

PH 0507466

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
NOV 18 1977
RECEIVED
MAR 30 1978
DATE ENTERED
RECEIVED

AUG 15 1977

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

NAME

HISTORIC

Yosemite Village Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Yosemite Village

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Not applicable (Yosemite National Park)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Not applicable (Yosemite NP) VICINITY OF El Portal, Calif. Fifteenth

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

California

06

Mariposa

043

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service - Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 577

CITY, TOWN

Yosemite National Park

STATE

California

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Yosemite Valley - Evaluation of Historic Resources, by Erwin Thompson

DATE

1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

National Park Service - Denver Service Center

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Yosemite Village Historic District comprises a mixture of sites and structures; there are some once-developed areas which have returned to a state of nature, and there are developed areas still in use. There is a cemetery containing the graves of some of Yosemite's earliest pioneers, there are buildings of historical significance, buildings of architectural significance, buildings which embody both historical and architectural qualities of significance, and some buildings which do not contribute to the significance and are considered intrusive.

The northwest portion of the district was the site of a "winter cabin" built by J. M. Hutchings for his family in 1865, an apple orchard planted by Hutchings, a sawmill powered by water which was operated for Hutchings by John Muir, and a small cabin which Muir built for his own use. Of the cabins and sawmill, there is today no trace, save perhaps subsurface historical archeological remnants. The apple trees still exist, although no longer tended and maintained as an orchard. A depression in the ground in the northwest corner of the district may be the remnants of the flume ditch which carried water to power the sawmill.

To the east or southeast of the Hutchings/Muir sites lies a National Park Service residential area consisting of 68 buildings erected between 1918 and 1951 and including four buildings moved into the area about 1929 which date from 1911, 1912 and 1914. Of the 68 buildings, 33 are 50 years old or older, another 19 are 40 years old or older, and of the remainder, nine are less than 40 years old while seven do not contribute to the significance of the district although within its boundaries.

With few exceptions, the residential buildings included in this district fit comfortably within what is termed a "rustic" style of architecture. The exceptions are the oldest buildings in the district: Residences Nos. 2 and 4, built in 1911, No. 5, built in 1912, and No. 13, built in 1914. Nos. 2, 4 and 5 are wood frame two story houses with wood shingled gable roofs and exterior brown-stained horizontal siding with coursed wood shakes in some areas such as the gable ends. The interiors have a finish of painted wood wainscot and above it an unusual board and batten wall and ceiling finish in living and dining room areas. Buildings 4 and 5 are essentially identical in design and finish, while Building 2, although similar in some respects, differs in plan and architectural detail. Residence No. 13 was erected in 1914. It has a shake-finished exterior, shingle finished gable roof, and interior surfaces of painted wood vertical paneling of railroad car siding. Some partitions are a single board thick with exposed framing on one side. None of these older buildings are of rustic design, but their color and exterior materials enable them to blend comparatively well with the truly rustic structures around them. None of these older buildings has integrity of site: No. 2 was moved to its present location from a site just north of No. 1; Nos. 4 and 5 were moved from sites south of No. 34; and No. 13 was moved from a site somewhere south of No. 6. With the exception of essentially minor interior and exterior alterations, these four buildings preserve their original design; the sole surviving representatives of Army architecture on the Valley floor.

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The remainder of the buildings represent the new residential area developed by the National Park Service beginning in 1918 as part of a long range plan to remove the intrusive old Yosemite Village in the middle of the valley which constituted something of an eyesore in the middle of the best view of Yosemite Falls and other scenic vistas. Placement of the new Yosemite Village, including this National Park Service residential area, was intended to remove development to a less intrusive site backed up against the cliffs which form the north wall of the valley, as well as for other reasons.

The first and oldest group of houses are wood frame with natural shingled gable roofs. Exterior walls are brown stained horizontal siding and/or coursed wood shakes. Some have stone fireplaces.

Residences Nos. 19 and 20 were built in 1918. They are single story frame houses with brown-stained exteriors. One has a vertical wood wainscoting of car-siding in the living room and vertical paneling of narrow car-siding in all other rooms; the other has a plastered interior.

Residences Nos. 16, 18 and 21 were built in 1919. All three are single story with No. 16 being the smallest house in the district. Both 18 and 21 have gable roofs and decorative dormers, all with a shingle finish. No. 18 retains its original interior finish of car-siding wainscoting and narrow-car-siding paneling on walls and ceilings.

This house has wood wainscoting in the living room with board and batten above, similar to earlier residences Nos. 4 and 5. The ceilings and other walls have narrow painted paneling of railroad car-siding.

In 1922 residences No. 9, 10, 11 and 12 were built in a row with broad lawns and large trees between them, in line with Nos. 13 and 14 already discussed. These six residences form a particularly charming residential enclave within the district. Interiors have vertical wood wainscoting of railroad car-siding and, in some, the same material on ceilings and walls.

Residences Nos. 54, 55 and 57 were built in 1923. Nos. 54 and 55 each originally had two apartments with separate entrances. Interiors of the main rooms have wainscoting of car-siding and wood paneling of walls and ceilings in other rooms. Residence No. 57, now a girls' club is similar; it has a wainscot and beaver-board paneled walls and ceilings and a massive granite fireplace, using a single stone lintel which is at least 8 feet long over the fire box.

Residence No. 17 was built in 1926. Local residents call this small building "the airplane" house because of its symmetrical airplane-like plan. All interior walls and ceilings are of full height wood paneling of railroad car-siding.

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The second group of houses is like the first in style, yet more generous in size, with somewhat larger rooms and less interior wood paneling. There is more use of native granite stonework for the foundations, on porches, steps, terraces and fireplaces. The exteriors continue the stained horizontal siding, use of coursed wood shakes, and use of natural shingles on gable roofs.

In 1930 and 1931, three very substantial houses were built. The earliest was No. 34, now used by the Yosemite Institute, which has ten rooms on two floors. On the south side near the rear an intrusive aluminum sash has been installed which detracts from its integrity. Residences Nos. 47 and 48 of similar design were built in 1931.

The district includes two small apartment buildings, both of which are two stories. No. 46, built in 1930, has four apartments, as does No. 60 built in 1934. Each has an open gallery-type porch at two levels in the front.

Residences Nos. 58 and 59 were built in 1932, and are more dormitory than house. Each has a single large kitchen, two bedrooms and one bath, but no living and dining spaces. Each has an open porch in the front.

In 1934, residences Nos. 61, 62 and 63 were built, duplicating Nos. 47 and 48 built in 1931 and using similar materials and plans.

The final group is more heterogenous than the others but have similar construction and finishes, employing natural woods, frame design, shingled gable roofs, and random coursed granite stonework.

Residences Nos. 39, 40 and 41 were built in 1927. Nos. 39 and 40 have fireplaces, wainscoting of car-siding, walls and ceilings of beaver-board type panels finished with wood battens as well as wood paneling of car-siding in halls and bedrooms. Residence No. 41 is smaller and plainer.

The county school district maintains two residences that are owned by the NPS within the district. Building No. 636, built in 1928, has a low wood wainscot in the living room. No. 637, somewhat smaller, was built in 1937. Each is near the school.

Residences Nos. 42 and 43 were built in 1928. Both have wood wainscoting of railroad car-siding in the living room/dining room, and both have stone fireplaces.

In 1929, residences No. 44 and 45 were built. The next four houses, all using the same plan, were built in succeeding years beginning in 1936 with Residence No. 36. Its porch and entry steps were built beside a very large boulder with several Indian bedrock mortars in its flat top surface, which becomes an extension of the porch.

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That was followed by No. 3 in 1937, No. 35 in 1938 and No. 37 in 1939. Residences Nos. 66 and 67 were built in 1940, the last to be constructed in this district before American entry into the Second World War brought to a close construction in the National Parks.

In 1951, the NPS built one more rustic residence in the district, No. 70, but it was built to the rustic standards of the 1930s and represents a post-war resumption of rustic construction which was a concluding chapter in the history of this style in the National Parks, for few of the classic rustic residences were built after World War II.

This portion of the district also includes ancillary structures. Among them are three woodsheds. Nos. 306 and 307 were built in 1919, and No. 312 in 1920. Each is a simple wood frame rectangle with coursed wood shake walls and shingled gable roofs. Each has an open covered porch along one or both sides for additional wood storage.

Most of the 11 garages are similar in appearance to the woodsheds--rectangular wood frame buildings with gable roofs and coursed wood shake walls. The first garage to be built was No. 305, a 3-stall design erected in 1919, the only garage which has a shed roof. In 1922 garage No. 310 and in 1924 garage No. 309 were built, each with 2 stalls. A one stall garage, No. 313, was built in 1924. Most of the larger garages were built later: Nos. 304 and 311 in 1927, with 5 stalls and 4 stalls respectively. The largest, No. 303, was built in 1929, a 7-stall design. In 1933 two 5-stall garages were built, Nos. 302 and 308. In 1937, garage No. 638 with three stalls was built for the school district. The last to be built, 5-stall garage No. 301 was put up in 1938.

There are seven structures within this part of the historic district which are not considered significant and which are architecturally intrusive. These are Residences Nos. 68 and 69, built in 1950, Residences Nos. 71, 72, 73 and 74, built in 1956, and Building No. 642, a modern school built in 1955.

Southeast of the grouping of rustic residences is the Pioneer Cemetery. It consists of a modified rectangle measuring 339 by 164 feet on its longest sides, bounded by a low stone wall on the north and east perimeter and a row of conifers on the south and west sides. Among the 44 plots are the graves of many individuals notable in Yosemite history.

Southwest of the rustic residential district, standing alone amid a stand of conifers near Yosemite Creek, is building No. 1, which is the Park Superintendent's residence, and its garage, Building No. 300. Erected by the Army administration in 1912, this building stands on its original site. Its original design was a duplicate of Building No. 2, in the residential district, already discussed, but it was thoroughly remodeled and rebuilt in 1929 so that its present appearance and form is that of a 1929 National Park Service

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rustic residence, and a fine example of the style. It is a two story wood frame structure with 13 rooms, finished on the exterior with horizontal redwood siding, with a gable roof finished with wood shingles.

Southeast of the Pioneer Cemetery is the administrative/business/service portion of Yosemite Village, only a portion of which is included within the historic district boundaries. (The concessioner buildings farthest to the east towards the Ahwahnee, and the NPS and concessioner service buildings and residences to the north, are so modern or so altered and modernized that they lack sufficient integrity for inclusion in this district).

The Rangers' Club, an employee residence, is a two story, wood frame, U-shaped structure with a steeply pitched gable roof. The building is sheathed with wood shingles and rough sawn board and batten in the gables at the second floor, all stained a dark brown. The end of the gable boards are cut in a decorative "Swiss chalet" pattern that matches the pattern cut into boards on small balconies. A combination 4-stall garage and wood shed was built beside the Rangers' Club, of the same style and materials, and a transformer house nearby was similarly encased.

Three National Park Service buildings stand in the headquarters area. These are the Administration Building, built in 1924, the Museum Building (now called the Valley District Building), completed in 1926, and the Post Office, finished in 1925. All are similar in design; each is two stories, rectangular with shingled gable roofs. Ground floors are finished with fine river-washed random stonework; second floors extend beyond the first supported on projecting log beams. The second stories of the Administration Building and Valley District Building have an elaborate coursed shingle finish; the second story of the Post Office was originally the same, but has been refinished in recent years with cement-asbestos shingles in place of wood.

The Administration building differs slightly in that it has a large entry porch on one side, with its own gable roof, carried on stone piers and pilasters supporting the open log roof structure.

The Museum (Valley District) Building differs from the others in that where the others have frame floors to the second stories (and ceilings to the first), the ground floor of the Museum (Valley District) Building is completely fireproof, separated from the frame second story by a thick concrete ceiling, a design factor resulting from its intended museum use with the purpose of preserving artifacts, specimens, and exhibits. The Museum Building has undergone several alterations, one of which, perhaps in 1967, resulted in closing the original entrance near the west end of the front and opening a window near the east end of the front as a doorway. A further alteration, the east end of the building has been connected to a non-historic comfort station, Building 445, built

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in 1957, which is considered intrusive and does not contribute to the significance of this district.

The Pohono Indian Studio, Building No. 1005 built c. 1925, is a small souvenir gift shop built of peeled log frame with wood shingle infill panels stained brown. The building is L-shaped with a covered porch on the south facade, and has a gabled roof supported on log rafters. The building is nearly unchanged from its original appearance.

The Ansel Adams Gallery is actually a complex of five buildings erected in 1925. The principal building is No. 900, the gift shop or "gallery", originally known as Best's Studio. This is a small wood-shingled structure which has been greatly altered. It was originally a gable-roofed structure (with a rear portion which had and still has a hipped roof) of rustic design with massive stone chimney and stone pillars supporting a generous gable-roofed front porch, with stonework in the front wall below the windows. Its exterior has been greatly altered by a large wooden porch of modernistic design and comparatively recent construction, supported on greenpole logs, located on the front facade. Building 901 was a small gable-roofed three-room darkroom with shed-roofed bathroom addition, the exterior finished in shakes. Building No. 902 was a small gable-roofed shake-finished eight room residence. Building No. 903 was a two stall gable-roofed shake-finished garage, to which an additional shed-roofed stall has been added. Building 904 is a shake-finished duplex residence. Aside from the gallery, Building 904 is a shake-finished duplex residence. Aside from the gallery, Buildings Nos. 901, 902 and 903 have all been altered by the addition of shed-roofed rooms, enclosure of porches, etc.

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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Yosemite Village Historic District, through both sites and structures, represents almost the entire range of Yosemite history since 1855, including early homesteading, John Muir's early residence in the park, development of the National Park, the army's role in park administration, and the evolution of early National Park Service administration and interpretation of the resources of Yosemite. The district is of Regional Significance in architecture and the history of conservation in America, and possesses at varying levels a complex mixture of other qualities of significance attached to particular sites and structures as indicated below.

Although Yosemite had been seen or visited by one or two early explorers and by the citizen soldiers who comprised the Mariposa Battalion during the Indian "war" of 1851, the history of Yosemite as a park--and in part the whole national park idea in America --originated with the first tourist visit to the Yosemite Valley in June 1855, led by magazine publisher J. M. Hutchings, whose first article on the subject appeared in a Mariposa newspaper on July 12 that year. In 1859 another individual became the first homesteader in the valley (at a location outside this district but subject of a separate National Register nomination). Hutchings himself publicized the Valley and its beauty in his California Magazine, and became a permanent resident of the Valley in 1864. That year, in large part due to Hutchings' efforts, Congress and President Lincoln ceded the Valley to the State of California for use as a public park.

In 1865 Hutchings erected a cabin whose site is within this historic district and planted an apple orchard nearby. In 1863 Hutchings purchased one of several primitive hotels in the valley (a site outside this historic district) and, in 1869, desiring to build additional cottages and make other improvements, hired two visitors to the Valley to build and operate a sawmill to produce lumber from a stand of trees felled a year or two earlier by a windstorm. One of the two men was John Muir.

Although boarding, at least at first, with the Hutchings, Muir erected a one room log cabin on the Valley floor near Yosemite Falls, the precise site of which is uncertain but believed to be within this historic district. Muir dug a ditch and diverted a small stream of water from the east branch of Yosemite Creek to run through the cabin to provide "running water" in the structure. By March 20 that year he had completed a water-powered sawmill with which to mill the fallen trees. For two years Muir explored Yosemite from this spot, began to evolve his philosophy of conservation and develop his idea for a system of great natural parks, and entertained notable visitors such as the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The sites of the Hutchings and Muir cabins and their immediate surroundings may possess local significance in historical archeology, and possess local significance in exploration/settlement.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Building Files, Maintenance Division, Yosemite National Park

Building Files, Yosemite National Park, in Division of Cultural Resources Management, Western Regional Office, National Park Service, San Francisco. (These are essentially duplicates of the park files, but there is some data in these files not duplicated in the park files).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 46

UTM REFERENCES

D	X	1	1	2	7	1	6	2	0	4	1	8	1	2	1	0	A	X	1	1	2	7	2	2	9	0	4	1	8	1	2	1	0
		ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING						ZONE		EASTING				NORTHING													
B	X	1	1	2	7	2	2	9	0	4	1	8	0	5	5	0	C	X	1	1	2	7	1	6	2	0	4	1	8	0	5	5	0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundary begins at the northwest corner of the historic district where a north-south horse trail joins an east-west foot trail at the base of the north wall of Yosemite Valley, and runs eastward along the southern edge of the Mirror Lake trail at the base of the north wall of the valley to the horse corral fence, then southerly along the west side of the road that separates the residential area from the NPS utility area to a road

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

Gordon Chappell, Regional Historian; Bob Cox, Historical Architect

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, Western Regional Office

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063

TELEPHONE

(415) 556-4165

CITY OR TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California (94102)

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

SEP 22 1977

W. M. ...
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

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 *D. ...*

Deputy Assistant Secretary

NOV 1 1977

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. ...

DATE

3 30 78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

W. ...

DATE

3-26-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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In ensuing years, while the sawmill and Muir cabin vanished, a Yosemite Village evolved on the valley floor around the Sentinel Hotel buildings; it was a conglomeration of intrusive and inharmonious structures. A Yosemite National Park, strongly supported by Muir, was created in 1890, but did not include the Valley floor which remained a state park. As the Department of the Interior had no capability of managing national parks, it called on the War Department to manage such parks. Consequently, each spring beginning in 1891 a troop of U. S. Cavalry was dispatched from the Presidio of San Francisco to manage, patrol and police Yosemite National Park excluding the Valley floor, with the troop commander acting as park superintendent. The army established a military camp or garrison at Wawona. In 1906, after several years' effort, Muir, the Sierra Club and others who were disenchanted with state management of the Valley succeeded in having it receded to and accepted by the Federal government. During that summer the flimsy military buildings at Wawona were dismantled and moved to the present site of Yosemite Lodge on the Valley floor, southwest of this historic district.

The first army commandant to manage the Valley as well as the rest of the park, Major H. C. Benson of the 14th Cavalry, recommended in 1906 construction of a permanent military post to replace the insubstantial shacks moved down from Wawona. The following year he made a pioneering recommendation which, although not stated in quite those words, called for the use of harmonious "rustic" architecture and the use of landscape architects ("landscape gardeners" he called them) in planning and laying out future developments in the park. It was a far-seeing and innovative recommendation for what eventually would become a National Park Service policy.

Unfortunately, when during Fiscal Year 1912 the Army commenced "permanent" construction in Yosemite National Park, it did not follow Major Benson's recommendation.

Management of Yosemite was transferred back to the Department of the Interior in 1914 and efforts were already being made to establish a bureau in the Department to manage the system of National Parks which had grown beyond the army's limited capability to provide staffing for a non-military function. The result was creation in 1916 of the National Park Service. American entry into the First World War during the following year delayed NPS development of the parks, but when the war ended in 1918 the National Park Service commenced building the staff residences and other permanent facilities needed at Yosemite.

Prior to any new construction in the park, NPS Director Stephen T. Mather had decided to eliminate the old Yosemite Village, which had occupied a central point in the floor of the valley and intruded upon the scenery in all directions in a most objectionable manner. The old village included a conglomeration of buildings, some of which would have been quite attractive in a suitable location but which were objectionable in their

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Yosemite setting, others which would have been considered unattractive anywhere. Mather decided to create a new Yosemite Village which, among other advantages, would be less intrusive; by applying all the talent that the National Park Service could apply in architecture and landscape architecture, the NPS would establish a village whose siting and design were as harmonious as possible with the environment and as unobtrusive as possible with respect to the scenery. The area selected for this new village was in the trees and brush close against the cliffs which formed the north wall of the valley east of Yosemite Falls, in contrast to the old village which sat conspicuously amid open meadows in the middle of the valley floor.

Beginning with its construction program of 1918, the NPS landscape architects laid out an irregular pattern of streets, mostly curved, and designed and sited residences (and other buildings) which drew on precedents elsewhere to achieve a "rustic" or environmentally harmonious style of architecture which would enable buildings to blend to some degree with their environment. Landscape Architect Charles Punchard was responsible for much of this early work. "Rustic" architecture has many origins and many variations, but as developed by National Park Service landscape architects, employed native building materials, in the case of the new Yosemite Village, granite and timber. The use of rough granite boulders and river-run stones to build walls, foundations, chimneys, steps and porches, or to veneer such structures when structurally of concrete, harmonized with the towering granite cliffs surrounding the valley. The boulders or stones varied in size and were laid in a rubble bond with a raked mortar joint which emphasized the natural size and shape of individual stones in contrast to the artificial order of cut and regularly coursed stone construction. The use of timber in various forms--thick logs, rough-milled lumber, shingles and shakes, much of it stained or painted dark brown, harmonizes with the bark of the Ponderosa pine and other conifers of the Yosemite forests. From any distance, the effect is nearly one of camouflage, and while it does not eliminate the intrusion of buildings on the natural scene, it measurably reduces the intrusion, which was the intent. The District therefore possesses regional significance in architecture, and local significance in landscape architecture.

Four of the buildings in this historic district represent the period of military administration of the park. Sketchy documentary evidence regarding their history has been supplemented by interviews with retired NPS Landscape Architect John Wosky, who worked in Yosemite during the 1920s, and by Herb Ewing of the protection division in Yosemite, who was a young boy at the time they were moved into the historic district. Although not of rustic architectural style, they were comparatively new buildings and apparently it was believed that, stained a dark brown, they could be made to blend at least moderately well with a collection of explicitly rustic buildings.

It was during 1911 and 1912 that the Army constructed seven officers' quarters at Camp Yosemite and, some distance to the east, erected four residences for the permanent

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civilian employees of the army administration--one for the resident engineer, one for the civilian clerk, and one each for two electricians. The Army put out proposals for bids, but all bids were rejected as excessive and the army acting superintendent decided to build them using day labor under the supervision of the park resident engineer. Resident Engineer David A. Sherfey reported on October 1, 1912, that they were "practically completed." Sherfey described them as "well-constructed frame buildings upon concrete foundations, and provided with electric lights and plumbing fixtures."

In line with the plan to establish a new Yosemite Village, a decision was made during the late 1920s to move three of these structures into the new group of rustic residences, for their original location was an intrusion upon one of the most impressive views of Yosemite Falls. Consequently, three of the buildings were jacked up and placed on wooden-wheeled dollies and laboriously dragged to their new location, probably in 1929. (Building No. 2 was apparently moved twice, the second time to its present location.)

Building No. 1 remained on its original location, but was thoroughly remodeled in 1929, and became in essence an excellent example of National Park Service rustic architecture of 1929, highly stylized on the exterior featuring a beautiful porch with rustic stone railing. Its significance (encompassing also the attendant garage, Building No. 300), lies in exterior architecture and landscape architecture, and in the stone fireplace in the living room, and, in the category of conservation, in its long use as the park superintendent's residence.

Building No. 2, now located on the north side of a street in the rustic residential area, stood originally a short distance north of Building No. 1, and the two were of identical architectural detail. Prior to its two moves, Park Engineer O. G. Taylor lived in it, and it may be presumed to have been traditionally the residence of the civilian park engineer.

Buildings Nos. 4 and 5, now located in the residential area across the street and a little east from Building No. 2, originally stood south of Building 54; No. 4 was north of the road which passes the Rangers' Club, and was occupied by the assistant superintendent during the 1920s; No. 5 was south of No. 4 and south of the road past the Rangers' Club. It was occupied by Park Forester Al Solinsky during the 1920s.

Buildings 2, 4 and 5 retain on their "new" locations, now 48 years old, their original external design, with few minor exceptions such as screens on the front porch of one, small enclosed porches added to the rear, finishing of the attics into additional rooms not in the original design.

Building No. 13 was also moved at about this time, and its history is something of an enigma. It was built in 1914, but whether by the Army before administration of the

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park was transferred to the Department of the Interior in the person of Superintendent Mark Daniels on July 14 that year is not known, nor is its original use, although long-time Yosemite resident Herb Ewing thought it had been a residence originally. If not built by the army, the building is one of the few surviving representatives of that brief period when Yosemite was managed directly by the Interior Department before the National Park Service was created. It seems to have been located somewhere west of the present Ranger's Club, perhaps just east of Building No. 4, but evidence regarding its original location is thin. It is of historical significance as one of the early pre-NPS staff residences in the park, of which only five are extant. When it was moved is unknown, but thought to be about the same time as the others, i. e. 1928-1929, although John Wosky claimed that it was moved before his time in the park, which would mean before 1925.

From an architectural standpoint alone these three buildings are something of an intrusion in a group of buildings of rustic architecture, but their wood frame construction and their dark brown exterior color matches that of the buildings of explicitly rustic design, thereby minimizing the intrusive element. The relocation of these old structures (63 to 65 years of age) although occurring only 48 years ago, nevertheless was a part of their history of continuing use as staff residences, and of the development of this rustic residential section of the "new" Yosemite Village, and does not impair their historical significance.

Buildings 2, 4 and 5 are of about the same size, but Building 2 differs in original floor plan and exterior architectural detail from Buildings 4 and 5, the latter two being essentially the same. They are not of architectural significance, representing architecturally standard quarters of the type the army built on military posts for officers and some senior non-commissioned officers. These three are individually of local historical significance in the categories of conservation and military history, representing a little known aspect of both categories in terms of the role the U. S. Army placed in the development of America's National Park System. Building 13 is individually of local historical significance in the category of conservation; whether like the other three it possesses an element of military historical significance is not shown by available evidence. The integrity of their exterior design and the design of the living room/dining room interiors is an element of their significance which requires preservation.

The remainder of the residential buildings in the Yosemite Village Historic District all represent some variation of National Park Service "rustic" architectural style, and (including the four structures not of this style) total 66 residences, dormitories, garages, and woodsheds (Buildings Number 1-14, 16-21, 34-37, 39-48, 54-63, 66-67, 70, 300-313, 315, 509, 636-638). Evaluated separately, a number of these buildings would qualify individually as of local architectural significance; collectively, they all

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form an enclave of rustic architectural style which is of greater significance than any individual component of this portion of the district. One aspect of the district's significance is that it represents nearly the whole range of the NPS rustic style, from the comparatively simple residences erected during the earliest years of the National Park Service, to the more highly stylized buildings of the late 1920s and the early and mid-1930s, to the again comparatively simple lap-siding structures of the late 1930s, the early 1940s, and one rare post-World War II example built in 1951. While there are other complexes of National Park Service rustic buildings in the Western Region, and many individual structures of significance, there is no other complex which illustrates as does this one the range and variation of the style, coupled with some excellent examples of what preceded the style. Their historic use as staff residences, and ancillary structures, with one exception (The Yosemite Institute using Building 34), continues today.

Among these residential buildings the Yosemite Rangers' Club is clearly of regional architectural significance; while not the first National Park Service building of rustic design to be erected at Yosemite, it is the most important, because it was built not by the government but by the first director of the Service as a donation to the Service, and it was explicitly intended to set a precedent for the use of rustic architecture; in the words of Director Stephen T. Mather, "this building is of particular artistic design and will guide the construction of all the other buildings in the headquarters village." Mather had hired San Francisco Architect Charles Sumner to design the building, and the result was a wood-frame structure featuring Swiss-chalet style decoration and a steeply pitched gable roof. This particular variation of rustic style was not copied elsewhere in the park, but almost all of the buildings erected by the Service from this time until after World War II--nearly thirty years--were of some variation of "rustic" architecture. On the interior, the significance of this building extends to the living room and its original furnishings. The Rangers' Club is also of regional historical significance in conservation through its connection with the first director of the National Park Service as his personal gift to the Service and to its Yosemite personnel. It continues to serve as residence for unmarried ranger staff members. Garage No. 306 (1922) and Transformer House 509 (1920) share the Rangers' Club rustic style and possess local exterior architectural significance through that association.

Apart from the essentially residential buildings listed above, the Yosemite Village Historic District contains nine other structures of significance.

The two-story Park Administration Building, Building No. 575, was constructed in 1924 at a cost of \$41,000. It was designed by Architect Myron Hunt, who played an important role in planning the new village, and set the precedent for two other important buildings to follow--the Museum and the Post Office. Its stone first story and overhanging rustic frame second story reflect the granite canyon walls of the valley surmounted by the conifer forests above the rim. The building is of local architectural

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significance due to the quality of its design and its role in setting the pattern for two other nearby buildings. The exterior is essentially unaltered and its design is architecturally significant. The interior design is not considered significant, with the exception of the Lobby with its fireplace.

The Museum Building (No. 576), now known as the Valley (Ranger) District Building, finished in 1926 at a cost of \$54,000 donated partially by the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Foundation. It was designed by Architect Herbert Maier assisted by Ranger-Naturalist Ansel F. Hall, and its design influenced the design standards of future NPS museums and led to Maier's involvement in designing many of them. Unlike the Administration Building and Post Office of externally similar architecture, this building is not merely a frame second story over stone-veneered concrete walls; its lower story is a fire-proof entity with a thick concrete ceiling forming the second floor, so that if fire destroyed the upper portion, the fireproof lower portion would protect the museum exhibits and artifact and specimen collections. The building is of regional significance in architecture in its influence on museum design elsewhere in the Service, of regional significance in education, and of local significance in conservation. Aside from its primary function to educate the public through exhibits and related activities, and through the collection and preservation of cultural artifacts and natural specimens, the museum was the home of the first organized training program for the naturalists who would serve throughout the National Park System. This was the Yosemite Field School of Natural History, founded in 1925 by Dr. Harold C. Bryant and continuing a vital service to interpretation until its suspension in 1953. Another educational "first" associated with this building is the Yosemite Natural History Association. Formed originally as the Yosemite Museum Association in 1920 by Ranger Ansel F. Hall, this organization was among the pioneer developers of the concept of cooperating associations which led to congressional action recognizing such groups as necessary for the support of research and interpretive activities in the National Parks. The Museum has historically also been the focus of interpretation of Indian prehistory and history in the Yosemite region. During its three year trial period beginning in 1957, it temporarily housed the initial NPS Ranger Training Center, a program subsequently moved to Grand Canyon National Park. The museum function of this building was in part removed when the new Visitor Center just to the east opened in 1966, containing exhibit areas, although the stored collections and library remained in the Valley District Building, and in 1976 an Indian cultural center inside the building restored a portion of its exhibit function. During the last half century the building has experienced a number of modifications, the most serious of which was the closing of the historic entrance near the west end of the front, and the opening of a window into a new main entrance at the east end of the front, a change incompatible with the structure's architectural design which impairs to a degree its architectural integrity. Other changes in the form of additions and modifications to the rear, some quite recent, are less visible.

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The Post Office, designed also by Herbert Maier, is the third of the trio of buildings featuring a stone lower story and an overhanging frame second story. Like the others, it possesses a local architectural significance, its integrity somewhat impaired by the intrusive use of composition shingles on the exterior of the second story and the roof to replace the original wood shingle finish.

Two concessioner buildings stand within this part of the Yosemite Village Historic District between the new Yosemite Visitors' Center and the Post Office.

The Pohono Indian Studio is a rustic frame structure featuring a massive peeled-log frame with wood shingle infill panels, essentially unchanged on the exterior since its construction in 1925. This was built to serve as the new village studio of Photographer Julius Boysen, who originally set up shop in the old village in 1898. Boysen served as official photographer during the visit of President William Howard Taft to Yosemite, and recorded Yosemite's development and natural beauty for many years. Upon Boysen's death in 1939 interest passed to his widow, Mabel, and upon her death in 1943 to her daughter. The Yosemite Park and Curry Company took over operation of the studio as a souvenir and gift shop on August 26, 1943, and on December 31 that year acquired its own permit as concessioner, and has operated the studio ever since, except for a brief period of use as Ranger Training Center classrooms in 1957. The building is of local historical significance in the category of commerce and of local architectural significance in terms of its unchanged rustic exterior design. The significance is embodied in its exterior and not its interior.

The final structure in the Yosemite Village Historic District which must be addressed is the Ansel Adams Gallery, actually a complex of five buildings: No. 900, Best's Studio, consisting of a shop and living quarters, was erected about 1925; No. 901 was a darkroom; No. 902 consisted of a 8-room residence built about 1925; No. 903 was a three stall garage built about 1925 and No. 904 was a residence built about 1925. This complex was built by Harry Cassie Best, a musician by training but painter by choice, who had married in Yosemite in 1901 and returned the following year to open an art studio in the old village. The phasing out of the old village brought him to this "new" village in 1925, and it remained his painting studio until his death in 1936. At that time management of Best's Studio, as it was then known, passed to his daughter Virginia and her husband, Ansel Adams. Adams, who like Best had trained to be a musician, also like Best turned to art for a career, but in this instance photography rather than oil painting, and explicitly to nature photography. During his lifetime Ansel Adams has become a photographer of national if not international importance, perhaps the world's foremost scenic photographer. In 1972 the name of the studio was changed to Ansel Adams Gallery in recognition of Adams. Parts of the complex have been remodeled extensively over the years to meet the changing needs of the Best-Adams family, and its significance is historical (art) rather than architectural. Existing knowledge of the relationship of this complex to Ansel Adams' career is inadequate, and further research may in the future modify treatment of this complex in terms of significance or non-significance of specific elements and the level of significance.

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There are nine buildings in this historic district which do not contribute to its significance in any way. In the residential area, Building 642 is a modern school built in 1955. Buildings 68 and 69 are residences of non-rustic style built in 1950 and Buildings 71 through 74 are non-rustic residences built in 1956; they have been painted or stained a dark brown in an effort to harmonize with their rustic neighbors, but their crackerbox design renders this impossible. Despite the effort to diminish their intrusive character, they remain intrusive in design and are explicitly excluded from this nomination although within the boundaries of the historic district. Building 598 is a modern Visitors' Center erected in 1967, essentially a modern structure of non-rustic design. Building 445 is a 1957 comfort station east of the Museum (Valley District) Building, also an intrusive structure lacking significance.

Normally cemeteries are not considered for nomination under National Register criteria with certain exceptions, including the presence of graves of persons of "transcendent" importance. The Yosemite Pioneer Cemetery, located between the residential area and the Museum, is considered to meet this stringent criteria at the regional level of significance because it possesses graves of: (1) a number of the last Indian residents of Yosemite Valley, including the last survivors of the Ahwahneechee or Yosemite Tribe as well as some Piutes and Miwoks; (2) James Mason Hutchings, significant in Yosemite Valley history and publisher of regionally historically invaluable Hutchings California Magazine; (3) James Lamon, native of Virginia, the very first non-Indian permanent resident of the Yosemite Valley; (4) Galen Clark, pioneer settler of Wawona, pioneer guardian of the Yosemite State Park and the Mariposa Grove, which he discovered in 1857, author of an early book on Indians of the Yosemite published in 1904, who lived to the age of 96. James Lamon may have been the first person buried here; his marker can be documented as having been erected during the year of his death, 1895, whereas several others known to have died earlier were first buried elsewhere in the Valley and later reinterred here. But there are also some unknown graves of Indians and perhaps of white pioneers as well. Park Supervisor Gabriel Sovulewski and concessioner John Degan planted the rows of incense cedars on the south and west sides in 1906 or 1907--sources differ on the year--and in 1918 enclosed part of the area in a fence. The last burials were over 20 years ago--those of Gertrude Hutchings Mills and an Indian woman, Louisa Tom, in 1956--and the cemetery is closed to further entry, so that it is a historic cemetery in the truest sense of the word, a part of the past and not of the present. There are some graves known to exist outside its boundaries but nearby, including one Indian burial reportedly 20 feet from the Museum building across the street.

Thus the Yosemite Village Historic District is composed of a complex mixture of sites and structures which reflect the history of development of the Yosemite National Park from 1855 to the present, and the use of "rustic" architecture to harmonize necessary structures with their park environment from 1918 to 1951. It is of regional architectural

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significance with respect to "rustic" architecture, and of regional historical significance with respect to conservation, with qualities of either local or regional significance in the categories of exploration/settlement, education, commerce, art and science attached to particular elements of the district as indicated in detail above, and contributing to the whole.

Resource management

Maintenance of the structures which contribute to the significance of this district should include replacement of deteriorated fabric in kind or return to the original type--e.g., wooden window casings which have rotted or broken should be replaced in kind, and aluminum sash should not be used; shake or shingle roofs should be replaced with shakes or shingles as appropriate, not with other kinds of roofing, and the same applies to exterior walls of buildings. Aluminum siding should not be used on historic structures in the district. Any major rehabilitation of the Museum/Valley District building in the future should encompass restoring the original entrance and changing the 1967 (present) entrance back to a window. Any future maintenance work on the exterior of the Post Office should involve replacement of the composition shingles with wood shingles of the original type to restore the architectural integrity of the exterior.

The entire floor of the Yosemite Valley including all of this historic district is encompassed in the Yosemite Valley Archeological District which is in the process of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. A number of the specific sites, bedrock mortars, etc., which are discussed in that nomination form, also lie within the boundaries of the Yosemite Village Historic District.

Long term planning and management may result in recommendations for less than total preservation of the cultural resources in this historic district, in which instance the Service will comply with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and all other applicable laws and regulations.

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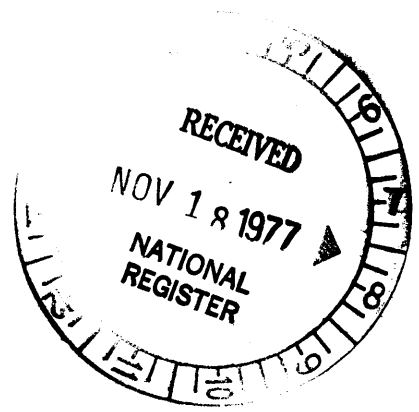
junction near Residence No. 46, then easterly along the southern edge of the road that forms the southern boundary of the utility area, along the north side of the Pioneer Cemetery, to a road junction at the northeast corner of the Indian Village at the rear of the Valley District Building, then along the fence along the north and east sides of the Indian Village, to a point where the fence intersects an east-west line ten feet behind the Visitors Center, along that line to the boundary of the Ansel Adams building complex, north east and west around the boundary of that complex to a point intersecting an east-west line ten feet behind the Pohono Studio, along that line to a point intersecting a north-south line ten feet east of Pohono Studio then south along that line, to a point intersecting an east-west line five feet north of the Post Office Building, then along that line easterly to where it intersects a north-south line five feet east of the Post Office, then south along that line to the northern edge of the paved former parking area, then northwesterly and westerly along the northern edge of the parking area past the south sides of the Post Office, Pohono Studio, Ansel Adams Gallery, the Visitors Center, the Valley District building, to the western edge of the parking area, then south along the western edge of the parking area past the east side of the Administration Building, across the road in front of the Ranger's Club, then east to a point intersecting a north-south line ten feet east of the Ranger's Club Garage, then south along that line to a point intersecting an east-west line twenty feet south of the Ranger's Club and transformer, westerly along that line to a point intersecting a north-south line five feet west of the transformer, than north along that line to the north side of the road which passes in front of the Ranger's Club, then along the north edge of the sidewalk on the north side of that road, westerly approximately 0.4 miles to a point where it crosses the easternmost branch of Yosemite Creek, then northerly along the east bank of the creek to the point of beginning.

Streets in this district are not named and buildings do not have addresses; each structure has a "building number" assigned by the Park Engineer.

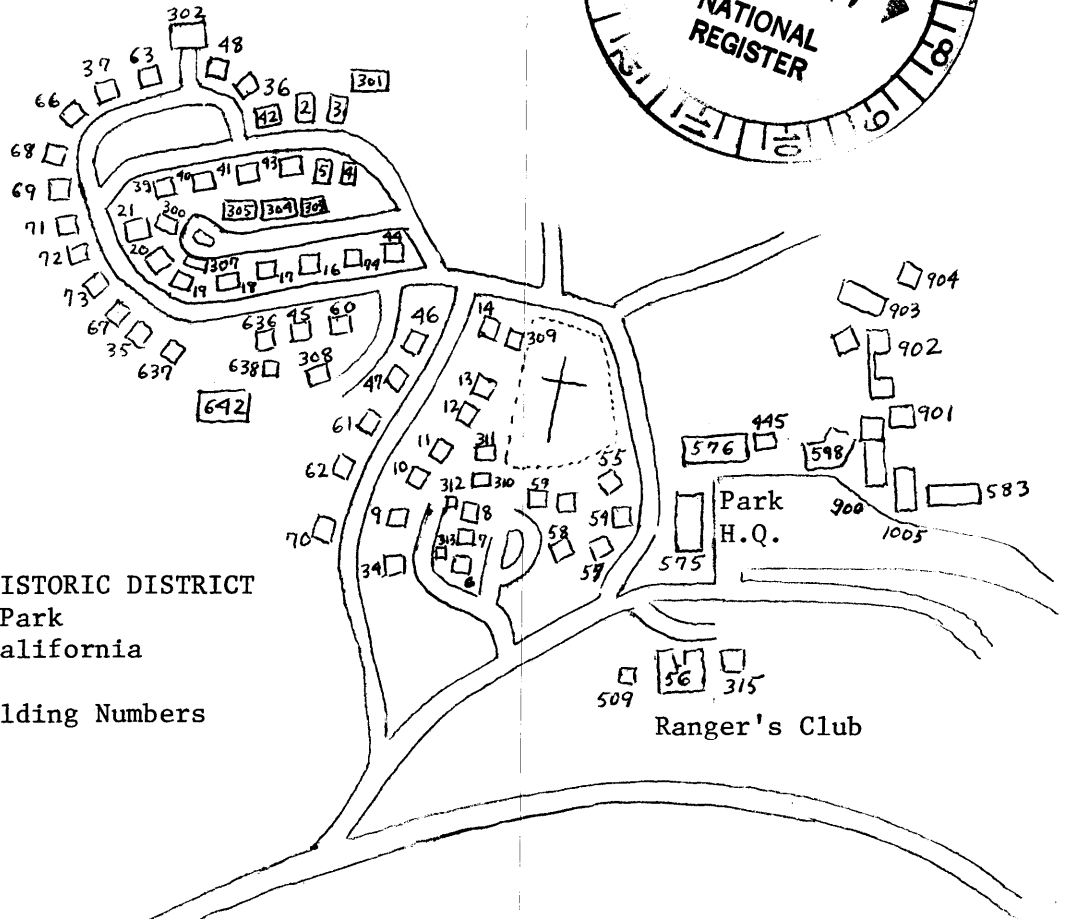
The boundaries of the Superintendent's residence and garage, a non-contiguous element, consist of two rectangles whose boundaries are 25 feet beyond the walls of each building.

UTM References, Superintendent's Residence and Garage:

2/71/550 41/80/360



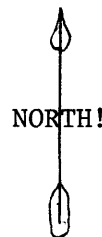
Residential Area



YOSEMITE VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT
Yosemite National Park
Mariposa County, California

Rough Map with Building Numbers

300
Superintendent's Residence
and Garage



Sketch Map by Gordon Chappell

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Yosemite Village Historic District Mariposa County CALIFORNIA
78000354

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED

Carol D. Shull 1-12-95

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018
(Rev. 8/86)
NPS/WHIS Word Processor Format
(Approved 03/88)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Also located in the Village is a group of buildings collectively known as the Ansel Adams Gallery. This group, historically known as Best's Studio, consists of four contributing buildings. The most visible one is the gallery which serves as a concession selling Ansel Adams Special Edition Prints, original works and other high quality merchandise. The gallery space is also used to exhibit contemporary photographic works. At the rear of the gallery are living quarters and additional office space and storage for the gallery.

Best's Studio was one of three studios built in 1925. It replaced the building Harry Best had used since 1902 in the Old Yosemite Village. With the exception of the chapel, all the buildings in the Old Yosemite Village were removed in 1926 with the implementation of the 1923 plan for the new Yosemite Village. The living quarters and the gallery building were built as individual structures but were joined some time before 1953. They are collectively known as Building 900. The building is of wood frame construction with sugar pine and cedar shake siding. The roof has recently been replaced using asphalt shingles; the original roof had been shake.

A major remodeling occurred in 1969, which replaced the Rustic front porch with a contemporary design, added a porch on the west side of the building, and extended the porch with a walkway back to the darkroom. The work also included adding a heating and cooling system and rewiring the studio. The choice to remove the Rustic elements was a deliberate one. In a letter from December 1984, Virginia Adams wrote "Ansel and I were relieved to get rid of the stone pillars and facade, add some necessary display spaces, improve the appearance by simplifying it to a clean California Architectural style, which we and the N.P.S. considered appropriate in Yosemite."¹ The work was designed by the Adamases' friend Ted Spencer, of Spencer, Lee and Busse, Architects. Spencer also designed their house in Carmel Highlands as well as several buildings in Yosemite National Park, including the Chinquapin service station and the Big Trees Lodge², which have been removed, as well as the park's visitor center and the waste water treatment plant at El Portal, both of which are extant. Additional work on the building has been done by architect Jim Oak.

The present darkroom is a shed-roofed structure of two stories with clerestory lights on the north side of the west end of the building but no windows on the east end. It is sided with plywood and is contemporary in design. The darkroom measures 24 feet by 40 feet, considerably larger than the one it replaced, and is built on the site of the original darkroom. The original darkroom had a rustic character similar to that of the two residences. The original darkroom measured approximately 38 feet by 10 feet and was wood frame with a gable roof with a shingled exterior.

The two residences were also built around 1925. Building 902 is a single family dwelling with 558 square feet. Building 904 has 1,094 square feet and is a duplex. Both buildings are wood frame with shingled exteriors. They are built in the Rustic style and retain their original character as well as approximately eighty-five percent of their original materials. They are contributing elements of the historic district for both their architecture and their association with Best's Studio.

¹Virginia Adams to Thomas D. Mulhern, Jr., December 10, 1984, National Park Service, Western Regional Office files.

²ibid.

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A three-stall garage, also built in 1925, once stood between the two duplexes. It was wood frame with a shake roof and siding. About 639 square feet, its interior was unfinished. The building was removed in 1980.

The modifications to the gallery/residence removed or covered many of its Rustic elements, such as the river rock porch and sugar pine shakes. The rear of the house provides the best glimpse of the building's original appearance. The gallery/residence has lost much of its original architectural integrity, but it, along with the darkroom and residences, is significant on a national level for its association with Ansel Adams, one of America's best known photographers and a staunch supporter of the conservation movement and protection of American wilderness and park lands. Best's Studio, renamed the Ansel Adams Gallery in 1972, served as the major operating base for Mr. Adams during much of his career.

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Applicable National Register Criteria: A, B
Criteria Considerations: G
Area of Significance: Art, Conservation
Period of Significance: 1937-1981
Significant Dates: 1937, 1969, 1981
Significant Person: Ansel Adams

Best's Studio (the Ansel Adams Gallery) is significant under Criteria A and B in the categories of art and conservation for its association with Ansel Adams, his photography and his conservation work.

Of the properties associated with Ansel Adams, such as his 1903 family home, the home he built in San Francisco in 1924, the home he built in Carmel Highlands in 1962, and his San Francisco Gallery on Geary Street, the Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite has the longest association with Adams and his career and, given its setting in Yosemite National Park, probably the greatest significance. It was in Yosemite National Park where he was given his first camera, where he went on his first Sierra Club outing, made *Monolith, the Face of Half Dome* in 1927 and numerous other of his most famous photographs, where he met his future wife Virginia Best in 1921, where he taught his first photographic workshop in 1940 and where he continued teaching workshops until 1981. The gallery has been used to exhibit and sell his work since 1938, continuing the tradition in which the building was built.

The building was built in 1925, replacing an earlier building that had been in the Old Yosemite Village. Harry Best, a painter, operated the studio and sold his paintings of Yosemite as well as books and other souvenirs. Ansel Adams met Best's daughter Virginia in 1921; they were married in 1928. Virginia Adams inherited the business from her father in 1936, and in 1937 the Adamses moved to Yosemite, where they lived until 1961.

After moving to Yosemite and taking over Best's Studio, Ansel and Virginia Adams changed the merchandise to include quality books and Native American crafts and photographic supplies. Adams selected some of his Yosemite negatives that were then printed by an assistant and sold for a nominal sum as a memento for visitors. These became the Special Edition Prints which are still made and sold today under agreement with the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust.

Ansel Adams - Photographer 1921-1984

Ansel Adams was born in San Francisco in 1902. He survived the 1906 earthquake and went on to become one of the best known photographers and conservation advocates in the country. He was also a talented musician and at one time had trained to be a concert pianist. He made his first trip to Yosemite National Park in 1916 at the age of fourteen. At that time he was given a Kodak Box Brownie camera by his father and took his first pictures. He returned to Yosemite every year of his life after that, living in the park from 1937 to 1961.

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Adams had enormous impact as a photographer, particularly with his images of Yosemite and other national parks. He received recognition around the world for his contributions to the field of photography. Adams played a key role in the recognition of photography as art. In 1932 he, Edward Weston and Imogene Cunningham founded f/64, a group dedicated to the expressive potential of pure photography. He also helped found the Photography Department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1940, the Department of Photography at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute) in 1941, and the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona, Tucson in 1975. In addition, he helped create the Friends of Photography, which is still active today, the magazine Aperture, and his photographic workshops. And of course, he took photographs.

In 1940, while teaching at the Art Center School in Los Angeles he perfected the Zone System technique of exposure and development control. In 1943 he photographed the Manzanar relocation camp for Japanese-American internees, and in 1944 he published Born Free and Equal, a photo essay about Manzanar.

In 1946-1948 he received Guggenheim Fellowships and photographed extensively in America's national parks and monuments. He continued to make and publish photographs until 1984. In 1975 he stopped accepting individual print orders; it took him three years to print the final 3,000 orders.³ In 1979, the sale of Adams prints accounted for "some half of the total dollar value of photograph sales during the year."⁴ His photographs were included in more than 500 exhibitions during his lifetime, and he published thirty-nine books and folios.

Ansel Adams died in 1984 at the age of 82 in Carmel, California.

Ansel Adams - Conservationist 1928-1984

Adams was heavily influenced by what he termed the Natural Scene, saying "everything I have done or felt has been in some way influenced by the impact of the Natural Scene."⁵ His early trips to Yosemite and acquaintance with Francis Holman got him involved with the Sierra Club, beginning in 1920 when he became the custodian of the club's headquarters, LeConte Memorial Lodge. He became more active, taking and leading trips into the High Sierra. He also began advocating conservation and, through his photographs and letters rallied support for parks and wilderness areas. In 1936 he testified before Congress on behalf of the Sierra Club for the establishment of Kings Canyon National Park, using both his words and his photographs to speak for the area's beauty. He presented Senate members with copies of a specially printed, limited edition portfolio of photographs of Kings Canyon, and those photographs were a key factor in the designation of the park.

Ansel Adams began visiting the Sierra Club's offices and became active in its work in 1927. In 1928 he went on the annual outing as the official photographer, with trip expenses paid but no fee given. He was the official

³James Alinder, ed., Ansel Adams 1902-1984, Untitled Series (Carmel, California: The Friends of Photography, 1984), 32.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ansel Adams, An Autobiography (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), 67.

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photographer on the 1929, 1930 and 1932 trips. His photographs were sold at cost to trip members as a memento. In 1930 he became the Assistant Manager for the outing. From these beginnings, he became a well known and respected member of the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club, serving from 1934 until he resigned in 1971. The Sierra Club is one of the country's foremost environmental organizations and has been influential in public policy and decision making.

His efforts on behalf of the environmental movement won him as much fame as his photography, and he worked on environmental issues throughout his life. Adams met with Presidents on environmental concerns and lobbied on behalf of conservation legislation and policy. He had an active role in President Johnson's environmental task force, discussed environmental policy with President Ford, and met with President Reagan on environmental concerns. At the time of his death, he was working to save Big Sur, and had founded and served on the Board of the Directors of The Big Sur Foundation. At his memorial service, speakers vowed to continuing pushing for protection of the area of the California coast.

In 1980 President Jimmy Carter awarded Adams the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor. The citation read:

At one with the power of the American landscape, and renowned for the patient skill and timeless beauty of his work, photographer Ansel Adams has been visionary in his efforts to preserve this country's wild and scenic areas, both on film and on Earth. Drawn to the beauty of nature's monuments, he is regarded by environmentalists as a monument himself, and by photographers as a national institution. It is through his foresight and fortitude that so much of American has been saved for future Americans.⁶

Numerous honorary degrees, titles, and awards were bestowed upon him for his contributions to both the field of photography and the conservation movement. A list of the honors follows.

Honors/Awards:

Brehm Memorial Award, 1957, Rochester Institute of Technology, for distinguished contributions to photography
John Muir Award, 1963
Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1966
Conservation Service Award, National Park Service, 1968
Progress Medal, Photographic Society of America, 1969
Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, 1976
Honorary Vice President of the Sierra Club, 1978
Honorary Member of the Moscow Committee of Graphic Artists, Photography Section, 1978
Presidential Medal of Freedom, 1980

⁶Ibid., 348.

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Inaugural Ansel Adams Award for Conservation, The Wilderness Society, 1980
Hasselblad Gold Medal Award, Sweden, 1981
Decoration of "Commandeur" in the Order of the Arts and Letters, France, 1982
Honorary Member of the American Academy and Institution of Arts and Letters, 1983
Honoree of Photography Hall of Fame, 1984 (posthumously)
Named Honored Photographer by Society of Photographic Educations

Honorary Degrees:

Doctor of Fine Arts, University of California, Berkeley, 1961
Doctor of Humanities, Occidental College, 1967
Doctor of Fine Arts, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1974
Doctor of Fine Arts, University of Arizona, Tucson, 1975
Doctor of Fine Arts, Harvard University, 1981
Doctor of Fine Arts, Mills College, 1982

Ansel Adams made major contributions to the world of art and photography as well as the effort to conserve the natural wonders of this country. The buildings at Best's Studio, despite the fact that the darkroom and the remodeling of the gallery/residence are less than fifty years old, are significant because of their strong association with Ansel Adams and therefore meet the criterion of exceptional significance for property under fifty years of age or having achieved significance within the last fifty years. The 1969 changes were under Adams' direction while he was still involved in the gallery and spending a great deal of time in Yosemite. The period of significance under this context begins when Ansel and Virginia Adams moved to Yosemite and ends in 1981 when the photography workshops Ansel Adams gave in Yosemite for many years were moved to Carmel and placed under the auspices of the Friends of Photography.

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Amendment Prepared By

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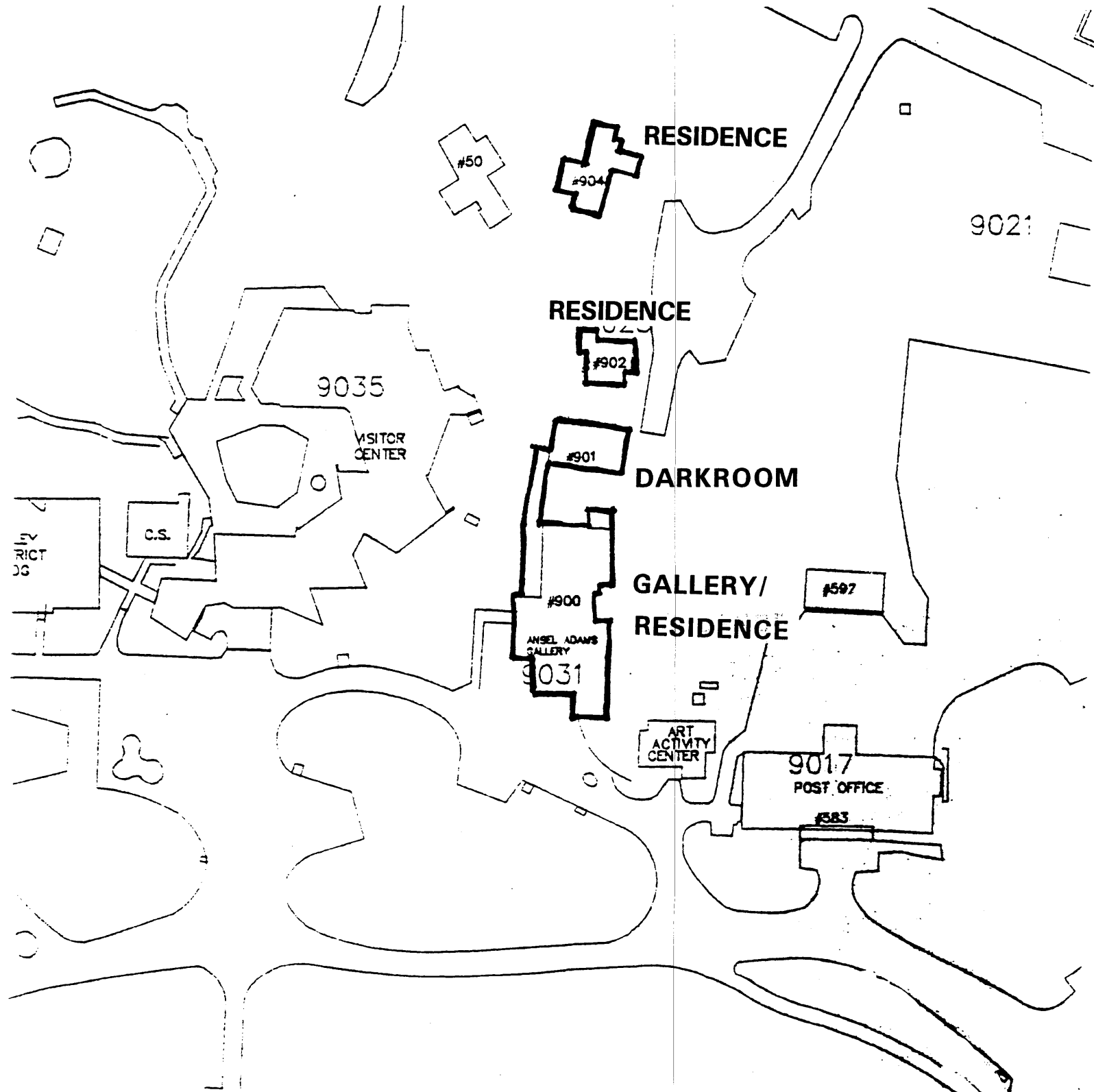
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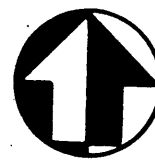
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SKETCH MAP

ANSEL ADAMS GALLERY



NORTH
SCALE: 1" = 80'