

TWAIN HARTE DESIGN REVIEW/PLANNING ADVISORY GUIDELINES



**Adopted by the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors
April 18, 2006
Amended March 20, 2007**

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction and Purposes.....	1
	A. Introduction.....	1
	B. Design Review Purposes.....	2
	C. Design Review Process.....	2
II.	Design Review Requirements.....	3
III.	Design Review Area Map.....	4
IV.	Planning Advisory for Land Development.....	5
	A. Purposes.....	5
	B. Duties.....	5
V.	Planning Advisory Area Map.....	6
VI.	Historic Preservation.....	7
VII.	General Design and Planning Consideration.....	9
	A. Development.....	9
	B. Architectural Style.....	9
	C. Public Services.....	10
VIII.	Design and Planning Criteria for All Land Uses.....	11
	A. Site Design.....	11
	B. Access.....	13
	C. Fences and Walls.....	14
IX.	Specific Land Uses, Design Criteria and Examples.....	16
	A. Residential.....	16
	B. Commercial.....	21
	1. Site Design.....	21
	2. Access and Parking.....	22
	3. Landscaping.....	24
	4. Architecture.....	26
	5. Lighting.....	28
	C. Service Stations, Repair Shops, and Car Washes.....	30
	D. Signs.....	31
	1. Design.....	31
	2. Placement.....	32
	3. Types.....	33
X.	Community of Twain Harte.....	34
XI.	History of Twain Harte.....	38
	Prepared by the Tuolumne County Historic Preservation Review Commission.	
XII.	Appendices.....	47
	A. Chapter 2.36II.....	47
	B. Acknowledgements.....	48

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I. Introduction and Purposes

A. Introduction

Twain Harte is a living as well as historic community. Residents of the community, Tuolumne County, and many regions of California treasure its rustic character as well as its mountain setting, natural beauties, healthy living conditions, and recreational opportunities. In addition to the attractive way of life, property owners, residents, and businesses have a financial investment in Twain Harte and the continuation of its appealing environment.

For an understanding of the history of the community and area, refer to Section XI of these Guidelines, "History of Twain Harte." Section X, "Community of Twain Harte," describes the current community and its activities.

Tuolumne County established the Twain Harte Design Review/Planning Advisory Committee to propose design guidelines and to review planned improvements in the Design Review area (refer to the map on page 4). In addition, the Committee is to advise the County on proposed land development in the more extensive Planning Advisory area outside the Design Review area (refer to the map on page 6).

These Guidelines for the Design Review and the Planning Advisory areas are intended to inform residents, property owners, business owners, and builders about the objectives of the Twain Harte community and how construction can be compatible with these objectives. References to the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code refer to its provisions in 2006. Ordinances and codes are frequently revised and updated, and it is essential that the applicant consult the most recent codes before proceeding with a project. The Tuolumne County Community Development Department (CDD) staff can provide current guidance on the codes, permits, and regulations in effect at the time of a project.



B. Design Review Purposes

The purposes of the Design Review Guidelines are:

- *To produce and maintain a rustic, rural, scenic and historic character for the district, and to ensure that development is compatible with this character; and*
- *To direct community growth in a manner, which is compatible with historic land use patterns; and*
- *To encourage improvement of the community's physical appearance and to preserve and enhance property values; and*
- *To preserve or rehabilitate existing visual and cultural resources in this rural mountain setting; and*
- *To encourage a spirit of cooperation among developers, business owners, property owners and residents in maintaining and improving the area.*

C. Design Review Process

1. The applicant contacts CDD about the proposed work. CDD determines if permits are required and the documents that will be necessary.
2. If appropriate, CDD sends the proposal, documents, and planning information to the Design Review Committee for its consideration.
3. The project is placed on the Design Review agenda and considered at a public meeting with a presentation by the applicant and input from the public.
4. The Design Review Committee makes its recommendation and forwards it to CDD.
5. CDD decides on the proposed project and notifies the applicant.
6. An application for a Design Review Permit may be approved, conditionally approved or denied.
7. The decision of the CDD can be appealed to the Tuolumne County Planning Commission.

II. Design Review Requirements

The Design Review Committee requirements and jurisdiction apply only to the Design Review area, which includes the central business district and adjoining neighborhoods as defined on the Design Review Area Map¹.

Within the Twain Harte Design Review Combining District, a property owner is required to obtain a Design Review Permit before any structure may be erected, structurally altered or changed in character or appearance.²

The Twain Harte Design Review/Planning Advisory Committee function is advisory and forwards its recommendations to the Community Development Department (CDD).³ The CDD decision can be appealed to the Tuolumne County Planning Commission.

A County building permit may be required for construction or remodeling of a structure, outside sign, retaining wall 4 feet high or higher, or fence 6 feet high or higher.⁴ Application for a building permit that involves exterior alteration or erection of structures in the Twain Harte Design Review area triggers CDD notification to the Committee.

The need for a Design Review Permit is also triggered by other changes or improvements to a structure or parcel which do not entail a building permit or other County entitlement. These improvements include signage, temporary structures, and changing the exterior color of a structure.

A prospective applicant may also bring a project before the Committee for review and comment before applying for a County permit, and applicants are encouraged to do so.

Public utility uses are conditional uses and are subject to a use permit. Each utility is encouraged to bring its projects to the Committee for information and suggestions before starting the project.

The Design Review Committee has no enforcement authority. Enforcement of the Guidelines, like other County Codes, is done by the County's Code Compliance Officer.

The Committee does not operate as an intermediary to pass on requests of complaints from individuals to the County. The Committee, if requested by an individual, will provide information about how a person may request enforcement or file a complaint directly with the appropriate County contact.

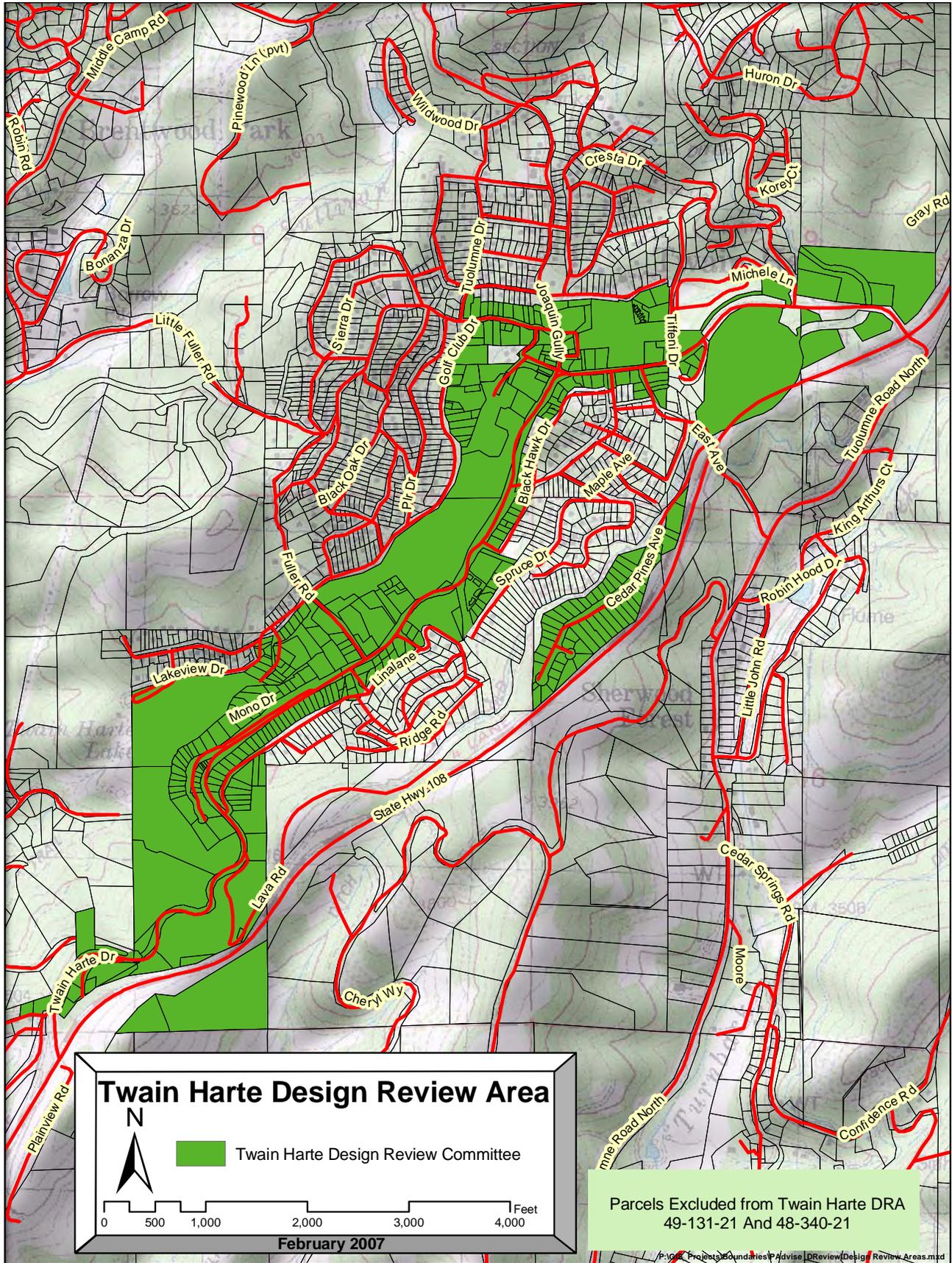
¹ Section IV, "Planning Advisory Purposes and Duties" describes the Committee's functions for the greater Planning Advisory Area, which is outside the Design Review Area.

² Tuolumne County Ordinance Code (TCOC), Chapter 17.46

³ TCOC, Chapter 2.36.II

⁴ California Building Code Section 106

III. Design Review Area Map



IV. Planning Advisory for Land Development

The planning advisory functions of the Committee apply to the wider Planning Advisory area, which is outside the Design Review area.

A. Purposes

The purposes of the planning advisory review are:

- *To preserve the scenic and rural character of the Twain Harte area, which contributes to the quality of life of its residents and visitors; and*
- *To recognize and enhance the identity of Twain Harte by encouraging new development to occur within or adjacent to the existing community and to be compatible with it; and*
- *To encourage a spirit of cooperation among developers, business owners, property owners and residents in maintaining and improving the area.*

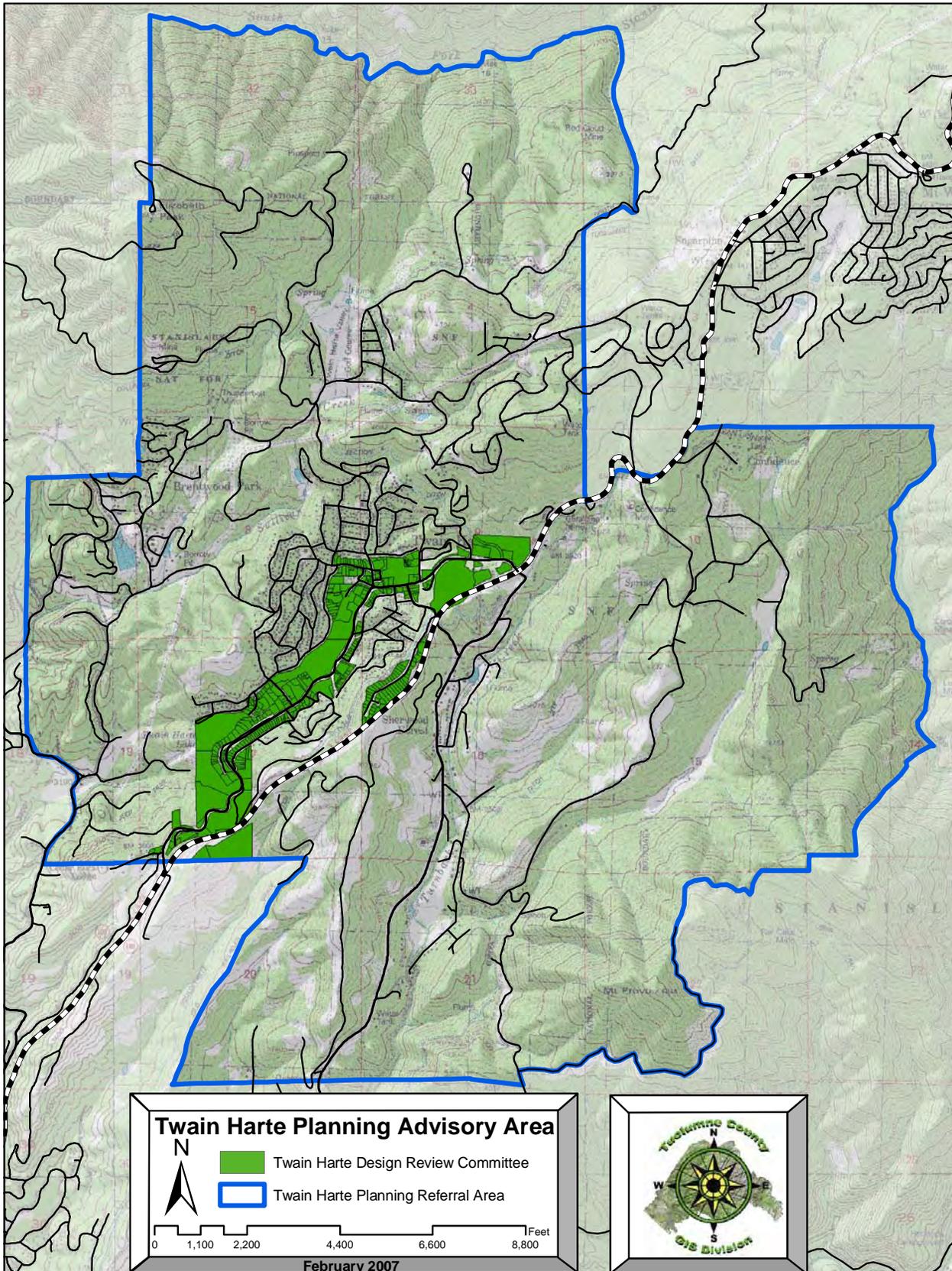
B. Duties

The Twain Harte Design Review/Planning Advisory Committee is charged to be advisory to the CDD on all discretionary land development applications within the area shown on the Twain Harte Planning Advisory map. Examples of discretionary applications are Site Development Permits, land divisions, and development applications that require a zone change. Ministerial permits, such as Building Permits, and on-site sewage disposal permits are not subject to review under the Planning advisory function.

Application for a discretionary permit in the Twain Harte Planning Advisory area triggers CDD notification to the Committee. The Committee forwards its recommendation to CDD for consideration in deciding to approve or disapprove an application and what conditions of approval to impose.

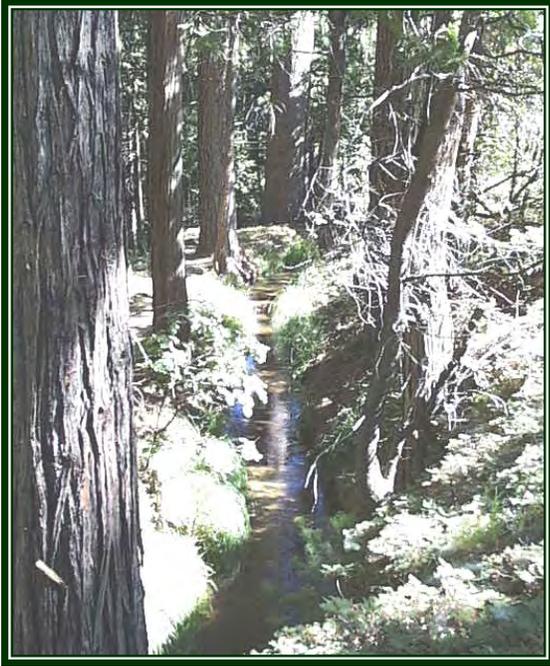
A prospective applicant may also bring a project before the Committee for review and comment before making application to the County, and applicants are encouraged to do so. The applicant must submit a request to CDD for the pre-application review so that it can be agendaized for the Committee's consideration.

V. Planning Advisory Area Map



VI. Historic Preservation

The purpose of historic preservation is to recognize and retain the cultural resources that identify important aspects of Twain Harte's past and can define its relation to the present and future. Examples of historic sites to be preserved are The Rock (historically known as Bald Rock), the Soulsbyville Ditch, the Sugar Pine Railroad right-of-way, and early vacation homes dating from the beginning of the Twain Harte Lodge Subdivision.⁵



Soulsbyville Ditch

- Design and locate new construction, including buildings, streets and parking lots, so they will enhance and be compatible with the character of historic properties and their environment.
- Do not remove or demolish historic sites, monuments and structures unless it is determined that the structure has become so damaged or dilapidated by causes not of the applicant's own making that it is unusable and cannot reasonably be repaired or restored.



Twain Harte Lake and Rock

⁵ Refer to Section 10, "History and Community of Twain Harte", for additional information about historic sites and their significance.

The State Historical Building Code (SHBC) provides alternative regulations for alterations and additions to buildings over 50 years of age that have been determined eligible for some historic register. Information about the use of the SHBC can be obtained from the Tuolumne County Community Development Department.

Twain Harte Lodge



- No person may demolish a building, structure, object or site 50 years of age or older unless the building permit application is approved or determined to be exempt.⁶ The Historic Preservation Review Commission shall review all demolition permits for buildings over 50 years old in all zoning districts.⁷



- Property tax reduction may be available to owners of qualified commercial or residential property. The Tuolumne County Community Development Department has information on the Mills Act and how it can lower property taxes for owners of vintage buildings.

⁶ TCOC, Chapter 14.08; Tuolumne County Construction Codes, Chapter 15.04

⁷ Tuolumne County General Plan, Policy 9.B.i.

VII. General Design and Planning Considerations

A. *Development*

The Design Review and Planning Advisory Guidelines are to be used to produce and maintain a rustic, rural atmosphere for the community and to conserve its scenic resources, landmarks and the natural landscape. When a project or development has been completed, it should be an enhancement to the area and reflect the goals of the community.

- Design and construct new developments so their sites, buildings and structures will be aesthetically compatible with the character and purposes of the adjacent area.
- Consider the impact of design and construction of developments on the immediately adjacent area and on the community as a whole.
- Carry out the architectural, material, and color themes in a consistent manner throughout the project.

B. *Architectural Style*

The exterior appearance of new, existing or restored buildings shall be aesthetically pleasing and shall blend into the architectural character of the surrounding community. Refer to the Residential and Commercial sections for more specific guidance.

Refer to “Specific Land Uses, Design Criteria and Examples” for requirements and guidelines for residential, commercial and service station and repair shop construction and improvements.

C. Public Services

For proposed projects, provide for the capacity requirements of public services as if all existing and proposed developments will be fully occupied and used all year long.

In the consideration of projects, include the impacts on road, fire, police, water, sewer and recreational facilities. Ensure that funds for public services operation and maintenance are available for existing and future demands.

It is desirable that the area's infrastructure be improved to preserve and enhance property values and the marketability of property, for the benefit of present and future owners, residents and visitors.

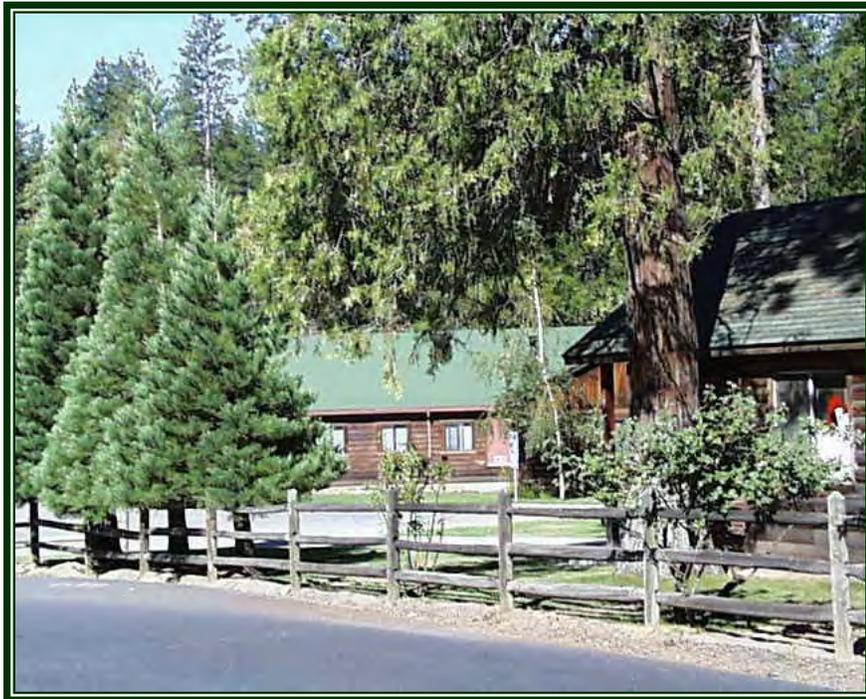


Fire station, Twain Harte Community Services District

VIII. Design and Planning Criteria for All Land Uses

A. Site Design

For both Design Review and Planning Advisory proposals, applicants are cautioned to refer to grading and building permit requirements, including those for visible property corners and clear property lines.



Commercial site and buildings compatible with surroundings

Grading Considerations

- Provide for adequate drainage and erosion control for the entire project and neighboring lands, including periods of construction.
- When constructing or modifying a driveway, ensure that roads and neighboring properties are not adversely affected.
- Keep cuts and fills to a minimum, and provide proper engineering and construction quality control.
- Use existing or natural changes in grades to avoid or minimize mass grading.
- Use natural slopes where possible.

Natural Features

- Maintain and protect significant natural features such as streams, rock outcroppings, and view corridors through design of the project.
- Keep tree removal to a minimum. Wherever possible preserve specimen trees with a diameter of 12” or larger at breast height (4.5’ above average ground level).
- Submit a tree removal plan showing the location of all existing trees with a diameter of 6” or larger at breast height.



New residence preserves trees and rock outcroppings

Avoid or minimize grading and construction along streams and in wetlands, and comply with the Tuolumne County General Plan’s Conservation and Open Space Element, Biological Resources section, and the Tuolumne County Biological Resources Conservation Program.

B. Access



Good visibility and space for entrance and exit

- Provide entrances, exits and turning space to create access drives and parking areas that are safe and have good visibility and sight distances.
- Design for no more than 10% grade where possible.
- Refer to Tuolumne County encroachment permit information for sight distance and other requirements.

C. Fences and Walls

Consult with CDD for permit requirements for construction or remodeling of a fence 6 feet high or higher, and for a retaining wall 4 feet high or higher.

- Avoid fencing of any kind, if possible.
- If fencing is necessary, it should be used in moderation to complement the natural surroundings and maintain the historic setting of the community.
- Use materials such as stone, rough wood, or black decorative metal. Avoid galvanized, industrial type materials such as chain link fencing.
- Use natural or historic materials for retaining walls. If concrete is necessary for a retaining wall, install a veneer of stone or other natural or historic material.



Traditional 3-rail wood fence



Natural rock retaining wall, rustic wood fence



Concrete retaining wall faced with artificial stone



Concrete retaining wall faced with artificial stone is compatible with its surroundings



A board fence can be both practical and attractive



Black decorative metal fencing and gate for commercial entrance



Railing and entry painted a natural color



A fence built of logs fits its mountain setting

IX. Specific Land Uses, Design Criteria and Examples

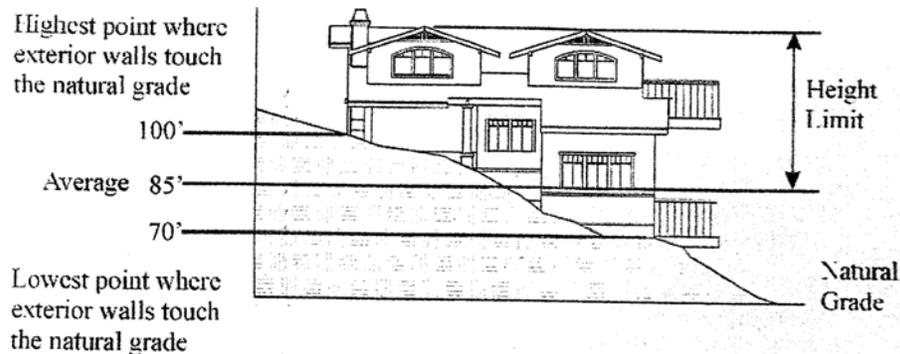
A. Residential

Design and construct new and improved residential buildings to be compatible with the style and appearance of the residential neighborhoods of this rustic mountain community.



The height and size of new or improved structures shall complement existing buildings. The Tuolumne County Ordinance Code allows a maximum height for any single-family residential building of 40 feet above the average grade, as shown below. However, a height of no more than 35 feet is more compatible with most Twain Harte neighborhoods. Often the height of adjacent residences will be considered in evaluating proposals for new construction.

Typical hillside residence



Height limit is measured from highest point of the structure to the average of the highest and lowest points where exterior walls intersect the natural grade.

The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and overall size of adjacent residences may also be considered in evaluating proposals for new construction in residential areas. FAR is defined as the total of the area of all floors of all buildings, including a garage, expressed as a ratio or percentage of the area of the parcel on which the buildings are constructed. For residential parcels zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential), the maximum FAR is 0.5 or 50%.

Many residential lots in the older parts of Twain Harte are quite small, and a FAR limit of 0.4 (40% of the parcel) would be more compatible. On a lot of 6,000 square feet, for example, this would permit a maximum of 2,400 square feet for the garage plus all floors of the house.⁸

In 2004 wood shakes, wood shingles, and other wood roof covering materials were prohibited on all roofs and walls, with minimal exceptions. In addition, an applicant must meet Building Code requirements and fire safety standards⁹. Advance consultation with CDD staff is recommended.

Examples of recently constructed residences compatible with the community



⁸ TCOC, Chapter 17.18

⁹ California Building Code and TCOC, Chapter 15.20, "Fire Safety Standards"

Conform to the following specific features for residential buildings in Twain Harte:

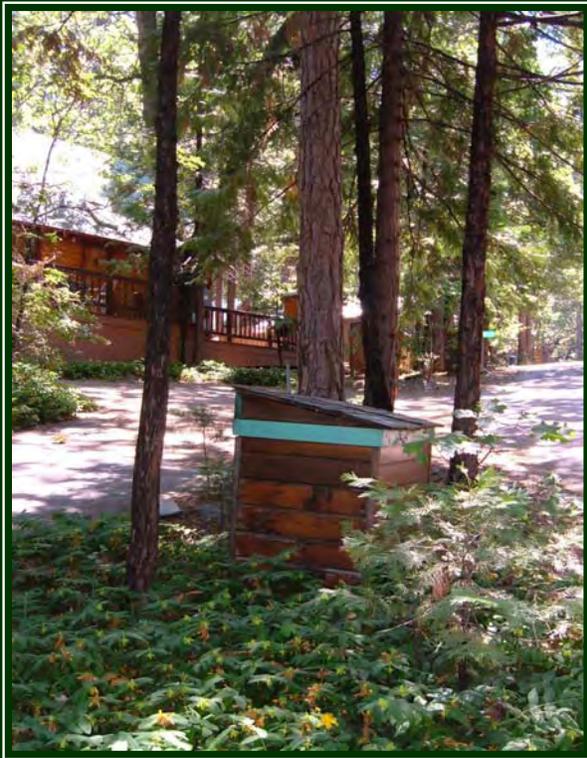


- Portions of buildings visible from the street are faced with logs, wood siding, stone, or other natural-appearing materials such as fiber-cement siding.
- Roofing materials are metal, or shingles such as composition or clay/concrete tiles. Steep pitched roofs are preferable to avoid accumulations of snow and needles and to be compatible with the rustic atmosphere.
- Decking is redwood, cedar or other natural appearing materials that are approved for fire safety. Entries and deck structures use logs or wood posts, railings and pickets.
- Colors are earth, natural tones, or historic colors such as “barn red.”



Windows visible from the street are of historic style: wood, vinyl or colored aluminum.

- Exterior doors visible from the street include wood or wood grain panels and/or glass panes.



- Screen or place in inconspicuous locations propane tanks, mechanical equipment, antennae, garbage cans, etc.
- Paint propane tanks a natural shade of beige or green.
- No flammable material is allowed within 10 feet of a propane tank.
- Screen tanks with non-flammable materials, such as brick or stone.

Wood trash enclosures blend in with surrounding environment and may be used in residential areas where dumpsters are not required and trash is removed weekly.



Manufactured home designs compatible with the Twain Harte area

- Modular or manufactured homes are permitted, provided they are compatible with the neighborhood and the appearance of adjacent structures.
- Features such as wood porches or decks and covered porches are encouraged.



B. Commercial

1. Site Design

Provide sidewalks when a new commercial building is constructed. When improvements are made, sidewalks are recommended.



Sidewalks on frontages of newer commercial center

- Provide adequate buffering and screening, especially for sound and lighting, to reduce potential conflict with nearby properties.
- Provide for snow removal and/or storage on-site.
- Locate utilities, service and storage areas where they will not be exposed to public view. Provide structural or landscape screening, or place in inconspicuous locations propane tanks, mechanical equipment, antennae, garbage cans, etc.
- Trash receptacles in commercial areas must be non-combustible.



2. Access and Parking

Off-street parking must be provided for residential and commercial developments.¹⁰ When designing a project the following access and parking criteria apply:

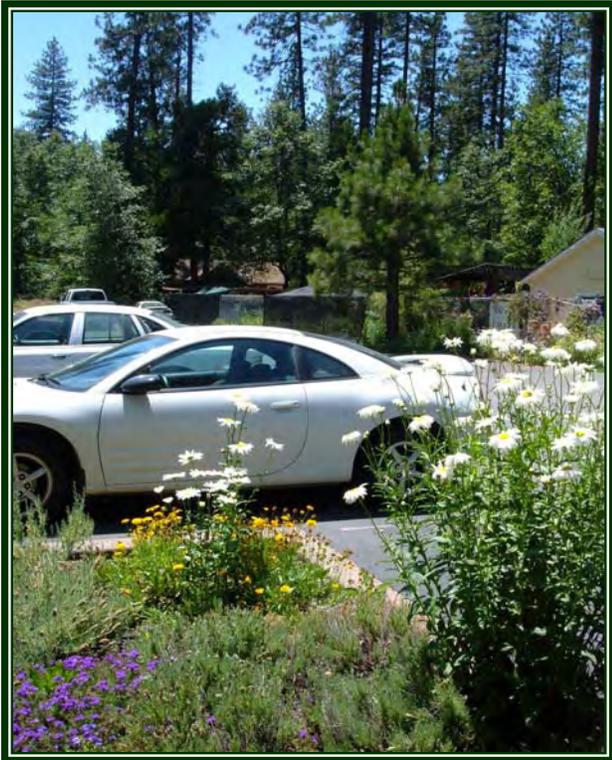
- Separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic in commercial areas. Provide sidewalks when a new commercial building is constructed. When improvements are made in a commercial area, sidewalks are recommended.
- Provide access and turning space for fire, trash, delivery and other vehicles that may service the property.
- Provide adequate parking areas that are safe and convenient for customers and employees.



Evergreen and deciduous trees in planters throughout parking area

- Locate parking behind buildings rather than fronting primary roadways.

¹⁰ TCOC, Chapter 17.60, "Off-Street Parking".



- Design parking lots around specimen trees, rather than cutting them down.
- Provide planters at suitable locations throughout the parking lot and at the ends of parking areas.
- Landscape strips along road frontages are required.¹¹
- Plant and maintain shrubs and trees to provide good visibility and safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

¹¹ TCOC, 17.60.060(F)

3. Landscaping

Provide and maintain at least the following area of the project site as natural vegetation or landscaping:¹²

Less than 1 acre – 20% of site area

1 to 5 acres – 15%

More than 5 acres – 10%

- Install, operate and maintain permanent irrigation systems to eliminate manual watering and to minimize watering after plants are established. Use drip irrigation where feasible. Submit a plan of the irrigation system and controls.
- Use landscape areas to solve environmental problems such as glare, noise and erosion control. Use landscaping to enhance building and project entrances and to soften architectural lines.
- Where trees are to be retained, do not cut or fill inside the drip lines of the trees. If necessary, construct tree wells or similar devices to protect roots from being disturbed.
- Do not use plants that produce fruit or seeds that will be a nuisance for pedestrians or vehicles. Select varieties and arrangements that can grow in natural shapes. Avoid sheared formal plants and hedges.



Landscaping enhances and softens building entrance

¹² TCOC, Chapter 15.28.

- Select plants that blend with the character of the Twain Harte area. Include native and especially drought tolerant species. Consult the Tuolumne County Landscape Guidelines for recommended species, minimum sizes, etc.
- Consider planting in raised beds and containers as well as in the ground to create diversity and help direct vehicle and pedestrian traffic.



Container plantings can create diversity and soften building lines



4. Architecture

Design and construct new and improved commercial buildings to be compatible with the style and appearance of the commercial sections of this mountain community. In addition, mixed-use projects that include retail shops and a limited number of residential units may be appropriate in commercial areas.



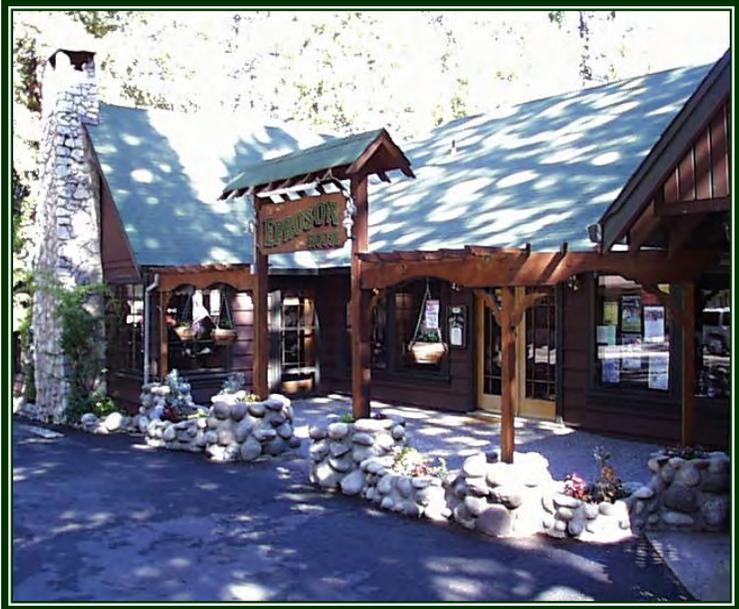
Newer professional office building compatible with mountain style

- The height of new or improved structures shall complement the existing pattern of building heights. Buildings shall not exceed two stories. The maximum height for any commercial building is 50 feet.¹³
- The width and overall proportions of new or improved buildings shall not overwhelm or strongly contrast with adjacent development. It may be necessary to break up new or altered building masses into smaller units that better relate to the sizes of surrounding buildings.
- Ordinances and codes are frequently revised and updated, and it is essential that the applicant consult the most recent codes before proceeding with a project.

¹³ TCOC, Chapter 17.54.

- Architectural details and texture variations shall be used to avoid monotonous building designs.
- Rooflines shall be designed to provide interest and variety. Steep pitched roofs are preferable to avoid accumulations of snow and needles and to be compatible with the rustic atmosphere.
- Windows shall be designed to blend with the mountain environment and to avoid the expansive glass areas of contemporary designs in urban areas.

Commercial building in style of mountain residence



Restaurant with traditional materials and rustic appearance

- Architectural features that project out from the facades of new or improved buildings shall be compatible with projections in existing nearby buildings.
- Limit the number and placement of racks for newspapers, real estate ads, advertising fliers, etc., so they do not create clutter or interfere with walks, paths or other public property.

Conform to the following specific features for commercial buildings in Twain Harte:

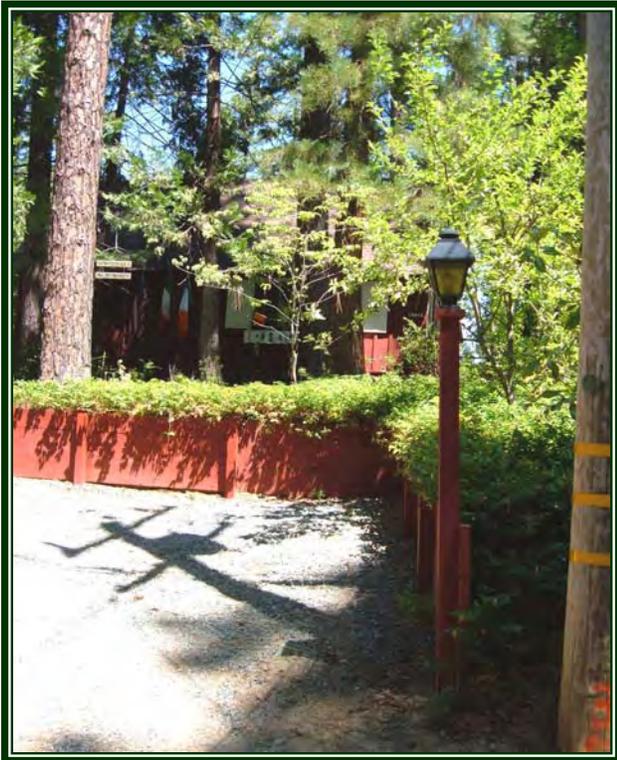
- Portions of buildings visible from the street are faced with natural or natural-appearing building materials such as stone, timber, wood, or fiber-cement siding to give a rustic appearance as appropriate to the surroundings and the uses of the new and improved structures.
- Roofing materials are metal, shingles such as composition, or clay/concrete tile.
- Colors shall be used, preferably in earth tones, to enhance the design and materials of structures.
- Provide adequate lighting for the visibility and safety of pedestrian traffic.



Restaurant in style of mountain residence

5. Lighting

- In commercial areas, provide lighting in styles that will improve safety for pedestrians and vehicles while being compatible with the character of this mountain community.
- Use fixtures that are energy efficient and controlled to be turned off when not needed.
- Provide lighting in pedestrian areas that is of historic or detailed design and on a scale that provides comfort and safety for foot traffic.
- Street lighting for vehicles may be more contemporary overhead fixtures that concentrate light into traffic and crosswalk areas.



C. Service Stations, Repair Shops, and Car Washes

Design and construct new and improved service stations, repair shops, and car washes to be compatible with the style and appearance of the commercial sections of this mountain community. In addition to the design criteria and specific features listed above for commercial buildings in Twain Harte, service stations shall conform to the following requirements:



Gas stations can be designed to fit the character of the community

- Building materials, including canopies or covers for outside vehicle service areas, should have the appearance of substance and permanence.
- Garage openings shall not be visible from the street frontage. Repair bay doors shall be closed during non-operating hours.

- Storage areas for vehicles, parts and supplies shall be enclosed or screened from public view.
- Exterior displays of merchandise shall not be used.
- On service station sites, provide areas for patrons to service their vehicles with water and air without obstructing circulation patterns for the pump islands.
- At each pump island, provide space for stacking at least two vehicles without obstructing a driveway or entrance from the street.
- Provide circulation for filling the station's tanks without obstructing customer traffic.
- Control noise of car wash facilities as appropriate for adjacent land uses.
- On car wash sites, provide space for vacuuming and drying of vehicles without obstructing circulation of other customers.

D. Signs

The Design Review Committee shall review designs for the placement and design of all new or altered signage. Number, size and placement of signage are regulated by the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code.¹⁴

1. Sign Design

- Design and install signs whose size is in proportion to the space available for their placement.

Small sign at entrance to business parking area



Large sign with natural materials at park entrance

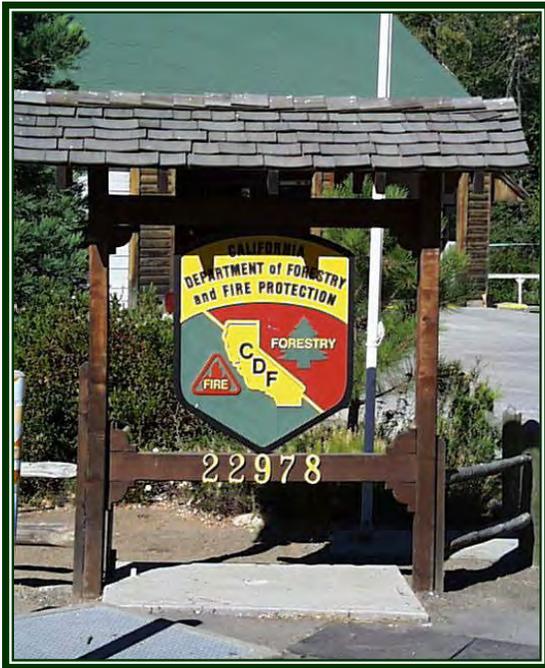
- Coordinate the shape and appearance of signs with the building's exterior colors, materials, and rustic character.
 - Wherever possible, use unique and identifying symbols of trade.
- Make new signs compatible with existing signs in the immediate area, especially if the new business is part of a complex or business center.
 - Use natural and/or rustic materials such as wood with routed letters and symbols. External signs should not use plastic, neon, or be internally lighted.
 - Interior lighted or neon style signs placed within windows are acceptable within the Twain Harte Design Review district.
 - Signs shall not be animated, rotating, moving or flashing.



Routed wood sign-natural colors

¹⁴ TCOC, Chapter 17.62

2. Sign Placement



Free standing sign using style and materials of buildings on site

- It is preferable to place signs flush with the face of the building.
 - If a projecting sign is used, place it only on the first floor and do not have the sign project above the building parapet.
 - Install all signs so the top of the sign is no higher than the lowest part of the building roof.
 - If a freestanding sign is used, incorporate in the sign the style and material of the building and establishment it is identifying.
- Place all signs on the same site as the business they are advertising, except as allowed by use permit.
 - Do not place any signs on trees.
 - Do not attach paper or other non-permanent signs to the exterior of buildings, windows, trees, shrubs, etc. Paper signs may be attached to the interior of store windows for a maximum of 30 days.
 - Place all signs, including “sandwich” signs, on private property, not in required setbacks or on sidewalks, roadside paths, road shoulders, or other county right-of-way.



Sign at entrance includes colors and styles of buildings

3. Sign Types

- Use small accessory, franchise or trademarked signs (AAA, Visa, MasterCard, etc.) and place them on the inside of the business door or window.
- Banners or similar advertising devices may be used when promoting a civic or community event. For banners in or across a County right-of-way, obtain an encroachment permit and submit the banner design to the Design Review Committee before installation.
- Banners may be used for up to 30 days to announce the opening of a new business, starting no sooner than when all permits have been obtained to open the business. The total area of banners shall not exceed an additional one-half square foot of surface area for each linear foot of frontage of the principal building.¹⁵ If application for the permanent sign is made within the above 30-day period, existing banners may be used for an additional 30 days or until the permanent sign is installed, whichever is less.
- Banners may also be used for up to 30 days by an existing business when it is having a special event or announcing a new product or service.

¹⁵ TCOC, 17.62.050

X. Community of Twain Harte

The rural, scenic community of Twain Harte has been a popular vacation area for families from various areas. Many have bought vacation homes here, returning year after year and often generation after generation, drawn by its beauty, recreational opportunities and friendships. Others have made Twain Harte their permanent residence and invested their efforts in the environment and way of life which Twain Harte represents.

Twain Harte offers many activities, including a beautiful nine hole public golf course, three tennis courts, a public swimming pool, and a field for softball or baseball. In Eproson Park, there is a playground and picnic area near the ball field and a miniature golf course, which operate in the summer. Twain Harte Lake offers its members and guests swimming, boating (non-motorized), and a beach and snack area.



The Twain Harte Golf Course Clubhouse



Baseball field at Eproson Park



Miniature golf course in downtown Twain Harte

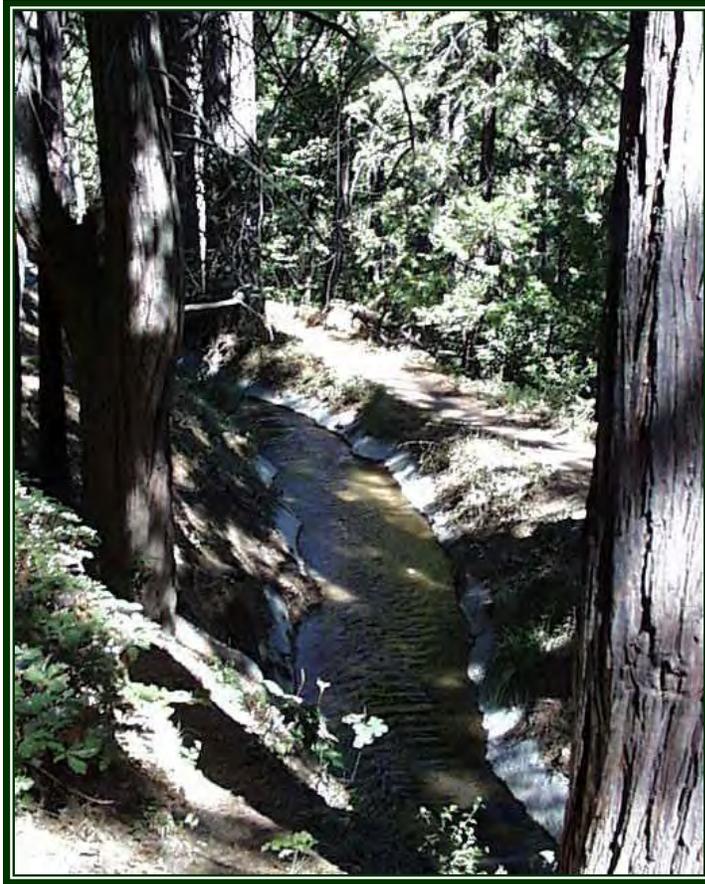


Playground at Eproson Park



Twain Harte Lake is popular for swimming and relaxing on the beach

The mountains around and above Twain Harte provide opportunities for hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, boating, water skiing, and downhill skiing, snowboarding, cross county skiing and snowshoeing in the winter.



The Soulsbyville Ditch (above) is an area of beauty in Twain Harte.

Twain Harte is clustered along old Highway 108 (now Twain Harte Drive and Business 108), a few minutes off the present Highway 108. It includes restaurants, retail shops, antique stores, boutiques, banks, medical and professional offices, real estate offices, a shopping center with full service market and pharmacy, motels, and bed and breakfast accommodations.

Community activities include concerts during the summer, arts and crafts festivals, wine tasting events, and holiday festivals. In Sonora and Columbia, there are musical events and two theatre companies, as well as educational opportunities through Columbia College.



Summer concerts and other events occur in Eproson Park

Twain Harte is the home of the Twain Harte Chamber of Commerce and several service clubs, fraternal organizations, women's clubs, veterans groups and recreational organizations. The Twain Harte Community Services District provides water, sewer, recreation, and fire and rescue services, in cooperation with the California Division of Forestry station in the center of the village.

Twain Harte has grown rapidly in both vacation and permanent population since the end of World War II. Once the retreat of a few hundred, the area is in 2004 the home of 2,500 permanent residents in addition to weekenders and vacationers. Residents are attracted today by qualities similar to those that drew the Me-Wuk tribe to the area in the distant past – abundant natural resources, a healthful climate, scenic beauty, and an inviting environment.

XI. History of Twain Harte

Introduction

Design Guidelines often include a general history of the design area to establish a historic context and explanation of that community's architectural heritage. Broad patterns of community or regional historical development tend to be reflected in buildings, structures, landscaping, and other features. Knowing how a community evolved over time provides essential background to creating and applying guidelines for changes to existing buildings or for the construction of new ones. This aspect of historic preservation not only creates design guidelines for modifications to existing buildings, but also provides tools for new construction to blend in with the old. Tuolumne County, through its Ordinance Code and the Cultural Resources Element of the Tuolumne County General Plan, firmly embraces historic preservation principles and applications, and supports design guidelines. Chapter 2.311 of the code specifically provides for a Twain Harte Design Review/Planning Advisory Committee, design guidelines and a commitment to preserve Twain Harte's identity and sense of community.

In planning for the preservation of Twain Harte's cultural heritage and for new development certain contextual themes stand out: Native American settlement, the arrival of non-natives, the Gold Rush, agricultural pursuits, transportation, water development, recreation, and the Twain Harte Lodge subdivision for vacation homes and year-around living. These themes have shaped where people live, what their homes and businesses look like, how they view their natural setting, and their attachment to their community.

Historical Context

Twain Harte is located in the Yellow Pine (Ponderosa Pine) Belt of the western Sierra Nevada range. Other vegetation, some with seasonal colors and blossoms, are interspersed in this forested landscape with wildlife such as Stellar jays, deer, squirrels, cottontails, raccoons, woodpeckers, and other woodland species. It was in this environment that Native Americans flourished for some 10,000 years. Today's inhabitants, the Central Sierra Me-Wuk, like most California Sierran groups are hunters of game, gatherers of plants, and fishers who seasonally reap harvests in the area like their ancestors. The Me-Wuk are known to have lived in several areas in and near Twain Harte, most notably at their 19th century village of Bald Rock Rancheria, along Twain Harte Creek. According to ethnographer C.H. Merriam, 10 Me-Wuk families were living at the Bald Rock Rancheria in August 1903 where there was a roundhouse, several traditional Indian houses and a half-dozen or more ordinary rough board houses. The Rancheria was lead by William Fuller, whose father, Alfred, had come to California from Ohio, and married Jenita, a Me-Wu woman. Their son William became a leader of the area Me-Wuk in 1888 at the age of 15. By 1933 William and many other Me-Wuk relocated to the Tuolumne Rancheria near Tuolumne.

Among Twain Harte's earlier non-native year-round residents were the Calvin "Pap" Williams family who arrived in 1854 following an arduous trip over Sonora Pass via the Walker River Trail. The Williams' home was on the Sonora-Mono toll road (now Twain Harte Drive), not far from a large watering trough they built for the teams of freighters using the road. The Williams family farmed on increasingly more land that they acquired and patented, planting crops such as apples and pears, and running a few cattle. Calvin Williams was the first toll taker, followed by the aforementioned Alfred Fuller. A historic marker notes that tollgate location on Twain Harte Drive. The building used as the tollhouse became the home where the Waltz family lived in the 20th Century. Other early settlers included William Calder, Austin Abbott, the Jasper brothers, and the Hiatts, who had a lumber mill. Many of these early settlers in the Twain Harte vicinity arrived in the 1860s. Austin Abbott was in the area by the early 1860s as was Calder by 1868. Mills, including Hiatt's Mill, the Fry-Comstock Mill (which burned in 1868 at Calder's Ranch), and the Mountain Pine Saw Mill (mentioned in a deed involving John D. Williams in 1865), were all established by this time providing early emphasis of wood in house construction.

Other early settlers were those who arrived after the California Gold Rush began in January, 1848. Gold was located both west and east of Twain Harte, and was even found in pockets that were hydraulicked near the modern Black Oak Elementary School, but the metal was not directly important to the history or architectural character of the community. By the 1860s, placer mining had diminished considerably and many miners took advantage of the Homestead Act of 1863 to follow other pursuits such as agricultural endeavors and logging which brought them to the higher elevations near Twain Harte. The Gold Rush-era ditches to the dry diggings cross through Twain Harte and are amenities to life in the community. Twain Harte Creek through the meadow was an early alignment for the Soulsby & Co. Ditch, now the Soulsbyville Ditch. The Main Tuolumne Canal and the Section 4 Ditch are also versions of earlier water systems in the area. Recreational trails have evolved along some of the canals (ditches) which, with spillways and flumes, still deliver water for residences and businesses. Their water also quenches the thirst of the area's flora and fauna.

Sonora Pass crossings predate the Gold Rush, but those events spurred further development of the route into a toll road. At one time there was a small fee for cattle to use the road, but a steep assessment on sheep kept most of them out of high country pastures. In the latter part of the 19th century, cattle ranches and apple and pear orchards were established around Twain Harte; some of the surviving old trees can still be seen on the fringes of the community. The fruit business grew quite large, with several orchards having their own box labels. Shipping this produce to market was greatly aided by the arrival of the Sierra Railway in Jamestown in 1897, ultimately reaching Tuolumne in 1900. However, it was a logging railroad, the Sugar Pine Railway, crossing through a part of Twain Harte, that enabled the rich timber resources on private and public forestlands to reach the Standard

Lumber Company mill at Standard. When the whistles of the logging railroad were finally stilled in 1965, the Sugar Pine's old grade continued on as a recreational trail, most visible to passersby in the trestle at the eastern entrance to Twain Harte Drive.



When Alonzo T. and Keturah Wood purchased the Williams ranch in 1921 for \$25,000, they intended to continue his timber-harvesting operation, but a major drop in the market price for wood led the couple to establish a summer resort community which they named after Mrs. Wood's favorite authors, Mark Twain and Bret Harte.



Williams Ranch House (before 1930)

On April 30, 1924, the Woods officially registered the name “Twain Harte Lodge” with the State of California. Their project was plagued with problems including limited public interest and lack of financing. In 1926, Albert L. Nevins and Dr. R. E. Turner purchased the Woods’ holdings for \$55,000 and began marketing efforts. The Union Democrat of June 19, 1926, reported on the venture:

With the announcement this week of the opening of Twain-Harte Lodge, what is said to be the most accessible mountain playground in the picturesque Sonora section of the high Sierra has been made available to private ownership... Although the Sonora and Pine Crest regions have long been

among the most popular recreational centers in California, it has hitherto been impossible to acquire title to cabin sites and mountain estates in this part of the Sierras because practically all the desirable property in this vicinity is within the boundaries of the National Forest reserve and is procurable only under the regular government leasehold. Acting in the belief that an active demand exists for cabin sites and estates outside the forest service, Messrs. Turner and Nevins, developers of Pismo Beach and other successful real estate enterprises on the Coast Highway, have set out to supply this demand by throwing open to public ownership sites and estates at Twain Harte Lodge...Cabin sites in the heart of one of the most beautiful tree-studded mountain playgrounds in this section of California are now open to public purchase. Lodge lots and estates varying in size from half-acres to ten acres have been laid out and are now ready for inspection.



Twain Harte Lodge (Courtesy of the Tuolumne County Museum)



Rocca's Twain Harte Lodge circa 1951

Nevins and Turner also proceeded with the Woods' project to create a lake by building a dam across Twain Harte Creek at the large granitic expanse known as Bald Rock. The dam cost nearly \$43,000 to construct and was partly financed by a loan from Edward M. Marquis. Dedicated July 4, 1929, the dam created a reservoir that during summer remains the recreational heart of Twain Harte for residents.



*Site of Twain Harte Dam and Lake
(Courtesy of Tuolumne County Museum)*



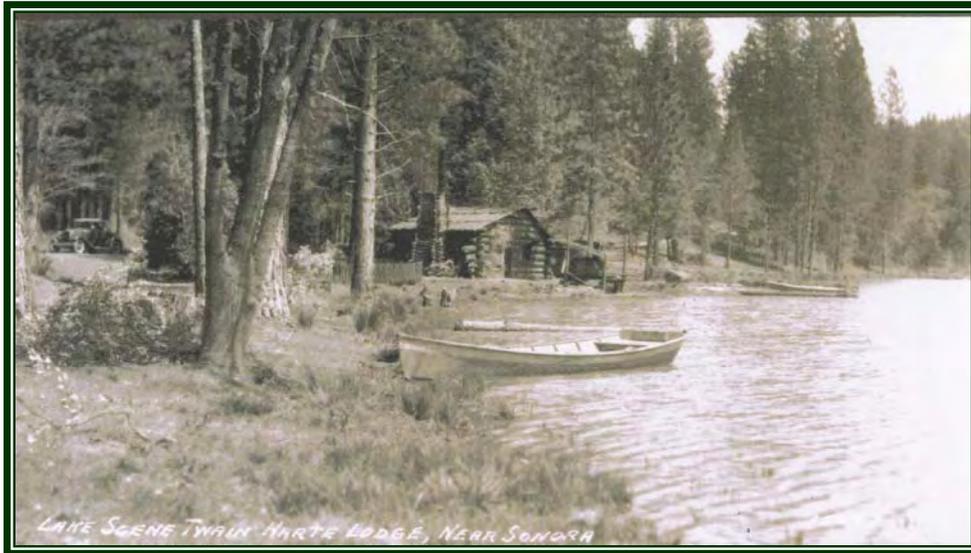
*Twain Harte Dam construction,
Downstream side*



Downstream face of Twain Harte Dam



Upstream face of Twain Harte Dam



*Twain Harte Lake
(Courtesy of the Tuolumne County Museum)*

Although Nevins and Turner defaulted on their loan and Marquis took over the company, the identity of the development as a colony of seasonal cabins took hold. Even the first “Twain Harte Arch” (1933) and the California Division of Forestry’s Twain Harte Station (1944) reflected the rusticity of the area’s architecture in construction using small logs.





The Twain Harte Arch has been rebuilt and modernized many times



The cabins and new business buildings were an expression of mountain architecture with other features such as board and batten or horizontal wooden siding, steeply pitched gable roofs, stone or brick chimneys, shutters flanking windows, outdoor decks for family gatherings under the pines, and native plants on sparsely landscaped grounds.



Mono Highway and Twain Harte Meadow (Courtesy of Tuolumne County Museum)

After Twain Harte development began, the meadow on the former Williams Ranch was used by residents for horseback riding, ballgames, rodeos, and all other recreation. In 1948, Arthur and Belle Nevins and Raymond and Ella Eproson granted a permanent easement to owners in the Twain Harte Tract to use the meadow for recreational purposes.

As recreational development grew, so did the year-round population. The Twain Harte School opened in 1928 in a schoolhouse moved from the mining town of Confidence. The Twain Harte Grocery prospered under Ray Eproson who bought the business in 1930. The Eprosons, whose woodsy home was successfully adapted as a restaurant many years later, allowed the development company to build a 9-hole golf course on Twain Harte Meadow with a modest rent of \$1 per year in 1966. After his death in 1968, his widow, Ella, gave the land to the Twain Harte Golf Club, provided the land was only used for recreational purposes. A rodeo held there was a part of the activities in Twain Harte from 1937-1940.



Twain Harte Rodeo circa 1938

The Twain Harte Volunteer Fire Co. was organized in 1935 and the Twain Harte Improvement Association in the late 1930s. The latter group bought Twain Harte Lake and dam from Marquis for \$10 in 1939. In 1943 Nevins and Eproson purchased the Marquis holdings, which by this time included the subdivision, a hotel, service station, and some outbuildings. The pair sold the hotel to John Rocca, a Jamestown businessman, who operated it until it was destroyed by fire in 1953. In December 2002, the successor building to Rocca's operation also met a fiery end.

Today, Twain Harte is a busy, year-round community with an economy fueled by tourism, part and fulltime residents, recreational and cultural opportunities, and business and service organizations pitching in to make life here more enjoyable. The recently formed Twain Harte Community Services District provides water, sewer, fire, and rescue services and tends to the recreational amenities within its jurisdiction. Twain Harte has grown rapidly in both vacation and permanent populations since the end of World War II. Once the retreat of a few hundred, the area in 2006 is the home of 2500 permanent residents, in addition to weekenders and vacationers. Residents are attracted by the same qualities that the Me-Wuk found here — a woodsy environment with seasonal variations, a healthful climate, spectacular natural scenery, and an inviting lifestyle.

XII. Appendices

A. Chapter 2.36II of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code

II. Twain Harte Design Review/Planning Advisory Committee

2.36.090 Established. There is established a committee to be known as the “Twain Harte design review committee” whose jurisdiction shall be over the territory shown on the map titled “Twain Harte planning area” adopted, and as it may be amended from time to time, by the board of supervisors. (Ord. 2019 § 2, 1993; Ord. 575 § 1, 1970; prior code § 12-4.0).

2.36.100 Membership. The committee shall consist of seven members who shall be residents of the territory shown on the “Twain Harte planning area” map. Six members of the committee shall be appointed by the Board of Supervisors; the seventh member shall be designated in July of each year by the Twain Harte Homeowners Board of Directors and shall be ratified by the Board of Supervisors after consideration of any recommendation from the committee concerning the ratification. (Ord. 2491 § 2, 2003; Ord. 2163 § 1, 1996; Ord. 2019 § 4, 1993; Ord. 1657 § 1, 1988; Ord. 1498 § 1, 1986; Ord. 575 § 2 (part), 1970; prior code § 12-4.1).

2.36.110 Terms – Appointment of successor. Except for the terms of office of the member of the committee designated by the Twain Harte Homeowners Board of Directors, the term of office of each member shall be for three years and until the appointment of his/her successor. The term of office for the member designated by the Twain Harte Homeowners Board of Directors shall be for one year and until appointment of his/her successor. (Ord. 2491 § 3, 2003; Ord. 575 § 2 (part), 1970; prior code § 12-4.2).

2.36.130 Officers and rules.

- A. Annually, the committee shall elect a chair from the members, and any other officers from its members as necessary to conduct its business. The officers shall serve a term of one year.
- B. The committee shall adopt rules for the transaction of its business and shall keep a record of its transactions, findings, determinations, and decisions which records shall be a public record.

C. A majority of the authorized positions of the committee constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. No act of the committee shall be valid or finding unless a majority of the filled positions concur therein, except as otherwise required by state law. (Ord. 2491 § 4, 2003; Ord. 575 § 2 (part), 1970; prior code § 12-4.4).

2.36.140 Compensation. The members of the committee shall serve without compensation, but may receive such actual and necessary expenses as are incurred in carrying out their duties. (Ord. 575 § 2 (part), 1970; prior code § 12-4.5).

2.36.150 Duties. The Twain Harte design review/planning advisory committee is charged with the following duties:

A. To propose design guidelines in conformance with the principles of chapter 17.46 for site planning, architecture, landscape design and development details, such as signage and lighting, for new improvements and changes to existing improvements on a parcel in the Twain Harte planning area. The design guidelines shall include standards for those improvements or changes in improvements requiring a permit pursuant to chapter 17.46. Except with respect to signs, the absence of a guideline shall not prevent the committee from exercising its advisory authority in conformance with the principles of chapter 17.46 of this code.

B. To act in an advisory capacity to all agencies of the county, including the board of supervisors and the planning commission, on matters pertaining to an application for a design review permit under chapter 17.46 of this code.

C. To act as the Twain Harte area planning advisory committee to all agencies of the county, including the board of supervisors and the planning commission, on all discretionary land development applications submitted to the community development department within the Twain Harte planning area. (Ord. 2491 § 5, 2003; Ord. 2314 § 5, 1999; Ord. 2019 § 5, 1993; Ord. 1498 § 2, 1986; Ord. 575 § 3, 1970; prior code § 12-4.6)

B. Acknowledgements

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Twain Harte

Twain Harte Area Chamber of Commerce
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Larry Qvistgaard, digital composition
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Sources of Information

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Elwood Johnson – photographs of dam construction
Tuolumne County Historic Preservation Review Commission