation.

- Additions, alterations, or related new construction do not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the cultural landscape. New work is differentiated from the old and is compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing of the landscape.

- Additions and adjacent or related new construction are undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the cultural landscape would be unimpaired.[3]

All proposed recommendations should be implemented in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings,* the most recent *Cultural Resource Management Guideline, NPS-28,* and the most recent *Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes.*

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AND OTHER CONCERNS

Mission Concepción's cultural resources are derived in large measure from a historic response to the site's natural environment. The relationship between the natural environment and cultural resources has been altered as a result of the two centuries of change that have occurred both on the historic site of Mission Concepción and in adjacent and interrelated areas. For example, the close relationship of land and water has changed. The San Antonio River has been reconfigured by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; now obscured from view by vegetation and urban development, the river is notably absent from the mission landscape. In addition, the *acequia* no longer represents its origin as a vital response to the natural environment and an essential element of mission life and

[3]*Management of Cultural Landscapes*, Cultural Resource Management Guideline, NPS-28, Release No. 4, p. 104-105.

sustenance. The existing landscape does not meet current NPS sustainability goals.[4] Although the site does retain character-defining features and aspects of integrity, much of the existing site vegetation is neither historically significant nor indigenous to the area. Implementation of cultural landscape recommendations for the mission can provide an opportunity to improve the health of the mission environment if they are developed to respect natural patterns and processes.

There are few precedents yet to consult in determining appropriate treatments for cultural landscape resources whose preservation may actually damage or degrade natural resources which have a significant relationship to the cultural landscape. The intent of the CLR is to provide balance between preservation and sustainability goals without adhering solely to one in absolute disregard of the other. Since a twentieth-century period of significance has not been identified for Mission Concepción, rehabilitation strategies have been developed that include use of native vegetation to assist in re-establishing plant communities appropriate to the local environment instead of recommending restoration of early twentieth-century plantings.

In most instances, the CLR addresses irrigation, stormwater management, and vegetation in terms of current sustainability guidelines. In some specific areas, however, non-native species may be appropriate to retain. The existing palms, for example, do not date from the period of significance and are not native species. They have become, however, familiar, popular, and visually interesting landscape features. Since local people and parishioners have considerable sentiment for the palms, they should be retained despite their non-native status. The CLR goal has been to develop landscape rehabilitation alternatives that preserve much of the spirit of the mission's early twentieth-century design character, but in a way that is appropriate in light of current sustainability goals. The challenge has been to develop treatments that are not only consistent with current sustainability philosophies but that also are designed to preserve essential cultural landscape resource values and respect local values.

As a result, some treatments may require removal, replacement of, or alteration to contributing cultural landscape features. When removal, replacement, or alteration occurs, however, the significance of the altered, removed, or destroyed cultural landscape feature must be acknowledged through appropriate mitigation. Mitigation measures may include comprehensive documentation, on-site interpretation, off-site interpretation, and/or removal of the feature to a more appropriate site.

The NPS sustainability initiative includes an interpretive aspect that is particularly appropriate for the San Antonio missions. Departures from historic precedents can be interpreted as such with the intent of informing the visitor that the changes have been necessary for the protection of the environment. Incorporating sustainability objectives into preservation treatments provides NPS with an opportunity to interpret both the natural and cultural resources related to this site. The site can be interpreted in large part as one that was established with indigenous building materials and whose design was developed in response to the local climate and natural setting. Similarly, departures from aspects of the twentieth-century site development, such as plantings that require irrigation or circulation systems that encouraged a vehicular experience over a pedestrian experience, can be interpreted as inappropriate to perpetuate today in light of sustainability goals.

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[4]"Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design," U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center, September 1993.

In 1991 the Regional Director of the Southwest Region of the NPS developed a "night sky" initiative (Appendix D) for parks in that region to follow in regard to site illumination. Guidelines and recommendations included in the CLR have been developed with this initiative in mind. Cultural landscape preservation and "night sky" objectives are compatible; implementation of night sky initiatives will enhance integrity of landscape setting and feeling. Currently the San Antonio missions have been included in category III for the night sky initiative. Category III sites are located in urban areas where existing light conditions are considered poor to fair as a result of the encroachment of undesirable city light pollution into a park. The management emphasis for such sites is to consider the effect of light pollution in all new lighting proposals and to use the minimum amount of exterior lighting necessary for safety and security.

TREATMENT GUIDELINES

The following treatment guidelines provide a framework and programmatic basis for preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance, and interpretation of Mission Concepción's significant landscape features. New construction is addressed where appropriate. Recommended treatments have been developed by taking into account the degree of integrity present within the mission as a whole and within each landscape character area described in Chapter 4. The landscape character areas are also appropriate for use as management treatment zones *(Exhibit R)*. Treatments are organized by the following zones:

- Mission-wide
- Mission Core
- Mission Foreground
- Seminary
- NPS Visitor Services
- Historic *Labores*

Park personnel, NPS regional personnel, and the consultant team participated in a series of workshops held in San Antonio to identify topics and issues to be addressed through treatments. The following topics and recommendations identified through the workshop process have been used to organize the discussion of cultural landscape treatments:

- Buildings and structures
- Roads, walks, and paths
- Vegetation
- Drainage
- Lighting and utilities
- Fencing
- Site furnishings
- Interpretation and signage

Mission-wide

- Use historic documentation to inform treatment decisions. Although rehabilitation is the overall recommended treatment approach, individual features, portions of features, and groups of features, however, may be either restored or reconstructed to reflect the period of significance. Do not restore or reconstruct features based on conjectural or incomplete information. Where information is incomplete, interpret a feature or features without reconstruction attempts.

- Treat all resources dating from the period of significance in accordance with the current versions of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* and the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.*

Buildings and structures

- Avoid new construction except as replacement for existing non-contributing buildings. Consider adaptive use rather than new construction to meet future interior space needs. Any replacement construction should be compatible with existing features in siting, orientation, massing, texture, color, and materials and easily distinguishable from historic features. New construction should not visually dominate or compete with historic features.

- Consider the landscape setting when planning treatments associated with the adaptive reuse of individual buildings. Consider fenestration, accessibility, matching adjacent grades, the placement of utilities, and the appropriate use of plant materials and site furnishings.

- Evaluate and correct architectural deficiencies, especially those that contribute to moisture retention and drainage problems.

- Coordinate with the City of San Antonio and nearby property owners to keep construction adjacent to and visible from the mission appropriate in height, massing, color, and other design characteristics. New development immediately adjacent to the mission is not desirable; low-rise development that is not visible from the mission is acceptable.

Roads, walks, and paths

- Base new circulation systems on historic usage, with special attention to widths, alignment, and materials and coordinate with interpretive plan.

- Coordinate all work on roads, walks, and paths with drainage needs.

- Develop circulation systems that accommodate universal accessibility in accordance with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) / Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), and in accordance with the site's historic character. Reduce the visual and physical effects on the cultural landscape if new ramps, railings, signs, and curb cuts are added. Design site access paths by using the natural topography of the site. Consider alternative means of interpretation and visual accessibility in areas that would suffer detrimental effects through direct UFAS/ADAAG requirements. Where UFAS/ADAAG compliance would have a negative effect on the historic character of the site or feature, develop interpretive areas adjacent to the site or feature.

- Make allowances for some degree of informal circulation; at the same time avoid formalizing or institutionalizing worn paths.

- Use the approved trace material (buff-colored, exposed aggregate concrete with applied sand finish) for pedestrian walks.[5]

Vegetation

- Rely primarily on the use of native vegetation. Replace non-native Bermuda and St. Augustine grasses with native grass as the primary ground cover. Plant only native trees, primarily mesquite, live oak, cedar elm, flowering or desert willow, redbud, and pecan. These trees are classified as xeriscape plants native to Bexar County. No significant historic vegetation has been identified that contributes to the character of the site; no special maintenance programs that differ from the overall maintenance program are necessary.

- Follow a xeriscape rehabilitation approach to the selection, installation and maintenance of new and existing plant materials where possible.

- Remove plant materials that threaten the integrity of historic structures and other resources, block important historic views, or endanger the visitor. (See *Exhibit Z*). Document plant materials before removal according to HABS/HAER standards.

- Maintain existing palm trees and other exotic vegetation introduced in the early twentieth century until they are no longer healthy or threaten the safety of visitors. Do not replace this type of vegetation when its condition requires removal.

- Avoid meticulous, over-maintenance of vegetation that creates an estate-like landscape setting.

- Prune trees/shrubs and remove as necessary only when hazardous conditions exist.

- Avoid planting near buildings and structures to avoid structural and material damage.

- Avoid new and replacement plantings that would further separate the site from its historic association with the San Antonio River.

- Once rehabilitation has been implemented, replace species in-kind as needed.

- Develop coordinated treatments for vegetation and closely related buildings and structures; coordinate and balance maintenance/management needs for interrelated vegetation and structures.

- Consider use of soil amendments to improve water retention of soil versus use of mulch; avoid inappropriate use of mulch. The use of mulch may be acceptable around larger trees and shrubs, adjacent to buildings, and in other locations where the use of a mechanical weed-eater may damage vegetative or architectural materials.

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[5]NPS has recently approved this specification for use throughout the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, and has directed the CLR team to recommend its use for all new pedestrian circulation.

- Prepare and implement an appropriate, comprehensive cyclical maintenance plan based on the CLR guidelines.

Drainage

- Use "soft engineering" approaches (such as absorption/open piping instead of closed) where appropriate.
- Respect the site's existing spatial organization when correcting existing drainage problems.
- Avoid allowing drainage treatments to dictate preservation treatments. (See *Exhibits V* and *W-1* through *W-8*.)

Lighting and utilities

- Comply with the NPS regional night sky initiative to the extent practical given security considerations.
- Restrict uplighting; illuminate the ground, not the sky.
- Ensure security needs are met; use vandal-resistant, metal fixtures.
- Develop lighting specific to the character and needs of each management zone.
- Develop consistent lighting standards for the four NPS missions and possibly carry over with the Mission Parkway Standard.
- Avoid use of rustic, period, or ornamental luminaires and poles.
- Tall poles are appropriate only in parking areas, although even there they should be as short as possible to reduce distant visibility, glare, and effect on the historic environment. Avoid their use in other parts of the park.
- Select fixture locations according to need and to create a minimal daytime effect; conceal conduits.
- Use recessed and concealed luminaires where possible.
- Locate dumpsters in areas of low visibility; paint dumpsters earth-tone colors to make them less obtrusive; keep dumpster environs well-maintained and free of debris.

Fencing

- Use fencing only to delineate property ownership or screen future undesirable views. New fencing should not be developed to re-create a historic style or period. As long as the former seminary is functionally separate, maintain existing screen fencing of stacked logs.

Site furnishings

- Use a minimum of site furnishings while still accommodating the needs of mobility-impaired visitors.
- Establish a consistent design prototype for all four NPS San Antonio missions for benches and trash receptacles since there are no known historic prototypes. The use of backless benches may be desirable to reduce the visual effect of benches placed in various locations.
- Base the prototypes on regional contemporary design and craftsmanship; choose a prototype that is relatively inexpensive to fabricate, durable, and appropriate to the intended mission use; create a notable but compatible design that is easily constructed at an affordable price.
- Explore the possibility of sponsoring a design competition or commission a respected regional craftsperson to create the prototypes.
- Involve local citizens, particularly the members of the San Antonio mission parishes, in the design and fabrication of site furnishings to provide a tangible link with the living cultures associated with the mission.
- Consider bench and trash receptacle locations carefully so that they do not become focal objects.
- Respect the architectural design and spatial organization of the landscape when locating benches and trash receptacles.
- Reduce the effects of walk and path widths by locating benches and trash receptacles adjacent to, instead of on, paths.
- Locate site furnishings in shaded areas to respond to the local climate.

Interpretation and signage

- Re-evaluate the interpretive prospectus in light of cultural landscape findings (see following section and *Exhibit X*).
- Use the findings of the cultural landscape report to inform the development of an interpretive plan; acknowledge the site's post-colonial history and preservation in such interpretation. Select interpretive media in concert with site and landscape preservation considerations. While waysides are an effective interpretive tool, also consider other, less intrusive ways to interpret the site. Consider the use of historic photographs, maps, and oral histories from the CLR process where they are appropriate to the interpretive goals.
- Reconstruct historic features only if necessary to meet interpretive goals.
- Document existing features to HABS/HAER standards if they are removed to provide a more accurate interpretation of the colonial period. The locations of reconstructed features should be based on thorough archeological and documentary evidence.
- Coordinate placement of waysides with circulation patterns *(Exhibit X)*.

- Develop a hierarchy and consistent, vandal-proof sign style for all missions, consistent with the approved design guidelines for the Mission Parkway project.

- Keep signs to a minimum; place signs to avoid obscuring cultural landscape features or placing signs within important view corridors.

- Coordinate with the City of San Antonio and adjacent property owners to keep signs adjacent to and visible from the mission appropriate in height, overall dimensions, color, and other design characteristics. Tall signs that are visible from the mission are inappropriate.

- Develop an overall plan for site signage that incorporates a hierarchy of signs. Design and carefully locate all signs, whether interpretive or informational so that they do not detract from the historic integrity of the site. Signs should be straightforward, vandal-resistant, and accessible. Signs should be consistent with the signs selected for the other mission sites.

Land Acquisition

- Acquire for management the lands to the north, west, and east of the church to enhance opportunities to interpret the Spanish colonial mission landscape. Significant archeological resources that contribute to the understanding of the landscape and its development exist on these properties.

Mission Core

Buildings and structures

- The following individual contributing landscape features should be retained and maintained:

  Church of Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña
  Sacristy
  Father President's Office
  Convento and *Corredor*
  Well

- Avoid constructing additional structures within the historic core or its viewshed.

- Use vacant and underutilized interior spaces for interpretation, visitor services, and site utilities; avoid permanent installations that will affect character-defining architectural features.

- Consider removal of splash blocks. At a minimum, evaluate and monitor the splash blocks to maintain the proper slope for positive water drainage.

Vegetation

- Rely primarily on the use of native vegetation in their plant communities; use native grasses installed as solid sod as the primary ground cover, and native trees—primarily mesquite, live oak, cedar elm, flowering or desert willow, redbud, and pecan. Generally choose locations for tree planting that will shade the walkway system leaving the former compound area mostly open.

- Monitor the growth patterns and condition of trees close to church structure on the north. Consider removal or seasonal root pruning to lessen their encroachment on the building facade.

- Replace existing lawn grasses with native grasses using sod installation. Maintain a shorter grass height within the historic mission compound area.

- Generally avoid planting trees and large shrubs within the viewshed corridor between Mission Road and the front facade of the church. (See *Exhibit Z*).

Drainage

- To encourage water movement away from structures, re-grade and remove, as necessary, soil added in the twentieth century. Undertake this work only in consultation with archeologists and historic landscape architects who meet the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications.

- Install a system of underground storm drainage lines to conduct rain water out of the courtyard and away from architectural and archeological resources. Conduct a thorough archeological investigation prior to the construction of this system to minimize disruption to below-ground resources. For a more detailed discussion of drainage in this area, see the preliminary design alternative discussion for the courtyard drainage later in this chapter, and *Exhibits V* and *W-1 through W-8.*

- Consider the use of soil amendments to improve the water retentiveness of soil in planting areas as part of the re-grading process; avoid the use of mulch unless its use is intended to protect architectural and vegetative materials by avoiding the use of mechanical weed-eaters in sensitive areas.

Lighting and utilities

- Develop lighting specific to the needs of the mission core. Avoid the use of free-standing poles. Consider the use of such alternative systems as retractable lighting to illuminate paths and walkways. All light fixtures should be of a simple, contemporary design, modestly scaled and located inconspicuously to avoid visual intrusion into the historic environment. Do not attempt to replicate period lighting.

- Remove existing lighting in church windows. Comply to the extent possible with the NPS regional night sky initiative without sacrificing security measures for the nighttime protection of historic resources.

- Install electrical fixtures in the ground in strategic locations to provide for temporary lighting of site during special events.

- Remove unnecessary or unused light poles.

- Use motion-activated pedestrian area lighting to reduce light in the core. Encourage special event temporary lighting that is retracted or removed following each event. Retractable bollard lighting should be key- or switch-activated by NPS and church personnel, not motion-activated.

- Avoid adding non-contributing features that will require vegetative or other screens and that diminish site integrity.

- Avoid locating dumpsters in the mission core.

Fencing

- Avoid compartmentalizing the landscape with fencing without historic documentation.

Site furnishings

- Locate a minimum number of benches and trash receptacles in the mission core for visitor use. Since there is a need to provide seating, however, for mobility-impaired visitors who may not be wheelchair users, some structured seating is desirable. For the sake of consistency, select furnishing styles that follow the approved design guidelines for the Mission Parkway project. When such features are used, avoid their placement in architectural voids or in locations that block open spaces or significant views.

- Avoid placing benches or trash receptacles in architectural voids or in locations that block open spaces or views to and from major features; locate movable furnishings in shaded spaces and in convenient locations adjacent to pedestrian walks.

- Design and install benches and trash receptacles so they can be moved to different locations and grouped and regrouped as necessary for different NPS and parish events, or even removed and stored in an interior space for photographic or other events where the presence of non-contributing features would be inappropriate or distracting.

Interpretation and signage

- Avoid placing unnecessary signs in the mission core.

- Consider signs that can be moved when their presence would be inappropriate or distracting.

Mission Foreground

Buildings and structures

- Avoid new construction.

- Retain the quarry. Remove interior vegetation; retain or provide native shade trees, such as mesquite or live oak, at the quarry wayside location *(Exhibit X)*.

Vegetation

- Retain existing groupings of trees.

- When dead, diseased, or damaged trees are replaced, rely primarily on the use of native species, such as mesquite, live oak, cedar elm, flowering or desert willow, redbud, and pecan planted as individual trees and as groups based on native plant community associations.

- Avoid planting trees and large shrubs within the axial viewshed corridor between Mission Road and the front facade of the church.

- Replace existing lawn grasses with native grasses using sod installation. Maintain a taller grass height outside the historic mission compound area.

Lighting and utilities

- Avoid adding non-contributing features that will require vegetative or other screens and diminish site integrity.

- Avoid locating dumpsters in this area.

Site furnishings

- Design and install benches and trash receptacles so they can be moved to different locations and grouped and regrouped as necessary for different NPS and religious events, or even removed and stored in a vacant mission room for photographic or other events when non-contributing features would be inappropriate or distracting.

- Use cooler, shaded spaces for installation of such necessary contemporary furnishings as water fountains, additional seating, and trash receptacles.

Interpretation and signage

- Continue to use an entry sign that is based on standard NPS prototypes. The park entrance should be easily recognizable as a NPS site. Avoid developing a thematic design based on regional or historic motifs or that introduces a different design vocabulary to the park.

Seminary

The former seminary grounds were not accessible during the CLR site visits. If the site becomes available for NPS use, a CLR should be developed that addresses its specific needs and requirements in terms of any new proposed use.

Fencing

- If existing wooden fencing between the mission and the former seminary grounds must be replaced, do so with reinforced chain link fencing that can support a cover of native vines.

- In the long-term, remove fencing between the mission and former seminary grounds to permit visitor access to and interpretation of the historic mission environs.

Vegetation

- At the corner of Mitchell Street and Mission Road, encourage future planting of groupings of native trees to soften the visual impact of commercial areas to the northwest.

Interpretation and Signage

- If the seminary becomes available for NPS use, implement a future phase of compound wall interpretation *(Exhibit X)*.

NPS Visitor Services

See Landscaping for Visitor Contact Station and Parking Area and *Exhibit Y*, below.

Historic *Labores*

Buildings and Structures

- Avoid new construction.

Roads, walks, and paths

- Avoid further subdevelopment; do not introduce circulation systems.

Vegetation

- Encourage use of sustainable indigenous/native communities for plant materials and avoid use of exotic species. Use native grasses and groves of native trees, primarily mesquite, live oak, and cedar elm; avoid the use of pecan trees in parking areas.

Lighting and utilities

- Do not introduce lighting to this area.

Interpretation and signage

- Interpret this area from the proposed interpretive walk *(Exhibit X)*.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN SCHEMES

Four preliminary design schemes have been developed for Mission Concepción, addressing drainage and preservation/restoration of features in the courtyard area, interpretation of the mission perimeter wall, landscaping at the visitor contact station and parking area, and preservation and enhancement of historic viewsheds. The schemes are based on research and analysis of historical documents and on specific design concepts and objectives developed for the cultural landscape as a whole. The purpose of the design schemes is to provide an appropriate framework and programmatic basis for preservation, rehabilitation, maintenance, and interpretation of Mission Concepción's significant landscape features. They have been developed in response to issues identified by park personnel, NPS regional personnel, and the team of consultants in the series of project workshops held in San Antonio.

Courtyard Drainage and Restoration/Preservation of Existing Surface and Subsurface Landscape Features *(Exhibits V and W-1 through W-8)*

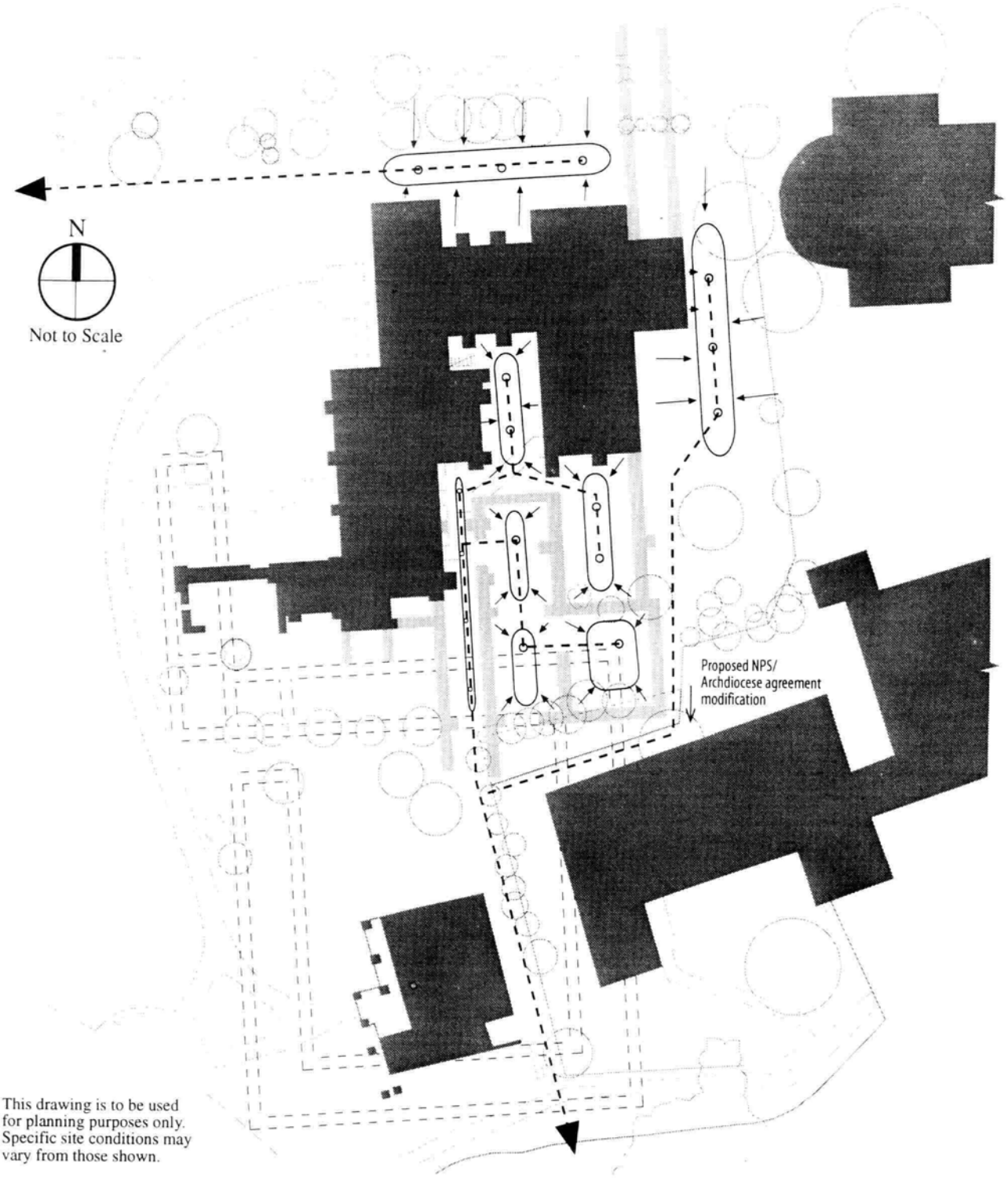
Developing and implementing a drainage and surface treatment design solution for the Mission Concepción courtyard involves a complex web of resource protection, interpretation and historic preservation philosophy issues. This preliminary design scheme and its associated alternatives address three major areas of concern: drainage, resource protection, and courtyard design and circulation, as well as considering the implications and opportunities for resource interpretation. Awareness of archeological resources is essential in addressing these issues, especially in regard to the need for soil removal to facilitate the flow of water away from both above- and below-ground resources. Since archeological resource identification and evaluation are not yet complete, every aspect of implementation should involve an NPS archeologist to assure resource protection.

Drainage and resource protection

Existing surface drainage patterns contribute to the instability of the mission's building foundations. Surface modifications have resulted in the pooling of rainwater at the bases of some structures. During heavy rainfall, the east rooms of the *convento* have experienced flooding. Topographic and property boundary constraints at Mission Concepción make it difficult to move stormwater drainage above ground; as a result, the drainage system for the courtyard needs to be based on the concept of directing excess water away from the structure. From the compound center, stormwater can be conducted either to a holding basin beneath the visitor center parking lot or underground to follow the natural drainage patterns associated with the San Antonio River. This system will require regrading and installation of subsurface drain lines and drop inlets along a swale running north to south, where there has already been substantial disturbance to archeological resources. Since existing archeological information is insufficient to determine conclusively the interior and exterior paving materials, special attention must be given to archeological resources during this engineering process. This further archeological research may suggest alternative paving surface material selections.

Storm water drainage can be removed from the site either above or below ground. A combination of the two, however, provides the least intrusive approach for the courtyard area. The more appropriate alternative design question involves whether storm water should be diverted directly from the site to the city's storm water system or below ground in an on-site detention tank in a previously disturbed area such as the parking lot. This decision should be made with regard to sustainable practices. A detention tank may be both cost-effective and useful as a cistern to provide water for various site uses ranging from landscape maintenance to toilet flushing.

As a result of the highly-constrained nature of the site and the complexity of its myriad of above- and below-surface resources—including the compound wall—there are few options for removing storm water from the immediate courtyard area. *Exhibit V* illustrates a system of storm water removal that is sensitive to the above-ground and below-ground resources. Executed properly, this solution has minimal visual impact.



This drawing is to be used for planning purposes only. Specific site conditions may vary from those shown.

Map Sources:
James N. Ferguson, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), *Addendum to Misión Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña*, sheet 12 of 12, 1986; Jake Ivey, United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), untitled drawing showing presumed configuration of 1745 and 1780 walls at Mission Concepción, 1988; USDI, NPS, Division of Land Resources. *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

Regraded low ground
Subsurface drain line
1745 wall location
1780 wall location
Drop inlet
Slope to low ground
Existing building
Existing vegetation

COURTYARD DRAINAGE
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report Mission Concepción

472/20924A

This preliminary design concept calls for a series of individual above- and below-ground drainage collectors located above the soil horizon defining layers associated with the period of significance. Although labor intensive, this solution will provide the best resource protection. First, narrow below-grade drainage areas with finished at-grade drains can be developed parallel to the north and east facades of the church and *convento*. The ground surface can then be gently sloped away from the adjacent building foundation walls to the drainage areas. The ground surface can also be gently sloped away from the currently fenced boundaries to these drainage areas. Storm water to the north can be removed from the property through an east/west pipeline to Mission Road while storm water to the east can be removed through a north/south pipeline that connects to a drainage pipeline from the courtyard. As noted above, a detention tank under the current parking area may be able to support beneficial sustainable practices and lower the amount of flow into the municipal storm water system.

Courtyard drainage can be handled through a series of interconnected above- and below-ground drainage units located within the areas that historically were rooms or open areas. This solution does not "cut" through historic wall areas and allows for either a finished or unfinished ground plane alternative (see below). The interconnected pipes flow into one line that follows the property line to the south to Felisa Street and/or a detention tank under the parking lot.

Courtyard design and circulation

Visitors to the courtyard area currently begin their sequence in an interior room, move outside through areas that historically were either interior or exterior spaces, and finish their tour in another existing interior room before backtracking to leave. Design improvements in this circulation pattern—brought about by drainage modifications and resource restoration and interpretation needs—should aim to delineate the differences between historic interior and exterior spaces, not affect adversely either above- or below-ground resources, and comply with UFAS/ADAAG requirements.

In the following design alternatives, circulation routes are either paved or structured with above-grade walkways. Walkways in particular must be designed to meet the needs of wheelchair users by maintaining a minimum width of five feet throughout (except at doorways) to permit two wheelchairs to pass each other, and by providing turning areas of at least eight feet square at walkway termini that will allow sufficient room for both wheelchair users and other visitors. Meeting these two criteria in the design and layout of the walkway network will obviate the need for specific passing turnouts.

Resource interpretation

All of the courtyard design alternatives discussed below provide physical as well as visual differentiation between historically interior and exterior ground planes. These differences should be interpreted unobtrusively to the visitor. The wall and threshold locations within the courtyard also should be interpreted. The visitor should be free to move directly through the courtyard from one portion of the structure to another, or to linger in the courtyard and learn about the various rooms and open spaces no longer extant above ground level.

Courtyard Paving Alternative #1 *(Exhibit W-1)*

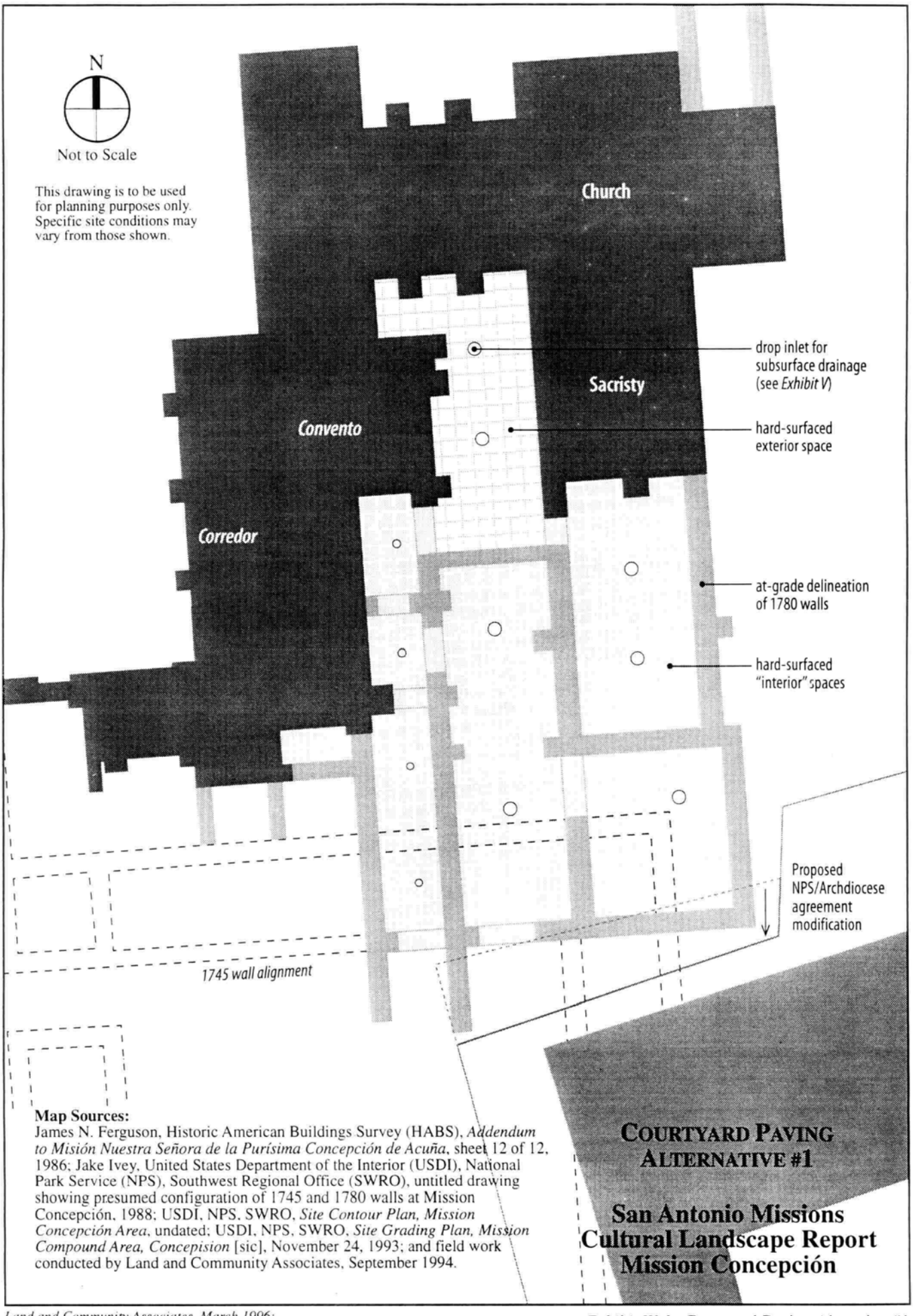
This alternative occurs entirely at grade, using two types of paving to distinguish between historically interior and exterior spaces. It features:

- at-grade delineation of 1780 walls using rough limestone pavers with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- hard-surfaced exterior space of approved trace material (buff-colored, exposed aggregate concrete with applied sand finish) or brick or stone pavers;
- hard-surfaced interior spaces of similar character to exterior space but differentiated in color, texture and/or material;
- paved surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system; inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*).

Courtyard Paving Alternative #2 *(Exhibit W-2)*

This alternative uses both paved and unpaved surface treatments to distinguish between historically interior and exterior spaces, and incorporates a section of above-grade walkway. It features:

- at-grade delineation of 1780 walls using rough limestone pavers with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- grass or similar treatment of exterior space;
- hard-surfaced interior spaces of approved trace material (buff-colored, exposed aggregate concrete with applied sand finish) or brick or stone pavers;
- paved and grass surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system (grass surfaces will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing); inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*);
- above-grade, wood or metal panel walkway system (minimum width, 5') across grass area (minimal height above surrounding ground should not require guardrail, but will require side curbs or bumper rails); permits rain, etc. to penetrate to ground below and allows surface drainage to drop inlets.



Map Sources:
James N. Ferguson, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), *Addendum to Misión Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña*, sheet 12 of 12, 1986; Jake Ivey, United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), untitled drawing showing presumed configuration of 1745 and 1780 walls at Mission Concepción, 1988; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

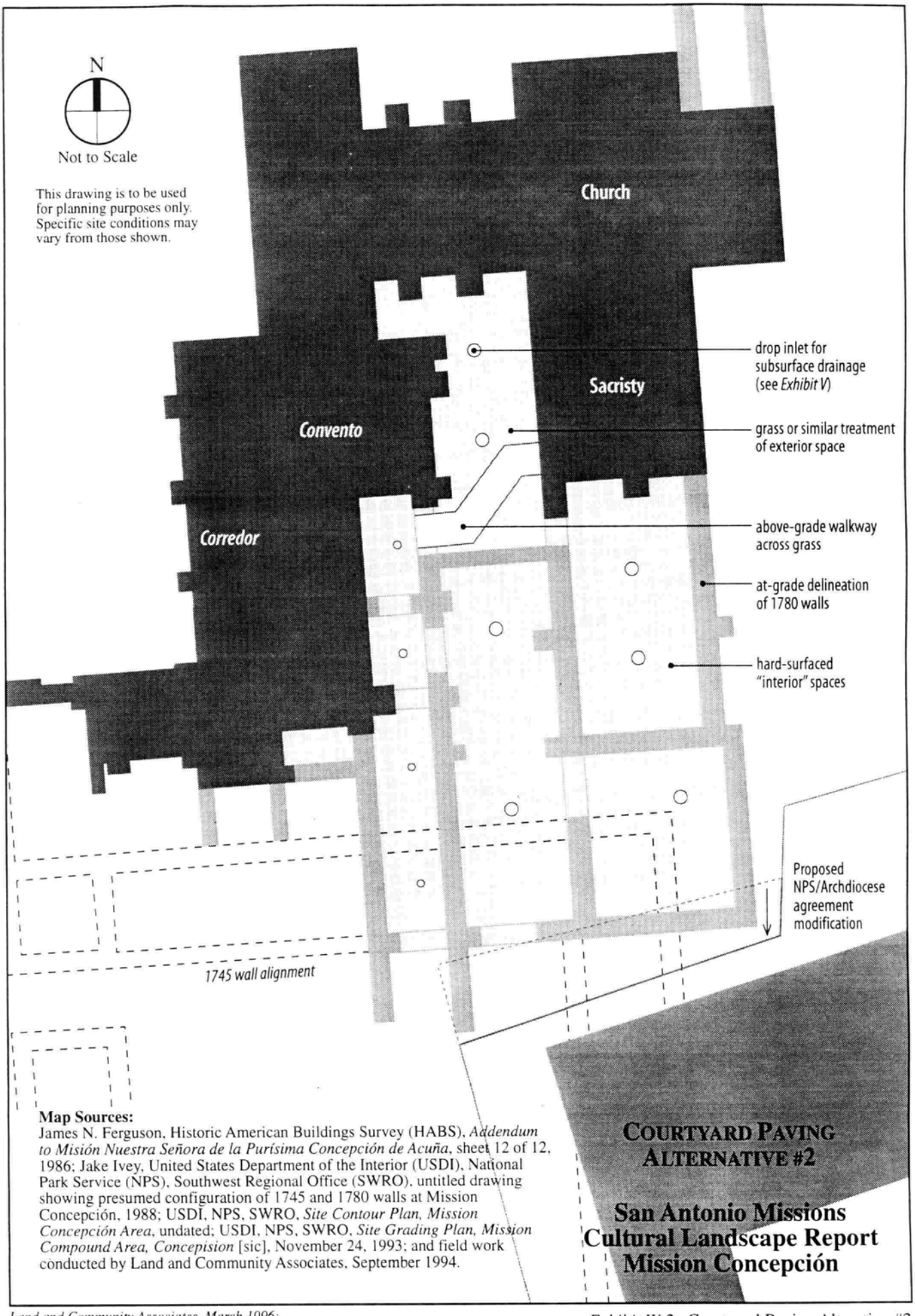
COURTYARD PAVING ALTERNATIVE #1

San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, March 1996; revised April 1998

Exhibit W-1. Courtyard Paving Alterative #1

1 of 8 472/20925A



Map Sources:
James N. Ferguson, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), *Addendum to Misión Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña*, sheet 12 of 12, 1986; Jake Ivey, United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), untitled drawing showing presumed configuration of 1745 and 1780 walls at Mission Concepción, 1988; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

COURTYARD PAVING ALTERNATIVE #2

San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Courtyard Paving Alternative #3 *(Exhibit W-3)*

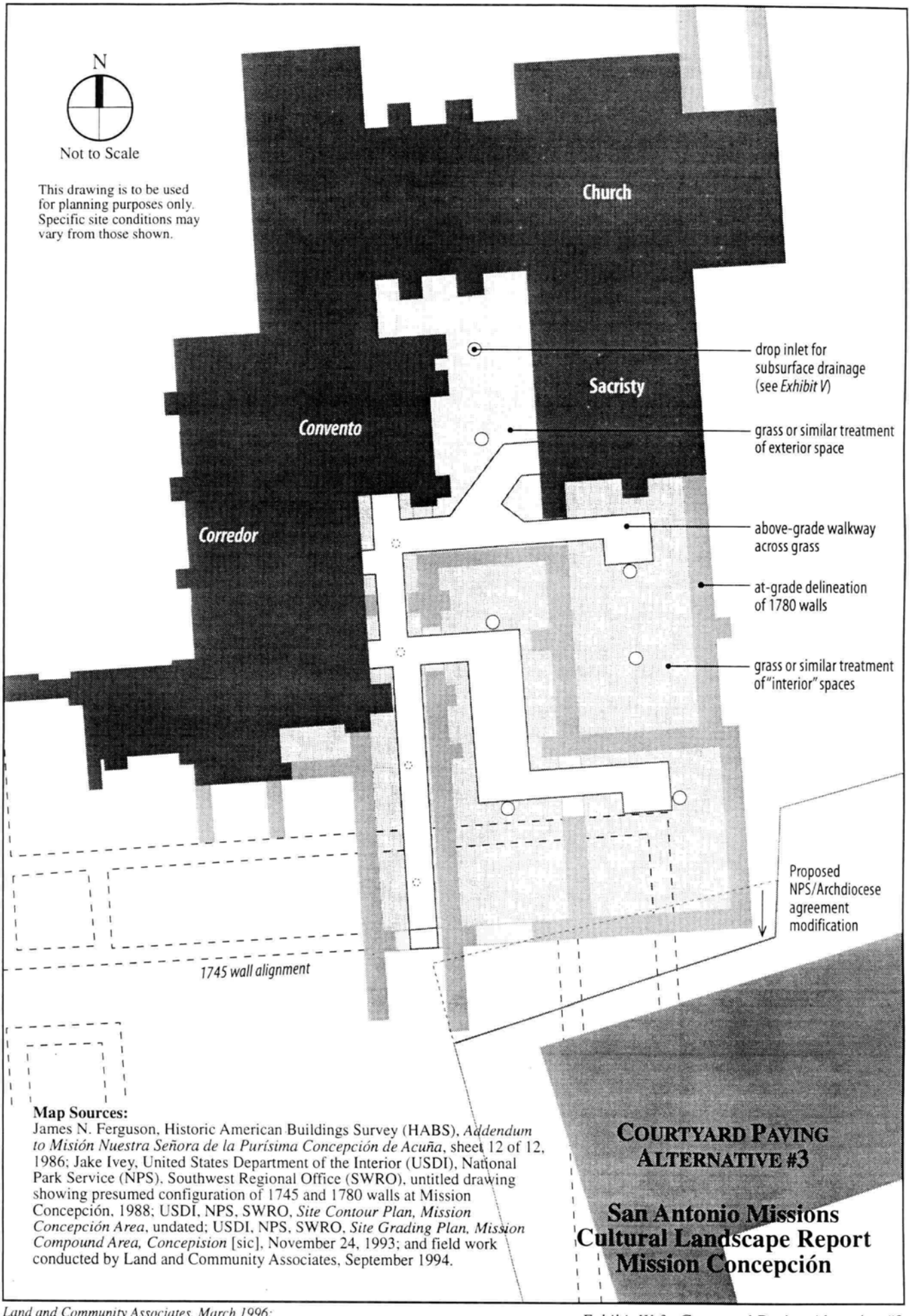
This alternative uses grass or another non-paving surface treatment for both historically interior and exterior spaces, in combination with a more extensive network of above-grade walkways than shown in Alternative #2. This alternative features:

- at-grade delineation of 1780 walls using rough limestone pavers with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- grass or similar treatment of exterior space;
- grass or similar treatment of interior spaces, perhaps with random stones, some other detail, or different groundcover to distinguish from exterior space;
- grass surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing); inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*);
- above-grade, wood or metal panel walkway system (minimum width, 5') across grass area (minimal height above surrounding ground should not require guardrail, but will require side curbs or bumper rails); permits rain, etc. to penetrate to ground below and allows surface drainage to drop inlets.

Courtyard Paving Alternative #4 *(Exhibit W-4)*

This alternative, which uses two types of paving to distinguish between historically interior and exterior spaces, is similar to Alternative #1, with the exception that the 1780 walls are given an above-grade expression. This provides an opportunity to interpret or delineate the 1745 walls at grade. This alternative features:

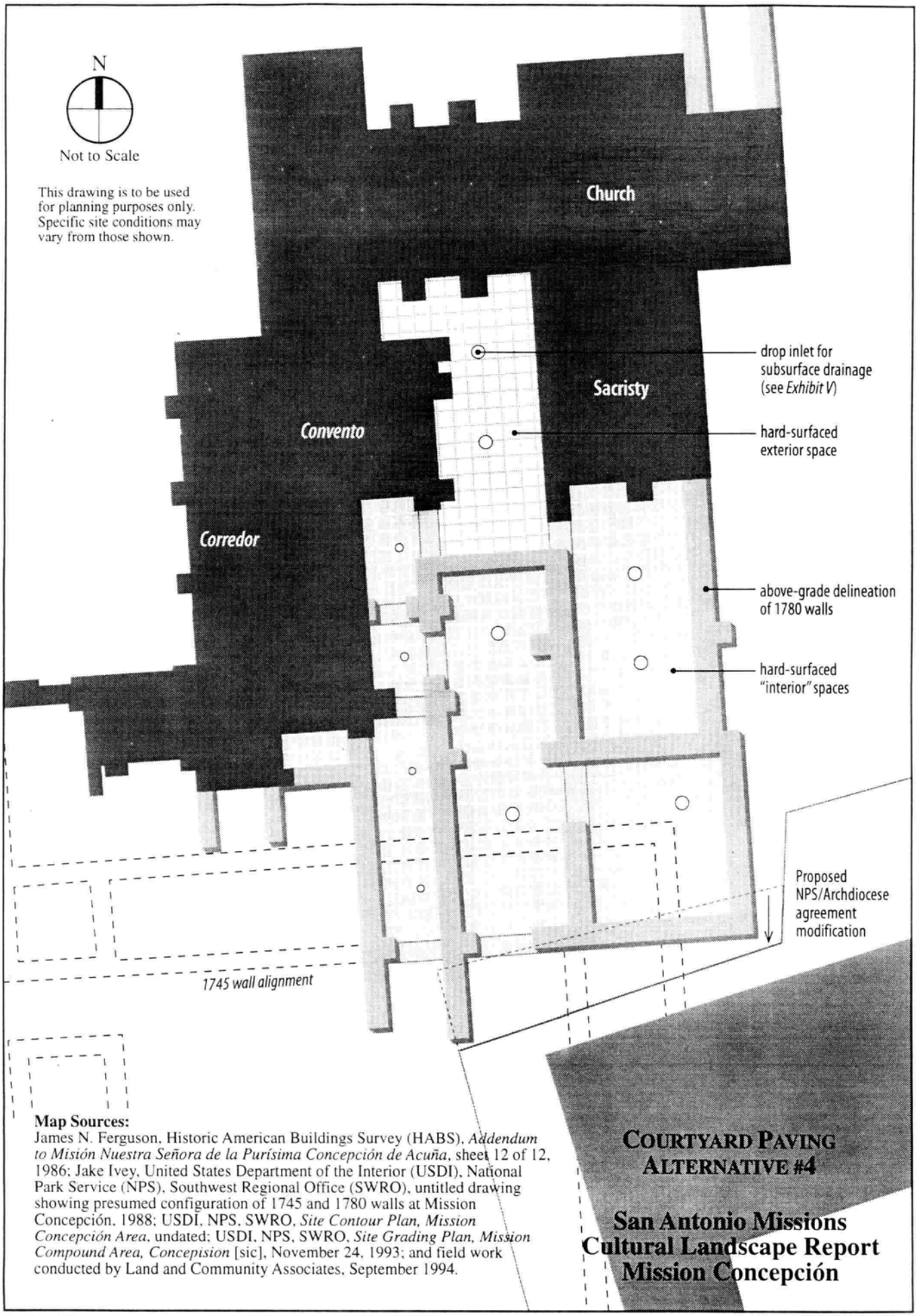
- above-grade delineation of 1780 walls to a height of about 2 feet, using rough limestone veneer with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- possible at-grade delineation of 1745 walls using rough limestone pavers;
- hard-surfaced exterior space of approved trace material (buff-colored, exposed aggregate concrete with applied sand finish) or brick or stone pavers;
- hard-surfaced interior spaces of similar character to exterior space but differentiated in color, texture and/or material;
- paved surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system; inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*).



Map Sources:
James N. Ferguson, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), *Addendum to Misión Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña*, sheet 12 of 12, 1986; Jake Ivey, United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), untitled drawing showing presumed configuration of 1745 and 1780 walls at Mission Concepción, 1988; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

COURTYARD PAVING ALTERNATIVE #3

San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
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Map Sources:
James N. Ferguson, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), *Addendum to Misión Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña*, sheet 12 of 12, 1986; Jake Ivey, United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), untitled drawing showing presumed configuration of 1745 and 1780 walls at Mission Concepción, 1988; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

COURTYARD PAVING ALTERNATIVE #4

San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Courtyard Paving Alternative #5 – Preferred *(Exhibit W-5)*

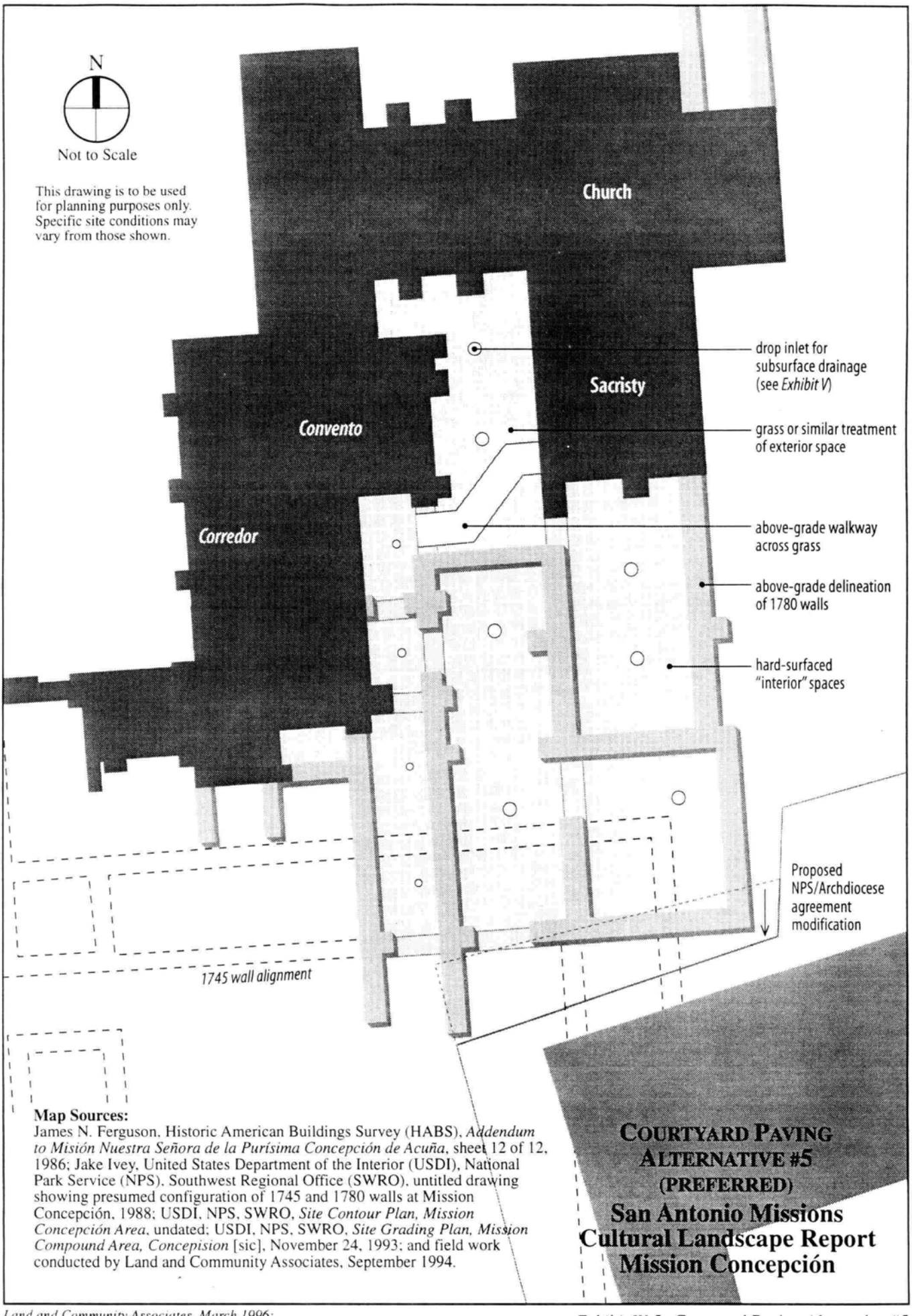
This alternative, which uses both paved and unpaved surface treatments to distinguish between historically interior and exterior spaces, is similar to Alternative #2, with the exception that the 1780 walls are given an above-grade expression. This alternative also provides the opportunity to interpret or delineate the 1745 walls at grade. This alternative features:

- above-grade delineation of 1780 walls to a height of about 2 feet, using rough limestone veneer with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- possible at-grade delineation of 1745 walls using rough limestone pavers;
- grass or similar treatment of exterior space (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing);
- hard-surfaced interior spaces of approved trace material (buff-colored, exposed aggregate concrete with applied sand finish) or brick or stone pavers;
- paved and grass surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system; inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*);
- above-grade, wood or metal panel walkway system (minimum width, 5') across grass area (minimal height above surrounding ground should not require guardrail, but will require side curbs or bumper rails); permits rain, etc. to penetrate to ground below and allows surface drainage to drop inlets.

Courtyard Paving Alternative #6 *(Exhibit W-6)*

This alternative, which uses grass or another non-paving surface treatment for both historically interior and exterior spaces and has an extensive network of above-grade walkways, is similar to Alternative #3, with the exception that the 1780 walls are given an above-grade expression. This alternative also provides the opportunity to interpret or delineate the 1745 walls at grade. This alternative features:

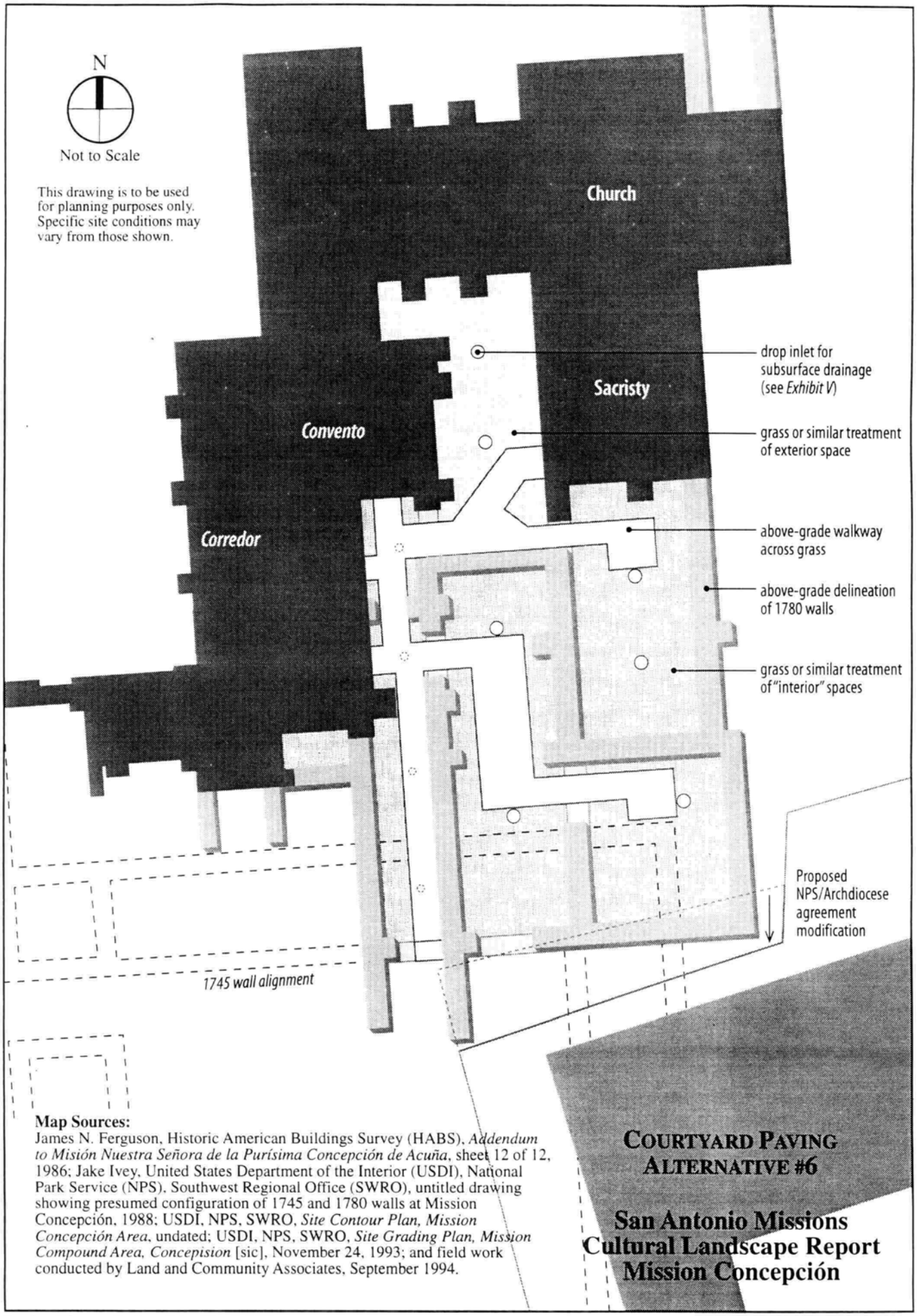
- above-grade delineation of 1780 walls to a height of about 2 feet, using rough limestone veneer with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- possible at-grade delineation of 1745 walls using rough limestone pavers;
- grass or similar treatment of exterior space (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing);
- grass or similar treatment of interior spaces, perhaps with random stones, some other detail, or different groundcover to distinguish from exterior space;
- grass surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing); inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*);



Land and Community Associates, March 1996; revised April 1998

Exhibit W-5. Courtyard Paving Alternative #5

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Land and Community Associates, March 1996; revised April 1998

Exhibit W-6. Courtyard Paving Alternative #6

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- above-grade, wood or metal panel walkway system (minimum width, 5') across grass area (minimal height above surrounding ground should not require guardrail, but will require side curbs or bumper rails); permits rain, etc. to penetrate to ground below and allows surface drainage to drop inlets.

Courtyard Paving Alternative #7 *(Exhibit W-7)*

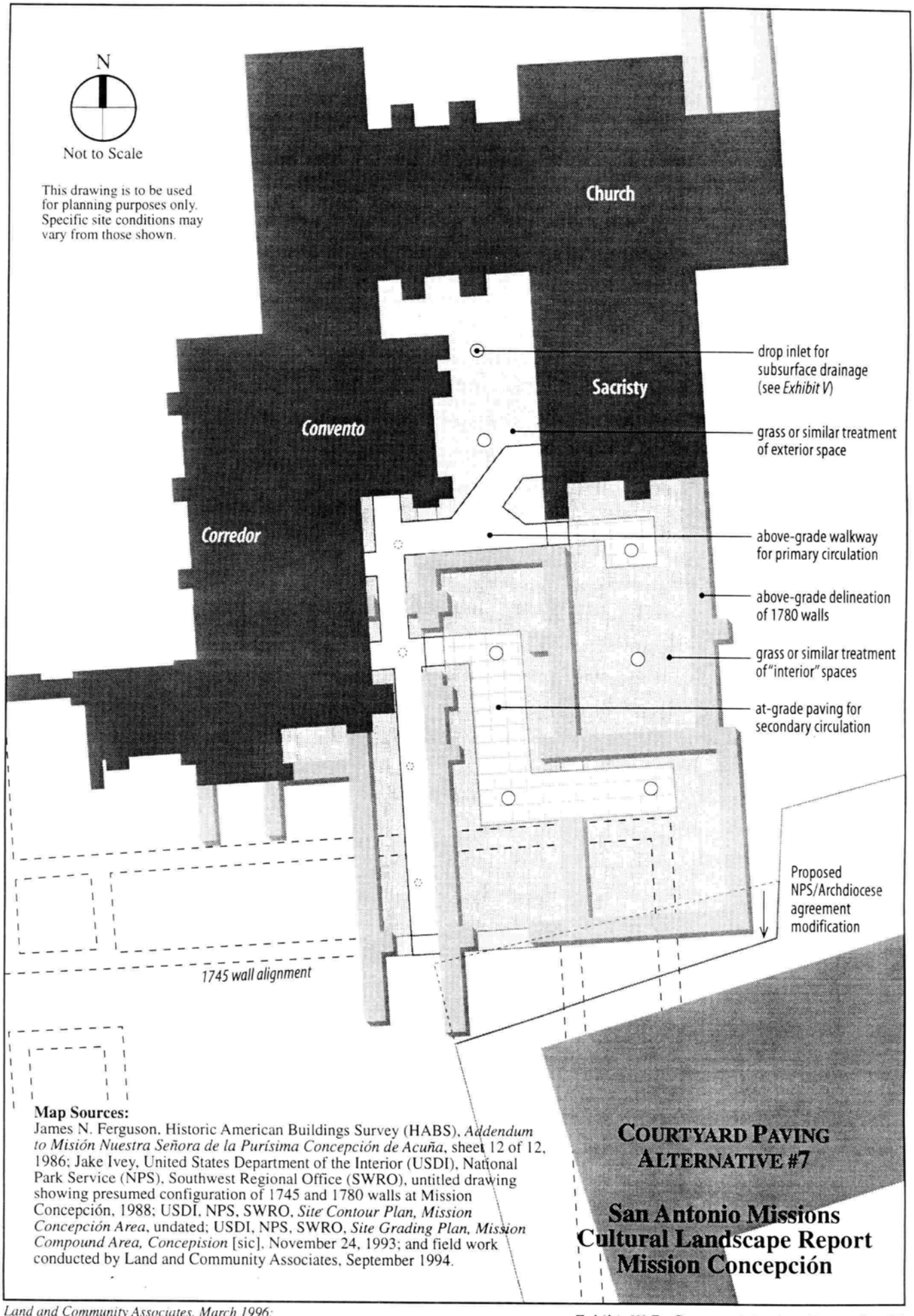
This alternative, which also uses grass or another non-paving surface treatment for both historically interior and exterior spaces, is similar to Alternative #6, but differentiates between primary and secondary circulation using both above-grade walkways and at-grade paving. This alternative features:

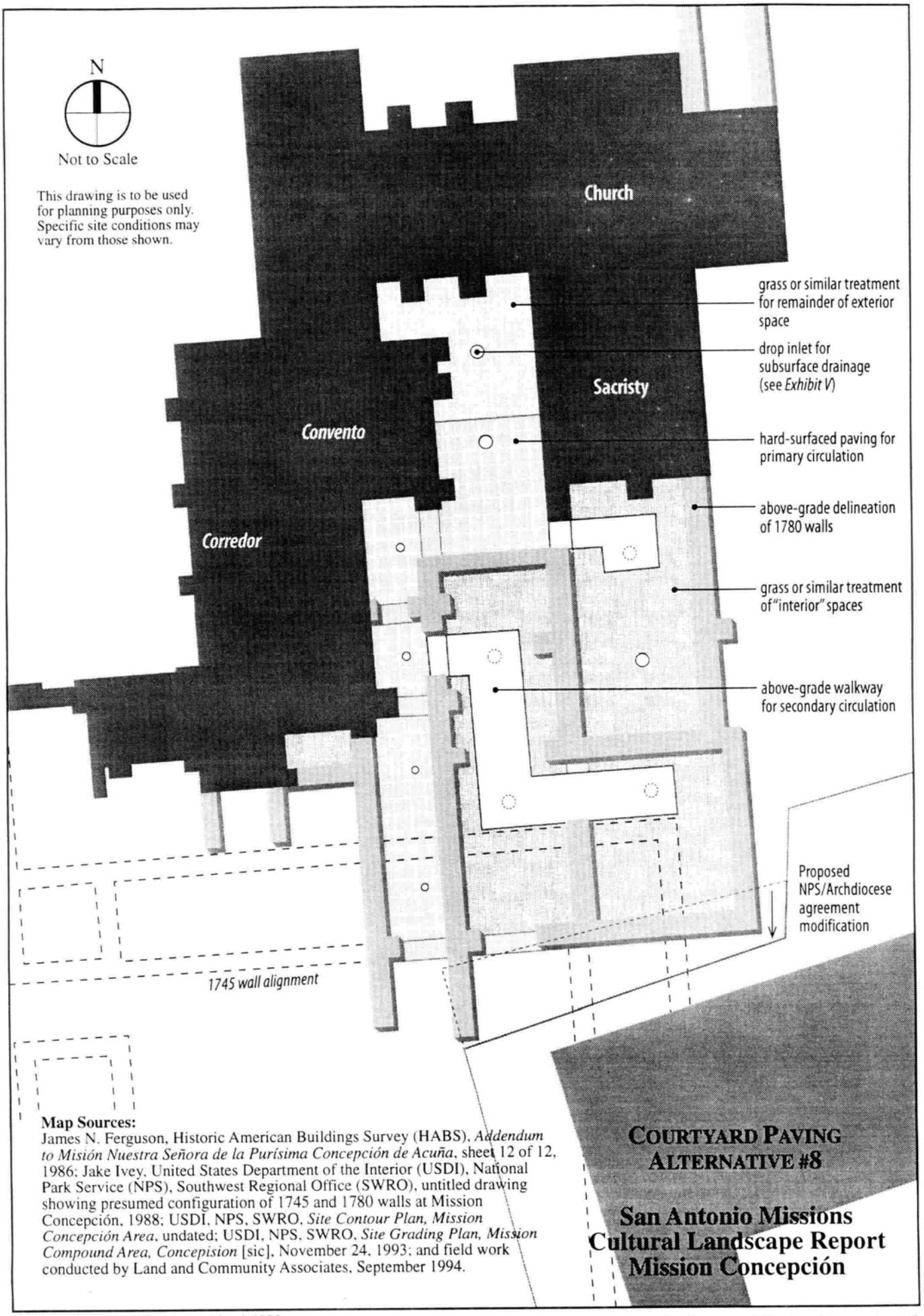
- above-grade delineation of 1780 walls to a height of about 2 feet, using rough limestone veneer with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- possible at-grade delineation of 1745 walls using rough limestone pavers;
- grass or similar treatment of exterior space (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing);
- grass or similar treatment of interior spaces, perhaps with random stones, some other detail, or different groundcover to distinguish from exterior space;
- grass surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing); inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*);
- above-grade, wood or metal panel walkway system (minimum width, 5') across grass area (minimal height above surrounding ground should not require guardrail, but will require side curbs or bumper rails); permits rain, etc. to penetrate to ground below and allows surface drainage to drop inlets;
- at-grade, hard-surfaced paving of approved trace material (buff-colored, exposed aggregate concrete with applied sand finish) or brick or stone pavers for secondary circulation; walkways incorporate drop inlets.

Courtyard Paving Alternative #8 *(Exhibit W-8)*

This alternative, which also uses grass or another non-paving surface treatment for both historically interior and exterior spaces, is similar to Alternative #7, but uses at-grade paving for primary circulation and above-grade walkways for secondary circulation. This alternative features:

- above-grade delineation of 1780 walls to a height of about 2 feet, using rough limestone veneer with smooth stone thresholds at historic wall openings and presumed doorways;
- possible at-grade delineation of 1745 walls using rough limestone pavers;


N
Not to Scale
This drawing is to be used for planning purposes only. Specific site conditions may vary from those shown.
Church
Sacristy
Convento
Corredor
drop inlet for subsurface drainage (see Exhibit V)
grass or similar treatment of exterior space
above-grade walkway for primary circulation
above-grade delineation of 1780 walls
grass or similar treatment of "interior" spaces
at-grade paving for secondary circulation
Proposed NPS/Archdiocese agreement modification
1745 wall alignment
Map Sources:
James N. Ferguson, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Addendum to Misión Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, sheet 12 of 12, 1986; Jake Ivey, United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), untitled drawing showing presumed configuration of 1745 and 1780 walls at Mission Concepción, 1988; USDI, NPS, SWRO, Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.
COURTYARD PAVING ALTERNATIVE #7
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción



Map Sources:
James N. Ferguson, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), *Addendum to Misión Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña*, sheet 12 of 12, 1986; Jake Ivey, United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), untitled drawing showing presumed configuration of 1745 and 1780 walls at Mission Concepción, 1988; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

COURTYARD PAVING ALTERNATIVE #8

San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
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- grass or similar treatment of exterior space (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing);

- grass or similar treatment of interior spaces, perhaps with random stones, some other detail, or different groundcover to distinguish from exterior space;

- grass surfaces sloping to centralized drop inlets for subsurface drainage system (will require greater slope for proper drainage than hard surfacing); inlets located so that drainage lines do not cut across 1780 foundations and as few 1745 foundations as possible (see *Exhibit V*);

- at-grade, hard-surfaced paving of approved trace material (buff-colored, exposed aggregate concrete with applied sand finish) or brick or stone pavers for primary circulation; walkways incorporate drop inlets;

- above-grade, wood or metal panel walkway and curb system across grass area (minimal height above surrounding ground should not require guardrail, but will require side curbs or bumper rails as well as turnouts or passing sites); permits rain, etc. to penetrate to ground below and allows surface drainage to drop inlets; minimum walkway width of 36".

In conjunction with the preferred alternative, NPS should consider working with the Archdiocese to relocate the HVAC units in the northwest corner of the courtyard adjacent to the south tower and remedy drainage problems in this area. These HVAC units detract from the historic feeling of the mission's environs by their noise level and visual appearance. Ground surface depressions and poor surface drainage in this area tend to retain rainwater, contributing to moisture penetration in adjacent portions of the *convento*. A preferable location for the HVAC units is adjacent to the north tower on the north side of the nave. NPS and the church also should explore the replacement of the HVAC equipment with a geothermal or similar system that does not require above-ground condensing units. As an interim approach, NPS should consider working with the Archdiocese on the temporary removal of the units, followed by drainage improvements, reinstallation of the units, and the addition of a contemporary physical and visual barrier to the equipment. This approach also would provide visitors with physical separation from these units and addresses safety issues concerning moving fan blades in an unsupervised area.

Perimeter Wall Interpretation and Circulation Loop *(Exhibit X)*

Interpretation philosophy

Interpretation of missing cultural landscape features dating from the period of significance, based on archeology, is essential to the visitor's understanding of the Spanish colonial period. The interpretive program for Mission Concepción should be based on archeological resources that are preserved *in situ*. The findings of archeological investigations should ultimately be used to interpret the locations of the compound walls, church, *convento*, and residences associated with first mission (San José) occupation of site, the compound walls and gates, the compound fencing and gates, the Indian Quarters, the blacksmith shop, the weaving shop, the outbuildings, the cemetery, the granary, the *acequia*, the road to the missions, Mission Road, other Spanish colonial circulation routes, and the *labores*.

Perimeter wall

NPS should consider undertaking a two-phased development of the compound wall interpretation. For example, during phase one, the wall could be delineated on the current NPS property; during phase two, wall delineation could continue on the former seminary site. The wall width might be approximated with rough laid stone at grade for ease of grounds maintenance. Any surface treatment should be separated from the archeological fabric in a manner to facilitate resource protection. See *Exhibit X* for a possible at-grade wall detail. To differentiate the compound interior from the exterior, the natives grasses could be maintained at a taller height outside the compound walls.

Compound interpretation

NPS should develop an interpretive walk that links the parking area, the visitor contact station, the church, the *convento*, the compound wall interpretation, the quarry (see below for expanded discussion), and the former Mission Road trace. The interpretive walk begins with a photographic opportunity station point; moves to and along the Mission Road trace and through the approximate location of the south central gate (believed to have been located in the south wall); takes a detour to the grotto for a discussion of the seminary grounds; proceeds back to the Mission Road trace and through the northwest gate; proceeds along the outer compound wall; pauses for a wayside interpretation of the *labores*, *acequia* system and the river while providing the visitor with a vista looking west over the Children's Home playing fields towards the river; circles the quarry and provides another photographic opportunity back towards the church across the compound; and proceeds east along the south wall to the palisade. This final wayside is located adjacent to the existing sidewalk leading to the church.

This interpretive walk consists of a hardened, accessible surface such as colored, exposed aggregate concrete linking significant mission features and photographic station points. Surface changes should be provided at points of interest to better accommodate visually impaired visitors. This walk can accommodate a series of waysides; however, providing booklets and posts, radio broadcast loops, and CD technology can be just as effective as waysides and are less intrusive.

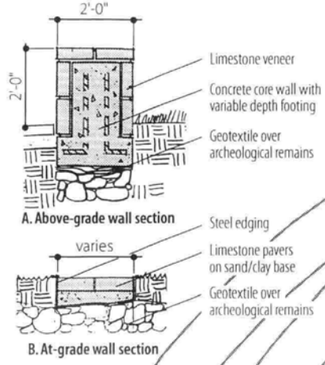
Landscaping for Visitor Contact Station and Parking Areas *(Exhibit Y)*

The visitor contact station should appear as subsidiary to the church structure. Its current visual prominence can be decreased through additional plantings. Such plantings will also provide shade for the visitor, both in the parking area and at the contact station. Plantings should be naturally occurring groupings of native shade trees such as mesquite, live oak, cedar elm, flowering or desert redbud, and pecan. The understory should remain open and unplanted to allow visual access under the canopy. This is important for vehicular sight lines in the parking area and to allow motorist views to the church structure from Mission Road.

Establishing and training a native vine such as coral vine on the trellis of the contact station will soften the visual effect of this structure and is in keeping with the purpose of this building feature. The planting will also enhance the visitor experience by providing additional shade as well as seasonal color. Vines can be pruned and independently supported against the building's piers to avoid damage to masonry. The planting of shrubs in this intensely used area is not recommended.

Legend

- Buildings and structures
- Roads and parking
- Sidewalks and paths
- Tree cover
- Rock outcropping or stone landscape feature
- Fence
- Road trace
- Interpretive trail
- (3) Wayside location
- Compound wall Phase I / Phase II
- Other 1780 walls
- Palisade



N

Not to Scale

Mission Road

Quarry

Parking Area

Bus Stop

Former Mission Road trace

Grotto

See detail B

See detail A

NPS Visitor Contact Station

Corredor

Convento

Church

Sacristy

Felisa Street

Interpretive Waysides

1. Photo opportunity
2. Old Mission Road trace
3. South central gate
4. Palisade
5. Seminary Grounds
6. "Indian Quarters"
7. Northwest gate
8. Compound wall
9. *Labores, acequia* system, river
10. South wall
11. Quarry

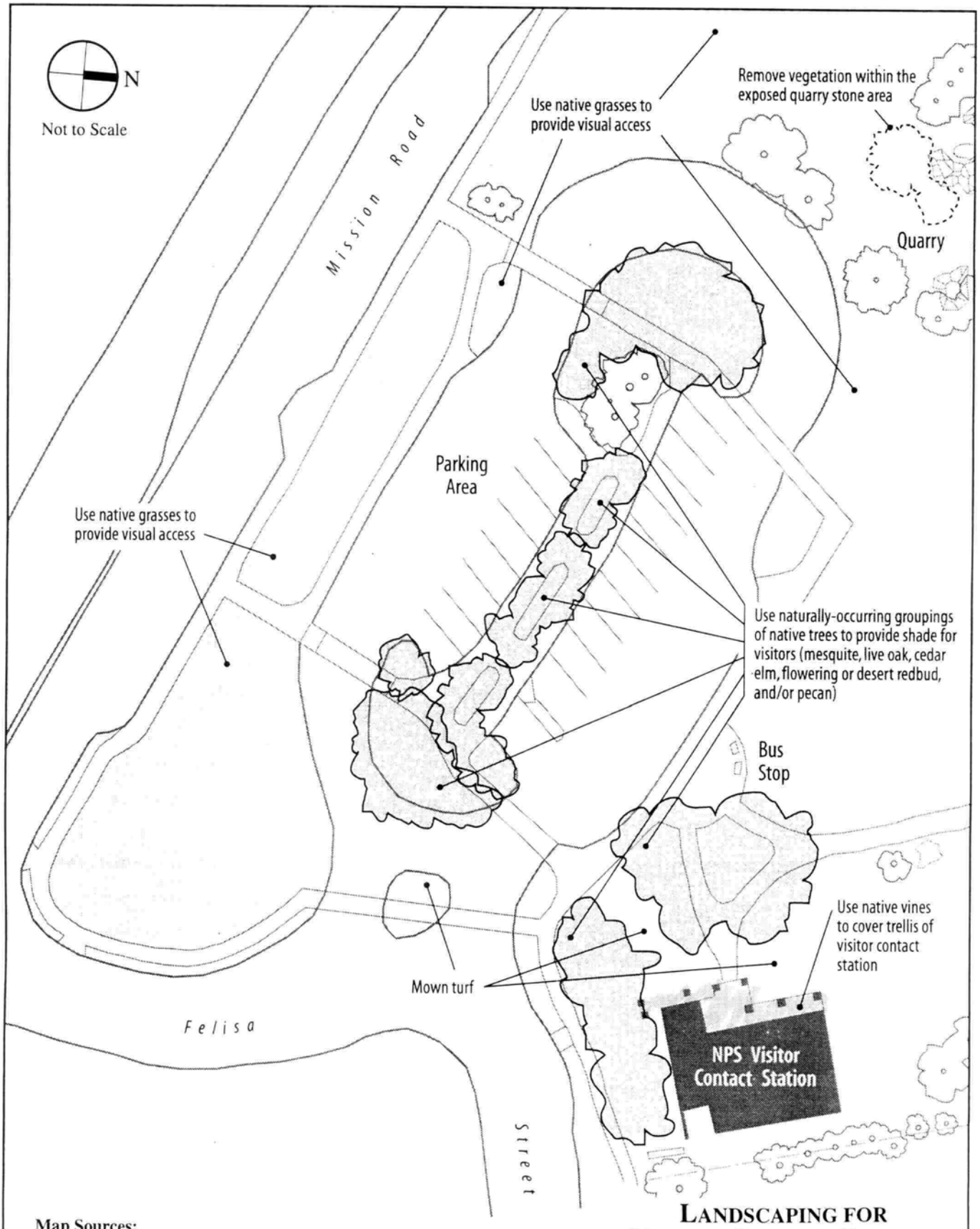
Map Sources:
Works Progress Administration, under direction of United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Branch of Plans and Design, for Historic American Buildings Survey, *First Floor Plan, Mission la Purisima Concepcion de Acuña, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas*, sheet 1 of 5, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Details Courtyard, Mission Concepcion, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park*, sheet 2 of _, September 1990; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

MISSION COMPOUND POINTS OF INTEREST
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, March 1996; revised May 1998.

Exhibit X. Mission Compound Points of Interest

472/20926A



Map Sources:
Works Progress Administration, under direction of United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Branch of Plans and Design, for Historic American Buildings Survey. *First Floor Plan, Mission la Purisima Concepcion de Acuña, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas*, sheet 1 of 5, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

LANDSCAPING FOR VISITOR CONTACT STATION AND PARKING AREA

San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

472/20927

The parking lot islands and areas to the north and east of the parking lot should be planted in native grasses that are maintained at a height consistent with those beyond the compound wall as described earlier. The small entry island and the area immediately adjacent to the contact station should consist of mown turf. Native plants used in a naturally occurring manner should be used to reduce the visual impact of such unpleasant elements as electrical utilities or chain link fencing. Planting native vines on the chain link fence is preferable to fence replacement.

Lighting should be as unobtrusive as possible. If necessary, square poles and luminaires of a contemporary design are appropriate for parking area and entry drive. Poles in parking lots should not exceed twelve feet in height. If night use occurs in the future, consider the use of such alternative systems as retractable bollard lighting to illuminate paths and walkways.

The current concrete sidewalks should be retained, but the white brick edging should be removed, if feasible, since this detail has no contemporary or historic relationship to the mission.

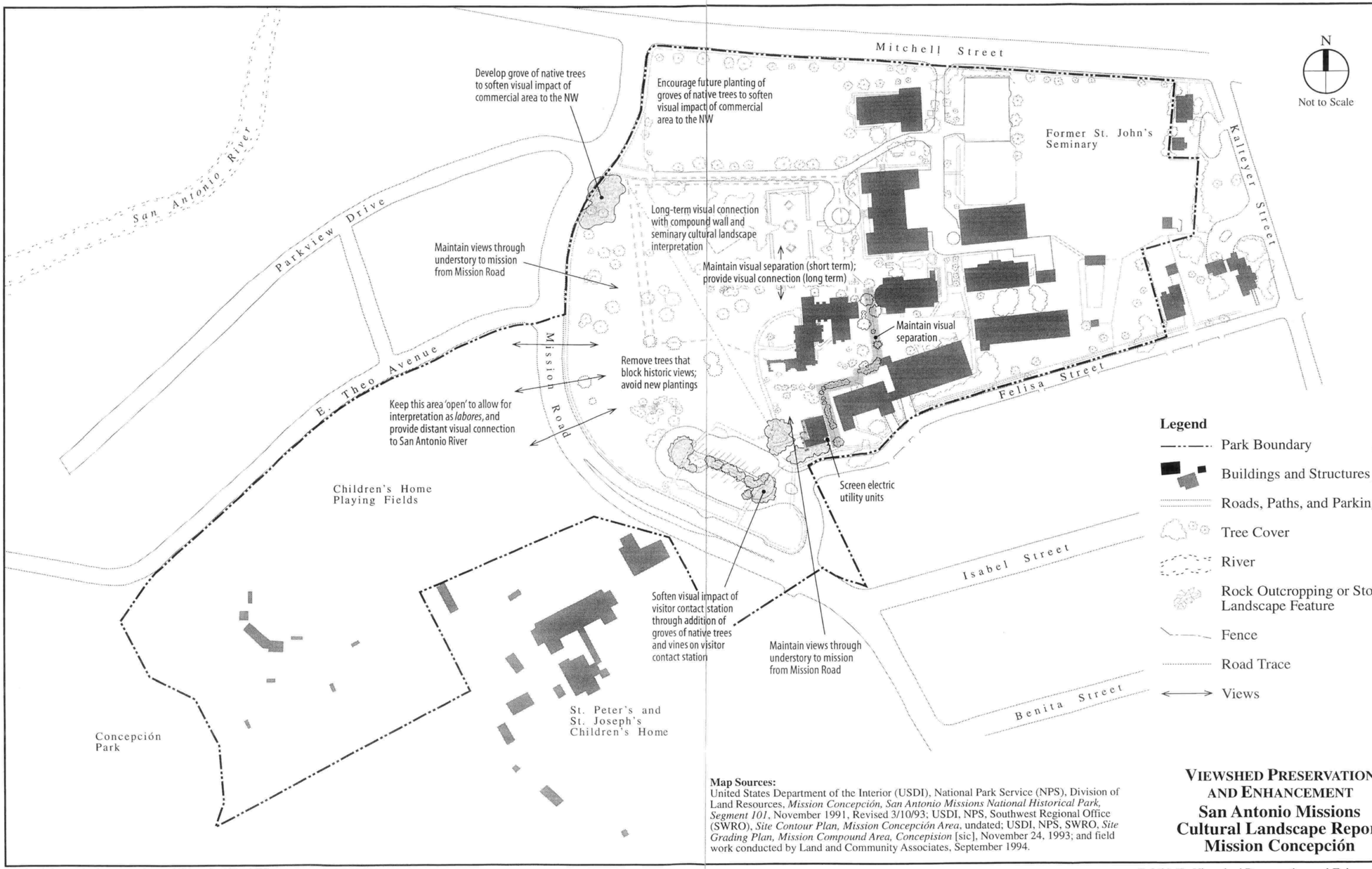
Preservation and Enhancement of Historic Viewsheds *(Exhibit Z)*

Presenting visitors to Mission Concepción with a comprehensive mission experience poses a significant management challenge for NPS. Only a small part of the mission environs is within NPS jurisdiction, and of that, a smaller portion is currently under direct NPS management. Consequently, implementing viewshed management recommendations will require cooperation with and close coordination among NPS and other private and public entities. Because of the significant land use changes that have occurred over time in the mission's environs, it is of utmost importance both to maintain the surviving rural qualities within view of the mission and to reduce the visual impacts of the surrounding areas that detract from these qualities.

In accomplishing the latter, NPS should give priority to the use of native deciduous trees over less appropriate, introduced evergreens. Although the seasonal change in foliage will serve to filter rather than completely block the unrelated surrounding land uses, this approach helps to re-establish native species in the mission environs, and is preferable to the introduction of non-native species in the historic setting. For example, this approach could be implemented at the northwest corner of the current management area. Planting a group of native trees could help screen the commercial area along Mitchell Street that is currently visible from the mission grounds. A grove of native species, such as mesquite, live oak, or cedar elm, complemented by their naturally-occurring associations, could provide a soft buffer. The location of such a grove should be outside or beyond the interpretation area for the compound wall.

NPS should work with commercial property owners and city officials to minimize intrusive off-site signage and lighting. NPS should also consider proposing a zoning overlay to provide design controls for the areas surrounding Mission Concepción and the other units of the NHP.

The former St. John's Seminary property poses several interesting challenges in balancing issues of viewshed management against those of resource interpretation. Due to the current use of the facility as a treatment center, there is a need to maintain physical and visual separation from the mission grounds. This is accomplished along much of the northern boundary between the two properties by a tall, wood fence. Consequently, landscape features such as the grotto, its plantings, and the surrounding paved walkway now are isolated from the larger, seminary gardens



Map Sources:
United States Department of the Interior (USDI), National Park Service (NPS), Division of Land Resources, *Mission Concepción, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Segment 101*, November 1991, Revised 3/10/93; USDI, NPS, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), *Site Contour Plan, Mission Concepción Area*, undated; USDI, NPS, SWRO, *Site Grading Plan, Mission Compound Area, Concepision* [sic], November 24, 1993; and field work conducted by Land and Community Associates, September 1994.

VIEWSHED PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT
San Antonio Missions Cultural Landscape Report
Mission Concepción

Land and Community Associates, March 1996; revised May 1998.

Exhibit Z. Viewshed Preservation and Enhancement

472/20928A

of which they were once a part. The fact that the walk leading to the grotto from the north disappears behind the fence proves confusing for mission visitors. Similarly, portions of the archeological remains of Mission Concepción's compound wall lie within the former seminary boundaries. Until NPS assumes management of the seminary property, the physical separation of the two properties and the visual barrier of the fence will confront NPS in planning its interpretation of the compound wall. The wall will disappear behind the fence, resulting in confusion about the wall's historic configuration and extent. In the cases of both the grotto and the compound wall, the issues involved should be explained to visitors. NPS should install temporary interpretation until the seminary grounds are made accessible to park visitors and there is no longer need to separate the two properties with a fence. Ultimately, NPS should attempt to extend the interpretation of the compound wall underlay into the seminary property while maintaining its cultural landscape—especially the garden to the north and east.

Other viewshed enhancement recommendations include the following:

- Within the park, reduce the visual impact of the visitor contact station as addressed above.

- At Concepción Park, work with the City of San Antonio to establish native plant communities along the river's edge to facilitate distant views to the San Antonio River which is interpreted through waysides along the interpretative walk.

- Work with the Children's Home to keep the playing fields open and free of trees and shrubs or structures, since this is the only available area that can represent and evoke the feeling of the *labores*. Work to re-establish the visual connection between this area and the church environs.

- In the short-term, work to re-establish the visual connection to the former seminary grounds. If fence replacement becomes necessary, work with the treatment center administration to define the common boundary with reinforced chain link fencing that can support a cover of native vines. Avoid the use of vines adjacent to the grotto to help provide visual access.

- Maintain axial views to the church from Mission Road, and ensure that new plantings provide visual access if only through the understory.

Quarry Interpretation *(Exhibit X)*

A variety of interpretive media could provide visitors with information about landscape features and conditions at the quarry site as part of the compound interpretive walk. Interpretation should focus on the role of the quarry in the Mission Concepción cultural landscape. For example, vegetation and soil layers above the horizon associated with the period of significance could be removed from within the quarry perimeter, retaining vegetation beyond the perimeter to provide shade and natural habitat.



6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A TERMINOLOGY

The terminology and data organization approach used relies on several precedent-setting publications, and on the growing body of work related to the documentation, evaluation, planning, and management of cultural and historic landscapes. Primarily, reference was made to NPS Bulletins 18, 28, 30, 77, and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 1992,* as well as to other publications listed in the project bibliography.[1]

Definitions are included to establish project-specific terminology. These definitions have been developed for use in describing and analyzing the Mission Concepción cultural landscape and may not apply to other locations or uses.

Landscape Characteristics

Landscape characteristics are abstract qualities, or applied concepts, that may be evident at many scales. The Mission Concepción landscape may be analyzed for the twelve landscape characteristics listed in NPS *Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes:* patterns of spatial organization; response to natural features; land uses and activities; buildings and structures; cluster arrangements; circulation systems; vegetation; small-scale features; views and viewsheds; archeological resources; boundary demarcations; and cultural traditions.

Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Contributing features are those features that survive from historical periods of significance and that retain sufficient integrity to represent their historic appearance and function. Non-contributing features are those features that have been added to the landscape since the last period of significance, as well as those that survive from the period of significance but that do not possess integrity.

Character-defining Features

Character-defining features are features that not only survive from a period of significance but that also relate to the historic themes and contexts associated with the resource as well as to the overall design. Character-defining features may include both individual resources and groups of resources.

Land Uses Identified for Mission Concepción

Land use at Mission Concepción is varied, as it was during most historical periods. The existing and historic land use and activity categories identified for this CLR include the following:

> Agriculture (crop land) - Land that is or was historically planted and cultivated or where native vegetation was managed and harvested with the intended goal of producing products for human or animal consumption and/or use.
>
> Agriculture (pasture / grazing) - Land that is or was kept open and covered in grass or herbage and grazed by livestock.

[1]Recently published papers on the subject of cultural landscapes, such as ICOMOS Landscapes Working Group Newsletter, No. 6, 7 September, 1993 have provided additional terminology in this developing field.

Residential - Areas or buildings whose primary occupants are private individuals dwelling at the mission for considerable periods of time.

Religious - Buildings or other spaces used primarily for worship and related activities.

Cemetery - Areas where human burials and cremations are known to have occurred.

Defense - Areas and structures dedicated to protecting the mission community from invasion by hostile forces.

Visitor Services - Buildings, structures, and areas where visitors receive information, advice, permits, and/or passes to facilitate their enjoyment of the site.

Administrative- Areas and buildings used for park and concession executive and management operations.

Open Space/Undeveloped - Large expanses of land that do not include substantial physical developments. This category includes current open space that may have been subject to previous uses that resulted in observable physical effects but that has been allowed to undergo secondary plant succession, or is being managed according to current ecological theory in the contemporary landscape.

Open Space/Recreation - Land designated for outdoor sports and other activities such as picnicking, sports, or lawn games.

Open Space/Ceremonial - Outdoor spaces used for public or community gatherings that involve the commemoration or celebration of events or religious dates.

Industrial - Areas and structures such as mills and quarries, where materials are manufactured or processed.

Museum/Interpretive - Buildings, such as nature centers and museums, and areas of land, such as museum gardens, nature trails, and zoos, whose primary function is education or interpretation of cultural and/or natural resources for visitors.

Service/Support/Storage - Areas, buildings, and structures where functions such as maintenance and security occur or are managed. Also areas, buildings, and structures where materials are stored when not in use.

Institutional - Areas, buildings and structures dedicated to the needs of an organization or establishment, usually involved in some public, educational, charitable, or similar purpose.

Circulation - The trails, roads, and bridges intended for pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian, and vehicular traffic moving from one point to another.

Garden - Areas developed for the express purpose of growing ornamental plants or vegetables for the enjoyment and use of mission inhabitants and visitors.

APPENDIX B GLOSSARY OF SPANISH TERMS

acequia(s)	irrigation ditch(es)
acequia de afuera	the outside irrigation ditch
acequia media	the middle irrigation ditch
alcalde	mayor, chief magistrate, primary local official
almud(es)	see *fanega(s)*
baluartes	bastions, bulwarks
caliche	chalk-like limestone
camposanto	cemetery
canal(es)	roof drain(s)
caño	drain
casa(s) real(es)	building(s) used for official purposes such as office(s), or residence(s) for visiting officials
compuerte	sluice gate
convento	priest's residence
corredor	open-air passageway
cortadores	lateral irrigation ditches
desagüe	ditch that carries water from the main ditch system to the river, usually located about the middle of the system, frequently used to carry water through the Indian quarters or the *convento* for household use
ejido(s)	common lands; the legal estate granted to a mission at the time of its establishment
fanega(s)	unit(s) of measurement for grain, equal to 55.5 liters or 1.575 bushels; also used as a land measurement of about 8.75 acres, or the approximate area one *fanega* of corn would cover when planted; a wheat *fanega* would cover only about 1.5 acres; occasionally smaller agricultural land areas are given in *almudes*; one corn *almud* equals about 0.73 acre
horno(s)	oven(s)
huerta	garden
jacal(es)	temporary type of construction consisting of upright logs chinked and clad with adobe clay

labor(es)	farm field(s)
labor arriba	the upper field
labor de abajo	the lower field
labor de afuera	the outside field
labranzas	cultivated lands
laguna	small lake
mayordomo	overseer
monte	woods, wilderness
morillos	timber (used for *vigas*)
obraje	workshop
pasadiso	small gate or entranceway
plaza de armas	military plaza, parade ground
presa	dam
presidio	fortress
pueblo	Indian village
puerta	gate
puerta principal	main gate
ramada(s)	rustic open porch(es)
rancho(s)	ranch(es)
reducciones	Indian villages created by Spanish missionaries during colonization
savino	sticks or logs used to form ceiling between *vigas*
sitio	one square league or a square 2.6 miles on a side, used for raising cattle
suertes	tracts of land selected by the drawing of lots, that is, by chance
tabla	a piece of land set aside for planting vegetables, grape vines, or trees
toma de agua	stone rubble embankment built across a river and used to raise water levels and to channel water (through a gate) to side irrigation ditches
torreones	fortified towers
vara(s)	unit(s) of land measure
viga(s)	roofbeam(s)

APPENDIX C LIST OF CLASSIFIED STRUCTURES

Structure #	Structure Name	Date Established
101	Church of Purísima Concepción de Acuña	1745-55 renovated mid-1800s
102	Sacristy	*circa* 1745
103	Father President's Office	*circa* 1745
104	*Convento* and *Corredor*	1743 restored 1950
105	Well	no date
106	Grotto	19th c. travertine rubble wall
107	Quarry	1745

United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHWEST REGION
P.O. BOX 728
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87504-0728

IN REPLY REFER TO

A5639 (SWR-D)

27 DEC 1991

Straight Talk 91-7

To: Superintendents, Southwest Region, and
All Employees Southwest Regional Office

From: Regional Director, Southwest Region

Subject: The Night Sky

Only in the southwest Region would we come up with a new management initiative that is as exciting as this one: To preserve the night sky!! Yes, I am excited about this. Heck, many of our parks contain the last clear views of the night sky unobscured by light from outside development!

A clear night sky is a diminishing resource. Also, an many of our parks, the clear night sky is essentially the same cultural landscape that the ▒Ancients▒ viewed centuries ago. A clear view of the stars was an essential ingredient in their life ways.

We are fortunate in this Region because so many clear night skies remain. In some of our parks that are located in dry climates at higher elevations away from city lights, we have impressive views of the night sky that provide all with a special experience.

The night sky represents a valuable resource for interpretation, especially in those parks with campfire programs. Like many other diminishing resources, it was not given the needed attention until we realized it had been threatened.

The International Dark Sky Association was formed by astronomers to help preserve the night sky. Information from the International Dark Sky Association will assist us in implementing this initiative. While our concern has positive implications for astronomers, this initiative should also improve the quality of visitor experience.

Involvement from the parks and Regional Office staffs will, however, be needed to implement this initiative. As spring approaches and your interpretive staffs begin to prepare for campfire talks, I want the night sky to be interpreted. In parks where the sky is preserved, the visitor should be reminded that the night sky is essentially the same as it was when viewed by those who lived in the park many centuries ago. The Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services staff will be developing some information on this subject to assist you.

As we draw attention to the night sky, our visitors will become more conscious of the sources of light pollution. While this awareness will ultimately help us in our efforts to preserve this resource, our own outdoor lighting must be scrutinized. Certain types of lights and lights that are not shaded cause light pollution. The Division of Engineering and Facility Management personnel will be sending each park a questionnaire to inventory outside light sources and to help you identify measures that will be needed to modify existing security lights. Different fixtures, shades and motion sensors will be considered. This questionnaire will also provide us wit information about the approach you intend to take to implement the night sky initiative.

Different conditions exist at different parks. A priority ranking system has been proposed to identify the emphasis to be placed on light pollution for each park; see attached list.

Statements for management and any other future planning documents need to incorporate the night sky management initiative. Proposals that are currently in the planning and review stages need to consider the type of outdoor lighting recommended.

A copy of this memorandum is being provided to Mr. John Reynolds under separate cover, requesting the Denver Service Center staff to provide support and cooperation in retrofitting existing lighting systems and to consider light pollution in all future lighting systems.

As more inventory information about retrofitting becomes available and an approach is developed for your park, each Category I and II park is asked to prepare a press release during this fiscal year announcing how the night sky management initiative will be implemented at the park.

As you can see many offices will be involved in implementing this initiative. I am proud that our Region is a leader in developing a program that should have national implications based upon our success. I have assigned Joe Sovick, Chief, Division of Environmental Coordination, to coordinate this initiative. If you have any questions, please contact him at FTS 476-1857 or commercial 505-988-6857.

Folks, there is good reason to be enthusiastic about this initiative. By making this effort to preserve the quality of the night sky, especially in our category I parks, we will be helping to insure that future generations will be able to enjoy a valuable scenic and cultural resource; and, who knows what else?!!

Thanks!



Enclosure

Attachment 1 Priority list of parks for Night Sky Initiative

Category I — Existing conditions are excellent. Area usually has camping or evening programs. A strong management emphasis will be placed on preserving the night sky from inside and outside the park.

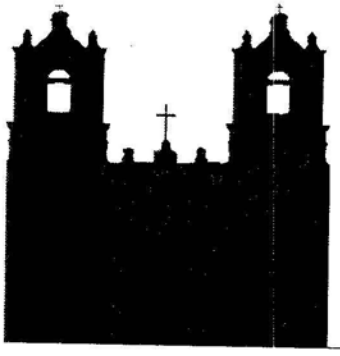
Arizona	Navajo National Monument
	Walnut Canyon National Monument
	Wupatki/Sunset Crater National Monuments
New Mexico	Bandelier National Monument
	Capulin Volcano National Monument
	Carlsbad Caverns National Park
	Chaco Culture National Historical Park
	El Morro National Monument / El Malpais
	Gila Cliff Dwellings national Monument
	Salinas Pueblo Missions national Monument
	White Sands National Monument
Texas	Amistad National Recreation Area
	Big Bend National Park
	Guadalupe Mountains National Park
	Lake Meredith national Recreation Area
	Padre Island National Seashore
Oklahoma	Chickasaw National Recreation Area
Arkansas	Buffalo National River

Category II — Existing conditions are good to excellent. There are no camping or campfire talks. A management emphasis will be taken to implement measures to prevent contribution to light pollution. There may possibly be work with outside sources.

Arizona	Canyon de Chelly National Monument
	Hubbell Trading Post National Monument
New Mexico	Fort Union national Monument
	Pecos national Historical Park
Texas	Fort Davis National Historic Site
Arkansas	Arkansas Post National Memorial
	Pea Ridge National Military Park

Category III — Existing conditions are poor to fair. Park is in an urban area. Management emphasis is to consider light pollution in all new lighting proposals.

New Mexico	Aztec Ruins National Monument
	Petroglyph National Monument
Texas	Big Thicket National Preserve
	Chamizal national Memorial
	Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
	San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
Arkansas	Fort Smith National Historical Park
	Hot Springs National Park
Louisiana	Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve



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Figure 1. *Mapa del Presidio de San Antonio de Bexar i sus Misiones de la Provinsia de Texas* [illegible] *en 24 del Mes de Marzo de 1764. Por el Capitan Don Luis Antonio Menchaca* [illegible] *Presidio.* 24 March 1764.

Figure 2. *Plano De la Villa y Presidio de S. Antonio de Vejar situado en la Provincia de Tejas en 20 grad. y 52 minutos de latitud bor y 275° y 57' de long. contados desde de Meridiano d Penerise.* 1767.

Figure 3. Jake Ivey.

Figure 4. Lungkwitz, Hermann. Lithographic drawing. *Circa.* 1850. Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC), San Antonio (73-97).

Figure 5. Lungkwitz, Hermann. Oil painting. 1857. San Antonio Public Library.

Figure 6. Photograph. *Circa* 1870. *Express-News* Collection, ITC (69-8696).

Figure 7. Gentilz, Theodore. Painting. *Circa* 1875. Mission Concepción Photograph Collection, Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo, San Antonio. Photograph of painting.

Figure 8. Stereographic photograph. *Circa* 1875. ITC (82-497).

Figure 9. Stereographic photograph. *Circa* 1880. San Antonio Conservation Society, copy at ITC (88-323).

Figure 10. Sturdivant, E.K. Photograph. Undated. Mission Concepción Photograph Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Figure 11. Jacobson, Mary E. Photograph. *Circa* 1889. Mission Concepción Photograph Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Figure 12. City of San Antonio. Department of City Engineering. Friesleben Papers. Vol. 1. 1879.

Figure 13. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. *Maps for the City of San Antonio.* 1911. San Antonio Public Library.

Figure 14. Photograph. *Circa* 1890. *Express-News* Collection, ITC (76-509).

Figure 15. Photograph. 1895. Jack C. Butterfield Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

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Figure 21. Photograph. *Circa* 1915. Butterfield Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Figure 22. Aerial photograph. *Circa* 1925. *Express-News* Collection, ITC (69-8661).

Figure 23. Photograph. Mid-1920s. Mission Concepción Photograph Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Figure 24. Ayres, Atlee B. *Mexican Architecture: Domestic, Civil, and Ecclesiastical.* New York: Wattelburn, Inc., 1926. Plate 3.

Figure 25. Photograph. 1920s. Mission Concepción Photograph Collection,, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Figure 26. Photograph. 1920s. Mission Concepción Photograph Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Figure 27. Tengg, Nic. *Map of the City of San Antonio.* Bexar County, Texas. 1924. Collection of Maria Watson Pfeiffer.

Figure 28. Photograph. *Circa* 1930. *Express-News* Collection, ITC (69-8697).

Figure 29. Photograph. *Circa* 1930. Mission Concepción Photograph Collection, Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Figure 30. *Circa* 1936 Measured Drawing, Irrigation System of the Missions, by Harvey P. Smith

Figure 31. *Circa* 1936 Measured Drawing of the church, *convento*, and sacristy, by Harvey P. Smith

Figure 32. Historic American Building Survey, Mission la Purísma Concepción de Acuña, *First Floor Plan*, survey No. Tex-319, 1934.

Figure 33. Historic American Buildings Survey. Photograph. 1936. ITC (76-870).

Figure 34. Historic American Buildings Survey. Photograph. 1936. ITC (76-866).

Figure 35. Historic American Buildings Survey. Photograph. 1936. ITC (76-865).

Figure 36. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. *Maps for the City of San Antonio*. 1912, updated 1951. San Antonio Public Library.

Figure 37. Aerial photograph. *Circa* 1955. *San Antonio Light* Collection, ITC (L-3644).

Figure 38. Aerial photograph. *Circa* 1955. *San Antonio Light* Collection, ITC (L-3644).