

Wilsonia Historic District

Building Maintenance, Addition & New Construction Guidelines

Statement of General Purpose and Intent

These Architectural Guidelines have been created and adopted for the purposes of (1) expediting the permitting process for designing and constructing cabins located in the Wilsonia Historical District in California; and (2) setting forth the general conditions and specifications to create or maintain the historical status of cabins in the Wilsonia Historical District. These Architectural Guidelines are not intended to authorize, or otherwise convey, any authority to any public or private governmental agency, the Wilsonia Village Inc., Wilsonia Historic District Trust, or, any individual to in any way enforce these Architectural Guidelines against, or on behalf of, any person or entity, public or private. In other words, these Architectural Guidelines do not interfere with the private property ownership rights of the cabin owners located in the Wilsonia Historical District.

Contributing cabins are those cabins built during 1918-1960 which maintain a high level of architectural integrity. Sustained substantial changes to the character defining features lessen the structures and communities chances of maintaining the historical district.

These guidelines:

- Pertain to the maintenance of existing Wilsonia permitted structures, to additions thereto, and the construction of new buildings within Wilsonia,
- Are intended to serve as an aide to Wilsonia property owners, Tulare County government, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS).

The Wilsonia Historic District Trust (WHDT), NPS and Tulare County provide guidance for ongoing maintenance and treatment of historic resources and features within Wilsonia to ensure that the character-defining features and materials of the cabins are sustained over time.

These guidelines:

- Are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for treatment of historic properties
- Are intended to protect and maintain Wilsonia's historic character
- Are intended to aid Wilsonia building owners, including the NPS, in complying with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic property maintenance and rehabilitation

- Have been prepared by the WHDT using NPS Standards and procedures
- Were approved by the WHDT's Board of Directors on 7-2-16.

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTS AND CONVERSATIONS ON THIS TOPIC HAVE BEEN BASED AROUND THE FOLLOWING ASSUMPTIONS:

- Owners play a significant role in preserving their individual property and the historic character of Wilsonia's cultural landscape and are in partnership with Tulare County, SHPO, and the NPS in that endeavor.
- Cabin owners should properly maintain their cabins. Failure to maintain a building results in deterioration of historic materials, diminishing the historic character of the building and of the Wilsonia Historic District.
- NPS approval is required for building construction or alteration. This approval is an undertaking under Section 106 of the National Preservation Act and may require SHPO review.
- Building permits are issued by Tulare County. The owner is responsible for securing such permits and any related approvals.
- Tulare County uses the California Historical Building Code where applicable for permits involving repairs and construction.
- Public visibility is a consideration for all projects. Cabin modifications should maintain materials, textures, color, and scale.
- Repairs to existing cabins and structures must be made according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Guidelines for Rehabilitation, which are included here by reference.
- These guidelines apply to all Wilsonia buildings, i.e., contributing, non-contributing, landscape, privately-owned and government-owned.

For any building project covered by these guidelines, the related owner must complete a Project Proposal Form (a blank form is attached) and submit it to NPS for review and approval.

Buildings in Wilsonia

Character-defining Features Include:

- Medium to high-pitched gable roofs, some with shed roof extensions on single and double story cabins.
- Shingle, shake, weathered heavy gauged galvanized or painted metal roofing.

- Wood exterior siding (shingles or shakes, board-and-batten, horizontal board, native bark and log) applied in a variety of patterns.
- Small rectangular windows mostly single hung or groups of windows intended to allow additional light in wood-frame openings. Surviving examples exist of historic cabins with bay window and dormers with windows in multiple locations.
- Doors and windows with and without panes.
- Top and side-hinged wooden shutters.
- Front, side and/or rear porches and decks.
- Natural stone and brick chimneys or metal and clay flues.

COMMON MODIFICATIONS TO HISTORIC CABINS

Typical modifications to historic cabins include the replacement of original wood shingle roofing with composite or cement shingles or metal; replacement wood siding; added, removed, or reconfigured decks and porches; replacement of windows within the original openings; metal flues replacing masonry chimneys; and compatible side or rear additions where the original structure is clearly discernable.

Compromising modifications that may threaten the historic integrity of a cabin and the future of Wilsonia as an historic in-holding include alterations that obscure the original structure, partial demolition of the original structure, additions that are out of scale with the original structure, and additions that are indistinguishable from the original structure.

GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC CABIN PRESERVATION:

The following are the general guidelines for the preservation of Wilsonia's buildings:

- 1 Modifications should not substantially alter a building's historic fabric or introduce non-historic features or additions.
- 2 Cabin owners should maintain their cabins to prevent the deterioration of historic materials.
- 3 Maintenance should be done in such a way as to preserve the building's historic integrity, including distinctive materials. Alterations of historically significant features, spaces, and spatial relationships should be avoided. Replacements should be the same kind as with all new building materials closely matching the originals in size, design, color, and texture. Fire resistant materials that closely match the original appearance may be used.
- 4 Cabin owners may alter the interior of their cabins if it does not adversely affect the exterior appearance of their cabin.

The most commonly used exterior wall treatments in Wilsonia are (1) board and batten, and (2) vertical plank construction, with a few examples of exterior walls or window trim made from cedar bark and Jeffrey/Ponderosa pine, and (3) shingles.

When replacing siding, keep the original texture and pattern (e.g., orientation, overlap, dimensions, etc.) to the extent practical.

Replace damaged wooden shake siding with material of the same size, shape, and type of wood. Replace hand-split with hand-split; sawn shingles with sawn shingles. Fire resistant materials that closely match the original appearance may be used.

Replace log wall cladding with logs of similar species and dimensions.

When replacing non-historic siding, do so with something as close to what might have been the original siding in appearance as possible. Fire resistant materials that closely match the original appearance may be used.

Roofs and Dormers - Roofing materials in Wilsonia fall into two categories: (1) wood shake/shingle and (2) metal. All roofing should be repaired or replaced in-kind and or with a type closely matching the original in look . but whatever is done, it must be in keeping with the fire code.

Always try to replace ~~in-kind~~ including type (sawn shingle, split shake, metal, etc.). When replacing non-historic roofing, replace with material that approximates the appearance of what you think was the original roofing. When replacing the entire roof structure, keep the original pitch, over-hang, and detailing unless structural concerns make this inappropriate. Retain any dormers and avoid adding new ones. Roofing for building additions or new construction should use materials similar in appearance to of other Wilsonia buildings.

Windows - Most of the historic windows in Wilsonia have wood frames and sashes with there being no dominant *type* of window (e.g., double-hung, single-hung, fixed, wood casement, simple single panes in fixed frames, multiple panes, sliding. etc.). Some cabins actually have examples of several types. Dormers and bay windows should be maintained in the style they were originally constructed.

Where the original wood-framed windows in a cabin have been replaced with aluminum or vinyl-framed windows, the WHDT would like to see a return to wood-framed or wood frame appearing windows wherever it is convenient for an owner to do so.

Original wood window sashes and framing should be retained and restored whenever possible. When aluminum or vinyl framed replacement windows are present, the frames should be covered with a wood fascia or painted a color to match the rest of the cabin's color scheme.

When replacing ~~the~~ beyond repair original windows, try to match the material, dimensions, operating style, and number of panes and pane configuration of the originals. When feasible, use dual pane energy efficient windows that retain the original look.

Caulking color should blend with the surrounding surface color. Windows in additions or new buildings should look similar in size, appearance, and placement to those in most other Wilsonia cabins.

Doors. Doors with unique designs should be preserved whenever possible in their original configuration, location and color. Wood doors that cannot be preserved should be replaced ~~the~~ kind with those originally found in the cabin.

When the original door type and style cannot be determined, the replacement door should be in keeping with doors found elsewhere in Wilsonia. Wherever possible, retain and repair original doors, door framing and hardware.

When replacing a ~~the~~ beyond repair door, the replacement should be a door of the same material and design dimensions and paneling pattern as the original. A non-historic door should be replaced with a door matching or approximating the look of the likely original door. If this is not known, the replacement should be similar to historic doors found elsewhere in Wilsonia.

Doors should be stained or painted to match the original color whenever known. Doors in additions and new buildings should be rustic in style and resemble those in our historic cabins.

Shutters - The most common types of shutter mountings used in Wilsonia are: side-hinged, top-hinged, and simple hung, the last being taken down when not in use. Shutters are generally painted or stained in colors that match either the trim or walls of a cabin. Original wood shutters should be repaired and retained.

When replacing a ~~the~~ beyond repair shutter, the replacement should be of the same material, dimensions and paneling pattern as the original.

When installing shutters on a cabin that currently does not have shutters, the new shutters should resemble shutters found on other Wilsonia historic cabins. Avoid plywood and non-wood material for shutters. The WHDT would like to see all plywood shutters replaced with shutters of historic style and construction.

Shutters on additions and on new buildings should resemble those found on Wilsonia's historic cabins.

Chimneys and Stovepipes - When rebuilding a damaged chimney, the original appearance should be maintained. When rebuilding a stone or brick fireplace, as much of the original stone or brick should be used as possible, using similar stone or brick to replace missing materials and portions of the chimney. When restoring a damaged chimney to its original design and appearance, any later, non-historic red brick section should be replaced with stone or faced with stone that resembles the original chimney

materials. Try your best to match new mortar to the original in all visual qualities.

When replacing damaged or unsafe stovepipe use code compliant pipe material that matches or closely resembles the original in length, diameter and appearance. Don't use bright, shiny metal finishes; use, instead, metal with a flat black.

The flues for all wood burning appliances (e.g., fireplaces, stoves, etc.) should be topped with properly functioning code-compliant spark arresters of visually non-obtrusive design. Additions should use chimney materials that are rustic in appearance and match the original structure. New chimneys on existing structures should not detract from or overwhelm the original structure.

New construction should use chimney types and construction materials commonly found in Wilsonia, and should be rustic in appearance.

Foundations. Wilsonia's most common historic foundations are native stone and post-and-pier. When restoring or replacing a foundation, try to retain as much of the original foundation as possible while preserving the integrity and stability of the structure. Retain as much of the original enclosure material as possible and match any new material required to the existing material. When rebuilding stone foundations reuse the existing stones. If additional stone is needed, use stone that matches the existing stone.

If a stone foundation must be replaced by a concrete or concrete block foundation for structural stability, an effort should be made to use existing stone or apply a veneer of stone to simulate the appearance of the original foundation. New foundations for additions and new buildings should resemble the foundations of our historic cabins.

Decks, Porches, Patios and Canopies. Decks are most often constructed of lumber; patios of stone or concrete. Porches are enclosed or partially enclosed platforms attached to a cabin and most were originally designed as entry points to a cabin.

New decks should be attached to the primary cabin and should be constructed to have minimal impact on the cabin's historic appearance. New or existing decks are limited in size to approximately 50 percent of an historic cabin's footprint. Decks should use materials that are rustic in appearance, such as rough-cut wood and post-and-pier construction. Decks should remain open from floor up and should be enclosed from floor down to ground. Deck railings should be designed to have minimal visual impact and should resemble the style, function and color of Wilsonia's historic railings. Non-historic structures, new construction and deck additions should resemble in size, scale and appearance within the District. New porches on non-historic additions should not clash or detract from the original structure.

Exterior Lighting-- Exterior Lighting should be kept to that needed for safety and used with careful consideration for those who wish to enjoy Wilsonia's often quite special night skies.

Outbuildings. Many Wilsonia cabins have outbuildings, such as outhouses, guest cabins, storage sheds, utility sheds and wood sheds. Many of these are historic and should be maintained as described in this document.

Historic outbuildings that have lost their historic appearance should be brought back to their historic appearance whenever possible. Existing but non-historic outbuildings and new outbuildings should be consistent in appearance with Wilsonia's rustic character and maintained or/and constructed in keeping with these guidelines.

Historic outbuildings should be maintained following this guideline.

Additions to existing outbuildings should not overwhelm, obscure or distract from the original cabin in size, scale, shape or color. The location of new outbuildings should not disrupt the primary cabin's spatial arrangement on the lot or the surrounding landscape. Additions should avoid loss of any part of the original structure.

Paint and Stain. Most Wilsonia cabins are painted in a color that blends in with the surroundings. A natural wood or oiled/varnished appearance is common. Some board and batten, shingled and shake siding are not finished at all.

WILSONIA'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Wilsonia is much more than a collection of mountain cabins and associated outbuildings. In truth, it is a geographically-definable *historic vernacular landscape* which has evolved through its use as a recreational mountain community. As such, this landscape contains both natural resources (topography, vegetation, open land, and wildlife) and man-made cultural resources (roads, signage, and the cabins themselves).

The 2011 Amendment described many of these elements as character-defining features of Wilsonia's overall setting. This amendment identifies these as elements of the *cultural landscape*, which is a contributing feature of the Wilsonia Historic District. Elements of the cultural landscape include: (1) overall spatial organization, (2) natural hilly topography, (3) natural vegetation (mixed conifer forest), (4) grassy meadows, (5) boulders and rock outcroppings, (6) intermittent streams, (7) circulation network (over 30 narrow roads paved and unpaved), and (8) wooden post street signage.

Driveways and Parking - Driveways should retain their width to remain in character with the cultural landscape. Driveways that have evolved beyond the need for reasonable access should be downsized and impacted lands naturalized when upgrades are made. Driveways should remain rustic and should not be improved with paving. If driveway repairs are needed, aggregate base that will properly compact should be used and be free of exotic plants and seeds. When possible, parking should be located on the flattest available land to minimize erosion and the need for grading. When grading is necessary, cuts and fills should be kept to a minimum. Parking areas located within the cabin's property should be utilized, to allow for the safe use of public Wilsonia access roads.

Cabin Site and Road Drainage - Drains should be installed to remove moisture away from roadways, buildings and associated foundations. Headwalls for drains should be constructed only if required. Headwalls constructed of concrete should be avoided. Drainage efforts should not involve major cut and fill projects or the installation of major new drains. The latter may require permits. Drainage structures should be in character with Wilsonia and modern building materials should not be used. Care should be taken to not inadvertently divert moisture away from surrounding wetlands or riparian habitats where it historically flowed. Drainage structures should be set at grade to not impede water flow or drain upstream wetlands and should neither be perched nor set below grade. Site drainage improvements on your property should not result in the introduction of excessive erosion or siltation to the neighboring properties. All organic material and soils should be removed from foundations to prevent deterioration of the historic fabric unless it is concrete.

Retaining Walls, Outside Fireplaces and Fire Rings . These are typical site improvements found around Wilsonia cabins. All historic retaining walls, fire pits and exterior fireplaces should be preserved and maintained as they appeared originally. Replacement materials should be of the same size, shape and color. Dry laid walls should be maintained as dry-laid walls. Wet-laid walls should use mortar of the same color. Terracing of slopes should be avoided to not destroy the look of Wilsonia landscape.

Revegetation - Wilsonia site is a heavily wooded mixed conifer forest dominated by black oak, ponderosa pine, Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, white fir, and Incense Cedar. There are numerous Giant Sequoias in Wilsonia which were planted by property owners in the early years of development. Low level plants include ferns, deer brush, manzanita, and white thorn.

Native plants are the only species authorized for landscape improvement and/or revegetation projects in Wilsonia. Plantings on personal property in Wilsonia should mimic the natural density and distribution of native plants. All exotic and invasive species are prohibited within the park. The presence of non-native plants or sources of seeds that could naturalize in Wilsonia is highly discouraged. These species should be removed.

To protect buildings and structures from wildland fires and to provide for firefighter safety, cabin owners should maintain a defensive space around their cabins. Planting of trees in close proximity to cabins and outbuilding is not recommended. Property owners should clean roofs, grounds and outbuildings of leaves, needles and other dead and downed plant material within the defensible space around their cabins. Brush and saplings that create a fire ladder should be removed. Living trees within the

defensible space should have their lower limbs removed. Height of limb removal should be relative to size, height and species of tree. Dead limbs within reach should all be removed.

Hazard tree removal should be done professionally and in a timely manner. Cabin owners should notify NPS or PG&E of any hazard trees on NPS property that threatens life, health and safety of property. Hazard tree removal on NPS land should not be performed by cabin owners. The cabin owner should ask the NPS to coordinate with the property owner.