

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Plehwe Complex

and or common The Plehwe Stagecoach Inn

2. Location

street & number 1/2 mile west of Leon Springs on Boerne Stage Road N/A not for publication

city, town Leon Springs X vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Bexar code 029

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment
___ object	N/A in process	X yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
		___ no	___ military
			___ museum
			___ park
			X private residence
			___ religious
			___ scientific
			___ transportation
			___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mitchell L. & Floy Martin

street & number 24141 Boerne Stage Road

city, town San Antonio N/A vicinity of state Texas 78255

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bexar County Courthouse

street & number

city, town San Antonio state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title (1) San Antonio Historic Survey
(2) Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date (1) 1972
(2) 1983 ___ federal X state X county ___ local

depository for survey records (1) City of San Antonio
(2) Texas Historical Commission

city, town (1) San Antonio
(2) Austin state Texas

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	moved date N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Plehwe Compound is comprised of three structures: two diminutive residences and a detached kitchen building. Built using a mixture of timber and masonry construction techniques, the structures reflect the vernacular building traditions of central Texas architecture of the mid-19th century.

The three structures that form the Plehwe Compound stand in a rural setting to the west of the unincorporated town of Leon Springs, and are situated on wooded land which slopes gently from north to south. The largest of the three buildings is built entirely of limestone masonry, while the other structures combine timber frame, log, and masonry work. All have recent standing-seam metal roofs.

The largest of the structures, No. 1 (see plan of site), is the northernmost of the group. It is built of limestone, and believed to be the residence of Mrs. Sophie von Plehwe. The entry facade of the house faces almost due south. A single doorway breaks the first floor of the south front, with a very small window centered above it in the upper half story. The east elevation also features a single doorway for access to the ground floor, with a window toward the north end opening into a small room under the downward-sloping, north face of the roof. The north elevation contains a single doorway opening; this face of the house extends off to the west with a single story wing whose only detailing is a window opening on its west wall. The west face of the one-and-a-half story structure features two narrow openings on the ground floor, and a doorway on the upper half-story wall, access to which is provided by a steel stair. The interior is characteristically spartan, with two chimney flues, one in the large south room, and another in the smaller northern room. They are the only elements of ornament. The original wooden floor of the structure, heavily worn, is now covered by another. There have been some changes to the structure over time, the most apparent being the replacement steel stair to the upper story. This stair is located in the same spot as an early, and possibly original, wooden stair that appears in a 1925 newspaper article on the property. The small single-room wing on the west side of the house is of stone veneer construction, thus it is probably a 20th-century addition, although in keeping with the character of the earlier stonework. The north slope of the roof is broken by a shed dormer which is clearly a more recent addition. The wooden strip attached to the south facade of the structure marks the point of attachment of a simple lean-to porch that once shaded the entrance. This porch is also visible in the 1925 newspaper photo.

The central of the three structures, No. 2, is the original kitchen building. Considerably smaller than either of its neighbors, it combines both timber and masonry construction beneath its gable-ended roof. The majority of the walls of this one-room structure are of hewn logs, smoothed on their sides. The lean-to rear, or north, section of the structure is of limestone, and there are spaces between the logs filled in with limestone chinking. The faces of the gables are faced with wood planking. The roof is of sheets of tin, as are those of the two residences. The interior is dominated by the large cooking hearth on the east wall. The hearth opening is now spanned by a series of steel and iron bars required by the collapse of some of the stonework. The chimney shaft has been repaired and now shows no sign of structural problems. Externally, on the

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east elevation, the chimney is the dominant feature, stepping inwards and narrowing as it rises past the peak of the roofline. The building can be entered by doors located on the south, east, and west elevations, with a single window opening in the log wall section of the west face. It is apparent from both the 1925 photographs already noted, and by inspection of the structure, that it was originally faced with a coat of stucco, with the nail holes for the armature of sticks still readily visible on the outer faces of the logs. The window opening on the west elevation is obviously the result of the shortening of a doorway, with rough limestone filling the lower half of the original opening. The loss of the protective stucco is detrimental in the sense that the hewn logs are showing the effects of rot, termites, and powder-post beetle damage.

The southernmost member of the compound, No. 3, is the structure believed to have been the residence of Charles Felix George von Plehwe. As in the case of the kitchen building, this structure combines limestone masonry and timber framing. The profile of the original residence can be seen most easily from the west, where the combination of hewn-log and limestone walling is clearly visible. There are two doors on the west side of the building, one each in the limestone and log sections. A porch canopy supported by cedar logs, shades this side of the house. The north elevation is nearly solid, with one small window opening. The west side of the structure is largely a result of a 20th-century renovation of uncertain date. Typical double-hung windows are placed side by side to create a sort of sun porch on that side of the house. The original roofline is still quite apparent, along with the original chimney shaft. The south elevation also combines new and original work, with the two periods of construction clearly visible. The principal change to this structure comes in the form of the east addition, with its limestone walls and large group of windows. The stone-walled lean-to on the north side appears to be either original or an early addition, and hence is part of the historic fabric.

To the southeast of the buildings are the foundation remains of a fourth building of limestone masonry. This site has not been investigated to determine whether or not it contains any significant artifacts. To the west of the three buildings, on a separate piece of property, and not included in this nomination, is the largest of the remaining Plehwe buildings, which is believed to have served as a guest house. It has been substantially altered.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1850s

Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The trio of buildings that forms the Plehwe Complex represents an important survival of a mid-19th-century homestead in central Texas. Constructed as the residences of the Prussian immigrant Charles Felix George von Plehwe and his wife Sophie, the buildings also served as a stagecoach stop for the stage lines operating out of San Antonio.

The three structures comprising the Plehwe compound reflect the simple character of central Texas vernacular architecture during the mid-19th century. Hewn-log construction is combined with rough limestone masonry on two of the three buildings. The largest of the structures, the one-and-a-half-story residence of Mrs. Plehwe (structure No. 1), is perhaps the most characteristically German. It resembles the so-called Sunday-house form that is so prominent a feature of the Fredericksburg landscape. While all of the buildings have undergone some alterations over the years, their original form and character are readily apparent and worthy of study.

The builder of these structures, Charles Felix George von Plehwe, was born in Berlin in 1823. Part of a family noted for its military service, Plehwe rose to the rank of captain in the King's Guard attached to the court of Frederick William II of Prussia. In 1848 he married Sophie von Pless, a ward of the court and lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth of Bavaria. It appears that the revolution of 1848, combined with Captain Plehwe's poor health, induced the couple to emigrate to the United States in 1851. Plehwe purchased 1,000 acres of land near Leon Springs in Bexar County, which surrounds the complex of buildings in question. Soon after the completion of the homestead structures, Plehwe contracted with the stage line that operated between El Paso and San Antonio to use his farm as a coach stop, where water and fresh horses could be obtained. The stage line stopped there once a week on its way west from San Antonio.

Captain Plehwe also affiliated himself with John Meusebach, the former head of the Adelsverein, whose goal was to encourage the settlement of Germans in Texas. Plehwe also served as a Justice of the Peace in Bexar County for a number of years. After his death in 1882, Plehwe's widow continued to reside on the property until her death in 1901. The property was acquired by the Altgelt family, the Plehwe's neighbors, who leased the structures out to tenants. The Altgelts sold the property in the 1940s, and it went through a series of owners until it was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell Martin in 1976.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Newspapers: "Where a Little Bit of the Old World Still Lingers in the Hills North of San Antonio," by Penelope Bordow; San Antonio Express, July 26, 1925.
"The Death of Mr. Plehwe," San Antonio Express; January 11, 1882.
Abstracts: Abstract of Title, Bexar County Courthouse.
Books: The Handbook of Texas, Vol. II, Page 49; Walter P. Webb, editor; Austin.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Van Raub, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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3	2	8	1	5	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The Plehwe Complex occupies a site immediately south of the Boerne Stage Road and 1/4 mile east of IH 10 as delineated on the accompanying map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steven Land Tillotson

organization De Lara-Almond Architects

date March 7, 1980

street & number 3610 Avenue B (P.O. Box 6558)

telephone 512 822-8536

city or town San Antonio

state Texas 78209

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10/24/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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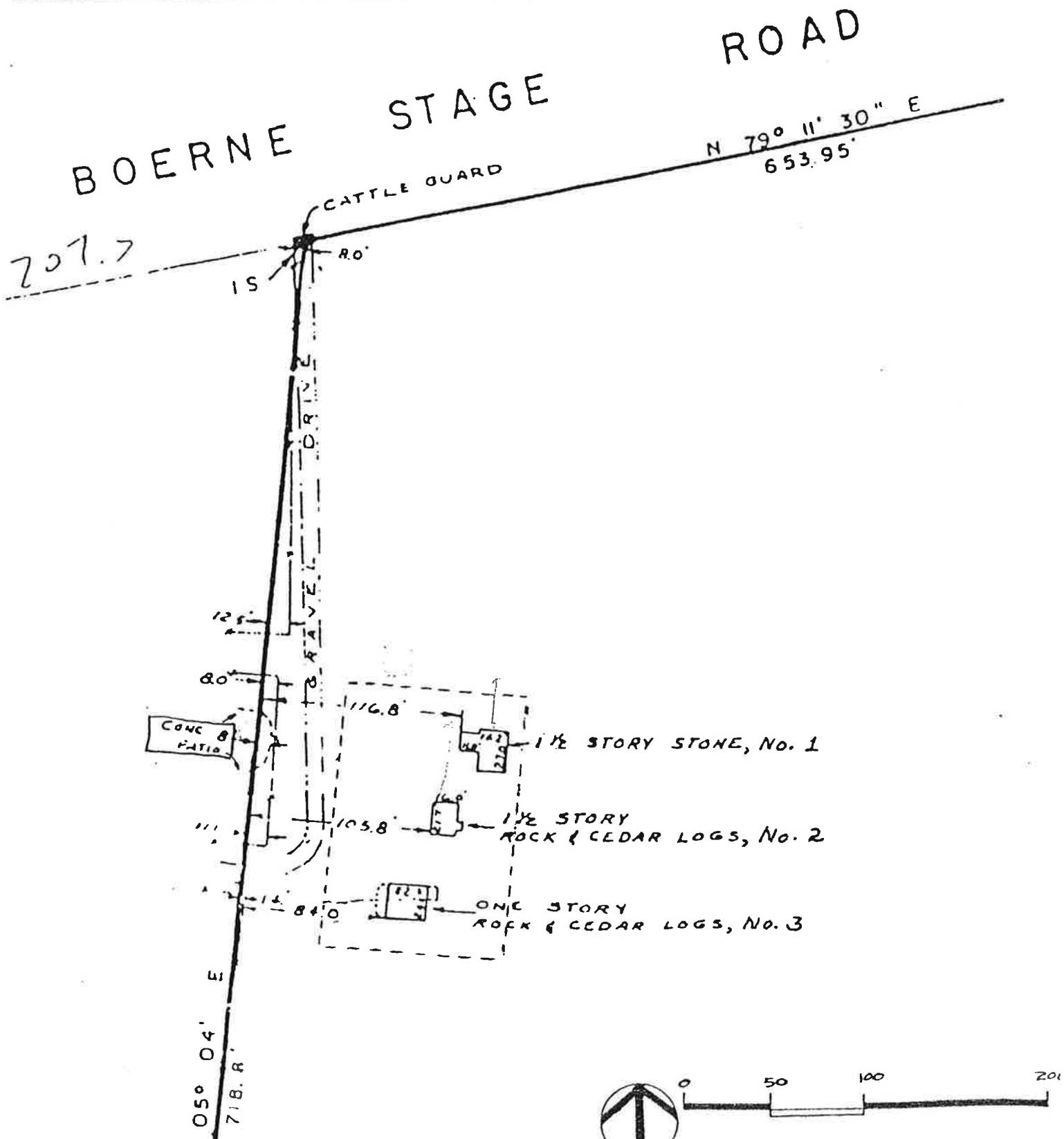
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THE PLEHWE COMPLEX
 1/2 MILE WEST OF LEON SPRINGS ON BOERNE STAGE ROAD
 LEON SPRINGS, BEXAR CO., TEXAS
 UTM REFERENCE: 14/535220/3281540

