
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
2004



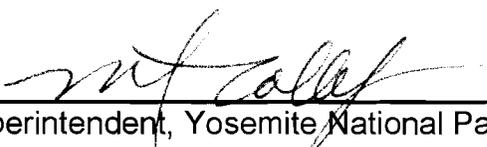
South Entrance Station
Yosemite National Park

Cultural Landscape Inventory Level II:
South Entrance Station
Yosemite National Park

Yosemite National Park concurs with the Management Category and Condition Assessment assigned through completion of this Level II Cultural Landscape Inventory for South Entrance Station as listed below:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY B: **Should be preserved and maintained**

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: **Fair**



Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

9/2/03

Date

Please return this form to:
Shaun Provencher
Coordinator, Cultural Landscape Inventory
National Park Service
Pacific Great Basin Support Office, Suite 700,
1111 Jackson Street
Oakland, CA 94607

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SOUTH ENTRANCE STATION
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

California SHPO Eligibility Determination

Section 110 Actions Requested:

- 1) SHPO concurrence with determination of eligibility for listing the South Entrance Station on the National Register,
- 2) SHPO concurrence with the structures to be entered on the List of Classified Structures (LCS). (See chart below.)

I concur, I do not concur that the South Entrance Station is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

I concur, I do not concur that the **Setting** as described in the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) contributes to the South Entrance Station (see the following landscape characteristics: spatial organization, land use, and vegetation).

Based on the information provided in the CLI, the following previously unevaluated structures have been identified as **contributing** to the South Entrance Station:

LCS number	Structure Name	Structure Number	Concur	Do not Concur
055753	South Entrance Office	WA04604	X	
055755	South Entrance Comfort Station	WA04606	X	
055754	South Entrance Ranger Duplex	WA04600	X	
055934	South Entrance Garage	WA04601	X	
330172	South Entrance Stone Retaining Wall		X	
330173	South Entrance Station Residence Road		X	
330174	South Entrance Station Fire Hydrant		X	

Based on the information provided in the CLI, the following previously unevaluated structures have been identified as **not contributing** to the South Entrance Station:

LCS number	Structure Name	Structure Number	Concur	Do not Concur
N/A	Two Modern Checking Kiosks		X	
N/A	Asphalt paths to comfort stations entrances		X	
N/A	Current 3-lane configuration at intersection		X	
N/A	Loop road in front of ranger duplex		X	
N/A	Boulder barriers on south side of Wawona Road		X	
N/A	Sign board at comfort station		X	
N/A	Telephone booth near comfort station		X	

Reasons/comments why any 'Do Not Concur' blocks were checked:

William Wayne Dick

25 AUG 2004

California State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

Contents

Part 1	
Executive Summary	1
Landscape Description	4
Cultural Landscapes Inventory Hierarchy Description	5
Location Map	6
Boundary Description	7
Regional Context	7
Site Plan	9
Chronology	10
Statement of Significance	11
Part 2a	
Physical History	
1932 – 1941: Initial Development	1
Part 2b	
1942-1970: Postwar Development	1
Part 3a	
Analysis and Evaluation	
Summary	1
Buildings and Structures	1
Circulation	4
Land Use	8
Part 3b	
Small Scale Features	1
Spatial Organization	3
Vegetation	3
Part 4	
Management Information	1
Descriptive and Geographic Information	1
National Register Information	1
General Management Information	3
Condition Assessment	3
Impacts	3
Landscape Stabilization Measures and Costs	6
Documentation Assessment and Checklist	7
Bibliography	9

Executive Summary

General Introduction to the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. This evaluated inventory identifies and documents each landscape's location, physical development, significance, National Register of Historic Places eligibility, condition, as well as other valuable information for park management. Inventoried landscapes are listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, or otherwise treated as cultural resources. To automate the inventory, the Cultural Landscapes Automated Inventory Management System (CLAIMS) database was created in 1996. CLAIMS provides an analytical tool for querying information associated with the CLI.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures (LCS), assists the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, NPS Management Policies (2001), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management (1998). Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report on an annual performance plan that is tied to 6-year strategic plan. The NPS strategic plan has two goals related to cultural landscapes: condition (1a7) and progress on the CLI (1b2b). Because the CLI is the baseline of cultural landscapes in the National Park System, it serves as the vehicle for tracking these goals.

For these reasons, the Park Cultural Landscapes Program considers the completion of the CLI to be a servicewide priority. The information in the CLI is useful at all levels of the park service. At the national and regional levels it is used to inform planning efforts and budget decisions. At the park level, the CLI assists managers to plan, program, and prioritize funds. It is a record of cultural landscape treatment and management decisions and the physical narrative may be used to enhance interpretation programs.

Implementation of the CLI is coordinated on the Region/Support Office level. Each Region/Support Office creates a priority list for CLI work based on park planning needs, proposed development projects, lack of landscape documentation (which adversely affects the preservation or management of the resource), baseline information needs and Region/Support office priorities. This list is updated annually to respond to changing needs and priorities. Completed CLI records are uploaded at the end of the fiscal year to the National Center for Cultural Resources, Park Cultural Landscapes Program in Washington, DC. Only data officially entered into the National Center's CLI database is considered "certified data" for GPRA reporting.

The CLI is completed in a multi-level process with each level corresponding to a specific degree of effort and detail. From Level 0: Park Reconnaissance Survey through Level II: Landscape Analysis and Evaluation, additional information is collected, prior information is refined, and decisions are made regarding if and how to proceed. The relationship between Level 0, I, and II is direct and the CLI for a landscape or component landscape inventory unit is not considered finished until Level II is complete.

A number of steps are involved in completing a Level II inventory record. The process begins when the CLI team meets with park management and staff to clarify the purpose of the CLI and is followed by historical research, documentation, and fieldwork. Information is derived from two efforts: secondary sources that are usually available in the park's or regions' files, libraries, and archives and on-site landscape investigation(s). This information is entered into CLI database as text or graphics. A park report is generated from the database and becomes the vehicle for consultation with the park and the

SHPO/TPO.

Level III: Feature Inventory and Assessment is a distinct inventory level in the CLI and is optional. This level provides an opportunity to inventory and evaluate important landscape features identified at Level II as contributing to the significance of a landscape or component landscape, not listed on the LCS. This level allows for an individual landscape feature to be assessed and the costs associated with treatment recorded.

The ultimate goal of the Park Cultural Landscapes Program is a complete inventory of landscapes, component landscapes, and where appropriate, associated landscape features in the National Park System. The end result, when combined with the LCS, will be an inventory of all physical aspects of any given property.

Relationship between the CLI and a CLR

While there are some similarities, the CLI Level II is not the same as a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). Using secondary sources, the CLI Level II provides information to establish historic significance by determining whether there are sufficient extant features to convey the property's historic appearance and function. The CLI includes the preliminary identification and analysis to define contributing features, but does not provide the more definitive detail contained within a CLR, which involves more in-depth research, using primary rather than secondary source material.

The CLR is a treatment document and presents recommendations on how to preserve, restore, or rehabilitate the significant landscape and its contributing features based on historical documentation, analysis of existing conditions, and the Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines as they apply to the treatment of historic landscapes. The CLI, on the other hand, records impacts to the landscape and condition (good, fair, poor) in consultation with park management. Stabilization costs associated with mitigating impacts may be recorded in the CLI and therefore the CLI may advise on simple and appropriate stabilization measures associated with these costs if that information is not provided elsewhere.

When the park decides to manage and treat an identified cultural landscape, a CLR may be necessary to work through the treatment options and set priorities. A historical landscape architect can assist the park in deciding the appropriate scope of work and an approach for accomplishing the CLR. When minor actions are necessary, a CLI Level II park report may provide sufficient documentation to support the Section 106 compliance process.

Park Information

Park Name: Yosemite National Park
Administrative Unit: Yosemite National Park
Park Organization Code: 8800
Park Alpha Code: YOSE

Property Level And CLI Number

Property Level: Landscape
Name: South Entrance Station
CLI Identification Number: 725296
Parent Landscape CLI ID Number: 725296

Inventory Summary

Inventory Level: Level II

Completion Status:

Level 0

Date Data Collected - Level 0: 11/1/1999
Level 0 Recorder: HRA, Inc. (Caywood & Homstad)
Date Level 0 Entered: 11/1/1999
Level 0 Data Entry Recorder: HRA, Inc. (Caywood & Homstad)
Level 0 Site Visit: No

Level II

Date Level II Data Collected: 11/1/1999
Level II Data Collection: HRA, Inc. (Caywood & Homstad)
Date Level II Entered: 11/1/1999
Level II Data Entry Recorder: HRA, Inc. (Caywood & Homstad)
Level II Site Visit: Yes
Date of Concurrence: 9/2/2003

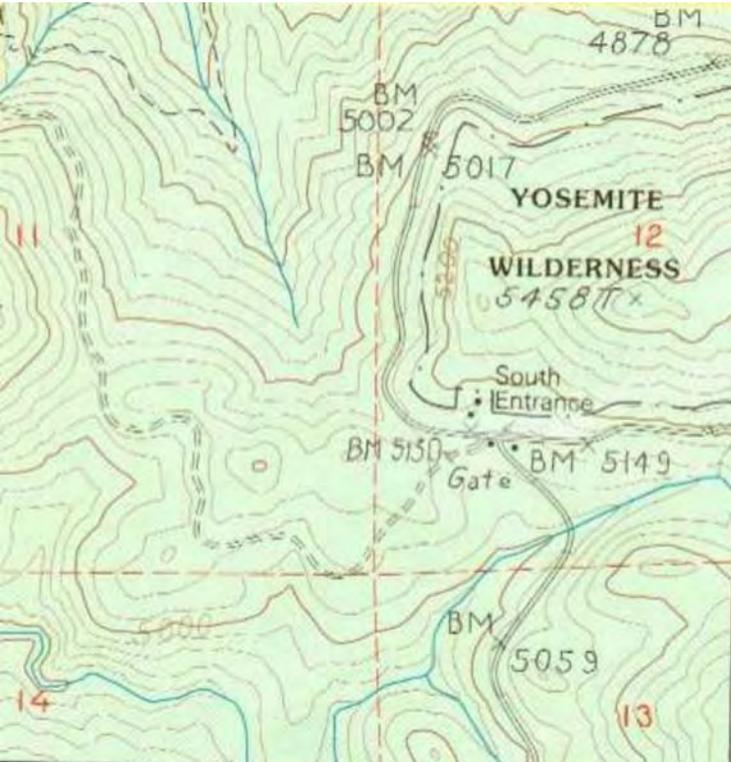
Landscape Description

The south entrance station consists of a small cluster of four historic buildings located at the 'T'-shaped intersection of the Wawona Road and Hwy 41. The district is located within the boundary of Yosemite National Park, in Mariposa County, California. The site is in clearing of about 2 acres; the steep slopes surrounding the buildings are densely timbered. Associated land uses include a housing area for National Park Service personnel, a checking station for visitors entering and leaving the park, and a service area. The housing area is located on the north side of the Wawona Road, while the checking station and service area straddle the road junction. This station is the principal entry point for people entering the park from the south.

Cultural Landscapes Inventory Hierarchy Description

The South Entrance Historic District is a landscape located within Yosemite National Park. It contains a number of contributing and noncontributing landscape features--principally buildings and structures.

Location Map



Portion of Wawona, CA USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle, showing location of South Entrance.

Boundary Description

The boundary for this property includes the cleared area for the housing unit on the north side of the Wawona Road and the area in the vicinity of the T-shaped intersection of the Wawona Road and Hwy. 41, sufficient to include the comfort station and the check station.

Regional Context

Physiographic Context

The south entrance to Yosemite National Park is located on the west slope of the south-central portion of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. This range divides central and northern California from the more arid lands of the Great Basin to the east. The two-acre site is in a small clearing surrounded by heavily wooded slopes consisting of stands of mixed forest of pine, fir and cedar with riparian vegetation along stream courses.

Cultural Context

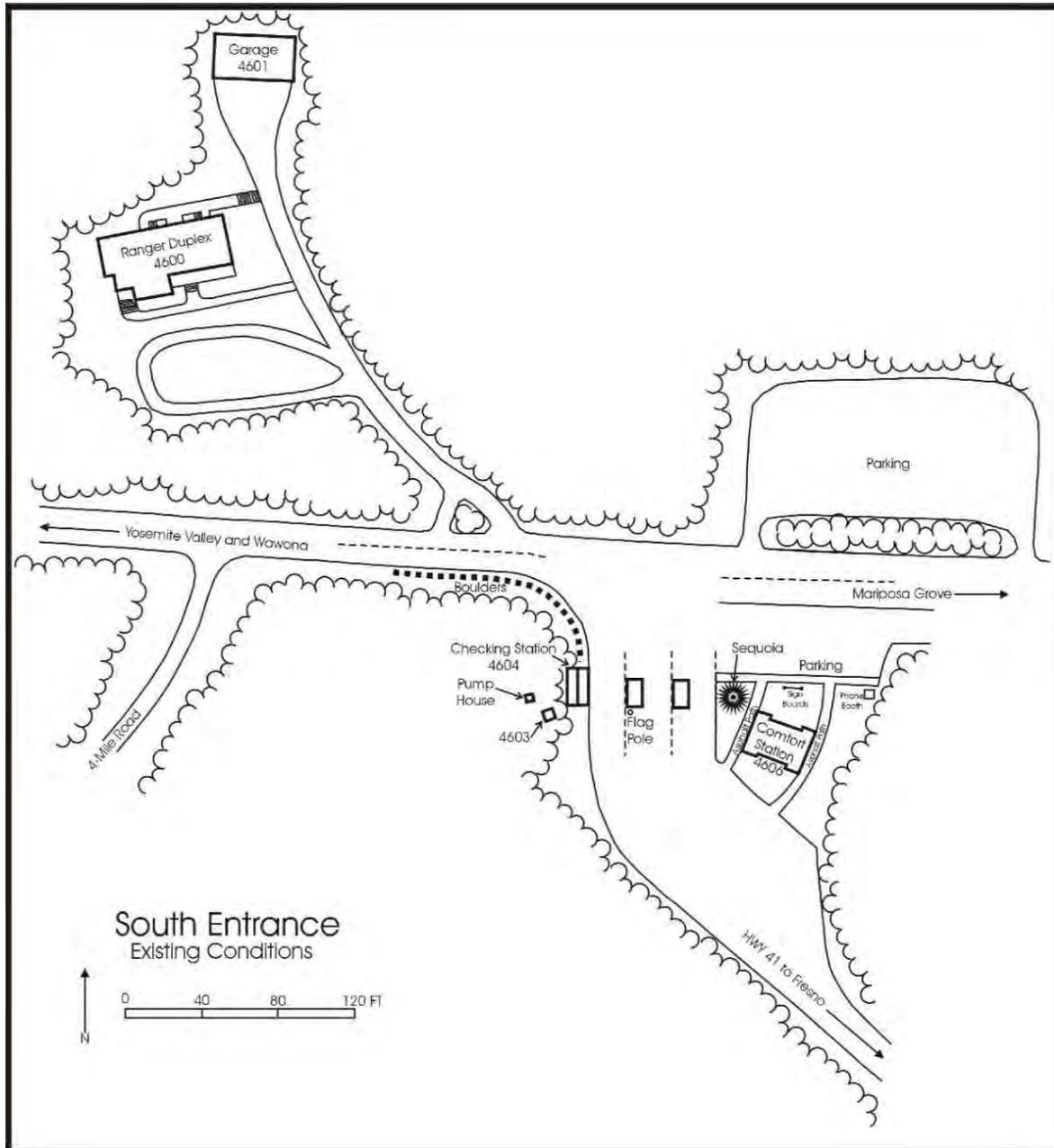
The buildings and structures that constitute associated with the South Entrance Historic District, are representative of National Park Service rustic architecture of the 1930s and 40s.

Political Context

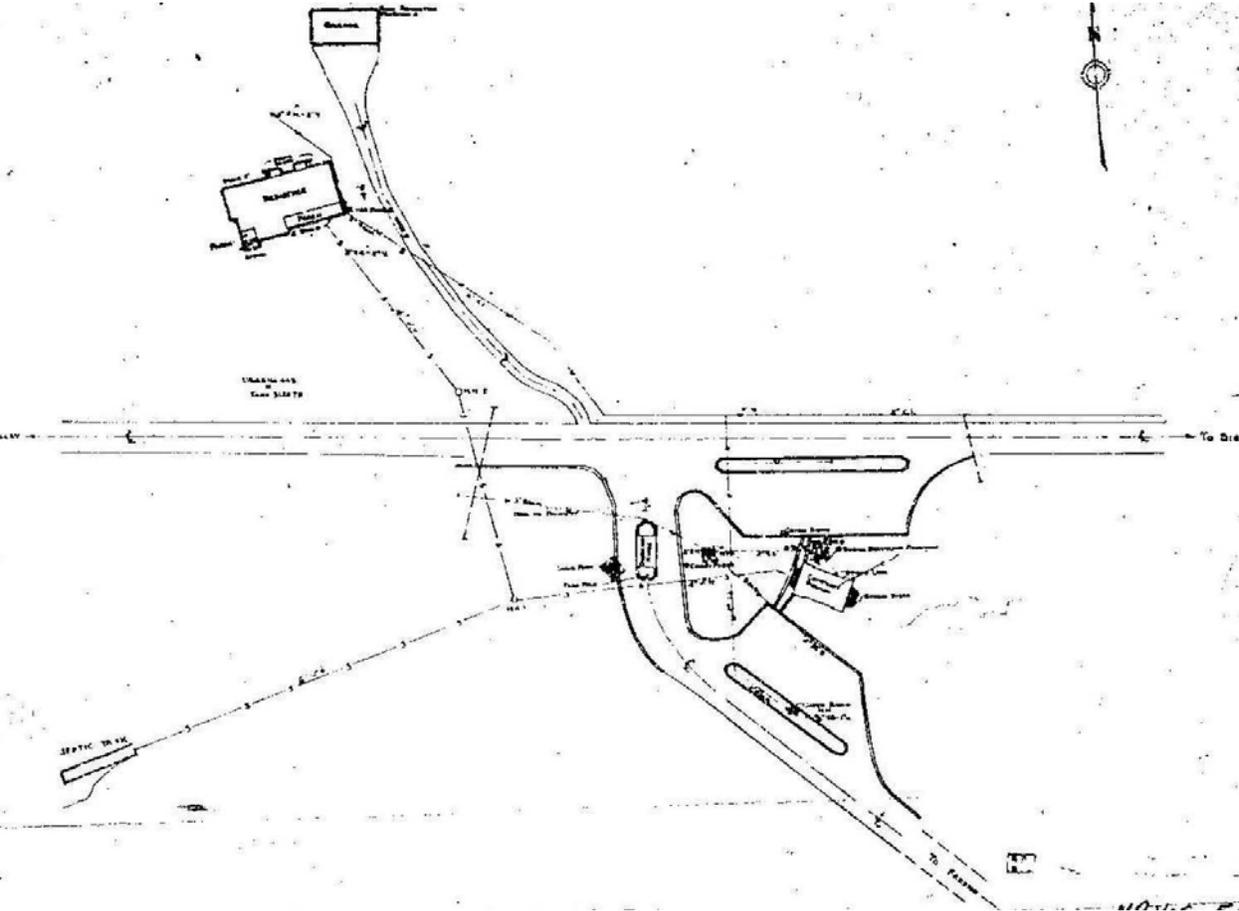
The South Entrance Historic District is located within Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County, California, in the SW 1/4 of Section 12, T5S/R21E.

Site Plan

South Entrance Historic District, existing conditions.



1935 Site Plan of the South Entrance. Drawing No. NP-YOS-5119.



Chronology

Year	Event	Description
1933 - 1934 AD	Built	Sewar system constructed for south entrance station. Funding source: Public Works Association
1934 AD	Built	Ranger Duplex (WA04600), garage (WA04601), checking station (WA04604) and comfort station (WA04606), constructed this year. Architect: NPS Branch of Plans and Design
1937 AD	Altered	South entrance station water system supplemented by constructing a pipeline from Mariposa Grove. Engineer: National Park Service
1937 AD	Built	California Department of highways completes Hwy. 41, which connects with the Wawona Road at the south entrance. Engineer: State of California
1941 AD	Altered	Configuration of the Wawona Road/Hwy 41 intersection changed. Southbound lane west of checking station eliminated, a second lane added east of the building. Octagonal kiosk added to middle of two lanes. Engineer: National Park Service
1941 AD	Paved	By this time, all segments of Hwy. 41, both within and outside the park were paved. Engineer: State of California
1955 AD	Altered	New checking kiosk added to the intersection, replaces octagonal building. Engineer: National Park Service
1980 AD	Altered	Sometime since the Mission 66 period, the intersection has been altered once again. There are currently three lanes of traffic in the road approaching from the south, two northbound and one southbound.

Statement Of Significance

Summary: With the exception of the two modern checking kiosks, the buildings at the south entrance were all built in the same time period, in a similar style, and possess a common association with development of the park's south entrance area. They represent a unique style of "rustic" architecture that was refined in the national parks during the early years of the National Park Service.

Additional Information: The rustic style of architecture represented by the buildings at the south entrance has its roots in the landscape design of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one of the tenants of which was the creation of naturalistic buildings and structures that blended with the natural environment. Even prior to its establishment in 1916, the formers of the National Park Service discussed the important role that landscape architects would play in developing park lands. Early on, the service recognized the need to create buildings and structures that blended with, rather than overpowered the natural landscape. The creation of the Landscape Division, which, over time, evolved into the Branch of Plans and Design, facilitated this goal. The park service employed landscape architects and "landscape engineers" to select building sites, and design buildings that matched the natural surroundings. This subordination of a building to its environment was achieved by using local materials, by screening the buildings from view with native vegetation, by blending building colors with the natural surroundings, and by scaling the building size to that of the landscape.

The buildings at the south entrance, with their low, horizontal lines and native materials, are good examples of the park service rustic style. For visitors entering Yosemite National Park from Highway 41, the south entrance continues to provide access to the park and its resources, provide services for park visitors, and housing for park service employees stationed in the Wawona District.

Physical History

1932-1941: Initial Development

In 1864, the federal government recognized the extraordinary scenic beauty of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoia by granting the land in trust to the state of California. Ensuring that future generations could forever enjoy this beauty, the legislation stipulated that these lands “be held for public use, resort, and recreation, and shall be inalienable for all time” (Act of June 30, 1864, 13 Stat., 325). In 1890, the federal government established Yosemite National Park. Comprising nearly a million acres, the new park surrounded Yosemite Valley and lands north of the Mariposa Grove.

In 1905 the state of California receded the grant of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to the federal government, and in 1906, after Congress passed a joint resolution accepting the grant and withdrawing the land from settlement, occupancy or sale, the state relinquished control of the grant (Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yosemite National Park 1905 and 1906; Greene 1987:405, 408-411). In 1905 and 1906 the boundaries of the park materially changed. The Act of February 7, 1905 eliminated nearly 543 square miles from the western, southwestern and eastern borders of the park while the joint resolution of June 11, 1906 cut another 16 square miles from the southwestern border. The purpose of these boundary changes was to remove privately owned lands and mineral and timber claims from within the park boundaries (Yosemite Park Commission 1904; Report of the Acting Superintendent of the Yosemite National Park 1905:6-7).

In 1932, President Herbert Hoover issued a proclamation to add 8,785 acres of the Wawona Basin to the park. A year earlier, Congress had approved this addition in the Interior Department appropriations act (Proclamation 2005, Aug. 13, 1932; Act of Feb. 14, 1931, 46 Stat. 1115, 1154). This addition took in the lands surrounding the south entrance area. As explained by Michigan Representative Louis Cramton, one of the reasons for approving the acquisition was to protect lands adjacent to the new Wawona Road, from new development (Cramton, Congressional Record, Dec. 12, 1930:654). The new road was to replace the old 1870s wagon road that connected the Wawona Hotel area with the Yosemite Valley. Designed to serve as the main connection between the south entrance and the valley, 30 miles to the west, construction of the new road had begun in 1929. By 1932 most of the road construction was complete, except for the Wawona Tunnel at Inspiration Point, which was completed in June, 1933 (Thomson, Superintendent’s Annual Report 1933).

This new Wawona Road was designed to connect with Highway 41, which led to Fresno and to other points south and west of the park. Observing that over 60 percent of travel into Yosemite originated in Southern California, Superintendent C. G. Thomson believed that once the new Wawona Road was linked with the highway from Fresno, a large number of visitors would then enter the park via this route (Thomson, Annual Report 1932:27). As a result, with completion of both the new Wawona Road and Highway 41 the need for a new entrance station at the southern boundary of the park became a necessity.

In April of 1933, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) enrollees moved a check station kiosk from the Alder Creek entrance to the south entrance area, to serve temporarily as an entrance station (John B. Wosky, Report to the Chief Architect, Aug. 1, 1933, copy available at the Division of Maintenance Office, El Portal, California). The CCC was one of the federal government’s relief efforts, organized specifically to employ young men in conservation work. By August of 1933, the CCC crews had also removed snags and performed general cleanup in the south entrance area (Wosky, Aug. 1, 1933). According to Superintendent C. G. Thomson, the kiosk that had been moved from Alder Creek stood “at

the intersection of the Big Tree Road, Mariposa Grove Road and the road to Yosemite Valley.” The triangle of land at the junction of the two roads at Four-Mile, an older name for the south entrance area, was “fenced on two sides with 18 inch log sections buried slightly in the ground, in accordance with plans prepared by the Division of Plans and Design.” As a result of the new station, the Park Service subsequently eliminated the checking station at Alder Creek (Superintendent’s Monthly Report, April 1933:7).

As with many of the NPS entrance stations constructed during this era, the complex of rustic structures was designed to “. . . invite and deter, encouraging use while discouraging abuse of the park by the public. It should be all things to all men, tempting the devotees of Nature and of the past, while warding off and detouring that bloc of the public primarily bent on a greater gasoline consumption” (Good 1938:9). Good defined the ideal park entrance station: “As the outpost of a reserved area offering certain distinctive recreational opportunities to the public, [the entrance station] can with subtlety and grace project the promise and lure of the region and its offered recreation to the very public highway” (1938:10).

The number of visitors coming into Yosemite National Park through the South Entrance in 1933 reached over 42,000. This represented the second highest number of visitors in the park that year; the greatest number, over 197,000 people, entered the park via the Arch Rock entrance (Thomson, Annual Report, 1933). A lack of available funding had necessitated temporarily using the checking kiosk that was moved from Alder Creek. But by July of 1934, federal relief funds had become available for building the south entrance checking station and comfort station as well as nearby housing for the rangers employed in the Wawona District of the park (Thomson, Final Report, Ranger Station Dormitory and Checking Kiosk, Jan. 1935.)

Under the direction of W. B. Carnes, deputy chief architect, plans and specifications for the kiosk, as well as for the ranger duplex, were prepared in the offices of the Branch of Plans and Design in San Francisco. Together with the south entrance comfort station and the garage located next to the ranger duplex, the buildings at the south entrance were all constructed using native materials and were designed to blend harmoniously with the environment.

The ranger duplex and garage, checking kiosk, and comfort station were all built during the latter half of 1934. The park’s engineering department supervised the project led by assistant engineer E. A. Foster. Ed Bowman served as construction foreman. On July 5, 1934, construction began on the living quarters for the rangers who were stationed all year at the south entrance checking station. The structure was sited on an elevated slope on the north side of the road, set back approximately 100 feet. The sloping ground "necessitated a cut of approximately 6 feet in the rear tapering down to nothing at the front on the west end, with a 3 foot cut at the east end. An area way was excavated back ten feet in the rear in order to allow accessibility, and to eliminate the possibility of snow drifting against the building." (Thomson, Final Report, Ranger Station Dormitory and Checking Kiosk 1935:1).

The ranger dormitory was wood-frame, approximately 36 feet by 68 feet, with two separate apartments – one for a ranger with a family and the other providing accommodations for two rangers. Steps and the foundation of the structure were made of rubble masonry. Workers transported the stone and sand needed to build the steps and the foundation some 6 miles from the Wawona Basin. Royal western red cedar shingles, laid 10" to weather, were used to cover the gable roof. The shingles were hand-brushed with a green, creosote shingle stain after application. A covered porch extended across the front of the building. The house was ready for occupancy by late October, 1934. A garage was also constructed at this time, at the end of a narrow drive to the rear (northeast) of the rangers’ residence. This clapboard structure also had stone foundation and a gable roof (Thomson, Final Report, Ranger Station Dormitory and Checking

Kiosk 1935).

Next in order of construction was the comfort station, which began on August 24, 1934. Like the ranger duplex, this building was ready for use at the end of October. Located southeast of the ranger duplex, south of the Wawona Road, the comfort station measured approximately 19 ½ feet by 32 feet. The building was wood-frame with redwood siding, and a gable roof. Similar to the foundations of the ranger duplex and the checking kiosk, the foundation consisted of rubble masonry from the Wawona Basin – specifically from the bed of the South Fork of the Merced River. “Marked and weather worn specimens were chosen for this purpose” (Thomson, Final Report, Rest Rooms – Four Mile Ranger Station, Feb. 15, 1935). Stone steps led to entrances on both ends of the building. Stone veneer extended 30 inches above grade to the base of the window sills. Also designed for year around use, the comfort station had a gas heating system and was lit with gas lamps. Just to the north of the comfort station, a stone drinking fountain was also constructed (Thomson, Final Report, Rest Rooms – Four Mile Ranger Station 1935).

Work on the checking kiosk began on September 20th. Workers waited until all materials were present at the site in order to limit the amount of disruption to checking vehicles as they entered or left the park. Because the new highway would be open all year, the new checking kiosk needed to be suitable for winter use. The kiosk was a wood-frame structure, with rubble granite foundation, and a wood shingle gable roof. The building also had a gas heating system, and gas lamps providing illumination. Like the ranger residence, the stone for the foundation came from the Wawona Basin. The road through the entrance station allowed for a lane of traffic on either side of the kiosk. By mid-November, 1934, visitors could use this new checking kiosk as they entered or left the park (Thomson, Final Report, Ranger Station Dormitory and Checking Kiosk 1935).

Although not specifically described in completion reports, historical photographs accompanying these reports show that the final step in the construction process was landscaping—particularly in the area between the checking station and comfort station. Small islands of native plants, defined by concrete curbing, guided traffic through the check station and marked the boundary of parking areas on both the north and south sides of the comfort station.

The new checking kiosk lay at the center of one of these islands. The area inside the concrete curbing was landscaped with native plants (including manzanita) and a flagpole was established at its southern end. Northbound traffic passed by the east side of the kiosk, while southbound traffic exited by the west side of the building.

Another island separated the northbound lane of the highway from a parking area on the south side of the comfort station. A similar structure separated the eastbound lane of the road to the Mariposa Grove from the parking area on the north side of the comfort station. Curbing extended west from the two parking lots, and formed the boundaries of another landscaped area located between the east edge of the northbound lane at the checking station and the west side of the comfort station. By January of 1935, the landscaping was complete, except that the parking areas were not yet paved.

Public works funding also paid for the water system at South Entrance, constructed between May and October of 1934. The construction period extended for so long because a labor strike in San Francisco delayed the shipment of pipe to the area. The system was designed to serve the comfort station and the rangers’ residence as well as to fill hydrants at the parking areas and to provide water for the sprinklers on the grounds. The system consisted of 2,760 lineal feet of 2-inch cast iron pipe. Except for the first 250 feet, the pipe followed the north side of the Wawona Road. The source of the water was a spring at the headwaters of a small stream that flowed into Big Creek. At the intake a 4-inch reinforced concrete cut-off wall measured 25 feet in length and 4 feet in height. The intake chamber (2 feet by 2 feet by 4 feet in

dimension) was constructed with an area in the back wall of the chamber filled with rock to permit percolation from the spring. The 4,000-gallon-capacity cylindrical wooden storage tank was benched into the hillside. Branch lines, consisting of primarily 2-inch pipe, extended for 640 feet to the comfort station and ranger duplex as well as to the drinking fountain and to three 2-inch fire hydrants, three 3/4-inch hose bibbs for irrigation, and two 3/4-inch hose bibbs used to provide water for filling radiators. Excavation to the rangers' residence was through clay loam soil, while excavation to the South Entrance intersection was in rock fill (Thomson, Final Report, Water System – 4 Mile, Jan. 1935, copy available at the Division of Maintenance Office, El Portal, California).

Construction on the associated sewer system for the South Entrance began a bit earlier, in September of 1933, but proceeded concurrently with the construction of the rangers' residence, checking kiosk, and comfort station. Completed in October, 1934, the system was also funded with public works monies. Pipelines to both the rangers' residence and the comfort station consisted of 4-inch vitrified pipe, extending 281 feet in length and 202 feet, respectively. The system included one manhole at the rangers' residence and another (both brick) at the juncture of the two lines just west of the entrance area. Sewage moved through a 6-inch vitrified main pipeline to a redwood-lined cesspool (6 feet by 6 feet by 48 feet 2 inches in dimension). Two sludge draining lines, each 30 feet long, were installed from the cesspool. The pipeline trench averaged 4 feet deep by 21 inches wide (Thomson, Final Report, Sewer System Extension and Improvement, Nov. 1934, copy available at the Division of Maintenance Office, El Portal, California).

By 1937, a problem of insufficient water flows had developed at the South Entrance. To resolve the problem, the Park Service used public works funding to install 6,600 linear feet of 2-inch galvanized pipe. This pipeline was connected to, and brought water from, the Mariposa Grove water system (O. M. Hilton, Park Engineer, memorandum to the Superintendent, July 16, 1937, filed with Superintendents' Annual Reports, YRL).

By 1937, the state of California had nearly finished the construction of Highway 41 between Fresno and the park boundary. A stretch of about 5 miles outside the park still remained extremely narrow and was not yet paved. Superintendent C. G. Thomson anticipated that the state would finish the road that year and that its completion would result in even more visitors arriving and leaving the park through the South Entrance (Annual Report, 1936:13; Annual Report 1937:12). In 1939, 142,435 visitors entered Yosemite National Park via the South Entrance. In 1940, the year of the park's 50th anniversary, these numbers at the South Entrance jumped to 170,421 (Annual Reports, 1939 and 1940). By then, Highway 41 was entirely paved both inside and outside the park. The parking areas on the north and south sides of the comfort station may also have been paved at this time (Annual Report 1941).

In 1939, because of increasingly heavy use of the south entrance, the Park Service decided to revise the original checking station configuration. As a result, additional traffic lanes and a second checking kiosk were installed. The new checking station – an octagonal log frame building – was built by 1940. These changes, however, did not affect the basic “T” intersection layout of the entrance (Ernest Davidson, Field Landscape Architect, notes for the files, May 26, 1939, Box: Landscaping General File: 601-15, 1931 to ___, Vertical Files, YRL; National Register of Historic Places Registration Form 1988).



Figure 1. Looking SE toward the south entrance prior to the 1934 construction project. Neg. No R1-6706, YOSE Research Library.



Figure 2. Looking W along Wawona Road prior to 1934 construction project. Neg. No R1-6704, YOSE Research Library.



Figure 3. Looking SE toward the new south entrance station after completion of 1934 project. Poles were temporary markers for snow removal. Neg. R1-6704, YOSE Research Library.



Figure 4. View to the NW, detail of the new checking station. Neg. No. R1-6702, YOSE Research Library.



Figure 5. View to NW along the south approach road. Note the curbing and landscaping that separated the northbound driving lane from the parking area on the S side of the comfort station. Neg. No. R1-6707, YOSE Reasearch Library.



Figure 6. Overview looking NW after the first lane reconstruction (circa 1940). Note that the island separating the northbound lane from the parking area has been removed. Neg. No. R1-6705, YOSE Research Library.

1942-1970: Postwar Development

During World War II the numbers of visitors to the park declined markedly as the government imposed wartime restrictions, including one on gasoline. During the winters of 1944 and 1945 the Park Service closed the south entrance (Annual Reports, 1944 and 1945). After the war ended and the postwar prosperity boomed, tourists began returning to the park. In 1958, the octagonal checking station was replaced by one of the two kiosks that remain at the entrance today. This change was part of a general redevelopment of the area associated with the implementation of the MISSION 66 program in Yosemite National Park (National Register of Historic Places Registration Form 1988). The westernmost traffic lane was subsequently eliminated and the original checking kiosk was adapted for use as an office.

By 1968, park officials were considering an option to relocate the south entrance to Wawona. Superintendent Lawrence Hadley observed that the south entrance accommodated “a high volume of bona fide park travel, as well as a substantial quantity of traffic generated by private land owners in Section 35.” Hadley thought that the location of the south entrance, “coupled with its high traffic volume, constitute[d] an intrusion and a barrier in and through the heart of the existing development and public use area at Wawona” (Supt. Lawrence C. Hadley, to Regional Director, Western Region, National Park Service, Nov. 12, 1968). Hadley’s proposal to relocate the south entrance did not prevail and the south entrance continued to operate in its original location.

With the exception of the kiosk that was added during the MISSION 66 era, and a second smaller kiosk that was subsequently added, the buildings that comprise the South Entrance to the park – that is, the original checking station, the rangers’ residence and garage, and the comfort station – together represent the efforts of the Park Service to create an entrance that appeals to the visitor and that blends with the natural environment. Despite traffic delays, these structures subtly announce the tourist’s entry into a world where natural beauty steals the show, a world where the valley’s massive granite walls and the Mariposa Grove’s stately giants have continued to delight and inspire fellow travelers since at least 1864.

Analysis And Evaluation

Summary

The south entrance is a simple designed landscape, whose most important contributing features are its four historic buildings. Three of these buildings retain integrity of materials, workmanship, design, setting and location, including the ranger duplex (WA04600), the south entrance garage (WA4601), and the south entrance comfort station (WA4606). The 1934 checking station (WA4604) has been remodeled to function as an office, resulting in the removal of some of the architectural details associated with its original function. Circulation was, and continues to be, an important landscape characteristic. Although the number of lanes in the roadway entering from the south (Hwy 41.) have been increased, the "T"-shaped intersection has been retained. This widening has resulted in the loss of some historical landscape elements including the original concrete-curbed islands that directed the flow of traffic through the check station and into and out of parking areas north and south of the comfort station. In general, the district retains integrity of location and setting, and the buildings and structures possess integrity of materials, workmanship and design.

Landscape Characteristics And Features

Buildings And Structures

The character of the district's buildings represents an important landscape characteristic at the south entrance station. These buildings, designed and constructed as a unit, represent the rustic style of architecture developed by the Landscape Division of the park service. Generally, this style of architecture combines the use of low horizontal lines with the use of native materials (usually wood and stone). Other than these constants, the execution of rustic buildings is usually dependent upon historical regional patterns and the availability of local materials.

The area also contains one structure, a stone retaining wall at the rear of the ranger duplex, designed to stabilize the cut in the hill slope behind the building.

Summary: "Buildings and structures" is an important landscape characteristic for the south entrance station. All of the historical buildings remain in place, though some have been modified. The multi-light sliding windows, which once allowed the attendant to collect fees from visitors entering and leaving the park, have been in-filled with board and batten siding. This modification obscures the original use of the building. The ranger garage has also been modified. This building actually possessed two interior spaces, a double garage and a wood storage area—each of which has a separate entrance. The original double garage doors have been replaced with aluminum overhead doors. Although these two buildings can be counted as contributing resources within a larger historic district, they do not qualify for individual listing.



Looking NW at the south and east elevations of the comfort station (WA04606). HRA, 1999.



Looking north at the south (front) elevation of the rangers' duplex (WA04600). HRA, 1999.



Looking NW towards the cobblestone retaining wall at the rear of the rangers' duplex (WA04600). HRA, 1999.

Characteristic Feature	Type Of Contribution	LCS Structure Name	IDLCS Number	Structure Number
Checking Station	Contributing	South Entrance Office	055753	WA04604
Comfort Station	Contributing	South Entrance Comfort Station	055755	WA04606
Ranger Duplex	Contributing	South Entrance Ranger Duplex	055754	WA04600
South Entrance Garage	Contributing	South Entrance Garage	055934	WA04601
Stone retaining wall behind ranger duplex	Contributing	South Entrance Stone Retaining Wall	330172	
Two modern checking kiosks	Non-Contributing			

Circulation

Checking Station/Service Area: “Circulation” is another important characteristic of the south entrance station. Prior to the 1934 south entrance development project, there was a "Y" shaped intersection where the Wawona Road intersected the access road from the south. Development plans for the new entrance station included not only the construction of buildings, but also the reconfiguration of the intersection, so that when development was complete, the intersection had been transformed into a "T" shape, with the two main roads intersecting each other at right angles. The new checking kiosk was placed in the middle of the lanes of the south approach road. People coming from the south (via Hwy. 41) entered the park passed by the east side of the checking station. Southbound traffic (those exiting the park) passed by the west side of the station. Sometime during the 1950s, likely during the Mission 66 program, the road configuration of the district was changed in order to allow more people through the entrance faster. The lane on the west side of the historical checking station was closed and another driving lane added in the formerly landscaped area west of the comfort station. A new island was created and an octagonal checking kiosk added to middle. The old checking station lay at the west edge of the southbound (exiting) lane.

Neither the original nor the modified, 1940s circulation pattern, is present currently. Now there are three traffic lanes located between the old checking station (which has been adapted for use as an office building), one southbound lane for people exiting the park and two northbound lanes for people entering the park. The historical checking station is no longer used for receiving fees—that function is allocated to the two modern checking kiosks. The driving lanes are distinguished by striping, rather than by the landscaped islands with raised curbs that characterized the initial development. In addition, there is no physical separation of the driving lanes from the parking areas on the north and south sides of the comfort station. The edges of the parking areas adjacent to the comfort station are defined by pre-cast concrete barriers. These same barriers form the edges of asphalt paths that lead to the east and west entrances to the comfort station. Instead of the stone steps that originally accessed the entrances, rough ramps have been formed by the simple expedient of covering the lower stone step with a layer of asphalt, the top of which is flush with the top step.

Housing Area: As originally designed, the ranger duplex and garage located north of the Wawona Road was accessed via a one-lane gravel road that led past the east side of the dwelling to the entrance to the garage. This road is still present, however a loop road now branches from this main access road to provide access to the front of the duplex.

Summary: Circulation was an important landscape characteristic at the time that the south entrance station was developed. Essentially, the buildings were designed and sited in response to the new intersection created during completion of the Wawona Road and Hwy. 41. Although historical travel lanes have been removed and new lanes have been added, the original T-shaped intersection remains. The primary configuration of circulation through the district is still discernible. In general, however, circulation systems within the site have lost integrity. The access road to the ranger dormitory has been modified to include a large loop drive that accesses the front of the building.



Looking SSW to the existing intersection. Note the three lanes of traffic. HRA, 1999.



Looking NNW to the entrance station. Note the continuous asphalt extending from the northbound driving lane through the parking area south of the comfort station. HRA, 1999



Looking NE towards the modern parking area NE of the comfort station. HRA, 1999.



Looking N along the asphalt path west of the comfort station (WA04606). HRA, 1999.



Looking N along the driveway to the garage (WS04601). HRA, 1999.



Looking NW towards the entrance to the residential area. HRA, 1999.

Characteristic Feature	Type Of Contribution	LCS Structure Name	IDLCS Number	Structure Number
Two track road leading from Wawona Road to ranger's garage	Contributing	South Entrance Station Residence Road	330173	
Asphalt paths to comfort station entrances.	Non-Contributing			
Current, 3-lane configuraion at intersection.	Non-Contributing			
Loop road in front of ranger duplex.	Non-Contributing			

Land Use

Since the 1934 completion of the improvements at the south entrance station, this area has supported three separate but closely associated functions. The site contains a park employee housing area that is restricted from public access, as well as an administrative checking station that controls public access at the south end of the park. Public services are also provided in the vicinity of the checking station. Historically, services included a comfort station and a drinking fountain. Modern additions to the services include informational signboards as well as a phone booth.

Summary: Since its completion in 1934, there has been continuity in land use at the south entrance. Today, the area continues to provide housing, to control the entry and exit of park visitors and limited public services. The continuity of land use contributes to the historical character of the district.

Small Scale Features

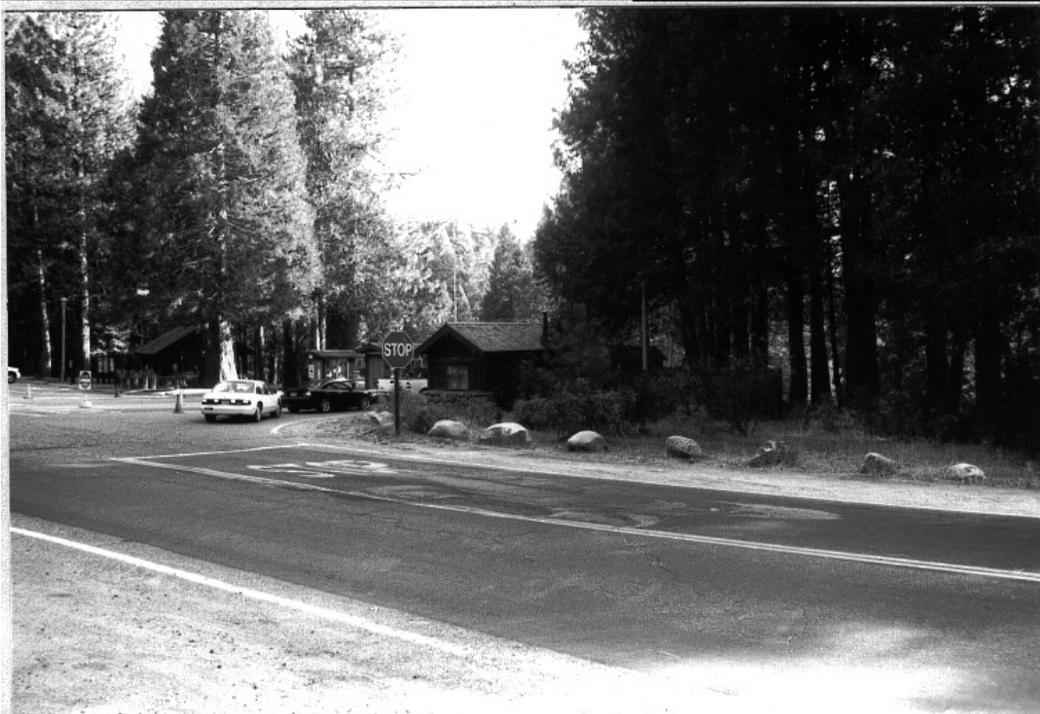
Checking Station/Service Area: Historically, this area contained a few small-scale features that added character to the area. A stone drinking fountain was constructed north of the comfort station, between the parking area and the building. The drinking fountain has been removed. Another feature added soon after completion of the buildings was a flagpole, located directly in front of the south elevation of the checking station. During the many reconfigurations of the intersection, the flag pole has moved several times. Currently, it is located in front of the modern checking kiosk. Other small-scale features in the vicinity of the intersection included directional signs. These historic signs were enameled metal, set low to the ground. All of these have been replaced with modern traffic control devices. These include a row of large boulders lining the shoulder of the eastbound lane of the Wawona Road, just west of the intersection. These boulders prevent travelers from parking on the wide road shoulder. Several stop signs are also located at the intersection.

Housing Area: Historical small-scale features located in the vicinity of the housing area include a fire hydrant in the vicinity of the ranger duplex. This hydrant is still functional, and represents the only above-ground evidence of the south entrance water system in direct proximity to the buildings. (Another of these hydrants formerly was located west of the comfort station in the service area).

Summary: The district contains one small-scale feature, the fire hydrant in the vicinity of the ranger dormitory, that dates to the historical period and that contribute to the eligibility of the property. Currently, there are a number of modern signs and facilities such as phone booths, that detract from the historical character of the district.



Fire hydrant and hose in the vicinity of the rangers' dormitory. HRA, 1999.



Looking SE towards the existing intersection. Note the boulder barrier on the south shoulder of the eastbound lane. HRA, 1999.

Characteristic Feature	Type Of Contribution	LCS Structure Name	IDLCS Number	Structure Number
Fire hydrant in housing area	Contributing	South Entrance Station Fire Hydrant	330174	
Boulder barriers on south side of Wawona Road, west of intersection.	Non-Contributing			
Sign board in front of Comfort Station	Non-Contributing			
Telephone Booth near comfort station	Non-Contributing			

Spatial Organization

The development at the south entrance is oriented around the junction of the Wawona Road, the road to the Mariposa Grove and Highway 41. Improvements associated with the two principal land uses are spatially distinct from one another. The housing area is located at the end of a short spur road that exits the north side of the Wawona Road. The two buildings in the housing area are screened from view from the entrance area proper by vegetation. The public buildings, namely the comfort station, the two modern checking kiosks and the remodeled "office" (the historic checking station) are located directly adjacent to the road junction. Summary: This area retains the spatial organization of the historical period. This characteristic retains integrity and contributes to the historical character of the district.

Vegetation

Native vegetation in the vicinity of the south entrance station consists of mixed stands of pine, fir and cedar. Prior to the beginning of the new development, the area adjacent to the road intersection was cleared of vegetation—mostly in the vicinity of the comfort station. The footprint of the buildings in the housing area as well as the access road corridors were also cleared, however historical photographs show that the clearing was kept to a minimum. Mature trees adjacent to the ranger dormitory were left standing in order to screen the buildings from the road. Selective clearing constituted the landscaping in the housing area.

The vicinity of the checking station similarly required little clearing. Historical photographs show an open stand of forest with rather sparse understory vegetation. The old road to the Mariposa Grove (shown on historical maps as the 4-Mile Road), entered the vicinity of the south entrance station from the southwest at this point, and some of the clearing may be due to the presence of that road.

After the completion of the comfort station and the checking station, the areas near these buildings were landscaped with native shrubs. A giant sequoia tree was planted near the northwest corner of the comfort station where it remains today. A photograph of the comfort station taken after completion shows that the slope above the east side of the building was planted with young fir and pine, as well as lower growing shrubs such as manzanita (*arctostaphylos*) and ceanothus. Modifications in the circulation system have resulted in the removal of most of the planted areas adjacent to the comfort station and the checking station. Almost the entire area between the driving lanes of Hwy 41 and the Wawona Road and the comfort station has been paved. The exceptions include the area containing the giant sequoia tree. The area immediately surrounding the building is heavily impacted by foot traffic and contains little in the way of herbaceous or shrubby vegetation. Mature trees are located between the south side of the comfort station and the south parking lot and to the east of the building—where the vegetation planted in 1934 has matured.

The area west of the checking station currently contains a dense stand of incense cedar, which post-dates the abandonment of the old southbound traffic lane.

Summary: Historically, native plants were used in the landscaping adjacent to the comfort station and checking station, therefore 'vegetation' was an important landscape characteristic during the period of significance. However, the majority of this planted vegetation has been removed. The deliberately planted giant sequoia does remain at the site, and can be considered a contributing landscape feature. In addition, the character of the surrounding forest, which defines the limits of site development, is substantially unaltered since the historical period. The native vegetation surrounding the site contributes to the integrity of setting of the property.

Characteristic Feature	Type Of Contribution	LCS Structure Name	IDLCS Number	Structure Number
Giant Sequoia located adjacent to the nw corner of the comfort station.	Contributing			

Management Information

Descriptive And Geographic Information

Historic Name(s): Four Mile Checking Station
Current Name(s): South Entrance Historic Districe
Management Unit: Wawona District
Tract Numbers: N/A
State and County: Mariposa County, CA
Size (acres): 2.00

Boundary UTM

Boundary UTM(s):	Source	Type	Datum	Zone	Easting	Northing
	USGS Map 1:24,000	Point	NAD 27	11	267425	4154400

GIS File Name:

GIS File Description:

National Register Information

National Register Documentation: Undocumented -- SHPO

Explanatory Narrative:

National Register Eligibility: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Explanatory Narrative:

The nomination submitted for the South Entrance Historic Distric in 1988 did not address landscape characteristics. However, the California SHPO concurred with the findings of this CLI, particularly: that the proposed district is eligible for listing on the National Register, that the setting contributes to the significance, and that the list of contributing/non-contributing features is correct.

Date of Eligibility Determination: 8/25/2004

National Register Classification: District

Significance Level: Local

Contributing/Individual: Individual

Significance Criteria: C -- Inventory Unit embodies distinctive characteristics of type/period/method of construction; or represents work of master; or possesses high artistic values; or represents significant/distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction

Period Of Significance

Time Period: 1934 - 1938 AD

Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values
Historic Context Subtheme: Landscape Architecture
Historic Context Facet: The 1930's: Era Of Public Works

Area Of Significance:

Category: Architecture
Priority: 1

National Historic Landmark Information

National Historic

Landmark Status: No

World Heritage Site Information

World Heritage Site Status: No

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Designed Landscape

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Use/Function Category: Government
Use/Function: Government-Other
Detailed Use/Function: Government-Other
Type Of Use/Function: Both Current And Historic

Ethnographic Information

Ethnographic Survey Conducted: No Survey Conducted

Significance Description:

An "affiliation study" is currently in progress for the Wawona area. It will be complete during the summer of 2000.

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?

No

Adjacent Lands Description:

General Management Information

Management Category: Should Be Preserved And Maintained
Management Category Date: 9/15/1998
Explanatory Narrative:

Condition Assessment And Impacts

The criteria for determining the condition of landscapes is consistent with the Resource Management Plan Guideline definitions (1994) and is decided with the concurrence of park management. Cultural landscape conditions are defined as follows:

Good: indicates the landscape shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The landscape's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the landscape shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character-defining elements will cause the landscape to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the landscape shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

Undetermined: Not enough information available to make an evaluation.

Condition Assessment: Fair
Assessment Date: 09/30/1998
Date Recorded: 09/30/1998
Park Management Concurrence: Yes **Concurrence Date:** 9/2/2003
Level Of Impact Severity: Moderate

Stabilization Measures:

Impact:

Type of Impact: Inappropriate Maintenance

Internal/External: Internal

Description:

The native stone stairs at the entrance to the comfort station have been covered with asphalt.

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

Internal/External:

Description:

The type of impact is listed in the 1998 LCS form.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement: None

Explanatory Narrative:
There are no management agreements in effect for this site.

NPS Legal Interest: Fee Simple

Explanatory Narrative:

Public Access: With Permission

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Undetermined

Approved Treatment Document:

Document Date:

Explanatory Narrative:

The approved treatment for this property has not been determined. Thus far, the buildings at the site have, for the most part, been maintained in a manner consistent with 'preservation.'

Approved Treatment Completed: No

Approved Treatment Cost

**LCS Structure Approved
Treatment Cost:** \$0

**Landscape Approved
Treatment Cost:** \$0

Cost Date:

Level of Estimate:

Cost Estimator:

Explanatory Description: The LCS has not identified ultimate approved treatment costs for the buildings and structures and no landscape treatment costs have been identified in a park document.

Stabilization Costs

LCS Structure Stabilization Cost:

Landscape Stabilization Costs:

Cost Date:

Level Of Estimate:

Cost Estimator:

Explanatory Description: Major redevelopments at the South Entrance Station are currently being planned and implemented that will significantly alter the site. Stabilization costs have been withheld pending completion of these projects.

Documentation Assessment and Checklist

Documentation Assessment: Fair

Documentation:

Document: General Management Plan

Year Of Document: 1980

Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

The GMP discussed the South Entrance/Mariposa Gove as a single management unit. Some management recommendations are presented, however the impact of these recommendations is not discussed.

Document: Historic Resource Study

Year Of Document: 1987

Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

There is no discussion of the south entrance station as a cultural landscape. However, the document does recognize the architectural significance of the buildings located there.

Document: Other

Year Of Document: 1978

Amplifying Details: Cultural Resources Management Plan

Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

This document outlines general management policies towards cultural resources. However its publication predates the consideration of cultural landscapes as a separate class of historic resource.

Document: Other

Year Of Document: 1988

Amplifying Details: National Register Nomination Form prepared by Linda Greene and Robert Pavlic

Adequate Documentation: Yes

Explanatory Narrative:

This nomination captures the essence of significance of the district, which has to do with the architectural value of its buildings. The majority of the historic era landscaping has been removed from the area.

Document: Vegetation Management Plan

Year Of Document: 1997

Adequate Documentation: Yes

Explanatory Narrative:

This document recognizes the existence of cultural landscapes and the importance of vegetation as a contributing landscape characteristic for some inventory units.

Appendix

Bibliography

Citations:

Citation Title: Historic Resource Study, Yosemite: The Park and its Resources: A History of the Discovery, Management, and Physical Development of Yosemite National Park, California, Volume II

Source Name: CRBIB

Citation Number: 013973

Citation Title: Park and Recreation Structures, 3 Vols.

Source Name: DSC/TIC

Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative

Citation Location: Copies may be obtained from TIC

Citation Title: Congressional Record

Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal

Citation Type: Narrative

Citation Title: Report of the Yosemite Park Commission, 58th Congress, 3rd session, Senate Document 34

Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal

Citation Type: Narrative

Citation Title: South Entrance Historic District

Source Name: National Register Nomination

Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative

Citation Location: Available at Yosemite Research Library

Citation Title: Final Report--Water System--4 Mile.
Source Name: Primary document
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Copy available at Division of Maintenance Office, El Portal, California

Citation Title: Final Report. Ranger Station Dormitory and Checking Kiosk
Source Name: Primary document
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Copy available at Division of Maintenance, El Portal, California

Citation Title: Final Report. Rest Rooms--Four Mile Ranger Station
Source Name: Primary document
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Copy available at Division of Maintenance Office, El Portal, California

Citation Title: Report to the Chief Architect
Source Name: Primary document
Citation Type: Narrative
Citation Location: Copy available at the Division of Maintenance Office, El Portal, California

Citation Title: Sewer System Extension and Improvement
Source Name: Primary document
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Copy available at Division of Maintenance Office, El Portal, California.

Citation Title: Annual Superintendents' Reports
Source Name: Primary documents
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: Yosemite Research Library, Yosemite National Park,
California

Citation Title: Monthly Superintendent's Reports
Source Name: Primary documents
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