

PH0503134

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	DATA SHEET
RECEIVED	AUG 29 1977
DATE ENTERED	MAY 5 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Giant Forest Lodge Historic District, Camp Sierra

AND/OR COMMON

Giant Forest Lodge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Not Applicable

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Sequoia National Park

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Three Rivers Seventeenth

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Tulare

CODE

107

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

National Park Service
Western Regional Office

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Tulare County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Mooney and Mineral King Boulevards

CITY, TOWN

Visalia

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1926</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Giant Forest Lodge Historic District encompasses approximately 4.5 acres located within the heart of the Giant Forest Grove of the Big Trees (*Sequoiadendrom giganteum*) at an elevation of 6,400 feet. Only the oldest portion of the complex is included within the district. The southern boundary adjoins several parking areas. The western boundary is mostly natural forest except that a modern dining room and two small out-buildings stand just outside the line at one point. The northern side of the district is a forested slope in an essentially natural condition. The eastern boundary is closely flanked by a complex of guest cabins erected between the 1930's and the present.

Twenty-five buildings are located within the district. These include eleven two-or-three room redwood shake guest cottages; five two-unit, rustic-sided guest cottages; two four-unit, rustic-sided guest cottages; two redwood shake single-room guest cottages; one shake manager's residence; one bark-paneled registration office; one bark-paneled general business office; and one amphitheater complex consisting of a stage/screen structure and outdoor benches for 300 people. No roads enter the complex. Parking is available immediately south of the business and registration offices. The site is heavily forested, including sequoia trees up to 28 feet in basal diameter.

Although first developed for tourist accommodations in 1900, the site now included within the historic district was not graced with permanent structures until after 1914, when the pioneer "Giant Forest Hotel" was built on a site immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the district. The "Hotel," (actually a 20 by 50 feet dining room) stood on the site now occupied by the modern Lodge Dining Room, which was built after the old structure was torn down in the 1960's. South of the historic district boundary, in the area now utilized for parking, a commercial village of small shops developed after 1910. The northern part of this village eventually spread onto land now included within the district. Cabin "A" is probably the old George Belden Photographic Studio which dates from this time. The store from the old village was later moved onto the Lodge grounds and remodeled for use as the registration office, a function it still fulfills. Cabin "B" is also thought to date from this pre-1920 period and may have been Chester Wright's summer residence. During the period when the commercial village was developing, tent frame accommodations were being built on most of the historic district zone.

Ten double-unit, redwood shake guest cottages were built to replace some of the tents in 1921. Nine of these are still in use as guest cabins: 9-10, 12, 15, 16-17, 20, 21, 22, 24, and 26. Bathrooms were added in 1927. Further enlargement of these units took place in 1930. Several cabins in this series have had interior partitions removed and exterior doors altered or removed. Although the additions vary somewhat, these cabins now average 20 by 24 feet in size. The rustic appearance of the shake exterior is augmented by heavy wooden doors with handmade hardware, and extended barge boards. Despite additions to the uphill (rear) sides of these cottages, their general appearance remains authentic to the original design.

Cabin "C" is the tenth of the double-unit shake cabins built in 1921. It was earlier converted into a manager's residence and has remained in that use through the years. More than the other cabins of the 1921 series, it has been subject to remodeling and enlarging. By 1940, the original two-room cottage had been rebuilt into a 40 by 34

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1 of 2

feet structure with an "H" floor plan. An additional wing was constructed about 1970. The original facade remains essentially unaltered. Most of the numerous alterations have been sensitive to original design details.

Cabin 14 is similar to the 1921 shake cabins except that it was built in 1927.

Cabin 25 was built in 1921 and is superficially similar to the other 1921 shake cabins. The 20 by 24 feet structure was erected, however, in the Hazelwood area, about 100 yards south of the Lodge. Originally built as a housekeeping warehouse for the old Glenridge Housekeeping Tent Camp, the structure was long used as the corral foreman's house. It was moved to its present site in the early 1950's and remodeled into a two-bedroom guest cottage.

Cabin "H" was built in 1921 as a lounge or "Writing Room." The 18 by 29 feet shake covered structure was remodeled about 1970 and converted into a guest cabin. A large stone fireplace and chimney (part of the original design) are built into the west end of the structure. Structural and decorative detail are similar to the other 1921 shake buildings.

Guest cabin "B", an 8 by 22 feet shake cabin with pole rafters, is believed to be the old Chester Wright residence built in 1918. It is not clear whether the cabin was erected on its present site or moved. By 1921 the cabin stood on its present site and was in use as a registration office. It was apparently used in that capacity until about 1926 when it was converted to a guest unit. A small addition containing bath facilities was added later.

Cabin "A" is a 16 by 20 feet, exposed frame, sequoia-bark-paneled structure apparently built about 1915 as the George Belden photographic studio. From 1926 until 1929, the gable-roofed structure served as the Lodge registration office. Since that time, it has been variously used as the general manager's office, residence, and in recent years as a guest cabin. A bathroom was added to the rear of the structure at an undetermined date.

The general office building is an exposed frame, bark paneled structure which currently measures about 78 by 37 feet. This structure began as a one-room building in the 1920's. Major additions were made in 1926, 1940, and again about 1970. These additions, with the exception of the last, were stylistically sympathetic to the original design. The northwestern part of the building is two stories tall.

The exposed frame, bark-paneled registration office started out as the Chester Wright general store, built in 1918 on a location about 50 yards south of the building's present site. In 1928, it was moved and remodeled for use as a registration office

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2 of 2

and curio shop. This remodeling moved the main entrance to the side and added a large porch. Extensive alteration in 1936 resulted in additional lounge and curio space, several store rooms, and two restrooms. The porch was also enlarged and rustic, hand-split redwood rails added. The exterior of the building has not been significantly altered since that time.

The amphitheater or campfire circle probably took its present form after 1940 although the site was used for such programs prior to 1930. Today the main structure is a combination stage, shed, and movie screen. The screen structure is framed with upright, bark-covered cedar logs. Simple wooden benches seat over 300 persons.

Buildings 1-2-3-4 and 5-6-7-8 are rustic sided, wood frame guest cottages built in 1932. Although constructed to slightly different floor plans, the two buildings are very similar. Both are split level buildings with gable roofs and large porches. The v-rustic shiplap siding is arranged in contrasting horizontal and vertical patterns. The buildings are approximately 40 by 40 feet in size.

Buildings 18-19, 27-28, 29-30, 31-32, and 33-34 are 16 by 40 feet double-unit bath cabins. Their exterior detailing is identical with the two four-unit cabins described above. These units were constructed in 1934.

The appearance of the Lodge has been greatly modified over the years by the planting and subsequent growth of native trees and shrubs. Although the site was naturally wooded, the early development resulted in a dust bowl. A program initiated in the 1930's, which included tree planting, the construction of asphalt foot paths, and the erection of rustic wood barriers, largely controlled human erosion and resulted in the pleasant scene which greets today's visitors.

The physical condition of the buildings included within the district varies from fair to poor. Most of these frame buildings are fifty or more years old, and the vigorous climate has taken its toll over the years in the form of wear and tear. Many of the buildings have decay problems in their foundations or lower walls resulting from buildup of forest debris. Broken shingles along eave lines and decayed rafter ends are also common. The bark covered buildings are in poor repair because sequoia bark is no longer commercially available. Most of the cabins have been repainted in recent years.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" 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/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Recreation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1900, 1921

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Giant Forest Lodge Historic District contains buildings and landscapes of regional significance in the field of recreation and of local significance in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, and conservation. These significances result from the lodge's historic role as a major California resort for over fifty years, from its unique forms of rustic architecture, from its distinctive and highly successful landscape plan, and from its role as a catalyst in the formation of modern national park planning concepts.

The development of what is now the Giant Forest Lodge began during the summer of 1900, when John Broder and Ralph Hopping, two local ranchers, opened a primitive tent camp among the giant sequoias which surround Round Meadow. The following summers witnessed little change in the camp; only tents were used. The partnership dissolved in 1909 after Broder's death, and their tent camp, "Camp Sierra," passed through several changes of ownership before Walter Kenney took control in 1913. The following summer Kenney erected the "Giant Forest Hotel," the first permanent building on the present lodge grounds. The "hotel" was actually a simple hall designed for cooking and dining.

By 1920, the obvious need for modern accommodations caused Stephen Mather, the Director of the recently established National Park Service, to intervene. As a result, Camp Sierra was purchased by the Yosemite National Park Company. The new owners took an immediate interest in improving the property. The camp was renamed the "Giant Forest Lodge," and during the summer of 1921 ten two-room shake cabins, a "Writing Room," a linen room, a comfort station, and several new tent frames were erected. Further construction took place in 1922, but when the company was unable to raise additional investment funds in 1922 and 1923, it asked to be let out of its Sequoia concession. Director Mather responded by locating another investor eager to operate hotels in Sequoia Park, Howard Hays.

Howard Hays purchased the Sequoia holdings of the Yosemite National Park Company in 1926 after operating the properties during 1925 as a lessee. Almost immediately the new Hays company, the Sequoia and General Grant National Parks Company, initiated a building program at the Lodge. During the several following years, the Hays company reconstructed most of the Lodge's existing buildings, moved additional structures to the site, and constructed new tents and small rustic cabins.

Because the Lodge was on government land, the National Park Service had considerable control over the emerging development. Hays had to seek NPS authorization before each new project was undertaken. In May, 1927, Hays met with Daniel Hull, Chief Landscape Architect of the National Park Service and John R. White, Superintendent of Sequoia

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Historic Resource File, "Giant Forest Lodge," in files of Division of Cultural Resource Management, Western Regional Office, NPS, San Francisco, California.
2. Tweed, William, "Sequoia National Park Concessions," Pacific Historian, Spring 1972.
3. Sequoia National Park, correspondence file 900-05.1.11.1, Federal Records Center, San Bruno, California.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4.5 (approx.)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 1	3 4, 1 9, 1, 0	4, 0 4, 7 9, 4, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at point 3+60 on the Sequoia and General Grant National Parks Company lease boundary as surveyed in 1928, proceed S82°29'E 269 feet; thence N6°45'E 94 feet; thence N49°12" 100 feet; thence N35°W 120 feet; thence W20°S 200 feet; thence south 484 feet; thence S28°K57'E 37.5 feet to point of beginning.

USE MAP FOR BOUNDARY

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

William C. Tweed, Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, Western Regional Office

DATE

August 8, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue

TELEPHONE

(415) 556-3394

CITY OR TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California 94102

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

James Rhodes
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE
JUN 23 1977

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

[Signature]

TITLE

Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE AUG 19 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]

DATE

5/5/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Catherine Cole

DATE

4.25.78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1 of 3

of Sequoia National Park. Together they all agreed that despite the fact that the Lodge stood in the midst of a dense stand of giant sequoia (some of them up to 28 feet in diameter) the site was suitable for development for up to 600 overnight guests.

The unsettled economic conditions of the late 1920's caused the concessioner to postpone this development several years. Finally, in 1931, he requested permission to construct a new hotel, a dining room/lounge, and numerous new bath cabins. Superintendent White, a man whose sensitivity to the beauties of Giant Forest had grown steadily since his assignment to the park in 1920, now found himself questioning the agreement of 1927. The meadow-side lodge site, with its numerous giant sequoias, no longer seemed to White to be an appropriate site. After considerable thought, the Superintendent withdrew his support of the 1927 agreement and openly opposed Hays' construction proposals. Hays, feeling that he had been misled in 1927, appealed White's decision to Washington. Ultimately NPS Director Horace Albright sided with Hays in his argument that visitors to Sequoia Park deserved the right to spend the night beneath the giant trees they had come to see. The Lodge was allowed to remain at Round Meadow, but only after White succeeded in reducing the ultimate accommodations limit of the facility to 200 persons.

The 1931 firm limit on the ultimate size of the Giant Forest Lodge soon led to limits on the size of the other lodging areas in Sequoia National Park. White felt later that these limits were of considerable historic significance in the development of national park planning policies, as they represented one of the first attempts to limit and/or disperse construction and development in primary scenic areas. Although this concept was only partially accepted in 1931, it has since become a major belief of national park planners and conservationists. The Giant Forest Lodge thus served as a significant catalyst in the development of a portion of the contemporary conservation philosophy with regard to park planning.

A more immediate result of the 1931 compromise was that Hays commissioned Daniel Hull, who had resigned from government service shortly after the 1927 meeting, to prepare a master plan for the Lodge. An aspect of the 1931 agreement was that future development on the Lodge site would proceed with a high level of sensitivity toward the natural environment. Henceforth, both the site plan and the individual buildings would be prepared in a manner that would minimize competition between the natural setting and man's necessary intrusions.

Hull's master plan attempted to implement these concepts. Automobiles were banished to the perimeter of the camp; cabin access was provided on gracefully curved foot paths. Proposed building sites were located in response to trees and topographic features. The eight new guest units (2 buildings) constructed during the fall of 1932 were intended to set a pattern for future architecture on the site. Conforming to the contemporary policies of the NPS landscape division, the buildings incorporated rustic textures and patterns in an effort to harmonize with the natural surroundings.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2 of 3

Split level construction resulted in a low profile, while several small architectural details were transferred from the earlier structures to preserve a feeling of unity. Native trees and shrubs were called for to screen and separate the intrusions of man. The result was a village of rustic cabins and support structures possessing a high degree of harmony with the natural environment.

The Hull plan was never fully implemented. Lack of funds prevented most of the called-for construction in the northern half of the lodge area, which long remained an area of tent frames and employee housing. Beginning in the late 1950's, the old tent area was finally redeveloped, but on later plans. Thus the northern half of the Lodge complex is not considered eligible for the National Register. Within the "Hull zone" (southern half) of the Lodge, only one major change has taken place since the 1930's. In 1966, Walter Kenney's oft-remodeled 1914 hotel/dining room was replaced. This new structure is also excluded from the historic district.

The regional recreational significance of the Giant Forest Lodge is a result of the more than half-century of service this complex has rendered the people of California. For most of the twentieth century the Lodge has been the primary "first class" accommodations complex in Sequoia National Park. Traditionally the majority of the Lodge's guests have come from the two California metropolitan areas and from the San Joaquin Valley. Since the 1930's, the San Joaquin Valley contingent has slowly decreased while the Southern Californians, in particular, have increased. Only a small percentage of the Lodge's guests have traditionally come from out of state. The Lodge is a California tradition. Even today, it welcomes back guests who have summered on the site for decades. It is probably the best-known and best-loved summer resort in the southern Sierra Nevada.

The landscape architecture significance of the Lodge results from the highly successful attempts of Hull and other, later, NPS landscape architects to subordinate the lodge structures to their grand natural setting. Although planned and built in an erratic and piecemeal manner, the southern half of the Lodge is a monument to the landscape architect's profession. A modern visitor, sitting on the porch of his rustic cabin, feels himself surrounded not by buildings, but by a natural, almost virgin forest of gargantuan proportions. Thickets of seedling trees planted during the 1930's separate the cabins, providing both privacy and intimate views of birds and other wildlife. If the ultimate goal of the landscape architect is to build in harmony with nature, here he has succeeded.

The architectural significance of the Giant Forest Lodge also is a result of the effort to subordinate the complex to the environment. Three distinct styles of rustic architecture are preserved within the portion of the Lodge designated as a historic district.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3 of 3

Truely unique are those buildings incorporating exterior sequoia bark paneling and exposed frame timbering. These structures have a one or two inch thick layer of fibrous sequoia bark nailed between the exposed studs. Matching perfectly the natural textures and colors of the surrounding forest, the bark is an excellent paneling material for the setting. It is also a good insulating material. The registration office, the general office, and cabin "A" are of this style. This type of construction has always been localized in the southern Sierra, and these are the only relatively unaltered examples known to remain.

The second type of rustic architecture preserved within the lodge area is composed mainly of cabins built in the early 1920's during the Yosemite National Park Company period. These are rustic, redwood shake structures. The well-proportioned cabins have heavy plank doors with special hardware, and heavy extended bargeboards with styled ends. Large, unroofed porches are generally included. The rustic appearance results from the use of wood textures in the shaked and shingle exteriors. These cabins are not unique, but they do represent well preserved remnants of another age's concepts of appropriate rustic architecture. Buildings 9-10, 12, 14, 15, 16-17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, B, H, and the manager's residence are in this category.

The third style of rustic architecture found within the historic district is composed of the cabins built in 1932-1936 under the Hull plan. These two and four unit bath-cabin buildings have v-rustic shiplap siding, contrasting vertical and horizontal siding patterns, stylized brackets, and shingle roofs. While their structural design is common enough, their specific detail design is unique to Sequoia Park.

All three styles are appropriate to their intended purpose, to provide comfortable accommodations while at the same time harmonizing with the natural environment. Under the Hays management this last point was carried to the point of staining exposed wood surfaces to match sequoia bark, painting all shingle roof surfaces a dark green to conform to local foliage colors, and painting all window trims a light green to match the locally heavy growth of staghorn lichen. This color scheme is still in use, and should be continued.

As is implied in the designation of this area as a historic district, the sum significance of these buildings is considerably greater than the total of their individual significances. When considered jointly, the buildings constitute a significant architectural unit.

Values requiring management protection relate primarily to the exterior visual appearance of the structures and to the visual appearance of the landscape adjacent to and between the structures. The historic appearance of the individual guest cabins and the registration office should not be altered. Minor alterations can be allowed to the business office and manager's house assuming that authentic textures are used and existing themes carried out. Authentic historic materials should be used in all maintenance work. The landscape setting should also be preserved without significant alteration, excepting the removal of hazard trees necessary for protecting persons or historic structures.