United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Jeannette Simons
Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Environmental Planning and Compliance
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Jeannette:

Please find enclosed the signed certification sheet for the Yosemite Valley National Register nomination, a copy of the Supplementary Listing Record (SLR) used to correct minor errors in the final nomination, and the "Weekly List of Actions" containing the Yosemite Valley information.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Paul Lusignan
Historian
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

ENC

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Janet Snyder Matthews — OCT 31 2006

Signature of Certifying Official — Date

National Park Service

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Mark Wayne Archer — Oct. 25, 2006

Signature of Commenting or Other Official — Date

California Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NPS CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

_✓_ Entered in the National Register
____ Determined eligible for the National Register
____ Determined not eligible for the National Register
____ Removed from the National Register
____ Other (explain):

12/14/06

Signature of Keeper — Date of Action

NPS Form 10-900a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section _____ Page ___

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 04001159 Date Listed: 12/14/2006

Yosemite Valley — Property Name
Mariposa — County
CA — State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action: 12/14/2006

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Resource Count:

The correct Resource Count when taking the previously listed resources into consideration should read:

Buildings	*104*
Structures	*53*
Sites	*15*
Total	*172*

Description:

The Map Codes provided in the narrative description (page 26) and the contributing building inventory list spreadsheet for the following resources should be revised as follows: [This is consistent with the enclosed maps, photographs, Part III Building & Structure Inventory documentation.]

Structure
S22 (Housekeeping Footbridge) revised to S23
S23 (Sentinel Bridge Transverse Road) revised to S24
S24 (Stoneman Bridge) revised to S25
S25 (Ahwahnee Bridge) revised to S26
S26 (Sugar Pine Bridge) revised to S27
S27 (Clark's Bridge) revised to S28
S28 (Eastern Portion Loop Road) revised to S29
(S29 is duplicated on the maps)

These clarifications were confirmed with the NPS FPO office.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

December 22, 2006

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to send you the following announcements and actions on properties for the National Register of Historic Places. For further information or if you would like to receive this list weekly via e-mail, contact Edson Beall via voice (202) 354-2255 or E-mail: Edson_Beall@nps.gov

Our physical location address is:

National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005

Please have any Fed Ex, UPS packages sent to the above address. Please continue to use alternate carriers, as all mail delivered to us via United States Postal Service is irradiated and subsequently damaged.

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 12/11/06 THROUGH 12/15/06

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

CALIFORNIA, CONTRA COSTA COUNTY,
Buehler, Maynard and Katharine, House,
6 Great Oak Circle,
Orinda, 06001118,
LISTED, 12/12/06

CALIFORNIA, STANISLAUS COUNTY,
Walton, Dr. Robert and Mary, House,
417 Hogue Dr.,
Modesto, 06001133,
LISTED, 12/14/06

CALIFORNIA, TUOLUMNE COUNTY,
Yosemite Valley,
Yosemite National Park,
Yosemite, 04001159,
LISTED, 12/14/06

DELAWARE, SUSSEX COUNTY,
Roosevelt Inlet Shipwreck,
Address Restricted,
Lewes vicinity, 06001056,
LISTED, 11/16/06

GEORGIA, TALIAFERRO COUNTY,
Locust Grove Cemetery,
Locust Grove Rd. SE,
Sharon, 06001119,
LISTED, 12/12/06

IOWA, CASS COUNTY,
American Legion Memorial Building,
201 Poplar St.,
Atlantic, 06001121,

LISTED, 12/12/06

MARYLAND, CARROLL COUNTY,
Arter, Philip and Uriah, Farm,
10 Deep Run Rd. W,
Union Mills vicinity, 06001124,
LISTED, 12/12/06

MARYLAND, HOWARD COUNTY,
Curtis--Shipley Farmstead,
5771 Waterloo Rd.,
Ellicott City vicinity, 06001127,
LISTED, 12/12/06

MARYLAND, HOWARD COUNTY,
Linnwood,
2327 Daniels Rd.,
Ellicott City vicinity, 06001126,
LISTED, 12/12/06

MARYLAND, WASHINGTON COUNTY,
Hays, Joseph C., House,
103-105 W. Main St.,
Sharpsburg, 06001125,
LISTED, 12/12/06

MASSACHUSETTS, MIDDLESEX COUNTY,
Boxborough Old Town Center,
Hill Rd., Middle Rd., Picnic St.,
Boxborough, 06001122,
LISTED, 12/12/06

MASSACHUSETTS, MIDDLESEX COUNTY,
Wetherbee, Levi, Farm,
484 Middle Rd.,
Boxborough, 06001128,
LISTED, 12/12/06

MASSACHUSETTS, PLYMOUTH COUNTY,
Sachem Rock Farm,
355 Plymouth St.,
East Bridgewater, 06001129,
LISTED, 12/11/06

NEW HAMPSHIRE, SULLIVAN COUNTY,
First Universalist Chapel,
3 2nd New Hampshire Turnpike,
Lempster, 06001130,
LISTED, 12/12/06

NORTH CAROLINA, CATAWBA COUNTY,
Lyerly Full Fashioned Mill,
56 Third St., SE,
Hickory, 06001137,
DETERMINED ELIGIBLE, 12/08/06
(Hickory MRA)

PENNSYLVANIA, LANCASTER COUNTY,
Keller's Covered Bridge,

SW of Ephrata on T 656, Ephrata Township,
Ephrata vicinity, 80003518,
PROPOSED MOVE APPROVED, 12/12/06
(Covered Bridges of Lancaster County TR)

TENNESSEE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY,
Port Royal Road,
N of the Red R jct W of TN 238, adjacent to the modern Port Royal Rd.,
Port Royal vicinity, 06001131,
LISTED, 12/12/06

TENNESSEE, RUTHERFORD COUNTY,
Riverside Farm,
1218 W. Jefferson Pike,
Walter Hill vicinity, 06001132,
LISTED, 12/12/06
(Historic Family Farms in Middle Tennessee MPS)

TEXAS, PRESIDIO COUNTY,
Fort D.A. Russell Historic District,
Roughly bounded by Ridge, El Paso, Kelly Sts, US 67 and FM 2810,
Marfa, 06001152,
LISTED, 12/14/06

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **Yosemite Valley**

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: PO Box 577 Not for publication:

City/Town: Yosemite National Park Vicinity:

State: CA County: Mariposa Code: 109 Zip Code: 95389

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property	Category of Property
Private: ___	Building(s):
Public-Local: ___	District: X
Public-State: ___	Site:
Public-Federal: X	Structure:
	Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
302	153 buildings
16	1 sites
611	164 structures
0	0 objects
929	318 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 749
(Yosemite Chapel, 1973; The Ahwahnee Hotel, 1977; 8 Valley Bridges, 1977; 74 buildings and structures in Yosemite Village Historic District, 1978; 664 buildings and structures in the Camp Curry Historic District, 1979; LeConte Memorial Lodge, 1987; 1 site at Camp 4, 2003)

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NPS CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):
_____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Landscape	Sub: Park
	Recreation & Culture	Sub: Outdoor Recreation
	Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
	Domestic	Sub: Multiple Dwelling
	Domestic	Sub: Institutional Housing
	Domestic	Sub: Hotel
	Transportation	Sub: Road-related
Current:	Landscape	Sub: Park
	Recreation & Culture	Sub: Outdoor Recreation
	Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
	Domestic	Sub: Multiple Dwelling
	Domestic	Sub: Institutional Housing
	Domestic	Sub: Hotel
	Transportation	Sub: Road-related

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: "Bungalow/Craftsman", Other: "NPS Rustic"

MATERIALS:
Foundation: Stone/Concrete
Walls: Stone/Log/Shingle
Roof: Shingle
Site Furnishings: Stone/Wood/Metal/Concrete
Pavements and Curbs: Packed Earth/Gravel/Asphalt/Stone/Concrete
Retaining Walls and Other Landscape Structures: Concrete/Stone/Packed Earth

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

NOTE: Information for Section 7 of this nomination (Description of Resources) is primarily taken from: *Yosemite Valley: Cultural Landscape Report*, 2 vols., Land and Community Associates, Denver, Colorado: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994 (hereafter abbreviated as CLR); other sources are as referenced in the bibliography.

SUMMARY

Yosemite Valley, the uniquely awesome and beautiful granite gorge in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, is one of the most famous and iconic scenic places in the American West. For thousands of years the grandeur of Yosemite has been appreciated by native people, and for over the last 150 years "the Incomparable Valley" has taken on enormous cultural significance for Euro-Americans and for visitors from all over the world.

From about 4,000 feet in elevation on the valley floor, the surrounding granite cliff walls rise to elevations of over 8,800 feet at Half Dome, 7,500 feet at El Capitan, and 7,200 feet at Glacier Point. Upper and Lower Yosemite Falls together drop more than 2,500 feet to the valley floor. The unparalleled beauty of these and many other features is set, remarkably, on a stage of serene and pastoral beauty. The valley floor itself is a relatively flat floodplain, through which the Merced River winds, flanked by open meadows and forests of oak and pine. The stunning juxtaposition of calm, park-like meadows and massive, grand cliffs makes Yosemite Valley one of the most visited, most described, and most depicted places in the world.

While the cliff walls and granite peaks that define Yosemite Valley remain immutable and eternal, people have managed, used, and manipulated the valley floor for thousands of years. American Indians periodically burned the valley floor to encourage open oak woodlands, interspersed with meadows that were productive for both forage crops (mainly acorns) and game. Shrubs and trees were also pruned to enhance production of various forest products. If left untouched, much of the valley might have been mature coniferous forest (rather than meadows and oak woodland) when Euro-American tourists began to arrive in the 1850s. Although images of Yosemite Valley soon were the heart of an American ideal of "nature," the landscape actually was the product of ancient agricultural practices: an aboriginal countryside as managed, in its way, as the fields and farms of New England.

By 1864, when the federal government granted Yosemite Valley to the state of California, Euro-Americans had taken over the management of the valley floor landscape for their own purposes. Intent on preserving the "natural" scene, state managers also wanted to allow the construction of hotels and other facilities to serve tourists. The role of fire and other practices in forming the valley landscape was poorly understood, however, and the preservation of what was assumed to be a wilderness soon resulted in unintended consequences. Tribal groups were prevented from burning off woody vegetation and some meadows were tilled and planted to provide food for tourists and fodder for livestock. Manipulation of drainage patterns to enhance production of crops led to drier meadows, which further encouraged the invasion of ponderosa pines and other woody growth into open areas. By the 1880s, management of vegetation in Yosemite Valley for the purpose of keeping views and meadows open was already a controversial issue. Cutting, grubbing, and burning were all employed (with various levels of intensity) over the next 90 years in an attempt to maintain the "natural" open character of the Yosemite Valley landscape. Since the 1970s, many of these practices have been reduced or suspended, as park managers have worked to balance natural and cultural resource values with public perception and use. The

amount of open space on the valley floor has remained relatively constant since 1942 (about half what it was in the 1850s), but ponderosa pines and other trees have begun to reach mature heights and densities, limiting historically open views to the falls and valley walls and visually isolating individual meadows from one another.

Development to accommodate tourists also began in the 1850s, but accelerated in the 1870s when the first wagon roads reached the valley. By the early 20th century, entrepreneurs had built a small resort town. After the National Park Service was created in 1916, extensive plans for visitor facilities were implemented, with a new emphasis on the quality of architectural design and an effort to minimize impacts to both scenic quality and the environment. Today, the array of hotels, tent cabins, administrative facilities, roads and trails in the valley dates mainly from the early 20th century (Camp Curry), the 1920s (Yosemite Village and the Ahwahnee Hotel), and more recent additions and changes (Yosemite Lodge, parts of Yosemite Village, other locations). The overall footprint of development in Yosemite Valley that remains today, however, was in place by 1942, which is the end of the period of significance for this nomination.

The complex and significant history of human interaction with natural processes in Yosemite Valley has resulted in a unique and historically important cultural landscape on the valley floor. The contributing resources of the Yosemite Valley National Register district include roads, trails, buildings, and structures. Other elements that contribute to the significance of the cultural landscape are described in terms of landscape characteristics as defined by the National Register of Historic Places, including natural systems and features, spatial organization, vegetation, circulation, land use, and views and vistas (see definitions below).

The Yosemite Valley Historic District is a single, contiguous district that extends roughly from Pohono Bridge to Mirror Lake and Vernal Fall, and from the base of the valley walls to the north and south. Almost the entire boundary is defined by the official Wilderness boundary, which follows the 4,200-foot contour around the valley floor (the historic district being the portion of the valley that is not designated as Wilderness; (see Map F). This comprehensive district is appropriate because it includes natural features and landscape characteristics, as well as historic buildings and structures, which collectively make up the historically significant cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley.

Within the single district, three specific areas are described separately and in more detail in Part 2 of this nomination: Yosemite Village, the Ahwahnee Hotel, and Camp Curry. Each of these areas is independently significant for its part in the history of Yosemite. All three areas were first listed in the National Register as districts in the 1970s; the Ahwahnee Hotel was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987. Two other buildings within the historic district described here were also designated as National Historic Landmarks: the Rangers' Club in Yosemite Village (1987) and the LeConte Memorial Lodge (1987).

Three other developed areas in the Historic District are not contributing, and therefore are not described in the same detail as the contributing developed areas, but they are included in the description of the overall valley landscape. The Yosemite Lodge area, Housekeeping Camp, and the campground areas all occupy sites of similar uses during the historic period, but all have been redeveloped in the postwar era, and almost all of their buildings and structures post-date the period of significance.

The Yosemite Lodge area is a 1950s motel complex, located along the base of the north valley wall, southwest of Yosemite Village, north of the Merced River, and immediately west of

Yosemite Creek. The original Yosemite Lodge building was constructed in 1915, in response to the advice of Stephen Mather and Franklin Lane. Both believed there would be an influx of visitors to the park after completion of the Panama Canal. Increased visitation to Yosemite did occur after World War II, making it necessary to completely rebuild the facility. Beginning in 1956, the motel and associated development was replaced with several new buildings. Today, Yosemite Lodge includes the main lodge (registration building), mid-scale motel units, two restaurants, a cafeteria, bar, gift and general merchandise store, specialty gift shop, bike rental shop, post office, swimming pool, and temporary (trailer) employee housing. All guest lodging consists of multi-unit style building construction. The last of the historic guest cabins along Yosemite Creek and the Merced River were removed after the 1997 flood, leaving the swimming pool as the only pre-1942 structure in the entire complex. Because the extensive redevelopment of the lodge area post-dates the period of significance for this nomination, the Yosemite Lodge area as a whole does is not eligible for listing, and is not documented in Part 2 of this nomination.

The Housekeeping Camp area, located on the south side of the Merced River, near the LeConte Memorial Lodge, also was developed after 1942. It consists of closely sited, rustic cinderblock and canvas tent cabins (similar to those at Camp Curry). Circulation is informal with few paved surfaces. Service buildings include a camp store and laundry and shower facilities, all built after 1942. Because this development post-dates the period of significance for this nomination, this area is not eligible for listing, and is not documented in Part 2 of this nomination.

The campground area, located along the Merced River toward the eastern end of the valley, includes the sites of several historic campgrounds. Camping along the Merced River has a long and continuous history of use in Yosemite Valley. Initially, camping occurred in undefined areas along the Merced River, resulting in significant damage to the riverbanks and adjacent vegetation. Beginning in the 1920s, selected campgrounds were defined and "formalized," meaning they had designated campsites and roads providing access. In the 1930s, virtually all of the campgrounds in Yosemite Valley were designed to accommodate large numbers of visitors with parking, construction of comfort stations, designated campsites, fire pits, and tables. Like many other National Park units, campgrounds of this era were based on the Meinecke Camping System, designed to minimize human impacts on the natural landscape, and "blend" with the surrounding landscape by incorporating native materials in the development of features and infrastructure.[1] In Yosemite Valley, the natural flood cycles of the Merced River caused repeated and extensive damage to these campgrounds, leading to ongoing rebuilding efforts over many years. In addition to flood damage over the years, campgrounds in Yosemite Valley have been extensively redesigned to meet the growing demand, and reconfigured to better accommodate larger numbers of campers and larger vehicles. This has resulted in the construction of new roads, new comfort stations, entrance kiosks, utilities, and other structures. Because of this redevelopment, the campgrounds today comprise structures that post-date the period of significance in this nomination, and individual campgrounds are not eligible for listing as designed landscapes.[2] However, because the campgrounds in Yosemite Valley are spatially discrete, limited, and well-defined within the overall valley landscape, and because their footprint and function is similar (or identical) to what they were during the historic period, these non-contributing areas have a limited adverse effect on the integrity of the historic district as a whole.

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[1] See Linda McClelland pgs. 276-284.
[2] The campgrounds were also evaluated in the CLR and they were determined ineligible because of the lack of integrity.

Despite changes in the character of the valley landscape since the 1850s, and additional minor changes since the end of the period of significance in 1942, the overall integrity of the Yosemite Valley historic district is exceptional. The general footprint of development remains essentially the same today as it was in 1942. Yosemite Valley continues to be an intact and always controversial experiment—one that began within only a few years of the arrival of Euro-Americans in the valley—of preserving a "natural" landscape through its development and management as a public park. The complex cultural landscape of the valley floor is the direct result of the vicissitudes of this unique and profoundly significant experiment.

Section 7: DESCRIPTION OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Introduction

This section describing the cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley is divided into two parts: **PART ONE** describes the overall valley landscape (the historic district as a whole), and **PART TWO** gives more detail about the three developed areas within the valley (Yosemite Village, the Ahwahnee Hotel, and Camp Curry) that contain a concentration of contributing resources.. Because the Yosemite Lodge, Housekeeping Camp, and Campground areas along the Merced River consist almost entirely of non-contributing resources, they are not discussed in detail. Contributing and non-contributing resources that fall outside of the three primary developed areas of the valley are included in the description of the overall valley landscape.

In the general description of the historic district (Part 1) and the detailed descriptions of the three developed areas (Part 2), the following categories of contributing resources are covered:

Natural Systems and Features — the geological, hydrological, and topographical features and characteristics that either contribute directly to the historic district or help shape and define other contributing resources.

Spatial Organization – the design, composition and sequence of outdoor spaces within the district.

Vegetation — the existing vegetation, and the management of introduced or manipulated vegetation through pruning, removal, or addition of trees and shrubs for design purposes.

Circulation — the means and patterns of both vehicular and pedestrian movement through the district.

Land Use — the historical and current patterns of use and associated activities within different areas.

Views and Vistas — general views of significant features as well as specific vistas from structured overlooks and observation platforms.

Buildings — structures that have constructed walls and a roof, and have interior spaces used by people for various purposes.

Structures — all other human-made elements in the landscape.

Sites — locations where historically significant events took place, archeological resources, or structural ruins remain.

Landscape characteristics are not counted as contributing resources in this nomination unless they are classified as structures or sites. However, notable and significant landscape characteristics are documented as contributing to the character of the historic district and developed areas, and within the framework of National Register.

NOTE: Archeological resources as well as resources relating to traditional cultural practices are referenced but not detailed in this nomination. Archeological resources are described in the existing archeological district nomination for Yosemite Valley. A separate nomination addressing the traditional cultural properties of Yosemite Valley will be prepared in the future.

Section 7: PART ONE
DESCRIPTION OF OVERALL VALLEY LANDSCAPE

Natural Systems and Features

Yosemite National Park lies on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada range in central California, between the San Joaquin Valley to the west and the Great Basin to the east. Yosemite Valley is situated on the west slope of the mountains, in the south central portion of the park. The valley is about nine miles long and one-half to one mile in width, and is oriented in an east-west direction. Elevations along the valley floor range between 3,800 and 4,200 feet.

According to geologists, the present form of Yosemite Valley is the result of three major glacial periods, the last of which ended between 10,000 and 12,000 years ago. As the last glacier retreated, a lake was created in the valley. The Merced River carried sediments into this lake, and over thousands of years the lake silted in and receded. Today the exceptionally sheer and nearly vertical walls of Yosemite Valley rise 1,500 to 4,000 feet from the almost level valley floor.

Yosemite Valley is in the mixed conifer zone of the Sierra Nevada, characterized by 41 identified biotic communities, grouped loosely into uplands, riparian, meadow, and aquatic communities. Lightning is the natural fire regime in Yosemite Valley. A more predominant mixed conifer forest would have probably evolved under this regime, with some differentiation between the wetter south, low-lying center, and drier north sides of the valley.

Yosemite Valley serves as a broad floodplain for the Merced River. In spring, melting snow from higher elevations causes flooding, and winter floods recur every 5 to 30 years. Flooding and the slow movement of the Merced River channel across the valley floor have resulted in a variety of associated landforms, such as low-lying wetlands and wet meadows. In 1879, a portion of the moraine that traversed the Merced River near the base of El Capitan was blasted away, and the water table in the valley dropped several feet. Research suggests that as the water level dropped, the Merced River cut a deeper channel through the valley. This also may have caused some meadows and wetland areas adjacent to the river to become drier.

Periodic rockfall in Yosemite Valley affects the topography of the valley floor. Rockfall has created steep talus slopes along each side of the valley that provide better drained soils and warmer microhabitats than are found on the adjacent valley floor. Because of its east-west orientation, the south side of the valley tends to be shadier, cooler, and wetter than the sunny, warm, north side of the valley, especially in winter. These temperature and light differences influence plant communities as well as human activity.

American Indians historically used the many plant communities in Yosemite Valley for food, subsistence, shelter, and the production of other functional and decorative materials. Beginning in the mid-1800s, and continuing intermittently through the historic period, others also used natural resources on the valley floor, such as wood and stone for constructing various structures. This reached a peak during the NPS era, when landscape architects advocated using materials that would harmonize with the surrounding character of the landscape for all constructed features. Most of the buildings and bridges and structures from this period reflect this practice.

The most salient natural features in the valley are the natural landforms and water features that define the valley itself. These natural features have taken on cultural value both in terms of use and association from prehistoric times to the present. Views of natural features have been primary influences in patterns of human use and development, especially since the 1850s.

Summary

Within the boundaries of the Yosemite Valley historic district, the Merced River and associated riverine corridor are the primary natural systems that have historically shaped the built environment of Yosemite Valley. Although the river corridor itself has fluctuated as a result of both natural and human influences throughout the period of significance, it continues to physically define the character of the valley landscape, and contributes to defining he significance and character of the cultural landscape.

In addition to the Merced River corridor, the towering cliffs that define the valley landscapes are important components of valley scenery. Although the cliffs and falls are not within the boundaries of the Yosemite Valley historic district, viewing these features from the valley floor has been an important attraction and has directly influenced the pattern of development and human activity in Yosemite Valley for over 150 years. The natural features listed below are particularly important to the overall significance and integrity of the historic district, although they are not included in the topographically designated boundaries of the valley floor.

- Upper Yosemite Fall
- Lower Yosemite Fall
- Bridalveil Fall
- Nevada Fall
- Vernal Fall
- El Capitan
- Cathedral Range
- Three Brothers
- Sentinel Rock
- Yosemite Point
- Lost Arrow
- Royal Arches
- Glacier Point
- Washington Column
- Half Dome
- North Dome

Spatial Organization

The unique geophysical characteristics of Yosemite Valley have historically shaped patterns of human use, modification of the landscape, and perception of the resources that define the cultural landscape. The extent and location of human activity have been constricted within the valley walls, and further limited by the meandering course of the Merced River. The river flows generally east to west, defining the center of the valley and creating an ecological zone that unifies and influences the patchwork of meadows and wooded areas. Above the palustrine zone, the valley floor typically steps up in elevation and forms a broad shelf to the toe of the talus slopes at the bases of the cliff walls.

Perhaps the most dramatic spatial characteristic of the cultural landscape as a whole is the relative narrowness of Yosemite Valley in relation to the height of the valley walls enclosing it. The approximately 1:3 to 2:3 horizontal-vertical ratio creates a highly unusual landscape, one that has historically influenced the type and degree of development within the valley. Another key spatial characteristic within the valley is the mosaic pattern of open meadows alternating with stands of oaks and conifers. This pattern of open and canopied spaces through the valley creates a series of long views, and frames specific views to features such as Bridalveil Fall, El Capitan, Yosemite Falls, and the Merced River.

Main access to the valley has been from the west, with a primary circulation pattern generally following higher, more stable ground around the base of the cliff walls. This alignment physically defined the perimeter of the valley landscape and choreographed the experience of visitors. Developed areas in the valley were also concentrated on slightly higher ground, especially in the eastern portions of the valley. Prehistoric settlement was concentrated on the north, sunny side of the valley.

Individual aspects of the spatial organization of Yosemite Valley have shifted in scale and composition as a result of various land uses and modifications. In this regard, the most significant change has been the shift in the amount of open meadowlands relative to the forest areas. In the mid-19th century, there were approximately 745 acres of meadow covering the valley floor. At the end of the historic period (1942), this amount had dropped to approximately 350 acres due to drier soils, different vegetation management practices, and the suppression of fires, all of which encouraged the growth of trees and shrubs.[3] Although the number of acres of meadow in the valley has remained relatively constant since the end of the historic period, the growth of trees throughout the valley has obscured some significant historic views, changing much of the historic character of the spatial composition of the valley landscape.

The vehicular circulation system in the valley, in place for over 100 years, has been repaved numerous times, and in some places has been widened and realigned. Most of these changes have not affected the spatial organization of the landscape. The exceptions are the changes made in the early 1970s, when the loop drive changed to a one-way system. In addition, during this period portions of the road were closed to vehicular traffic, including the road to Mirror Lake and areas around Yosemite Village. In spite of these changes, the circulation system as a whole continues to define the perimeter of the valley landscape, and provides the overall spatial sequences—typically composed of meadows, forests, open woodlands, and the river corridor—

[3] Gibbens, Robert and Harold Heady. *The Influence of Modern Man on the Vegetation of Yosemite Valley*. California Agricultural Experiment Station Extension Service, Manual #36, 1964.

experienced during the historic period. Three major river crossings divide the loop road into thirds.

Summary

The overall spatial organization of the valley landscape retains the physical character and integrity to the period of significance. This is especially evident in the larger spatial sequence experienced by visitors as they arrive and move through the valley. Although aspects of this spatial sequence have been altered since 1942, the landscape organization defined by the framework of the loop drive and associated trail system remains the primary means for most park visitors to experience Yosemite Valley. In addition, the overall pattern of concentrated developed areas in the valley—Yosemite Village, Yosemite Lodge, Camp Curry, and the Ahwahnee Hotel—have remained in place since the end of the historic period (1942). While changes within specific developed areas have taken place (such as the redevelopment of Yosemite Lodge and Yosemite Village areas) these changes have occurred within the historic footprint of development.

Three primary aspects of the valley's spatial organization contribute to the historic character of the Yosemite Valley historic district:

- The patchwork pattern of open meadow and woodlands along the Merced River corridor defines the overall park-like character of the landscape and provides a sequence of spaces and views to primary natural features.

- The general density of development in the eastern portion of the valley, and the overall footprint of historic development in concentrated nodes throughout the valley.

- The influence of natural systems on the type and degree of physical development and land use on the valley floor (the cliff walls and river corridor in particular).

Vegetation

Natural vegetation in Yosemite Valley can be grouped into four major communities: Upland, California black oak woodland, meadow, and riparian. Upland communities are comprised of mixed conifer communities, which cover approximately 15 percent of the valley, mostly inhabiting the talus slopes and steeper fringes of the valley. Black oak woodlands cover 5 percent of the valley, surrounding meadows and transitioning between meadows and riparian vegetation, and between upland conifer and live oak communities. Riparian and meadow communities cover approximately 10 percent each of the valley floor.

Archeological evidence in the valley suggests that sometime around 500 AD, the Southern Sierra Miwok people were using Yosemite Valley for food production. Prior to 1851, the Ahwahneechees periodically set fires to facilitate hunting and maintain the open character of the valley floor. Fires helped keep the meadows free of trees and shrubs and swept underbrush from wooded areas. The fires also created an environment favorable to California black oak and the production of acorns that were a major food source for the Ahwahneechees.

Use and settlement of the valley in the 19th century by Euro-Americans had a dramatic influence on vegetation. Beginning as early as 1856, several meadows were being used for agriculture and to graze livestock. Hay and other grains were planted in several meadows to provide feed for livestock at the Lower Hotel. Around this time, James Lamon planted a four-acre orchard, with 500 trees and a large vegetable garden, in the northeast portion of the valley.

In 1866, there were approximately 745 acres of meadow in the valley, composed mainly of sedges, willows, and herbaceous plants adapted to live in a high water table. Riparian vegetation included willows, black cottonwood, big leaf maple, and white alder. Mixed conifer communities bordered the valley in higher and drier zones. California black oak communities were abundant, typically located on the edge of meadows. Live oak communities were found in drier parts of the talus slopes.

Between 1860 and 1890, agricultural use of the meadows increased and had a significant impact on plant communities in the valley. In the 1870s, Lamon’s orchards were producing apples, pears, peaches, plums, nectarines, plums and almonds. The garden had raspberries, blackberries, and strawberries, much of which was sold to tourists and hotelkeepers in the valley.

In 1879, a portion of the moraine at the base of El Capitan was blasted away and the water table in the valley dropped several feet. In addition, local ditching and stream diversion related to road and infrastructure development also altered natural hydrology. These changes had a profound effect on the valley’s stream system, vegetation, and the surrounding watershed. Leidig’s Meadow, historically a marshy area, became dry enough for cultivation and was planted in 1881. Stoneman Meadow was plowed for hay in 1887. In addition to the change in the water table, the intense use of the meadows by livestock and visitors caused change in meadow vegetation. Soils were compacted, and the absence of fire led to the loss of sedges and other meadow species, as well as establishment of more grazing-tolerant grasses and non-native species.

In 1880, the commissioners reported that the growth of a dense understory had blocked significant views and was crowding out meadow vegetation. Within a few years, Frederick Law Olmsted, among others, became involved in the controversy of how and whether to manage

Yosemite Valley vegetation to address these changes. Olmsted's opinion, which was an extension of the opinions he expressed in the 1865 Yosemite report, was that it was not unethical or contrary to the purposes of the park to manage vegetation according to artistic principals; but misguided management would be worse than no management.

By 1888, the commissioners issued a policy for management of vegetation in the valley with the goal of restoring the landscape to its 1851 appearance. The cultivation of crops was to be restricted to areas that had already been plowed and the remaining "natural" meadows were to be "preserved," an action that would require the removal of encroaching trees. Cutting other trees in the valley was permitted only under the supervision of a "landscape gardener," or other expert to ensure that the "natural" qualities of the valley were preserved. Although the principle of minimizing vegetation maintenance was clearly stated in the commissioner's report, it was also evident that a relatively high level of landscape maintenance would be required to maintain the open character of the meadows, oak woodlands, and long sweeping views across the valley floor.

By the 1920s, activities related to the management of vegetation included repeated burning of Cook's and Bridalveil Meadows to reduce encroaching vegetation, and clearing trees at Camp Curry that obstructed views. By 1927, meadowland in the valley had decreased to 430 acres. In the early 1930s, the NPS began a program of naturalization in the valley that was to continue, in various ways, over the next 50 years. Early efforts focused on the meadows, and in 1930 grazing and burning of the meadows were banned. Valley residents were ordered to stop cultivating exotic plants in their gardens. Trees in El Capitan Meadow were thinned, and other meadows were seeded with native grasses and wildflowers. During this period, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crews were responsible for a large amount this work. They transplanted, pruned, and removed vegetation to open vistas, screen buildings, and improve the appearance of developed areas. Landscape naturalization involved transplanting materials from numerous places outside the valley, and re-establishing them in developed areas. Plant materials brought in included azaleas, ferns, spice bushes, woodwardias, manzanitas, lungworts, chinquapins, lilies, cedar, aspen, lupines, maples, and mountain mahogany. The CCC also maintained trees throughout the valley along road corridors, cutting dead limbs from oak trees and routinely grubbing up seedling trees in meadows.

After World War II, the NPS continued its program of meadow management. In 1964, there were 349 acres of meadowland in the valley, and very few signs of agricultural land uses. At this time, approximately 18 percent of the known species on the valley floor were non-indigenous.

Although the composition and extent of specific plant communities in the valley have changed over the past 150 years, the general pattern and characteristics of vegetation in the valley—the pattern of meadow and woodlands—have retained integrity since the end of the historic period. Documentation indicates that although there has been a shift in the species composition of meadow communities since 1942, the overall number of acres classified as meadow in the valley has remained reasonably consistent. In 1866, there were approximately 745 acres of meadow. In 1942 there were approximately 385 acres and today there are approximately 360 acres. California black oak communities that have existed in the valley for over 3,000 years have also been reduced in size. Most of the reduction in California black oak woodland is attributed to the suppression of fire, changes in hydrology, and the subsequent increase in coniferous growth.

Another change in the cultural landscape related to vegetation is reflected in the number of new trees that have grown along roads and in developed areas since the historic period. These trees often obstruct views of significant features and resources.

Summary

In spite of the changes, vegetation in the valley, including the meadows, the riparian corridor, forest areas, and black oak stands, contribute to the historic character of the cultural landscape and retain overall integrity in terms of pattern and relationship throughout the valley floor.

Valley meadows and historic orchards that contribute to the significance of the Yosemite Valley historic district are described and counted in the Sites section that follows.

Circulation

Circulation within Yosemite Valley consists of a variety of vehicular, pedestrian, and equestrian routes. Northside and Southside drives create a framework for circulation around the valley, on either side of the Merced River. This experience is choreographed by a series of pull-offs oriented to specific vistas, with associated interpretative waysides and trails. Secondary roads provide access to individual major and minor developed areas. In addition to the vehicular routes, a network of hiking, biking, and bridle trails and pedestrian ways connect visitor attractions with lodging, employee housing, administrative offices, and visitor services.

During the period of early development in the valley, informal wagon roads routed tourists and sightseers to the hotels and scenic vistas along the edge of the valley. The first designated roads to reach the valley floor were the Coulterville Road and the Big Oak Flat Road. Both roads were completed in 1874 and entered the valley from the northwest. As the number of people visiting the valley increased, additional roads and bridges were developed, generally following the south side of the Merced River. The first river crossing was built in 1859 at the site of the historic Sentinel Bridge.

In 1865 Frederick Law Olmsted proposed a one-way park road system that would extend up the valley on one side of the Merced River and down the valley on the other side, sited to take advantage of scenic views. Although his plan was never implemented, by the 1880s a system of wagon roads had been built that routed traffic around the edges of the valley on both sides of the river, approximating the original concept for a loop drive.

As formal roads were developed in the valley, they were sited to expedite access to primary facilities and to take advantage of views. The location of roads nearer to valley walls allowed better views of the features on the opposite side of the valley. Because of the narrowness of the valley, the views of major features typically were improved by this distance, which created a foreground of open meadow, a stretch of river, or woodlands. By 1892, there were more than 20 miles of roads in the valley, 6 bridges, and 24 miles of bridle trails.

In 1900 the first automobile entered the valley, and three new river crossings (transverse roads) were added, generally dividing the valley into thirds and creating the opportunity for more diverse touring experiences as well as better access to visitor services. Additional crossings were added in the 1920s and 1930s. The experience of driving the loop included a series of pull-offs providing the opportunity to stop along the way and view a specific vista within the valley. These pull-offs allowed individual riders and carriages to set the timing and sequence of their experience of the Yosemite landscape. After World War I, as private automobiles became the dominant means of visiting Yosemite, the experience of driving the Northside and Southside Drives in a loop in a private automobile became a significant aspect of the overall experience of the Yosemite landscape.

The primary trails originating in the valley are the Mist Trail, Four Mile Trail, Yosemite Falls Trail, Pohono Trail, and the Valley Loop Trail. The Mist Trail was constructed in 1858, and was the first trail in the valley constructed specifically as a scenic route for visitors. Leading from the Happy Isles area to Vernal and Nevada Falls, it is one of the oldest trails in the valley. Completed in 1872, the Four Mile Trail leads from the base of Sentinel Rock to the summit of Glacier Point. Originally constructed with a rise of over 4,000 feet in four miles, it was historically a difficult and somewhat dangerous trail. In 1928, switchbacks were added to create a slightly less difficult climb, and today the trail is closer to five miles long. The Yosemite Falls Trail was built between

1873 and 1878, and is approximately three and one-half miles long. It leads from an area west of Yosemite Village (near the base of Eagle Peak) and follows Yosemite Creek on its west side to the top of Upper Yosemite Fall. The Valley Loop Trail dates from the 1920s and was originally built as a bridle trail, generally aligned along existing circulation routes. Thirteen additional miles were added to the Valley Loop Trail in 1928, requiring the construction of 14 bridges. Today, the Valley Loop Trail includes the entire remaining bridle trail system in the valley and it is approximately 21 miles long.

Summary

Since 1942, a variety of minor alterations have been made to the system of roads, trails, and pedestrian ways in Yosemite Valley. Beginning at the turn of the century, both Northside and Southside Drives have been repaved, realigned, and widened in places. Since their construction in 1882, the Northside and Southside Drives have been used as a one-way loop several different times; in 1972, this arrangement became a permanent condition. Portions of the loop road were closed to traffic at the same time, including Happy Isles Loop Road (east of Camp Curry) and the road to Mirror Lake.

Most of the bridges located in the valley date from the 1920s and 1930s. The Sentinel Bridge was replaced in 1994 and constructed 50 feet upstream from the location of the historic bridge. A variety of bridges built during the historic period are now closed to vehicular traffic and are used as trail bridges. Minor alterations have been made to all the historic trails. In 1966, a bike trail was constructed between Camp Curry and Sentinel Bridge. In the 1970s, a comprehensive bike trail plan was developed and its construction began in the 1980s. The trail is a 12-mile asphalt paved loop that originates at Yosemite Lodge and provides access to the major developed areas, trails, and sites in the east valley.

Today, the circulation system of vehicular, pedestrian, and equestrian routes in the Yosemite Valley retains a high degree of integrity to the historic period. The overall Northside-Southside loop drive system, with spur roads connecting to Yosemite Village, Camp Curry, the Ahwahnee Hotel, and Yosemite Lodge, is still the primary circulation system in the valley, and only a few sections of road have lost integrity. The river crossings, hiking, bridle, and pedestrian trail systems developed during the historic period also retain integrity, and a majority of their associated features are still intact and contribute to the significance of the cultural landscape.

Contributing resources in the historic district associated with circulation are listed in the "Structures" section that follows.

Land Use

Five major developed areas in the northern and eastern portions of Yosemite Valley support a variety of land use activities intended to meet the needs of park visitors and NPS administration: the Ahwahnee Hotel, Camp Curry, Yosemite Lodge, Housekeeping Camp, and Yosemite Village. Each of these provides guest accommodations, employee housing, visitor services, and recreation facilities. In addition, several parking areas, overnight camping areas, picnic areas, interpretative waysides, trails, stables, and other visitor resources exist outside of the five major areas.

Early use of Yosemite Valley by American Indians may have occurred as early as 5,000 to 7,000 years ago, with permanent settlement beginning about 3,500 years ago. American Indians managed and used the valley landscape for a variety of purposes, such as hunting, gathering, and collecting for the production of food and material culture.

Among the first Euro-American land uses in the valley was establishment of three camps by the Mariposa Battalion. One camp was located at the base of Bridalveil Fall, one at the mouth of Indian Canyon, and one near the later site of the Sentinel Hotel. Four years later James M. Hutchings organized the first expedition into the valley for tourists. In order to support the growing number of tourists visiting the valley, several of the meadows were used for agriculture and pasturing livestock. Meadows were planted with vegetables, orchards and small lawns were established near structures, and shade trees were planted adjacent to new development. By 1890, approximately 200 acres on the valley floor were under cultivation.

Campsites for visitors were generally located in the eastern part of the valley, sited along the riverbanks. Early campgrounds in the valley were somewhat ill-defined and early visitors to the valley often camped in any open space available. In the early 1920s, the NPS maintained 11 free public camps, each about one mile square in size. When the All-Year Highway opened in 1926, visitation to the valley increased dramatically with many visitors camped in meadows not normally used for campsites, compacting soils and damaging vegetation. In response, camping areas were formalized in designated areas along the Merced River. Camping was limited to 30 days in an effort to reduce crowding and accommodate the large numbers of campers requesting space. The biggest change to the campground area occurred in 1939 when several campsites were developed based on the Meinecke Camping System, implemented throughout the park service. By design, campsites were located and designed in a manner that minimized damage to vegetation, and offered parking spaces, room for tents, firepits, and articulated paths to minimize the trampling of vegetation. In 1941, an additional 94 campsites were added at Camp 11 using these design standards. After World War II, repeated flooding and denuding of the riverbanks as a result of intense use lead to redevelopment of several campgrounds. Work undertaken included reconfiguring campsites, rerouting circulation, and constructing new comfort stations. Today there are few tangible remains of the original campgrounds (only eight comfort stations).

Since World War II, traditional land use activities including hiking, swimming, camping, ice skating, picnicking, watching wildlife, bike riding, and sightseeing have continued to be part of the visitor experience in Yosemite Valley. The valley today retains most of the same land uses that existed at the end of the historic period (1942).

Land uses that are compatible with the historic character of the cultural landscape include:

- Ceremonial and Traditional Use (by Native peoples)
- Open Space (undeveloped and recreational)
- Housing (residential)
- Lodging (guest)
- Administration
- Camping
- Recreation
- Museum/Interpretation
- Stables/Kennels
- Visitor Services

Views and Vistas

Euro-Americans were not the first people to appreciate the natural features and wonders of Yosemite Valley. Writing in 1920, Ansel F. Hall described the American Indian use of the valley: "It may be added that the Indians, as their legends clearly indicate, were pretty fully aware of the extraordinary scenic features of the valley, and derived much satisfaction from them."

In 1865, writing as a member of the Commission, Frederick Law Olmsted advised that "the action taken by Congress with regard to the Yo Semite was doubtless taken in view of the particular value of its natural scenery, the purpose of its action was to give the public for all future time the greatest practicable advantage of that scenery." From the early exploration and descriptions of Yosemite Valley by Euro-Americans in the mid-19th century, views of the pastoral valley juxtaposed with towering geologic features and dramatic waterfalls have been recognized as the outstanding resources of the valley. Many of these views have become cultural icons. It is largely through the early writings, paintings, and photographs by nationally recognized artists and visitors that the beauty of the landscape came to the attention of the nation.

From the earliest development of visitor facilities in the valley, views have been a major influence in the siting and orientation of structures. For example the Lower Hotel, constructed in 1856, was sited to take advantage of the view to Yosemite Falls. As one visitor put it, "comforts were at a minimum, but surrounding beauty so great that few lodgers complained." In 1899, the Camp Curry site was selected part because of the views of Half Dome and other features. The number of people in the valley, and the structural development required to accommodate them, continued to impact the views and scenic qualities of the valley. In 1890, a visitor commented on the "miserable sheds, cabins and rookeries that are a blot on the landscape." Just four years later, the commissioners ordered the removal of dilapidated buildings because they "rendered the valley unsightly." As development in the valley continued, the primary developed areas also focused on maintenance of significant views. For example, the siting of the Ahwahnee Hotel in 1926 was influenced by the spectacular views it would provide, including views to Yosemite Falls.

Over the years, development in the valley increased and management of vegetation to retain scenic quality and significant views became a challenging issue that continues to the present day. In 1880 and again in 1886, the commissioner's report noted that dense underbrush on the valley floor had begun to block the valley's magnificent views. In 1890, trees were felled around the Stoneman House to permit views to Yosemite Falls. That same year the commissioners announced a policy to clear the valley of underbrush and restore the long, park-like vistas that existed in 1851. The practice of clearing away vegetation to maintain views became a regular duty of park staff. In a similar way, the meadows were also managed to retain a specific character. For example, through the early 1900s, pasturage was limited in the meadows to ensure that the grasses and flowers had time to seed.

In the east end of the valley, the landscape surrounding Mirror Lake was also managed to retain the views and reflective qualities of the lake. These activities included dredging the lake (beginning in 1898) and modifying a natural rock dam across its narrow opening to raise the water level. Maintenance practices between 1889 and 1971 at Mirror Lake (and other areas) actively preserved significant views and landscape compositions.

In 1976, during preparation of the General Management Plan (1980) for the park, the scenic resources of the valley were analyzed to determine their historic and existing conditions. Eleven

quintessential features were identified: Yosemite Falls, Half Dome, El Capitan, Bridalveil Fall, Three Brothers, Cathedral Rocks, Sentinel Rock, Glacier Point, North Dome, Washington Column, and Royal Arches. Mirror Lake was also analyzed. Although these features are visible from several areas in the valley, the analysis identified 12 points in the valley that were consistently selected by 19th-century photographers such as Carleton Watkins, Eadweard Muybridge, George Fiske, and Charles Weed. Also evaluated were the works of painters such as Albert Bierstadt, although in many cases compositions did not literally represent specific viewing points.

Based on this assessment, 11 sets of views have been identified as historically significant. Although some views have been somewhat obscured by the growth of vegetation, a comparison shows that many of the same vistas admired today are those that have attracted visitors to Yosemite Valley since the 1850s.

The following views contribute to defining the character of the cultural landscape in Yosemite Valley:

- Views from Valley View to El Capitan, Cloud's Rest, Half Dome, Sentinel Rock, Cathedral Rocks, Bridalveil Fall, and Leaning Tower
- Views from pull-off to Ribbon Fall, El Capitan, Bridalveil Fall, and Leaning Tower
- Views from Northside Drive to Bridalveil Fall
- Views from Northside Drive to El Capitan and Cathedral Rocks
- Views from intersection of "Taft Toe Road" (South Pit) and Southside Drive to Cathedral Rocks
- Views from Southside Drive to El Capitan and Three Brothers
- Views from Southside Drive to Merced River and El Capitan
- Views from Southside Drive to Sentinel Rock, Sentinel Fall
- Views from Sentinel Meadow to Three Brothers, Yosemite Falls, Indian Canyon, Half Dome, and Cathedral Rocks
- Views from Northside Drive to Half Dome and Glacier Point
- Views from the former parking lot at Mirror Lake to Mt. Watkins, Cloud's Rest, and Half Dome

Buildings

The buildings in Yosemite Valley today range in date from 1879 (the Yosemite Valley Chapel) to present day residences, shops, and concessionaire buildings. Almost every phase of American park architecture is represented. Above all, NPS Rustic style buildings are well represented, and the valley contains the second greatest concentration of buildings from this era in the national park system.[4] In addition to the NPS Rustic style buildings, there are three National Historic Landmarks (in the theme of architecture) in the valley: the LeConte Memorial Lodge (1903), the Ahwahnee Hotel (1927) and the Rangers' Club (1920). (The Ahwahnee Hotel and the Rangers' Club are addressed in their respective following sections.)

Shortly after Euro-Americans entered Yosemite Valley, a variety of structures were built to accommodate the growing number of tourists. Most of these early structures were vernacular in character, constructed of wood and canvas. Two hotels were constructed in 1857: the Lower and Upper hotels, both constructed as rough barn-like structures of pine-board. Between 1864 and 1889, two building clusters proliferated on the south side of the Merced River, becoming the Lower Village and the Old (Upper) Village. Between 1869 and 1915, a number of buildings within these areas were constructed. Notably, Leidig's Hotel was built west of the Lower Hotel, and the Cosmopolitan Bath House and Saloon opened in the Old Village in 1871. The Sentinel Hotel was constructed in the Old Village in 1876 (the Upper Hotel, later known as Cedar Cottage, became part of this complex), and the Stoneman House, near Stoneman Bridge, was built about 10 years later. By that year the commissioner's report complained that most of the buildings in the Yosemite Valley were made of wood and in poor condition, and did not blend well with their surroundings.

The only building that remains in the valley from these early periods is the Yosemite Valley Chapel, constructed in 1879. It was originally located in the Lower Village and moved to the Village in 1901, after most of the buildings in the Lower Village had fallen into disrepair. Unlike most of the early valley buildings, the Chapel was designed by an architect, Charles Geddes. It is a simple structure, small in size, with a steeple. The oldest building in Yosemite National Park, it was listed in the National Register in 1973.

Le Conte Memorial Lodge was constructed 1903 at the base of the cliffs below Glacier Point. It is a small stone building that was designed for the Sierra Club by architect John White (brother-in-law of Bernard Maybeck). The building was moved to its present location in 1919. White's emphasis on vertical lines reflected the steep pitches of the cliffs enclosing Yosemite Valley. The building was designed in the Tudor revival style and constructed of rough-cut granite laid in cement mortar in a rough course ashlar pattern. The plan of the building is a "Y" shape. A small concrete porch at the entrance fills in the space at the top of the "Y". The roof of the main section is predominantly a gable roof, but formed into a three-sided hip on the front elevation emphasizing the entrance. In 1987 the lodge was designated a National Historic Landmark.

Between 1906 and 1914, Yosemite Valley was administered by the U.S. Army, which established camp at the site of an American Indian village. By 1912, four frame cottages had been built east of the encampment. Three of these cottages were later moved to the residential area of Yosemite Village, and still exist. The army camp was transformed into the Yosemite Lodge in 1915.

[4] Only the National Historic Landmark district on the south rim of the Grand Canyon has more.

Today, Yosemite Lodge is located along the base of the north canyon wall, southwest of Yosemite Village, north of the Merced River, and immediately west of Yosemite Creek. The original Yosemite Lodge was constructed in 1915, and over the years has undergone numerous changes. Virtually the entire lodge complex has been rebuilt, including construction of a new registration building in 1956, (replacing the original lodge building) a number of mid-scale motel units, two restaurants, a cafeteria, bar, gift and general merchandise store, a specialty gift shop, bike rental shop, post office, and temporary employee housing. Temporary employee housing consists of mobile trailers clustered in a grove of trees west of the registration building. As a result of this development, no historic buildings dating to the period of significance remain in the Yosemite Lodge area.

Nine comfort stations were constructed in the public campgrounds during the 1920s, eight of which remain today. These are simple rustic frame buildings with shake gable roofs. Today, with the exception of the eight comfort stations from the 1920s, all of the remaining buildings in the campground area post-date the period of significance and do not contribute.

In 1927, the massive stable complex known as Kenneyville was removed to make way for the Ahwahnee Hotel, and a new, smaller stable complex was built to replace it. Now located farther east near the Lamon Orchard, today Kenneyville stables (or Concessioner stables) includes a mule barn, horse stable, five associated support buildings, six employee housing units and a comfort station. With the corrals and fencing through the complex, the cluster remains with good integrity today.

In 1931, a new Indian Village was constructed west of Camp 4 (Sunnyside Campground). It contained 15 residences, a garage, and a toilet and shower building. Although the village no longer exists, one of the Indian residences survives, (in a new location) in the maintenance area of Yosemite Village.

The Houskeeping Camp area, located along a meander of the Merced River west of Camp Curry, was a historical campground (Camp 16) that was developed with facilities and canvas-sided cabins in the postwar era. The camp sites consist of closely clustered cinderblock and canvas units. Service buildings include a camp store, and laundry and shower facilities. All of these structures post-date the period of significance and do not contribute to the historic district.

Buildings in Yosemite Village, the Ahwahnee Hotel, and the Camp Curry developed areas are described in the more detailed description sections for these areas in Part II.

Contributing buildings (28) in the Yosemite Valley historic district (valley-wide) are listed below. Numbers (e.g., B5), are keyed to Map A and Map A1 Detail. An asterisk (*) next to the building number indicates previously listed resources. For building descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

*B1	Yosemite Valley Chapel, built 1879, moved 1901 (Listed in NR, 1973)
*B2	Le Conte Memorial Lodge, 1903, moved 1919 (Listed in NR 1977; NHL, 1987)
B3	Concessioner Stables Office, 1927
B4	Concessioner Horse Stable, 1927
B5	Concessioner Mule Barn, 1926
B6	Concessioner Stables Linen Building, 1927

B7	Concessioner Stables Tack Building, 1927
B8	Concessioner Stables Harness Shop, 1927
B9	Concessioner Stables Blacksmith Shop, 1927
B10	Concessioner Stables Comfort Station, 1927
B11	Concessioner Stables Pony Tack Shed #1, 1926
B12	Concessioner Stables Pony Tack Shed #2, 1926
B13	Concessioner Stables Employee Residence, 1927
B14-B18	5 Concessioner Stables Employee Cabins, 1927
B19	Vernal Fall Comfort Station, 1934
B20-B27	8 Comfort Stations in Upper and Lower River campgrounds (Camps 15, 7),1922-1924
B28	Nature Center at Happy Isles (Fish hatchery, 1927)

Eighty-six (86) buildings in the Yosemite Valley historic district post-date the period of significance and are considered non-contributing resources. These include:

47 Buildings in the Yosemite Lodge complex
13 Buildings in the Houskeeping Cabins area
Comfort Station at Camp 4 (Sunnyside Campground)
Comfort Station at Yosemite Falls
22 Comfort Stations in Campgrounds
New Comfort Station at Happy Isles
New Happy Isles Concession Shack

Structures

Bridges have been a major component of the cultural landscape of the Yosemite Valley from the first years of Euro-American settlement. In 1859, Gustavus Hite built the first bridge in Yosemite Valley in the vicinity of the present Sentinel Bridge. By 1882 the first Pohono Bridge was in place spanning the Merced River.

Many of the early valley bridges were replaced with more substantial wood, steel, or combination wood and steel structures. In 1909 a "Report of Roads, Trail and Engineering Structures" by A. R. Ehrnbeck,1st Lieut. Corps of Engineers, stated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended that almost all the bridges in the valley be replaced by stone arch bridges.

Under NPS administration, most of the valley bridges were replaced. Sentinel Bridge was replaced in 1918 and was the sixth bridge to cross the Merced River in this general location. The Sentinel Bridge was the first attempt at a rustic bridge design for the valley. It was a three span bridge constructed of reinforced concrete faced with native granite (the bridge was later demolished). In 1919, the Stoneman Bridge was replaced with a reinforced concrete beam bridge that was not rustic in appearance (it was replaced in 1932). The Old Happy Isles Bridge was also rebuilt in 1921. Like the Stoneman Bridge, it was a reinforced concrete beam bridge, but no longer remains today.

The Yosemite Creek Bridge was one of the earliest masonry veneered bridges designed by NPS landscape architect Daniel Hull. The stone arch bridge design was further developed by the NPS in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Seven bridges replaced earlier bridges during this period: Ahwahnee Bridge (1928), Sugar Pine Bridge (1928), Tenaya Creek Bridge (1928), Clark's Bridge (1928), Pohono Bridge (1928), New Happy Isles Bridge (1929), and Stoneman Bridge (1932). The Happy Isles Bridge, and the Clark's Bridge are among those that Thomas Vint (Hull's successor as NPS chief landscape architect) considered to be among the agency's best designs. The El Capitan Bridge was also rebuilt in steel with a log veneer. It is a three span bridge that now has modern aluminum guardrails.

Numerous footbridges had been constructed crossing the Merced River and the many streams that flow through the valley; most have been replaced a number of times since original construction. The Housekeeping Footbridge and the Superintendent's Bridge, however, date to the period of significance.

Particularly significant bridges along trails and roads are listed below as separate structures. Additional historic bridges, culverts, or other structures along contributing trails and roads are included as part of the structure of the trail or road itself.

Contributing structures (39) in the valley-wide area are listed below. Numbers (e.g., S2), are keyed to Map A and Map A1 Detail. An asterisk (*) next to the structure number indicates previously listed resources. For building descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

*S1	Pohono Bridge, 1928; Listed in NR 1977
S2	Gauging Station at Pohono Bridge, 1916
S3	Valley Loop Trail, 1920s
S4	Bridalveil Fall Access Road
S5	Bridalveil Fall Trail

S6-S8	3 Bridalveil Fall Trail Bridges No.1-3, 1913
S9	El Capitan Bridge, 1933
S10	El Capitan Transverse Road
S11	Northside Drive, 1880s
S12	Southside Drive, 1880s
S13	Superintendent's Footbridge, 1937
*S14	Yosemite Creek Bridge, 1922; Listed in NR in 1977
S15	Lower Yosemite Fall Trail
S16-21	6 Yosemite Fall Trail Bridges
S22	Housekeeping Footbridge, 1929
S23	Sentinel Bridge Transverse Road
*S24	Stoneman Bridge 1932; Listed in NR 1977
*S25	Ahwahnee Bridge 1928; Listed in NR 1977
*S26	Sugar Pine Bridge 1928; Listed in NR 1977
*S27	Clark's Bridge, 1928; Listed in NR 1977
S28	Eastern Portion of Loop Drive
S29	Mirror Lake Road
*S30	Tenaya Creek Bridge, 1928; Listed in NR in 1977
*S31	New Happy Isles Bridge, 1929; Listed in NR in 1977
S32	Happy Isles Middle Bridge, 1997 reconstruction
S33	Happy Isles West Bridge, 1997 reconstruction
S34	Mist Trail, 1858
S35	Four Mile Trail, 1872/1928
S36	Concessioner Stables Corral, 1927
S37	Concessioner Stables Feeders, 1927
S38	Concessioner Stables Fence, 1927
B39	Yosemite Fall Trail, 1888

One-hundred-thirty (130) structures in the Yosemite Valley historic district are considered non-contributing resources because they post-date the period of significance. These include:

3 sections of Northside and Southside Drives (See Map A; sections indicated date after the period of significance)
Sentinel Bridge
Bike Trail
Swinging Footbridge, 1966
Vault Toilet at Swinging Bridge Area
All Yosemite Lodge Roads and Parking (counted as 1 structure)
Yosemite Lodge Swimming Pool (1916, no integrity))
All Houskeeping roads and parking lot (counted as 1 structure)
88 Housekeeping Tent Cabins (cinderblock walls, canvas roof, post-date the period of significance)
5 (All) Campground Loop Roads in Campgrounds
2 Amphitheaters in Campgrounds
5 Kiosks at Campground Entrances
Kiosk at Sunnyside Campground
2 Vault Toilets at Church Bowl

Vault Toilet at Cathedral Beach
4 Vault Toilets at Sentinel/Yellowpine areas
Vault Toilet at Mirror Lake
Parking lot at Yosemite Falls
Road and Parking at new El Capitan Picnic Area (counted as one structure)
Vault Toilet at El Capitan Picnic Area
Vault Toilet at Valley View
Parking Area at Valley View
Concessioner Kennels at Stables
Happy Isles Water Tank
Happy Isles Water Tank Access Road
Parking lot at Happy Isles
Wilderness Trailhead Parking Lot
Parking lot at Camp 6

Sites

The meadows of Yosemite Valley are fewer in number and smaller in size than they were during the significant period, yet they are still characteristic landscape features. They remain meadows today partly because of natural soil and moisture regimes, and because of the burning, grubbing, and clearing practices that date back thousands of years. A history of intensive use and management (in some cases), as well as the iconic significance of the meadows as elements of Yosemite scenery (in all cases), make the Yosemite meadows contributing sites in the historic district.

The three apple orchards in the district are the last significant landscape features associated with the extensive 19th-century history of homesteading and early tourism in the valley. The Lamon Orchard and meadow are the best-preserved examples of this theme. Hutchings Orchard is also a contributing site for the same reason, although it is in poor condition. (Curry Orchard is discussed in Section 7: Part Two, Camp Curry Developed Area.)

Fern Spring is a natural spring that was modified (enclosed) and landscaped by the CCC. Mirror Lake is included as a contributing site because of its long history of dredging, vegetation management practices to enhance scenic qualities, and manipulation of the outflow (damming) to enhance and preserve the scenic qualities of the lake. Site work, including the construction of trails, rock walls, and overlooks, and the 100 years of landscaping around Mirror Lake, was also based on designs for the site advocated by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

Camp 4 is a historically significant site for its association with the growth and development of rock climbing as a recreational activity within the valley. During its period of significance, Camp 4 earned national and international acclaim as the center of modern rock climbing. The approximately 10-acre site, situated northwest of the Yosemite Lodge area, includes the open boulder-strewn areas, the parking area, and the more concentrated campground area containing original restrooms and rescue camp. The area served as a place for training, ascent planning, and information and equipment exchange. The individual campsites do not retain historical integrity and are therefore not considered contributing resources. In 2003, Camp 4 was listed as a historic site in the National Register of Historic Places.

Contributing sites (13) in the Yosemite Valley historic district are listed below. Numbers (e.g. SITE 1) are keyed to Map A. An asterisk (*) indicates a previously listed resource.

Site 1 Bridalveil Meadow
Site 2 El Captain Meadow
Site 3 Slaughterhouse Meadow
Site 4 Sentinel Meadow
Site 5 Leidig Meadow
Site 6 Cook's Meadow
Site 7 Ahwahnee Meadow
Site 8 Stoneman Meadow
Site 9 Hutchings Orchard
Site 10 Lamon Orchard and Meadow (Listed in the NR in 1975)
Site 11 Fern Springs
Site 12 Mirror Lake
*Site 13 Camp 4 (Sunnyside Campground; Listed in 2003)

SECTION 7: PART TWO
DESCRIPTION OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPED AREAS

YOSEMITE VILLAGE

Background

Yosemite Village was known for many years as the New Village because it was a 1920s planned replacement for the more ramshackle Old Village that had evolved since the 19th century. The Old Village was demolished over a period of decades as the new Yosemite Village was built, and today only the Yosemite Chapel (1879) remains of the older settlement.

The construction of a new village had been a preoccupation of the Department of the Interior since at least 1914. The idea of razing older, usually poorer communities and replacing them with planned, usually picturesque villages is as old as the park idea itself. In 18th-century Britain, for example, planned villages with land enclosures and vast private parks sometimes were created to house villagers displaced from their old villages. The new village often would feature a group of pseudo-vernacular cottages arranged to form an element of an overall landscape scene. In the 19th century, park improvements in cities on both sides of the Atlantic often involved clearing slums and replacing them with uninhabited scenery.

By the early 20th century, national park planners and managers at the Department of the Interior began planning so-called improvements that were very much in this tradition of park development. The most important laboratory for these early experiments would be the park area that, by that time, was displaying the most serious problems associated with unplanned development: Yosemite Valley.

Under the state board of commissioners between 1864 and 1906, Yosemite Valley had been developed haphazardly, due to the fact that entrepreneurs experienced minimal interference from state government. Investments, at least in the early days, remained limited in scale, and many of the early valley hotels and other buildings were simple or even crude. Sited to maximize proximity to scenic features and to take advantage of the Merced River or other streams to dispose of garbage and sewage, these early tourist facilities caused some damage to natural systems while serving (often inadequately) what was still a very small number of visitors. Two conglomerations of hotels, cottages, and residences emerged out of this period: the Lower Village, on the south side of the Merced near its confluence with Sentinel Creek; and the Old (Upper) Village, on the same side of the river, farther east at the historical location of the Sentinel Bridge. By the 1890s, the Old Village was thriving, while the Lower Village site began to be abandoned in favor of the upstream community.

By the early 20th century, as greater numbers of tourists began to arrive at Yosemite Valley, the 19th-century accommodations began to seem unacceptable to a number of advocates. In 1905, John Muir and others succeeded in having the valley "receded" back to the federal government so that it could be administered as part of the surrounding Yosemite National Park that had been created in 1890. The U.S. Army then administered the valley until 1915. During that time the Army established their headquarters (the future Yosemite Lodge) and improved sanitation, roads, and other infrastructure.

In 1914, however, the condition of Yosemite Valley still seemed deplorable, at least to some. That year, a successful businessman (and longtime park advocate) Stephen T. Mather wrote to

his U.C. Berkeley classmate, Franklin K. Lane, who had just been appointed secretary of the interior, complaining about conditions in Yosemite Valley. Lane was already initiating a reform of the management of the national park system, and had appointed Adolph C. Miller as assistant to the secretary for national parks (the first time such a position existed at the Department of the Interior). Miller in turn had hired Horace M. Albright as his assistant, and also a San Francisco landscape architect named Mark Daniels, who was asked to complete a plan for the redevelopment of the floor of Yosemite Valley. At the end of 1914, Lane asked Mather to come to Washington to replace Miller. Two years later, Mather and Albright had engineered the creation of the National Park Service (NPS) within the Department of the Interior, and Mather became its first director.

At the heart of the NPS mission was the need to improve what were considered substandard visitor facilities in national parks. Yosemite Valley was at the top of the list of areas that needed new planning and capital investment. By 1914, Mark Daniels had already produced a plan for a new "park village" on the north side of the Merced that would allow demolition of the buildings in the Old Village across the river. Daniels' plan was not implemented, but did set the basic premises for park village planning: unified, pseudo-vernacular architectural theme; strong visual relationships between public spaces and nearby natural features; zoning of residential, public, and commercial areas; and hierarchy of different street types. These ideas were drawn from the best of contemporary American town planning and "garden city" planning as practiced in Britain.

Mather soon replaced Daniels, but these basic ideas continued to be featured in new plans. In 1918, Mather hired a landscape architect, Charles Punchard, who was replaced two years later by another designer, Daniel Hull. Each of the new proposals for a new village had it located on the north side of the Merced River, opposite the Old Village. In 1920, Mather paid for the construction of a new ranger dormitory, the Rangers' Club, at the site of the future village (several other residential bungalows had been built in the area by that time). By the early 1920s, the Los Angeles architect Myron Hunt was also involved in the village planning. Hunt, Hull, and Hull's assistant Thomas Vint, devised a complete village plan, and in 1924, Hunt's Administration Building became a cornerstone of the new "plaza" at the center of the new village. Soon, several other buildings were constructed, including Herbert Maier's Museum, Gilbert Stanley Underwood's Post Office, and other buildings that defined a central arrival point, civic plaza, and parking lot at the heart of the new village. By that time, a separate residential subdivision was also laid out, with curvilinear streets and more Art & Crafts-style bungalows. A new maintenance area also was taking shape to the north of the central plaza. Each area of the village was well separated by vegetation, topography, and design, to keep each land-use zone independent of the others.

By 1925, the new village—Yosemite Village—had taken shape. The Old Village lingered on for decades, however, and the last vestiges were only removed under Mission 66, the post-World War II national park development program. Yosemite Village was the most significant early park village planning project, simply because it was first, and it was in Yosemite, the park that soon had more visitors and more automobiles (and more problems associated with a high level of use) than any other. But Yosemite Village does not survive with the best integrity of early park villages. During the Mission 66 period, the village was redeveloped with a new visitor center, store, restaurant, and other facilities. Only a few years later, the village was again altered as cars were banished, and the central plaza was redesigned as a pedestrian mall. The Yosemite Village Historic District was first listed in the National Register in 1977.

Natural Systems and Features

As was the case for almost all the development in Yosemite Valley, the natural systems and features of Yosemite offered opportunities and constraints that shaped the evolution of the cultural landscape.

The Yosemite Village site was on the sunny side of the valley, a consideration as plans were being made to make the valley more of a year-round destination. The site chosen for the village was also central with regard to established patterns of circulation and development in the valley, which historically had been centered on the Sentinel Bridge site (the Old Village was just across the river). There were many reasons for the general popularity of this area, but exceptional views of nearby Yosemite Falls were among the most important. Waterfalls in general, and Yosemite Falls in particular, were the premier visual feature of the park in the 1920s, contributing to the value of the village as a visitor destination.

In addition, the site offered stands of black oak in the area designated for development of NPS employee housing and maintenance facilities. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.'s input on the design of the residential area, which included use of curvilinear roads, setbacks, front lawns, and a functional separation between utility areas and public spaces, create a somewhat suburban character for this area of the village. Olmsted advocated the siting of structures under the canopy of the black oaks in order to screen the visual impacts of development when viewed from Glacier Point and other points along the top of the ridge.

The other major natural system limiting and influencing the extent of development in Yosemite Village is the close proximity of cliffs and talus slopes to the northern edge of the village. This area continues to be subject to periodic rockfall and continues to effect land use and services.

The natural systems and features that historically influenced siting and development of Yosemite Village remain. Today, the village site remains above the flood plain of the Merced River. Historic views to Yosemite Falls also remain, although growth of vegetation within the plaza areas has reduced the number of vantage points and open views that historically existed from this area. The open oak woodland through the residential area also remains, although the condition of many individual trees has been impacted by current water regimes (maintaining irrigated lawns under the trees).

Spatial Organization

Existing topography and vegetation played a key role in the planning for Yosemite Valley and the design of the new village. Many elements of the design were typical of what would soon be the standard for park village planning in several parks, including Grand Canyon, Mount Rainier, Crater Lake, and others.

Central in most park villages was the open plaza, which was lined by public buildings and major visitor facilities. By design, the plaza was a civic zone in which the public administration of the park was symbolically expressed through the architectural façades of important government buildings. The Yosemite Village plaza was a prototypical example, with the Administration Building, Museum, Post Office, and two photographer's studios (important public service buildings at the time) defining the space of the plaza. The Rangers' Club, set slightly back from the south edge of the plaza, also helped define it, although that building retained a level of separation from the village, sited across what was the main entry road. The village plaza created

a sense of arrival and a sense of place for the entire village. Like all designed park villages of this era, the plaza inevitably became a parking lot, which might not have been a problem in the 1920s, but became one as the number of cars grew beyond any anticipation.

The other zones of the village were arranged to be conveniently near one another, but well separated in terms of circulation and visual links by topography, vegetation, and cluster siting. The NPS maintenance area to the north of the central plaza, for example, is sited farther into the rockfall zone at the base of the talus slope, forming the outer edge of the village. The concessioner utility area to the east (now the main parking lot) is set apart from the central civic zone. This area has since become the main point of arrival into the village, significantly altering the historic design and intent of the village by routing visitors to a utility area that was not meant to be a primary public space.

The NPS and the concessioner utility areas each had residential zones associated with them. The NPS bungalows were to the south and west of the NPS utility area, and the concessioner housing was to the north and east of their utility buildings. In both cases, the residential areas were similarly separated from both the utility yards and the public plaza, while remaining conveniently within walking distance of both. While the open character of the plaza encouraged views out towards landscape features, the residential areas featured narrower, curvilinear, tree-lined streets that encourage inward views. These more private, intimate spaces enhance the residential character of these zones.

In terms of broad patterns and relationships, the overall spatial organization of the village remains from the original design. Changes to the central civic plaza (conversion to a "mall") as well as modifications in the visitor arrival sequence are the most significant changes since the period of significance. In spite of these changes, the designated land use areas originally defined in the design of the village remain, including the core cluster of public buildings, the residential area, maintenance, concessionaire housing, and services.

Significant characteristics of Spatial Organization in the Yosemite Village developed area are:

- Response to existing topography and vegetation in the organization and layout of different buildings and functional zones.
- Zoning of land-use areas, including civic, residential, and utility zones; division of zones through design of circulation, use of vegetation, and topography.
- Compactness of overall plan that allows residential and other zones to be separate, but conveniently within walking distance of each other.
- Hierarchy of street types, including wide main drives, narrower residential streets and alleys, and pedestrian paths.
- Definition of main public areas by the façades of public buildings, reinforced by foundation plantings, as well as natural topography and vegetation.

Vegetation

The original vegetation of the village area was mostly oak woodland, interspersed with stands of mixed conifers, especially ponderosa pines and incense-cedars. A primary goal in the original design and development of the village involved using the site's natural vegetation to screen structures and delineate public spaces and government functions. As a result, a significant amount of vegetation was preserved to become a feature of the new village landscape.

Large quantities of additional vegetation were added to the village landscape between 1916 and World War II. New planting emphasized use of native vegetation collected and transplanted from nearby areas and arranged in artistic compositions. The goal was to mirror natural plant communities and associations by massing plants in groupings often found in nature. This approach to planting design became known as "landscape naturalization" and was employed in many other national parks during this period. By 1930 it included a specific prohibition of non-native plants, for both scientific and aesthetic reasons.

Foundation plantings and other plantings around the public buildings sought to reinforce the effects and compositions of NPS Rustic façades, rather than obscure them behind a wall of vegetation. In the residential areas, existing and newly planted black oaks took on particular significance, lending the area an aesthetic unity and overall character. With houses well set back on main streets, significant numbers of black oaks are dispersed in lawn areas, producing a particularly pleasing effect. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. was also concerned with black oaks in the residential areas, advocating their preservation because they screened the views from above, and prevented the development from being an eyesore when seen from Glacier Point (or other viewpoints on the rim of the valley).

Existing and planted vegetation in the village also played an important role in emphasizing the divisions between zones in the village, and in screening the utility areas from public view.

Management of vegetation to preserve views in the village also must have been an important concern, since the views from the plaza area, in particular, were very impressive.

A major planting area was established during redevelopment of the plaza during the Mission 66 period. These plantings were established based on other design principles and have matured, in some cases obscuring historic views from the central plaza area. In addition, since the 1970s, different management philosophies have led to the revegetation of much of the plaza area, and other areas of the village.

Today, many of the views that influenced selection of the village site and the organization of its subsequent development have been lost, as trees and other vegetation have matured. The NPS Rustic buildings on the plaza are also obscured by vegetation, reducing their effect in defining the plaza and imbuing it with the presence of the civic administration of the park. Although some vegetation from the historic period survives in the village (specifically the black oaks and some foundation plantings), much of the existing vegetation post-dates the period of significance.

Significant vegetation in the Yosemite Village developed area that contributes to the character of the cultural landscape includes:

- Black oaks along streets in residential areas.
- Other specimen trees preserved as the village was developed.
- Trees and other vegetation that serve to screen different land-use zones in the village from one another.
- Original foundation plantings that reinforced the visual effect of public building façades.

Circulation

Arrival to Yosemite Village was originally from the west, on what is now Village Drive. Pulling into the plaza area, therefore, visitors were presented with the façade of the Museum, flanked

by the Administration Building to the left. Looking up, Yosemite Point and Yosemite Falls would be looming directly above. Arrival is now at what was designed to be the concessioner utility area, a situation that greatly reduces the sense of arrival or place.

As in most NPS park villages, circulation at Yosemite Village is characterized by a hierarchy of street and path types. Village Drive was a wide, generous road that historically opened onto the open, wide space of the village plaza. Today, a similarly wide road still separates the plaza area from the cemetery and residential subdivision to the west. This road leads directly to the NPS maintenance area, offering direct access for service vehicles without passing through the public or residential areas of the village.

In the NPS utility area (and to a degree in the concessioner utility area) larger buildings are arranged orthogonally, creating rectangular yards and broad, straight streets with no sidewalks. This pattern is essentially a formalization of the utilitarian nature of early roads and circulation through these areas.

In the NPS residential area, the narrower streets typically follow a curvilinear grid that generally follows the topography. The fronts of houses face the streets, while the backs and garages face service alleys, which are narrower in width and are often cul-de-sacs. Some houses are sited on short cul-de-sacs, forking off main streets.

In the concessioner subdivision, a row of residences (Ahwahnee Row) directly faces Ahwahnee Meadow, screened by dogwoods and shrubs and separated from the meadow by a narrow street that is now a trail. The wider alley to the rear services the residences, as well as a group of larger, dormitory style residences to the west. This unusual arrangement is somewhat inside out, with the alley being the wider street and the main means of access.

Overall, there is a high degree of integrity related to circulation in the village. The elaborate hierarchy of street types is still intact in the residential and utility areas. The change in the main entrance to the village and the "pedestrianization" of the plaza area are the greatest changes from the historic period.

Contributing and non-contributing structures relating to circulation are listed in the Structures section.

Land Use

Today, land use in Yosemite Village is similar to what it was during the period of significance. Land use has been and still is heavily weighted towards visitor uses of many types. Although there are no overnight accommodations in the village, there are several restaurants, shops, the main park visitor center, two photography studios (shops), the park museum, post office, and the park administration building.

Yosemite Village also has extensive historic residential areas for NPS, park partners, and concessioner employees. A large maintenance area includes workshops of all types, warehouses, and areas for outdoor stockpiling of materials.

Views and Vistas

Important views from the public areas of Yosemite Village include views of Yosemite Falls, Half Dome, Yosemite Point, Lost Arrow, Sentinel Rock, and Cathedral Range.

These impressive views historically defined and enhanced the character of the village, and created a unique sense of place. As maturing vegetation steadily obscures these views, there is an increasing impact on the integrity of the historic vista from the village. In spite of these changes, the following historic views remain from within the village and are significant to the character of the cultural landscape of the Yosemite Village developed area:

- Views from the plaza area up to Yosemite Point, Yosemite Falls, Half Dome, and Sentinel Rock.
- Views from the NPS residential area to Yosemite Falls and Yosemite Point.
- Views from the concessioner residential area across Ahwahnee Meadow to North Dome and Half Dome.

Buildings and Structures

Yosemite Village has one of the largest and most significant collections of NPS Rustic style buildings in the national park system. Both concessioner and NPS buildings represent a range of rustic types and building materials. Rustic style architecture was a type of design and style of construction used throughout the national parks between 1916 and 1942. The style expressed the philosophy that buildings should be in harmony with the landscape and in harmony with each other. Oversized stone and logs were used in construction to ensure that the mass of the building appeared to fit within the setting. Horizontal lines were used to lower the profile of the structure, and vegetation was often massed along the foundations of the structure to enhance its natural appearance and blend with the surrounding landscape. Examples of Rustic style buildings in Yosemite Village include the park Administration Building, the Museum, Post Office, NPS residential buildings, and a variety of utilitarian buildings and small offices.

Charles Sumner's Rangers' Club (1920) was a gift of Stephen Mather to the national park system. The building met the need for not only housing, but also a private gathering and dining place for rangers. This building was representative of his commitment to an architectural aesthetic appropriate for the parklands that he was charged to manage. The foundations of that aesthetic, which he and others formulated, guided the design of park buildings through World War II. It is a two-and-one-half story wood frame structure with granite rubble foundation. The building is U-shaped in plan with a small courtyard on the inside of the U. Exterior walls are mainly finished with redwood shingles. The building is a fine example of stick-style architecture and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987.

Myron Hunt's Administration Building (1924) was the first major feature of the new civic plaza at the heart of the new Yosemite Village. The building also set a standard for the architectural theme of several public buildings in Yosemite Village: an overhanging wooden second story, and a rough boulder masonry first story. To some extent, the Administration Building even set the standard for administration buildings in other parks (such as Mount Rainier), which follow the same pattern. Herbert Maier's Museum (1925) was one of the influential early examples of this building type by the architect, who more than any other, established the NPS Rustic style. Gilbert Stanley Underwood's Post Office (1925) was a disappointment to the architect: he felt too many changes were made to his design. (His other Yosemite commission, the Ahwahnee Hotel, however, was his great masterpiece.)

Both the NPS and the concessioner residential areas feature a remarkable collection of period bungalows and other residences, ranging in date throughout the historic period. Although most of the maintenance buildings are fairly straightforward and functional in character, at least two structures are rather unique; the primary NPS maintenance building (1935) is a relatively innovative concrete building; and the concessioner store is also an important building in scale and design, reminiscent of an Arts & Crafts barn.

The Middle Tecoya residential area is located between a large parking lot and the Valley medical clinic. Most of the residences in this area are one-and one-half story wood-frame buildings constructed in 1942. In general they are smaller than other housing in the village area, are more closely spaced, and skillfully sited away from public view within a forested area. Middle Tecoya as a whole, reflects some of the architectural features of Bay Area residential design from the late WWII period, including rectangular forms, flat roofs, large single-pane wood windows, and several types of wood siding combined in one building.

Structures in Lower Tecoya include dormitories, apartments and associated laundry rooms, the Ahawanee Row Houses, small cottages, cabins, and curvilinear roads connects the housing units.

The Ahwahnee Row Houses are a group of structures built in the 1920s on the east side of Lower Tecoya. Many of these one-and two-story residences have enclosed patios and freestanding wood garages. Screen fencing, is visually prominent because of the close spacing of the buildings and the narrowness of the street corridor. The Row Houses form a boundary between a densely developed and coniferous Lower Tecoya area and the open Ahwahnee meadow.

To the west of the row houses are four three-story wood dormitory buildings and an adjacent kitchen facility. These structures are larger than the nearby Ahwahnee Row Houses. Half of the dormitories in Lower Tecoya were constructed in the late 1920s and significantly altered in the 1930s, while the other half were constructed in the 1930s and remain unchanged.

The Lower Tecoya dorms are long, rectangular, three-story volumes with medium-pitch roofs and small shed dormers that articulate the top story. These relatively large buildings are reduced in scale by their roof form and varied siding patterns. The main roof is a simple gable, with the ridge continuing over projecting bays at the ends of the buildings. Main entrances are placed under gables at the ends of the buildings. The use of a corrugated metal roof is a unique element in the Village. These features help to unify the group while they differentiate the housing area from the maintenance and commercial facilities that are in close proximity.

The area includes two vehicular and two pedestrian bridges over Indian Creek.

Contributing buildings (138) in the Yosemite Village developed area are listed below. Numbers (e.g. B6) are keyed to Map B. An asterisk (*) by the building number indicates previously listed resources. For building descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

*B1 Superintendent's House (1911/1929; Residence No. 1;Listed in NR in 1978)
*B2 Superintendent's Garage
*B3 Yosemite Village Residence 2, 1911, moved to Yosemite Village in 1929
*B4 Yosemite Village Residence 3, 1937
*B5 Yosemite Village Residence 4, 1911, moved to Yosemite Village in 1929
*B6 Yosemite Village Residence 5, 1912, moved to Yosemite Village in 1929

*B7 Yosemite Village Residence 6, 1920
*B8 Yosemite Village Residence 7, 1920/1939
*B9 Yosemite Village Residence 8, 1920/1939
*B10 Yosemite Village Residence 9, 1922
*B11 Yosemite Village Residence 10, 1922
*B12 Yosemite Village Residence 11, 1924
*B13 Yosemite Village Residence 12, 1922
*B14 Yosemite Village Residence 13, 1914, moved to Yosemite Village in 1929
*B15 Yosemite Village Residence 14, 1924/1938
*B16 Yosemite Village Residence 16, 1923, rehabilitated 1926
*B17 Yosemite Village Residence 17, 1926
*B18 Yosemite Village Residence 18, 1919
*B19 Yosemite Village Residence 19, 1919
*B20 Yosemite Village Residence 20, 1918
*B21 Yosemite Village Residence 21, 1919
*B22 Yosemite Village Residence 34, 1930
*B23 Yosemite Village Residence 35, 1938
*B24 Yosemite Village Residence 36, 1937
*B25 Yosemite Village Residence 37, 1938
*B26 Yosemite Village Residence 39, 1927
*B27 Yosemite Village Residence 40, 1927
*B28 Yosemite Village Residence 41, 1937
*B29 Yosemite Village Residence 42, 1928
*B30 Yosemite Village Residence 43, 1928
*B31 Yosemite Village Residence 44, 1929
*B32 Yosemite Village Residence 45, 1929
*B33 Yosemite Village Apartment Building 46, 1930
*B34 Yosemite Village Residence 47, 1931
*B35 Yosemite Village Residence 48, 1931
*B36 Yosemite Village Girls' Dormitory 54, 1923
*B37 Yosemite Village Girls' Dormitory 55, 1923
*B38 Yosemite Village Girl's Club, 1923
*B39 Yosemite Village Girls' Dormitory 58, 1932
*B40 Yosemite Village Girls' Dormitory 59, 1932
*B41 Yosemite Village Apartment Building 60, 1934
*B42 Yosemite Village Residence 61,1934
*B43 Yosemite Village Residence 62, 1934
*B44 Yosemite Village Residence 63, 1934
*B45 Yosemite Village Residence 66, 1940
*B46 Yosemite Village Residence 67, 1940
*B47 Yosemite Village School Residence 636, 1928

*B48 Yosemite Village Residence 637, 1937
*B49 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 636, 1937
*B50 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 3, 1938
*B51 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 48, 1933
*B52 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 43, 1929
*B53 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 41, 1927
*B54 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 40, 1919
*B55 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 45, 1933
*B56 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 14, 1924
*B57 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 12, 1922
*B58 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 11, 1927
*B59 Yosemite Village Garage for Residence 6, 1924
*B60 Yosemite Village Woodshed for Residence 21, 1919
*B61 Yosemite Village Woodshed for Residence 19, 1919
*B62 Yosemite Village Woodshed for Residence 8, 1920
*B63 Museum Building, 1926
*B64 Administration Building, 1924
*B65 Rangers' Club, 1920
*B66 Rangers' Club Transformer House, 1920
*B67 Rangers' Club Garage, 1920
*B68 Best Studio & Ansel Adams Darkroom, ca. 1925
*B69 Ansel Adams Residence, ca. 1925
*B70 Ansel Adams Duplex Residence, ca. 1925
*B71 Pohono Indian Studio, 1925
*B72 Yosemite Village US Post Office, 1924
B73 Yosemite Valley Group Utility Building (Fort Yosemite), 1935
B74 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Equipment Shed (HVAC-Siberia Storage), 1932
B75 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Camp 1 Comfort Station, 1924
B76 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Camp 1 Kitchen, ca. 1920
B77 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Camp 1 Cabin #1, 1923
B78 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Camp 1 Cabin #2, 1923
B79 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Warehouse (529 and 532), 1916
B80 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Supply Warehouse (530), 1916
B81 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Equipment Shed (516), 1921
B82 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Equipment Shed (518), 1920
B83 Yosemite Valley Utility Area Equipment Shed (519), 1926
B84 Middle Tecoya Residence 126, 1942
B85 Middle Tecoya Residence 127, 1942
B86 Middle Tecoya Residence 128, 1942
B87 Middle Tecoya Residence 129, 1942
B88 Middle Tecoya Residence 130, 1942

B89 Middle Tecoya Residence 131-132, 1942
B90 Middle Tecoya Residence 133, 1942
B91 Middle Tecoya Residence 134-135, 1942
B92 Middle Tecoya Residence 136, 1942
B93 Middle Tecoya Residence 139, 1942
B94 Middle Tecoya Garage for Residence, ca. 1942
B95 Middle Tecoya Garage for Residence, ca. 1942
B96 Middle Tecoya Garage for Residence, ca. 1942
B97 Lewis Memorial Hospital (Medical Clinic), 1929
B98 Nurses' Quarters and Garage, 1931
B99 Yosemite Village Residence 49, Doctor's Residence, 1931
B100 Yosemite Village Residence 65, 1939
B101 Lower Tecoya Dormitory A & B, 1930s
B102 Lower Tecoya Dormitory C & D, 1920s
B103 Lower Tecoya Dormitory E, 1930s
B104 Lower Tecoya Dormitory F, 1920s or 1930s
B105 Lower Tecoya Dormitory Y, 1920s
B106 Lower Tecoya Residence 119, 1925-1930
B107 Lower Tecoya Residence 118, 1925-1930
B108 Lower Tecoya Residence 117, 1925-1930
B109 Lower Tecoya Residence 116, 1925-1930
B110 Lower Tecoya Residence 115, 1925-1930
B111 Lower Tecoya Residence 114, 1925-1930
B112 Lower Tecoya Residence113, 1920
B113 Lower Tecoya Residence 112, 1922-1924
B114 Lower Tecoya Residence 111, 1920
B115 Lower Tecoya Residence 110, 1922-1924
B116 Lower Tecoya Residence 109, 1922-1924
B117 Lower Tecoya Residence 108, 1922-1924
B118 Lower Tecoya Residence 107, 1920
B119 Lower Tecoya Residence105/106, 1920s
B120 Lower Tecoya Residence103/104, 1920s
B121 Lower Tecoya Residence101/102, 1925-1930
B122 Lower Tecoya Residence 100, ca. 1920s-1930s
B123 Lower Tecoya Residence 99, ca. 1920s-1930s
B124 Lower Tecoya Residence 98, ca. 1920s-1930s
B125 Lower Tecoya Residence 92-97, 1925-1930
B126 Lower Tecoya Residences 86-91, 1925-1930
B127 Lower Tecoya Laundry Cabin, 1930s
B128-B132 Lower Tecoya Garages, 1920s-1930s
B133 Concessioner Headquarters Building, 1937-1939

B134 Curry Garage (Concessioner Garage), 1920
B135-B138 4 Garages north of Curry Garage, 1920s

Fifty-four (54) buildings in the Yosemite Village area post-date the period of significance and are considered non-contributing resources. These include:

Visitor Center Comfort Station at Visitor Center
Degnan's Post Office
Degnan's Garage
Concessioner Warehouse
Magistrate Court Pacific
Bell Building
NPS Stables Barn
Yosemite Village Store
Bank and Art Activity Center
9 Storage Buildings in NPS Utility Area
2 Shops in NPS Utility Area
Lower Siberia Shed in Utility Area
Ambulance Garage in Utility Area
Forestry Office in Utility Area
Gas Station in Utility Area
2 Offices in Utility Area
7 Residences
School
Concessioner Dormitory above Degnan's
15 Upper Tecoya Residences
2 Middle Tecoya Residences
Fire Station
Security Office

Structures

Fourteen (14) structures contributing to the Yosemite Village developed area are listed below. Numbers (e.g. S4) are keyed to Map B. An asterisk (*) indicates previously listed resources. For structure descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

*S1	Village Drive (between junction with Northside Drive and Village bike path), Listed in NR in 1978
S2	Road between Village Drive and Maintenance Area
*S3	Roads and alleys in Yosemite Village Residential Area, Listed in NR in 1978
S4	Middle Tecoya Road
S5	Lower Tecoya Road
S6	Ahwahnee Meadow Road Pedestrian Path
S7-S10	4 Bridges over Indian Canyon Creek
S11	Lower Tecoya Footbridge
S12	Rangers' Club Parking Area
S13	Yosemite Valley Medical Clinic Road and Parking Area

S14 Yosemite Valley Medical Clinic Paths

Nine (9) structures in the Yosemite Village area post-date the period of significance and are considered non-contributing resources. Other reasons for non-contributing status are parenthetical. The nine structures include:

Upper Tecoya Road Back Road between Degnan's and NPS Maintenance Area
School Playground (Schoolhouse Meadow) and Parking Lot (counted as one structure)
Old Central Parking Lot (now a pedestrian mall; loss of integrity after 1970s redevelopment)
Former Concessioner Utility Area (current main parking lot; loss of integrity after 1970s redevelopment)
Pedestrian Paths and Bridges around Village Store (counted as one structure)
Pedestrian Paths around Visitor Center (counted as one structure)
Pedestrian Paths around Degnan's (counted as one structure)
Bike Path (counted as one structure)
Road in Front of Degnan's

Sites

Contributing sites (1) in the Yosemite Village area are listed below. Numbers (e.g. Site 1) are keyed to Map B. An asterisk (*) indicates previously listed resources.

Site 1 Yosemite Pioneer Cemetery

Non-contributing sites (1) in the Yosemite Village area:

Indian Village (garden) Reconstruction (current reconstruction dates after the period of significance)

THE AHWAHNEE HOTEL DEVELOPED AREA

Background

Completed in 1927, the Ahwahnee Hotel was a luxury hotel designed to meet the high standards for national park lodges that began with the Old Faithful Inn (Yellowstone, 1903) and El Tovar (Grand Canyon, 1906). Among the greatest of the national park lodges, the Ahwahnee Hotel would also be the last. Fine hotels were built in the parks during the 1930s and even after the war; but never again would a national park lodge achieve the level of artistic significance of the Ahwahnee Hotel.

The Ahwahnee Hotel was one of the most important and high profile projects of the NPS during the years Stephen Mather was director. In 1914, prompted by the seemingly random growth of facilities in Yosemite Valley and ongoing problems with concessioners, Mather became directly involved in national park management. In 1925, after years of difficult political wrangling, Mather began to see his overall goals for the valley implemented. That year the New Village was dedicated on the north side of the Merced River, with a new administration building and museum under construction. The same year, Mather succeeded in creating a single concessioner within the park, allowing managers to make plans—and a contract—for the overall future development of the park. The Ahwahnee Hotel was the direct result of these arrangements.

For many years Mather had envisioned a truly first class hotel for Yosemite to replace the aging Sentinel Hotel (located in the Old Village). The concessioner hired Gilbert Stanley Underwood as the hotel architect. Underwood was an understandable choice, since he had already developed a series of fine lodges in national parks, including the lodges in Bryce and Zion National Parks. Underwood worked closely on all these projects with the then chief landscape architect at the National Park Service, Daniel Hull. In his position as landscape architect, Hull was in charge of many major park planning decisions, as well as the design of developed areas throughout the park system. Hull and Underwood worked together on several projects and the close collaboration between the architect and the NPS landscape architect led to excellent results; the Ahwahnee Hotel was one of them. The developed area was sited in the eastern end of the valley, in an area that had once been an American Indian village. It had later been the site of J. C. Lamon's homestead, and in 1878 it became the first official campground in the valley when Aaron Harris opened a public camping facility. In 1888, the area was developed as an extensive stable complex, known as Kenneyville. But by the mid-1920s, Kenneyville stables were cleared to make way for the Ahwahnee Hotel.

The hotel itself is a six-story, steel frame and reinforced concrete structure. Large wings contain a massive lounge and a dining room, both of which are extraordinary spaces. The dining room features high, exposed timber vaulting, and the lounge has an ornate, coffered ceiling. American Indian design motifs run throughout the building's interior design, and the hotel also displays an impressive collection of American Indian art. The exterior of the building is sheathed in tinted, textured concrete, and extensive veneer of native granite boulders. The building's massing is broken up; creating the sense of a rambling, organic structure that belies the sheer size of the facility.

The Ahwahnee Hotel has continued in operation, except during World War II when it was converted into a naval hospital. Despite this use, the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area retains excellent integrity to the period of significance ending in 1942. The Ahwahnee Hotel was listed in

the National Register in 1977, and was designated a National Historic Landmark for its significance in architecture in 1987.

Natural Systems and Features

The Ahwahnee Hotel is sited in a relatively secluded meadow at the east end of Yosemite Valley. Siting the hotel in a meadow gave visitors views to important natural features. The over 3,000-foot wall of Glacier Point is immediately to the south, while the Royal Arch Cascade, the Royal Arches, and Tenaya Canyon are to the north and northeast.

The Merced River winds along the southern edge of the hotel site, creating an effective barrier between the hotel and Camp Curry and the maze of public campgrounds that occupy the eastern extreme of the valley.

A response to natural features informs almost every aspect of the building's design and overall site plan for the complex. Stained, textured concrete, veneer of native stone, and massive proportioning of structural elements all seek to achieve picturesque harmony with the building's unique site. Near proximity to the giant granite walls of the valley seems to diminish the building's massive scale. Guest cottages are sited adjacent to the hotel, clustered in discrete groups extending east along a level river bench.

Spatial Organization

The Ahwahnee Hotel developed area is located due east of Yosemite Village, and due north of Camp Curry. The spatial organization of the site is dominated by the hotel itself, which stands in splendid isolation, despite the proximity of these other developed areas.

From the parking lot, the hotel is hidden behind a massive porte cochere and shrubs and trees (including sequoias) planted in the 1920s. The porte cochere leads to a long, covered walkway, which in turn leads into the reception lobby of the hotel. From this point, access leads to the outdoor spaces on the other side of the hotel, as well as to shops, the dining room, and the large, main lounge.

The unusual entrance actually is on the service side of the building, although the service areas and loading docks are completely hidden from view by a heavy board fence. According to anecdotal sources, the west side of the building was originally intended to be the entrance, and the porte cochere was to be built at what is now the Indian Room at the south end of the main lobby. A last-minute change was then ordered because it was feared that the traffic on the front side of the hotel would disturb second-floor guests. This story may or may not be true; in any case, the effect of the north entrance was a happy, if improvised one. But it is interesting to note that Underwood also used the device of the large porte cochere, followed by a low, covered entryway, in his later Jackson Lake Lodge (Grand Teton National Park). This building was also largely hidden from the parking lot (entry) side. Evidently the architect felt this was, after all, a powerful means to create a dramatic spatial sequence to magnificent views, which were revealed only as the visitor moved through the building. Also, although Underwood produced several renderings of the Ahwahnee Hotel west façade (one is hanging in the hotel's lobby), none of the versions show a main entrance on this side of the building.

From the other (southern) sides of the Ahwahnee Hotel, the building makes very different and surprising impressions. After hardly seeing the building from the north side, it finally emerges as

a massive, granite-clad structure that seems to both stand up to its surroundings, and to acquiesce to them. The huge, stone-covered piers and projecting wings of the hotel give it a sculptural quality. Set in an open meadow, the building both contrasts and harmonizes with the background views: the Royal Arches, Glacier Point, Yosemite Point, and other major formations of the valley walls. Without a busy entrance or any traffic on the west (main) façade, its sculptural quality as an object is enhanced when viewed from the south, east, and west.

The Ahwahnee guest cottage area, completed in 1928, possesses its own character. The cottages are spatially independent from the main hotel building, and were designed by another architect, Ted Spencer. Modest clapboard buildings with shake roofs, they are heavily screened by both native and planted understory vegetation. No vehicles have access, and the pedestrian paths enhance the close, intimate quality of the spaces. The cottage area's intimate, semi-private spaces are in marked contrast to the areas around the main hotel.

The most serious threat to the historic spatial organization of this area today is the spread of vegetation into the open oak woodland and meadow on the southern sides of the hotel. Invasive pines are shading out oaks and growing to heights that affect views to and from the hotel. Other vegetation, including dogwoods and oaks near the hotel, is closing off important views of Yosemite Falls and the cliff walls.

Characteristics of historic spatial organization that contribute to the character of the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area are:

- The sense of enclosure from the north, which effectively hides the building from the parking lot, and sets up a sequence of spaces through the reception lobby to the outdoor spaces south of the building.

- The open quality of the meadow south of the building, which allows the hotel to be perceived as an isolated object in a field; other buildings and facilities are kept at a distance or visually screened.

- The intimate, narrow, semi-public character of the spaces around the guest cottages.

Vegetation

Management of vegetation at the Ahwahnee Hotel has historically focused on attempts to maintain the open black oak woodland and meadow on the south and western sides of the hotel, as well as to reinforce certain spatial sequences and impressions.

In the parking lot, rows of sequoias and other plantings were established to screen the hotel, creating an arrival sequence as one progresses through the entry. On the meadow side, the open black oak woodland has been managed to retain its open character, although some of the oaks are in decline, and ponderosa pines are establishing quickly.

In 1927, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., provided plans for additional planting of native species (specifically those deer would not browse) in the Ahwahnee Hotel area to create a more lush and varied vegetative scene around the hotel. Although much of this plan was implemented, much of it was destroyed during World War II. A deer fence erected to protect native plants has since been removed.

Vegetation that contributes to the character of the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area includes:

Sequoia trees and other plantings around the main parking lot.

Open meadow on the south and western sides of the hotel.

Screening between the hotel and the guest cottage complex.

Understory vegetation within the bungalow complex.

Other specimen trees, especially sequoias, planted to screen tennis court, and in other locations.

Circulation

Prior to construction of the Ahwahnee Hotel, circulation in the area was limited to two east-west roads that were connected by a north-south road serving as the main access to Kenneyville. With the construction of the Ahwahnee Hotel, the east-west roads were paved with asphalt and the road through Kenneyville was removed. The east-west road on the north was realigned and became a closed road to the Ahwahnee Hotel. A new north-south road was constructed on the western edge of the Ahwahnee Hotel meadow to connect the north and south roads (by 1972 this road was changed to a bike trail). South and west of the Ahwahnee Hotel, two automotive bridges were built in 1928 over a meander of the Merced River: the Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine Bridges.

Today the Ahwahnee access road is a narrow two-lane, dead-end road, about 3,000 feet long, between the hotel parking lot and Yosemite Village. The road provides access to the parking lot on the north side of the hotel, continues through the hotel porte cochere to another smaller (and non-contributing) parking lot to the east, and then loops back.

Contributing resources relating to circulation in the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area are listed in the “Structures” section, which follows.

Land Use

The Ahwahnee Hotel developed area has been historically used, and continues to be used today for a range of visitor services and activities, in particular overnight lodging. Other uses include undeveloped open space, recreational open space, service, supply, and storage areas.

Views and Vistas

Views and vistas both to and from the hotel were important in siting and designing the building, and remain important today. To an impressive degree, the landscape and overall site plan of the area have been maintained to preserve views, as well as the sense of splendid isolation that characterize the location of the Ahwahnee Hotel.

Views that contribute to the character of the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area are:

Views to the Ahwahnee Hotel set in an open meadow (from the south).

Views of Glacier Point from the Ahwahnee Hotel and from areas to the south.

Views of Royal Arches and Royal Arch Cascade with the Ahwahnee Hotel in the middle ground.

Views of Yosemite Point and Yosemite Falls from the dining room and elsewhere in the building, and from areas to the south of the hotel.

Buildings

Contributing buildings (10) in the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area are listed below.
Numbers (e.g. B2) are keyed to Map C. An asterisk (*) indicates previously listed resources. For building descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

*B1	Ahwahnee Hotel, 1927, Listed in NR 1977, Designated NHL 1987
B2-B9	8 Ahwahnee Hotel Guest Cottages, 1928
B10	Ahwahnee Hotel Guest Cottage Linen Building

Non-contributing buildings (1) are:

Employee dormitory (dates after the period of significance)

Structures

Contributing structures (11) in the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area are listed below. Numbers (e.g. S2) are keyed to Map C. An asterisk (*) indicates previously listed resources. For individual descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

S1	Ahwahnee Hotel Entry Road (from gateway to parking lot)
S2	Ahwahnee Hotel Gate Lodge and Post
S3	Ahwahnee Hotel Parking Area (West)
S4	Ahwahnee Hotel Fish Pond
S5	Ahwahnee Hotel Paths Leading to Guest Cottages
S6	Ahwahnee Hotel Footbridge to Guest Cottages
S7	Ahwahnee Hotel Footbridge near Merced River
S8	Ahwahnee Hotel Bridle Trail Ford
S9	Ahwahnee Hotel Drainageways
S10	Ahwahnee Hotel Tennis Courts
S11	Ahwahnee Hotel Terrace

Five (5) structures post-date the period of significance and are considered non-contributing resources in the Ahwahnee Hotel developed area, including:

Swimming pool
3 tent cabins in front of employee dormitory
Secondary (east) parking lots (counted as one structure)

CAMP CURRY DEVELOPED AREA

Background

Camp Curry was established in 1899 by David and Jennie Curry, two schoolteachers from Indiana. Tent cabins and communal meals in a central dining hall made Camp Curry a more affordable option for staying in Yosemite Valley than hotels like the Sentinel Hotel, while offering a camping experience for those not prepared to camp on their own. The formula proved extremely popular, and Camp Curry grew from a dozen tents to hundreds of tents in a matter of a few years. A social phenomenon as much as a campground, the camp featured charismatic managers (especially David and "Mother" Curry), nightly entertainment (often put on by staff), and the famous "firefall," in which a bonfire was pushed off Glacier Point at night, creating a cascade of fire.

Camp Curry was one of a number of national park tent camps in the early 20th century, such as the Wylie Way camps at Yellowstone, or Reese's Camp at Mount Rainier. Other, shorter-lived camps were located in Yosemite Valley as well. Almost all of these other tent camps disappeared by the 1940s, as the public demanded more elaborate motel units. Camp Curry also closed briefly during World War II, but reopened in 1945 and soon was as large as ever. Since then it has operated as the last significant tent camp of its type in the national park system. Camp Curry survived for a number of reasons, including the range of entertainments and other attractions organized by its managers. In later years, the tradition associated with the camp, as well as the always strong demand for lodging of any type in the Yosemite Valley, have helped to assure the continued public interest in this type of accommodation.

Camp Curry was located at the east end of the valley, at the foot of Glacier Point on the south side of the Merced River. The area offered views of Glacier Point, Half Dome, Royal Arches, Washington Column, and other features, and was near an apple orchard planted by James Lamon in 1861. The site had been previously used as at least one family's summer tent camp, and the old tent platforms were used to establish the first Camp Curry (known briefly as Camp Sequoya). The new business flourished under the relaxed control of the Yosemite state board of commissioners. By 1905, roads connected Camp Curry to the Old Village to the west, and the Currys had constructed dozens of tent cabin platforms, permanent dining and registration buildings, bathrooms, and tennis and croquet facilities. Business was brisk, and even after a destructive fire in 1912, 254 tent cabins were open the next year. That year a new sewer had made it possible to plan still further expansion. By 1915, there were 540 tents, as well as numerous services and recreational activities available to the public. Most of the tents during this period were located to the east of the core facility area, stretched out in a narrow area between the park road to the north and the talus slopes to the south. Other groups of tents, notably Nob Hill and the Terrace, were to the south of the core area.

The 1920s were years of further expansion. In 1919, Jennie Curry paid for the relocation of the LeConte Memorial Lodge (1903) in order to allow expansion of Camp Curry to the west. In 1922, a group of 48 wooden bungalows were completed to the west of the core facility area, providing another level of accommodations, separated from the main body of tents. By that time, Camp Curry had telephones, evening movies, a pool hall and dance pavilion, a gas station and garage, a soda fountain, and numerous cottages and other residences for employees. In 1925, Camp Curry came of age, in a sense, as the Curry Camping Company merged with the Yosemite National Park Company, creating a unified concessioner for Yosemite Valley. In 1927, the need for more parking was met (following the suggestion of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.) by parking

cars between the rows of apple trees in the 1861 orchard. By this time, Camp Curry featured a swimming pool, ice rink (pond), and co-sponsored "Indian Field Days" competitions.

The Depression and World War II slowed the pace of growth at Camp Curry, and closed it entirely in 1943. But following the war, visitation to Yosemite Valley increased dramatically, and by 1959, the camp once again operated almost 500 tents and 200 bungalow and cabin rooms, numbers that are comparable to the operation today. Various other changes occurred in the postwar period. The old dance hall became a lodging unit, the Stoneman House. The central dining facility (1929) burned and was replaced by a new complex in the 1970s. A new pool and bathhouse and a new skating rink were built as well. But Camp Curry retains its overall integrity to the period of significance (ending in 1942), as the following description shows. Camp Curry was first listed in the National Register as a historic district in 1976 (amended 1979).

Natural Systems and Features

Camp Curry was sited at the base of the talus slope directly below Glacier Point. The high ground on the south side of the valley offered some protection from the annual flood of the Merced River. The south side of the valley also offered shade and cooler conditions during the summer months that were, and are, the camp's busiest season. Expansion of the camp went to the east and the west, creating a somewhat longitudinal plan along the base of the talus. Blasting was sometimes necessary to afford some room for structures to the south, and this limited expansion in that direction. Today, the hazard of rockfall at Camp Curry, especially in its southern portions, is an important concern for park managers.

Spatial Organization

The overall layout of Camp Curry is essentially longitudinal, with a central, core facility area, tent cabins to the east, and bungalows to the west. In addition, other (smaller) groups of tent cabins are set on high ground to the south.

Camp Curry always featured a central, public zone at the main entrance, defined in part by the entrance gateway, the amphitheater, dining facility, registration building, and other public spaces and activities. The larger scale buildings in this area were sited with commensurate space between them. Their central location and public functions assured that these more open, larger spaces would become gathering points for public programs and social interaction in general. The central dining facility/pool house complex was replaced (following a fire) in the 1970s, and is a non-contributing building. The new building maintained the footprint and massing of the old (1929) facility, however, and so helped maintain the integrity of spatial organization in the central area of the camp. Although many core area activities (including parking) have ended, the amphitheater, food services, and registration all continue to enliven it.

The open, civic character of these central spaces at Camp Curry is somewhat impaired by vegetation planted in the 1980s, as well as changes in circulation patterns. The main entrance gateway remains, but has been surrounded by revegetated areas and no longer functions as a gateway. The sense of arrival is greatly diminished for visitors. Other open areas have also been replanted, and buildings have been heavily screened, a process intended to make them disappear from view, but which more often makes them merely difficult to fully apprehend or understand as buildings. As a result, the central spaces of Camp Curry (the core facility area) are themselves somewhat disorienting. This disorientation prevents visitors from forming a clear sense of the layout of the camp upon their arrival.

The spaces to the east of the core facility area are defined by hundreds of one-room, walled tent cabins. With gabled ends and set on wooden platforms, the tents are still made in Fresno, California, using new materials according to original specifications. The long rows of white tents create narrow streets; these are typically of packed earth, and curve slightly to follow the talus contours. The overall setting is wooded, with a mature forest of ponderosa pine, Incense-cedars, black oak, live oak, and big leaf maples shading the entire area and providing an overhead sense of enclosure. The rhythm of the tent streets is punctuated by periodic, larger, wooden comfort station buildings. The overall sense of enclosure along the tent cabin streets is in marked contrast to the grandeur experienced in Yosemite Valley. The small scale of the individual tents, set one after another, also creates public paths and streets between them, which have a unique spatial character in the valley.

To the west of the core facility area, the original 48 wooden bungalows (cabins with baths), completed in the 1920s, still retain their character and spatial organization. The bungalows were also laid out in rows, although these larger buildings were set somewhat farther apart and in slightly straighter, more regular rows. The space created by the buildings is analogous to that of elongated city blocks, with streets on the fronts of the bungalows and narrower alleys separating the backs of the buildings. The overall character of the spaces is correspondingly less intimate, and more established. Some of the streets are broader, with planted areas down the center.

Between the core facility area and the bungalows (cabins with baths)—and also scattered elsewhere around the core facility area—are more elaborate bungalows built for Mother Curry and other family members and employees. These residences (most now used as additional lodging or employee housing) enhanced the domestic atmosphere of what was, at least initially, a truly mom-and-pop business. Sited to maintain at least some privacy, however, these residences do not create important public spaces; rather, they provide a transition zone between the core area and the bungalows to the west.

To the south of the core facility area, the talus slope rises quickly. Most of the level ground in this area was originally used for amphitheater seating, lawn games, and some employee housing. By the early 1930s, a group of wooden, one-room cabins without baths (known as WOBs) were built here. Additional groups of tent cabins had also been sited on the talus slopes to the south and east. One group, known as Nob Hill, made up a distinctive neighborhood. Another group of tent cabins sited on the high ground was appropriately known as the Terrace, and housed female employees. (A number of these tents, which were in the most hazardous area for rockfalls, have recently been removed.) These groups of tent cabins, above the core area on the beginnings of the talus slope, did not define characteristic spaces, as did the larger groups of cabins to the east; but the sight of some of the higher tent cabins, perched among the rocks, did create a characteristic image.

Similarly, the Boys Town area of employee tents (and other housing) on the north side of the road (east of the apple orchard) does not create important spaces in the overall organization of the Camp Curry developed area, although it does possess its own, distinctive character.

To the northwest, redevelopment of the recreation center area (ice rink, etc.) has caused a significant loss of integrity of the spatial organization in that area.

One of the most remarkable features of Camp Curry is the parking lot/apple orchard, first suggested by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. in 1927. This proved to be a happy reuse of an 1861

apple orchard, which, by 1927 had little use since produce could be brought in economically on improved roads. The rows of mature fruit trees give a certain dignity to the space, although the frequent overcrowding of the lot, and the additional parking area immediately to the south, undermine the quality of the orchard space.

Characteristics of spatial organization that contribute to the character of the Camp Curry developed area include:

> Open spaces at the core facility area, with larger public buildings defining spaces for outdoor activities, socializing, and programs.
>
> A central entrance space defined by a historic gate.
>
> Long, narrow street spaces, curving slightly, created by the rows of tent cabins in the east end of the development.
>
> Wider, straighter streets and alleys created by the bungalows in the west end of the development.
>
> Rectilinear, shaded parking bays created by the reuse of the 1861 orchard as a parking lot.
>
> Overall zoning of spaces with tent cabins, bungalows, and core facilities, all in separate zones and characterized by distinct and different qualities of outdoor spaces.

Vegetation

Vegetation at Camp Curry is characterized to some degree by the mature conifers, especially ponderosa pine and incense-cedars, and understories typical of the south (more shaded and moist) side of Yosemite Valley. In addition, the overall trend in the valley towards increased forest cover is evident here.

Throughout the years, the managers of Camp Curry have made some attempts to preserve significant trees from damage, and to remove trees and other vegetation that they felt were blocking important views. Shrubs and other plants have also been planted around buildings, especially in recent years. Since the 1970s, revegetation of formerly open areas has, in some cases, had a negative effect on spatial organization and views.

Circulation

Historically, Camp Curry was approached by two roads: from the Old Village to the west, and from the Stoneman Bridge crossing of the Merced River to the northwest. Today vehicular access is limited mainly to the northwestern approach, and the western approach has been converted to parking and foot trail. Since the original entry was oriented to this entrance, the historic gateway has become somewhat obsolete, at least in the current circulation configuration.

Within the developed area, circulation is primarily pedestrian, and characterized by relatively unstructured movement on packed earth trails. In heavier use areas, asphalt pavement and wood boardwalks have been added. In the core facility area, asphalt paths and shrub plantings have been used to restrict circulation to a defined system of paths.

In the early days of Camp Curry, as more visitors gradually arrived by car, there apparently was little structure as to where vehicles parked, although one parking area existed outside the main gate in approximately the same location as the parking lot today. By 1927, a growing problem with parking was addressed by converting the nearby apple orchard into a unique parking area. This system (with some additional parking) serves to the present day.

Contributing structures relating to circulation are listed in the Structures section.

Land Use

Land use at Camp Curry, both historically and presently, can be characterized as visitor accommodation and recreation. Historically, accommodations have been mainly in tents on wooden platforms, rustic bungalows (cabins with baths), and one-room wooden cabins (cabins without baths or WOBs). Recreation has included swimming, croquet, and tennis, as well as bowling, dancing, music recitals, theatrical performances, ice skating, and campfire programs. Perhaps the most famous amusement at Camp Curry was the spectacle of the firefall, which was discontinued by the NPS in 1968. Today, campers stay in the same tents and cabins. Recreational activities still include overnight accommodations, bike riding, boat rentals, evening programs, hiking, and picnicking.

Views and Vistas

Views and vistas of surrounding Yosemite Valley features, including Half Dome, Royal Arches, and Glacier Point, were all reasons for siting Camp Curry, and helped determine the internal layout of the developed area. Views from the core facility area, in particular, are impressive and define the character of Camp Curry to a significant degree.

Views that contribute to the character of the cultural landscape at Camp Curry include:

Views of Half Dome.

Views of Glacier Point.

Views of Royal Arches and Washington Column.

Buildings

The one-room cabins without baths (WOBs) are duplex units of undistinguished frame construction and low-pitched gable roofs. Records indicate construction sometime in the late 1920s and early 1930s, but the buildings have received new windows, interior paneling, and composition shingle roofs. The buildings are considered, nevertheless, to be contributing in the historic district because of their original construction date and their original location and massing.

The more elaborate overnight accommodations in the camp can be described as Arts and Crafts bungalows (cabins with baths). These buildings typically contain two rooms (14’ X 30-35’), and three contain four rooms (28’ X 30’). They are of exposed log frame construction, with tongue-and-groove walls set in herringbone patterns. Split log gable ends, overhanging eaves, river stone foundations, and porches all contribute to the rustic quality of the bungalows. The Mother

Curry Bungalow, the Foster Curry Cabin, and other residential buildings in the camp share these general characteristics, on a slightly more elaborate scale.

Other buildings, including the Registration Office and the other remaining original buildings of the core facility area, are earlier in date and of a more rustic construction, featuring slab siding and log frames. The original registration building (1904) is the oldest contributing resource in the Camp Curry area. The Stoneman Cabin built in 1924 for Charles Peterson, the comptroller of Camp Curry remains with a high level of integrity. The interior of the Stoneman House (1920) was rehabilitated in 1961 to provide employee housing while maintaining the original rustic architectural character on the exterior of the building. The Camp Curry Historic District was first listed in the National Register in 1977, and was amended with more elaborate descriptions of contributing resources in 1979.

Contributing buildings (126) in the Camp Curry developed area are listed below. Numbers (e.g. B3) are keyed to Map D. An asterisk (*) indicates previously listed resources. For building descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

*B1	Camp Curry Registration Office (now Lounge), 1904, Camp Curry Historic District listed in NR in 1979)
*B2	Camp Curry Post Office (now Registration Office), 1920
B3	Camp Curry Stoneman House (now Lodge), 1913
B4	Camp Curry Huff House, 1923
*B5-B50	46 Camp Curry Cabins Without Baths (WOBs), singles and duplexes, 1928-1935
*B51-B56	5 Camp Curry Comfort Stations and 1 Camp Curry Employee Kitchen/Shower Building in tent and cabin areas
*B57-B103	47 Camp Curry Duplexes with Baths (Bungalows), 1918-1922
*B104	Camp Curry Mother Curry Bungalow, 1917
*B105	Camp Curry Foster Curry Cabin, 1916
B106	Camp Curry Stoneman Cabin (Cottage 819), 1923
B107	Camp Curry Cabin 90 A/B (Rufus Green Bungalow), 1920s
*B108-B109	2 Camp Curry Comfort Stations in the ice rink area, 1930s
*B110	Camp Curry Bike Shop/Skate Rental Building, 1920-1940
*B111-126	Camp Curry Employee Cabins (Boys Town Cabins), 1930

Twelve buildings (12) in the Camp Curry area post-date the period of significance and are considered non-contributing resources, including:

Central dining facility/poolhouse complex
7 hard-sided cabins for employees (near bath house)
Comfort station for employees (near bath house)
Cabin for employee (near orchard parking lot)
Comfort station in Boys Town
Campground building at north end of orchard parking lot

Structures

Camp Curry is characterized, first and foremost, by the distinctive white, walled tents that have been the mainstay of visitor accommodations since 1899. Made in Fresno, California, according to the same pattern for many decades, the tents now feature mildew-resistant fabric, but otherwise remain remarkably unchanged. Many can be assumed to be in their original locations,

either exactly or approximately. The tent cabins typically measure about 10′ x 12′, or 12′ x 14′. Originally they had flaps, not doors; but in the 1920s tent frames began to feature wooden doors, which became standard. Obviously there has been necessary and extensive maintenance to the tents since the period of significance (ending in 1942). The work has been consistent with the historic character, feeling, workmanship, and materials of the originals, and the tents have retained their overall locations and arrangements. Some of the tent frames and platforms date to before World War II. The tents are considered here as contributing structures in the historic district.

Contributing structures (547) in the Camp Curry area are listed below. Numbers (e.g. S1) are keyed to Map D. An asterisk (*) indicates previously listed resources. For structure descriptions, see the *Building and Structure Inventory*.

*S1-S427	427 Camp Curry Canvas Cabins (Guest Cabins) (year 2000 number; number has varied over the years)
*S428-S469	42 Camp Curry Employee Canvas Cabins (Terrace Tent Cabins) (year 2000 number)
*S470-S542	73 Camp Curry Employee Canvas Cabins (Boys Town Tent Cabins) (year 2000 number)
S543	Camp Curry Pedestrian Paths
S544	Camp Curry Bungalow Roads
*S545	Camp Curry Entrance Sign, 1914
S546	Camp Curry Electrical Transformer Structure, 1920
S547	Two-story Storage Structure (in Cabins without Baths area)

Twenty (20) structures in the Camp Curry area post-date the period of significance and are considered non-contributing resources including:

Amphitheater
Ice rink
3 ice rink support sheds
Ice rink parking lot
Bus shelter near registration
Tour center kiosk near registration
3 linear parking lots near registration
Paths between ice rink area and registration
Bus loop road near registration
Sign outside dining pavilion
2 maintenance/storage cabins near orchard parking lot
4 tent cabins for employees (near bath house)

Sites

Contributing sites (2) in the Camp Curry area are listed below. Numbers (e.g. Site 1) are keyed to Map D. An asterisk (*) indicates previously listed resources.

Site 1 Walls and foundations of original LeConte Memorial Lodge
Site 2 Curry Orchard Parking Area

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: __ Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B __ C X D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A __ B __ C __ D __ E __ F __ G X*

Areas of Significance:
Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Politics/Government, Community Planning and Development, Transportation, Entertainment/Recreation, Conservation

Period(s) of Significance:
1855 to 1942*

(*Camp 4 has its own period of significance from 1947 to 1970. This site is within the Yosemite Valley Historic District boundaries and was determined eligible by the Keeper in 1999, and listed in 2003.)

Significant Dates:
1864, Yosemite Grant; 1865, Olmsted's Yosemite Report; 1874, Wagon roads open into valley; 1899, Camp Curry started; 1903, LeConte Memorial Lodge dedicated; 1906, US Army takes over administration; 1914, civilian administration begins, first DOI plans for the valley published; 1915, first Yosemite Lodge started; 1916, NPS created; 1920, Rangers' Club built; 1925, Administration Building and new Yosemite Village dedicated, Yosemite Park & Curry Company formed; 1927, Ahwahnee Hotel opens; 1933, CCC camps established; 1942, US enters WWII

Significant Person(s):
NA

Cultural Affiliation:
NA

Architect/Builder:
Myron Hunt, Herbert Maier, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Gilbert Stanley Underwood, Daniel Hull, Thomas Vint

Historic Contexts:
See the "Statement of Significance" that follows.

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

The cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley is nationally significant under National Register criteria A, and C.[5]

Criterion A

The Yosemite Valley landscape is the result of a long and complex history of interactions between natural systems and human influences. For thousands of years, American Indians managed the landscape through burning and other practices. In the 1860s, Euro-Americans took over management of the valley floor landscape for the purpose of preserving it as a public park. This has resulted in a 150-year history of agricultural use, clearing, burning, and facility development. Yosemite Valley today is the landscape record of one of the most ambitious and historically significant experiments in the preservation of natural scenery ever attempted.

The valley floor landscape as a whole is nationally significant in the themes of outdoor recreation, tourism, and conservation. Since 1864, Yosemite has been an archetype for the preservation of scenic places through their development as public parks. The first public place to be created by Congress for the purposes of scenic preservation and outdoor recreation in 1864, Yosemite Valley became the subject of Frederick Law Olmsted's earliest and most important contribution to national park management theory and practice in 1865. Many influential plans, developments, and events subsequently were associated with Yosemite Valley as a state, then a national park. Conditions at Yosemite Valley in the early 20th century were a direct impetus for creation of the NPS, and resulted in the most significant early park planning and development efforts by that agency. Many recreational trends, including sight seeing, camping, auto camping, mountaineering, winter sports, and others began or were significantly advanced at Yosemite. Yosemite has been used as a scenic reservation since before the Civil War; few natural places in the country have such a long tradition of appreciation and use. The fact that American Indian cultural practices have continued throughout the history of the valley adds to the unique significance of the Yosemite Valley cultural landscape.

Yosemite Valley has already been determined nationally significant in the history of natural resource conservation.[6] John Muir, who lived and worked in Yosemite Valley, began developing his philosophy of conservation while residing there. Muir was later a principle founder of the Sierra Club.

The valley as a whole is also nationally significant for its role in western expansion and exploration. The development of Yosemite as a park served to galvanize the image of California as a state. As a major tourist attraction, Yosemite boosted the early economic growth of California by drawing visitors from across the country, and helped create a national image for California and the West.

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[5] See Land and Community Associates, *Yosemite Valley: Cultural Landscape Report*, 2 vols. (Denver: Department of the Interior, NPS, 1994), pp. 4/4-4/12. (Hereafter abbreviated as *CLR*.)
[6] See Charles W. Snell, *Conservation of Natural Resources: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings* (Unpublished manuscript, NPS, 1963).

The Yosemite Valley landscape is also nationally significant in the themes of American photography and painting. Photographers Carleton E. Watkins and Ansel Adams made their careers and reputations through images of Yosemite scenery; the painter Albert Bierstadt established a new school of American landscape painting, in part with canvases that depicted the valley.

Criterion C

The cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley features nationally significant examples of architecture, including the Rangers' Club, the Ahwahnee Hotel, and the LeConte Memorial Lodge, all of which are national historic landmarks. Yosemite Village is a nationally significant example of early Park Service "park village" planning. Camp Curry is a rare example of a surviving tent cabin complex of the type that was once common in many parks. The bridges and other resources already listed in the National Register are significant examples of state and national park development dating from the 19th century to World War II.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The surpassing historical significance of the Yosemite Valley landscape derives from the fact that countless generations of tribal groups and later untold millions of park visitors have infused the valley's natural features with great cultural significance. Social groups as different as the Miwok and the United States Congress have recognized, asserted, and celebrated the value of this place to their respective societies. The cultural processes of defining sacred space, of turning land into landscape, and of making a wild place into a public park, have made Yosemite Valley one of the most culturally significant natural places in America.

The significance of the cultural landscape of Yosemite cannot be described or assessed apart from its significance as a natural landscape. The distinction between what is natural and what is artificial is rarely clear in Yosemite Valley. The open, pastoral landscape of meadows and clumped trees that greeted 19th-century visitors was assumed to be a natural condition; the landscape, however, was due in part to seasonal burning and other land management practiced by Indian peoples. By the 1860s these traditions were suppressed, and many meadows were drained and plowed for agriculture. In 1879, the water table in the eastern portion of the valley was lowered when part of the moraine near El Capitan was blasted away, and drainage diversions associated with road development were constructed. Drier meadows and the end of annual burning led to rapid growth of trees and shrubs, and by the 1880s park managers regularly cleared such woody growth to keep meadows open and vistas clear. During the last 150 years, the effort to leave the natural aspects of the valley floor has at times meant burning, active ecological restoration efforts by park staff, clearing, and frequent pruning of shrubs and trees.[7] Providing for tourists has meant extensive agricultural uses of land, as well as the constructing entire towns and villages. Today, the valley floor landscape is a unique record of the encounter between American Indian and Euro-American cultures of land management. It is also a record of the unexpected consequences and vicissitudes of the earliest and most ambitious attempt by Euro-America to preserve what was described as nature, or wilderness.

The floor of Yosemite Valley is a cultural landscape that has resulted from a long and unique history of interactions between natural systems and human influences. And it is this cultural landscape as a whole—not just individual buildings and structures—which is of particular historic significance. The valley floor landscape cannot be easily broken down into cultural and natural zones, nor would such an analysis be desirable. Landscape compositions depend on unity for their emotional effect, and at Yosemite this unity combines the pastoral and the awesome, the cultural and the natural, the Indian and the European, the past and the present.

These juxtapositions mesmerized early tourists, who began arriving in Yosemite Valley in the 1850s. The unified compositions of contrasting landscape effects, so characteristic of the valley, were soon made nationally famous thanks to paintings and photographs by Bierstadt, Watkins, and others. Frederick Law Olmsted, the most influential of early observers, was deeply affected by the opposition of the dominating grandeur of the sheer valley walls with the park-like serenity of the valley floor. "The union of the deepest sublimity with the deepest beauty of nature," he wrote in 1865, "not in one part or one scene or another . . . but all around and wherever the visitor goes, constitutes the Yo Semite the greatest glory of nature."[8]

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[7] A mixed coniferous forest has spread into many formerly open areas of the valley, nevertheless. CLR, 2/12-2/18.
[8] For the complete text of the report, see Frederick Law Olmsted, "The Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Trees: A Preliminary Report," [1865] in *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted: Volume V, The California Frontier, 1863-1865*, Victoria Post Ranney, ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 488-516.

For Olmsted, who wrote these comments as the Civil War was ending, the landscape of Yosemite Valley was, above all, one of *union*: of potentially discordant emotional effects brought together and resolved in complete aesthetic compositions. Individual landscape features, by benefit of being brought together in the grand scenes of Yosemite, had the power to generate an emotional response that far exceeded what each might produce in isolation. In landscapes as in nations, unity produced strength greater than the sum of its parts.

In the description of Yosemite quoted above, Olmsted uses terms drawn from 18th-century British landscape aesthetics. His park planning practice, as well, was based on the precedents of picturesque design and theory. In 1864, following the enactment of the Yosemite Grant by Congress, Olmsted was named chairman of the commission charged with managing Yosemite Valley as a state park. Olmsted immediately understood that the valley could become the "noblest park or pleasure ground in the world." In his final report to the commission in 1865, Olmsted articulated principles and ideals for the management of Yosemite (and of scenic reservations generally) that would guide American park planners for the next century.

Olmsted's first instinct in preparing a plan for Yosemite was to consult the artists who had already established the valley as a nationally renowned landscape. Olmsted wanted their advice on how to correct "conditions affecting the scenery of the Yo Semite unfavorably," as well as for advice about what could be done to "enhance the enjoyment now afforded by the scenery."[9] Today, since we assume environmental sciences have given us more profound ways to understand nature, this emphasis on preserving scenery might seem superficial. But scenic preservation, as Olmsted defined it, went to the very heart of what national and state parks could hope to achieve for American society. Preserving Yosemite for the enjoyment of present and future generations was described in the report as "a political duty of grave importance . . . the grounds of which rest on the same eternal base of equity and benevolence with all other duties of a republican government."

Noting that it was "the main duty of government" to protect and provide the means for the "pursuit of happiness," Olmsted asserted that it was "a scientific fact that the occasional contemplation of natural scenes of an impressive character, particularly if this contemplation occurs in connection with relief from ordinary cares, change of air and change of habits, is favorable to the health and vigor of men . . . beyond any other conditions that can be offered them." Republican government had the responsibility of making sure the "enjoyment of the choicest natural scenes in the country and the means of recreation associated with them" be "laid open to the use of the body of the people." Since the wealthy would otherwise eventually monopolize scenic places for the pleasure of the few, "the establishment by government of great public grounds for the free enjoyment of the people" was "justified and enforced as a political duty."

This remains the most profound political justification for the role of government in making parks: outdoor recreation and the experience of scenic beauty are not luxuries, but are prerequisites for the pursuit of happiness and guarantors of public health. Left to the disposition of the private sector, these places would become exclusive resorts or would be ruined by excessive commercialism. If the great majority of people were denied access to the scenic beauty of North America, the Republic would have failed in an essential duty to the American people.

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[9] For the text of the letters sent to Thomas Hill, Carleton Watkins, and Virgil Williams, see Hans Huth, "Yosemite: The Story of an Idea," *Sierra Club Bulletin* 33, no. 3 (March 1948): 47-78.

Olmsted went on in his report to give specific suggestions for how Yosemite should be developed as a public landscape park, or scenic reservation, that could be open to "the body of the people" without destroying its special qualities. Since the reason Yosemite was "treated differently from other parts of the public domain . . . consists wholly in its natural scenery," the priority was "the preservation and maintenance as exactly as is possible of the natural scenery." This would prove a more difficult task than anticipated since the conditions perceived as natural in the valley were far less stable than he imagined. But Olmsted's first concern was limiting the destructive effects of large numbers of people and vehicles. His design proposals were based on the correct assumption that "if proper facilities are offered . . . in a century the whole number of visitors [to the valley] will be counted by millions."

Olmsted fully understood what millions of visitors could do to a landscape; he and Calvert Vaux had been responsible for the design and management of Central Park in New York just a few years earlier. To avoid the destruction of greenswards and shrub borders in that municipal park, the landscape architects had designed a complex circulation system that kept pedestrians and carriage drivers from trampling the landscape (and one another) while assuring they experienced the best views and sequence through the 840-acre park. The landscape preservation plan Olmsted presented to the Yosemite commissioners in 1865 employed the same strategy for the 2,200-acre valley. The construction of a one-way carriage loop (up one side of the Merced and down the other) would "enable visitors to make a complete circuit . . . reaching all the finer points of view." This circuit drive was to be complemented by a system of pedestrian paths leading to points of interest. This was part of a general strategy for concentrating visitor activities and traffic, and restricting "within the narrowest limits . . . all artificial constructions." For accommodations, Olmsted suggested a series of five campgrounds, each with a small cabin and caretaker offering "simple necessities for camping parties."

Olmsted's plan for Yosemite depended entirely on improved transportation technology that would allow food, lumber, and other supplies to be shipped in rather than grown or harvested in the park. Out of a total two-year budget of $37,000, he suggested spending $25,000 on an improved road to the steamboat docks at Stockton. The road would reduce the cost of visiting Yosemite and so would allow a larger, more diverse public to visit. At the same time, the road would reduce the need for development within the valley, and so it would reduce the impacts of those larger crowds. But after Olmsted returned to New York later in 1865, the remaining members of the park commission abandoned the Yosemite plan. The valley floor was subsequently logged, although not extensively, and the lumber was used to build precisely the types of hotels Olmsted wished to avoid. Most significantly, the road to Stockton was not completed, supplies could not be brought in economically, and delicate meadows were therefore drained and fenced to provide food and fodder for visitors and their stock.

Olmsted's 1865 report on Yosemite did not entirely disappear, however, as is sometimes supposed. This most influential early statement of the ideals that should guide national park development remained in the landscape architect's papers, and were consulted by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and others.[10] In 1916, the younger Olmsted had the opportunity to write the key

[10] The Yosemite report of 1865 is often supposed to have been completely lost until 1952, when Olmsted's biographer, Laura Wood Roper, pieced together portions of the report and published it in something like its original complete form. The texts Roper pieced together, however, had always been accessible to F. L. Olmsted, Jr., who was the first editor of his father's papers. He quotes from the Yosemite report extensively, for example, in a 1913 analysis of the Hetch-Hetchy controversy. The state board of commissioners of Yosemite also mention Olmsted's document in later published reports.

passages of the legislation that created the NPS and described its mandate. The purpose of the parks, he wrote, was "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."[11] This famous statement summarized the priorities his father described for Yosemite 50 years earlier: "The duty of preservation is the first which falls upon the State . . . because the millions who are hereafter to benefit by the [Yosemite] Act have the largest interest in it. . . . Next to this . . . is that of aiding to make this appropriation of Congress available . . . to those whom it is designed to benefit."

The elder Olmsted never returned to Yosemite, but he was drawn into some of the later controversy surrounding the management of its vegetation. As the valley's meadows became drier, shrubs and trees quickly invaded. By the 1880s, park managers were struggling to maintain what they considered the natural condition of the landscape: its relative openness. Other observers, however, were horrified to see tree stumps, slash, burned areas, or other byproducts of this work. They too felt Yosemite Valley should be left in its natural condition, but they came to the opposite conclusion that trees should therefore not be cut.

In 1888, Olmsted provided a statement to the *San Francisco Examiner*, reiterating some of the policies he had suggested for the management of Yosemite: agriculture should be restricted in the future to the areas already under production, remaining natural meadows should be preserved, and therefore some tree cutting should be permitted as long as it was under the supervision of someone with an artistic appreciation for the landscape and experience in managing it.[12] Managing vegetation in park landscapes had become an increasingly contentious issue in the 1880s. Parks like Central Park had been extensively planted 20 years earlier and now required thinning. In other cases, volunteer growth (as in the Yosemite meadows) needed to be controlled if the original character of the landscape was to be preserved. In 1889, Olmsted (with J. B. Harrison) wrote a short discourse titled the "The Use of the Axe" in municipal parks, in which he vigorously defends necessary thinning and other forestry practices, although pointing out that "the management of a large park is an art," and indiscriminate or insensitive tree cutting could be disastrous.[13]

Also in 1889, Olmsted was contacted by Robert Underwood Johnson, an editor of *Century* magazine and a great national park advocate. Johnson, fresh from a visit to Yosemite, was outraged by the evidence of recent tree removal and trimming. He offered to bring Olmsted to California to make an assessment of the Yosemite Commission's management policies. Olmsted declined, citing other obligations, but his own ambivalence on the subject may have made the opportunity less appealing. Advocates like Johnson were likely to object to any management of the Yosemite landscape. Olmsted sympathized with this position, and he agreed with Johnson that the indiscriminate removal of all the young trees and shrubs in the valley would be a "calamity." But he also clearly felt that the removal of trees, in some cases, would be justified, as long as it was done under careful guidance. The dispute grew heated enough that Olmsted felt compelled to issue a public letter in 1890 on "Governmental Preservation of Natural Scenery," in which he again reiterated that the "development and exhibition" of Yosemite

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[11] (U.S.C., title 16, sec. 1.)
[12] Charles E. Beveridge, "Introduction to the Landscape Design Reports," in *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted: Volume V, The California Frontier, 1863-1865*, Victoria Post Ranney, ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 467.
[13] Frederick Law Olmsted and J. B. Harrison, "The Use of the Axe," [1888] reprinted in *Landscape Architecture* 3, no. 4 (July 1913): 145-152.

scenery must be devised with "artistic refinement" if the natural landscape were to be preserved.[14]

For Olmsted, artistic intervention was required to preserve the "natural" landscape conditions. This may seem a paradox, but scenic preservation has never been an entirely passive act. Olmsted understood that subtle manipulation of the scenery would not make it less natural; it was in fact the only way to protect its naturalness over time while allowing the "multitudes of travelers" to appreciate it. Inaction was the same as inappropriate action, in that it would ultimately result in the loss of the public's experience of Yosemite's unique and natural landscape character.

But the irresistible pull of Yosemite Valley on the national imagination had only begun, and the multitudes continued to swell. By 1874 the valley could be reached by two new wagon roads, replacing old saddle trails that had been the only access up to that time. Once visitors could bring in their own wagons, camping greatly increased, and the first organized campground opened in 1878. A carriage loop, roughly approximating the idea Olmsted had suggested, was completed in 1882. By that time, however, the valley was beginning to present a very different appearance from the landscape that Olmsted had experienced in 1864. Spring flooding had been reduced and the water table lowered. Concessioners had drained and plowed some meadows, while shrubs and trees were rapidly filling others. Extensive fencing had been erected to control grazing horses and cows. By the 1880s, numerous organized camping sites became established, although they remained largely unimproved. Perhaps most significantly, an entire community of hotels, saloons, and other establishments (the Old Village) had rapidly taken shape on the south side of the Merced, directly opposite Yosemite Falls. By 1890, 20 miles of road, numerous bridges, and 24 miles of bridle trails had been built in the valley.[15]

The larger Yosemite National Park was created in 1890 around Yosemite Valley itself, which remained a state park for another 16 years. That year the state-appointed Yosemite Commission reported that it was their policy to restore the valley landscape to its 1850s appearance, as much as possible, by clearing trees and underbrush and demolishing many of the ad hoc structures that had been built. The commissioners oversaw the demolition of numerous structures and the continued clearing of trees and brush from meadows. The park's concessioner, in the meantime, continued to build and expand their facilities as the number of visitors steadily grew. Camp Curry, a sprawling compound dedicated to providing less expensive tent cabins and various other services to the public, opened in 1899 to the east of the Old Village.[16]

In 1905 the California legislature agreed to recede Yosemite Valley to the federal government, and the next year it became part of the surrounding Yosemite National Park. The valley then came under US Army administration, and an Army cantonment was built on the site of an Indian village (later the site of the Yosemite Lodge). Army officials were shocked by both the aesthetic and the sanitary conditions they found in the park. Visitation had soared to over 10,000 a year by that time, and numerous campgrounds and more established accommodations either had inadequate septic systems or disposed of sewage directly into the Merced. Trash was buried or

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[14] The letter never received wide circulation, but it was distributed within the Park Service in 1941 by the architect Herbert Maier, who at the time was the Region IV (western) Acting Director. "Region IV Circular," January 15, 1941, RG 79, Entry 37, Box 149, National Archives, Washington, DC.
[15] *CLR*, 2/10-2/24; Hank Johnston, *The Yosemite Grant: 1864-1906* (Yosemite National Park: The Yosemite Association, 1995), 176-177.
[16] *CLR*, 2/25-2/33.

burned wherever convenient. There was a real fear of epidemic, and the Army immediately closed three campgrounds below the Sentinal Hotel that had no sanitary facilities. Automobiles were also banned for the next seven years since they presented a hazard on narrow mountain roads that were still used mainly by horse-drawn vehicles. But visitation only continued to increase in the early 20th century, especially once a new road was opened in 1907 connecting the valley to a rail head in El Portal. During the eight years of Army administration, the Corps of Engineers also widened and modernized roads and replaced bridges throughout the valley.[17]

In 1913, Woodrow Wilson appointed Franklin K. Lane, a Californian and former San Francisco city attorney, as secretary of the interior. For several years, national park advocates had lobbied for creation of a national parks bureau within the Department of the Interior in order to better address the worsening management problems in the parks, especially in Yosemite. While that legislation stalled, Lane took what administrative steps he could in the meantime. He sent out a chemical engineer from the Geological Survey to inspect sanitary conditions in the parks, which were found to be substandard and dangerous, at Yosemite in particular. Roads in most parks also remained inadequate to the increased demands put upon them. Lane allowed automobiles into Yosemite and Sequoia on a limited basis in 1913, however, and he recommended road improvements that would allow all park roads to be safely opened to combined horse and motor vehicle traffic. He also replaced the soldiers in Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant national parks with civilian rangers in 1914.[18]

As Lane established the nucleus of a future parks agency, Yosemite Valley was its proving ground. In 1914, he engaged a San Francisco landscape architect, Mark Roy Daniels, to design "a comprehensive general plan for the development of the floor of the Yosemite Valley." Of specific concern were "the best locations for roads, trails, and bridges, so as to bring into view the full scenic beauty of the surroundings, the clearing and trimming of suitable areas of woods to provide attractive vistas, [and] the proper location and arrangement of a village in Yosemite valley." As part of the job, Daniels also acted as the park's first civilian superintendent. Two months later the landscape architect's commission was expanded, and Daniels became "general superintendent and landscape engineer" for all the national parks. That summer Daniels went to work visiting parks and drafting preliminary plans for their development. He planned "park villages" for Glacier, Mount Rainier, and Crater Lake, and he also designed the first uniforms for the civilian park rangers. But the design of a new village for Yosemite was his most important commission, and Yosemite Valley was his base of field operations.[19]

At a 1915 national park conference held in Berkeley, Daniels made it clear that the "inevitableness of creating villages in the parks" demanded "village plans . . . so drawn that [they] suit the various conditions." He knew from his experience at Yosemite that as the numbers of visitors grew by the thousands, their "community ceases to be a camp; it becomes a village . . . . It has municipal problems . . . [and] will demand some sort of a civic plan in order to properly take care of the people who visit." Daniels designed a new Yosemite Village on the north side of the Merced that would "do away with unsightly buildings that now mar the scenery [the Old Village]. . . and establish a village properly planned, comprising buildings of carefully studied architecture." The building locations were "carefully thought out," and the architectural

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[17] *CLR*, 2/33-2/40, 2/91.
[18] Department of the Interior, *1913 Annual Reports*, 87-88, 746-750; Department of the Interior, *1914 Annual Reports*, 26-27, 88-89.
[19] Department of the Interior, *1914 Annual Reports*, 88; Ralph S. Kuykendall, "History of the Yosemite Region," in Hall, Ansel F., ed., *Handbook of Yosemite National Park* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 43-44.

character of every building was determined "in the light of a careful study of the best arrangement of the buildings and for picturesqueness."[20]

None of Daniels's park plans were directly implemented and he resigned after less than two years on the job, not long after Stephen T. Mather arrived at the Department of the Interior as an assistant to the secretary for park affairs. But Daniels was the first landscape architect to be officially involved in managing the national park system, and he contributed to planning and design policies during a formative period. The park village concept he described for Yosemite guided the design of large, developed areas in national parks through the 1920s and 1930s.

In general, the problems evident at Yosemite were a major catalyst for reforming national park management during the critical years just before the NPS was created. Stephen Mather, a native Californian and a Berkeley classmate of Franklin Lane's, was a lifelong Sierra Club member, and first became involved in national park issues because of his concerns as a park visitor about conditions at Yosemite Valley. In 1915, after he joined the Department of the Interior at Lane's invitation, one of Mather's earliest acts of personal generosity to the park system was his gift of the Tioga Road, which he purchased from its private owners (he raised about half the funds from fellow enthusiasts) and donated to the park. Several California auto clubs then contributed to improve the road to make it usable for their machines.[21] Mather also made the reform of concession operations an early priority, and that year he succeeded in encouraging a new concessioner to convert the former Army cantonment into the first Yosemite Lodge.[22]

Mather was greatly concerned with the quality of architectural design and landscape planning in the parks. In 1917 he became the first director of the new NPS, and the next year he hired landscape architect Charles P. Punchard, Jr., to continue the work Daniels had begun planning park improvements. Yosemite Valley, again, was a particular concern, and Punchard worked on a village plan while stationed in the park between 1918 and 1919.[23] He advised that the new village north of the Merced River, which had been "for many years . . . the subject of much discussion," be divided into commercial, industrial, and residential "zones."[24] That summer Punchard oversaw the construction of the new Rangers' Club building (1920, Charles K. Sumner, arch.) sited on the public plaza of the new village. Mather paid for that building, as he had for the Tioga Road, another indication of his personal commitment to improving conditions at Yosemite.

Punchard also oversaw dredging at Mirror Lake, which had silted in considerably since the 1860s, and the thinning of trees on the valley floor to "open up and develop very interesting open spaces and vistas." In both cases, the actions were intended to preserve the "natural" landscape compositions that painters and photographers had made famous. Although his career was cut short by his death in 1920, Punchard's recommendations made it clear that many of the early landscape management concerns of the Park Service were similar to those addressed by the state Yosemite Commission until its dissolution in 1906.

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[20] Department of the Interior, *1915 Annual Reports*, 849-850; Department of the Interior, *Proceedings of the National Park Conference Held at Berkeley, California, 1915* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915), 15-20.
[21] Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks*, Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), 62-63, 78-79, 148.
[22] *CLR*, 2/91.
[23] Linda Wedel Greene, *Yosemite: The Park and Its Resources*, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, NPS, 1987), vol. 2, 580-581.
[24] Department of the Interior, NPS, *1919 Annual Report*, 26-27, 331-332.

The situation in Yosemite Valley, however, was changing rapidly. In 1921, Mather observed that "the advent of the automobile with the opportunity for its use freely in all the parks in the past five years has been the open sesame for many thousands." He went on to observe that as early as 1919, "74 percent of the visitors of Yosemite National Park entered in their own machines."[25] These demographics indicated that the model of the national park as a minimally funded, semi-private resort had seen its day. Auto tourists, unlike earlier park visitors, were not paying customers of the concessioner; they were a much larger and broader public. After the All-Year Highway to Yosemite opened in 1926, the annual number of visitors to the valley jumped to almost 500,000, up from about 40,000 just 10 years earlier. On one day during Memorial Day Weekend in 1927, the crowd was estimated at 25,000. Asphalt paving for the valley's roads was completed that summer to handle the dense traffic. The situation was at least comparable to that in other parks, but Yosemite was leading the new, automotive trend.[26]

By the early 1920s, the Park Service was in a position to respond to some of these changes, and management policies for the Yosemite Valley landscape began to shift. Daniel H. Hull became the chief landscape architect in 1920, and in 1922 he hired Thomas C. Vint as his assistant. Conditions in Yosemite continued to be a priority. "For years," Hull reported that year, "the building of [the new village] and the elimination of the present dilapidated shacks . . . has been considered essential both from the standpoint of practical operation and landscape effect."[27] Mather also hired the Los Angeles architect Myron Hunt to work with Daniel Hull in planning the new Yosemite Village, which in 1923 finally set the shape of the new village on the north side of the Merced.

A recent reconstruction of the 1923 plan shows that the Post Office and Administration Building, with several studio buildings, the Museum, and the Rangers' Club, originally defined a central civic plaza that served as the arrival point and parking area for automobiles.[28] Separate residential areas featured winding, tree-lined streets, generous setbacks, and cul-de-sac access to rear garages. Single family and duplex cottages were preferred housing types, and architectural detailing was generally of the Arts and Crafts movement with San Francisco Bay Area inspiration. Utility areas, organized orthogonally, were well segregated both visually and in terms of circulation from the public area around the plaza and from the private residential areas. Over the next eight years, over two dozen buildings were built in the New Village, including Myron Hunt's Administration Building (1924), and Herbert Maier's Park Museum (1925). Most new construction followed Hunt's lead, employing simple rectangular floor plans, granite veneer below, and dark wood siding above, to create a unified architectural presence for the village. During the same period, most of the structures of the Old Village (some of them dating to the earliest period of the valley's development) were razed. The Indian community in Yosemite Valley was eventually relocated to a new village built in the early 1930s.[29]

Even with the improvements, however, escalating numbers of visitors and automobiles continued to put pressure on the capacity of facilities in the valley. The opening of the All-Year Highway, in particular, brought huge increases in campers. Official campgrounds overflowed,

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[25] Stephen T. Mather, "The Ideals and Policy of the NPS Particularly in Relation to Yosemite National Park," in Hall, ed., *Handbook of Yosemite*, 77-86.
[26] Yellowstone, Mount Rainier, and Rocky Mountain all reported over 200,000 visitors in 1927. The total number of motor vehicles entering the parks jumped from 315,000 in 1924 to almost 690,000 in 1929. Department of the Interior, NPS, *1928 Annual Report*, 173; Department of the Interior, NPS, *1929 Annual Report*, 50.
[27] Department of the Interior, NPS, 1923 Annual Report, 52-53; 184.
[28] *CLR*, vol. 1, fig. V-2.
[29] *CLR,* 2/49, 2/99-2/116; Greene, Yosemite, vol. 2, 580-591; Mark Spence, "Dispossessing the Wilderness: Yosemite Indians and the National Park Ideal, 1864-1930," Pacific Historical Review 65 (February 1996), 27-59.

and visitors drove and camped on Stoneman and other meadows that had not been the site of such intensive use previously. Other park visitors were looking for more luxurious accommodations. In 1925, Mather encouraged two fractious park concessioners to merge into a single manageable group, the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, which was then encouraged to hire the architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood to design a new luxury hotel. Daniel Hull worked with Underwood on the site development plans for the hotel, called the Ahwahnee Hotel, located in a secluded meadow in the east end of the valley. The six-story steel frame building, which opened in 1927, was sheathed in textured concrete and stone veneer to simulate rough wood siding and massive stone piers. Luxurious, striking, and uniquely situated, the Ahwahnee Hotel culminated the tradition of massive, centralized national park lodges built by concessioners to cater to wealthy tourists.

By the end of the 1920s, as visitation to the valley continued to soar, Mather and the Park Service planners and engineers had succeeding in correcting many of the perceived problems in the valley. The ramshackle Old Village was partially demolished and replaced with the new Yosemite Village. Park infrastructure was greatly improved, especially by new sewers and other utilities, as well as park roads and trails. Grazing and farming were phased out by 1930, and steep ditches along park roads helped stop visitors from illegally driving through meadows. The concessioners had expanded and reorganized their operations to meet new demand. The Park Service had built new picnic and camping areas throughout the valley to encourage concentrated use in certain areas. All of these procedures helped minimize the impacts of enormous increases in visitation.[30]

But the increase in visitation consisted almost entirely of people in cars. All of the expanded and restructured activity in Yosemite Valley was predicated on the unrestricted use of private vehicles. There were some positive sides to this situation; improved highway access meant that there was no longer reason to allow agriculture in the valley meadows, and Park Service managers began restoring pastures and agricultural fields back into meadows. The increased visitation that automobiles made possible also ensured that Yosemite Valley assumed a central, permanent position in American popular culture and the national imagination. If auto campers were trampling Stoneman Meadow in the late 1920s, at least Yosemite Valley would never suffer the fate of the nearby Hetch Hetchy Valley, which at the time was filling with water following the completion of a massive reservoir project authorized in 1913. Public use served to preserve the valley.

On the other hand, already in the 1920s automobile traffic, pollution, and noise were persistent problems. The effects of the thousands of automobiles that accumulated in the valley on peak days did not go unnoticed by many park visitors and advocates, who began to feel that Yosemite had been spoiled by its new popularity. Congestion was particularly bad at the Old Village, and the new Yosemite Village was intended in part to improve the situation. A series of new bridges and improved roadways were built during this period to better accommodate the traffic. Road and bridge construction was accelerated thanks to greatly increased Congressional appropriations for park roads, and an interbureau agreement with the Bureau of Public Roads signed in 1926. Some of the finest construction during this period includes the Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine Bridges (1928) and the Stoneman Bridge (1932). As the valley's roads were modernized, some older, redundant roads were obliterated and restored as meadow.

[30] *CLR*, 2/40-2/56.

The negative side of unrestricted automobile access was readily apparent, despite the improvements made by the end of the decade. Before World War I, there had been a consensus between government officials and preservation groups that increased access would mean better preservation of the valley. At the 1912 national parks conference, held that year in Yosemite Valley, even William E. Colby, speaking for the Sierra Club, noted that although his group was "blamed for keeping the automobile men out," he hoped that "they will be allowed in when the time comes, because we think the automobile adds a great zest to travel and we are primarily interested in the increase of travel to these parks."[31] But when visitation in the valley started to approach half a million people annually (the great majority arriving in their own cars) preservationists began to question proposals for ever larger expansions of visitor facilities in the valley.

In 1928, Mather responded to the suggestion that a "board of expert advisors" should be officially endorsed to oversee the management of Yosemite and make suggestions on key issues and controversies. It was particularly significant that Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was named chairman of the three-member panel, not only because of his father's role in the history of the park, but also because the younger Olmsted had first suggested establishing such a group for Yosemite in 1911.[32] The board of expert advisors subsequently addressed a series of contentious issues faced by the Park Service at the time, and provided an independent voice in favor of landscape preservation often over the desire of park concessioners to expand their businesses. Olmsted worked closely with the new chief landscape architect for the Park Service, Thomas Vint, and exercised considerable influence on that planner's career at a critical time. The board of expert advisors addressed many threats to the valley landscape, and successfully opposed a proposed cable tramway to Glacier Point as well as the expansion of Camp Curry parking lots in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[33]

With the initiation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in the spring of 1933, an unprecedented era of park development and park system expansion began. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), one of the earliest relief programs to get underway, was active in Yosemite as it was in virtually every national park. Many of its activities involved restoring areas to their "natural condition," which could mean removing exotic weeds and young Ponderosa pines from valley meadows, dredging Mirror Lake, or improving soil and planting native species in areas that had been damaged by overuse. Trails and campgrounds received special attention, as park managers capitalized on the boon of free labor. After a particularly destructive flood in 1937, the CCC was instrumental in repairing damage, as well as implementing attempts to control flooding and erosion. The CCC and the New Deal programs typically enhanced and completed plans and projects already underway since the 1920s. At Yosemite, the Old Village was further demolished and "naturalized" with native vegetation, and the new Yosemite Village was brought to completion with the addition of maintenance buildings and residential bungalows. Many buildings and facilities were added or replaced in the valley through the largesse of federal programs in the 1930s.[34]

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[31] Department of the Interior, Proceedings of the National Park Conference Held at the Yosemite National Park, October 14, 15, and 16, 1912 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 33, 61, 117-119, 139.
[32] Olmsted made the suggestion in an open letter to the 1911 national parks conference. The letter suggested that a "permanent independent 'board of overseers'" be established to "discuss questions of general policy with the executive officer," in other words the director of the proposed national parks bureau. "This is the theory of unpaid park commissions all over the country, and it is a sound theory," he concluded. Department of the Interior, Proceedings of the National Park Conference Held at Yellowstone National Park, September 11 and 12, 1911 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911), 20-21.
[33] Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 153-155.
[34] *CLR*, 2/56-2/63.

Visitation to Yosemite Valley greatly decreased during World War II, but increased to unprecedented levels as soon as the war ended. In 1954, over one million visitors were recorded. The next year, facilities that had already been battered by floods in 1950 were inundated by the worst flooding ever recorded in the valley, which damaged roads, trails, bridges, and other facilities. And in 1956, Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth announced a major new construction campaign: Mission 66 was intended to improve or replace aging and often inadequate national park facilities in order to meet the demand for services created by postwar levels of visitation. Increased funding, increased visitation, and flood damage repair all came together in the 1950s and resulted in some major changes to the valley landscape over the next 20 years.

In 1956, the Yosemite Lodge was completely rebuilt and most of the old lodge buildings were demolished. The fish hatchery at Happy Isles was converted into a new nature center in 1957, and a large Degnan's restaurant and store was completed in the village in 1959. Mission 66 was particularly noted for the construction of visitor centers, and a Yosemite visitor center was completed in 1968. The new building was sited next to Herbert Maier's museum on the village plaza. In 1972, the plaza was closed to traffic and redeveloped as a pedestrian area, a process which included revegetating many former open spaces, considerably changing the character of the area, and the relationship of buildings to one another.[35] In 1970, much of the valley's vehicular circulation was made into a one-way loop, as Olmsted had originally suggested almost 100 years earlier (The northern portion of the loop had been one-way in 1958.).[36] Vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns were considerably altered during this period, especially in the public areas of the village. New parking lots, in addition to the new concession and visitor use buildings, make the public plaza area of the village one of the most changed since 1942. Nearby, the Yosemite Lodge is almost entirely the product of postwar planning and construction. Elsewhere in the valley, scattered roads, bridges, and other facilities are postwar replacements.

In 1994 there were over four million visitors to Yosemite. A bewildering array of activities and distractions continue to be available in the valley. But it is reasonable to assume that the overwhelming reason people visit today has remained constant since the 1850s: they come to experience the remarkable scenery—the compositions of sublime grandeur and pastoral calm—that have always been the primary resource of Yosemite Valley as a park. No natural area in the country has taken on greater cultural significance for larger numbers of people.

But if the scenery has been imbued with great cultural significance, it has also changed over the last 150 years. The immortal background of granite walls and waterfalls, of course, has not changed significantly. But the foregrounds and middlegrounds of these landscape scenes—the meadows, clumps of trees, and winding waterways—have been altered over time. In this sense, the character of the Yosemite landscape that the elder Olmsted knew has now vanished, despite the best intentions to preserve the "natural" scene unchanged. The draining of meadows and suppression of fires has led increased growth of woody vegetation that could not be effectively countered. The area of meadows in the valley was estimated at 745 acres in the 1860s; it was down to 430 acres in 1927, and 350 at the end of the historic period (1942) despite fairly sustained efforts since the 1880s to keep the landscape open. In the 1970s, large-scale clearing of underbrush and trees was reduced or suspended altogether, once again by managers who were seeking to maintain "natural" landscape conditions. The growth in the height and density of

[35] *CLR*, 2/96-2/98; 2/110-2/115.
[36] *CLR*, 2/64-2/68.

vegetation—which may or may not be considered a natural process—continued apace. Mirror Lake, which was dredged and cleared of vegetation regularly until 1972, has decreased in size and begun to disappear behind shrubby growth.

Compared to the larger geological landscape context, these changes are relatively minor. The cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley is significant for many reasons, but one of them certainly is the fact that it has been amazingly well preserved for the last 150 years. As Olmsted hoped in 1865, the valley landscape has been passed on to future generations, with open access for all. Despite the millions that Olmsted predicted would come, the damage has been minimized as much as possible by the art and science of park management. Yosemite Valley has indeed remained the "noblest park or pleasure ground in the world."

If, in some ways, Yosemite has changed, in its deepest meanings and significance it has remained remarkably constant. Indian peoples still revere sacred sites and maintain traditional practices. The crowds of visitors today come primarily for the same reasons people have come since the 1850s. This continuity of activities—both American Indian and Euro-American—since before the Civil War, make the cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley a unique and highly significant monument of American history and culture.

The cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley, overall, has excellent integrity to the historic period. By 1942, the valley landscape had assumed the overall dimensions and character it possesses today. There would be significant redevelopment (in particular at Yosemite Lodge and in the plaza area of Yosemite Village), but no major new developments or new highway projects would be undertaken within the valley. Although the numbers of visitors would grow, and facilities would expand to meet the demand, the basic footprint of development has remained relatively constant over the last 58 years.

Many individual views and areas also retain excellent integrity. The historic district at Camp Curry, for example, is the most significant and intact tent camp of its type left in the national park system. The Yosemite Village Historic District is an extremely significant example of Park Service park village planning. It includes extensive and intact residential subdivisions, as well as many significant individual buildings and a historic cemetery. Many other historic buildings, bridges, and sites in the valley have also been listed independently in the National Register. The Ahwahnee Hotel, the Rangers' Club, and the LeConte Memorial Lodge have all been designated National Historic Landmarks individually for their national significance in the history of architecture.

Yosemite Valley has assumed iconic significance in American society, matched only perhaps by Niagara Falls, the Hudson Valley, the White Mountains, and a few other regions and places that were already discovered and appreciated as landscapes by the 1850s. But it is in Yosemite Valley that we find the oldest, fullest, and purest expression of what scenic preservation and park development could achieve on a national scale. Unlike the other areas mentioned above, Yosemite has been a park almost since its discovery by Euro-Americans; it has been developed and managed as a park since 1864. The cultural landscape of the Yosemite Valley floor is the result, and the complete landscape record of this ambitious and historically significant experiment in the preservation of natural scenery.

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Pacific Historical Review 65(February 1996): 27-59.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register: Camp Curry Historic District; Yosemite Village Historic District; Eight Yosemite Bridges; Yosemite Chapel; Lamon Orchard and Meadow Site
_X_ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register: "Camp 4" (Sunnyside Campground) Site
_X_ Designated a National Historic Landmark: Rangers' Club, the Ahwahnee Hotel, LeConte Memorial Lodge
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
_X_ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: Yosemite Roads and Bridges, #CA-117

Primary Location of Additional Data:
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
_X_ Federal Agency NPS)
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 3,800 acres

UTM References: UTM points listed below correspond to Map E.

Point	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	3	265,105	4,178,000
B	3	267,265	4,178,780
C	3	269,695	4,179,110
D	3	271,280	4,181,490
E	3	272,525	4,181,220
F	3	274,810	4,180,420
G	3	275,385	4,181,040
H	3	275,830	4,180,980
I	3	274,980	4,179,680
J	3	274,900	4,178,400
K	3	276,940	4,178,435
L	3	276,910	4,177,650
M	3	274,655	4,178,045
N	3	273,920	4,179,000
O	3	272,165	4,179,865
P	3	269,585	4,177,280
Q	3	267,040	4,177,570
R	3	266,340	4,176,870
S	3	265,090	4,176,915

Verbal Boundary Description:
The Yosemite Valley historic district extends from valley wall to valley wall, from Pohono Bridge to Mirror Lake and Nevada Fall. The district is defined almost entirely by the official Wilderness boundary, in the sense that the area NOT designated as wilderness describes the Yosemite Valley Historic District. Generally this boundary follows the 4,200-foot contour line, with some variation at the east end of the valley as shown on Map E. At the west end of the valley, the historic district boundary is defined by a true north line drawn 10 feet west of the western edge of the intersection between the Northside Drive and the Pohono Bridge. In addition, the district extends out of this zone to follow three historic trails: the Yosemite Trail, the Four Mile Trail, and the Mist Trail. The district boundaries follow these trails, 10 feet from the trail centerline in either direction, to the end of each trail, as shown on Map E.

Boundary Justification:
The historic district boundaries include the meadows and other natural features that historically have been painted, photographed, and described as the Yosemite Valley landscape. The district also includes the roads, trails, buildings, and other park features that were developed in Yosemite Valley during the period of significance. The district as described encompasses the area of Yosemite Valley historically used and manipulated by both American Indians and Euro-Americans, resulting in the unique cultural landscape seen today. In other words, the historic

district encompasses the cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley. The boundaries do not include the natural features around the valley (which have not been subject to modification over the centuries) although these features are important to the overall significance of the cultural landscape.

A comprehensive boundary for a single historic district, as described here, is the most efficient means to include and describe both the natural and cultural features of Yosemite Valley, which together make up the cultural landscape.

SECTION 10: MAP LIST

Map A:
Valley-wide Contributing Resources

Map A1 Detail:
Concessioner Stables Contributing Resources

Map B:
Yosemite Village Developed Area Contributing Resources

Map C:
Ahwahnee Hotel Developed Area Contributing Resources

Map D:
Camp Curry Developed Area Contributing Resources

Map E:
Boundary Map

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Ethan Carr, landscape architect, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Paul Cloyd, historical architect, NPS Denver Service Center; Randy Fong, historical architect, Yosemite National Park; Cathy Gilbert, landscape architect, NPS Pacific West Region; Robbyn Jackson, historical architect, NPS Pacific West Region; Laura Kirn, archeologist, Yosemite National Park; Erica Owens, Landscape Architect, NPS, Pacific West Region; Robert Page, Director, NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.