



Ansel Adams Gallery Buildings Rehabilitation



History of the Ansel Adams Gallery

Best's Studio was one of several artists' studios operating in Yosemite Valley at the turn of the twentieth century. Harry Best opened his studio in Yosemite Valley in 1902. In 1925 he relocated the business from Old Yosemite Village (near the Chapel) to its present day location (between the Visitor Center and the Yosemite Post Office). A young and talented artist named Ansel Adams often played the piano at Best's Studio. Ansel met his future wife, Virginia Best, here, and it is where he first publicly exhibited his art. He and his family lived and worked at this site, in the private residences, public gallery, and working photography darkroom (known collectively as the Ansel Adams Gallery buildings) through the late 1940s. In the 1960s, Ansel made improvements to the Gallery and designed the porch and pergola that exist today. These buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places and sited within the Yosemite Valley Archaeological District and Yosemite Village Historic District. Today, the family still operates their photography studio and gallery here, which are open to the public.

What repairs are needed ?

Currently, the Adams operate their business and house employees on site through a concessions contract with the National Park Service, which is responsible for maintaining the buildings. Minor repairs and upgrades have been made in recent times; however, after more than 90 years of continuous operation and occupation, the buildings are in need of major repair and rehabilitation. A 2002 NPS Facility Assessment recommended that the main building undergo substantial stabilization and rehabilitation, and the residences either be substantially stabilized and rehabilitated or completely replaced due to their deteriorating condition. These buildings are historically significant for their association to the late Ansel Adams. The site and this area of Yosemite Valley are rich in traditional cultural and archaeological history. Rehabilitation plans for this project will seek to protect and avoid impacts to these treasured and sensitive resources.

Goals of the project are to:

- Maintain and improve the living and working environment for visitors and staff by repairing and improving features such as insulation, electrical, plumbing, foundation, and public access to the gallery and studio spaces.
- Improve structural stability and longevity of the buildings
- Improve building conditions to meet modern standards for accessibility and fire/life/safety requirements
- Protect and avoid impacts to sensitive cultural and historic resources, following National Historic Preservation Act and NPS policies and guidelines



What is the planning process?

Public, agency, and tribal participation are key to the planning process for this project. The NPS is preparing an environmental assessment according to NEPA and NHPA guidelines to develop and analyze alternatives for repair and rehabilitation of the Gallery buildings. You are invited to submit written comments and suggestions during the scoping period for this EA, now through September 2, 2011. Comments submitted during scoping help identify the issues and concerns to address as we develop alternatives and designs for a comprehensive rehabilitation.

How can I get involved?

- **Visit online:** www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/planning.htm
- **Attend Public Open Houses** on the last Wednesday of each month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Visitor Center Auditorium in Yosemite Valley. Park entrance fees are waived for visitors who attend the Public Open Houses.
- **Submit your email address** to receive the park's periodic electronic newsletter yose_planning@nps.gov
- **Provide input during the planning process.** You can submit comments by visiting the National Park Service's Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) project page at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/AnselAdamsEA> Or send regular mail to:
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