

Higdon Cabin

Elkmont Historic District
Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Historic Structure Report



August 2015

for

**Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Southeast Region, National Park Service**

by

JOSEPH K. OPPERMAN-ARCHITECT, P.A.

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National Park Service
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Atlanta, GA 30303
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2015
Historic Structure Report
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Elkmont Historic District
Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Higdon Cabin
LCS#: 933384

The historic structure report presented here exists in two formats. A traditional, printed version is available for study at the park and at the Southeastern Regional Office of the NPS (SERO). For more widespread access, the historic structure report also exists in digital format through the IRMA Portal, Integrated Resource Management Applications, including the NPS Data Store, accessed at <<https://irma.nps.gov/App/Reference/Welcome>>, a website of the National Park Service.

Higdon Cabin
Elkmont Historic District
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Historic Structure Report
2015

Approved by:



Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park

9-16-15

Date

Recommended by:



Chief, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science Div., Southeast Region

9/28/15

Date

Recommended by:

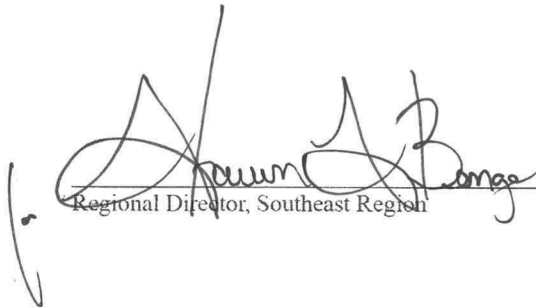


Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region

9/29/15

Date

Approved by:



Regional Director, Southeast Region

9/29/15

Date

Foreword

We are pleased to make available this Historic Structure Report, part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the historic structures and cultural landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region. A number of individuals contributed to the successful completion of this work, but we would particularly like to thank the Project Team who authored the report.

The authors would like to thank the staff at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park who assisted with the project, especially Dianne Flaugh, cultural resource manager, who provided copies of relevant documents from park files, logistical assistance and general editorial review. Danita Brown, AIA, of the National Park Service's Southeast Regional Office, provided helpful comments as part of her technical review and project oversight. We hope that this study will prove valuable to park management in ongoing efforts to preserve the building and to everyone in understanding and interpreting these unique resources.

Dan Scheidt, Chief
Cultural Resources, Stewardship, and Science Division
Southeast Regional Office
2015

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to document the development, use, and current condition of the Higdon Cabin in the Elkmont Historic District of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The National Park Service will use this report to inform and guide their stewardship of this historic structure.

The scope of work prescribed by NPS for this HSR specifies “limited” historical research as defined by *Director’s Order #28: Cultural Resources Management Guidelines*. The present study provides historical background and context for Elkmont that is based primarily on a series of studies and reports developed by the National Park Service between 1993 and 2006. Elkmont’s history has been well documented, and this Historic Structure Report has not included additional archival research on the larger community but does include additional historical documentation for the families who occupied the cabin. Determination of the physical evolution of the Higdon Cabin is based primarily on earlier photographs and building archaeology.

The report is divided into two major segments, *Part I: Developmental History* and *Part II: Treatment & Use*. Part I is organized into three sections that address in sequence the historical background and context of the Elkmont, a chronology of development and use of the Higdon Cabin specifically, and a physical description of the cabin’s exterior and interior on a room-by-room basis. This last section also includes an assessment of condition and a listing of character-defining features. A bibliography concludes Part I.

Part II presents the recommended “ultimate treatment and use” and also examines

alternatives for treatment and use as well as requirements that circumscribe the cabin’s treatment and use. An appendix contains scaled drawings of as-found foundation, floor, and roof plans.

Historical Overview

The town of Elkmont was developed in the early twentieth century as a summer community, deep in the woods of the Great Smoky Mountains in Sevier County, Tennessee. Elkmont was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 as the Elkmont Historic District, which at that time included sixty-nine historic structures constructed primarily between 1910 and 1930. The district’s historic structures were organized around two clubs, the Appalachian Club and the Wonderland Club, and included dozens of rustic summer cabins, a social clubhouse, a hotel, and a variety of outbuildings.

Most of those structures have since been removed by the National Park Service, but the Appalachian Club’s clubhouse, the Spence Cabin on Little River, and sixteen of the summer cottages and ancillary structures built along Daisy Town Road in the early twentieth century are being preserved. The existing contributing structures retain much of their historic integrity, but most have been vacant since 1992 and are in various states of disrepair.

Elkmont is important not only for its architecture, but also for its association with the development of summer resort communities in the southern Appalachian Mountains in the early twentieth century.

These communities were the products of a renewed interest in nature and outdoor recreation, and their architecture, landscaping and planning sought earnestly to express this “back-to-nature” sentiment.

Statement of Significance

In 1994, the properties associated with the Appalachian Club and Wonderland Club were listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Elkmont Historic District. The district’s significance is due to its associations with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A). Specifically, Elkmont is significant for its part in the development of summer resort communities during the early twentieth century. These communities were the product of a renewed interest in nature and outdoor recreation, and their rustic architecture, landscaping, and planning reflect this admiration for a “back-to-nature” lifestyle.

In addition, the Elkmont Historic District is significant because the surviving properties embody the distinctive characteristics of rustic architecture and vernacular building traditions. While the properties at Elkmont may lack “individual distinction,” the National Register nomination points out, as a group they comprise “a significant and distinguishable entity.”

Cultural Resources and Natural Resources

Although the park intended to remove the buildings at Elkmont and return the area to nature, Section 106 consultation with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other interested parties resulted in negotiation of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in 2008 to resolve the adverse effects on National Register properties posed by the proposed demolition.

The MOA states in part, “...eighteen contributing and one non-contributing building will be retained . . . A total of 30 contributing buildings will be removed. . . The exterior of the sixteen buildings in Daisy Town will be restored and their interiors rehabilitated.” The MOA includes stipulations for documentation and treatment that led to development of historic structure reports (HSRs) on this and the other buildings in the district.

In 2009, NPS amended the park’s GMP and prepared the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Elkmont Historic District. The FEIS outlines the strategy to restore the exteriors of nineteen buildings “to a point within the period of significance” (1908–1940, according to the current National Register Nomination for Elkmont; 1910–1942, according to the draft nomination for a Daisy Town historic district) when there is adequate documentation. For the interiors, the stated goal in the FEIS is to “preserve,” which encompasses the rehabilitation called for in the MOA.

The MOA stipulates reconsideration of the National Register nomination to reflect the area of retained buildings and cultural landscapes. A more informed understanding of the historic district has evolved during the course of developing the required HSRs and the findings of those studies suggest that a revision to the period of significance might be in order.

With three-fourths of the required HSRs complete, a range of building materials and features from the early post-World War II era have been documented. These represent a continuation of the vernacular building traditions that give the district its historic character. Their continued preservation, as recommended in several of the HSRs to date, should be considered when a new National Register nomination is developed.

Methodology

The objectives of this Historic Structure Report (HSR), which complies with the guidelines at NPS-28, are to research and prepare a comprehensive and scholarly assessment of the building's history and fabric and its existing physical conditions, and to recommend treatment for preservation.

The findings and recommendations made in this report rely on the combined research of primary and secondary resources, early photographs, oral histories, and the investigation of extant building fabric.

The NPS Scope of Work for this HSR places the level of background research for this report as "limited investigation," as defined in NPS-28. However, because of the scarcity of written documentation, additional research was deemed necessary for an adequate understanding of the context and history of this particular cabin.

Physical investigation of the building to determine its evolutionary history was a large component of the work to complete this HSR. That investigation involved a close look at features in the building and at details such as the framing materials and methods, the relationship of finish treatments, at the variety of siding, ghost marks, and nail types. Each research effort, both documentary and physical, was designed to create a dual, coordinated approach to determining how the building was used and adapted over the progression of Elkmont's history.

The firm of Joseph K. Oppermann – Architect, P.A., prepared this HSR. The team for this cabin included Joseph K. Oppermann, FAIA, historical architect and principal-in-charge; Rebecca L. McCormick, AIA, assisting architect; Langdon E. Oppermann, architectural historian; Christopher M. Woollard, Associate AIA; and Tommy H. Jones, cultural resource specialist. The team researched, investigated and documented the cabin and authored this HSR. This

interdisciplinary approach improves understanding of history and conditions, which aids the development of appropriate treatment recommendations.

An initial multi-day visit to the site was made in the spring of 2014 with additional follow-up visits in November 2014 and April 2015. Measurements were compiled using manual measuring tape, carpenter ruler, digital camera, and digital recorder, a Leica Disto laser distance meter. Overall photography was completed for both exterior and interiors. Detailed field drawings were made. Upon return to the office, these field drawings were used to create digitized AutoCAD drawings of foundation, floor and roof plans. The digitized floor plan became the base document on which final recordations and assessed conditions were made during the subsequent return trips.

A standard assessment methodology was used for the condition survey of each exterior feature and each interior room, itemizing features and elements. Detail photography was conducted. Visual observation of surface conditions supplemented with a 20-power magnification loupe and Protimeter BLD 2000 moisture meter were the method and instruments of assessing the physical condition of building materials. In accordance with the NPS scope of work, no building system components were tested. No invasive methods of investigation were employed. Tape measure and digital cameras were used to record the size, design and location of components and conditions.

Findings

Although now known as the Higdon Cabin, the building was constructed by David C. Boykin (1875-1925), a prosperous automobile dealer in Knoxville. The Boykin cabin consisted of what are now Rooms 101, 102, and 103, as well as Rooms 104A and 104B, which were originally built as a single room. Since they took meals at the Appalachian

Club, they had no need of a kitchen, but probably had a bathroom in Room 104.

After his death in 1925, the cabin was acquired by Edward Vernon Ferrell Sr. (1888-1960), a real-estate developer from North Carolina who worked in Knoxville in the 1920s. The Ferrells were likely responsible for expanding the cabin to include Rooms 105 and 106 and a back porch. The Depression ruined Ferrell's real-estate business, and the family moved to Raleigh in the early 1930s. How long the Ferrells owned the cabin at Elkmont after that has not been documented.

In 1949 or 1950, Lee Higdon (1883-1974) and his family moved into the Ferrell's old cabin after they lost their nearby home to fire. He had come to Elkmont around 1906 and married Julia Mae Ownby (1886-1963), whose grandparents had settled along Jakes Creek in the 1840s. They remodeled the cabin for year-round use and with two of their children, Faye and J.T., continued to live there for most of the rest of their lives. Lee Higdon, and later J. T. as well, worked as caretaker for the Appalachian Club and the summer cabins at Daisy Town.

The younger Higdon siblings were apparently responsible for partial enclosure of the back porch, probably around 1980, but they left that work incomplete. Sections of the board-and-batten siding were also replaced at that time. Water penetration from leaking roofing after they vacated the cabin in the early 1990s caused significant damage to interior finishes, as did the necessary repairs to stabilize the building in the twenty-first century.

Recommended Treatment and Use

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) resolving adverse effects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act obligates the NPS to continued preservation of the Higdon Cabin, stipulating also that the

exterior will be restored to its appearance during the district's period of significance and the interior rehabilitated to a safe and stable condition.

The recommendations discussed in the last section of this report and summarized here are meant to provide a conceptual plan for treatment of the Higdon Cabin. They do not and are not intended to provide complete specifications for all aspects of the work. Some of the repairs can be performed by a skilled carpenter. Other repairs will likely require plans and specifications as well as additional, more intensive building investigation.

Recommendations for Site Work:

- whenever site work requires ground disturbance, secure clearance from an archaeologist before commencing work.
- repair grade around the cabin to ensure positive drainage away from the foundation, especially on the south side;
- ensure that there is no wood-to-ground contact under and around the cabin;
- construct wooden steps to back porch;
- identify location of historic walkway behind the house and delineate as appropriate;
- repair front walkway, steps, and retaining wall.

Recommendations for Foundation Work:

- eliminate wood-to-ground contact under and around the cabin and/or install metal termite shields;
- monitor rear retaining wall for movement and repair as appropriate;
- improve site drainage;
- inspect foundation posts and piers, especially under Room 107, and make repairs as necessary to ensure stability;
- repair board-and-batten foundation enclosure under original cabin and the vertical-board enclosure of the rear wing, adding battens to the latter.
- stabilize mortared rock underpinning part of the front porch.

Recommendations for Wood Framing:

- repair and replace damaged sole plate on south and west sides of cabin;
- replace missing ceiling joists in rear wing;
- replace missing battens.
- add posts and beams at mid-span of floor joists as necessary.

Recommendations for Roofing:

- repair damaged roofing above northeast corner of Room 107;
- make permanent repairs to front-porch roof decking;
- install full system of unpainted, galvanized, half-round gutters and round downspouts on all sides of the house;
- plan for replacement of remaining metal roofing within five years.

Recommendations for Front Porch:

- Replace missing tongue-and-groove flooring at front steps.

Recommendations for Back Porch (Room 107):

- dismantle east and west walls of what is now Room 107 in order to recreate the back porch;
- follow material evidence that is exposed during demolition to recreate screened enclosure of those walls.

Recommendation for Chimney:

- rebuild top of chimney, flash, and cap;
- design and install additional support for the chimney base.

Recommendations for Exterior Doors:

- return front door to working order, including lockset and other hardware;
- when back porch is restored, a reproduction door should be installed in the opening on the east side of Room 102.

Recommendations for Windows:

- return all movable sash to working order;
- replicate casement windows for the south

side of Room 106 if the original sash and frame cannot be located.

Recommendations for Exterior Finishes:

- after repairs wash exterior wood surfaces;
- reapply solid-body stain to all board-and-batten siding, including that which encloses the foundation, as well as porch ceilings and eaves;
- repaint windows, doors, and porch flooring in appropriate colors.

Recommendation for Interior:

- replace fiberboard panels recently removed from walls and ceilings in Rooms 105 and 106;
- replace runs of double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards recently removed from the east side of Room 103, leaving a “window” to show the tongue-and-groove and the cabin’s structure;
- remove loose and peeling paint and other debris;
- preserve fixtures and cabinets in the bathrooms and kitchen;
- conserve linoleum in Room 105;
- preserve historic fiberboard on walls and ceilings;
- consider repainting interior, especially new replacement material.

Recommendations for Fire Suppression and Security:

- install complete fire-detection system;
- install complete fire-suppression system;
- bypass but preserve existing electrical wiring and fixtures in place;
- install new electrical system in metal conduit.

Recommendations for Pest Control:

- ensure no wood-to-ground contact
- ensure a dry crawl space beneath the cabin;
- screen all windows and doors;
- install crumpled hardware cloth within the chimney stack to prevent animal entry;

- fill small openings with foam or fiberglass backer rod;
- routinely inspect in, beneath, and around the structure for signs of the presence of wood-destroying insects and other pests.

Other Recommendations:

- consider extending National Register period of significance for the proposed Daisy Town district to encompass the Little River Company's founding of Elkmont in 1908 as well as the early post-World War II era;

- improve general maintenance of the Daisy Town district;
- implement appropriate measures to stem vandalism;
- develop interpretive brochure for Elkmont;
- use HSRs to inform park planning documents, including National Register nomination updates.

Administrative Data

Locational Data

Building Name: Higdon Cabin

Location: Elkmont Historic District
Great Smoky Mountains
National Park

County: Sevier County

State: Tennessee

Related NPS Studies

“Future Management of the Elkmont Historic District.” Briefing Statement by National Park Service, January 27, 2010.

National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior. “Elkmont Historic District. Final Environmental Impact Statement and General Management Plan Amendment.” Vols. 1 and II. Gatlinburg, TN: National Park Service, 2006.

Oppermann, Joseph K. “Addicks Cabin and Adamless Eden, Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Historic Structure Report.” National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2010.

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_____. “Levi Trentham Cabin, Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Historic Structure Report.” National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2010.

_____. “Mayo Cabin and Mayo Servants’ Quarters, Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Historic Structure Report.” National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2010.

_____. “Smith Cabin, Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Historic Structure Report.” National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2014.

_____. “Sneed Cabin, Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Historic Structure Report.” National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2015.

_____. “Spence Cabin, Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Historic Structure Report.” National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2009.

Thomason and Associates. "The History and Architecture of the Elkmont Community." Atlanta, GA: National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 1993.

Thomason, Phillip and Dr. Michael Ann Williams, revised by Len Brown. National Register of Historic Places nomination; Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1994.

TRC Garrow Associates, Inc. "Archaeological Investigations in the Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Sevier County, Tennessee." National Park Service, 2005.

_____. "Cultural Resources of the Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky

Mountains National Park, Sevier County, Tennessee." National Park Service, 2004.

Real Property Information

Acquisition Date: June 14, 1933

LCS ID: 933384

Size Information: Total Floor Area: approx. 1,040 square feet, not including front porch.

Roof Area: approx. 2,000 square feet

Number of Stories: 1

Number of Rooms: 7

Number of Bathrooms: 2

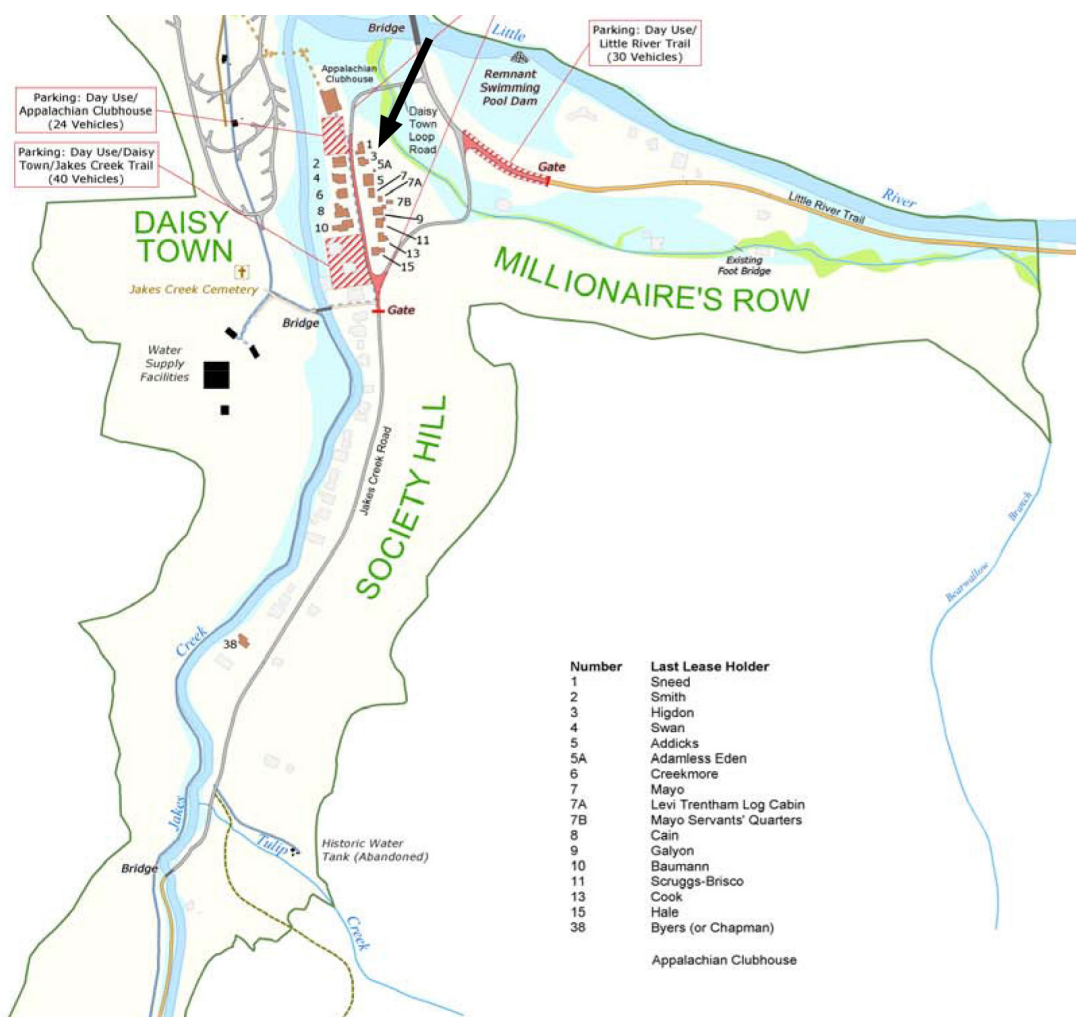


Figure 1. Detail from map of Elkmont showing Daisy Town and vicinity, annotated with an arrow to locate the Higdon Cabin.

Cultural Resource Data

National Register Status: Listed
March 22, 1994; Contributing Structure.
Reference # 94000166

Name: Elkmont Historic District, Great
Smoky Mountains National Park

Proposed Treatment: Exterior
Restoration and Interior Rehabilitation

Part I: Developmental History

I.A. Historical Background and Context

The town of Elkmont was developed in the early twentieth century as a summer community, deep in the woods of the Great Smoky Mountains in Sevier County, Tennessee. Elkmont was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 as the Elkmont Historic District, which at that time included sixty-nine historic structures constructed primarily between 1910 and 1930. The district's historic structures were organized around two clubs, the Appalachian Club and the Wonderland Club, and included dozens of rustic summer cabins, a social clubhouse, a hotel, and a variety of outbuildings.

Most of those structures have since been removed by the National Park Service, but the Appalachian Club's clubhouse, the Spence Cabin on Little River, and sixteen of the summer cottages and ancillary structures built along Daisy Town Road in the early twentieth century are being preserved. The existing contributing structures retain much of their historic integrity, but most have been vacant since 1992 and are in various states of disrepair.

Elkmont is important not only for its architecture, but also for its association with the development of summer resort communities in the southern Appalachian Mountains in the early twentieth century. These communities were the products of a renewed interest in nature and outdoor recreation, and their architecture, landscaping and planning sought earnestly to express this "back-to-nature" sentiment.

This chapter of the present study provides historical background and context for Elkmont and is based primarily on a series of studies and reports developed by the National Park Service between 1993 and 2006. Elkmont's history has been well documented, and this Historic Structure Report has not included additional archival research on the larger community but does include some additional historical documentation for the families who occupied the cabin.

Environment

Nestled in the valley of the East Prong of Little River on the Tennessee side of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Elkmont is ideally situated for a mountain getaway. The valley is just over 2,100 feet above sea level and is enclosed by steeply sloped, forested mountains with a biologically rich environment and wide diversity of plants, animals, and invertebrates. A temperate climate and high levels of rainfall have promoted both human settlement and plant growth. The Little River and its tributary

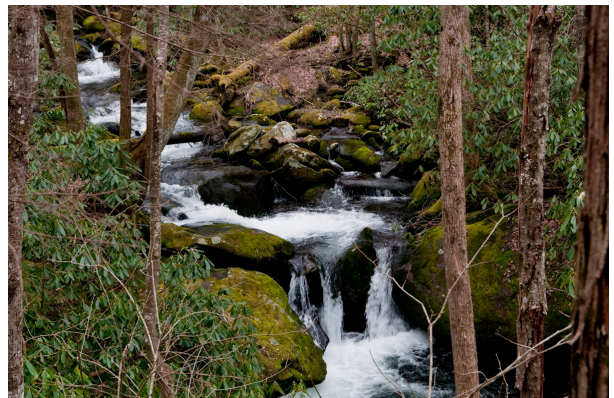


Figure 2. Cascade on Jake's Creek.

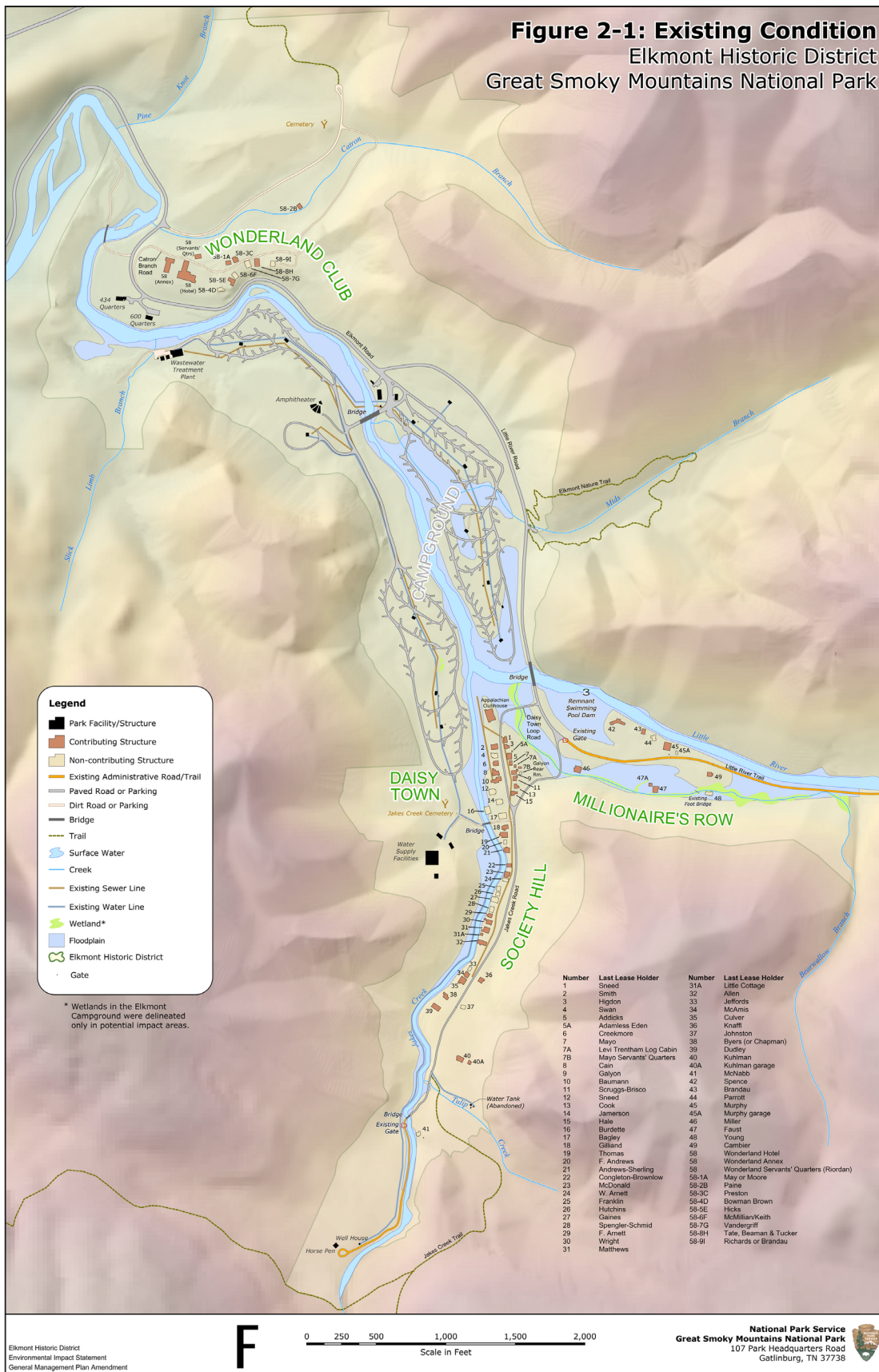


Figure 3. Map of Elkmont Historic District showing its communities bordering Jakes Creek and the Little River. (National Park Service)

Jakes Creek are each fed by springs and smaller branches flowing from the upper elevations of the surrounding mountains. The valley is narrow, but its level areas along the waterways have been areas of settlement through several centuries and changing cultures.

Early Euro-American Settlement

Although Native Americans settled in the Little River valley centuries earlier, the first permanent Euro-American occupation occurred after the 1785 Treaty of Dumplin Creek, when the Cherokees ceded a large tract of land between the French Broad and Little Tennessee rivers to the United States. The new settlers began to farm the mountain valleys and coves. Two families, the Ownbys and Trenthams, came to own much of the land along Jakes Creek, where they constructed single- and double-pen log dwellings, farm buildings and mills.

The heavily forested and rugged mountain terrain initially inhibited extensive settlement and travel through the area. However, by the latter part of the nineteenth century, family-owned companies, especially the J.L. English Company and Swaggert & Eubanks, began to cut and laboriously haul timber out of the mountains. Larger timber companies soon saw opportunity in the Great Smokies, especially as timberlands in the Northeast and Great Lakes area were depleted. These companies had an enormous impact on the surrounding environment in only a short time. With their greater capital came more efficient methods of extracting timber, resulting in widespread destruction of mountain habitat.

Little River Lumber Company

A group of Pennsylvania investors, Col. Wilson B. Townsend, J. W. Wrigley, and F. H. McCormick, selected this area of the Smokies after investigating its lumber



Figure 4. Avent Cabin, Elkmont, built by the Ownby family about 1845.

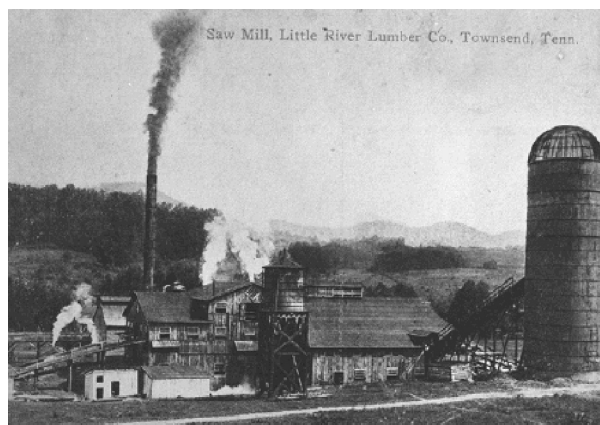


Figure 5. Undated postcard, "Saw Mill, Little River Lumber Company, Townsend, Tenn."

potential. In 1900, they bought 86,000 acres of virgin forest along the Little River, and the following year chartered the Little River Lumber Company. The company set up its headquarters and built a large band mill in Tuckaleechee Cove. The community of workers that grew around the sawmill was named Townsend in honor of the company's founder and general manager.

In 1901, the Little River Railroad Company was created to bring in the valuable hardwoods from upper elevations. The railroad connected to the Knoxville & Augusta Railroad and later would be extended to link the company headquarters at Townsend to additional mountainous areas, reaching Elkmont in 1908.

During construction of the Little River Railroad, simple temporary structures known as “set-off” houses were built for railroad



Figure 6. Little River Railroad Company set-off houses. (Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum)



Figure 7. A log loader lifts a log onto a flatbed rail car. (NPS, “Logging,” www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=BF35F887-1DD8-B71C-0793D04A3C9075AF)



Figure 8. Logging train with workers. (NPS, “Logging,” www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=BF35F887-1DD8-B71C-0793D04A3C9075AF)

employees and their families. These structures were assembled at company headquarters and moved by train as railroad construction progressed. Often, several set-off houses were placed in a row to create what was known as a “string town.”

The rail line into the mountains was built from 1906 to 1908. At its terminus, a lumber camp was established as a base of operations, and a community of workers and their families soon took root. This was Elkmont. Company headquarters remained in Townsend, and as the businesses prospered, Col. Townsend and his investors hired the much younger Joseph P. Murphy as superintendent.

Although the purpose of the rail line was timbering, access to the isolated mountains changed the region. Knoxville sportsmen



Figure 9. A chestnut tree somewhere in the watershed of the Little River, ca. 1900. (Daniel Paulin, *Images of America: Lost Elkmont*)

were soon asking to use the railroad to reach hunting and fishing locations in the backcountry. A long-time Elkmont summer resident recalled the role the train played in transforming Elkmont from a logging camp to a vacation community:

At first, these Knoxvilleians rode the ‘dog car’ or caboose, got off at Elkmont and the train continued up to Jakes Creek to the logging camps. This weekend trip became so popular that the wives became curious. So in 1907 the wives and husbands hunted and fished together in Elkmont.¹

1. Ivah C. Murphy, interviewed in 1965, Willard Yarbrough, “Early Days Recalled: Elkmont, Rooted in Smoky Park History, Is Proud of Tradition,” *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, August 29, 1965, p. F. genealogytrails.com/tenn/sevier/commElkmont.html

The lumber company recognized the potential of passenger service and encouraged the sportsmen and their families. Before long, an observation car was added to take travelers from Knoxville to Elkmont each Sunday.



Figure 11. Undated photograph of log train passing through Elkmont. (Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum)

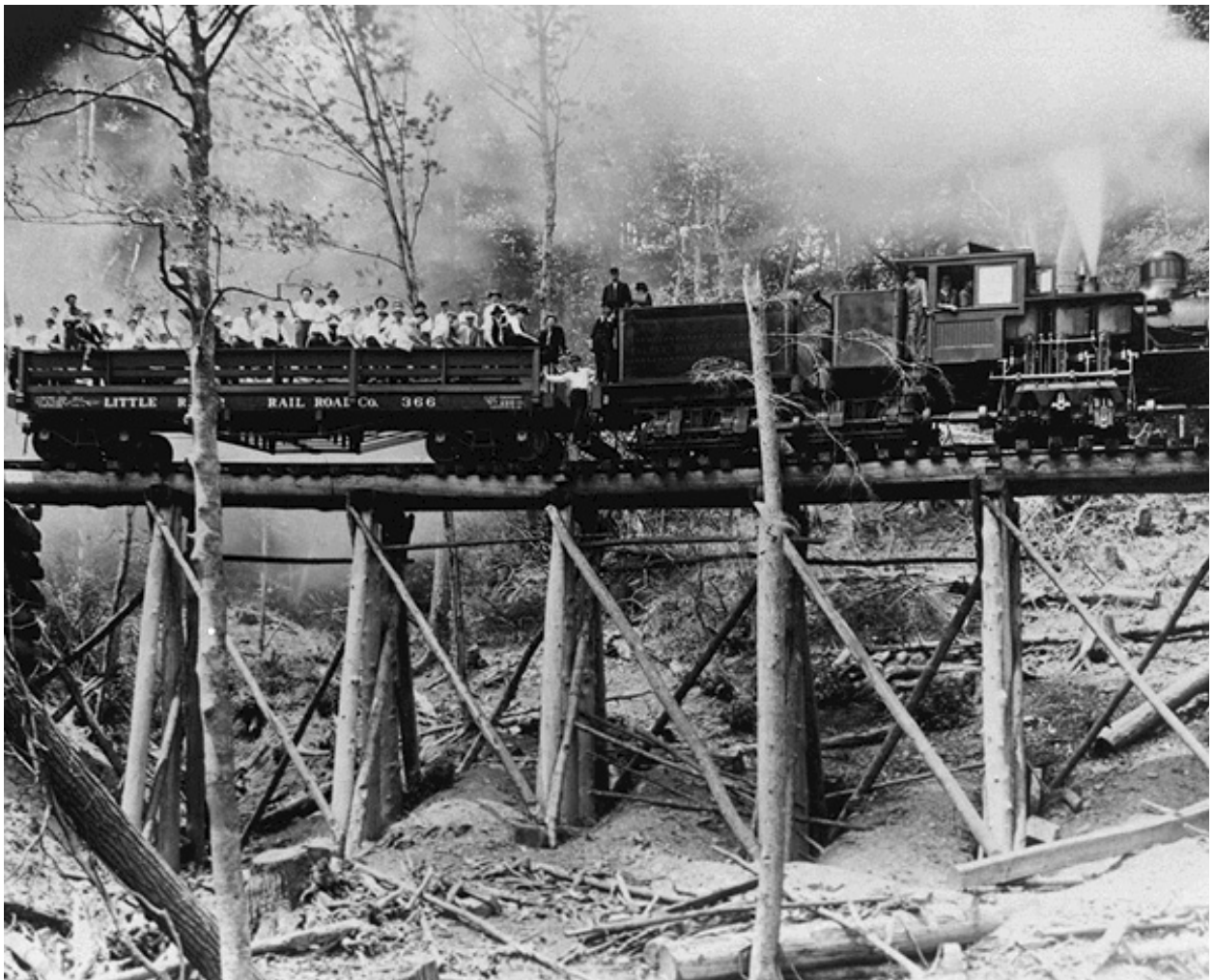


Figure 10. Logging train with workers. (NPS, “Logging,” www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=BF35F887-1DD8-B71C-0793D04A3C9075AF)

These excursions quickly grew in popularity and came to be offered several days a week. By 1909, tourists traveled daily from Knoxville's Southern Station to Elkmont.

Certain engines began to be used predominantly to pull the passenger cars. In 1911, superintendent Murphy bought a new, modern locomotive, designed to navigate the line's steep grades and tight curves. This engine was assigned not to the logging operation, but to the ever growing passenger schedules, handling the daily trains and special weekend excursions.

Appalachian Club

As land was cleared, the lumber company presented an area for development and in



Figure 12. The original Appalachian Clubhouse, ca. 1910 (later destroyed by fire). (Steve Cotham, *Images of America: The Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, Arcadia Publishing, 2006)



Figure 13. Socializing on the original Appalachian Clubhouse porch, undated photograph. (Cotham, *Images of America*)

1910, deeded 50 acres to the Appalachian Club while retaining timber and mineral rights. A clubhouse for members was built south of the railroad workers' town of Elkmont. The club was a Knoxville-based sportsmen's club composed primarily of businessmen who sought the hunting and fishing opportunities of the mountains. The Appalachian Club was said to be the most exclusive in East Tennessee. Its new clubhouse spurred construction of rustic cabins for families, and a community of summer residents developed. In 1910, Colonel Townsend built his own cabin south of the clubhouse. The area became known as Daisy Town.²

The Appalachian Clubhouse served as both clubhouse and hotel. Ten rooms were initially constructed, but an annex was soon added to provide accommodations for the growing membership.

Early photographs show the original clubhouse designed in the rustic style prevalent throughout the district. The dominant feature of the simple two-story wood frame structure was a wide porch stretching the length of the building. A masonry chimney can be seen in an early photograph rising at the front elevation, probably serving a fireplace in the main room used for dining, dancing, and other social events. To protect the club members from

2. Joseph K. Oppermann, *Appalachian Clubhouse Historic Structure Report* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 2009)



Figure 14. A view of the card room of the original Appalachian Clubhouse. (Paulin, *Lost Elkmont*)

dirt and mud as they traveled to and from the clubhouse, a boardwalk was built connecting the clubhouse to the cottages.

Members brought with them many of their social standards and formality, as well as domestic servants, some of whom lived in small buildings behind the cabins. Meals were served by waiters in the clubhouse, nurses watched over the children, and members arrived well-attired for performances and formal costume parties.³ Societal manners and customs were enjoyed, but daily activities were geared to enjoyment of the rustic and rugged environment of the mountains.

The Appalachian Club was promoted in brochures distributed by the Little River Railroad and the Knoxville & Augusta Railroad. The natural surroundings, cozy cottages, and modern amenities were advertised to entice newcomers. A 1914 brochure, "The Appalachian Club," was distributed to a select audience and announced that the Club "has made extensive improvement on its club house and annex since last year, and is now in position to serve its members better than ever before."⁴ Some of the changes touted in the brochure included a complete water and sewerage system and electric lighting. A water tank was constructed near the Hommel Orchard. Prior to this time, water was provided from a spring located down the hill behind the Higdon and Addicks cabins.

The electric system for the clubhouse and cabins was provided by a water-powered generator, but the system provided electricity for only two hours a day. The system failed in the 1920s as members began adding electric stoves, refrigerators, and heaters to their cabins. Later, diesel-powered generators were installed at the northern end of the Elkmont community where a dam on the Little River was created. With this system, lights were

turned off promptly at 10:00 PM each night. It was not until 1952 that commercial electric service was brought to the Elkmont community by the Sevier County Electric Company.⁵

Wonderland Park Company (Club)

In 1911, the Little River Lumber Company made another deed of land, selling acreage just north of the Elkmont community to

5. Gail L. Guymon, Daisy Town Historic District, draft National Register Nomination, 2010.



Figure 15. View of the community spring that was located down the hillside behind the Higdon and Addicks cabins. Two wooden stairways are visible here, and there may have been others, including one between the Sneed and Higdon cabins. (Paulin, *Lost Elkmont*)



Figure 16. Wonderland Hotel, undated photograph. (NPS-GRSM Collection)

3. Thomason and Associates, *The History and Architecture of the Elkmont Community* (Atlanta, GA: National Park Service Southeast Regional Office, 1993), p. 17.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Charles B. Carter. Carter and his brother founded the Wonderland Park Company and constructed the Wonderland Park Hotel on their new acreage in 1912. Like the Appalachian Club, the Wonderland Hotel catered to those seeking relaxation and recreation in a mountain landscape, and was conveniently reached by the daily passenger train from Knoxville, the Elkmont Special. The Wonderland Hotel was also advertised by the two rail lines in brochures promising an array of outdoor activities, such as fishing, horseback riding and mountain climbing, as well as social events and formal dances.

Only a year later, the Carter brothers' activities were drawing less pleasant attention. The brothers were selling land aggressively and suspected of deceitful sales

tactics. A legal dispute in 1913 disrupted any plans they may have had for the property, and the land was sold instead to a group of Knoxville residents who established the Wonderland Club. The Wonderland Club community was similar to the Appalachian Club with its members' cabins clustered near the hotel.

The Town of Elkmont

The little community that began as a lumber camp in 1908 soon became a sizable town as the Little River Lumber Company increased its operations in the valley. Elkmont was situated in a relatively flat area where Jakes Creek joined the Little River. The workers' town had a character distinct from its later neighbors at the Appalachian and



Figure 17. A view of Elkmont ca. 1912 showing housing for Little River Lumber Company employees. (Cotham, *Images of America*)

Wonderland clubs. At its peak, Elkmont town could boast several dozen dwellings, a few commercial buildings, a school and two churches.

The buildings were generally stark and utilitarian, reflecting the town's impermanence and working population. The decline of this early lumber town coincided with the relocation of the Little River Company's operations from Elkmont in 1923, and the discontinuation of the railroad line in 1925.

The loss of the primary employer and the area's designation as a national park signaled Elkmont's end as a year-round community. Between 1934 and 1942, the majority of the town was removed with many frame buildings dismantled for their lumber. In the late 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps chose the site of the former town of Elkmont for their camp which, in 1952, was redeveloped by the National Park Service into a campground.

Retreat of the Lumber Company and Rise in Tourism

The relocation of the Little River Lumber Company and the abandoned railroad damaged the original Elkmont community, but the loss of transportation also initiated changes for the wealthy club members. Fortunately, the departure of the rail line coincided with the rising popularity of the automobile, and the Little River Railroad tracks were replaced by a gravel road for automobile traffic.

New and improved roads were soon built elsewhere in the region as part of the nationwide trend of rebuilding, which became a profitable enterprise during the 1920s, reflecting the demand for efficiency and enjoyment of auto travel. Road improvements were spurred on by businessmen and organizations that sought to increase automobile travel to bring potential business to their communities.

The new roads and new automobiles brought more people to the Elkmont clubs. Visitors spent their time in the rustic, comfortable cabins and enjoyed their club meals and dances. Outdoor activities continued to be popular, including swimming, hiking, picnicking, and games such as badminton. The increased membership necessitated an increase in infrastructure. Additional cabins were built, boardwalks added, swimming holes created, and amenities extended. Construction continued at both clubs throughout the 1920s, but as the region was transformed into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the early and mid-1930s, new development was halted.

The "Back-to-Nature" Movement and Craftsman Architecture

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the exploitation of natural resources was destroying the American rural landscape and indirectly leading to unsightly urban sprawl. In response, Americans took a renewed interest in nature. Cities were increasingly seen as crowded, polluted, immoral places that had lost touch with the simplicity and purity of the country. In contrast, suburban or country living was viewed as wholesome; outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, and canoeing became steadily more popular. This interest in the



Figure 18. Craftsman style houses, Hunt & Eager, Architects. (*The Craftsman*, November 1908)



Figure 19. The 1934 Appalachian Clubhouse showing uses of natural materials and simple geometric forms.

outdoors led to the formation of national conservation and awareness organizations, including the Sierra Club (1892), National Audubon Society (1905), Boy Scouts (1910), and the Campfire Girls (1912). These nature-oriented movements sparked enthusiasm for the national park system and the numerous outdoor lodges and summer resorts that sprung up around the country.

Popular at this time was the Craftsman style of architecture, which caught on in cities as an offspring of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. The Craftsman style sought a return to architectural simplicity, truthfulness in construction, use of natural materials, and harmony with the natural surroundings. It shared many of the values of the back-to-nature movement and, beginning about 1905, was particularly popular for small suburban or country houses.

Due to the prevalence of bungalow house designs, the Craftsman style is often referred to as the Bungalow style. The style appealed to the public and was spread in numerous trade and architectural journals and magazines. Mail-order catalogs featured countless variations of Craftsman-style houses. With its use of natural materials and harmonious design with nature, the style became an especially fitting choice for summer houses and mountain retreats.

The architectural precepts of the Craftsman style include a reliance on locally available natural materials, low-pitched roofs, and large porches. River stone was an important element in Craftsman buildings found in chimneys and foundations, as well as retaining walls and other landscape features.

Architecture in the Elkmont Development

As membership in the two Elkmont club communities grew, so did construction activity. The majority of the buildings, mostly summer cabins, were built between 1910 and 1930. Also built during this period were hotels, other clubhouses, and numerous outbuildings such as guest cottages, servants' quarters, woodsheds, privies and garages.

Most of Elkmont's buildings from this period have a simple rustic appearance often described as "folk" or "vernacular." How vernacular they are is hard to tell, especially due to the popularity of the Craftsman style. Architects may have evoked local architecture rather than simply followed local tradition.

Whether based on traditional folk designs, the Craftsman style, or a commingling of the two, common features are found in the architecture of Elkmont. The original Appalachian Clubhouse burned in the early 1930s and was replaced by a new clubhouse in 1934. Both presented the rustic style.

Most buildings in the club are of balloon-frame construction covered with board-and-batten, weatherboard, or drop siding, and originally had galvanized steel roofs, many later replaced with asphalt shingles. Some had bark-peeled porch posts and railings. Stone, bricks, and concrete were the typical materials for chimneys, foundations, and retaining walls, while outdoor living spaces were created with the large porches found on most Elkmont buildings. Wood paneled doors, sash windows, and variations on the casement window are other common features found

in the buildings of both club communities. The rustic elements of the exterior are continued on the interior and are evident in the predominance of exposed wood ceilings, walls, and floors.

Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park

The establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was approximately seventeen years in the making, from 1923 to 1940, and brought about the demise of the club communities. The idea to create a national park in the Great Smoky Mountains was initially proposed by Willis and Anne Davis, who were inspired by the national parks in the west and wondered whether the same could be created here. The Davis family, wealthy and influential Knoxville residents, were able to generate interest in the idea among politicians, businessmen, and naturalists.

As the park idea gained momentum, a group of Knoxville businessmen, many of whom were members of the Appalachian Club, created the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association in 1923 to promote the creation of a national park. One of its members was Colonel David C. Chapman, a successful Knoxville wholesale druggist, who quickly became a driving force behind the movement. Successful lobbying campaigns, first from citizen groups and then the states of Tennessee and North Carolina, eventually convinced the U.S. government to authorize in 1926 purchase of the land for the park.

Although the movement faced many obstacles, primarily from those who feared the park would interfere with their business or property interests, it continued to gain adherents. Perhaps the most powerful was John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who made a \$5 million donation with the stipulation



Figure 20. Colonel David C. Chapman (front) one of the founders of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and member of the Appalachian Club. (Cotham, *Images of America*)

that it be matched.⁶ With contributions in hand, organizers began the arduous task of convincing landowners to sell.

Unlike previous national parks where land was donated or already in Federal domain, property had to be purchased by the states of North Carolina and Tennessee for transfer to the Federal Government. Some property holders were reluctant to sell. An agreement was eventually reached with Elkmont residents in 1932 whereby landowners would receive lifetime leases in return for sale of their property at half the appraised value. Appraisals began in 1931.

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park was officially established in 1934, but it was not until 1940 that the park was formally dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The establishment of the park effectively ended both new development and the sale of lots in the Elkmont communities. Although the restrictions were detrimental to expansion of both clubs, they nevertheless contributed to the overall preservation of the community plan, landscape features, and most of the buildings.

Available records do not address changes in the two clubs during the 1930s and 40s. However, in 1952, the lease terms were reconstituted as members of both clubs gave up their lifetime leases for a fixed 20-year

6. "History of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park," www.gsmnp.com.

lease in exchange for commercial electric service.⁷ The non-profit Elkmont Preservation Committee obtained an additional twenty-year extension in 1972 with the majority expiring in 1992. Three families refused to

7. "Elkmont Historic District. Draft Environmental Impact Statement and General Management Plan Amendment" (National Park Service, January 2006).

accept the terms and procured extensions to December 31, 2001. In 1994, the properties associated with the two clubs were listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Elkmont Historic District, and in 2001, the last of the leases finally expired. All properties are now under National Park Service ownership.

I.B. Chronology of Development and Use

Thought to have been built around 1910, the Higdon Cabin is one of the more unusual structures in the Daisy Town district. The low-pitched roof and board-and-batten siding are not particularly unusual among the buildings at Elkmont, but as a building type, the Higdon Cabin is quite rare. It is an excellent example of the simplest type of box-frame construction, also known as vertical-plank construction. It may have been built in two phases prior to the Great Depression, then modified and enlarged when it was adapted for year-round residency after World War II.

Another round of alterations, some of them unfinished, in the last quarter of the twentieth century brought the cabin to its present configuration. Most of the alterations were additions that retained historic features.

“Box” Houses

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mining and logging companies built housing for their employees as cheaply and quickly as possible. The Little River Lumber Company used “set off” houses,

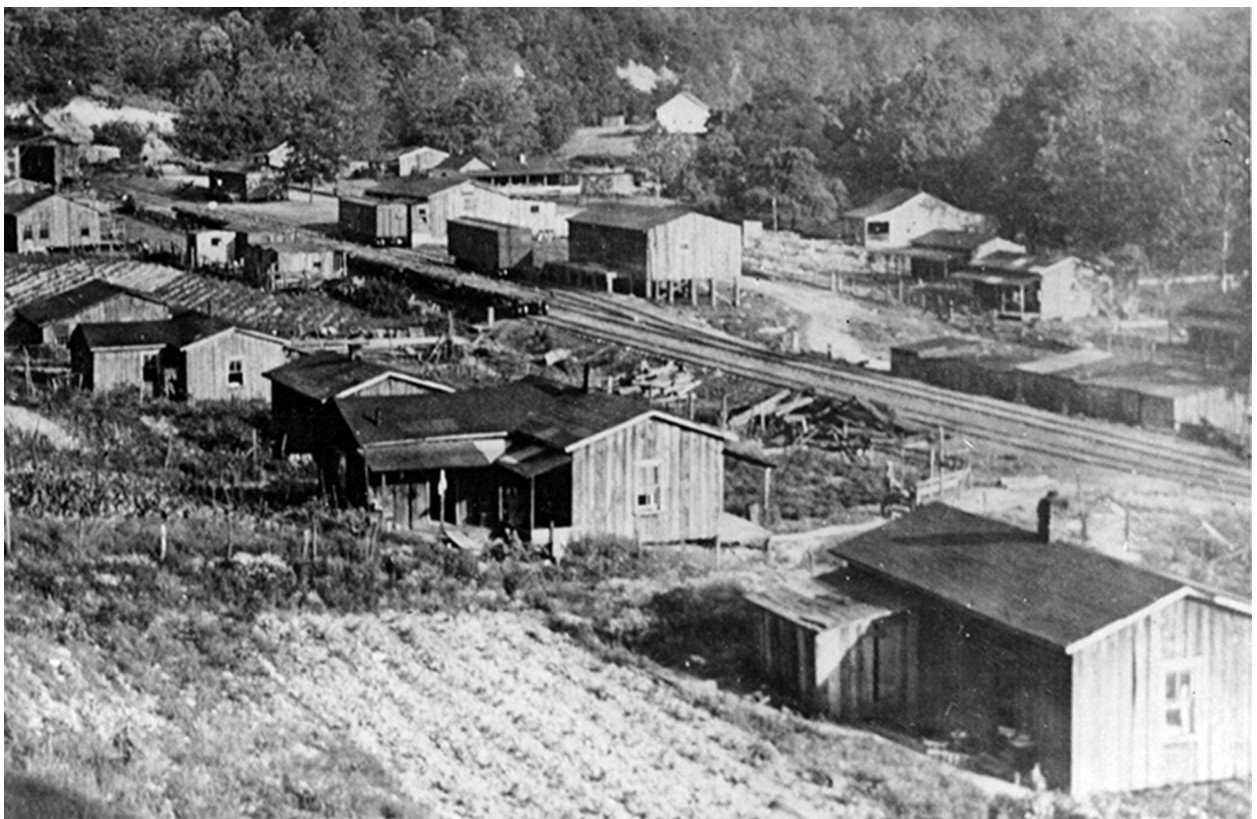


Figure 21. Detail from a ca. 1912 photograph showing some of the housing in the community of loggers at Elkmont. The houses in the foreground have the same form and exterior finishes as the Higdon Cabin, but the structural system is unclear.

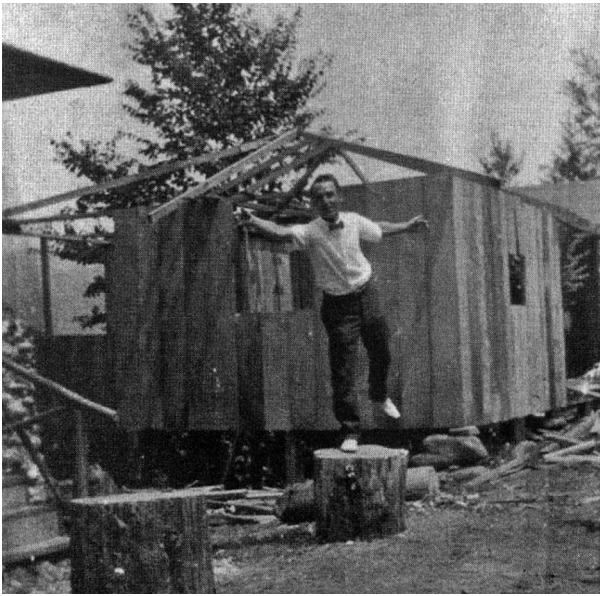


Figure 22. Undated photograph of an unidentified man in front of a box-frame cabin under construction in Daisy Town, probably in the second decade of the twentieth century. (Paulin, *Lost Elkmont*)

simple wood-framed buildings that were small enough to be easily moved from place to place as operations changed. The Addicks and Mayo Cabins, located just south of the Higdon Cabin, are among the several buildings of this sort that have been documented at Elkmont.¹

These houses were built in a variety of ways, but the simplest and cheapest type of building was the so-called “box” or “plank” house. Typically found in mining towns and lumber camps, as well as in summer resort communities, box houses required little skill to construct and were popular wherever quick, cheap housing was needed. They remain poorly documented, however, not least because the nature of their construction can be so easily overlooked.²

As a building type, variations on the plank house, using hewn timbers and planks, have been documented as early as the seventeenth century, but it was the proliferation of

sawmills in the nineteenth century that made possible the sort of plank construction seen at Elkmont and in the Higdon Cabin.

As early as 1856, Charles P. Dwyer (1802-1882), author of several pattern books and housing guides in the mid-nineteenth century, was touting the benefits of box houses:

For cheapness and strength, this style of wooden building surpasses all others. It is so simple in construction, and yet so compact in form and pretty in appearance, that it can not fail of winning patrons. The requirements are, a moderately heavy cap and sill, and sides of plank nailed to both. The joints throughout these plank walls are to be covered with slips, three inches wide, each.³

This ideal, the epitome of which is the Mayo Cabin, included two layers of plank, either both vertical with joints staggered, or one vertical and the other horizontal, which provided more strength to the structure. By the late nineteenth century, this had been stripped to the barest minimum when box houses, such as the Higdon Cabin, were constructed with a single layer of vertically installed planks, nailed to a sill or plate at the bottom and a plate at the top, with no studs or corner posts.

There is no evidence that the Higdon Cabin was a “set-off” house, and as Figure 22 suggests, box houses were not necessarily prefabricated. It might be assumed, then, that the Higdon House was built on-site.

Similarities in framing and other materials suggest that the original cabin included Rooms 101-104, the latter not being partitioned into 104A and 104 B until later. The front porch is also an original feature, and there may have been a smaller back porch as well. It is possible that Room 104 was built as a bathroom and not as a kitchen, since most

1. See Joseph K. Oppermann’s historic structure reports on the Addicks and Mayo Cabins (NPS, 2010).

2. William Kibbel III, “Old houses: plank construction,” *old house web*, accessed at <<http://www.oldhouseweb.com/how-to-advice/boxhouse-plank-construction.shtml>>.

3. Charles P. Dwyer, *The Economic Cottage Builder: Cottages for Men of Small Means* (Buffalo, NY, Wanzer, McKim & Co., 1856), p. 33.

Appalachian Club members continued to take meals at the clubhouse until it burned in 1933.

Boykin Cabin

When the Appalachian Club was reorganized in 1919 and title to the lots transferred to members, D. C. Boykin took title to what would later be known as the Higdon Cabin.

David Campbell Boykin (1875-1925) was born on 8 August 1875 in Rutherford County, Tennessee. He was the fifth of seven children of William Osborne Boykin and his wife Louise Semmes Beaty and grew up on the family's farm, not far from Murfreesboro. After William Boykin's death in 1882, the family moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where they lived at 521 Douglas Street, now part of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga campus not far from downtown. Probably in the late 1890s, David began working as a passenger agent for one of the several railroads that served the city.

On 18 June 1902, Boykin married Maiden H. "Mary" Heiskell (1880-1956) at her mother's home in Sweetwater, Monroe County, in southeast Tennessee. Mary was the daughter of James M. Heiskell and his wife Laura, both of whom had deep roots in East Tennessee. The death of Mary's father in 1898 may have left her mother in straitened circumstances, and by 1900, Laura Heiskell was operating a boarding house in Sweetwater.

By 1904, David and Mary Boykin were in Knoxville, and it was there, in 1906, that their only child, Elizabeth (1906-1981), was born. Living first on Clinch Avenue, the family was at 948 Temple Avenue by 1910 and that would remain the Boykin home until World War II.

David Boykin continued to work for the railroad at least until 1912, but he had probably already begun a new career as an automobile dealer. By 1919, he was apparently prosperous enough to afford a cabin at

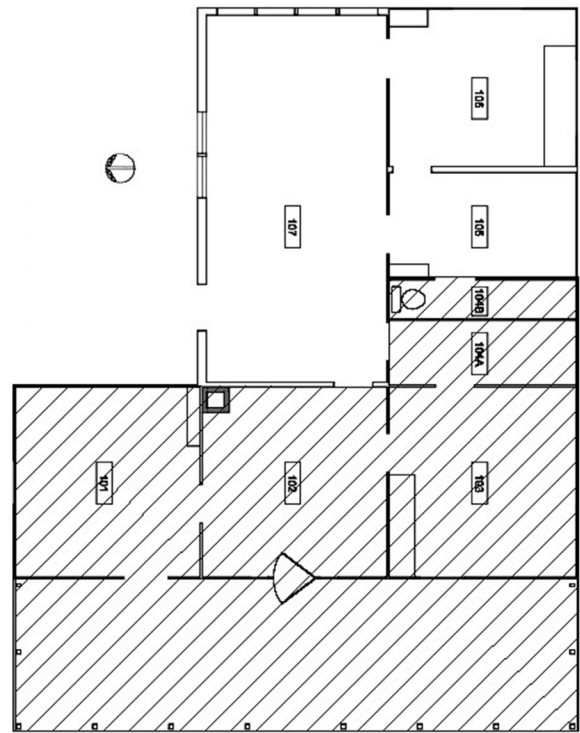


Figure 23. Floor plan of present Higdon Cabin, with the hatched area identifying the original portions of the cabin. Room 104 was not partitioned in the original cabin.

Elkmont, but exactly when the Boykins began summering at Elkmont is not known.⁴

Which of the early owners—the Boykins or their successors, the Ferrells—added Rooms 105, 106, and 107 to the original four-room cabin has not been documented. The character of the framing and the presence of elements of an early twentieth-century, knob-and-tube wiring system on the south wall of Room 107 suggests that Rooms 105-106 and a back porch were constructed in the first quarter or early in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

In December 1925, perhaps suddenly, David Boykin died at his home in Knoxville. He was buried in West View Cemetery in Sweetwater, Tennessee, a few days later.

4. Federal Census, Population Schedules, 1880-1920, and Chattanooga city directories document Boykin's occupation and residence.



Figure 24. View, ca. 1912, of two wooden staircases leading down to the community spring behind the Higdon and Addicks Cabins, which are out of view to the right. (Paulin, *Lost Elkmont*)



Figure 25. Woodland-period mound along Cherokee Boulevard in Sequoyah Hills, just west of downtown Knoxville. Its presence was probably one reason that Ferrell named the subdivision as he did. (Photograph by Brian Stansberry, 2010, Wikipedia Commons)

Mary Boykin continued to occupy the house on Temple Avenue, and it may have been there that her daughter, Elizabeth, married Nathan M. Kuhlman (1904-1980) in 1926. He was a Knoxville native, but the couple soon moved to Manhattan, where he worked as a salesman at one of the city's many department stores.

Nathan and Elizabeth Kuhlman would return to Knoxville, but for unknown reasons they decided to sell the cabin at Elkmont. In 1927, Maiden H. Boykin, Elizabeth Boykin Kuhlman and Nathan M. Kuhlman conveyed title to the property to E. V. Ferrell.

Ferrell Cabin

Edward Vernon Ferrell Sr. (1888-1960) was born in Wake County, North Carolina, the son of William L. and Mary Walker Ferrell. He apparently grew up and graduated from high school there. Known as Vernon, he did not go to college but in 1911 founded Ferrell Realty Company in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, which remains in business today.⁵

On 19 June 1912, Vernon Ferrell married Hazel Mitchell in Kinston, Lenoir County, North Carolina. They moved to Virginia, where two daughters were born before her untimely death in 1918, perhaps in childbirth. Ferrell and his children have not been found in the 1920 Federal census, but on 8 June 1921, he married Rosena Olive Jordan, a Pennsylvania native. For unknown reasons, the wedding took place in Garland County, Arkansas.

They appear to have begun married life in North Carolina, where a daughter was born in 1925, but he was probably already developing Sequoyah Hills in Knoxville. Located on old farmland at Looney's Bend, a great loop in the Tennessee River between downtown Knoxville and West Knoxville, the subdivision was marketed to Knoxville's elite and remains one of the city's wealthiest neighborhoods.

He was a "visionary" entrepreneur, according to one source, and was responsible for building the subdivision's main thoroughfare, Cherokee Boulevard, a winding roadway with landscaped median.⁶ They built a house at 231 Cherokee Drive and had two more daughters and a son while living there.

As noted above, the Ferrells bought the cabin in 1927, and if the Boykins had not already added Rooms 105, 106, and 107, the Ferrells did shortly after they acquired the cabin. By the 1930s, a bathroom and kitchen were almost certainly present in the house.

5. Federal Census, Population Schedules, 1880-1940, document Ferrell's occupation and residence over the years.

6. "Sequoyah Hills, Tennessee," *Wikipedia*.

The Ferrells owned the house for only a short time. In June 1930, the Federal government paid the Ferrells \$1,200 for their property at Elkmont for incorporation into the proposed Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Presumably they obtained a life-time lease but that has not yet been documented.⁷

The stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression collapsed the real estate market in Knoxville and everywhere else; lots that had sold for several thousand dollars before the crash sold for only a few hundred dollars by the early 1930s. The developer of a subdivision adjoining Ferrell's found himself in financial ruin and committed suicide. A similar economic situation may have prompted the Ferrells to move to Raleigh, where they were living in 1935, but by the time their last child was born in 1937, they were back in Winston-Salem, where they lived the remainder of their lives.⁸

Whether the Ferrells continued to go to Elkmont after they moved back to North Carolina is not certain, and nothing is known about the occupancy of the cabin until around 1950, when Lee Higdon made it a year-round home for himself and his family.

Higdon Cabin

Lee Jackson Higdon was born in Swain County in southwestern North Carolina on 19 November 1883, and with his twin brother, George, was the last of seven children of John Calvin Higdon and his wife Darcus. Lee grew up helping his parents with the few acres that they farmed in the mountains around Forneys Creek, a part of Swain County that is now within the boundaries of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It was a hardscrabble existence and Lee and his siblings barely managed to pull themselves



Figure 26. Undated view of Humphrey Ownby's log house on Jakes Creek, moved and remodeled in 1918 and now known as the Avent Cabin. The Higdon's farm house was probably similar. (Paulin, *Lost Elkmont*)

out of illiteracy with three or four years of schooling.⁹

Lee Higdon began working as a logger while still in his teens, employed by a logging company in North Carolina. Shortly after 1900, according to his grandson, Higdon walked across the mountains to Elkmont to work for the Little River Lumber Company as it set up its new logging operation. Among other things, he built log cabins for company offices and residences for employees.¹⁰

Higdon apparently met Julia Mae Ownby (1886-1963) shortly after he arrived at Elkmont, and they were married in 1909. Her grandparents and other relatives had moved to Sevier County from North Carolina in the 1830s and settled on Jakes Creek. The Avent Cabin in Elkmont is thought to have been built by Humphrey Ownby, who was probably Julia's great uncle, around 1850. Julia's father, Thomas David Ownby, grew up on Jake's Creek and married Sarah Elizabeth Watson in 1870. Several of their nine children would continue to live along Jakes Creek until their youngest son, Lemon or "Uncle Lem," died in 1984.

7. The Sevier County Public Library has digitized copies of the records kept by the Federal appraisals online at <<http://history.sevierlibrary.org/Park%20land%20files/D%20-%20H%20Index.htm>>.

8. Ibid.

9. The Federal census of Swain County in 1900 recorded Lee's name as "Levi."

10. Calvin D. Hill, "Lee Higdon Moves to Tennessee," *Janicelovescalligraphy*, accessed at <<http://home.earthlink.net/~firepink/id27.html>>.

Julia and Lee's first two children, Sarah and Femula, did not survive infancy, but Ollie Mae (1912-1989), John T. (1916-1997), and Myrtle Faye (1918-1998) lived long productive lives. J. T. and Faye continued to live at Elkmont until the leases expired in 1992.

The Higdon had a small farm of 25 acres a mile or so up Jakes Creek from Elkmont,



Figure 27. View looking southwest toward Higdon Cabin in 2000. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

surrounded by Julia's Ogle and Ownby relatives, including her youngest brother, Lem, who lived next door. They lived in a two-room log house with a box frame addition that was probably a kitchen. By the 1920s, there was a barn and probably some livestock and an orchard of 94 bearing apple and plum trees by the late 1920s.¹¹

Higdon relatives were also in the area, including Lee's widowed father, who was renting a farm a few miles away in Blount County in 1920. When he died in 1924, Lee had him buried in the Old Elkmont Cemetery. Lee's nephew Frank Higdon also owned 27 acres a couple of miles northwest of Elkmont in the 1920s.¹²

In May 1929, appraisers working for the Federal government offered the Higdon \$1,000 for the house and farm on Jakes

11. The Federal Land records at the Sevier County Library, *op. cit.*, document the house, barn, and orchard.

12. Federal census, 1900-1940.



Figure 28. View looking southeast toward Higdon Cabin in 2000. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

Creek, which were to be incorporated into the proposed Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Thinking the farm was to be razed, they sold the property in March 1930. It is doubtful that he was aware that some of the well-to-do owners of the cabins on Daisy Town Road, built on a fraction of an acre, sold their properties to the government for hundreds of dollars more than he received for his working farm.

The Higdon's moved to Anderson County, Tennessee, where they rented a farm not far from Oak Ridge. They were still there in the spring of 1935, but by 1940 Lee and his family and several of the Ownby clan had returned to farming near Elkmont and were living with Julia's uncle Burton Abner Ownby on Jakes Creek.¹³

As late as the 1940 Federal census, Lee Higdon listed his occupation as "farm laborer," but he was frequently or perhaps permanently employed by the Federal government after that. According to his grandson, Lee at one time worked on construction of the Newfound Gap Road, managed the Chimneys campground, and

even operated a commissary and post office at Elkmont.¹⁴

Lee's grandson recalled how the Higdon's came to live in what became known as the Higdon Cabin:

Late 1940's he was on one of the fire towers maintained by the service. He saw and plotted a fire only to realize that it was very close to his house. He went to the fire only to arrive at his place that was totally consumed in flames. He did not know if his family had gotten out of the house but was relieved to meet his family on the path down toward Lem's place.

The Higdon's farm house probably burned in 1949, but the Appalachian Club hired him as its year-round caretaker that same year. For much of their adult lives, the Higdon's worked as caretakers for the Appalachian Club and made many repairs and alterations to the buildings in Daisy Town. By the early 1950s,

14. Undated, typed manuscript by the Higdon's grandson Calvin D. Hill provides details on Higdon's employment not documented elsewhere.

13. TRC Garrow Associates, "Cultural Resources of the Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Sevier County, Tennessee" (National Park Service, 2002), p. 46, describes the archaeology of what is thought to have been Lee Higdon's house and farm.



Figure 29. View looking east in Room 107 in 2000. (Historic American Buildings Survey)



Figure 30. View looking south in Room 106 in 2000. (Historic American Buildings Survey)



Figure 31. View looking south on Daisy Town Road in 2000, with Sneed and Higdon Cabins visible at left. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

Lee and Julia Higdon and their two children J. T. and Faye were living in the Higdon Cabin.

Built as a summer house, the cabin was not really suited for year-round occupancy, so the Higdons rehabilitated it for that purpose. Most notably, they were probably responsible for installing the thin fiberboard that covers the original walls. Less than a quarter-inch thick, the 4' by 8' panels may have made the house a little less drafty, but would have provided little insulating value.

The chimney for a wood stove in the northeast corner of Room 102 would not have been a critical need for summer occupancy. It might also have been built by the Higdons when they began using the house year-round.

The Higdons subdivided Room 104 to create a full bathroom in Room 104A that opened to Faye's front bedroom and to the back porch, and a half bath with a door to the dining

room. They also constructed the partition that created Rooms 105 and 106, the dining room and kitchen respectively. The cast-iron sink and plywood cabinets on the south wall of Room 105 date to the mid-twentieth century.

Julia Higdon died in 1963 and Lee in 1969. Both are buried in the Levi Trentham Cemetery at Elkmont. Their son, J. T., assumed the duties of caretaker for the Appalachian Club and with his sister Faye continued to live in the Higdon Cabin. In addition to their responsibilities at the Club, Lee and J.T. were often hired to make repairs and additions to other cabins at Elkmont.

Sometime early in the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, the Higdons replaced the front porch floor, posts, and balustrades and began work enclosing the back porch but never finished. They probably replaced an original course of rock under the south side of the cabin with the existing concrete block and replaced the vertical board enclosure of the rear wing at around that same time.

J. T. and Faye Higdon continued to live at the cabin on Daisy Town Road until their lease expired in the early 1990s. J.T. Higdon died in 1997 and Faye Higdon in 1998. Both are also buried in the Levi Trentham Cemetery.

The Recent Past

Most of the leases on the cabins in the Appalachian Club complex expired in 1992; all leases expired by 2001. The park's General Management Plan (GMP) in 1982 called for the demolition of all structures at Elkmont and return of the sites to a natural state. This contributed to the general lack of maintenance of the cabins.¹⁵

By the early 1990s, private efforts to preserve Elkmont were organized, and in 1994 the Elkmont Historic District was listed in the

15. National Park Service, "Elkmont Historic District, Draft Environmental Impact Statement and General Management Plan Amendment, Vol. 1" (January 2006), p. S-2.

National Register of Historic Places. In 2001, the park contracted to have the Daisy Town cabins, ancillary structures, and the Appalachian Club's clubhouse photographed to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).

Consultation with the SHPO under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act resulted in a determination that the proposed demolition of Elkmont constituted an "adverse effect." With the support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the NPS revisited the issues at Elkmont in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), drafted in 2006 and finalized in 2009, which modified the demolition proposal to allow for the preservation of some of the historic structures in the district. One of those being preserved is the Higdon Cabin.

In 2008 a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was negotiated among the Advisory Council, the National Park Service, and the Tennessee SHPO, with other concurring parties. The MOA states in part,

...eighteen contributing and one non-contributing building will be retained....A total of 30 contributing buildings will be removed.... The exterior of the sixteen buildings in Daisy Town will be restored and their interiors rehabilitated.

The MOA includes stipulations for documentation and treatment that led to development of historic structure reports (HSRs) on the Higdon Cabin and the other buildings in the district.

NPS made repairs to the cabin in 2008-2009. These included replacement of the front porch

posts and balustrades north of the front steps and replacement of the roof framing and roofing over the kitchen wing. Major repairs were also made to the south wall of Room 106 as well as to the walls around the junction of the north wall of Room 107 and the east walls of Room 101 and 102.

In 2009 the National Park Service amended the General Management Plan and prepared the Elkmont Historic District Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which outlines the current strategy to preserve nineteen buildings in the Elkmont National Register Historic District. Of that number, eighteen are contributing features of the National Register district; "where adequate documentation is available," their exteriors are to be restored "to a point within the period of significance" (1908-1940, according to the current National Register nomination) and their interiors preserved. One of the nineteen is a non-contributing building; its exterior is to be returned to its historic configuration and its interior preserved. The Higdon Cabin is one of the eighteen contributing structures of the district.

As required in the MOA, an HSR is being prepared for each historic building retained, along with a Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), and the National Register nomination is being revised to determine "whether there remains a new historic district resulting from implementation of the undertaking." The revised National Register nomination likely will result in an expanded period of significance for the surviving historic properties. As also stipulated in the MOA, "Implementation... shall be subject to availability of appropriated funds."

I.C. Physical Description

Located near the northern end of Daisy Town Road, the Higdon Cabin is on a quarter-acre lot 250 feet south of the historic Appalachian Clubhouse (1933). Facing west, it is one in a row of rustic summer cabins on the east side of the road and one of eighteen historic structures that survive of the several dozen buildings built at Elkmont in the early twentieth century.

Dating to around 1910, the Higdon Cabin is a one-story, box-framed structure with a metal roof, set on a combination of wooden posts, concrete block, and stone. The board-and-batten siding on the exterior is simultaneously a finish material and the building's structural

system, since there are no posts or studs in the exterior walls.

The original cabin had an L-shaped plan encompassing Rooms 101-104. This was modified by the early addition of Rooms 105 and 106, and a back porch which was enclosed in the last quarter of the twentieth century. With the front porch, the present cabin occupies a footprint of about 1,371 square feet.

Site

The Higdon Cabin is located near the end of the long plateau that descends between Jakes Creek on the west and Bear Wallow Branch



Figure 32. View of front of Higdon Cabin. Unless otherwise noted, all images in this section are by JKOA, 2014-2015.



Figure 33. View looking northwest towards the rear of the Sneed Cabin, right, and Higdon Cabin, left.



Figure 34. View south on Dasy Town Road, with front porch of Higdon Cabin left of center.

on the east, just a few hundred yards south of where those two streams join the East Prong of Little River. The cabin fronts on a spur of Jakes Creek Road that runs along the spine of the plateau and is now part of a narrow, one-way drive through the historic Daisy Town district at Elkmont.

The site slopes gently from north to south but, like its neighbors on each side, has a steep, rocky drop of over twenty feet to Bear Wallow Branch on the east (rear) side of the property.

There appears to have been little effort given to leveling the site before construction of the building, and a large boulder was even left in place under Room 103. A stone retaining wall running the width of the rear of the cabin stabilizes a steep slope and provides a footing for the posts which support that end of the cabin.

Stone Walls and Rock Borders

The cabin is set about fifteen feet from the road, with a low, mostly dry-laid stone retaining wall separating the front yard from the roadway. Consisting of river stone that was no doubt locally sourced, the wall is about 20" high and extends the entire width of the



Figure 35. View looking northeast toward Higdon Cabin.

property except where two sets of concrete steps rise from the road.

Not recorded in the 2001 cultural landscape inventory, but almost certainly an historic feature, are rows of lighter-colored stones set on the surface of the ground in the front yard. These may have delineated planting beds on each side of the front walk and along the retaining walls.

Concrete Steps and Walkway

Near the center of the lot, three concrete steps rise from the road to a concrete walkway that leads to three more concrete steps rising to the front porch. Steps and walkway are just under 6' wide, and the steps have a rise around 7"-8" and a run varying from 14" to 17". All of the concrete appears to have been poured as part of one project.

Just off the southeast corner of the Sneed Cabin, TRC Garrow Associates' cultural resources survey (2004) identifies three concrete steps that the report associates with the Sneed Cabin.¹ Those steps remain in place, each step about 7" high, 12" deep, and 34" wide and each finished with broadly beveled outside edges.

Running south from the corner of the top step is a concrete curb that is likely contemporaneous with the steps but that was not recorded in TRC Garrow's 2004 report. The curb, which is about six inches wide and

has the same broadly beveled edges as the steps, continues just above grade for several yards behind the neighboring Higdon Cabin. The curb likely edged a walkway of some sort that led from the back door of the Higdon



Figure 37. View of concrete steps at north end of front yard.



Figure 38. View of concrete steps located near the southeast corner of the Sneed Cabin.

1. TRC Garrow Associates, Inc., "Cultural Resources of the Elkmont Historic District, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Sevier County, Tennessee," Appendix 3 (draft report, 2002).



Figure 36. View of concrete steps and walkway from the road to the front porch.



Figure 39. View of retaining wall at rear of cabin where erosion is threatening its stability.

Cabin to the concrete steps near the Sneed Cabin.

In line with the latter steps, another series of concrete steps rises from the road near the northeast corner of the Higdon Cabin's front



Figure 40. View of rock pier supporting foundation post at northeast corner of the original cabin.



Figure 41. View of posts and other supports under the east side.

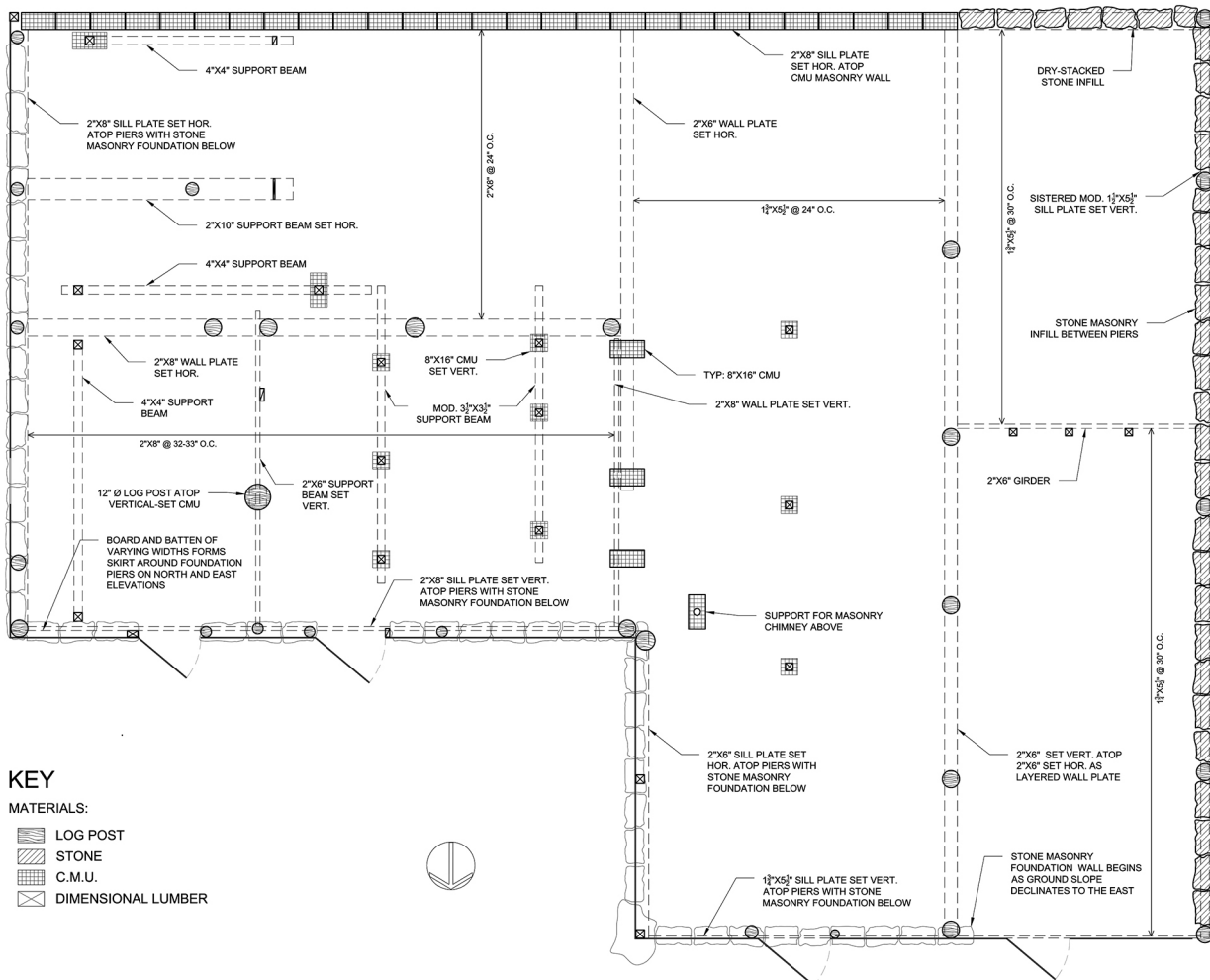


Figure 42. Plan of existing foundation of Higdon Cabin. See Appendix for full-size drawings.

Problems of Repair

The concrete steps at the rear remain in excellent condition, but the others suffer from some surface erosion. At the steps from the road to the front walkway, the lowest step has shifted and is badly cracked, as is the front walk itself.

Erosion from uncontrolled runoff from the roof and across the site as well as the growth of tree roots have diminished the integrity of landscape features. In particular, erosion around the rear of the cabin jeopardizes the stability of the stone retaining wall supporting that end of the cabin.

Foundation

The wood frame of the cabin was built on a series of wooden posts and rock piers, but many of these have since been replaced with other materials. The original support system has also been augmented with additional posts, piers, and walls. Some, but perhaps not all, of the wood posts are set on rock laid directly on the ground, evidently with no below-grade footing.

Original Posts

Five of the original six log posts supporting the front (west) of the cabin remain in place. All are around 8" in diameter but spacing is irregular, ranging from 5'-3" to 7'-10" between centers. Similar posts support the front edge of the front porch and the north side of the kitchen wing (Rooms 104, 105, and 106). They are also about 8" in diameter and are spaced from 6'-4" to 13'-7" apart at the front porch and 2'-2" to 7'-10" at the north side of the kitchen wing.

Smaller posts, 5" to 7" in diameter, support the east end of the cabin and the perimeter of the back porch (now Room 107), but it is not clear which if any of them are original. The posts across the east end of the cabin rest on the stone retaining wall noted above. On the exterior face and ends, the wall rises 38"-40"

above grade, but from the crawlspace, the top of the wall rises only a few inches above grade.

Alterations

In addition to these features of the as-built foundation for the cabin, a variety of post-and-beam supports as well as single posts of various materials have been added, mostly under the former back porch and kitchen (Rooms 106 and 107).

Much of the west end of the south side may have been supported by low rock piers, but whether that or wooden posts, all original foundation material on that side of the cabin has been replaced by a continuous concrete block foundation. Wicking action has kept many of the block damp and precipitated rot



Figure 44. View looking southeast under Room 107, showing some of the variety of makeshift supports that have been installed under the rear of the cabin.



Figure 43. View looking southwest showing some of the original wooden foundation posts, center and left, and added posts and the stone wall underpinning the front porch, right.



Figure 45. A view of the foundation dry-laid stone underpinning the south end of the front porch and of the concrete-block foundation on that side of the cabin.



Figure 46. View of the stone wall underpinning the west side of the front porch.



Figure 47. View of board-and-batten enclosing foundation on north side of cabin.

and decay in the wooden wall plate that rests on it.

Other Features

Between the wooden posts supporting the front porch floor, the wood frame is underpinned with mortared stone walls that, in spite of appearances, offer little if any structural support. On the south end of the porch, the frame is underpinned with dry-laid stone.

Around most of the remainder of the foundation, a single course of stone is laid on the ground between the foundation posts. As the grade steepens on the north side of the old back porch, a low stacked-stone wall meets the stone retaining wall across the east end of the cabin.

Nominally 2" by 4" lumber nailed between the posts provide a frame for $\frac{3}{4}$ "-thick boards installed vertically. On the north end of the porch and the north and east sides of the original cabin, the boards are random-width, 6" to 12" wide; under the back porch and kitchen, boards are uniformly around $\frac{3}{4}$ " by $5\frac{1}{4}$ ".

On the north end of the front porch and the north gable end, a 1" by 2" batten runs horizontally at the top of the wall and 1" by 2" battens cover the joints between boards. On the rear of the original cabin, a 1" by 4" board



Figure 48. View of erosion threatening to destabilize the stone foundation on the near-vertical slope at the rear of the cabin.

runs horizontally across the lower ends of the siding, and a similar feature is found along the south side of the cabin. The vertical-board foundation enclosure under the east side of Room 101 and under the north and east sides of the rear wing was completely replaced in the late twentieth century. Although battens were likely a part of the original enclosure, they are not present on the existing foundation.

There are four doors in the foundation wall that provide access to the crawl space. All are on the north side of the cabin and vary in size. The one at the north end of the front porch is 2'-5½" by 3'-5" and at the north side of Room 101 is 2'-10" by 3'-6". On the north side of the enclosed back porch are two access doors, one 2'-9" by 3'-8" and one 2'-5" by 4'-0".

Problems of Repair

As with many of the cabins at Elkmont, there are serious issues with the foundation,

including poor drainage around the perimeter of the cabin. Ground erosion has undermined the stone wall supporting the east end of the cabin and precipitated a significant structural crack in the concrete block foundation under the south side of Room 106. Unlike some of



Figure 50. View of concrete block foundation at east end of the south side of Higdon Cabin, with an arrow highlighting the location of a significant structural crack in the foundation.



Figure 49. View looking northeast toward the front and south end of the cabin.

the other points of deterioration in the cabin, the instability of the foundation here could lead to sudden, catastrophic failure.

On the south side of the cabin, poor drainage also keeps the low concrete-block foundation damp for extended periods, precipitating rot in the wooden wall plates with which it is in continuous contact. Areas of continued dampness in the crawl space and the many points of wood-to-ground contact are conditions conducive to termite infestation. Some of the makeshift posts, particularly under Room 107, are not stable.

Some of the foundation access doors are off their hinges or otherwise rendered inoperable. Battens are missing or damaged on the board-and-batten siding enclosing the foundation of the original house. The remainder of the



Figure 51. View of joists and wall plates on east side of Room 101, typical of the original cabin.



Figure 52. View looking southwest toward the north side of the cabin.

foundation has vertical board siding without battens.

Wood Framing

The cabin has a box frame that includes conventional floor and ceiling joists and rafters but has no studs or posts, with the board-and-batten siding bearing the load of the roof.

Plates and Joists

Sole plate and floor joists are typically 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " under Rooms 101-104. Joists run east to west, set on 24" centers, with no notching over the sole plate and with the open ends closed with rim joists. Plates and floor joists are typically 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " under Rooms 105-107, where the joists run north to south, set on 24"-26" centers, without rim joists.

Ceiling joists are nominally 2" by 4" spaced with the rafters around 24" on centers. Most of the ceiling joists have been removed from Rooms 105 and 106.

Walls

There is no wall framing in the usual sense of the word, and the vertical board-and-batten siding bears the load of the roof. Boards are typically $\frac{7}{8}$ " to 1" by random widths between 7" and 12", except around the back porch where boards are uniformly 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. Typically, boards are nailed to the exterior face of the rim joists, extending about an inch below the sole plates, and to 2" by 4" wall plates at the top that catch the rafters.

Battens on the exterior finish these walls. They are generally $\frac{3}{4}$ " by random widths of 2", 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", and 3", except around the back porch where nominally 1" by 4" boards are used for battens.

The board-and-batten siding appears to have been finished with a solid-body stain rather than paint. The finish is badly worn and the original green has faded to blue except in a few sheltered locations.

Roofs

The main roofs are end-gabled and framed with 2" by 4" rafters set on 24" centers. Rafters are joined at the top without a ridge board and create a roof pitch of 7/12 over Rooms 101-103 and about 6/12 over the kitchen wing. Open rafter tails extend beyond the walls to form a 10"-deep eave around the cabin. Ceilings joists, also 2" by 4", are nailed to each rafter and presumably to the top plate, but there are no collar ties or wind braces.

The shed roofs over the front porch and Room 107, which was built as an open porch, also have 2' by 4" rafters, 24"-28" between centers.

Problems of Repair

Sections of the sole plates on the south side and around the southwest corner of the cabin are deteriorated, mostly from rot but there may be substantial hidden termite damage as well. Removal of most of the ceiling joists in the east wing may have significantly weakened that portion of the structure. The solid-body stain protecting the exterior siding

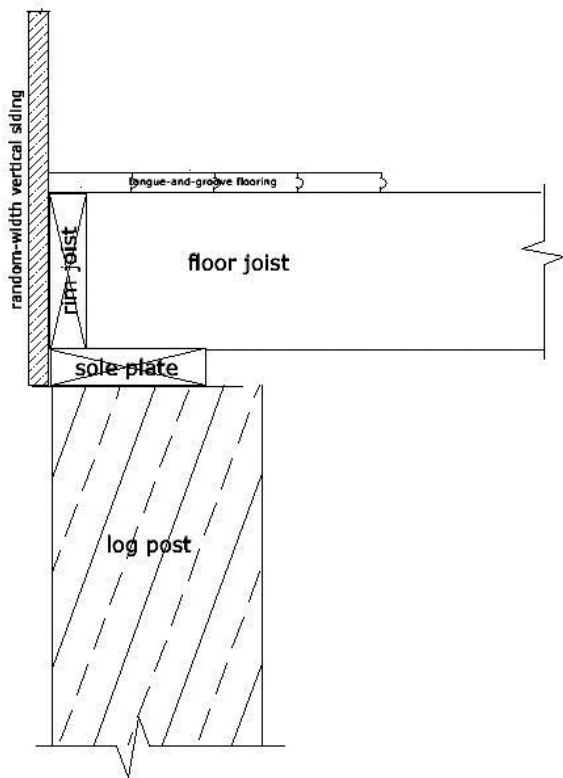


Figure 53. Detail of joist and wall connection typical of the original part of the cabin.



Figure 54. View looking southeast under Room 107.



Figure 55. View of roof framing, decking, and roofing over Room 105. The 2" by 4" upright left of center is not typical.



Figure 56. View at southeast corner of Room 103 showing typical roof framing.

is in poor condition and no longer reflects its original green color.

Roof

The roof has a closed wooden deck comprised of nominally 1" by 12" boards, except where the roof over Rooms 104-106 was rebuilt. Rafters over those rooms have widely spaced 1" by 4" battens.

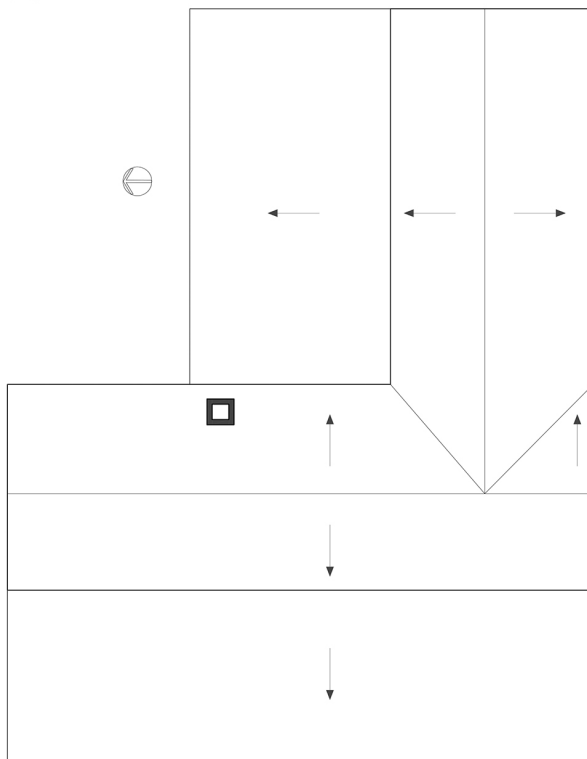


Figure 57. Plan of roof of Higdon Cabin. See Appendix for full-size drawing.

The original roof covering was most likely asphalt, probably a roll roofing. The present roofing is 5V crimp, galvanized steel, installed in typical panels, 26" wide. All of the roofing is in good condition, with that over the kitchen wing dating to the late twentieth-century repairs.

Problems of Repair

The cabin does not have gutters and rainwater runoff from the roof remains uncontrolled, which has led to ground erosion all around the cabin. At the northeast corner of Room 107, a falling tree limb or other impact has damaged the roofing. There may still be roof leaks around the chimney and at the junction of the shed roofs and the gable roofs.

There have been several temporary repairs to apparently rotting porch roof decking. Repairs have been made from the underside of the deck using 1" by random-width boards held in



Figure 59. View of roof damage at northeast corner of Room 107.



Figure 58. View looking northeast at roofing on Higdon Cabin.

place by lengths of 2" by 4" lumber nailed to the sides of the rafters.

Front Porch

The front porch measures 9'-10" east to west and 36'-4" north to south. Flooring, which is unpainted, tongue-and-groove 3¼" wide, and posts, which are 3½" by 3½", are replacement materials installed in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The railing is contemporaneous with the flooring and posts. Built with nominally 2" by 4" lumber, it measures about 34" high. Balusters are also 2" by 4" and are set about 18" apart.

Porch rafters, which appear to be historic, are nailed to the side of the rafters for the main roof and set on a header comprised of two 2" by 4" pieces of lumber. The header is supported by seven 4" by 4" posts spaced from 5'-5" to 5'-10" apart except at the front steps where they are 6'-1" apart. Hangers for roof-hung, half-round gutters are mounted over the front steps but the gutter is missing.



Figure 60. View of front entrance.

Mid-twentieth-century, surface-mounted wiring runs along the front wall of the cabin from the former location of an electrical fuse box on the exterior at the north end of Room 101. Porcelain knobs mounted to the header for the porch rafters are remnants of an early twentieth-century knob-and-tube wiring system.

Problems of Repair

Although stable, repairs to the roof decking are temporary in nature. About 10 square feet of flooring at the front steps has been replaced with plywood.

Exterior Doors

With stairs missing at the modern back door on the north side of Room 107, the front door is currently the only accessible entrance to the cabin.



Figure 61. View looking north on front porch.



Figure 62. View looking south on front porch.

Front Entrance

As with the other window and door openings in the cabin, this opening does not have a conventional jamb-and-header frame, but rather uses 2" by 4" lumber nailed to the siding to approximate the usual framing for such an opening.

The door is 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " by 2'-10" by 6'-10", has six lights over four horizontal panels, and appears



Figure 63. View of interior of front entrance and its exposed framing.



Figure 64. View of exterior of front door.

to be original. It is hung with a pair of 4" butt hinges and fitted with an early twentieth-century mortise lock. There are also a modern deadbolt lock and a steel hasp for a padlock on the door. The screen door is probably contemporaneous with the door.

The front entrance includes two sidelights, each consisting of a pair of four-light casement windows, each of which is 1'-4" by 2'-6". Boards with 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " vertical battens below the sidelights are painted white to become part of the front entrance surround.

Above the door and sidelights, a series of six small wooden panels has been created with boards and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide battens. There appears to be no reason for this feature other than to improve the proportions of the entrance in the absence of a transom.

Back Door

The original back door between Rooms 102 and 107 is missing from the opening, which is 2'-6" by 6'-6". The six-panel door, painted green and white, that was retrieved from the crawl space as part of the 2008 repairs and is now stored in Room 102, matches the six-panel doors that remain in place at Rooms 104 and 105 and may have originally hung at this opening. After enclosure of the back porch, the back entrance of the cabin was on the north side of Room 107. The opening is 3'-0" by 5'-8", but the door itself is broken and no longer hinged in the opening. The door is a 15-light, exterior French door.

Problems of Repair

The front door has been nailed shut so it is not clear how well it operates. The back door, which dates to the 1980s, has been ruined, and the door between Rooms 102 and 107, which would have been the original back door, is no longer in place.

Windows

The original windows in the cabin are six-over-six, 2'-10" by 4'-6", with operable

lower sash. The muntins have a distinctive profile typical of the nineteenth century and suggesting that they could have been reused from another location. These windows are located on each of the front walls of the cabin and one each in the north and south gable ends.

The more or less conventional window frames are only as wide as the two sash and parting stop, or about 2½". The window casing, which is 4½" on the exterior and 2" on the interior, is installed such that it replaces the window stop which would ordinarily be present. There is a 1½" sill on the exterior but no stool on the interior nor are there counterweights for the sash. Wire screening without a frame has been attached to some of the openings, held in place by a ¾" screen molding. The west window in Room 103 is covered with hardware cloth.



Figure 66. View of a typical six-over-six window.



Figure 65. View of south side of Higdon Cabin.



Figure 67. View of muntins in south window of Room 103.



Figure 68. View of the casement windows in Room 105. Those in Room 104 are similar.



Figure 69. View of typical casing detail on original windows.

There are three additional window openings on the south side of the cabin. Those in Rooms 104 and 105 are around 2'-10" by 5'-2", with two casement sash, each sash with two vertical lights, using three-inch hinges attached to the face of the sash and of the window frame. A simple hook and eye secures the two sash. The wall that was built to divide Room 104 meets the south wall of the room in such a way as to obscure part of one sash.

In Room 106, there are window openings on the south and east walls. The opening on the south wall is set about 5' above the floor, which is about 6" lower than the sash in Rooms 104 and 105. The opening measures around 3'-0" by 5'-6" but the sash have been removed.

The opening on the east wall is around the same size but set lower still on the wall, being about 4' above the floor. It has a pair of sash with two vertical lights, similar to those in Rooms 104 and 105 but installed with wooden tracks at top and bottom to allow the sash to be slid open.

When the back porch was enclosed to create Room 107, a large opening nearly 10' long



Figure 70. View of typical casing/sill detail on original windows.

and 4'-1" high was created on the east wall. Divided into four bays by the wall studs, the openings are screened but have no sash.

On the north wall is a pair of casement windows. Opening inward, each sash is 2'8" by 2'-7" but one sash has three vertical lights while the other has four.

The only other window in the cabin is in the middle of the rear foundation wall to light the crawlspace under Rooms 106 and 107. It is a fixed four-light sash about 2'-10" by 3'-0".

In the south gable, what appears to have been an attic vent is now covered with plywood. It is not clear whether this opening was originally fitted with a louvered covering since there are no similar openings on the house.

Problems of Repair

None of the windows are in good working order, and the sash and frame at the opening

on the south wall of Room 106 are missing entirely, exposing the interior to the elements. Interior and exterior painted finishes are in poor condition.

Room Descriptions

The Higdon Cabin now has eight rooms, including the two bathrooms and the enclosed back porch. Rooms 101-104 were part of the original cabin. Rooms 105 and 106 were probably not part of the original cabin but may have existed in some form prior to the Higdon's occupancy of the house. Room 104 has been partitioned by the Higdon's when they added a partition to create Room 106 about 1950. Room 107 was an open back porch until it was enclosed in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Rooms have similar finishes, including 3/4" by 3 1/4" tongue-and-groove flooring.

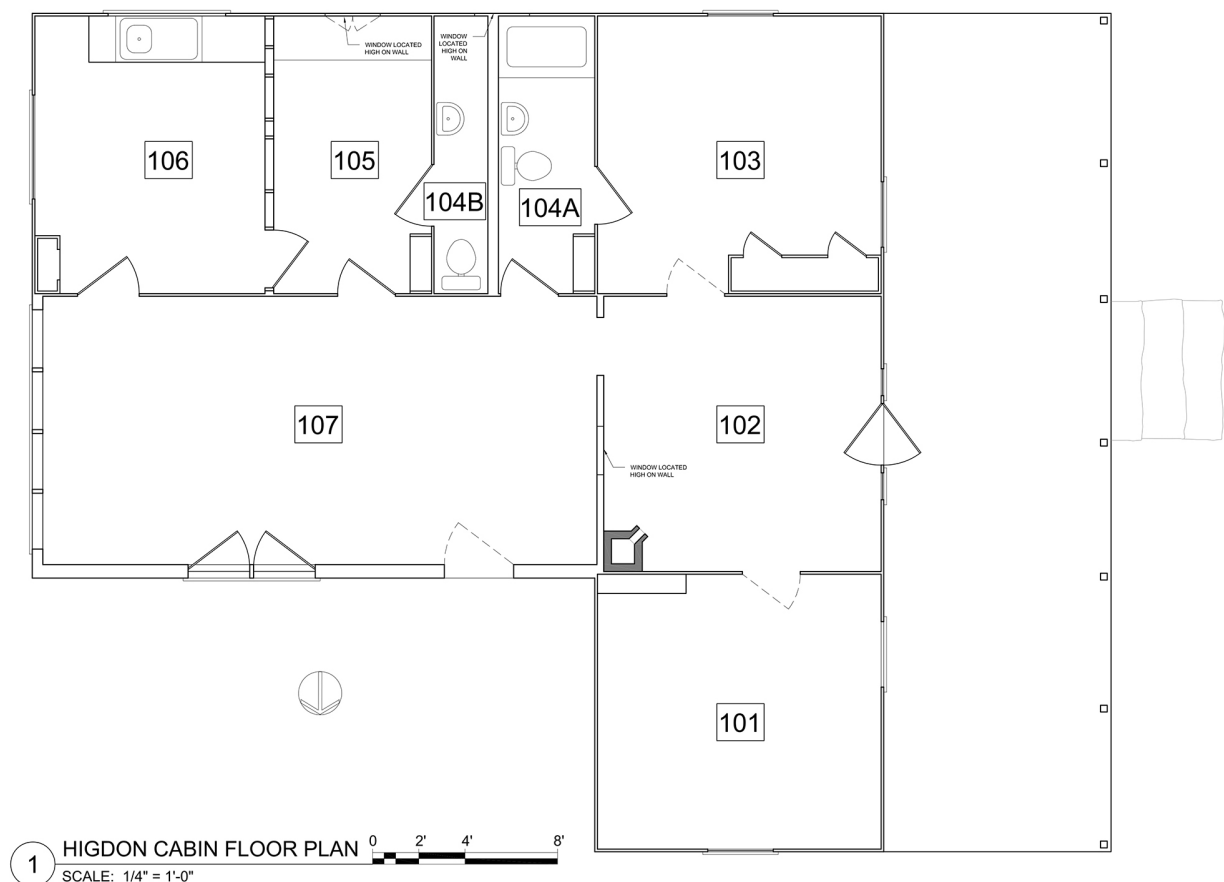


Figure 71. Floor plan of Higdon Cabin.

Load-bearing exterior board siding was originally exposed, unpainted, on the interior along with 3/4" by 5 1/2", double-beaded, tongue-and-groove boards, also unpainted, installed vertically to create room partitions using 1" by 2" cleats nailed to the floor and ceiling.



Figure 72. View of ceiling in Room 101.

The same material is used for the ceilings. Walls and ceilings are now covered with a four-ply, 3/16"-thick fiberboard installed in 4' by 8' sheets with 1/4" by 1 1/2" battens covering the seams. All of the fiberboard has been painted, and much of it has been water damaged.

There are nine interior door openings. One two-panel, two four-panel, and three six-panel doors remain in their frames. It is not clear where or if the four-, five-, and six-panel doors that do not remain in their frames but which remain in the cabin were originally installed.

Room 101 (Bedroom)

Located on the front of the cabin and one of the original rooms in the cabin, Room 101 was used historically as a bedroom and was probably J. T. Higdon's bedroom in the last



Figure 73. View looking southwest in Room 101.

half of the twentieth century. It is entered from Room 102.

Floor: The room is floored with typical tongue-and-groove flooring, running north to south. Floor area measures 12'-3" east to west by 12'-0" north to south. The flooring may have been painted at one time, but the finish is badly worn.

Walls: The west, north, and east walls are formed by the typical vertical, load-bearing boards seen on the exterior and described above. The south wall is composed of typical double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards vertically installed. All walls are covered with the fiberboard described above.

Ceiling: The ceiling is at 9' and covered with the typical fiberboard and battens, presumably over the original double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards.

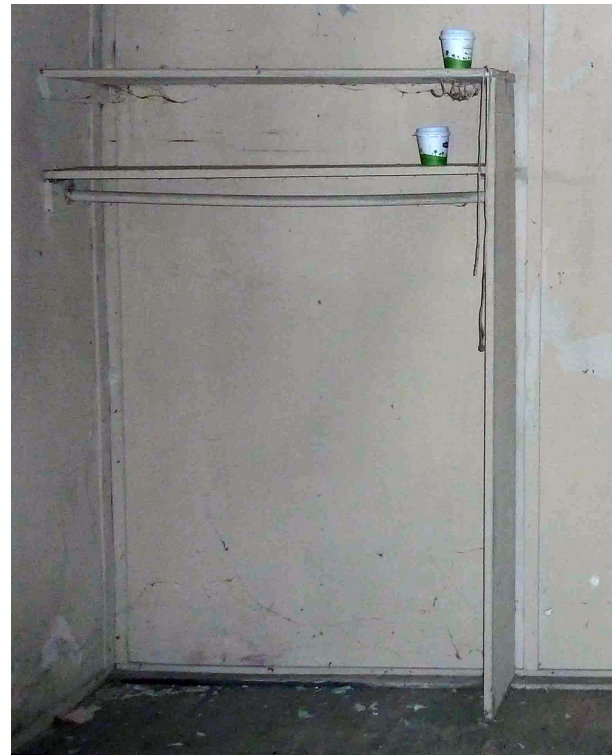


Figure 75. View of shelves and hanger rod built in southeast corner of Room 101.



Figure 74. View looking northeast in Room 101.

Doors: The door opening from Room 102 is 2'-6" by 6'-6" and cased with 3/4" by 2 1/2" boards. The door itself has six horizontal panels and though it is no longer hanging, remains in the cabin. Much of the casing on the east side of the opening has been removed.

Windows: The room has two windows, both original, located on the west and north walls. As described above, both windows are 2'-10" by 4'-6" and have six-over-six sash without counterweights. The sash have no lift hardware but do have a plain metal sash lock.

Electrical System: A porcelain light fixture operated by a pull chain is mounted near the center of the ceiling and a single convenience outlet served by surface-mounted wiring is located under the north window.



Figure 76. View looking southeast in Room 102.



Figure 77. View of west wall of Room 102.

Other Features: In the northeast corner of the room, 3/4" by 11 1/2" shelving has been used to create an open closet with two shelves and a clothes-hanging rod.

Walls and ceilings have been painted on at least two occasions, but the paint is now in ruinous condition.

Room 102 (Living Room)

Entry to the Higdon Cabin is into this front room and was part of the original four-room cabin. It was used historically as a living or sitting room and opens to both bedrooms and to the now-enclosed back porch.

Floor: Although now covered wall-to-wall with late twentieth-century sheet-vinyl floor covering, the room appears to retain its original 3 1/4"-wide, tongue-and-groove flooring. Floor area measures 11'-9" east to west by 12'-0" north to south.

Walls: The west wall is formed by the vertical, load-bearing boards seen on the exterior and described above. The north and south walls are composed of typical double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards installed vertically. The east wall is 3 1/2" thick but it is not clear how it is framed or why its composition differs from the other walls in the cabin.

Ceiling: The ceiling is at 9' and covered with the typical painted fiberboard and battens, presumably over the original double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards.

Doors: The front entrance door and sidelights described above have no interior trim or casing. There are three additional door openings in this room, all of which are 2'-6" by 6'-6". None of the doors remain in their frames, although they may be among those that remain stored in the cabin. The doors to the bedrooms are cased with 3/4" by 4 1/2" boards with simple butt joints. The door to Room 107 is cased with 2 1/2" boards similar to those used on the original windows in Rooms 101 and 103.

Windows: In addition to the casement windows used as sidelights at the front entrance, there are two other casement windows, both located high on the east wall. Each four-light sash is 1'-4" by 2'-6" and each has small cupboard latch for closure.

Electrical System: A porcelain light fixture operated by a pull chain is mounted near the center of the ceiling and duplex convenience outlets served by surface-mounted wiring are located on the north and south walls and to the right of the front doorway. A late-twentieth-century telephone jack is located to the left of the doorway.

Chimney: Built into the northeast corner of the room is a small brick chimney, 16" by 16" in plan, built as a flue for a wood- or coal-fired stove. Inexplicably, it was built directly on the wood flooring in that corner with no foundation below. The chimney rises about

a foot above the roof. There has been serious structural damage in that corner of the room, perhaps more so because of water penetration around the chimney than the actual weight of the chimney itself.

Other Features: A single shelf, 3/4" by 7 1/2", is mounted using metal brackets low on



Figure 79. View of west wall of Room 102.



Figure 78. View looking northeast in Room 102.

the wall to the left (south) of the door. In the northwest corner of the room, a small triangular shelf is attached to the wall about 48" above the floor.



Figure 80. View of supports added beneath joists near where chimney was built on the floor above.

Walls and ceiling have been painted on at least two occasions but the paint is now in ruinous condition.

Room 103 (Bedroom)

Located at the front of the cabin and one of its original rooms, Room 103 was used historically as a bedroom and was apparently Faye Higdon's bedroom in the last half of the twentieth century. It is entered from Rooms 102 and 104.

Floor: The room is floored with typical tongue-and-groove flooring, running north to south. Floor area measures 12'-3" east to west by 12'-0" north to south, precisely the same size as the other bedroom. The flooring is painted, but the finish is badly worn.

Walls: The west, south, and east walls are formed by the vertical, load-bearing boards seen on the exterior and described above.



Figure 81. View looking northwest in Room 103.

The north wall is composed of typical double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards, vertically installed. All walls were covered with typical fiberboard and batten, but a large section of the board wall has been exposed on the east side of the south window. Small pieces of metal have been nailed over knotholes.

Ceiling: The ceiling is at 9' and covered with the typical fiberboard and battens over the original tongue-and-groove boards. A large section of the fiberboard has been removed on the east side of the room along with several runs of the tongue-and-groove ceiling.

Doors: The door openings to Room 102 on the north wall and Room 104A on the east wall are 2'-6" by 6'-6" and cased with 3/4" by 2 1/2" boards. The four-panel door to Room 102 is no longer hanging, but remains stored in the room. It has a 3" by 4" metal rim lock,

missing knob and spindle but with the keep still in place on the door frame. The door to Room 104A is a six-panel door hung with a pair of 3" butt hinges and fitted with a mortise lock. Stamped-metal escutcheons, knobs, and spindle remain intact.



Figure 83. View looking northeast in Room 103.



Figure 82. View looking south in Room 103.



Figure 84. View of door between Rooms 103 and 104A, typical of the six-panel doors in the cabin.



Figure 85. View looking south in Room 104A.

Windows: The room has two windows, both original, located on the west and north walls. As described above, both windows are 2'-10" by 4'-6" and have six-over-six sash without counterweights. The sash have no lift hardware but do have a plain metal sash lock.

Electrical System: A porcelain light fixture operated by a pull chain is mounted near the center of the ceiling. A convenience outlet similar to the one found on the front porch is located below the center of the south window and a second, late-twentieth-century outlet is located below the east side of that same window.

Other Features: In the northwest corner of the room, 3/4" plywood has been used to construct floor-to-ceiling closets and cabinets. Doors are also plywood, each hung with a pair of 3" surface-mounted hinges and a barrel latch.

Room 104A (Bathroom)

This room was created when the Higdon's partitioned a larger space that appears to have been part of the original structure and which could have been the original bathroom. It can be entered from Rooms 103 and 107.

Floor: Modern vinyl floor covering is laid over what is probably typical 3 1/4" tongue-and-groove flooring such as remains exposed in Room 104B. The room measures 4'-2" east to west and 12'-2" north to south.

Walls: The north, south, and west walls are typical vertical plank walls. The east wall is a conventional stud wall covered with 3/4" plywood. A rectangular opening above the sink most likely was made for a medicine cabinet that has since disappeared.

Ceiling: The ceiling is at 9' with typical fiberboard and batten over what is probably the original tongue-and-groove ceiling.

Doors: In addition to the door opening into Room 103 on the west wall, there is a door

opening from Room 107 on the north wall. It is 2'-6" by 6'-4". Hung with a pair of 4" butt hinges, the original four-panel door remains in place. The rim lock remains but there are no knobs or spindle.

Windows: The partition creating separate bathrooms left part of the original window opening exposed in both Rooms 104A and 104B. In this room one of the two-light casement windows in the opening was fully exposed and might have remained operable until the present modern shower was installed.

Plumbing Fixtures: A porcelain toilet with a wall-hung tank is located on the east wall along with a porcelain-glazed cast-iron lavatory. With an oval basin, it retains its original chrome- or nickle-plated faucets.

The Higdon's may also have installed a cast-iron tub when they created this bathroom, but if so, it was replaced by the present fiberglass shower surround in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Supply pipes are galvanized steel, have cut-off valves and are run up through the floor. Waste lines are cast-iron except where replaced by PVC when the shower was installed.

Electrical System: A porcelain light fixture operated by a pull chain is mounted near the

center of the ceiling. There are no convenience outlets.



Figure 86. View looking north in Room 104A.



Figure 87. View looking north of ceiling in Room 104A.



Figure 88. View of lavatory and shower in Room 104A.



Figure 89. View looking north in Room 104B.



Figure 90. View looking south in Room 104B.

Other Features: Five open shelves, 3'-0" long, are built on the east wall between the two doors using 1' by 10" planks. The top shelf is 6'-6" above the floor.

Room 104B (Half Bathroom)

This room was created when the Higdon's partitioned an earlier space that appears to have been part of the original structure. That space could have been the original bathroom. The present space can be entered from Room 105.

Floor: Flooring is typical 3 1/4" tongue-and-groove flooring running north to south. The room measures 2'-4" east to west and 12'-2" north to south.

Walls: The north, south, and east walls are typical vertical plank walls. At the south end of the room is the only instance where the original vertical tongue-and-groove paneling remains exposed; unlike similar paneling elsewhere in the house, it has been painted. The west wall is a conventional stud wall covered with 3/4" plywood in Room 104A but originally left exposed in this room. A single sheet of drywall has been installed at the south end of the wall and a second sheet is in the room but not installed.

Ceiling: The ceiling is at 9' with typical fiberboard and batten over what is probably the original tongue-and-groove ceiling.

Door: Located on the east wall, the door is 2'-8" by 6'-6" and has six horizontal panels, mortise lock, stamped-metal escutcheons, knobs, and spindle similar to those on the door between Rooms 103 and 104A.

Window: The partition creating separate bathrooms left part of the original window opening in both Room 104A and 104B. In this room only one of the two-light casement windows in the opening is exposed.

Plumbing Fixtures: A porcelain toilet with a wall-hung tank is located on the north wall. A porcelain-glazed cast-iron lavatory with an oval basin and chrome- or nickle-plated

faucets is hung on the east wall on the south side of the door opening. Both fixtures are similar to the corresponding fixtures in Room 104B.

Supply pipes are galvanized steel, have cut-off valves, and are run up through the floor. Waste lines are cast-iron.

Electrical System: There is no light fixture or other electrical equipment in this room.

Room 105

The wing containing this room and Room 106 is thought to have been built by the Boykins or the Ferrells. The Higdon's constructed the partition wall when they first occupied the cabin around 1950. Both rooms were built with exterior walls of load-bearing board-and-batten siding, but the partition wall between the two rooms uses conventional stud-wall

construction. The difference in character of those walls suggests that the two rooms may have existed as a single room prior to the Higdon's mid-century remodeling.

Floor: A mid-century "linoleum rug" covers most of the original flooring, which is 3¼" tongue-and-groove that differs very little from the original flooring, except that this flooring is laid east to west. The room measures 6'-10" east to west and 12'-2" north to south.

Walls: The north, south, and west walls are typical vertical plank walls. The east wall is a conventional stud wall. All walls were originally covered with ½" drywall, but that is now missing from the east wall.

Ceiling: The ceiling appears to have been at 9', but no longer exists. Joists were removed in conjunction with the repairs in 2008,



Figure 91. View looking northwest in Room 105.

but remnants of the original drywall remain around the perimeter of the room.

Doors: In addition to the door opening from Room 104B, there are two other door openings. From Room 106, the door on the east wall is 2'-6" by 6'-6" with two panels, typical of the mid-twentieth century. Opening from Room 107, the door on the north wall



Figure 92. View of the mid-twentieth-century floor covering in Room 105.

is 2'-6" by 6'-4". Hung with a pair of 4" butt hinges, the original four-panel door remains in place. The rim lock, knobs, and spindles are missing from the door.

Windows: Centered in the south wall is a horizontal window opening, 2'-2" by 4'-6", with two sash, each with two vertical lights. The sash are hung as casement windows using 3" hinges mounted to the face of the sash and the edge of the window frame. There is a simple hook-and-eye latch.

Electrical System: No electrical equipment remains in place, although what appears to be the fixture box and wiring for an overhead light fixture dangles in the door opening to Room 107.

Other Features: Open shelving, similar to that on the east wall of Room 104A has been installed on the east wall between the two doors using 1' by 10" planks.



Figure 93. View looking southeast in Room 105.

Room 106 (Kitchen)

The wing containing this room and Room 105 is thought to have been built by the Boykins or the Ferrells. The Higdon constructed the partition wall when they first occupied the cabin around 1950. (Figure 30 shows this room before the recent repairs.) Both rooms were created with exterior walls of load-bearing board-and-batten siding, but the partition wall between the two rooms is of conventional stud-wall construction.

Floor: Plywood is laid over the original flooring, which is 3¼" tongue-and-groove that differs very little from the original, except that this flooring is laid east to west. The room measures 9'-10" east to west and 12'-2" north to south.

Walls: The north, south, and east walls are typical vertical plank walls. The west wall is a conventional stud wall. The south wall was



Figure 95. View of shelving on the east wall in Room 106.



Figure 94. View looking southwest in Room 106 with Room 105 visible through the stud wall at right.

almost completely rebuilt during the course of the recent repairs.

Ceiling: The ceiling appears to have been at 9', but no longer exists. As in Room 105, joists were removed in conjunction with the repairs to the roof in 2008, but remnants of the original drywall remain around the perimeter of the room.

Doors: In addition to the two-panel door opening into Room 105, a door on the north wall opens from Room 107. The opening is 2'-8" by 6'-6" with a six-panel door similar to the other six-panel doors in the cabin but with its original hardware.

Windows: Centered in the south wall is a horizontal window opening, 2'-6" by 4'-6". The pair of casement windows on the south

wall, which were similar to those on the south wall of Room 105, and the window frame are missing.

On the east wall, a pair of sash, each with two vertical lights, is installed to slide in a makeshift wooden track mounted directly to the wall.

Electrical System: The ceiling-mounted porcelain keyless fixture visible in earlier photographs is no longer present, but the fuse box in the southeast corner remains. A duplex convenience outlet is located on the south side of the door opening to Room 105.

Cabinets and Sink: An enameled 36" cast-iron sink, with its integral backsplash and drain board, remains on the east wall. It is set into plywood base cabinets that appear to be



Figure 96. View east in Room 106.

contemporaneous with the plywood closets in Room 103.

Other Features: Open shelving, similar to that on the east wall of Rooms 104A and Room 105 is installed on the east wall behind the door to Room 107. The damaged water heater visible in the southeast corner of the room in Figure 30 is no longer present.

Room 107 (Former Porch)

Built as a porch, its enclosure was never really completed: drywall is only partially painted, none of the new openings have been cased, and apparently no windows were ever installed in the openings across the east wall. (Figure 29 shows this room before the recent repairs.)

Floor: The room is floored with 3¼" tongue-and-groove flooring, laid north to south, similar to that used throughout the cabin. The

room measures 11'-8" north to south and 23'-11" east to west.

Walls: The south and west walls are formed by the cabin's original board-and-batten siding. The north and east walls use conventional stud-wall construction and are covered with drywall, some of which remains unpainted.

Ceiling: The ceiling was built with two slopes in an apparent effort to avoid covering the existing windows on the west. The ceiling height is around 7'-2" above the floor on the south, around 6'-10" in front of the windows, and only 5'-8" on the north wall. The ceiling was finished with drywall, but much of that was removed during the course of recent roof repairs.

Doors: There are three door openings across the south wall and one on the west wall. The



Figure 97. View looking northeast from Room 105 into Room 106.

opening to Room 104A has a four-panel door, 2'-6" by 4'-6". The opening to Room 105 is also four-panel, but 2'-6" by 6'-6". The door



Figure 98. View of framing of ceiling and roof in Room 107. Visible at the top are the dark wood of the original porch rafters and decking and the lighter wood of the rafters and decking from the recent roof repairs. In the foreground are the ceiling joists installed in the late twentieth century.

to Room 106 has a six-panel door, 2'-8" by 6'-6". All three openings are cased with 1" by 5" planks. At the west end of the room is an uncased door opening to Room 102. The opening is 2'-6" by 6'-6" but the door is missing. See the individual room descriptions above for details of the doors.

Windows: When the back porch was enclosed to create Room 107, a large opening nearly 10' long and 4'-1" high was created on the east wall. Divided into four bays by the wall studs, the openings are screened but have no sash.

On the north wall is a pair of casement windows. Opening inward, each sash is 2'-8" by 2'-7" but one sash has three vertical lights while the other has four.

Electrical System: Two keyless fixtures are mounted in the ceiling, with wiring concealed above the ceiling but surface-mounted to a



Figure 99. View looking east in Room 107.

switch at the door opening from Room 102. A duplex outlet with surface-mounted wiring rising through the floor is located low on the wall between the door openings from Rooms 104B and 105, and a second is located low on the wall between the door openings from Rooms 105 and 106. In addition, an early twentieth-century rotary switch, which probably operated an original light fixture on the back porch, is located near the door to Room 106.

Problems of Repair

The interior of the Higdon Cabin is in fair to poor condition, with debris throughout. Some doors are out of their frames and others are missing knobs and other hardware. Rooms 101-104 remain much as the Higdon left them, except for removal of part of the ceiling in Room 103. Flooring in the bathrooms is deteriorated. Painted finishes are in poor



Figure 101. View looking south from Room 107 into Room 106.



Figure 100. View looking west in Room 107.

condition throughout the cabin. The enclosure of the back porch has compromised the historic character of the cabin as have the incomplete repairs to the front porch and to the south side of Room 106.



Figure 102. View of lavatory in Room 104B.

Utilities

It is not clear whether any utility systems were present in the original cabin. As discussed earlier, there is historical documentation to suggest that at least some of the cabins had electric lights and running water as early as 1914. At present, the cabin has no functioning utility systems.

Plumbing System

The original cabin may have depended on a privy, which were common at Elkmont, but it is also possible a bathroom was present at an early date. If so, it would have been located in the larger room that was partitioned by the Higdon's around 1950 to create the present bathrooms in 104A and 104B.

The present plumbing system includes service and waste lines for two toilets, two lavatories, one shower, a kitchen sink, and a water heater that is now missing. The galvanized water-supply piping present under the rear wing of the cabin probably dates to the mid-twentieth century, although some of it could be from an earlier period.



Figure 103. View of early water supply pipes to the kitchen, upper right and upper left, and a hose bib, lower left. The original cast-iron waste lines have been replaced with white PVC pipes.

Electrical System

There is evidence in the Higdon Cabin for an early, knob-and-tube wiring system, such as that found in other cabins. Of particular interest are the ceramic knobs on the front-porch header and along the south side of the house, the rotary light switch on the south wall of Room 107, and a pair of ceramic tubes in the siding near the top of the wall above that switch and above the added ceiling. No early wiring has been located.

All of the present wiring is Romex or earlier rubber-coated wiring, and all of it is surface-mounted. The system was not grounded. Interior lighting was provided by bare bulbs in keyless porcelain fixtures. These were served

by surface-mounted wiring and operated by pull chains instead of switches.

There is no longer any electrical service to the cabin. The breaker panels or fuse boxes at the north end of the cabin have all been removed.

Character-Defining Features

Important character-defining features include:

- The cabin's box-frame construction.
- The proximity of the cabin to the other summer cabins within the Appalachian Club complex and to the clubhouse.
- The densely wooded site at the top of the ridge.



Figure 104. View of ceramic tubes from an early knob-and-tube electrical system, located on south wall of Room 107.



Figure 105. View of early twentieth-century electrical switch.



Figure 106. View of a series of ceramic knobs across front-porch header.

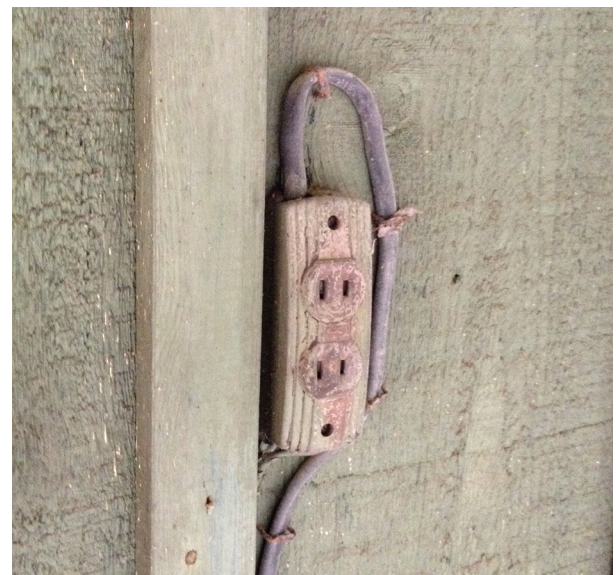


Figure 107. View of mid-twentieth century electrical receptacle.

- The stone retaining walls, steps, and walkway in the front yard.
- The shared concrete steps off the southeast corner of the Sneed Cabin and the associated concrete curb running behind the Higdon Cabin.
- The board-and-batten walls of the cabin.
- The open front porch.
- The gable roofs over the main cabin structure and the shed roofs over the front porch and the enclosed back porch.
- The 5V metal roof covering.
- The log posts, stacked stone piers, and stone walls at the front and rear that create the foundation.
- The board-and-batten siding enclosing the foundation.
- The brick stove flue.
- The four-panel and six-light front door and its associated casement-window sidelights and screen door.
- The two-, four-, and six-panel interior doors.
- The early door and window hardware

throughout the cabin.

- The six-over-six wood windows.
- The two- and four-light casement windows.
- The 3¼" tongue-and-groove wood flooring throughout the cabin.
- The thin fiberboard on walls and ceiling, most of it over earlier tongue-and-groove boards.
- The lavatories, toilets, kitchen sink and water heater.
- Elements of early electrical systems, including the ceramic knobs across the front-porch header and south side of the cabin, ceramic lamp bases in most rooms, and the early light switch on the south wall of Room 107.

Summary of Physical Conditions

In general, the Higdon Cabin is in mostly fair physical condition as a result of repairs in 2008-09, which included replacement of the roofing over Rooms 104-107.



Figure 108. View of Higdon Cabin looking northeast.

The concrete steps and curb at the rear of the cabin remain in excellent condition, but the two sets of steps from the road have some surface erosion. In the steps to the front walk, the first step off the road has shifted and is badly cracked, as is the walkway to the front porch.

As with many of the cabins at Elkmont, there are serious issues with the foundation, including poor drainage around the perimeter of the cabin. Ground erosion has undermined the stone wall supporting the east end of the cabin and precipitated a significant structural crack in the concrete block foundation under the south side of Room 106. Unlike some of the other points of deterioration in the cabin, the instability of the foundation here could lead to sudden, catastrophic failure.

On the south side of the cabin, poor drainage also keeps the low concrete-block foundation damp for extended periods, precipitating rot in the wooden wall plates with which it is in continuous contact. Areas of continued dampness in the crawl space and the many points of wood-to-ground contact are conditions conducive to termite infestation. Some of the makeshift posts, particularly under Room 107, are not stable, and the erosion that is destabilizing the stone retaining wall under the east end of the cabin threatens that entire wing.

The board-and-batten siding enclosing the foundation is missing battens and is in generally poor condition. Part of the stone wall underpinning the west side of the front porch is significantly out of plumb and has been braced to prevent collapse. The access doors to the crawl space are not in good repair, with hinges missing and, in the case of the access under the front porch, simply nailed shut.

Sections of the sole plates on the south side and around the southwest corner of the cabin

are deteriorated, mostly from rot but there may be substantial hidden termite damage as well. The condition of the nails tying the structure together could not be directly examined, but some of the joints between framing members may be compromised.

At the northeast corner of Room 107, a fallen tree limb or other impact has damaged the roofing. There may still be roof leaks around the chimney and at the junction of the shed roofs and the gable roofs.

There have been several temporary repairs to apparently rotting porch roof decking. Repairs used 1" by random-width boards held in place by lengths of 2" by 4" lumber nailed to the sides of the rafters.

The front door has been nailed shut so it is not clear how well it operates. The back door, which dates to the 1980s, has been ruined and the door between Rooms 102 and 107, which would have been the original back door is no longer in place.

None of the windows are in good working order, and the sash and frame at the opening on the south wall of Room 106 are missing entirely. Interior and exterior painted finishes are in poor condition.

The interior of the Higdon Cabin is in fair to poor condition, with debris throughout the house. Some doors are out of their frames and others are missing knobs and other hardware. Rooms 101-104 remain much as the Higdons left them, except for removal of part of the ceiling in Room 103. Flooring in the bathrooms is deteriorated. Painted finishes are in poor condition throughout the cabin. The late twentieth-century enclosure of the back porch has compromised the historic character of the cabin as have the incomplete repairs to the front porch and to the south side of Room 106.

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Part II: Treatment and Use

II.A. Ultimate Treatment and Use

At one time slated for demolition, the historic structures at Elkmont, including the Higdon Cabin, were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 as part of the Elkmont Historic District. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service (NPS) consultation with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other interested parties

resulted in a finding of adverse effect that would result if the buildings at Elkmont were removed. As a result, the NPS public planning process was revisited and the NPS ultimately committed to preserving part of the Elkmont Historic District.

Formalizing that commitment in December 2008, the park superintendent signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among the National Park Service, the Advisory



Figure 109. View of front of Higdon Cabin in 2001. (Historic American Building Survey)

Council on Historic Preservation, and the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office. The MOA provides for the preservation of nineteen buildings in the Elkmont Historic District, sixteen of which are in the Daisy Town portion of the district and include the Higdon Cabin.

The MOA stipulates that HSRs will be completed for each of the contributing buildings in Daisy Town that are being preserved; the present HSR is part of that effort.¹ The MOA also stipulates that the exteriors of these buildings, including the Higdon Cabin, will be restored to their appearance during the period of significance and the interiors rehabilitated. In addition, contributing cultural landscape features will be preserved (e.g., stone walls and paths).

The recommendations for ultimate treatment and use included in this

1. The Swan Cabin in Daisy Town is being preserved, but because it has lost integrity and does not contribute to the district's significance, the MOA does not require an HSR.

HSR for the Higdon Cabin echo the stipulations in the Memorandum of Agreement that call for restoration of the exterior and rehabilitation of the interior.

The MOA also stipulates that the NPS will implement "long-term treatment":

Retained buildings will be brought to a condition that allows for satisfactory protection, maintenance and interpretation (NPS Management Policies 2006, Section 5.3.5.4). The implementation of long-term treatment (i.e. preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration) of the retained buildings will be based on sound preservation practice, as recommended by the HSRs, to enable long-term preservation of historic features, materials, and qualities in accordance with the provisions of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.

The MOA stipulates reconsideration of the National Register nomination to reflect



Figure 110. View of front entrance to Higdon Cabin in 2015.

the area of retained buildings and cultural landscapes. A more informed understanding of the historic district has evolved during the course of developing the required HSRs, and the findings of those studies suggest that a revision to the period of significance might be in order.

The recommendations of the present historic structure report support restoration of the exterior of the Higdon Cabin, as stipulated in the MOA; but as a practical matter, few changes to the exterior will be required. The cabin's original board-and-batten siding, a type common at Elkmont, is mostly intact and is particularly well preserved on the walls that have been sheltered by the front and back porches. Most of the cabin's historic window sash remain in place, and on the front, a vernacular expression of a traditional entrance, using boards and battens, remains the cabin's most distinctive exterior feature.

The vertical boards are also the primary component of the cabin's unusual box-frame structure. Built without studs, box frame houses were most often found in mining towns, lumber camps, and summer resort communities. They remain poorly documented, in part because the nature of their construction is so easily overlooked.

The front porch posts and railings were replaced in kind in 2007, using nominally 4" by 4" posts and 2" by 4" rails and vertical pickets, matching those seen in 1993 photographs. A historic photograph may be located that would document a different arrangement, but considering the simplicity of the cabin's historic finishes and the sorts of posts and railings documented in other cabins at Elkmont, the present design and materials are entirely appropriate.

The most significant component of exterior restoration would be removal of the late-twentieth-century walls that enclose the back porch (now Room 107) and reconstruction of a screened back-porch enclosure and back steps. With an orientation to the north and



Figure 111. View of rear of Higdon Cabin in 2001. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

east, overlooking the community spring, it would have been the cabin's living room for most of the summer.

Minor repairs, including replacement of missing or irreparably damaged materials, and repainting siding and trim would complete exterior restoration. This would include replacement of frame, sash, and trim in the windowless opening on the south side of Room 106 and replacement in the near future of the metal roofing that was not replaced in 2007.

Little rehabilitation of the interior to make it safe for self-guided visitor access would be required. Electrical and water service should not be reinstated, except as necessary for fire protection and security and routine maintenance, thereby eliminating a variety of hazards to the historic building. Historic bathroom fixtures should be preserved in situ if the toilet bowl can be secured against use.

Recognizing the importance of modifications over time that reflect the history of Elkmont, the interior features and finishes that were part of the Higdon's remodeling of the house for year-round occupancy around 1950 should be preserved wherever possible. The most significant of these alterations is the

thin fiberboard covering most of the walls. Although there are no plans for interior restoration in the foreseeable future, it should be noted that this material was a defining feature of the Higdons' remodeling and is no longer manufactured. In rehabilitation of the interior, the treatment prescribed in the MOA, the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation caution against removing historic features and material, and every effort should be made to preserve this material in place.

Reinstallation in existing doorways of doors where they still exist, stabilization of existing wall and ceiling coverings and finishes, and removal of debris should be a high priority.

Removal of the existing enclosure of the back porch, if done carefully, may reveal significant information about the details and character of the historic porch. Photographic documentation of all phases of work should be routine.

The Higdon Cabin is being preserved in part because it is a critical aspect of the visitor experience of the historic Elkmont community. For the foreseeable future, tours will continue to be self-guided, as they are at a number of the park's historic buildings

in Cataloochee and Cades Cove. Wayside markers and other interpretive devices will provide a much-needed enhancement of visitor use of this and the other cabins along Daisy Town Road.

The approach to treatment and use recommended here would benefit the public by helping to ensure the continued preservation of an important contributing property in the National Register historic district at Elkmont. Visitor understanding of an important epoch of park history would be broadened by presenting the building itself as an important cultural resource that expresses the entire history of Daisy Town and especially the Higdon family's deep ties to the area.

Visitor safety would be improved by stabilizing or repairing site features, removing unsafe construction and, where necessary, rebuilding with sound materials erected to safe building standards. Finally, this approach retains flexibility for future park decisions regarding treatment and interpretation to coincide with the results of additional documentary research and building investigation, shifts in interpretive focus, and changes in funding.

II.B. Requirements for Treatment and Use

In addition to the stipulations in the MOA discussed in the preceding section of this report, a number of laws, regulations, and functional requirements also circumscribe treatment and use of the the historic structures in our national parks. In addition to protecting cultural resources, these requirements also address issues of life safety, fire protection, energy conservation, abatement of hazardous materials, and handicapped accessibility. Some of these requirements may contradict or be at cross purposes with one another if they are rigidly interpreted. Any treatment must be carefully considered in order that the historic fabric of the structure be preserved.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (NHPA) mandates Federal protection of significant cultural resources, including buildings, landscapes, and archeological sites. In implementing the act, a number of laws and authorities have been established that are binding on the NPS.

Section 106

A routine step in the park's planning process for the treatment of cultural resources is compliance with Section 106 of NHPA. This requires that prior to any undertaking involving National Register or National Register-eligible historic properties, Federal agencies "take into account the effect" of the undertaking on the property and give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

"a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking."

To satisfy the requirements of Section 106, regulations have been published (36 CFR Part 800, "Protection of Historic Properties") that require, among other things, consultation with local governments, State Historic Preservation Officers, and Indian tribal representatives. They also establish criteria under which the Advisory Council may comment, but as a practical matter, the vast majority of Federal undertakings do not involve review by the Advisory Council. The entire point of Section 106 review is to ensure that all interested parties have a voice in the preservation of our nation's cultural heritage.

To expedite the review process, a programmatic agreement between the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, the National Council of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the NPS allows for a streamlined Section 106 review process. With certain conditions, routine repairs and maintenance that do not alter the appearance of the historic structure or involve widespread or total replacement of historic features or materials are not subject to review outside the NPS.

The Secretary's Standards

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are the Secretary's best advice to everyone on how to protect a wide range of historic properties. They provide a philosophy to underpin historic preservation that is widely understood and almost universally accepted

in the United States. They are intended to be applied to a wide variety of resource types, including buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. The Standards, revised in 1992, are codified as 36 CFR Part 68.

The Standards describe four broad approaches to the treatment and use of historic properties. These are, in hierarchical order:

- Preservation, which places a high premium on the retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a building's continuum over time, through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations that are made.
- Rehabilitation, which emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but provides more latitude for replacement because it is assumed the property is more deteriorated prior to work. (Both

Preservation and Rehabilitation standards focus attention on the preservation of those materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that, together, give a property its historic character.

- Restoration, which focuses on the retention of materials from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting the removal of materials from other periods.
- Reconstruction, which establishes limited opportunities to re-create a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object in all new materials.

Regardless of treatment approach, the Standards put a high priority on preservation of existing historic materials and features and not just the architectural form and style. The Standards also require that any alterations, additions, or other modifications be reversible, i.e., be designed and constructed in such a way that they can be removed



Figure 113. View of Higdon Cabin, looking southwest in 2001. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

or reversed in the future without the loss of existing historic materials, features, or character.

Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) establishes comprehensive civil rights protection for disabled Americans, both in employment and in their right to free, unaided access to public buildings. While people with restricted mobility have most frequently benefited from ADA, protection also extends to those with other disabilities, including those with impaired vision or hearing.

Requirements for full compliance with ADA regulations are extensive and easiest to apply to new construction. Full compliance for historic buildings is more difficult and sometimes would require significant alterations to the historic character of the property. Where that is the case, ADA authorizes a process for arriving at alternatives to full compliance that can preserve historic character while maximizing a disabled visitor's access to the historic building.

International Building Code

As a matter of policy, the NPS is guided by the International Building Code, which includes this statement regarding code compliance in historic buildings:

3406.1 Historic Buildings. The provisions of this code related to the construction, repair, alteration, addition, restoration and movement of structures, and change of occupancy shall not be mandatory for historic buildings where such buildings are judged by the building official to not constitute a distinct life safety hazard [emphasis added].

Threats to public health and safety should always be eliminated, but because this is an historic building, alternatives to full code compliance are always sought where

compliance would needlessly compromise the integrity of the historic building.

NFPA Code 914

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) as promulgated codes for historic buildings, most notably NFPA 909, "Code for the Protection of Cultural Resources Properties - Museums, Libraries, and Places of Worship," and NFPA 914, "Code for Fire Protection of Historic Structures." As a matter of policy, NPS recommends installation of fire-suppression systems in every historic building.

NPS Management Policies

The NPS General Management Policies (2006) guide overall management of historic properties, especially Chapter 5 "Cultural Resource Management." Based upon the authority of some nineteen Acts of Congress and many more Executive orders and regulations, these policies require planning to ensure that management processes for making decisions and setting priorities integrate information about cultural resources, and provide for consultation and collaboration with outside entities. These policies also support good stewardship to ensure that cultural resources are preserved and protected, receive appropriate treatments (including maintenance), and are made available for public understanding and enjoyment.

Section 5.3.5, "Treatment of Cultural Resources"

This section of the management policies provides specific directives, including a directive that "the preservation of cultural resources in their existing states will always receive first consideration." The section also states that "treatments entailing greater intervention will not proceed without the consideration of interpretive alternatives.... Pending treatment decisions reached through the planning process, all resources will be



Figure 114. View looking south of the north side of the wing at the rear of the cabin, 2014.

protected and preserved in their existing states. Except for emergencies that threaten irreparable loss without immediate action, no treatment project will be undertaken unless supported by an approved planning document appropriate to the proposed action.”¹ The present HSR is that approved planning document.

Park General Management Plan

The General Management Plan (GMP) for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was prepared in 1982. That document states in part, “...leases for approximately 50 structures occupied by the Elkmont Preservation Committee (cabins and the Wonderland Hotel) will expire in 1992, and four remaining leases will expire in 2001. None of these leases will be extended, and the structures are proposed for removal on termination of

1. NPS General Management Policies (2006), p. 50.

the leases. Building sites will be returned to a natural state.”

In 1994, the Elkmont Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with the Higdon Cabin listed as one of the district’s contributing structures. Consultation with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer, as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, resulted in a determination that the proposed demolition of Elkmont constituted an “adverse effect.” With the support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the NPS revisited the issues at Elkmont in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2006 that modified the demolition proposal to allow for preservation of some of the historic structures at Elkmont.

Final resolution of the adverse effect was reached in late December 2008 when “Memorandum of Agreement Re. Environmental Impact Statement and General Management Plan Amendment” (MOA) was circulated for signing by representatives of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer and other parties. The MOA stipulates that “...eighteen contributing and one noncontributing building will be retained” and the “exterior of the sixteen buildings in Daisy Town will be restored and their interiors rehabilitated.” One of those sixteen buildings is the Higdon Cabin.

II.C. Alternatives for Treatment and Use

In addition to the Ultimate Treatment and Use discussed in Section II.A above and following NPS directive, alternative treatments have also been considered. While not recommended under the present circumstances, these alternative approaches nevertheless fulfill the basic park mandate to preserve the historic resources at Elkmont.

Preservation of the Higdon Cabin in its present condition is simply not an option. Roof leaks and missing windows and doors do not protect the building from the elements, and its general appearance suggests neglect and invites vandalism. At a minimum, the roofing must be repaired, windows and doors reinstalled, and the exterior finishes repaired and stabilized. These simple treatments would help ensure the building's continued preservation as a major component in the visitor's experience of the Elkmont historic district. All approaches to treatment and use would begin with those actions.

Alternative #1: Mothballing

Having completed the basic repairs outlined above, park management could elect to simply mothball the house, following standard established procedures for that action.¹ Window and door openings would be secured with wood louvers and no visitor access would be allowed.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- retains maximum flexibility for future

1. See Sharon C. Parks, *Preservation Brief 31: Mothballing Historic Buildings* (National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, 1993).

decisions by park management regarding treatment and interpretation of Elkmont;

- minimizes cost to preserve the cabin.

While this approach might be necessary for a short period of time, it becomes increasingly hard to justify as time goes by. As a result, this approach would have the following disadvantages:

- violates the spirit of the MOA with the Tennessee SHPO, the Advisory Council and others;
- diminishes the public's educational experience, since mothballing would of necessity severely diminish the cabin's historic character and prevent public access;
- risks long-term neglect if not carefully monitored;
- violates NPS policy in support of adaptive use of historic buildings;
- leaves the NPS open to public criticism for its failure to use and properly preserve and interpret the cabin.

Alternative #2: Restoration to ca. 1920

Exterior restoration of the cabin to its appearance during World War I, when few if any alterations had been made to the original cabin, might be considered. Such an approach would begin with removal of Rooms 105, 106, and 107, which were most likely added early in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Further building investigation during the course of demolition would probably identify the original fenestration in the rear, which could then be restored. Additional archival

research would probably not be helpful, and documentation of the original cabin would depend on intensive building investigation to, e.g., show whether there was a back porch in the cabin's original construction. It is also possible that physical evidence will remain inconclusive.

Restoration of the cabin to its appearance ca. 1920 would require some change to the fenestration on the south side, where the Higdon's mid-century alterations to the floor plan partially blocked the casement windows that lit the original, larger room that is now Rooms 104A and 104B. Restoration of the original window opening on the south side would require removing the partition creating those spaces. The exact nature of the earlier openings is uncertain, although building investigation, including selective dismantling might reveal important clues.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- benefits public by preserving the original cabin and restoring lost features that are critical to understanding its original appearance;
- expands visitor understanding of the role that the Boykins and the Ferrells played in the history of Elkmont;
- destructive building investigation could broaden understanding of the character of the original house and its early alterations.

This approach would have the following disadvantages:

- it is not certain that additional historical research and further building investigation will provide enough information to support restoration to ca. 1920;
- requires a significant outlay of funds to pursue the research and investigations according to professional standards;
- destroys the Higdon's mid-century alterations;
- would not be fully reversible.



Figure 115. View of linoleum in Room 105.

II.D. Recommendations for Treatment and Use

The following recommendations for ultimate treatment and use of the Higdon Cabin echo the stipulations in the Memorandum of Agreement that call for restoration of the exterior and rehabilitation of the interior.

They are meant to provide a conceptual plan for treatment of the building and do not and are not intended to provide complete specifications for all aspects of the work. Some of the repairs can be performed by a skilled carpenter. Other repairs may require plans and specifications as well as additional, more intensive building investigation.

Site

The concrete curb and steps at the rear of the cabin remain in good condition, but the two sets of steps at the road suffer from some surface erosion. At the steps from the road to the front walkway, the lowest step has shifted and is badly cracked, as is the front walk itself. These features do not need replacement, but appropriate repairs and improved maintenance of the site would greatly improve visitor safety.

The white stones laid in L-shaped patterns in the front yard require no intervention other than to ensure they are not disturbed. The rock wall along the road needs a few repairs to stabilize it, but does not need total reconstruction.

Erosion from uncontrolled runoff from the roof and across the site has diminished the integrity of landscape features.

Recommendations for Site Work:

- whenever site work requires ground disturbance, secure clearance from an archaeologist before commencing work;
- repair grade around the cabin to ensure positive drainage away from the foundation, especially on the south side;
- ensure that there is no wood-to-ground contact under and around the cabin;
- construct wooden steps to back porch;
- identify location of historic walkway behind the house and delineate as appropriate;
- repair front walkway, steps, and retaining wall.

Foundations

As with many of the cabins at Elkmont, there are serious issues with the foundation of the Higdon Cabin, including poor drainage around its perimeter. Ground erosion has undermined the stone wall supporting the east end of the cabin and precipitated a significant structural crack in the concrete block foundation under the south side of Room 106. Unlike some of the other points of deterioration in the cabin, the instability of the foundation here could lead to sudden, catastrophic failure.

On the south side of the cabin, poor drainage also keeps the low concrete-block foundation under Rooms 103 and 104 damp for extended periods, precipitating rot in the wooden wall plates with which it is in continuous contact. Areas of continued dampness in the crawl space and the many points of wood-to-ground contact are conditions conducive to termite

infestation. Some of the makeshift posts, particularly under Room 107, are not stable.

The concrete-block foundation on the south side of the cabin is not an historic feature. Although it is not certain, the concrete block probably replaced a single course of dry-laid stone, similar to that found under the foundation walls around the north end of the original cabin. While not necessarily critical to exterior restoration, replacement of the concrete block with stone is recommended.

The board-and-batten siding that encloses the foundation should be retained and repaired. Restoration should also include replacement of the missing battens on the exposed east side of the original cabin. The enclosure under the north and east side of the rear wing and back porch appears never to have had battens and none should be installed.

The mortared rock underpinning of part of the west side of the front porch was likely a mid-twentieth century feature, but it was reconstructed on 2007. If stabilization of both walls is possible, they should be retained until their origins can be determined.

Recommendations for Foundation Work:

- eliminate wood-to-ground contact under and around the cabin and/or install metal termite shields;
- monitor rear retaining wall for movement and repair as appropriate;
- improve site drainage;



Figure 116. View of Higdon Cabin, right, and Sneed Cabin, left in 2001. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

- inspect foundation posts and piers, especially under Room 107, and make repairs as necessary to ensure stability;
- repair board-and-batten foundation enclosure under original cabin and the vertical-board enclosure of the rear wing, adding battens to the latter;
- stabilize mortared rock underpinning part of the front porch.

Wood Framing

It is important to remember that the vertical board-and-batten siding is part of the cabin's structural system and that there are no studs in the walls. Sections of the sole plates on the south side and around the southwest corner of the cabin are deteriorated, mostly from rot but there may be substantial hidden termite damage as well.

The board-and-batten siding on the cabin itself is mostly intact but needs minor repairs. Because the boards are structural and run continuously with no intervening support between plates, spliced repairs are not recommended.

The supplementary posts and beams, sometimes referred to as "shake sills," that have been installed perpendicularly to the floor joists should be retained in order to minimize movement of the floor framing when loaded with visitors.

Recommendations for Wood Framing:

- repair and replace damaged sole plate on south and west sides of cabin;
- replace missing ceiling joists in rear wing;
- replace missing battens.
- add posts and beams at mid-span of floor joists as necessary.

Roofing

Most of the roofing over the east wing has been replaced but that over the original part of the house and the porches remains intact. It is approaching the end of its useful life and

should be frequently monitored for leaks. If it is removed, the metal should be examined for evidence that it was ever painted.

At the northeast corner of Room 107, a falling tree limb or other impact has damaged the roofing, and a section there needs immediate replacement.

The cabin does not have gutters and rainwater runoff from the roof remains uncontrolled. This has led to ground erosion all around the cabin and made it more susceptible to termite damage. Runoff from the room also keeps the lower ends of the board-and-batten siding wet for longer periods, which promotes rot. Although not historic features, galvanized half-round gutters and round downspouts would allow for control of runoff from the roof and eliminate much ground erosion while helping protect wood siding and trim from water damage, especially along the bottoms of the walls.

There have been several temporary repairs to apparently rotting porch roof decking. Repairs have been made from the underside of the deck using 1" by random-width boards held in place by lengths of nominally 2" by 4" lumber nailed to the sides of the rafters. The existing roofing should be removed and proper repairs made to the underlying decking.

Recommendations for Roofing:

- repair damaged roofing above northeast corner of Room 107;
- make permanent repairs to front-porch roof decking;
- install full system of unpainted, galvanized, half-round gutters and round downspouts on all sides of the house;
- plan for replacement of remaining metal roofing within five years.

Front Porch

Although stable, repairs to the roof decking are temporary in nature. About 10 square feet of flooring at the front steps has been replaced with plywood.

Recommendations for Front Porch:

- Replace missing tongue-and-groove flooring at front steps;
- Make permanent repairs to roof deck and roofing.

Back Porch (Room 107)

Now enclosed as Room 107, recreation of the back porch should be a part of any exterior restoration. Careful dismantling of the existing modern features should confirm much of the character of the Higdon's mid-century porch, which itself may have replaced an earlier porch. Additional building investigation as the porch is re-opened should also show if the Higdon's screened porch had solid knee walls, similar to the one at the east end of the present room.

Recommendations for Back Porch (Room 107):

- dismantle east and west walls of what is now Room 107 in order to recreate the back porch;



Figure 117. View of southeast corner of Room 103, showing the structural materials in the cabin.



Figure 118. View east in Room 107, which was created by enclosing the back porch in the late twentieth century.

- follow material evidence that is exposed during demolition to recreate screened enclosure of those walls.

Chimney

The small chimney stack built in the northeast corner of Room 102 was poorly designed and installed but is an historic feature and should be retained. The short section that rises above the roof should be reconstructed and well flashed before new roofing is installed. The chimney should also be capped with metal to prevent ongoing water damage in the chimney and the interior of the cabin. Repairs will also be necessary to provide better support in the crawl space for the chimney stack.

Recommendation for Chimney:

- rebuild top of chimney, flash, and cap;
- design and install additional support for the chimney base.

Exterior Doors

The front door has been nailed shut so it is not clear how well it operates. The back door, which dates to the 1980s, has been ruined, and will be removed when the porch is re-opened. The door between Rooms 102 and 107, which would have been the original back door, is no longer in place. Two doors

are stored in Room 102, but it is not clear where they were originally hung. Unless the original door can be located, a new door will be necessary in the opening on the east side of Room 102 once the back porch has been restored. A paneled door with window lights, similar to the front door, might be most appropriate in that opening. Alternatively, a door with six horizontal panels could be used. The three doors on the south side of Room 107 will be exterior doors once the porch is restored.

Recommendations for Exterior Doors:

- return front door to working order, including lockset and other hardware;
- when back porch is restored, a reproduction door should be installed in the opening on the east side of Room 102.

Windows

All of the windows should be put in good working order so that the house can be ventilated. The sash and frame at the opening on the south wall of Room 106 are missing entirely, exposing the interior to the elements. If those features no longer exist, they should be replicated using the HABS photograph of the room and the surviving casement windows on the east wall of this room.

Recommendations for Windows:

- return all operable sash to working order;
- replicate casement windows for the south side of Room 106 if the original sash and frame cannot be located.

Exterior Finishes

When repairs to the exterior woodwork are complete, the exterior of the house should be washed to eliminate dirt and mildew prior to refinishing. The solid-body stain protecting the exterior board-and-batten siding is in poor condition and, because of fugitive pigments, no longer reflects its original green color, except in some sheltered locations, such as above the ceiling in Room 107. The same

finish was used on the porch ceilings and on the eaves.

Exteriors of doors and windows appear always to have been white and that finish should be maintained. Porch flooring should be painted gray.

Recommendations for Exterior Finishes:

- after repairs wash exterior wood surfaces;
- reapply solid-body stain to all board-and-batten siding, including that which encloses the foundation, as well as porch ceilings and eaves;
- repaint windows, doors, and porch flooring in appropriate colors.

Interior

The MOA stipulates that the interior of the cabins be rehabilitated. Except for enclosure of the back porch in the late twentieth century, a change that should be reversed, most of the present interior should be preserved and rehabilitated.

As noted above, ceiling joists for Rooms 105 and 106 should be re-instated for structural reasons.

Among the character-defining features of the Higdon's interior alterations is the thin fiberboard covering most of the walls. It is no longer manufactured, and every effort should be made to preserve it in place.

Modern fiberboard panels can be used to replace those removed from the walls and ceilings of Rooms 105 and 106 during recent repairs. Note that the Higdon's appear to have left the west wall of Room 106 unfinished, installing fiberboard only on the Room 105 side of the wall. The badly mildewed fiberboard on the east wall should also be replaced.

The damaged runs of double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards along the east side of Room 103 should be replaced, while leaving



Figure 119. View looking southeast in Room 101.

a “window” in the walls and ceiling around the southeast corner in order to expose some of the tongue-and-groove boards, which the Higdon's used throughout the house, and to allow better exhibit of the house's unusual wood frame.

Kitchen and bathroom fixtures and cabinets should be preserved, although waste lines should be capped and the fixtures plugged to prevent use. The mid-century linoleum in Room 105 should be conserved.

Loose and peeling paint should be removed along with other debris. Encapsulation is recommended if the paint is found to contain lead. Interior surfaces should be cleaned. Although not really necessary for material protection, repainting of the interior, especially of new replacement materials should be considered.

Recommendation for Interior:

- replace fiberboard panels recently removed from walls and ceilings in Rooms 105 and 106;
- replace runs of double-beaded tongue-and-groove boards recently removed from the east side of Room 103, leaving a “window” to show the tongue-and-groove and the cabin's structure;
- remove loose and peeling paint and other debris;

- preserve fixtures and cabinets in the bathrooms and kitchen;
- conserve linoleum in Room 105;
- preserve historic fiberboard on walls and ceilings;
- consider repainting interior, especially new replacement material.

Fire Suppression and Security

There is currently no water or electrical service into the house, and none should be reinstalled except as necessary for security and fire protection and ordinary maintenance. As noted above, the fixtures and cabinets in the bathrooms and kitchen should be preserved in place. Waste lines should be capped below floor level, and the fixtures visibly plugged to discourage use.

A complete fire-detection system should be installed and monitored. A fire-suppression system, per NPS policy, would also be appropriate and could be installed with minimum impact on historic fabric.

A rudimentary electrical system could be installed to service the fire and security systems and support routine maintenance. The existing wiring and fixtures should be preserved but bypassed for a modern system installed in metal conduit.

Recommendations for Fire Suppression and Security:

- install complete fire-detection system;
- install complete fire-suppression system;
- bypass but preserve existing electrical wiring and fixtures in place;
- install new electrical system in metal conduit.

Pest Control

Routine inspection for infestation by termites, powder-post beetles and other

wood-destroying insects must be a part of good management of any wooden structure. If wood-to-ground contact is eliminated and if drainage issues are addressed, the potential for termites, which are the primary threat, would be greatly reduced,

Bats, birds, squirrels and other rodents can be destructive of old buildings and should be excluded from access. Since windows must be regularly opened for ventilation, the well-fitted, wood-framed screens that were a feature of the historic building should be restored to all window and door openings.

The chimney should also be blocked. The metal chimney cap protects the interior of the chimney from water damage and may prevent bird entry; but to prevent bats roosting in the chimney, crumpled hardware cloth should also be tightly fitted *within* the chimney walls at or near the top of the stack.

The challenge in attempts to exclude bats, birds, and rodents from the cabin will be the numerous small gaps where walls meet the roof. Most of these have been covered with wood, and foam or fiberglass backer rod can be used for any that are not covered. Routine inspection should look for signs of animal entry, including gnawed wood and dirty stains around holes.

Recommendations for Pest Control:

- ensure no wood-to-ground contact
- ensure a dry crawl space beneath the cabin;
- screen all windows and doors;
- install crumpled hardware cloth within the chimney stack to prevent animal entry;
- fill small openings with foam or fiberglass backer rod;
- routinely inspect in, beneath, and around the structure for signs of the presence of wood-destroying insects and other pests.

Other Recommendations

The Higdon Cabin is a contributing structure in the Elkmont National Register Historic



Figure 120. View of Higdon Cabin from across Daisy Town Road in 2001. (Historic American Buildings Survey)

District, which was listed in 1994. According to that nomination, the period of significance for the district begins in 1908, when Elkmont was established as the Little River Lumber Company's base of operations on the East Prong of Little River, and ends in 1940, when the last resort cabin was built at Elkmont and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was dedicated. The National Register nomination for the proposed Daisy Town Community Historic District that was drafted in 2010 repeats much of the Elkmont nomination, but establishes the period of significance as beginning in 1910, when the Appalachian Club bought fifty acres from the Little River Lumber Company and ending in 1942, the date that was used in the EIS in order "to capture the cultural landscape components that were installed during the final period in which the Civilian Conservation Corps was still active in the Park."¹

1. Draft Environmental Impact Statement, pp. 149-150.

Reassessment of the National Register nomination will be based on the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI), which includes historic structures as features in the landscape. That work will be informed by the findings of the HSRs, which suggest that in terms of history, material culture, and the preservation of historic building materials in the cabins, a more expansive view of significance should be considered.

The 1908 establishment of Elkmont and the presence of cabins such as the "box" or set-off houses that predate the Appalachian Club suggest that 1908 as a beginning to the period of significance might be preferable to 1910. Current research, too, supports an expansion of the period to include the early post-World War II period.

Conversion of the lifetime leases to twenty-year leases in exchange for commercial electrical service in 1952, for example,

was a significant date in the history of the Elkmont community, but it also marked the beginning of a new era in the evolution of the historic structures in the district. Commercial electrical service made possible a range of activities and uses that were not possible before there was reliable electric lighting, which in turn affected the design of later alterations to the buildings.

New designs coincided with the widespread changes in building technology and materials characteristic of the post-war era. A range of significant building materials and features from the early post-World War II era have been documented but may be easily overlooked. These represent a continuation of the vernacular building traditions expressed in most of the cabins at Elkmont, both in original construction and in later repairs and alterations. Many of these mid-twentieth century features, some of them using materials that are no longer manufactured, have been an important aspect of the district's character for over sixty years.

In addition, the story of Lee and Julia Ownby Higdon, partially documented in the present report, traces the entire history of white settlement along Jakes Creek as well as the early twentieth century development of Elkmont, the Appalachian Club, and Daisy Town. Probably in 1949, their house further up Jakes Creek burned to the ground, and they were forced to relocate. The family, which included Lee and Julia Higdon's daughter Faye and son, J. T., neither of whom ever married, moved to Daisy Town shortly after that, and adapted the old Ferrell Cabin as a year-round residence. The Higdons lived much of their adult lives at Elkmont and, for many years, Lee and J.T. Higdon worked as caretakers for the Appalachian Club and made many repairs and alterations to the buildings in Daisy Town. The Higdons are all buried at Elkmont.

The changes that the Higdons made to the cabin included partition of an original room

(now Rooms 104A and B) to create one full bathroom and a half bathroom and partition of the early wing on the east side of the bathrooms to create an extra bedroom or dining room (Room 105) and kitchen (Room 107). To make the house more weather tight, the Higdons installed the present thin panels of fiberboard over the original tongue-and-groove paneled walls and ceilings. They were probably responsible for installation of the chimney flue in Room 102, and they also rehabilitated an early twentieth century electrical system. Except for enclosure of the back porch in the late twentieth century, most of the present building should be preserved and rehabilitated.

General maintenance of all of the cabins at Elkmont should be improved. In addition to their generally deteriorated condition, the current air of neglect, exacerbated by the fact that some of the cabins are closed and some are open, invites vandalism.

The MOA and the EIS as well as NPS policy commit the park to appropriate interpretation of the district. Eleven of the required historic structure reports (HSRs) have been completed and two more are nearing completion. These will be particularly useful for ensuring that any update to the district's National Register nomination includes accurate descriptions of the historic structures. The completed HSRs can inform a range of interpretive opportunities specific to Elkmont as well as updates to the park's comprehensive resource education plan, foundation document, and other planning documents. Completed HSRs can also be used to develop a brochure for Elkmont similar to those sold in park bookstores for Cades Cove, Roaring Fork, Tremont and the Mountain Farm.

The park should consider installation of temporary informational signs during the period when some Elkmont buildings are being removed and others rehabilitated in order to keep visitors better informed on the process and the overall goal for Elkmont.

Other Recommendations:

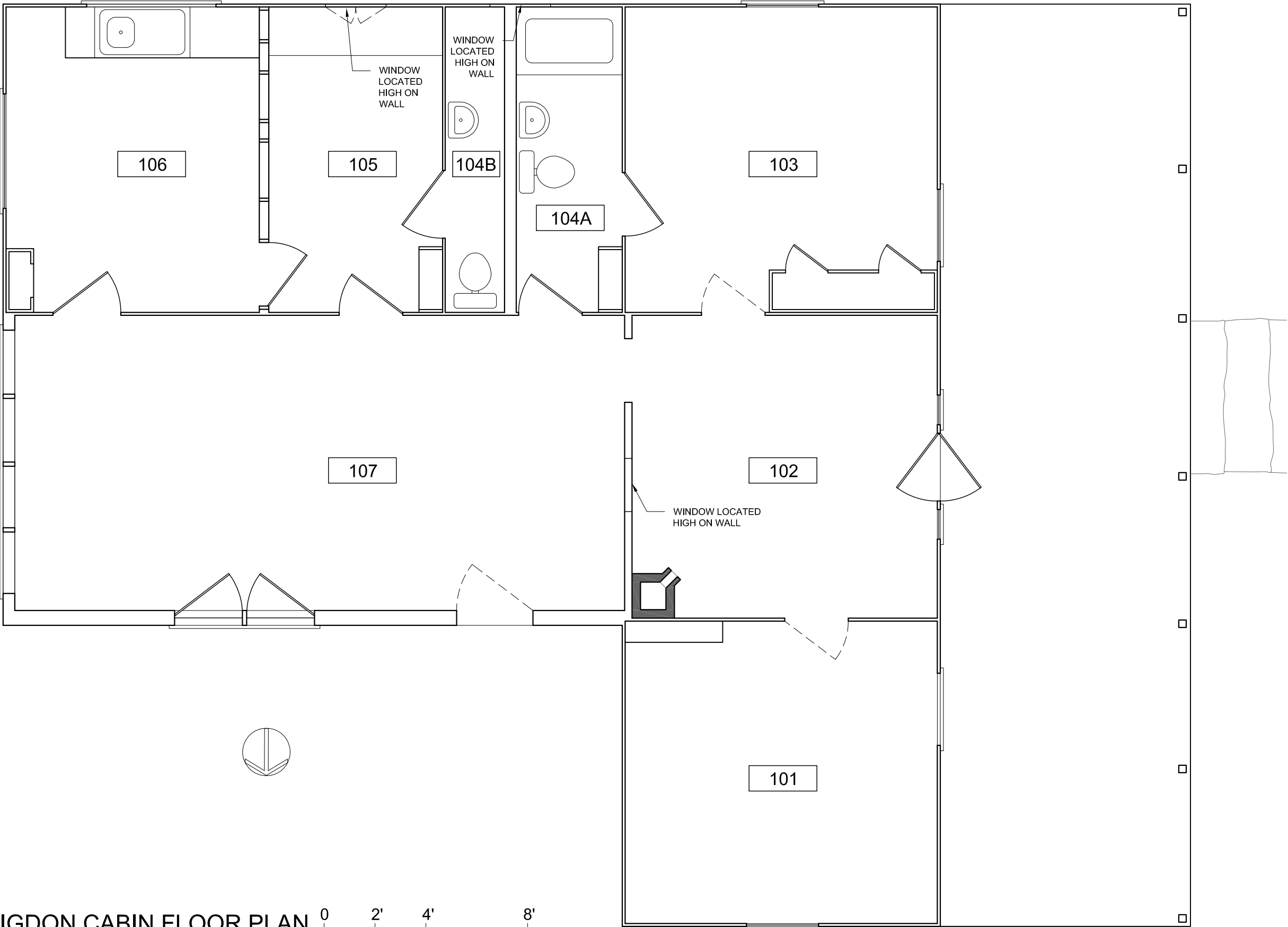
- consider extending National Register period of significance for the proposed Daisy Town district to encompass the Little River Company's founding of Elkmont in 1908 as well as the early post-World War II era;
- improve general maintenance of the Daisy Town district;
- implement appropriate measures to stem vandalism;
- develop interpretive brochure for Elkmont;
- use HSRs to inform park planning documents, including National Register nomination updates.

Appendix: Documentation Drawings

1

HIGDON CABIN FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



HIGDON CABIN

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK
ELKMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT
SEVIER COUNTY, TN

RECORDATION
DATE:
02.20.2015

RECORDED BY:
JKO
RLM, CMW

SCALE:
1/4"=1'-0"

HSR
APPENDIX:
SHEET

1

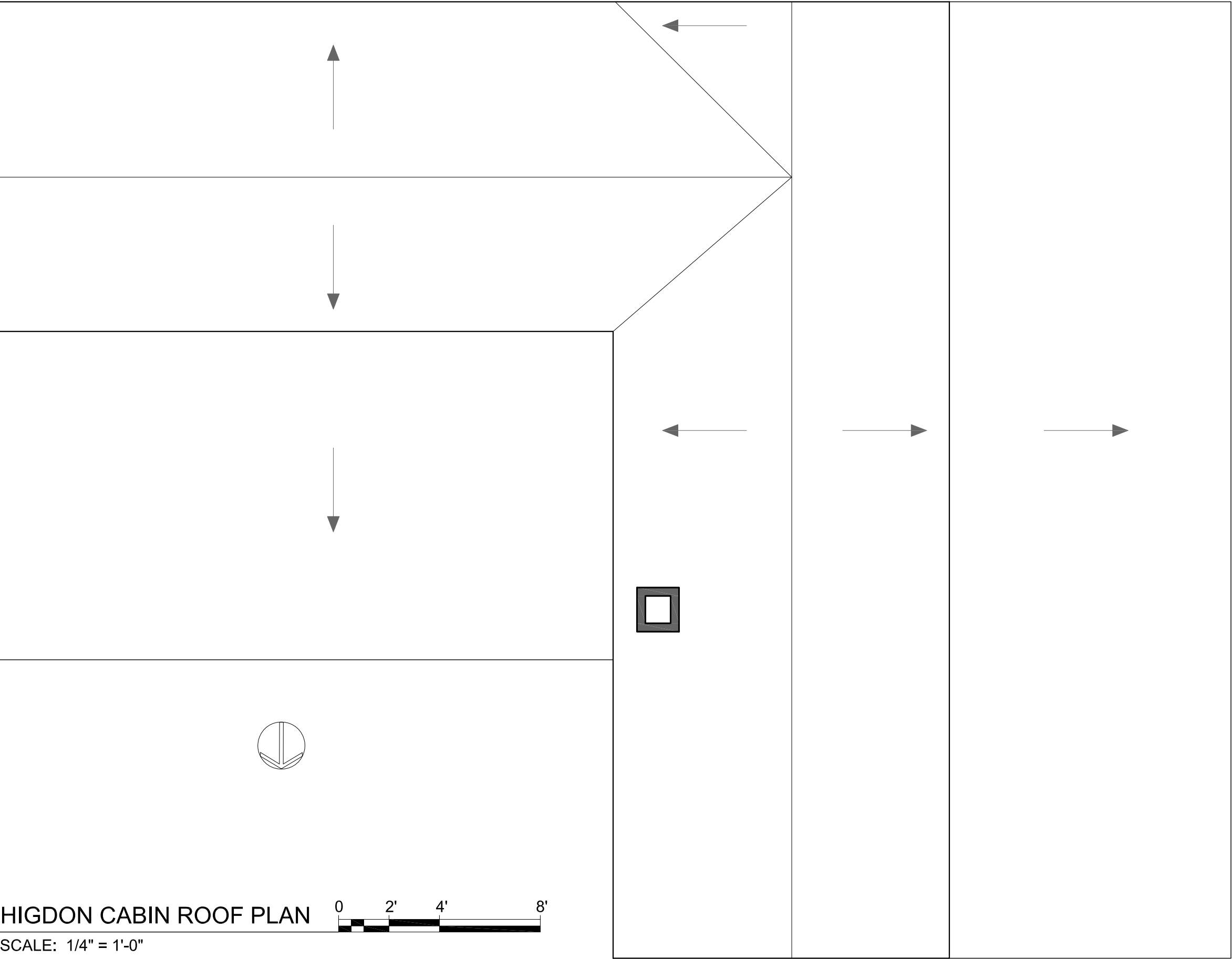
JOSEPH K. OPPERMANN - ARCHITECT, P.A.
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

2

1

HIGDON CABIN ROOF PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



RECORDATION
DATE:
02.20.2015

RECORDED BY:
JKO
CMW

SCALE:
1/4"=1'-0"

HSR
APPENDIX:
SHEET

HIGDON CABIN
GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK
ELKMONT HISTORIC DISTRICT
SEVIER COUNTY, TN

JOSEPH K. OPPERMANN - ARCHITECT, P.A.
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA