

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: Portuguese Chapel of San Diego

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)



### 2. Location

Street & number: 2818 Avenida de Portugal

City or town: San Diego State: CA County: San Diego

Not For Publication: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      \_\_\_ statewide      \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A      \_\_\_ B      \_\_\_ C      \_\_\_ D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></span></p>	

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this 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.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion/Religious Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion/Religious Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation – Brick;

Walls - Wood/weatherboard;

Roof - Asphalt

### 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.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Portuguese Chapel, or Império Capela, is a single-story, wood frame building inspired by similar chapels from the Isles of Terceira and Pico, in the Azores, and includes Craftsman style features. The chapel has a small rectangular footprint (12' x 20'), a triune pediment with stained glass finials, and a gable roof to the rear as well as an altered front porch. The exterior is composed of Redwood clapboards, asphalt shingles, and stained glass windows along with a red brick foundation and a concrete stair. The interior represents a typical chapel found inside a tuna boat, due to three symmetrical alcoves along the far alter wall, as well as the Craftsman style, vertical-grain Douglas Fir wood altar and trim details. Located near the San Diego bay, in the La Playa neighborhood of Point Loma, Avenida de Portugal is a diverse street in parcel size and building form with little vegetation. The adjacent properties are primarily residential, in addition to the Portuguese Historical Center across the street and the hall next door, which houses the United Portuguese Sociedade do Espírito Santo (UPSES). The immediate neighborhood is also residential, but includes a larger mix of commercial uses. The chapel fronts onto Avenida de Portugal, facing southwest between the associated community hall and a small apartment building, with a 10-foot setback from the sidewalk; large sidewalk medallions lead to the adjacent hall. A masonry wall with iron fencing at a 3' perimeter surrounds three façades. The property is in excellent condition with little alteration since the 1922 construction date (see Figure 6).

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## **Narrative Description**

### Location

The Chapel is located on the bay side of the Point Loma peninsula, faces southwest, and occupies a 50' x 40' parcel, described as a portion of Map 305, Block 11, and Lot 3, filed with the County of San Diego on September 5, 1874.

### Exterior

The primary façade is symmetrical and features a triune pediment with three stained-glass and metal triangular finials (four-sided) and a Latin Cross at the pediment center. The façade also has two stained-glass windows with crown motifs and slightly flattened gothic arched transoms (also stained glass), and matching arched entry doors in the center. Chapels found on the Azores Islands, a region of Portugal, inspired the three-bay, central door design and the vernacular triune pediment, which symbolizes the Holy Trinity; see comparison examples in Figures 1 and 2. The exterior wall is located on a raised brick foundation and is composed of painted Redwood clapboards with a slight flair at the base, and trim at the corners, windows, and doors. Concrete entry stairs with two iron handrails lead to an 8'x9' platform, which replaced the original wooden steps sometime during the 1940s. Later sheathed in maroon tile, today these tiles are engraved with the names of members. Left of the stairs, the initials SES are noted in multi-colored pebbles to represent the Society of the Holy Spirit; to the right, and with the same stones, is a 1922 marker of the construction date. Above the entry is a recreation of the original crown-shaped sign with crossing American and Portuguese flags. The Crown of the Holy Spirit is illustrated above the flags, topped with a dove. Initials of the United Portuguese Association of the Society of the Holy Spirit, UPSES, flank either side of the two flags.

The gable behind the front pediment has deep eaves with exposed Craftsman style rafter tails along two identical side façades. Each elevation has two stained glass windows with transoms that match the front façade, but no crown motif, in addition to the painted cedar clapboards, window trim, and flared skirt.

The rear façade is void of any openings and the gable creates deep eaves. This elevation is composed of painted clapboards, flared at the base, with trim and two large Craftsman style brackets at either corner.

### Interior

The interior is also laid out symmetrically, to reflect the chapel design of tuna boats during the early twentieth century, with an altar located at the rear, or along the eastern wall. See interior

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plan, Figure 3. Since the primary purpose of the chapel is to house the crown of the Holy Spirit, no pews or permanent seats are located on the interior.

The double entry doors (the only interior access) have steeple-tip hinges and a slightly flattened Gothic arch. The flooring is composed of 4" vertical grain, tongue and groove Douglas Fir, same as the window trim and wainscoting beneath the windows, on all but the alter wall. A gated wooden altar rail, which divides the interior space, marks the edge of a two-step chancel. The upper walls and ceiling are lathe and plaster, while the lower wall is composed of Douglas Fir wainscoting, and the ceiling reflects an uncrossed inverted catenary arch style.

The eastern, rear wall consists of a wooden alter that is approximately 6' in length, nestled between two doors, with three arched alcoves centered above that repeat the triune motif. The alter itself is composed of Douglas Fir with three paneled sections. The doors that flank either end lead to a storage vestibule behind the alter where the walls are 2x4 Douglas Fir boards laid flat. The center alcove is the tallest and considered a place of honor where a crown or statues are to be displayed. Two arches on either side of the center are slightly shorter and house statues, and finally, two arches are recessed above both vestibule doors. There are two paired sconces located along each sidewall, above the alter rail, with push button light switch on brass plates.

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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.)

- 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.
- 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- 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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Criterion C – Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1922 through 1949, from the date of construction to when the new UPSES Hall was erected

**Significant Dates**

1922 Chapel construction date;

1949 construction date of new UPSES Hall

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Athaide, Joseph (carpenter);

Brown, Frank (painter);

Lucas, John (stone mason)

**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 Portuguese Chapel is significant in the area of architecture as a rare and outstanding example in the City of San Diego of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese heritage inspired chapel, meeting the requirements of Criteria Consideration A, and is appropriate to list on the National Register under Criterion C at the local level. Consideration A applies due to ownership by a religion-based entity, the United Portuguese Sociedade do Espírito Santo (UPSES); however, an evaluation of the architectural significance under Criterion C demonstrates the merit of this resource. The Portuguese Chapel is significant for architecture because it embodies the building type of a typical Portuguese Festa chapel, which is illustrated by the Azorian style design, and includes an interior that emulates a 1920s tuna boat chapel. The period of significance begins with the completion of construction in 1922 and continues until 1949, when the current UPSES Hall is constructed, which begins a new period of significance. The Portuguese Chapel is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, at the local level, for high architectural significance as a rare example of the Portuguese chapel building type.

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

The Portuguese Chapel is eligible to list on the National Register under Criterion C, at the local level, because the building is architecturally significant as an uncommon example in the City of San Diego of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese heritage inspired chapel, which meets the requirements of Criterion Consideration A, and has a period of significance beginning in 1922 and concluding in 1949.

### Criterion C

The Portuguese Chapel is significant in the area of architecture, under National Register Criterion C, because it embodies the building type of a Portuguese chapel, which includes an Azorian style design, and has an interior that emulates a 1920s tuna boat chapel. This building type is recognized through the basic gable form with triune pediment, a width of three-bays, Azorian style of design, and an interior void of pews. The Chapel's form and Azorian style are modeled after traditional Festa chapels located in the Azores Islands; therefore, this Chapel is representative of the Portuguese chapel building type, an ancestral form of architecture originating from the motherland. The interior design of the Chapel has three alcoves along the alter wall, copying tuna boat chapels of the 1920s, because the early tuna fishing industry in San Diego was primarily comprised of the early Portuguese community, and many were involved in the construction of this Chapel. Adding to the diversity of architectural style within San Diego, in applying Criterion C, the San Diego Portuguese Chapel is an excellent example of the building type, which contributes to the authenticity of the Festa celebrations and, through the architecture, visually represents long-standing Portuguese traditions associated with the Feast of the Holy Spirit.

The Portuguese chapel building type is established first in the Azores Islands during the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Prince Henry, "the Navigator," decreed that only Catholics would be allowed to colonize the Azorean settlements. Following the settlement of the Azores Islands by the Portuguese, many of the traditional Festa chapels were constructed in modest massing and feature a gable form with triune pediment, a width of three-bays, Azorian style of design such as the use of stained glass, and an interior void of pews (see Figures 1 and 2). These two examples illustrate a humble massing, triune pediment, and a width of three-bays with a central door and windows on either side. As representative of the Azorian style, the use of stained glass in these two examples is minimal, but could have been removed at a later date. However, this style is otherwise illustrated in the hearty width and detail of the wood and door trim, detailed transom windows, and pediment detailing that highlights the triune. Typically, the interiors of this type of chapel do not have pews.

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The San Diego Portuguese Chapel fits this building type and illustrates an Azores Island inspired style of design. The subject Chapel is a rare and excellent example of the Portuguese chapel building type because it is modest in massing with a gable form and triune pediment. This Chapel is also consistent with the building type because it has a width of three bays along the primary façade and an interior without any pews. The Azorian style design is understood through the extensive use of stained glass, both in the windows and the cupolas of the triune pediment, as well as the hearty width of window and door trim, and slightly flattened Gothic arch detailing. The building type and design provide tangible elements of the Azorian chapel design tradition, which furthers the authentic quality for the Feast of the Holy Spirit celebrations in San Diego. In applying Criterion C, the subject property is the only known and best example of this building type in Southern California, because this Chapel embodies the same form and design style of Festa chapels located in the Azores Islands built centuries before.

The interior design of the San Diego Portuguese Chapel, which is indicative of a 1920s tuna boat chapel, is unique only to this specific building. As construction on the subject Chapel (and original Hall) began, each fishing boat pledged the labor of one fisherman, for the duration of construction, making sure that each fisherman fully shared in the catch. The labor and commitment of these men is why the interior reflects the design of chapels found within a tuna boat at that time. Specifically, this includes the uncrossed inverted catenary arch of the ceiling, the wainscoting along the walls, and three symmetrical alcoves, with the center being the tallest, where a crown or statues are to be displayed. The early tuna fishing industry in San Diego was primarily comprised of this early Portuguese community, many of who were involved in constructing the Chapel. This interior honors their cultural and social commitment to their local community.

#### Criteria Consideration A

The Portuguese Chapel is eligible to list on the National Register, although ownership is a religious-based entity and the building has a religious-associated purpose, because this property meets Criteria Consideration A, as a rare and architecturally significant example of the Portuguese chapel building type. The UPSES, or United Portuguese Sociedade do Espírito Santo (UPSES), the current owner and operator of the Chapel was initially established to help erect the subject Chapel and first meeting hall (no longer extant). Over the years, the UPSES has become much more than a religious entity, and transitioned into a cultural establishment that utilizes the Chapel to support and promote the heritage and ethnicity of the Portuguese community. For example, the Portuguese Chapel was constructed in 1922 to house the Crown (or Coroa) during the annual Feast of the Holy Spirit, a religious celebration to commemorate the Sainted Queen Isabel and her selflessness. Today, the Portuguese Chapel is still the focal point of the annual UPSES Feast of the Holy Spirit, which is understood to be the longest running ethnic celebration in San Diego. Since construction in 1922, the Chapel has continued to house the Crown during

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the annual Feast of the Holy Spirit celebration and serve as a focal point of the Festa activities, where devotees say prayer and provide offerings. However, as a rare and architecturally significant resource that exemplifies the Portuguese chapel building type, this building meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration A. With a modest massing and gable, along with the triune pediment, this Chapel also exemplifies the Portuguese chapel building type because it is three bays wide along the primary façade and has an interior devoid of pews. The Azorian style of design is illustrated by the extensive use of stained glass, both in the windows and the cupolas of the triune pediment; the hearty width of the trim surrounding the windows and doors; and the slightly flattened Gothic arch detailing at the top of each window and door.

### Period of Significance

The period of significance for the Portuguese Chapel begins with the completion of construction in 1922 and continues until 1949, when the present UPSES Hall was erected. The Chapel was initially built to house the Crown during the annual Portuguese Festa activities and, while the function remains the same, the UPSES came into a new period of significance in 1949 due to their growth in membership and need for a larger meeting space. Therefore, the period of significance ends in 1949, upon construction of the new hall, because this notes a transition of the UPSES from a medium sized club into a large Portuguese community, with needs for a more spacious meeting hall.

### Conclusion

The Portuguese Chapel is an uncommon local example of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese heritage inspired chapel, which meets the requirements of Criterion Consideration A, and has a period of significance that begins in 1922 and concludes in 1949. As a building type, the Portuguese Chapel is significant in the area of architecture because it illustrates several distinctive characteristics, including the Azorian inspired design, and has the unique interior of a 1920s tuna boat chapel. Due to the rarity of this resource and its level of historical significance, although owned by a religious affiliated entity, Criteria Consideration A has been met. Beginning in 1922, the period of significance ends in 1949, upon construction of the new UPSES Hall, which transitions the Society further as a cultural establishment of the Portuguese community. The San Diego Portuguese Chapel is eligible to list on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architectural significance as a rare and outstanding example of the Portuguese chapel building type.

**\*See continuation sheets, Section 8, Pages 12-16, for figures, maps and historical photographs.**

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Goulart, Tony P. *The Holy Ghost Festas: A Historic Perspective of the Portuguese in California*. Portuguese Heritage Publications, Inc., 2002.

Oliver, Lawrence; Wolin, Rita Larkin, ed. *Never Backward: The Autobiography of Lawrence Oliver a Portuguese-American*. San Diego, CA: Neyenesch Printers, 1972.

Portuguese Historical Center; Alves-Calhoun, Donna. *Images of America: Portuguese Community of San Diego*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

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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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### 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):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 0.0459 acre



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city or town: San Diego state: CA zip code: 92106  
e-mail jilgm@att.net  
telephone: (858) 271-4008  
date: October 11, 2014 (original); October 1, 2016 (revised)

2. name/title: Amie Hayes, Historic Resources Specialist  
organization: Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO)  
street & number: 2476 San Diego Avenue  
city or town: San Diego state: CA zip code: 92110  
e-mail: ahayes.SOHOsandiego@gmail.com  
telephone: (619) 293 -9327  
date: October 1, 2016 (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.)
  1. Figures, maps and historical photographs (continuation sheets, Section 8, Pages 16-20)
  2. Letter from San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer (previously submitted)
  3. Letter from Council member Ed Harris (previously submitted)
  4. Letter from Council member-elect Lorie Zapf (previously submitted)
  5. Letter from County Supervisor Ron Roberts (previously submitted)
  6. Certificate of Recognition from 1975 (previously submitted)
  7. Initial UPSES Letter of Submittal, October 2014 (included in revised submission)

### **Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, 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.

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### **Photo Log**

Name of Property: United Portuguese S.E.S., Inc. Chapel

City or Vicinity: San Diego

County: San Diego State: CA

Photographer: John Lauriano

Date Photographed: March 23, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

#### **1 of 10.**

- Photo 1: Portuguese Chapel, primary facade (north view)
- Photo 2: Portuguese Chapel, primary facade (northeast view)
- Photo 3: Portuguese Chapel, primary and south side facades (north view)
- Photo 4: Portuguese Chapel, rear facade (northwest view)
- Photo 5: Portuguese Chapel, north side facade (eastern view)
- Photo 6: Portuguese Chapel and Hall (southeast view)
- Photo 7: Portuguese Chapel 1922 cornerstone (southwest corner)
- Photo 8: Portuguese Chapel Sociedade do Espírito Santo (SES) cornerstone (northwest corner)
- Photo 9: Portuguese Chapel, interior (western view of entry door)
- Photo 10: Portuguese Chapel, interior (eastern view of alter)

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Photo 1: Portuguese Chapel, primary facade (north view)



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Photo 2: Portuguese Chapel, primary facade (northeast view)



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Photo 3: Portuguese Chapel, primary and south side facades (north view)



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Photo 4: Portuguese Chapel, rear facade (northwest view)



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Photo 5: Portuguese Chapel, north side façade (eastern view)



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Photo 6: Portuguese Chapel and Hall (southeast view)



Photo 7: Portuguese Chapel 1922 cornerstone (southwest corner)



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Photo 8: Portuguese Chapel Sociedade do Espirito Santo (SES) cornerstone (northwest corner)



Photo 9: Portuguese Chapel, interior (western view of entry door)



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Photo 10: Portuguese Chapel, interior (eastern view of altar)



**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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N/A  
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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\*Additional Items Continuation from Section 8, Page 11.

**1. Figures**

Figure Log

1. Example chapel 1 from the Azores Islands
2. Example chapel 2 from the Azores Islands
3. Interior plan for Portuguese Chapel of San Diego
4. Google Map of Portuguese Chapel of San Diego
5. Assessor Parcel Map (Map 305, Block 11, Lot 3)
6. Portuguese Chapel, c. 1920s
7. Portuguese Chapel wedding, 1926

Figure 1 (bottom left): Example chapel 1 from the Azores Islands; located in Praia da Vitoria, Terceira Island, Azores (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/479281585321104913/>)

Figure 2 (bottom right): Example chapel 2 from the Azores Islands; located in Praia da Vitoria, Terceira Island, Azores ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porto\\_Martins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porto_Martins))



Figure 1



Figure 2

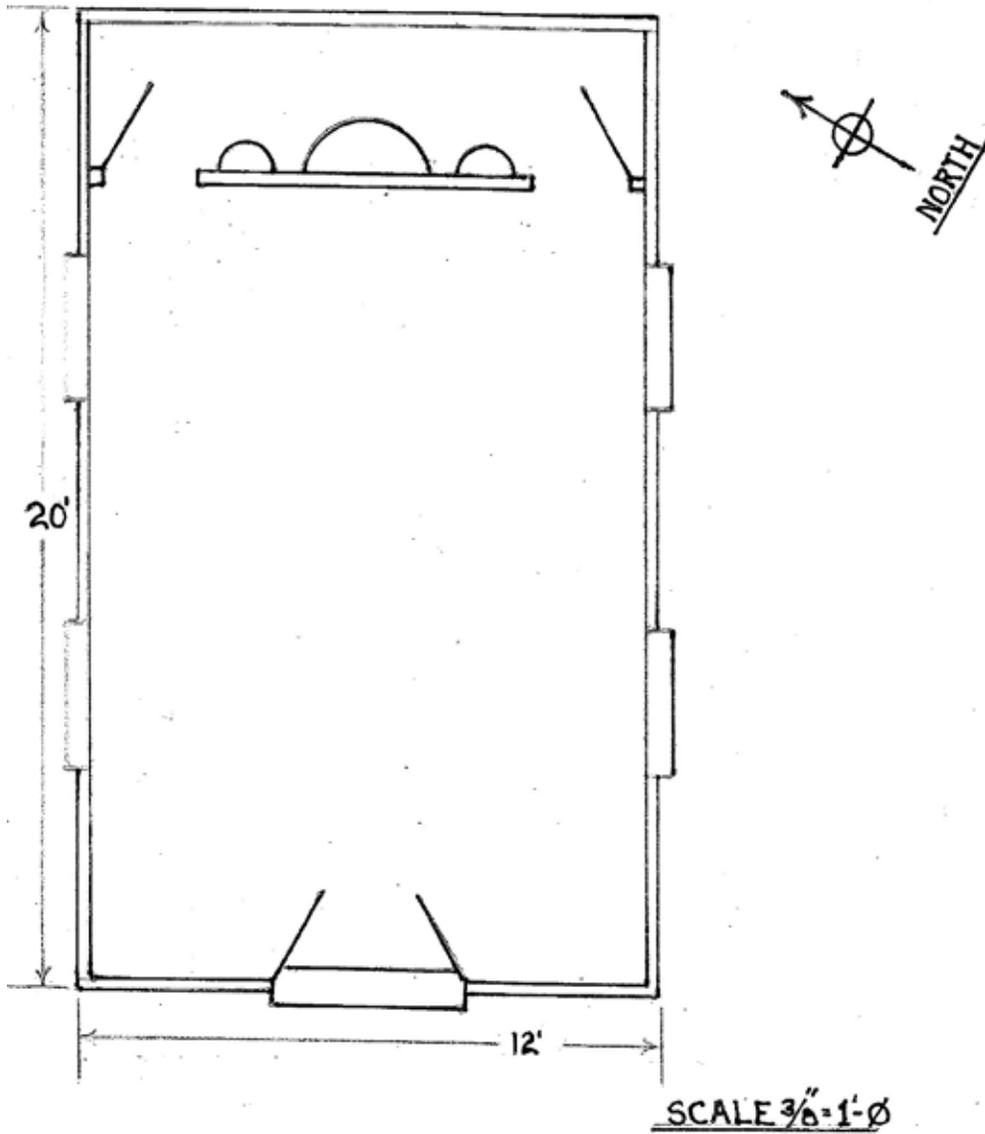
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Figure 3: Interior plan for Portuguese Chapel of San Diego



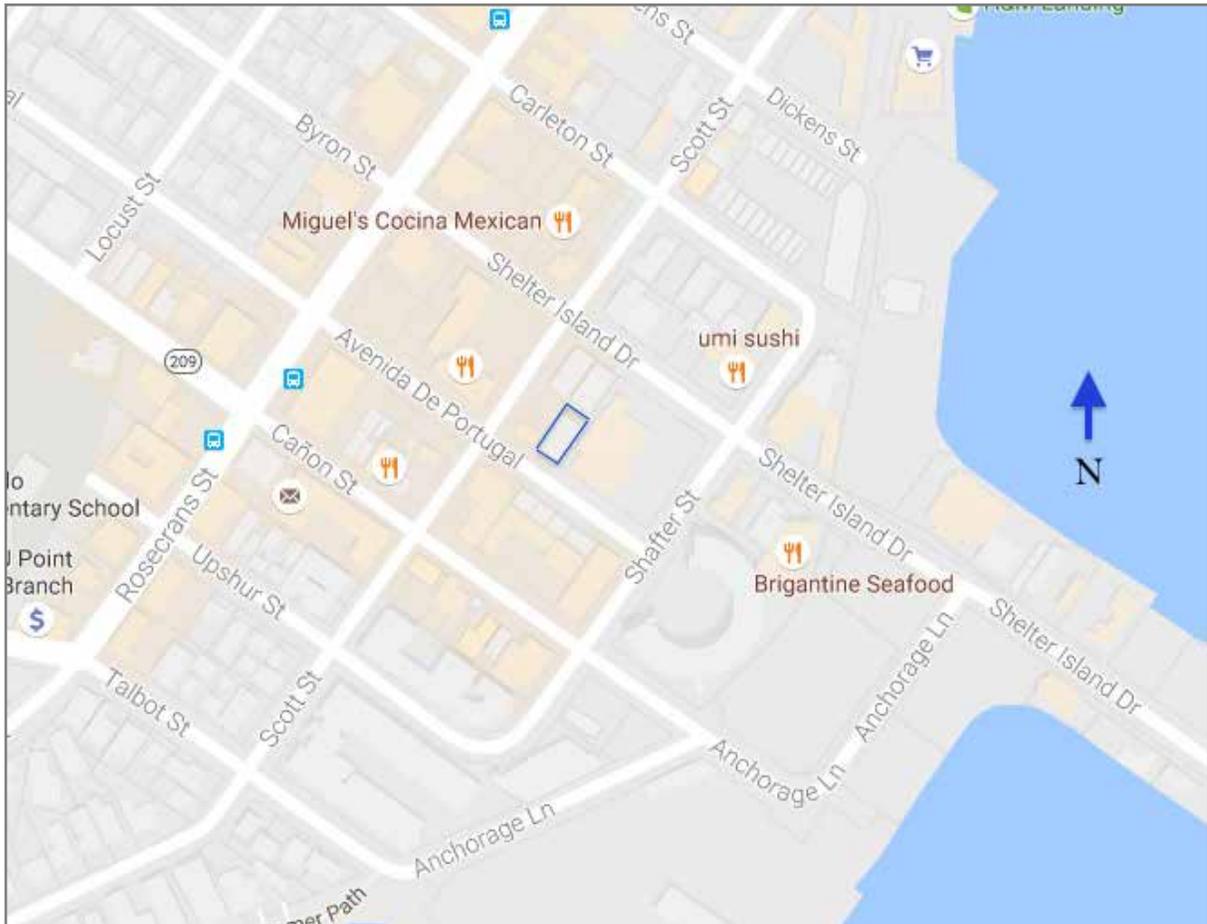
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Figure 4: Google Map of Portuguese Chapel of San Diego  
This Google Map below illustrates the location of the Portuguese Chapel (outlined in blue) along Avenida de Portugal with north arrow to the far right, just above Shelter Island Drive.



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Figure 5: Assessor Parcel Map (Map 305, Block 11, Lot 3)  
Subject portion of Lot 3 is colored yellow and outlined in red.



Figure 6: Portuguese Chapel, c. 1920s



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Figure 7: Portuguese Chapel wedding, c. 1926

