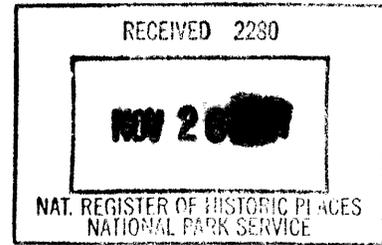


1584

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House

other names/site number Sitka Post Office, Sitka City Hall
AHRS Site No. SIT-313

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 100 Lincoln Street

not for publication n/a

city or town Sitka **vicinity** n/a

state Alaska **code** AK **county** Sitka **code** 220

zip code 99835

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith Bethune
Signature of certifying official

Nov 19, 1997
Date

Alaska
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the
National Register
- See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the
National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Paul H. Luyten 12/31/97

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) n/a

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: government Sub: post office
government courthouse

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: government Sub: city hall

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Moderne, Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof asphalt
walls concrete
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House is situated in the southeast Alaska town of Sitka. The building is on a triangular shaped lot in the downtown area. It fronts on Lincoln Street on the south edge of Totem Square. Across the square to the east is the Sitka Pioneers Home (listed in the National Register of Historic Places), built in 1934, and to the west is a rock retaining wall built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1940 when the square was created. On the west is the Cable Office (listed in the National Register of Historic Places). To the east are two and three story commercial buildings and Castle Hill (American Flag Raising Site National Historic Landmark).

In the 1930s the federal government built eight federal buildings in Alaska, most in the Moderne style. At the time, most Sitka buildings were wood frame, and the solid concrete construction was symbolic of the strong federal government. The architectural style retained the classical symmetry, proportion, and façade organization of its predecessors, but was stripped of the architectural ornamentation found on earlier public buildings. Simple rectangular massing with smooth surfaces was accented by the use of low relief suggesting classical elements. Piers represented columns and were occasionally fluted but without capitals or bases. Fenestration in vertical, recessed panels and ornamental spandrels was combined with Art Deco motifs.

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) n/a

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

politics/government

Period of Significance 1938-1947

Significant Dates 1938

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder Underwood, Gilbert Stanley
Warrack, J.B.

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Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Alaska Weekly (Seattle), March 18, 1938.

Anderson, Augustus B. Sitka, Alaska. Personal communication, May 1, 1997.

Armstrong, Ellis L., editor. *History of Public Works in the United States: 1776 to 1976*. Chicago, Illinois: American Public Works Association, 1976.

Choate, Glenda. United States Post Office and Court House Historical and Archaeological Significance Survey, 1983. Copy in files of U.S. Postal Service, Juneau, Alaska.

Colby, Merle. *A Guide to Alaska*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1943.

DeArmond, Robert N. *A History of the Postal Service in Sitka, Alaska 1867-1936*. Sitka, Alaska: Sitka Historical Society, 1987.

Fehlberg, Robert E. Sitka, Alaska. Personal communication, May 2, 1997.

Hoagland, Allison K. *Buildings of Alaska*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Kolva, James. Historic U.S. Post Offices in Alaska 1900-1941. Draft National Register of Historic Places multiple property nomination, 1990. Copy in files of the Office of History and Archaeology, Anchorage, Alaska.

Mills, Russell. Sitka, Alaska. Personal communication, May 1, 1997.

Post Office Department. Reports of Sitka Locations, 1837-1950. Record Group 28. National Archives (Pacific Alaska Region), Anchorage, Alaska.

Short, C.W. and R. Stanley-Brown. *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and Other Governmental Bodies Between the Years 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS) n/a
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
 State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other

Name of repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	08	479540	6322700	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

U.S. Reserve, south side of Lincoln Street, beginning at the corner of the public walkway to Castle Hill State Historic Site (the northwest corner of the building), SW 171', SE 229.6', NW 59.5', SE 29', N 168.4', and NW 84.7' to the point of beginning as shown on the site plan.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the entire lot set aside for construction of the U.S. Post Office and Court House in Sitka; surrendered to the Treasury Department on March 23, 1937.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Linda Millard, Project Manager, and Amanda Welsh

organization Stephen Peters & Associates, Architects

date August 18, 1997

street & number 300 Mill Stteet, Suite 26

telephone 907-225-7133

city or town Ketchikan **state** AK **zip code** 99901

=====
Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City and Borough of Sitka

street & number 100 Lincoln Street

telephone 907-747-3294

city or town Sitka **state** AK **zip code** 99835

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Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House

Sitka, Alaska

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The Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House is a flat roofed, two-story reinforced concrete building over a partially exposed basement. The foundation bears on solid bedrock, with the rear (south) half of the basement floor unexcavated. The building measures 117' x 56'. The upper floor (91' x 56') is centrally placed above the main level, giving the main level the appearance of having wings at each end. Constructed in the Moderne style, the original facades were smooth, symmetrical, and horizontal in massing, and consisted of equal bays, with fenestration in vertical recessed panels and decorative concrete spandrels between the first and second story and north and south facades. The slight projection of the façade at the basement level, immediately below the window bays, creates a base at the front(north) and side elevations. An incised horizontal reveal one foot below the line of projection further emphasizes the horizontality of the base. The appearance of a continuous architrave is created by the three incised reveals or grooves between the vertical recessed fenestration at the top of the bays. A single reveal above the plain frieze, presently obscured by metal flashing, represents the terminating cornice. An elevation increase from north to south provides access to the first floor from the rear of the building. In the front, the basement is at ground level.

The front (north) façade on Lincoln Street is symmetrical, with slightly recessed single story wings one bay wide on each side. The first floor, approximately ten feet above street level, was accessed by two symmetrical concrete stairways with concrete railings, each with a single return. Access to the partial basement was east of the main entry.

The main section of the north façade is divided into five equally spaced, slightly recessed vertical window bays. The entry is in the central bay. Each bay is divided into two equal vertical parts by a mullion extending from the top of the base to the architrave, with the exception of the entry bay where it terminates above decorative spandrels at the second floor level. Two concrete spandrels per bay, cast in place with incised vertical grooves and zigzag patterns, divide the first and second floor window openings. The spandrel pairs are separated by a continuous vertical mullion in each window bay, while those in the entry bay are divided by a narrower, projecting mullion continuing only for the length of the spandrels. The windows are three over three double hung on the first floor and two over two double hung on the second floor, with panes divided horizontally.

The only ornamentation outside of the window bays is incised lettering across the plain frieze and below the architrave. Flanked by two raised circles, each centered above an end bay, the frieze lettering reads *United States Post Office and Court House*. Below the architrave, *Sitka* on the left and *Alaska* on the right are inscribed.

The initial approach to the building was a wide straight run of five concrete steps flanked by low concrete walls slightly flared at the street end. These steps led to a landing where the stairway divided into two runs of six steps. Each of these had a single return with six steps leading to

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Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House

Sitka, Alaska

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a landing. The paired wooden two-panel entry doors consist of a single-light glass pane above a wood panel, and are below a painted wood panel transom of original design. The doors and transom are set in simple recessed surrounds ornamented with three parallel reveals which step back from the elevation to doorway. Flanking the entry, centered between the bays at the level of the transom, were two bronze light fixtures hung from decorative brackets. The paired wood doors leading to the basement were similar to those of the main entry, with glazing above and wood below. Two one over one double hung basement windows were located on either side of the stair wall and aligned vertically with the windows above. The original marble cornerstone was placed immediately above the base and centered between the westernmost window bay and the west wing. Inscribed are six names with titles and 1936, the year of construction.

The two wings mirror each other, with a single recessed three over three double hung window centered in each. The slightly projecting base and horizontal reveal on the main façade continue around each wing, with the lower reveal dying into the ground. A reveal runs along the top edge, similar to the cornice groove on the main section.

Originally, the south elevation mirrored the organization and detail of the front façade except for the projecting base and incised lettering. There was a single door to the east of the central window bay. East of the door was a three light window. A covered loading dock for the daily delivery of mail was at the west end.

The east elevation has four equally spaced pairs of recessed three over three double hung windows on the first floor, with the base and horizontal grooves continuing from the front façade. At the second floor, the elevation steps back to the main mass of the building and has four pairs of two over two windows similarly spaced. The three incised grooves of the architrave, plain frieze, and single grooved cornice are continued from the front elevation.

Similar in massing to the east elevation, the base and horizontal grooves on the west elevation continue around from the front. The first floor has three pairs of recessed three over three double hung windows alternating with two smaller fixed pane three light windows. On the second floor, eight equally spaced recessed bays contain two over two double hung windows, with the exception of the southernmost bay that is a simple recessed concrete rectangle. The three grooved architrave, plain frieze and uppermost cornice groove are continued from the front elevation.

Alterations

In 1963, the post office expanded to occupy the entire first floor. The customs office moved upstairs and the courtroom and offices moved out of the building. On the east elevation, two louvered vents were installed in a first window pair, one at the top of each opening. On the west elevation, the panel in the southernmost second floor window bay was

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Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska

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replaced with a window and the window just below it on the first floor was infilled. On the south elevation, a larger, enclosed concrete loading dock accessed from the west side was added. The original entry and three light window were filled, the original dock and canopy removed, and the loading dock doors replaced by a pair of three light windows.

In 1994, renovations were made to the front façade at the basement level, above the west wing, and at the center of the south elevation. An Exterior Insulation Finish System was used for new construction, and on all elevations aluminum windows replaced the originals.

On the front elevation, two symmetrical, flat-roofed basement level wings flank a new entry. The projecting base is no longer visible, rather, slightly recessed window bays on the additions extend to the ground. A horizontal overhang extends the length of the new wings. Two over two double hung windows mimic the placement of those above on the original façade, with one on each end and a centered pair.

The main entry has been relocated to the basement level. The stairs have been removed and replaced with a box, stuccoed form retaining the massing of the original stairs. The platform in front of the original entry has been retained as a balcony. The bronze light fixtures have been moved to flank the new entry.

On the west elevation, a single story addition was added over the wing steps with steel exit stairs. Changes to the south elevation include a single story addition over the loading dock and changes to the easternmost bay. On the upper level a door opens to new steel exit stairs, while on the lower level one of the paired windows has been replaced by a door and the other has been filled.

Despite the changes, the Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House retains its location and relationships with nearby historic buildings. The 1994 additions leave the classical organization of the façade and detail of the bays unobstructed. They do, however, change the relation of the primary elevation to the street and the approach and entrance to the building. Yet the building is still easily recognizable as a public building and continues to used for public offices.

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Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House

Sitka, Alaska

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House is a Works Progress Administration building completed in 1938. Constructed to replace the wood customs house and post office destroyed by fire in 1936, the new concrete building reconfirmed Sitka's place as one of Alaska's major communities at the time. The building was a unifying presence in the community, serving as an informal meeting place and as a ceremonial centerpiece for public events. Designed by architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood, who designed federal government buildings throughout the nation, the building is an example of the Moderne style popular in the 1930s. Although used for the post office and other federal agency offices until 1987, the period of significance ends in 1947, fifty years ago.

Historic background

The Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House was one of eight federal buildings constructed around Alaska Territory during the 1930s and 1940s. Alaska's federal buildings combined post offices and federal offices, which was common, and also had jails, which was unique. These buildings served as administrative centers. The Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House housed the U.S. Commissioner, Customs, Marshal, Attorney, National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and had a detainment jail cell. From 1938 until 1943 the building also housed the Sitka Public Library on the second floor. The Moderne style and the use of poured-in-place concrete were typical of the eight new federal buildings. The choice of material and the style symbolized the strength and permanence of the federal government. The buildings also signified the federal government's commitment to the economic well-being of communities throughout the nation as a physical embodiment of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

To the east of the new building was the site of the one it replaced. The earlier building—a wood building built by the Russians before 1867--burned on February 23, 1936. In July, Congress appropriated \$185,000 for a new building. Architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood completed plans for the building in September, and construction started the following April. The J.B. Warrack Company of Seattle constructed the building for \$168,000, simultaneously working on the Ketchikan Federal Building. The March 18, 1938 edition of the *Alaska Weekly* (Seattle) described the dedication and characterized the building as a "two-story structure of monolith steel and concrete construction."

With no home mail delivery, the post office served Sitka and its outlying area as an unofficial meeting place where local residents met friends and heard community news. Upcoming community events were posted on a bulletin board in the post office lobby. The building was near the hub of the Sitka business district and close to the cold storage facility. The landing outside the building's main doors frequently served as a reviewing stand for parades going down Lincoln Street. Left unlocked at night, the post office lobby provided overnight shelter during World War II for military

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Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska

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personnel who missed the 2:30 a.m. boat to the Naval Air Station on Japonski Island.

Although there was widespread opposition in the community, the post office moved in 1986 to a new building outside the downtown area. The U.S. Post Office and Court House stood empty until 1993 when the City and Borough of Sitka purchased, renovated and reopened the building as City Hall, continuing the building's public service.

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NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section photograph identification

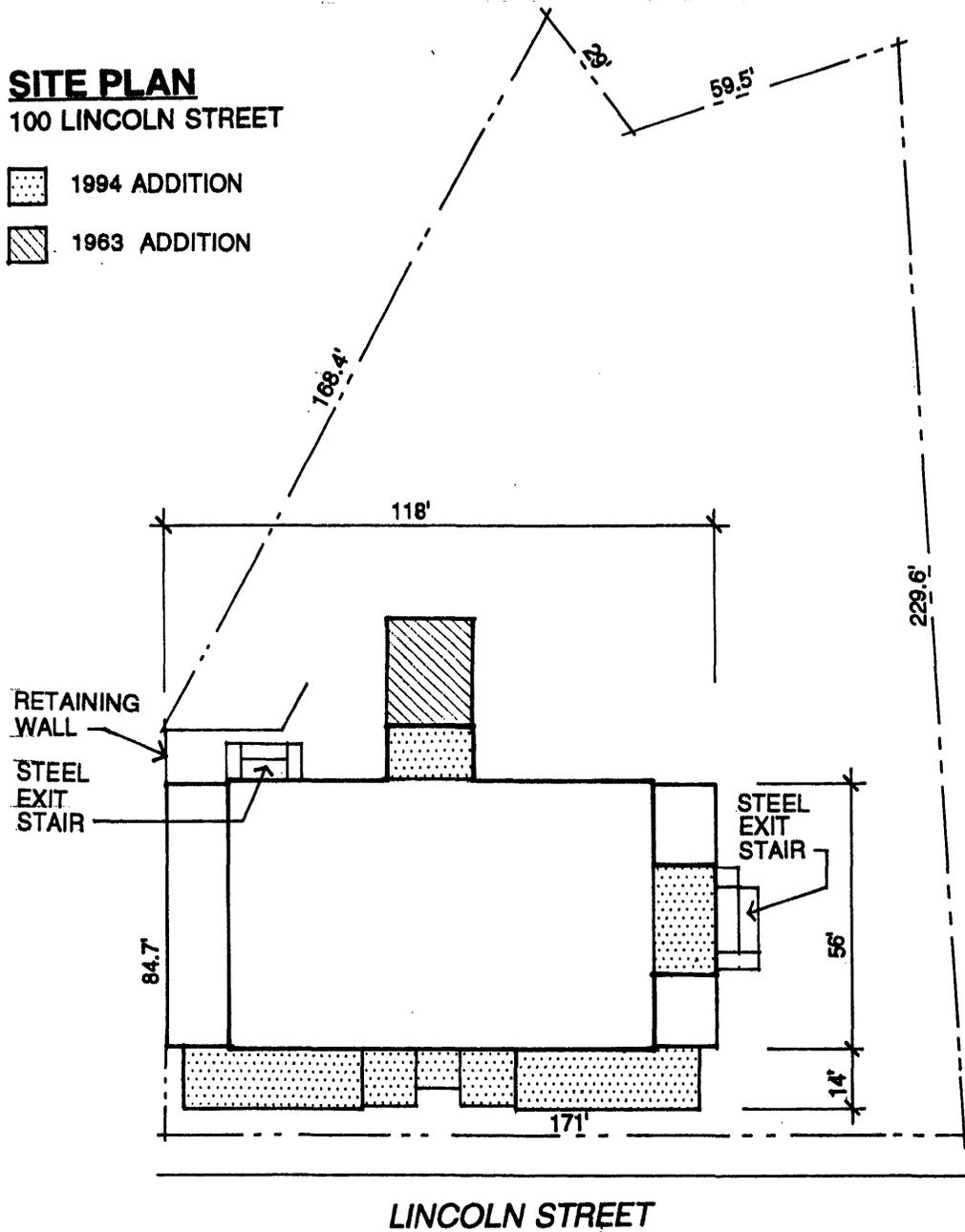
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1. Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska
unknown
circa 1940
Isabel Miller Museum, Sitka, Alaska
looking south at front of building shortly after construction
2. Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska
Linda Millard
May 1, 1997
Stephen Peters & Associates, Architects, Ketchikan, Alaska
looking southeast at front of building, taken from Totem Square
3. Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska
Linda Millard
May 1, 1997
Stephen Peters & Associates, Architects, Ketchikan, Alaska
looking east at west side of building
4. Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska
Linda Millard
May 1, 1997
Stephen Peters & Associates, Architects, Ketchikan, Alaska
looking north at rear of building

SITE PLAN

100 LINCOLN STREET

-  1994 ADDITION
-  1963 ADDITION



SCALE



Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House
Sitka, Alaska