

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
Other Names/Site Number: Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, 5CN.489
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

2. Location

Street & Number: 6631-33 County Road 13
City or town: Conejos State: CO County: Conejos
Not for Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 national state local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer **Date**
History Colorado
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title: **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site
<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	4	Buildings
0	0	Sites
1	0	Structures
2	1	Objects
4	5	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):
RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):
RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.):
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
foundation: CONCRETE
walls: CONCRETE, BRICK

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roof: SYNTHETICS
other: METAL/aluminum

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The 1927/48 Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, part of the oldest Catholic parish in Colorado, is located in the small unincorporated community of Conejos in the southwest corner of Colorado's San Luis Valley. This high desert valley lying between the Sangre de Cristo Mountains on the east and the San Juan Range on the west was a focus of early Hispano settlement efforts beginning in the 1830s. Conejos, founded ca. 1854, is twenty-eight miles south-southwest of Alamosa and just six miles north of the New Mexico border. The nominated area encompasses nearly all of a square block in the central part of Conejos, the county seat of Conejos County, at an elevation of 7,915'. The county courthouse and commercial buildings sit across the street to the north. The eight-acre nominated area includes ten resources. The four contributing resources are clustered in the northeast corner of the block: a concrete brick Spanish Colonial Revival-style church (1927/48), native stone shrine (1954), stone historical marker (1958), and frame and stucco wellhouse (pre-1965).¹ The remaining resources are of frame construction and are located in the southern three-quarters of the block. All were built after 1975 and are assessed as noncontributing due to construction after the period of significance. The property retains historic integrity.²

Narrative Description

The present Our Lady of Guadalupe Church dates to 1927/48. After an 1863 adobe church in this location partially burned in 1926, the 1927 rear portion of the building was constructed and attached to twin 1879 adobe towers and the façade that survived the conflagration. In 1948 the adobe towers and front were demolished, the nave was expanded one bay to the east, and the current front and towers were erected. The block containing the church and associated resources is located in the central part of Conejos and is oriented slightly west of true north-south. The church is located within an irrigated rectangle at the northeast corner of the block. The building faces east toward a lawn enclosed by a chainlink fence; a hedge extends along the fence to the north and three large blue spruce trees stand near the southeast corner of the church. The three other contributing resources within the district are located in or adjacent to this area. The 1954 native stone Lourdes Grotto is nestled under the spruce trees. A 1958 Colorado Historical Society historical marker describing the church's history stands beside the sidewalk leading to church entrance. A pre-1965 north wellhouse lies south of the church just outside the chainlink fence.

All but one of the district's noncontributing resources are situated in the southern three quarters of the block. Most are fairly small in scale, and all were built after 1975. A frame shed (ca. 1975-1998) lies between the church and the north wellhouse. The 2004 frame parish hall, the largest resource within

¹ A rectangular (242' x 111') area at the northwest corner, which is used for the storage of construction materials and vehicles unrelated to the church, is not included within the district. Only real property, not water rights (per 36 CFR 60.6), is the subject of this nomination. The church has a well which is used to irrigate the grounds; the well does not supply any other property.

² The archaeological potential is unknown but should be considered with any future ground disturbing activities.

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the district, stands south of the wellhouse with an asphalt parking lot located to its east and south. A stage, built ca. 2013-16, sits near the southwest corner of the parish hall. A tall steel cross (ca. 1998-2005) stands between the parish hall and the street to the east. The south wellhouse, a small frame building erected ca. 2001-05, is located near the center of the block. A 140'-diameter prayer labyrinth with an outdoor chapel is planned for the southern third of the block; its location is marked by a large circle of gray gravel, where a full-scale hay bale mock-up was erected in recent years.

Much of the southern half of the parcel is undeveloped and covered with grass and forbs. Small trees line the east, south, and west edges of the block, and a double row of trees extends west from the southwest corner of the church area. Father Felix Lopez, who served at the church between 1972 and 1997, initiated the tree planting. A barbed wire fence on wood and metal posts on the parcel perimeter parallels the tree rows. An irrigation ditch lateral flows along the south edge of the block outside the nominated area.

Construction years for smaller or more recent resources within the nominated area were estimated and are sometimes expressed as a range of years. There were no building permits issued during the historic period or fire insurance maps after 1930. Estimates were produced using historic maps, photographs, aerial photographs, newspaper articles, and discussions with church staff.³ The included Sketch Map shows the nominated area and photograph locations.

Contributing Resources

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Resource 1, 1927 and 1948, building, photographs 1 through 20

The one-story cross-gabled-roof cruciform plan church faces east and features square soaring towers at the northeast and southeast corners. The building measures 108' east-west and 56' north-south. The church has a concrete foundation, and the walls are composed of locally made gray concrete bricks. The bricks are masonry building units the same size as standard clay bricks but composed of cement and sand. The symmetrical façade contains a center entrance and is elaborated with contrasting red clay brick that adds a paneled appearance and verticality.⁴ West of the projecting gabled-roof transept, the rear portion of the church displays a taller semi-octagonal component (the chancel) flanked by lower one-story hipped-roof elements to the north and south. Most windows are round arch, although there are four oculus windows; all feature slightly projecting concrete brick surrounds and sills and nearly all contain stained glass. Stained glass windows are protected with an exterior covering of yellowed Lexan or similar material. The church roof has overhanging eaves with exposed shaped rafter tails and is clad with synthetic roofing that resembles orange Spanish tiles.⁵

Front. The symmetrical front (east) façade features an inset round-arch central entrance containing double wood doors with round-arch panels featuring a quatrefoil design. A stained-glass transom bears the church name and date: "Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe 1926." Above the entrance is decorative brickwork employing the orange brick in decorative patterns, including vertical pilasters, an inverted V, and other shapes. Flanking the entrance are paired, orange, wire-drawn clay brick decorative pilasters (one narrow and one wider). At the level of the choir loft is a first-story cornice

³ Building dates were developed using a variety of sources. Google Earth aerial images cover the period 1998 through 2016, with six intermediate images. Three historic aerial photographs were located covering the 1953 through 1975 period: VV BE M2 AMS 133, 29 September 1953; H-5600 GS-VBBI, 30 April 1965; and 34-61 GS-VDSD, 22 September 1975. Historian Dana EchoHawk discussed building dates with church staff in February 2018.

⁴ Rodd Wheaton, Englewood, Colorado, email to Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, 3 March 2018. Wheaton, a retired National Park Service architect, felt the design of the façade attempted to create a Spanish Colonial appearance with the contrasting brick pilasters, with "the entrance feature trying to imitate Plateresque style."

⁵ Travis Williams, Green Gable Roofing and Exteriors, Denver, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 13 February 2018.

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composed of corbelled orange brick with dentils. Above is an oculus stained-glass window with a slightly projecting brick surround.

At the top of the gable face a niche holds a statue of Mary, with a dedication panel below; the niche and panel have slightly projecting gray brick surrounds. The panel appears to be composed of white stone and contains an incised cross with the following inscription below: "A Maria Inmaculada/En Nombre de la Parroquia/de Conejos/La Congregacion de las/Hijas de Maria/8 de Dic. 1854-1904."⁶ Installed in 1904, the statue of Mary survived the 1926 fire and was returned to the same location on the rebuilt façade the following year. When the church front was expanded in 1948, the statue was removed and then placed on the façade of the expanded church.⁷ The raking gable cornice is corbelled orange brick with dentils. The line of the gable face features a curve at each end. A budded wood cross crowns the top of the gable.

At the northeast and southeast corners of the church are square three-story towers with aluminum hipped (or cloister) domes. Slightly projecting orange brick frames each wall of the towers, providing a contrast to the gray concrete field brick. The first story of each tower on the front holds a narrow round-arch stained-glass window, while the north and south walls contain oculus stained-glass windows; the narrow stretch of exposed west walls are unfenestrated. The second story of each tower holds the church bells and loudspeakers. The three outside walls each contain a narrow round-arch window covered with a grille, while the wall facing the roof is unfenestrated. The top of the second story features an orange brick corbelled cornice with dentils. The third story of each tower is slightly inset and displays three narrow blind arches on each face. An orange brick corbelled cornice with dentils tops the story. The domes are composed of aluminum sheets with a seam extending from each corner of the tower to the apex of the dome.

South Wall. The wall of the nave is inset from the west wall of the tower and is divided into four bays by brick pilasters. A brick water table with a beveled top extends the length of the wall. Each bay holds a large round-arch stained-glass window with a slightly projecting brick surround and sill. The front and the first bay to the west were added in 1948 using the same type and color of concrete bricks but with gray rather than white mortar.

To the west of the nave wall is the projecting gabled-roof south transept; the gable ends feature knee braces. The transept's narrow east wall contains an entrance with a round-arch six-panel wood door and a metal security door. The entrance has a slightly projecting brick surround and a fanlight transom. The southeast and southwest corners of the transept feature brick corner piers that project through the eaves and are topped by concrete pyramids with ball finials. The first story holds two large round-arch stained-glass windows. At the top of the first story is a projecting corbelled cornice with dentils. The gable face contains an oculus window with a slightly projecting brick surround.

West of the transept is a one-story hipped-roof bay that is shorter than the semi-octagonal roof of the chancel. The south wall of the bay contains two round-arch wood four-light windows with fanlight transoms. The south wall features a low shed-roof pre-1965 projection with board-and-batten siding and a flush door on its south wall. There is a slightly projecting brick corner pier at the southwest corner.

Rear (West Wall). The rear features hipped-roof sections flanking the semi-octagonal chancel and is divided into three bays by brick pilasters. The south bay contains an entrance with a roughly center flush door with a slightly projecting brick surround; the door opens onto a concrete stoop with stairs and a metal railing. The center bay is composed of a taller semi-octagonal chancel component with a

⁶ In English this reads: "To Mary Immaculate In the Name of the Parish of Conejos the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary on 8 Dec. 1854-1904."

⁷ A 2016 fire in the church damaged the statue; after removal for repairs it is now back in its niche.

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hipped-roof. Its west wall holds two small round-arch stained-glass windows with slightly projecting surrounds and sills. The design of the north bay is similar to the south bay but has a smaller set of stairs with no stoop or metal railing.

North Wall. The north wall is identical to the south wall except that west of the transept on the one-story hipped-roof section is a small, projecting, side gabled-roof restroom addition. The restroom covers the location of the east four-light window. This 1970s addition has stucco walls with an off-center flush door in its east wall that opens onto a concrete stoop. The north and west walls are unfenestrated.

Interior. The church's double wood doors open onto an entrance vestibule. The west end of the vestibule features a stained-glass transom. Flanking the vestibule are recesses; enclosed areas in the northeast and southeast corners contain stairs accessing the choir loft. The interior displays an east-west nave and a north-south transept (see Figures 11 and 13). The vaulted ceiling features three-centered flattened arches springing from wall piers centered between windows. The ceiling of the transept and crossing is a groin arch. The ceiling and the upper part of the walls are plastered; the lower part of the walls is covered in wood paneling with a chair rail. The chancel at the west end is raised and has a curved wall. It holds an elaborate altar, and an elevated pulpit accessed by a short flight of stairs is located at its southeast corner. The choir loft at the east end exhibits a paneled balustrade with quatrefoil roundels.

The nave contains a center aisle extending from the vestibule to the chancel, as well as narrower north and south aisles. Nineteen rows of long oak pews flank the center aisle, while the transept holds shorter pews—three in the north and four in the south.

The interior of the church is extensively decorated with stained-glass windows, statuary, an elaborate altar, and other items reflecting religious themes of particular relevance to Hispano parishioners, as discussed below.

Stained Glass. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church's stained-glass windows constitute a highly artistic installation due to their number, size, vividness of colors, quality of execution, and variety of religious subjects depicted. A spokesperson for Watkins Stained Glass Studio of Denver said, "these windows were most likely crafted by Frank Watkins."⁸ The Watkins firm dates to 1868 in Denver and is the state's premier stained glass studio. Stained glass scholar Virginia C. Raguin observed that the windows employed a machine-rolled type of opalescent glass.⁹ The church displays twenty stained-glass windows, including fourteen large round-arch figural windows, two short round-arch windows, and four oculus windows.

The large round-arch figural stained-glass windows are located on the north and south walls of the nave (four in each wall) and the north and south ends of the transept (two in each wall). All of these windows exhibit a roundel with a cross at the top, above two round arches filled with small rectangular lights with a contrasting diamond light at each intersecting corner.¹⁰ In the center is a large oval containing a painted image of a religious figure.¹¹ A rectangular area at the base holds a center

⁸ Jane Watkins, Watkins Stained Glass Studio, Denver Colorado, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 12 February 2018.

⁹ Virginia C. Raguin, Medford, Massachusetts, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 6 February 2018; 40. Images of selected windows were emailed to Professor Raguin. She opined that "the images you sent give me that impression that both sets of windows [St. Joseph's and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Conejos] were produced by the same studio. It was quite common for a diocese to develop a tradition of patronage." Raguin explained that opalescent glass "is a rolled translucent to semi-translucent milky glass. It is often streaky, with a mixture of different colors."

¹⁰ James Stevens Curl, *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29 and 31. Curl describes an arch of this configuration as a "Venetian arch."

¹¹ Stained Glass Art: Materials & Methods, <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/stained-glass-materials-methods.htm>, accessed 1 February 2018. The figural panels are painted with a vitreous paint composed of "a low-firing, essentially clear

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rectangular light with donor information flanked by two roundels with crosses. Windows vary as to what colors of glass are used for the rectangular lights, the diamonds, the borders, and the roundels. Images depicted in the nave windows include: the Sacred Heart of Mary, San Luis Gonzaga, Nuestra Señora del Carmen, and Nuestra Señora de los Dolores (on the north wall) and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, San Francisco de Asis, San Antonio de Padua, and Jesús Nazareno (on the south wall). The north wall of the transept holds windows depicting the Santo Niño de Atocha and Mary Inmaculada; the south wall features San José and the Santo Niño. The round-arch figural stained-glass windows in the first story of the towers are somewhat narrower than those in the nave and transepts. The north window depicts Saint Cayetano; the south window shows Saint Teresa.

The two short round-arch stained-glass windows on the rear of the church depict floral themes. The four stained-glass oculus windows are located on the north and south gable faces of the transept and the north and south walls of the towers. The building also contains four stained-glass transoms, including the one over the entrance (described earlier). A rectangular stained-glass transom at the west end of the vestibule contains a shield and crown with the Latin phrase "Quaerite dei primum regnum" (Seek first the kingdom of God).

Altar and Pulpit. The large, ornately decorated wood altar was created in 1934 by assistant priest Nicholas Femenia, C.R., and local carpenter Benjamin Chavez of Capulin. Local artist Epifanio Trujillo executed decorative faux marbling. The altar features a curved top surmounted by a budded cross, as well as moldings, dentils, and corner urns. A painting of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe dominates the center, flanked by statues of San José to the north and the Sacred Heart to the south. Each statue is flanked by classical columns. The elevated pulpit southeast of the altar also features faux marbling and gilding. Some alterations to the altar occurred between 1934 and 1957-58 (see Figures 8 and 11): the statue consoles were replaced; the statues present in 1934 were moved to the north and south transepts and replaced with the current ones; and an ornament above the painting was removed. An inscription below the painting is no longer extant; it was perhaps removed following the 2016 fire.

Statuary and Paintings. On a corbelled base mounted to the north wall of the chancel is a statue of Antonio de Padua; the south wall features a statue of St. Ignacio on a similar base. The north and south walls also contain paintings of the Stations of the Cross. The west wall of the north transept holds a crucifix (*bulto*) flanked by two small statues above a glass cabinet holding a statue of a reclining Jesus. The north wall displays a statue of St. Andres Avellino. The south wall of the south transept contains a statue of St. Cajetan flanked by Stations of the Cross plaques, with a large painting above. A small statue of Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno (donated by members of the Morada of San Antonio) stands on a wall base to the east. The east wall of the transept holds a crucifix carved by Charles D. Atencio in 1995.

The north and south walls of the nave exhibit bas relief plaques depicting the Stations of the Cross with one placed on each wall pier. The short east walls at the rear of the nave each holds a painting; the one to the south is the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The south recess contains a wall hanging depicting Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, while the north recess features a tile image of Santa Niño de Atocha (2008).

Confessional Booth. The wood confessional booth in the south transept is divided into three compartments with doors, each with a light bulb above. The upper part of each door is glazed and mounted in a wood frame with a round-arch top; the center door has clear glass, while the flanking ones have obscuring hammered glass. A word is carved below the glass in the center of each door:

glass-flux and opaque metallic oxides, generally iron or copper," which is built up in thin coats and then fired in a kiln to fuse the "paint" to the glass base.

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dabo, pacem, vobis ("I will give you peace"). The lower part of each door includes a quatrefoil panel with carving: the center door features crossed keys and the other two a budded cross. The top of the booth displays a center curved pediment with the letters "IHS" and foliate carving; *fleur de lis* ornaments are placed along the top of the booth and on the curved pediment. The date of the booth is not known; it appears in a 1957-58 photograph of the church interior.

Alterations. A small board-and-batten projection was added to the south wall between 1927 and 1965. Lexan (or similar material) was added post-1960s to the exterior of the stained glass windows. A small one-story restroom addition was constructed at the west end of the north wall in the 1970s. Prior to this the church had no restroom facilities. The paneling and chair rail in the nave are nonhistoric. In 2016 a fire in the rear of the building heavily damaged the church. In 2018 the church was reroofed with orange synthetic roofing that closely resembles Spanish clay tiles. The original 1927 roof appeared to be wood shingles.

Lourdes Grotto, Resource 2, 1954, object, photograph 21

Located near the southeast corner of the church, Pedro Romero and his family constructed the Lourdes Grotto in 1954. A bronze plaque in Spanish near the north end of the grotto explains it was dedicated to the double centennial of the founding of Guadalupe (Conejos) and the papal declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Declared a Marian year shrine, the installation was inspired by the grotto at Lourdes, France.¹² The shrine is constructed of native stone and is about 12' high and 25' wide. A white statue of Mary stands in an elevated, center niche on a concrete base, while a white statue of Bernadette kneels to the southeast. The shrine originally featured flowing water, which called "attention to the mystery of the healing waters of Lourdes."¹³

Alterations. There are no apparent alterations. Water can still flow through the grotto.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Historical Marker, Resource 3, 1958, object, photograph 22

This historical marker installed by the State Historical Society of Colorado in 1958 stands east of the church on the north side of the sidewalk leading to the front entrance. The marker consists of a vertical pink rhyolite boulder holding a bronze plaque on its southeast face. The marker rests upon a 4' x 3' base composed of dark gray, roughly coursed volcanic stones; the top course features more decorative stones. The plaque displays the state seal, discusses the history of the church, gives the date of installation as 10 June 1958, and credits the William A. Braiden Fund for its placement.

Alterations. There are no apparent alterations.

North Wellhouse, Resource 4, pre-1965, structure, photograph 23

The wellhouse is situated 43' south of the church, just outside the chainlink fence surrounding the churchyard. It is shown on a 1965 aerial photograph of Conejos. This wellhouse delivers water for irrigating the church grounds. The low front gabled-roof structure is about 5' high and faces east. The narrow east section (6' x 3') has an off-center flush door on the front and walls with horizontal board siding. The 8' x 9' west component is stuccoed and unfenestrated. The roof displays overhanging eaves, exposed rafter tails, and asphalt composition shingles.

Alterations. There are no apparent alterations.

¹² In the Catholic Church, a Marian year is one dedicated to Mary.

¹³ *Southern Colorado Register* (Pueblo, Colorado), 13 August 1954, 1.

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Noncontributing Resources

Resources evaluated as noncontributing are so classified because they were constructed after the period of significance.

Shed, Resource 5, ca. 1975-1998, building, photograph 24

Located south of the church, this one-story frame shed (approximately 12' x 10') faces east and is sided with T1-11 panels. The front contains double top-mounted sliding doors made of the same material as the walls that open onto a concrete apron. The remaining walls are unfenestrated. The eaves are boxed and overhanging, and the roof is clad with asphalt rolled roofing. The shed does not appear to be present on a 1975 aerial but is shown on a 1998 image.

Alterations. There are no apparent alterations.

Parish Hall, Resource 6, 2004, building, photograph 25

The assessor provides a 2004 year of construction for the parish hall. The large one-story front gabled-roof parish hall measures approximately 100' x 62' and faces east toward a paved parking lot. The walls are clad with panels fabricated to resemble gray brick. The front contains a center entrance with glazed double metal doors with a single-light lunette above; round-arch windows (two-light vinyl sliders with a round-arch transom) flank the entrance. The south wall has three of the same type of window and a center entrance with a flush metal door and a lunette. The rear wall is clad with standing seam metal panels and has a flush door at its north end. The north wall displays the same fenestration as the south wall, except it has a single flush door with a smaller lunette. The roof has flush eaves and is clad with standing seam metal roofing.

Alterations. There are no apparent alterations.

Stage, Resource 7, ca. 2013-16, building, photograph 26

Located at the southwest corner of the parish hall, the stage was erected for use during the annual summer festival. The shed-roof building faces east and has a concrete slab foundation. Walls are clad with what appear to be synthetic panels resembling vertical wood boards. The front is open and is flanked by small wall-mounted lights. The remaining walls are unfenestrated.

Alterations. The exterior cladding was installed in 2018 over plywood and oriented strand board.

Cross, Resource 8, ca. 1998-2005, object, photograph 27

A tall (approximately 50'- to 60'-high) metal cross painted white is situated 115' east of the parish hall. The cross is composed of steel pipe about 4" in diameter. The vertical shaft of the cross is supported by three tall angled legs anchored in concrete. Inside the legs is a rectangular monument with a sloped top and sides composed of native stone. There is no inscription. Four metal posts linked by chains form an enclosure around the base of the cross. Church staff indicate this was a project initiated by Father Jaramillo to honor the Mysteries of the Rosary; the project was not completed.

Alterations. There are no apparent alterations.

South Wellhouse, Resource 9, ca. 2001-05, structure, photograph 28

A second wellhouse is located near the center of the block, roughly 155' south of the parish hall. The front gambrel-roof building faces east and has a concrete slab foundation. It has walls clad with T1-11 panel siding. The front features a single door composed of the same material; the remaining walls are unfenestrated.

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Alterations. A 2001 survey of the block showed this as just a concrete slab; the superstructure was added between that date and 2005.¹⁴

El Santuario de los Pobladores, planned site, photograph 29

The planned Santuario de los Pobladores, dedicated to the Mysteries of the Rosary, is to be located in the south-central part of the block (see Figure 14). A full-scale hay bale mock-up of the proposed labyrinth was installed at the site in recent years to illustrate its proposed scale, which has since been removed.¹⁵ As of the writing of this nomination, the location is currently marked by a 145'-circle covered with gray gravel; a large mound of gray gravel and earth are present along the west edge of the parcel. Construction of the foundation is expected to begin late summer 2018.¹⁶

Integrity

Our Lady of Guadalupe Church historic district retains very good historic integrity. The church building is still in its original location, displaying the highest level of integrity of location. The district also possesses excellent integrity of association, with the church and its related buildings still serving the religious needs of the overwhelmingly Hispano residents of Conejos and surrounding area. The church retains a high level of integrity of design; the only addition after the period of significance is the small one-story restroom on the north (1970s). The church displays excellent integrity of workmanship as reflected in the decorative concrete brickwork, aluminum cloister domes, and finely executed stained glass, faux marbling, and other interior components. The district retains a high level of integrity of feeling with the large church parcel surrounded by small dwellings, open fields, and the remnants of the town plaza to the north. The resource generally maintains integrity of materials. In 2018 the church's asphalt composition roofing was replaced with synthetic clay tiles. Integrity of setting has been somewhat impacted by the construction of buildings and objects south of the church after the period of significance, but the added resources are all related to the functions of the parish and are small in scale (with the exception of the parish hall) in the context of the 8-acre church parcel.

¹⁴ Reynolds Engineering Company, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Boundary and Topographic Survey, 24 October 2001, Surveyor Play Number 0182, Conejos County Clerk and Recorder, Conejos, Colorado.

¹⁵ El Santuario de los Pobladores, 23 November 2015, www.santuariopobladores.org;

¹⁶ Any future ground disturbance, including construction of the sanctuary, should be monitored by an archaeologist as subsurface deposits may exist.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

Criteria Considerations:

X	A	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
	B	Removed from its original location
	C	A birthplace or grave
	D	A cemetery
	E	A reconstructed building, object, or structure
	F	A commemorative property
	G	Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.):

- Ethnic Heritage/Hispano
- Social History
- Architecture
- Art

Period of Significance: 1927-68

Significant Dates: 1941, 1948

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name):

- Monroe, John K., Sr.
- Chavez, Manuel

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance for Architecture is 1927 and 1948, corresponding to the rebuilding of the rear portion of the church in 1927 and the construction of the east bay of the nave, façade, and towers in 1948. The period of significance for Art is ca. 1927 through ca. 1948, corresponding to installation of the stained-glass windows, altar, and other interior ornamentation in the sanctuary. The period of significance for Ethnic Heritage/Hispano and Social History is 1927 to 1968, extending from the rebuilding of the church to a time fifty years before the present, in keeping with National Register guidelines.

Significant dates include: 1941, the parish becomes part of the recently created Diocese of Pueblo; 1948, extension of the front of the church and erection of the towers; and 1954, construction of the Lourdes Grotto.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary):

Criteria Consideration A. The property is owned by a religious institution and is an active church. The property is being nominated for its architectural, social, artistic, and ethnic heritage significance and therefore meets the burden of Criteria Consideration A.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The 1927/1948 Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Conejos, Colorado, the mother church of the oldest Catholic parish in Colorado, is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Hispano, erected by and serving a Hispano congregation, and in the area of Social History, providing a venue for community celebrations and other events. The church is further significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as an example of a Spanish Colonial Revival-style church designed by prolific church architect John K. Monroe, Sr., and in the area of Art, for its extensive use of figural stained-glass windows and other interior decoration. The level of significance for all areas is local. The overall period of significance extends from completion of the rebuilding of the church in 1927 to 1968, a time fifty years before the present, in keeping with National Register guidelines. The church complex retains historic integrity.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church is significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Hispano. Beginning in the late 1840s-early 1850s, Hispanos from northern New Mexico began the Euro-American settlement of the San Luis Valley of present-day Colorado. These early *pobladores* (settlers) brought with them traditions developed over two centuries of Spanish and Mexican control of the Southwest. This "cultural impress" on the new territory included the Spanish language; adobe brick as the most common building material; village or plaza settlement patterns; communal irrigation systems (*acequias*); dome-shaped outdoor ovens (*hornos*); other traditional methods of agriculture and foodways; and folk arts, including rug weaving, *santos*, *bultos*, *retablos*, and other religious iconography.¹⁷ In religion the newcomers were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and they soon raised village churches and brought Spanish and religious-inspired place names to the land.¹⁸ Our Lady of Guadalupe Church serves a heavily Hispano parish, and its parishioners participate in administering the church and contributing to its construction and ornamentation. Hispano individuals, families, and church-related groups sponsored the church's striking aluminum domes and its extensive installation of figural stained-glass windows. The congregation honored their *poblador* ancestors by persuading the Denver Diocese to rebuild the church in its original location after a 1926 fire.

The church is also important in the area of Social History. The church has been a focal point for community events since its initial founding in the 1850s. The present church has been the site of funerals, weddings, and feast days. The area south of the church has held community bonfires, an annual summer festival, and is planned as a site of a prayer labyrinth honoring the area's *pobladores* (settlers).¹⁹

Criterion C. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church is significant in the area of Architecture as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, as reflected in the twin square towers with aluminum hipped

¹⁷ Richard L. Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 7-11 and 217. *Santos* and *bultos* are three-dimensional wood carvings of religious figures, such as saints, and *retablos* (often placed behind the altar) are depictions of religious figures painted on wood panels.

¹⁸ Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland*, 217-23.

¹⁹ Virginia McConnell Simmons, "Hispanic Place Names of the San Luis Valley," 23 *San Luis Valley Historian* (1991), 11.

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domes, use of contrasting gray concrete bricks and orange clay bricks, and round-arch windows. The church is notable as a work of Lakewood, Colorado, architect John K. Monroe, Sr., who designed the 1948 expansion of the church with its signature twin towers. Monroe executed scores of commissions for the Denver and Pueblo Catholic dioceses, particularly in the post-World War II period.

The church is also significant in the area of Art for its extensive installation of stained-glass windows, hand-crafted altar, statuary, and other works of art. Stained glass scholar Virginia C. Raguin commented on church's windows: "The exciting issue about your windows is the subject matter closely tied to Hispanic piety in the Southwest of this time. The Santo Niño and Jesús Nazareno are striking. ... [The survival of] an intact program of glass from this time is always important."²⁰ The figural windows, very likely fabricated by Frank Watkins of Denver, portray saints and religious images of particular importance to Hispano devotion. The elaborate altar was fabricated in 1934 by assistant priest Nicholas Femenia, area carpenter Benjamin Chavez, and local artist Epifanio Trujillo, who earlier provided decoration for St. Cajetan's Church in Denver.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

Settlement of Conejos

Conejos is located within the boundary of the 1833 Conejos Land Grant, authorized by the Mexican government. The nearly 2.5 million-acre grant included all of today's Conejos and Rio Grande counties and parts of Alamosa and Saguache counties. Initial attempts by Hispano settlers from northern New Mexico to permanently occupy the grant, a necessary condition of the document, were thwarted by Native American opposition. In 1842 claimants successfully reapplied to Mexican authorities for the grant. Settlement efforts in the 1840s had not succeeded when the Mexican War (1846-48) intervened. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo transferred jurisdiction of the area to the United States but provided for recognition and protection of pre-existing grants.

The creation of Fort Massachusetts a mile west of present-day Fort Garland in 1852 provided military protection for would-be settlers. In 1854 *pobladores* led by José Maria Jacquez established Guadalupe on the Conejos River. They came from northern New Mexico, including Ojo Caliente, Abiquiú, and El Rito. In 1857 the new settlement of Conejos was created on the south side of the Conejos River, on higher ground less prone to flooding than Guadalupe. Settlement continued in the nineteenth century with more Hispanos pushing north along both sides of the San Luis Valley. The arrival of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway in the late 1870s saw an influx of Anglo settlers and creation of such railroad towns as Alamosa (1878) and Antonito (1880).

Early Religious Activities

The Conejos area was initially under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Santa Fe, created in 1853 under Bishop Jean P. Lamy. In June 1857 Bishop Lamy recognized Conejos as the first parish in what would become Colorado and appointed N.S. Montano as the first resident priest. The parish covered a large area of the San Luis Valley (see Figure 1). Bishop Lamy visited Conejos in 1860 and noted that an adobe church was under construction by Montano's successor Father José Miguel Vigil. Lamy noted the problems of erecting a building given the relatively small, scattered, and poor population of the area. The Bishop blessed the completed church in 1863.²¹ The Vatican removed Colorado from the supervision of the Diocese of Santa Fe in 1868, creating the Vicariate Apostolic of

²⁰ Virginia C. Raguin, Medford, Massachusetts, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 6 February 2018.

²¹ Parroquia de Conejos, *El Reino de Dios a La Parroquia de Conejos* (Antonito, Colorado: Parroquia de Conejos, 1934), 9-10.

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Colorado and Utah under Bishop Joseph P. Machebeuf in Denver.²² The vicariate became the Diocese of Denver in 1887.²³

Arrival of the Jesuits

Priests of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) assumed care of Our Lady of Guadalupe from 1871 to 1920. Political upheavals in Italy resulted in suppression of the Jesuit order and expulsion of its priests. Approximately four hundred Neapolitan Jesuits responded to requests from Catholic bishops in California and New Mexico to serve as clergy. In 1868 the Jesuits established a base in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Bishop Machebeuf of Denver asked in August 1871 that the Jesuits accept responsibility for the Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

The Jesuits accepted the Conejos assignment, and Father Salvatore Personé and a lay brother arrived in Conejos in December 1871, and, as historian Gerald McKevitt explains, “For the next fifty years Jesuits ministered to the largely Hispanic population of the town and its twenty-nine neighboring farm hamlets and immigrant mining camps.”²⁴ The Jesuit newcomers described the existing church as more like “a cave or stable rather than a house of worship.”²⁵ At that time Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish contained about three thousand Catholics and covered a large territory within the San Luis Valley, from the Conejos vicinity north to Saguache and east to San Luis and other villages on the Culebra River in the southeast corner of the valley (see Figure 2).²⁶ Conejos was one of a handful of hubs established by the Jesuits from which circuit-riding priests made regular visits to outlying missions.

Father Personé found an enthusiastic parish ready to engage in public exhibitions of their faith. McKevitt reported on Father Personé’s description of the 1872 celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe: “The procession that filed through town included two hundred men on horseback, a territorial senator carrying the flag, and riders ‘armed with pistols from which time to time six successive shots were fired.’ Next came children carrying colored flags, a processional cross, men, women, a gorgeously vested priest, and finally the statue of Our Lady, surrounded by a throng of people who discharged fireworks.”²⁷ The feast day is still celebrated in the parish.

According to McKevitt, the Jesuits found among Southwest Hispanos “an abundance of Marian pieties that gave devotion a local name,” such as Our Lady of Guadalupe (Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe).²⁸ Other examples include Nuestra Señora de Atocha and Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. Historian Stafford Poole explained that the power of the Marian devotion of Hispanos to Our Lady of Guadalupe is “universally recognized.”²⁹ The devotion is founded on the story of Juan Diego, a native man recently converted to Catholicism, to whom the Virgin Mary appeared on a hillside near Mexico City in December 1531. The incident possesses twofold cultural significance in that it was the

²² Utah was removed from the Vicariate in 1871 and assigned to San Francisco.

²³ Thomas J. Noel, *Colorado Catholicism and the Archdiocese of Denver, 1857-1989* (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1989), 12, 42, and 127. The Vatican recognized the Archdiocese of Denver in 1941.

²⁴ Gerald McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848-1919* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 187.

²⁵ Quoted in McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture*, 183.

²⁶ Parroquia de Conejos, *El Reino de Dios a La Parroquia de Conejos*, 10; Patrick C. Stauter, *100 Years in Colorado's Oldest Parish* (Denver: St. Cajetan's Press, 1958), 16-17.

²⁷ McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture*, 195.

²⁸ McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture*, 196.

²⁹ Stafford Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996), 1.

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first miraculous event to occur in the Western Hemisphere and that Mary spoke to Juan Diego in a native dialect.³⁰

Parish Development and the Departure of the Jesuits

The Jesuits took steps to improve the existing 1863 adobe church. In 1879 the front of the church was repaired and two 40' towers were constructed. The church received a new roof, fencing of the grounds, and twenty pews in 1881. Unfortunately, in 1886 and 1887 two walls of the church collapsed, requiring their rebuilding in 1888.³¹ The Sanborn fire insurance map for 1890 shows the church with a U-shaped "pastoral residence" attached to its south wall (see Figure 3).

The construction of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway through the San Luis Valley to Santa Fe in 1877-78 led to the railroad's creation of the town of Antonito in 1880, a mile southeast of Conejos. The new town became the transportation and business center of the area, boasting a population of 315 by 1890. Reflecting this dynamic, St. Augustine Catholic Church was erected in the town in 1889.

An 1891 description of Conejos underscored the continuing importance of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, observing that "the Mexican people [sic] are mostly all members of this religious denomination. On special occasions 2,000 to 3,000 of these worshippers meet at this church to enjoy their religious rites; they come from near and far."³² In December 1904 a niche on the front of the church received a statue of Mary and a plaque marking the fiftieth anniversary of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (see Figure 4). The parish's Daughters of Mary raised funds for the project.³³

During their 1871-1920 tenure in Conejos, most Jesuit priests served only four years before moving elsewhere. Father Pascual Tomassini had the longest service, remaining about seven years in three separate rotations.³⁴ In August 1919 the Jesuit Southwest Mission (Colorado and New Mexico) was severed from the Province of Naples and its components split among American provinces. The Colorado Jesuits were attached to the Missouri Province. Churches administered by Jesuit priests immediately were transferred to other orders or to diocesan clergy.³⁵

Arrival of the Theatines

Bishop J. Henry Tihen asked the Congregation of Clerics Regular of the Divine Providence (or Theatines) to assume control of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, and priests arrived in October 1920. Founded by Gaetano dei Conti di Tiene (later canonized as St. Cajetan) and others in Italy in 1524, the Theatine order sought "to recall the clergy to an edifying life and the laity to the practice of virtue."³⁶ The Theatines established foreign missions and grew quickly to about 1,400 priest by 1700. The order declined with the suppression of religious orders in Italy and by 2014 the number of Theatine priests had dropped to about 140. The U.S. headquarters of the Theatines is in Durango, Colorado.³⁷ The Theatines used Conejos as a base to serve mission churches in the San Luis Valley of Colorado and New Mexico, including Tres Piedras and Las Tusas. The *Denver Catholic Register*,

³⁰ Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, 11 February 2018, Hispanic Religious Gallery, Millicent Rogers Museum, Taos, New Mexico.

³¹ Stauter, *100 Years in Colorado's Oldest Parish*, 22.

³² A.R. Pelton, *The San Luis Valley* (Salida, Colorado: A.R. Pelton, 1891), 113.

³³ "History of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish-Conejos-Antonito," ca. 1946, 27, Our Lady of Guadalupe parish records, St. Augustine Church, Antonito, Colorado. The statue and plaque survived the 1926 fire and were incorporated into the 1927 façade. When the church was expanded in 1948 with a new façade and towers, the statue and plaque were transferred.

³⁴ Stauter, *100 Years in Colorado's Oldest Parish*, *2.

³⁵ McKeivitt, *Brokers of Culture*, 305; *Woodstock Letters* 48 (1919): 429-433.

³⁶ "Theatines," Catholic Encyclopedia, www.newadvent.org, accessed 11 February 2018.

³⁷ "Theatines," Catholic Encyclopedia; The Theatine Fathers, Province of Our Lady of Purity, Durango, Colorado, www.theatinesusa.com, accessed 11 February 2018. In Colorado the Theatines presently operate St. Andrew Avellino Seminary in Denver and staff churches in Antonito, Ignacio, Cortez, Durango, Pueblo, San Luis, and Denver.

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with no sense of irony, noted the population served by the Theatines “is overwhelmingly Spanish and Mexican, though there is a good scattering of Americans.”³⁸ The Theatines immediately started improving the interior of the church by installing a new floor, tin ceiling, electrical fixtures, new pews (1922), stained-glass windows, and a bell acquired in 1924 from a Protestant church in Monte Vista.

Fire of 1926 and Rebuilding the Church

On Ash Wednesday 1926 (26 February), a devastating fire destroyed most of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and the attached rectory to the south. Only the adobe towers and front of the church remained standing. The diocese received an insurance settlement totaling \$9,632 early the following month.³⁹ After some discussion, the parish and diocese determined that the church should be rebuilt in the same location rather than in Antonito. A late 1940s history of the parish explained that “the wish of the old families of the Parish prevailed. For sentimental reasons they wanted the church of Our Lady of Guadalupe to be rebuilt in the very same spot where their grandfathers built the old church, in Conejos.”⁴⁰ It was also decided that the surviving adobe towers and front would be retained. A 1932 article in the *Denver Catholic Register* explained that those elements were of “such historical interest that it was deemed inadvisable to abolish them.”⁴¹ The reconstruction project began in September 1926 (see Figure 5). An architect for the reconstruction was not identified, but given the sophistication of the added façade ornamentation and the interior vaulting, it seems probable that an architect was involved.

Bishop J. Henry Tihen blessed the rebuilt church on 12 December 1927 (see Figure 6). The *Denver Catholic Register* estimated the total cost of the project at \$50,000. The 1934 parish history described the rebuilt church: “The church is of Roman style, spacious, with large windows of polychromatic glass, of cement brick. It measures 95 feet long by 55 wide. There is room to sit comfortably 450 people.”⁴² The new façade provided the church with a decidedly Spanish Colonial appearance with a curvilinear parapet with coping and ball finial ornaments, an arcaded entrance, and two enframed roundel windows. The walls were composed of locally made gray concrete bricks, the same size as regular clay bricks.⁴³ The 1930 Sanborn fire insurance map reported the church had a wood truss roof structure (see Figure 7). The 1904 statue of Mary and its associated plaque were reinstalled on the rebuilt front. The rectory destroyed in the fire was not rebuilt; priests would thereafter reside in Antonito and Our Lady of Guadalupe would not have a resident priest.

In July 1932, Bishop Urban J. Vehr consecrated Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at the request of Father Onofrio Martorell, the provincial of the Theatine Fathers. The *Denver Catholic Register* explained that most Catholic churches are blessed, not consecrated. Once consecrated, a church “cannot be turned over to any use except Catholic worship.”⁴⁴

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish celebrated what it described as its diamond jubilee in 1934.⁴⁵ In that year the church received a new altar, designed by assistant priest Nicholas Femenia and fabricated locally with the assistance of carpenter/craftsman Benjamin Chavez and artist Epifanio Trujillo (see

³⁸ *Denver Catholic Register*, 18 May 1933, 1 and 4.

³⁹ *Denver Catholic Register*, 4 March 1927, 7.

⁴⁰ “History of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish-Conejos-Antonito,” 27.

⁴¹ *Denver Catholic Register*, 7 July 1932, 1.

⁴² Parroquia de Conejos, *El Reino de Dios a La Parroquia de Conejos en Sus Bodas de Diamante*, 14; *Denver Catholic Register*, 25 November 1926, 1. By contrast, the *Denver Catholic Register* article estimated the replacement church would have a seating capacity of two hundred.

⁴³ *Denver Catholic Register*, 7 July 1932, 1. The newspaper described them as “fire-baked bricks (locally made).”

⁴⁴ *Denver Catholic Register*, 7 July 1932, 1.

⁴⁵ A diamond jubilee is typically the 60th anniversary of an event, but the parish was created in 1857, seventy-seven years prior to 1934.

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Figure 8). An *Antonito Ledger-News* article reported that Father Femenia's "skillful, mechanical hands guided the jig-saw through the graceful scrolls and veneerings and joined the delicate miters."⁴⁶ He worked on the project in his spare time for nearly six months in the basement of the rectory in Antonito. Femenia (1900-99) was born in Pollença, Majorca, Spain, and ordained as a Theatine priest in Rome in 1925. He came to the United States in 1926. Father Femenia served just two years in Conejos before moving to the El Paso and San Angelo dioceses in Texas.⁴⁷ Trujillo, a "young local artist" with no instruction in art, executed the altar's gold and faux marble and onyx decorations. In 1932 he produced "marble effects" in the sanctuary of St. Cajetan's Church in Denver (5DV.702).⁴⁸ Chavez (1892-1969) apparently undertook carpentry as a sideline; his principal occupation in manuscript census listings was farmer.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish found itself within a new jurisdiction when the Vatican created the Diocese of Pueblo in 1941. Included in the new territory were thirty-three counties comprising the southern half of Colorado. Joseph C. Willging served as the first bishop of the diocese.⁴⁹ The Pueblo Diocese included most of the state's counties with high proportions of Hispano residents.

Expanding the Church and Constructing the Present Towers

By the late 1940s, church officials concluded it was impossible to maintain the adobe towers retained following the 1926 fire. It was determined to remove the old towers and expand the church with new towers. Architect John K. Monroe, Sr., of Lakewood, Colorado, was selected to prepare plans for the project. Monroe (1893-1974) designed scores of churches, hospitals, schools, and other facilities for the Denver and Pueblo Catholic dioceses. A full tabulation of Monroe's works for the Catholic church has not been compiled, but it appears he served as the de facto diocesan architect for the early post-World War II period.

A Denver native, Monroe (1893-1974) received an architecture degree from Washington University in St. Louis. After his graduation in 1916 he worked briefly for a St. Louis architectural firm before serving in the Marine Corps during World War I. Returning to Denver, Monroe worked for many years as an assistant to architect J.J.B. Benedict before opening his own practice in 1933. He worked on up to twenty-four projects at the same time, and his commissions included numerous Catholic buildings, including St. John the Evangelist, Sacred Heart in Alamosa (5AL.262, NRIS.98000855, National Register listed 1998), Christ the King, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Denver (5DV.358.3, Denver Landmark), St. Patrick's in La Junta (5OT.709, State Register listed 1998), and St. Catherine of Sienna in Denver (5DV.8150) churches; St. Vincent de Paul, Shrine of St. Anne (5DV.1648), St. Philomena (5DV.10941, NRIS.11000239, National Register listed 2011), and St. Therese schools; buildings at St. Thomas Seminary (5DV.729, NRIS.89001007, National Register listed 1989); and St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver and St. Mary-Corwin Hospital in Pueblo. Bonfils Theater (5DV.4045, NRIS.91001417, National Register listed 1991) in Denver was a noted secular work of Monroe. Monroe described himself as an old school Beaux Arts designer: "I learned there was always a focal point and everything is in scale within itself. That is what most ecclesiastical architecture is all about."⁵⁰

Demolition of the old towers took place in February 1948. The new construction, supervised by Manuel Chavez, began in late March and included expanding the nave one bay to the east and

⁴⁶ *Antonito Ledger-News*, 5 June 1958.

⁴⁷ *San Angelo Standard*, 30 December 1999; Nicholas Femenia, Petition for Naturalization, 1942, Ancestry.com.

⁴⁸ *Denver Catholic Register*, 21 January 1932, 2.

⁴⁹ Patrick C. Stauter, and Howard L. Delaney, *The Willging Years* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1986), 217.

⁵⁰ *Denver Catholic Register*, 1 February 1968, 2:1; John K. Monroe, Colorado Architects Biographical Sketch, 12 July 2000, History Colorado, Denver, Colorado; R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Denver, Colorado, Denver Landmark Designation Application, landmark number 245, 1995.

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adding a new façade with twin towers. The new construction employed the same gray concrete brick used in the 1927 work. Monsignor Patrick C. Stauter praised the new towers: “Aluminum domes were added to the towers and with them the towers stood 56 feet high, making the building stand out on the landscape almost rivaling San Anton peak for eye-catching appeal” (see Figure 10).⁵¹ Parishioners donated funds for the domes, as well as four new stained-glass windows—two on the front and two on the north and south walls of the new bay. The project brought the seating capacity of the church to more than five hundred persons.⁵²

The dedication of the expanded Our Lady of Guadalupe Church occurred on 7 August 1948. Bishop Willging of the Pueblo Diocese blessed the church (see Figure 9). Archbishop Edwin V. Byrne of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe also participated. The ceremonies recognized the 400th anniversary of the death of St. Cajetan, the founder of the Theatine Fathers. Antonito businesses closed during the middle of the day to permit attendance at the observance. The *Southern Colorado Register* reported that nearly one thousand people attended the pontifical mass in the church.⁵³ In the post-World War II period, the church recorded two priests with relatively long tenures: Michael Pascual (1946 to 1960) and Felix Lopez (1972 to 1997).⁵⁴

Recent Developments

A bequest to the church from the estate of Josephine Salazar left \$40,000 to establish “a religious and cultural center to promote the Faith and to educate people about the culture of our ancestors, the Spanish settlers or pobladores of southern Colorado.”⁵⁵ Our Lady of Guadalupe parishioners formed a committee to develop a project that would fulfill the bequest’s goals. Plans were developed to create a prayer labyrinth in the open area south of the church. In 2009 Pueblo Bishop Arthur Tafoya approved the effort. The project envisions a labyrinth to explore the Mysteries of the Rosary. The site will include an outdoor chapel and feature works by three prominent area sculptors: Lynn Kircher, Huberto Maestas, and Charles Ewing.

Ninety years after the 1926 fire, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church experienced a February 2016 blaze in the rear of the church. In addition to fire losses the interior of the church sustained smoke damage with a total loss estimated at \$500,000. After the fire, parishioners noticed a crown had appeared over the head of Our Lady of Guadalupe in an altar painting, leading some to believe that a miracle had occurred. Father Sergio Robles asked the Pueblo Diocese to investigate the incident.⁵⁶ The fire damage was repaired but the crown was left in place (Photograph 14).

The Theatine Fathers continue to serve the Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish. Father Robles, who came to the church in 2008, is the current parish administrator. Currently, two masses are celebrated at the church on Sundays. The parish now includes 450 parishioners.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Stauter, *100 Years in Colorado’s Oldest Parish*, 28.

⁵² Stauter, *100 Years in Colorado’s Oldest Parish*, 28-29.

⁵³ *Southern Colorado Register*, 13 August 1948, 1 and 27 August 1948, 1.

⁵⁴ Patrick C. Stauter, *Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Oldest Parish of Colorado* (Alamosa, Colorado: O&V Printing, March 1997), *2.

⁵⁵ El Santuario de los Pobladores, 23 November 2015, www.santuariodelospobladores.org, accessed 2 March 2018.

⁵⁶ KUSA-TV, “Oldest Catholic Parish in Colorado Catches on Fire,” 10 February 2016 and “Parishioners Believe Recent Fire at Oldest Colorado Church Created a Miracle,” 16 February 2016, KUSA-TV, Denver, Colorado, www.9news.com, accessed 13 July 2018.

⁵⁷ Daniel Smith, “Places: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church,” *Colorado Central Magazine*, 1 December 2017.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ___ previously listed in the National Register
- ___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ___ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5CN.489

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 8.0

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.087301 Longitude: -106.020379

UTM Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

1. Zone: 13 Easting: 409313 Northing: 4105044

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated area consists of all of Conejos County Assessor parcel number 598719100900 with the exception of an approximately 242' x 111' area at the northwest corner. The parcel is located within the block within Conejos bounded by County Road 6 on the north, County Road 13 on the east, County Road 5 on the south, and County Road 12.9 on the west. An irrigation ditch running parallel to the south edge of the block is not included.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated area is comprised of the entire block historically associated with the church, except for a small area at the northwest corner now in other uses.

11. Form Prepared By⁵⁸

name/title: Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, Architectural Historians
organization: Front Range Research associates, Inc.
street & number: 3635 West 46th Avenue
city or town: Denver state: CO zip code: 80211
e-mail: frraden@msn.com www.frhistory.com
telephone: 303-477-7597

with contributions by

name/title: Dana EchoHawk, Cultural Historian
organization: N/A
street & number: P.O. Box 353

⁵⁸ Funded by Underrepresented Communities Grant from NPS to History Colorado. This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect views of the Department of the Interior.

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city or town: Louisville state: CO zip code: 80027
e-mail: dana.echohawk@gmail.com
telephone: 303-579-2462
date: 1 May 2018 (revised)

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
City or Vicinity: Conejos
County: Conejos
State: Colorado
Name of Photographer: Thomas H. Simmons

Date of Photographs: Varies (as indicated)

- 1 of 31, Church (Resource 1), front. View west. Date: April 2018.
- 2 of 31, Church (Resource 1), statue niche at top of gable. View west. Date: April 2018.
- 3 of 31, Church (Resource 1), front and north wall. View northwest. Date: April 2018.
- 4 of 31, Church (Resource 1), north wall and transept. View northwest. Date: April 2018.
- 5 of 31, Church (Resource 1), north wall and part of rear. View southeast. Date: April 2018.
- 6 of 31, Church (Resource 1), rear (west wall). View east. Date: April 2018.
- 7 of 31, Church (Resource 1), rear and south wall. View northeast. Date: April 2018.
- 8 of 31, Church (Resource 1), south wall. View northwest. Date: April 2018.
- 9 of 31, Church (Resource 1), south wall. View northeast. Date: April 2018.
- 10 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, nave looking toward chancel. View west. Date: April 2018.
- 11 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, nave looking toward choir loft. View east. Date: October 2017.
- 12 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, south transept. View south. Date: October 2017.
- 13 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, north transept. View north. Date: October 2017.

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- 14 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, altar detail. View west-southwest. Date: October 2017.
- 15 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, pulpit and confessional box. View southwest. Date: October 2017.
- 16 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, confessional box. View west-southwest. Date: October 2017.
- 17 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior, north transept and north wall of nave. View northeast. Date: October 2017.
- 18 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior north transept, Maria Inmaculada figural window. View: north. Date: October 2017.
- 19 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior nave south wall, Jesús Nazareno figural window. View: south. Date: October 2017.
- 20 of 31, Church (Resource 1), interior nave south wall, San Francisco de Asis figural window. View: south. Date: October 2017.
- 21 of 31, Lourdes Grotto (Resource 2). View southwest. Date: April 2018.
- 22 of 31, Historical marker (Resource 3). View northeast. Date: October 2017.
- 23 of 31, North wellhouse (Resource 4). View northwest. Date: April 2018.
- 24 of 31, Shed (Resource 5) with parish hall to left. View southwest. Date: October 2017.
- 25 of 31, Parish hall (Resource 6). View northwest. Date: October 2017.
- 26 of 31, Stage (Resource 7). View southwest. Date: April 2018.
- 27 of 31, Cross (Resource 8). View northeast. Date: October 2017.
- 28 of 31, South wellhouse (Resource 9). View southwest. Date: October 2017.
- 29 of 31, Prayer labyrinth site (Resource 10), with south wellhouse, stage, and parish hall in distance. View northwest. Date: April 2018.
- 30 of 31, Row of trees and barbed wire fence along east edge of property. View southwest. Date: October 2017.
- 31 of 31, East row of trees (right) with church, parish hall, stage, and shed in distance. View north. Date: April 2018.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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List of Maps and Historic Figures

Location Map

Sketch Map

Historic Figures

1 of 14, The earlier adobe church at Conejos is shown in this view west-southwest in 1874. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, photographer, 1874, Wheeler expedition of 1874. Courtesy of Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.

2 of 14, This 1934 map shows the location of Conejos northwest of Antonito in south-central Conejos County, as well as other missions operated by the Theatine Fathers in southern Colorado and New Mexico. A cross in a circle indicates the location of a mission. Courtesy of *El Reino de Dios a La Parroquia de Conejos en Sus Bodas de Diamante* (1934), 13.

3 of 14, This pre-1904 southwest view shows priests standing inside a wood fence east of the church. The residence shown at the left adjoined the church on its south side. Courtesy of Special Collections Jesuitica, Regis University, Denver, Colorado.

4 of 14, This 1911 view shows the front of the church. The niche in the gable holds a statue of the Blessed Virgin above a white dedicatory plaque placed in 1904. Courtesy of Stephen H. Hart Library and Research Center, History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

5 of 14, Following a devastating February 1926 fire that spared only the adobe towers and front wall, the church was rebuilt in 1926-27. Courtesy of Stephen H. Hart Library and Research Center, History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

6 of 14, This 1927 view northwest shows the rebuilt church, which retained the adobe towers and a redesigned front wall. Courtesy of Stephen H. Hart Library and Research Center, History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

7 of 14, The 1930 Sanborn fire insurance map of Conejos showed the church with the 40' high adobe towers still in place. The new construction was concrete brick with a wood truss roof. No other buildings were shown on the block holding the church. North is to the top. Courtesy of Sanborn Map Company, Conejos, Colorado, fire insurance map (1930), extract.

8 of 14, An imposing altar was installed in the church in 1934, crafted by Father Nicholas Femenia (the assistant parish priest), local carpenter Benjamin Chavez, and local artist Epifanio Trujillo. Courtesy of *El Reino de Dios a La Parroquia de Conejos en Sus Bodas de Diamante* (1934), 3.

9 of 14, On 7 August 1948 Bishop Willging of Pueblo (center) blessed the expanded church and towers. To his right is Archbishop Edwin V. Byrne of Santa Fe. Courtesy of *Southern Colorado Register* (Pueblo, Colorado), 27 August 1948, 1.

10 of 14, In 1948 the adobe towers and front were removed. The building was extended eastward one bay and the present concrete brick twin towers with aluminum domes constructed. The Lourdes Grotto at left was created in 1954. Courtesy of Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons, Our Lady of Guadalupe, ca. late 1950s-early 1960s, historic postcard collection, Denver, Colorado.

11 of 14, The view shows the altar area from the center aisle ca. 1957-58 view. Father Francis Colom, C.R., photographer, in Stauter, *Our Lady of Guadalupe, Conejos, Colorado* (1997), 19.

12 of 14, This 1965 aerial photograph shows the undeveloped nature of the block containing the church at that time. The church, shrine, historical marker, and wellhouse in the northeast corner were

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the only extant resources. Aerial photograph H-5600 GS-VBBI, 30 April 1965. Courtesy of Colorado School of Mines/U.S. Geological Survey.

13 of 14, Phillips B. Gallegos prepared this measured drawing of the floorplan of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1989 as part of a study of Hispanic religious architecture in the San Luis Valley. North is to the top of the page. Courtesy of Phillip B. Gallegos, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Conejos, Colorado, Measured drawing, August 1989, Phillip B. Gallegos Hispanic Religious Architecture of San Luis Valley, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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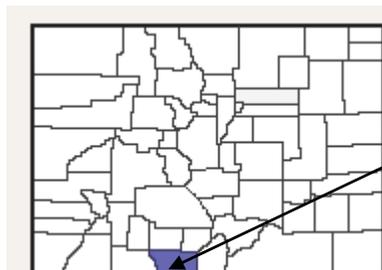
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Location Map



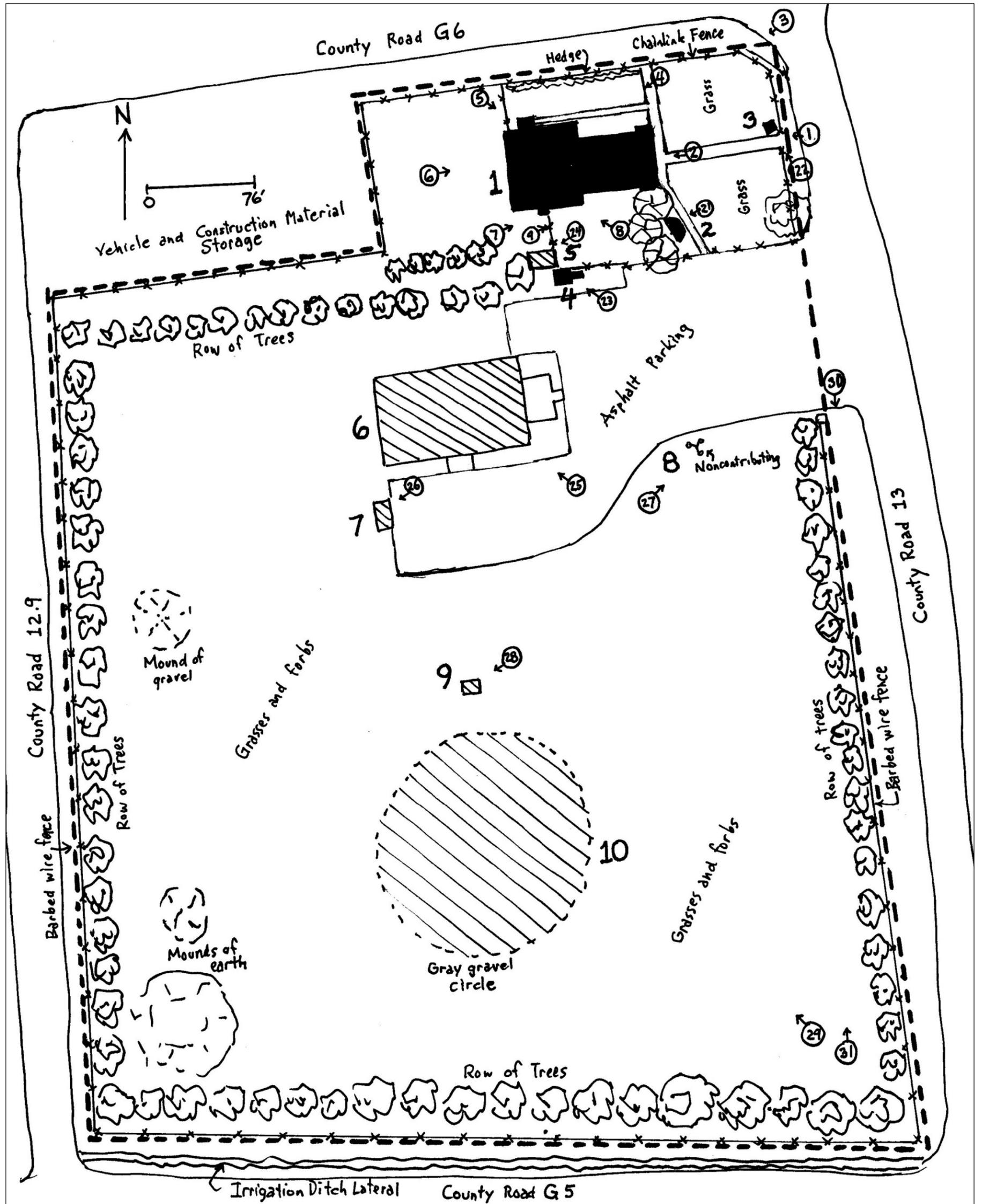
The labeled point indicates the location of the nominated resource, which has the following coordinates:

Latitude: 37.087301
Longitude: -106.020379
Image Date: 14 October 2016



State Perspective:
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Sketch Map



The heavy dashed line indicates the nominated area boundary. Numbers beside buildings are resource numbers. Contributing resources are shaded black; noncontributing resources are hatched. Numbers in circles show photograph locations and camera directions.

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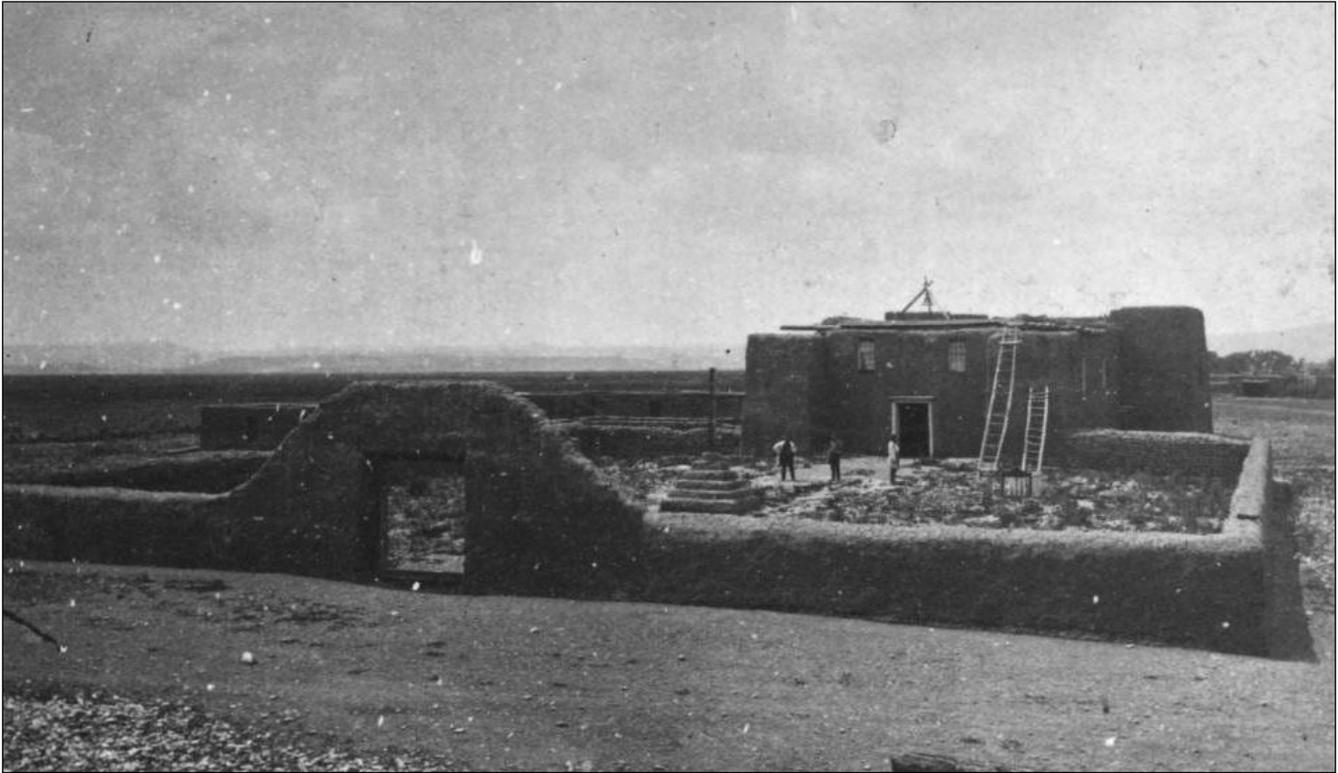


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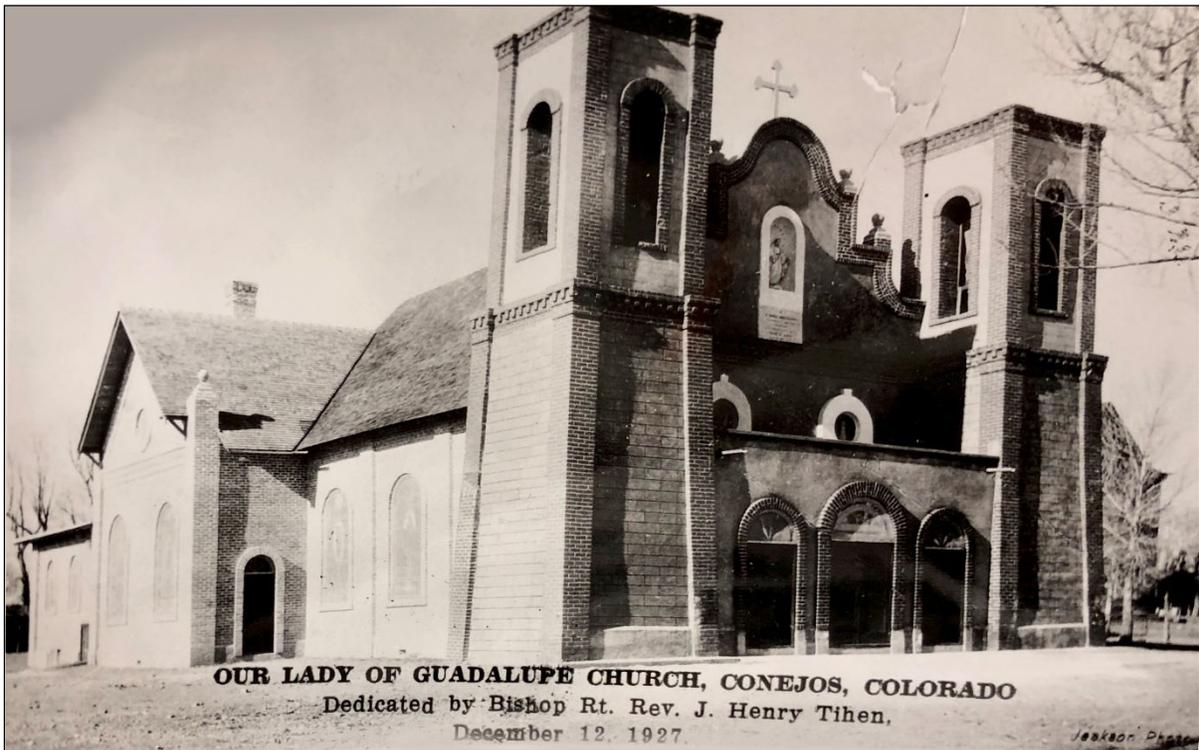


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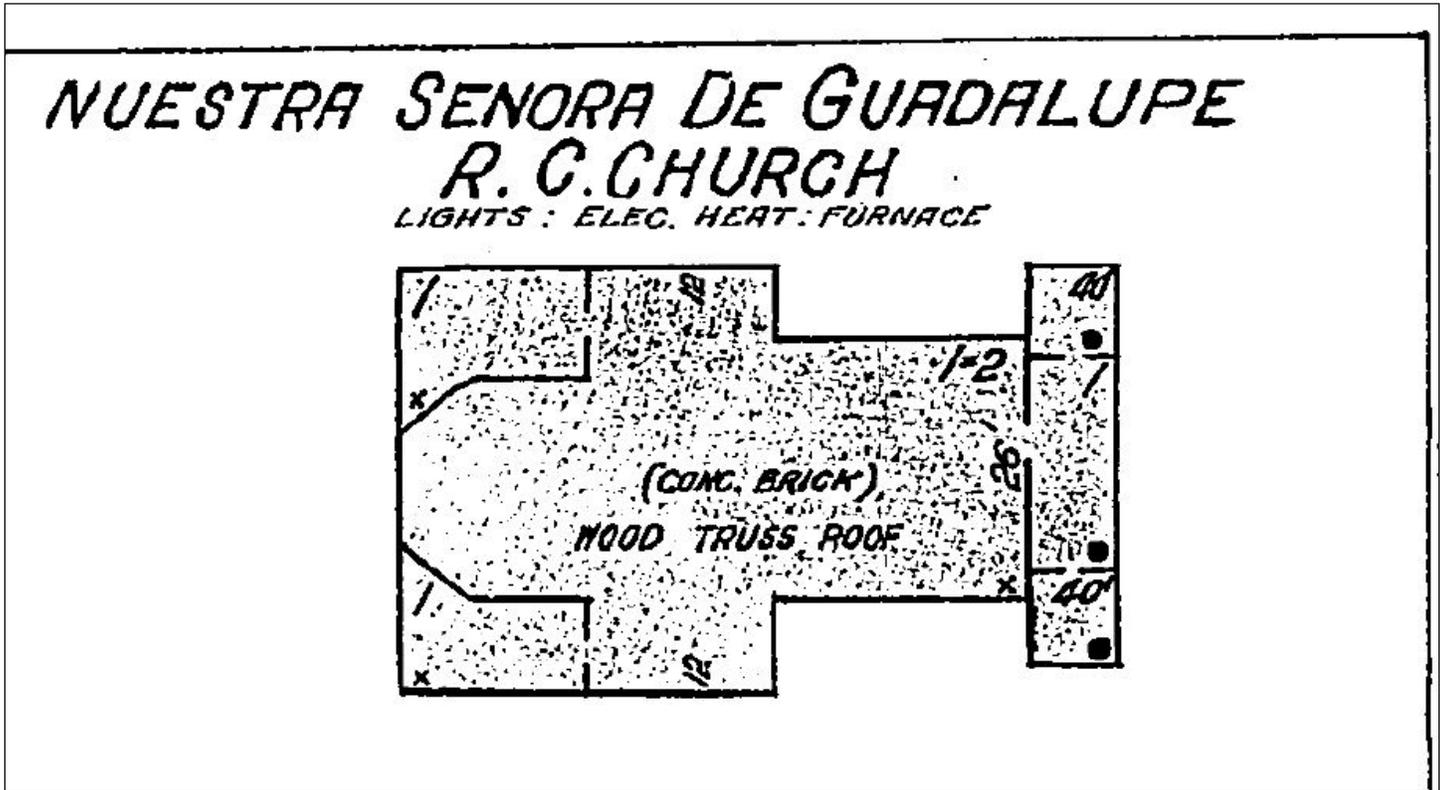


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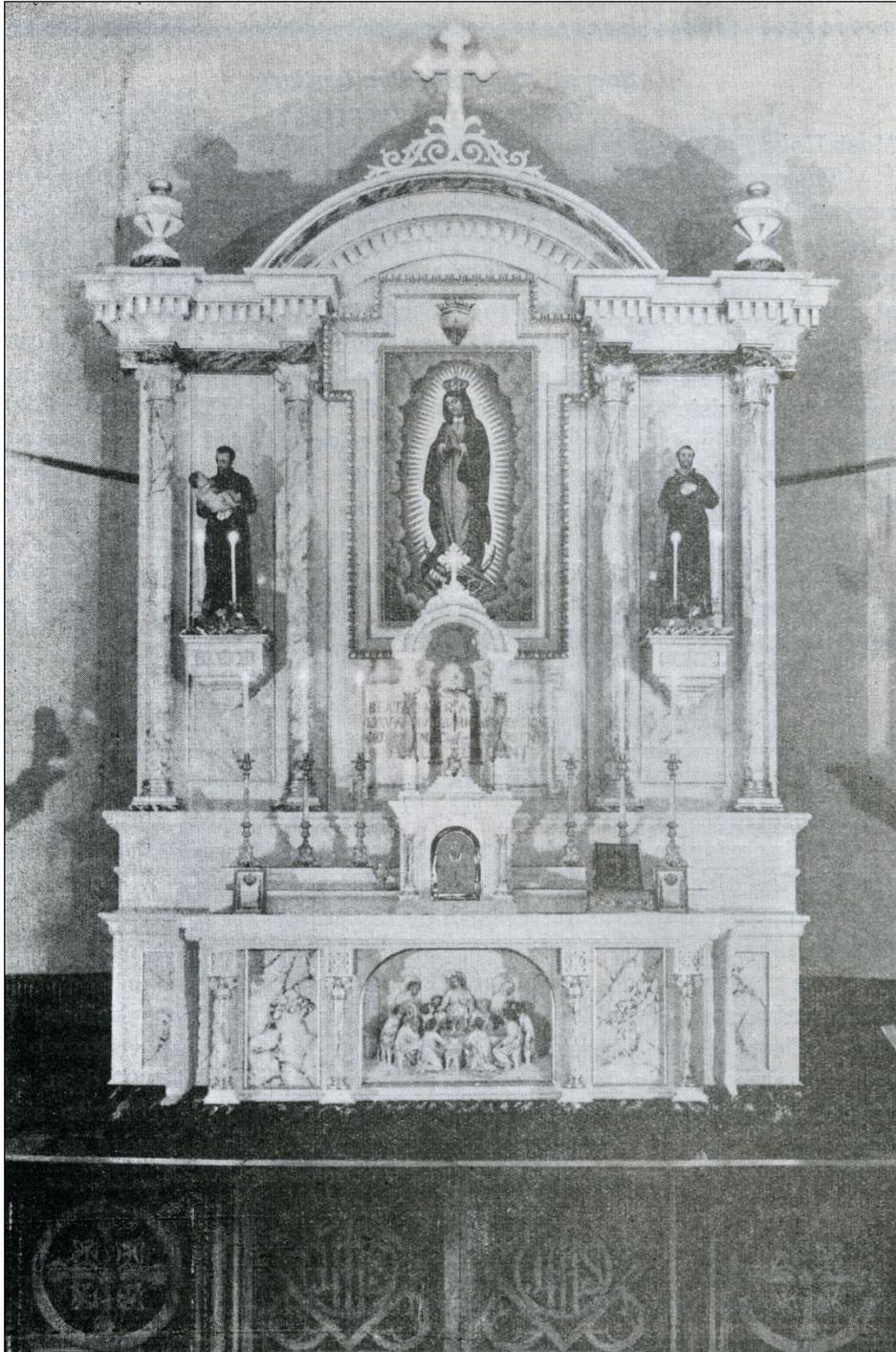


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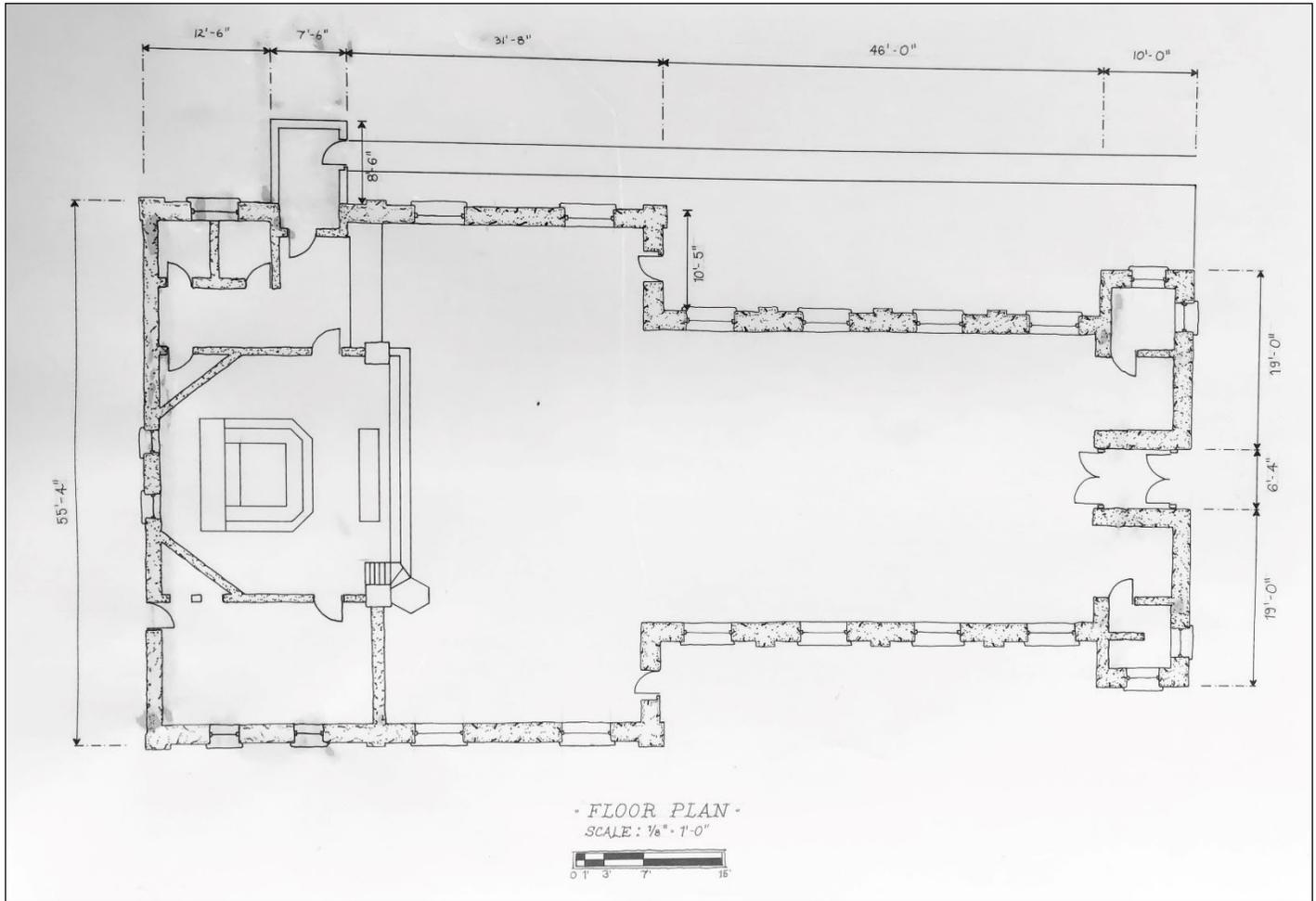


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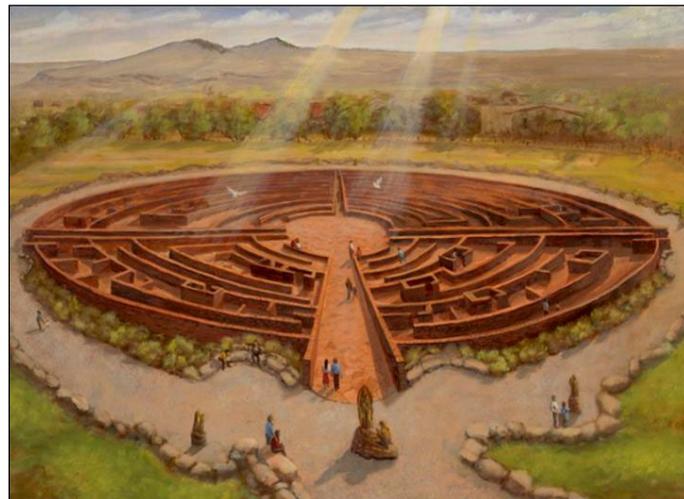


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