

JOHNSVILLE

STYLE BOOK FOR AN HISTORIC MINING TOWN

Plumas County, California
1972

(Adopted Pursuant To Ordinance)

Style Book of JOHNSVILLE

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Being a portion of the town embraced within the
boundary and described with Article 2 of the
Town Charter of 1852.

Designed by

Robert W. Johnson

Published by the
Town of Johns ville
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JOHNSVILLE STYLE BOOK

Table of Contents

	Page
Overview	1
Architectural Features	3
Exterior Siding	4
Foundations	5
Roofing	6
Exterior Finish	8
Optional Materials	9



Entrance to
Plumas Eureka Mine

Overview

A unique feature of Johnsville and its neighboring mining towns is the predominance of wood framed and finished structures, with the only exceptions being a few proprietary metal-sheathed structures such as the "red hotel."

This trend in wood finish should be continued.

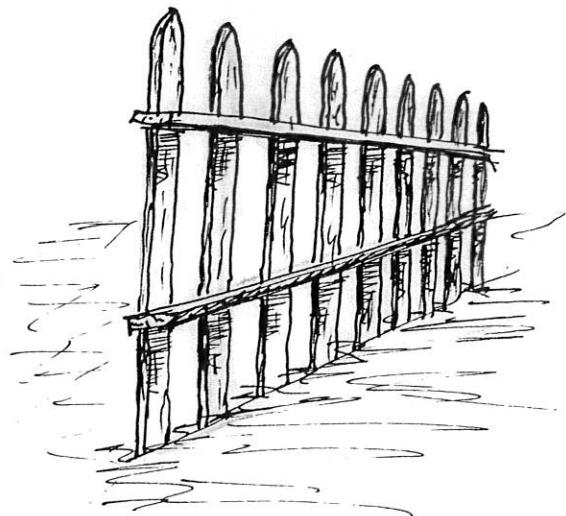
The setting of the town on a small, flat remnant of a former lake bed resulted in a compact form of development which is so characteristic of such outposts of man in a rough and challenging environment. The narrow streets were faced by residences and commercial structures located



close to the property line - seldom more than 20 feet. Where wagon or carriage houses were constructed, they were generally located on the front property line, but sufficiently far removed from primary structures so that the view between such main buildings and the street was not infringed upon.

Trees were generally few in number because of past fires and the need for wood; and where trees were grown, they were somewhat removed from structures so as not to obstruct the view of the spectacular vistas surrounding.

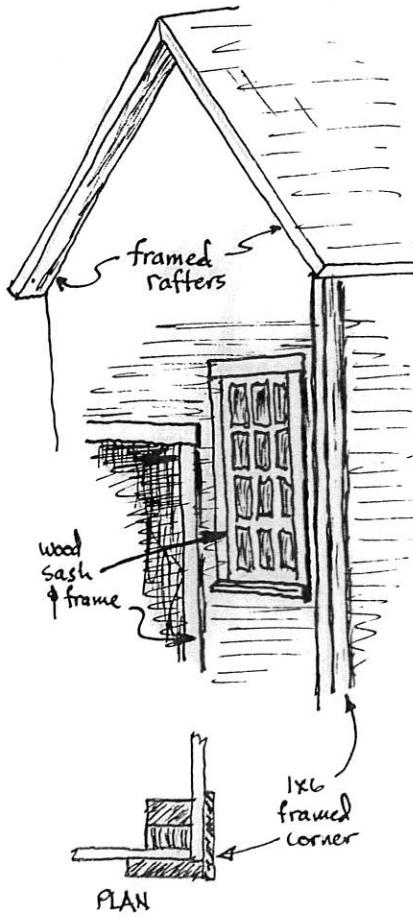
Fences, where they were used, were normally a simple picket type. Some stacked cedar rail type might also be considered in keeping with the rustic character of the area.



Architectural Features

The style of historic structures in Johnsville reflects the construction of the latter decades of the 19th Century, with emphasis on the simpler forms. Where special architectural features were embodied, they were generally a response to the deep snows and severe cold of the forbidding winter weather.

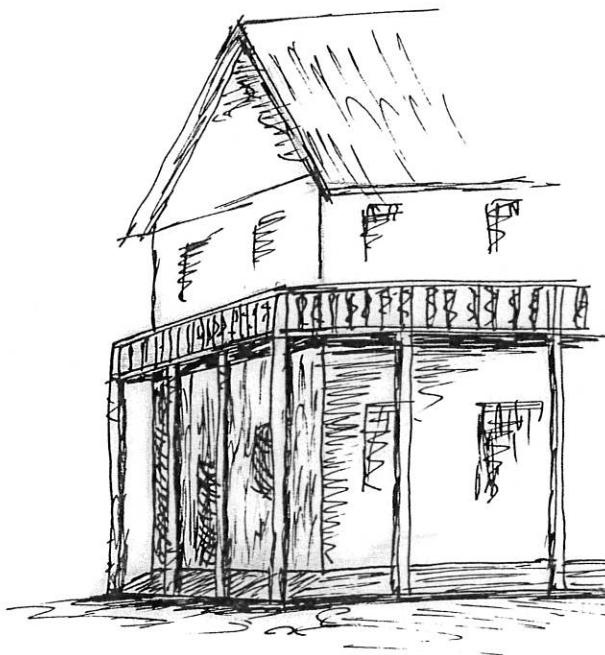
Naturally, with all-wood construction,



the window and door sash and trim were of this material. Even where aluminum sash is used today, some effort should be made to use 1x6 or 1x8 wood trim around all openings. The corners of buildings also were finished with vertical wood trim members.

Roof eaves and overhangs were generally on

the order of two feet; and the ends of rafters were framed to minimize heat loss and present a complete appearance.



Second Story Porch

Second story porches, with simple or beveled 2×2 rails and posts were common. Not only did such appurtenances provide shelter from sun, rain and snow for the first floor, but they also served a very important

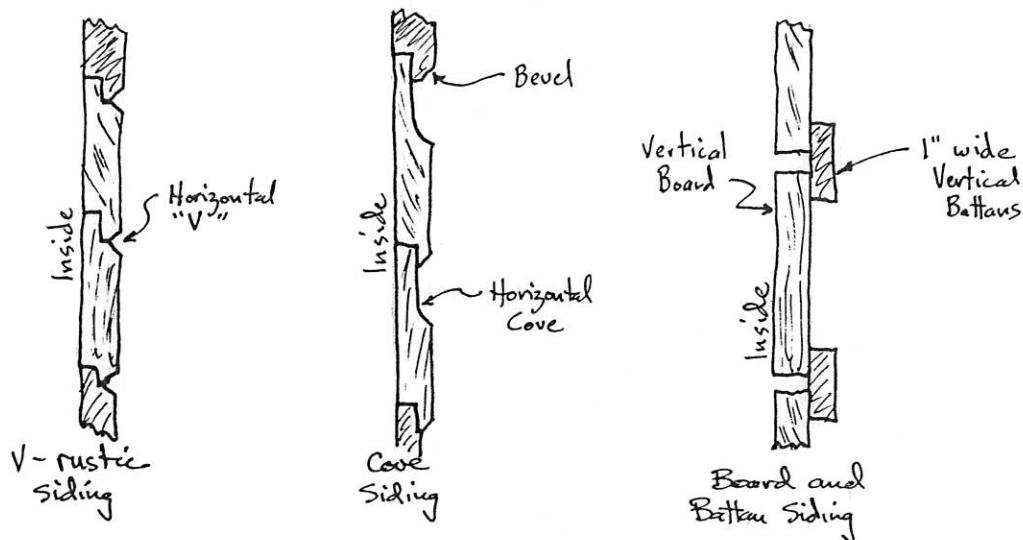
function as the entry way to buildings during the heavy winter snows (12-20 ft.)

Exterior Siding

Three general types of siding were commonly used for both residential and business structures. In some cases a combination of two were used, one style in front and another in the rear; although this practice need not be en-

couraged today

For main buildings and frontages, either V-rustic or coved, cut lumber was used. Unfinished board and batten siding was also common; although this material was apparently reserved for accessory buildings, shops, and the rear portion of some main structures.



Foundations

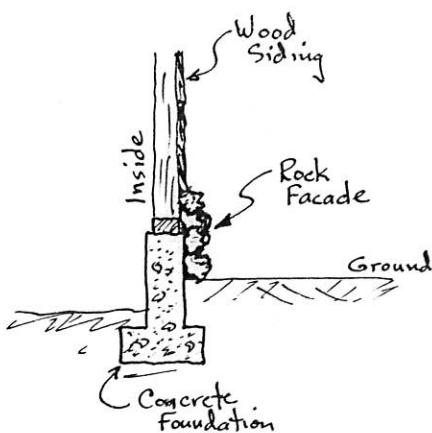
Many of the old buildings in Johnsville were constructed with full or half basements, lined with unmortared rock walls. Often this rock work projected above the level of the ground surface and

and was visible from the outside. In the remainder of cases, buildings were constructed on cedar pads; and the exterior siding was carried right down to the ground line.

With today's requirements for concrete foundations, some limitation is presented in how low the exterior siding may be carried; however, the visual impact of the 6" of concrete above ground will not

have a dramatic effect.

Mortared rock foundations or facades might be encouraged as a substantial building material, with well-suited architectural qualities for the heavy snows encountered in the area.



Roofing

Roofs in Johnsville, and other similar high-elevation communities were characteristically constructed with steep slopes (1:1 or greater), as a means of

minimizing snow loads and of keeping structural roof stresses within reasonable values. Roofing materials were predominantly wood shingles, with corrugated iron gaining favor around the turn of the century. Because roofs are such a prominent feature in any community, every effort should be made to conform them to the historic character of the town. Where metal roofs are used, they should be either old, rusted corrugated



iron or else new, non-glare, colored iron or aluminum with a brown or green tone.

Exterior Finish

A trend in the finish of Johnsville's historic structures is not apparent. Many of the buildings were not painted; and the aged wood - predominantly the black, yellow-tinged sugar pine - is quite attractive. Any natural or unfinished new surfaces may be considered acceptable; although some evaluation should be given to the tone of the ultimate weathered material, and to the desirability of accelerating the aging process.

Where structures were painted, white was used in the majority of cases. If some color other than white is desired, it should be rusticated corporation-building red or earth colors which blend best with the natural setting of the area.

Where signs or nameplates are used, they should be simple in design, using the same color guidelines noted above,

and with legend and characters conforming to the style of the late Gold Rush period.

Optional Materials

In addition to the basic materials noted above, others may be used where they fit into the gold rush architectural pattern. For example, long shingles with 10" or greater weather were common in many outlying areas; and several examples are still visible in the La Porte area. New reverse-cove plywood simulates, to a degree, the classic board and batten siding; and such wood, rough sawn, may be considered a suitable alternate to the basic styles enumerated previously.

