

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018
MAY 01 1990

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: A.E.C. Cottage No. 23

other name/site number: DeLong Cottage
AHRS Site No. ANC-325

2. Location

street & number: 618 Christensen Drive

not for publication: NA

city/town: Anchorage

vicinity: NA

state: AK county: Anchorage Division code: 020 zip code: 99501

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date April 23, 1990

Alaska State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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 6. Function or Use
 =====

Historic: domestic Sub: single dwelling
 Current : commerce/trade Sub: professional

 =====
 7. Description
 =====

Architectural Classification: bungalow

Other Description: bungaloid

Materials: foundation partial basement, poured concrete
 roof shingle, composition
 walls frame, weatherboard
 other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

A.E.C. Cottage No. 23, located at 618 Christensen Drive in Anchorage, is a one-and-one-half story frame structure with a gable roof and an open porch spanning the front facade. Drop siding and cornerboards sheath the building. Of the various A.E.C. residences, No. 23 is the only one constructed according to file drawing number 1503. In moderately good condition, the only significant exterior alterations include a large central dormer constructed on the front elevation and an addition on the rear of the building. The house is located in a neighborhood of similarly-scaled buildings, former residences currently used for commercial purposes due to their proximity to downtown Anchorage.

The ground plan is almost square and measures 35'3" on the front elevation by 31'8" on one side and 27'4" on the opposite side. The building is sited in a rear corner of the lot and is directly adjacent to an alley running through the middle of the block. This siting allows the house to command a good view, as the lot slopes to the north, or street side. Typical residential landscaping, a five foot wide concrete walk and wooden steps leading to the front veranda, provide the site amenities. The walk and steps are located at the left end of the porch.

The orientation of the main facade to the gable roof is parallel. The roof has a moderate pitch and is covered with composition shingles. A fascia board, supporting a gutter, covers the original exposed rafters. An interior brick chimney is located near the ridge. The front facade has three bays and is unsymmetrical. The door is located on the left with two paired, 9/1, double hung windows to its right. These windows with simple wide frames are typical for the house and are seen either in single or paired format. Metal edged exterior storms are clipped into the frames.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : NA

Areas of Significance: Exploration/settlement

Period(s) of Significance: 1916-1930

Significant Dates : 1916

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Alaska Engineering Commission

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 is an example of Anchorage's early residential structures, and is a reminder of the community's railroad roots. The Alaska Engineering Commission (A.E.C.), created by the Federal Government to build a railroad (today's Alaska Railroad--ARR) from a year-round port to interior Alaska, built a number of houses, among them Cottage No. 23, in 1915 and 1916 to provide housing for its employees in the new town of Anchorage. The A.E.C. moved its administrative headquarters from Seward to Anchorage in 1916, a decision critical to the new community's future. The previous year, the A.E.C. had surveyed the Anchorage townsite and held an auction to sell lots. Because housing was in very short supply in the boom town, the A.E.C. determined that it needed to provide accommodations for its employees. In 1915 the A.E.C. built thirteen houses on Government Hill (which is located across the railroad yards and Ship Creek to the north of the town site) for employees, and in 1916 it built nineteen houses on the Anchorage Townsite. Eight of the houses (called cottages) still stand on Government Hill, eight still stand on the Anchorage Townsite, and another seven exist but have been moved from their original locations. Cottage No. 23 is one of two (the other is on Government Hill; the owner is not interested in nominating the property at this time) that have been minimally altered. Although changed quite a bit, another cottage in the Anchorage Townsite, A.E.C. Cottage No. 25 (AHRS Site No. ANC-330), has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1912, the U.S. Congress passed the Second Organic Act for Alaska that, among other provisions, created an Alaska Railroad Commission. The commission studied the railroad situation in the territory of Alaska, and

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

NA

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:

X State historic preservation office

Other state agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: less than 1 acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 06 344663 6790590 B

C D

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The nominated property occupies Lot 16A, Block 16, Original Anchorage Townsite and is approximately 60' x 80' in size.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Frank S. Koziol

Organization:

Date: February 1, 1990

Street & Number: 618 Christensen Drive

Telephone: (907) 258-7706

City or Town: Anchorage

State: AK ZIP: 99501

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The gable roof of the house extends over the front porch and is supported by four square posts with chamfered edges. Beaded ceiling board covers the ceiling of the porch and the walking surface is wood planking. The closed rail is made of narrow vertical strips butted tightly together. The entrance door is a large slab wood door with a single beveled glass panel. The door measures a full 3'0" by 7'0".

Although the interior has been modified, the basic room layout has been maintained and several original details remain. The ceilings in the front two rooms are 10' high. A picture rail runs continuously 1'0" below the ceiling. Original moldings still exist on all windows, and the inside of the front door has its matching hood. All exhibit a horizontal geometrical design. Repetition of these simple horizontal moldings produces an elegant and unified effect.

A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 sits on a partial basement. This poured concrete foundation occupies a little more than one-fourth the area and is located at the rear of the house. Three horizontal hinged windows provide light into this space. Interior, enclosed, concrete steps lead to it. The basement has a concrete slab floor.

Modifications to this 73-year old house have been surprisingly few. A large shed-roofed dormer sheathed with T-111 plywood and located on the front elevation is the most intrusive. A large metal framed Chicago window is centered on its north side. Smaller Chicago windows have replaced the original multi-paned windows in the east and west gable peaks. It is thought these alterations were made in the mid-1970s.

The addition on the rear of the building is also sheathed with T-111 plywood, and may have been added at the same time as the dormer. The addition has a steep shed roof with a gable highlighting and protecting the entry from snow slides. The door is a paneled metal door with a metal screen door.

The exterior modifications have not destroyed the architectural integrity of this building. Major elements such as windows and frames, open porch, and front door remain as originally built. Two original horizontal window frames, measuring 2'6" by 6'0", hold single pieces of fixed glass. These fixed panes may not be original. Located at the rear of the structure, they are not frequently-seen elements.

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Although the dormer is large and intrudes on the major facade, it is obviously of recent construction, is simple in execution, and does not overwhelm the original design.

The rear addition is small, representing about one-third of the horizontal distance across the rear facade and rising far less than the height of the remainder of the house. At the very back of the lot, it is seen infrequently and does not destroy the architectural integrity of the house.

Eight A.E.C. cottages remain in the neighborhood; all have been modified. The exterior facades of No. 23 have been altered the least and are closest to their original appearance of the eight Anchorage Townsite cottages.

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recommended that the government buy the Copper River and Northwestern Railway that began at Cordova and penetrated the interior about 160 miles to Chitina, and build a trunk line from Chitina to Fairbanks. This would cost less, they argued, than buying the Alaska Northern Railway that went from Seward to Turnagain Arm and extending the road to Fairbanks. The commission found Cordova's harbor better than Seward's. The Copper River railroad, however, was associated with the east coast Guggenheim and J.P. Morgan families and many people considered the "Guggs" Alaskan mining, shipping, fishing, and railroad operations a monopoly.

Democrat Woodrow Wilson replaced Republican William Howard Taft as U.S. President before the commission's report was adopted. Shortly after taking office, Wilson appointed a new three-person commission. Members included William C. Edes, Thomas Riggs, and Lt. Frederick Mears. Sensitive to political concerns, the new Alaska Engineering Commission (A.E.C.) also saw long-range benefits in opening the Matanuska and Susitna river valleys to develop agriculture and to tap coal resources. This second commission recommended the Seward to Fairbanks route for a government railroad. On March 12, 1914, the President signed a bill that authorized government construction of a railroad in Alaska. That summer the commission members established a field headquarters at the mouth of Ship Creek. On April 9, 1915, President Wilson announced selection of the route his commission recommended.

That spring, word spread rapidly through the communities of southcentral Alaska about a major construction camp to be established at the mouth of Ship Creek. Folks from Cordova, Valdez, Knik, Kodiak, and Seward headed for the camp. There would be construction jobs and a need for restaurants, entertainment, clothing and supply stores. Quickly, stamperders put up tents and opened businesses. The A.E.C. contracted with independent construction firms to build 100-foot sections of the railroad north and south from Ship Creek. This arrangement enticed contractors to move to Anchorage who, in turn, hired local laborers.

One of the purposes of the government-built railroad was to encourage the settlement of land adjacent to the route. In addition to building the railroad, the commission surveyed several townsites and held auctions to sell lots at Anchorage, Matanuska, Wasilla, Talkeetna, and Nenana. The auction at Anchorage--by far the largest--took place on July 10, 1915. That day, 655 lots in the townsite were sold for almost \$150,000.

By the spring of 1916, as many as 6,000 people had come to Anchorage. That year the A.E.C. moved its administrative operations from Seward to Anchorage.

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Because housing was in extremely short supply, the commission had built thirteen residences on Government Hill for its employees in 1915, and a second set of nineteen houses, including Cottage No. 23, on the original townsite in 1916. The commission designed the cottages, and local contractors constructed the houses. Apparently there were nine different building plans. Walter DeLong, A.E.C. general store keeper, moved into Cottage No. 23 in early 1917. During the first five years of Anchorage's existence, the town was managed by the Alaska Engineering Commission. The federal government, new to the railroad business, had inadvertently become involved in local government. The federal role in town management ended when Anchorage officially incorporated on November 23, 1920, but the railroad's continuing presence remained critical to the town's prosperity and growth.

A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 was a rental unit for railroad personnel until 1930 when it was sold. It continued to be used as a residence until its conversion to a law office in the late 1970s. The cottage is an example of Anchorage's first residential structures, and is a reminder of the community's railroad roots.

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Municipality of Anchorage, 1988).

Naske, Claus-M. and Ludwig Rowinski. Anchorage: A Pictorial History.
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Wilson, William H. Railroad in the Clouds: The Alaska Railroad in the Age of
Steam, 1914-1945. (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1977).

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1. A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 (AHRS Site No. ANC-325)
Anchorage, Alaska
Donna L. Lane
January 1990
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor
Recreation, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Looking southwest at front and east facades of building.
 2. A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 (AHRS Site No. ANC-325)
Anchorage, Alaska
Donna L. Lane
January 1990
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor
Recreation, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Looking south at front facade.
 3. A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 (AHRS Site No. ANC-325)
Anchorage, Alaska
Donna L. Lane
January 1990
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor
Recreation, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Looking east at the west facade.
 4. A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 (AHRS Site No. ANC-325)
Anchorage, Alaska
Donna L. Lane
January 1990
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor
Recreation, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Looking north at rear of cottage.
 5. A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 (AHRS Site No. ANC-325)
Anchorage, Alaska
Donna L. Lane
January 1990
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor
Recreation, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Looking west at the east facade.

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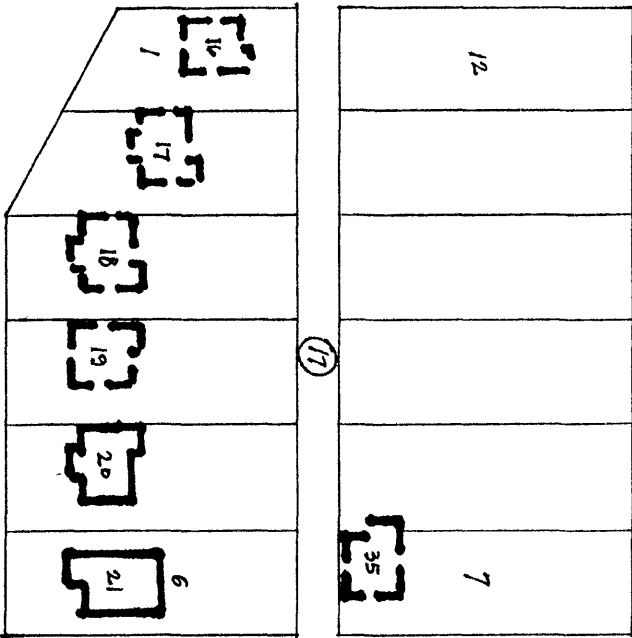
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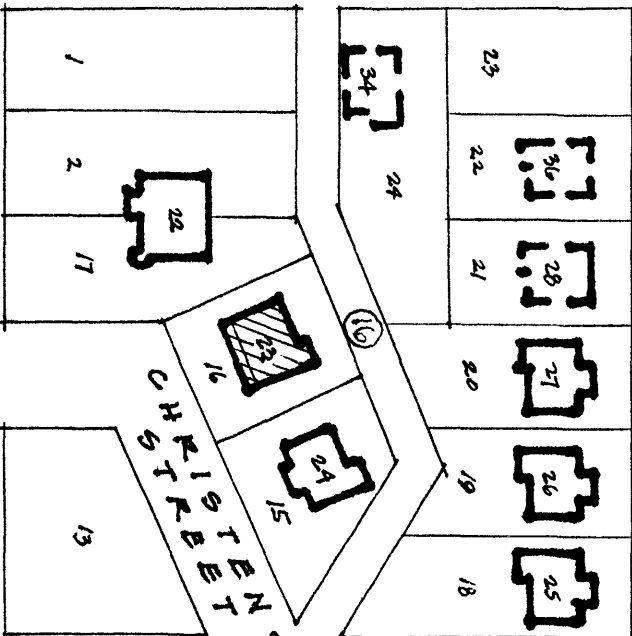
- =====
- 6. A.E.C. Cottage No. 23 (AHRS Site No. ANC-325)
Anchorage, Alaska
Donna L. Lane
January 1990
Office of History & Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor
Recreation, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Looking south at front entry of cottage.

E STREET



THIRD STREET

F STREET



STREET

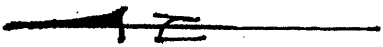
SECTION D

SECTION D

ORIGINAL LAYOUT OF A.E.C. COTTAGES
ON BLOCKS 16 AND 17

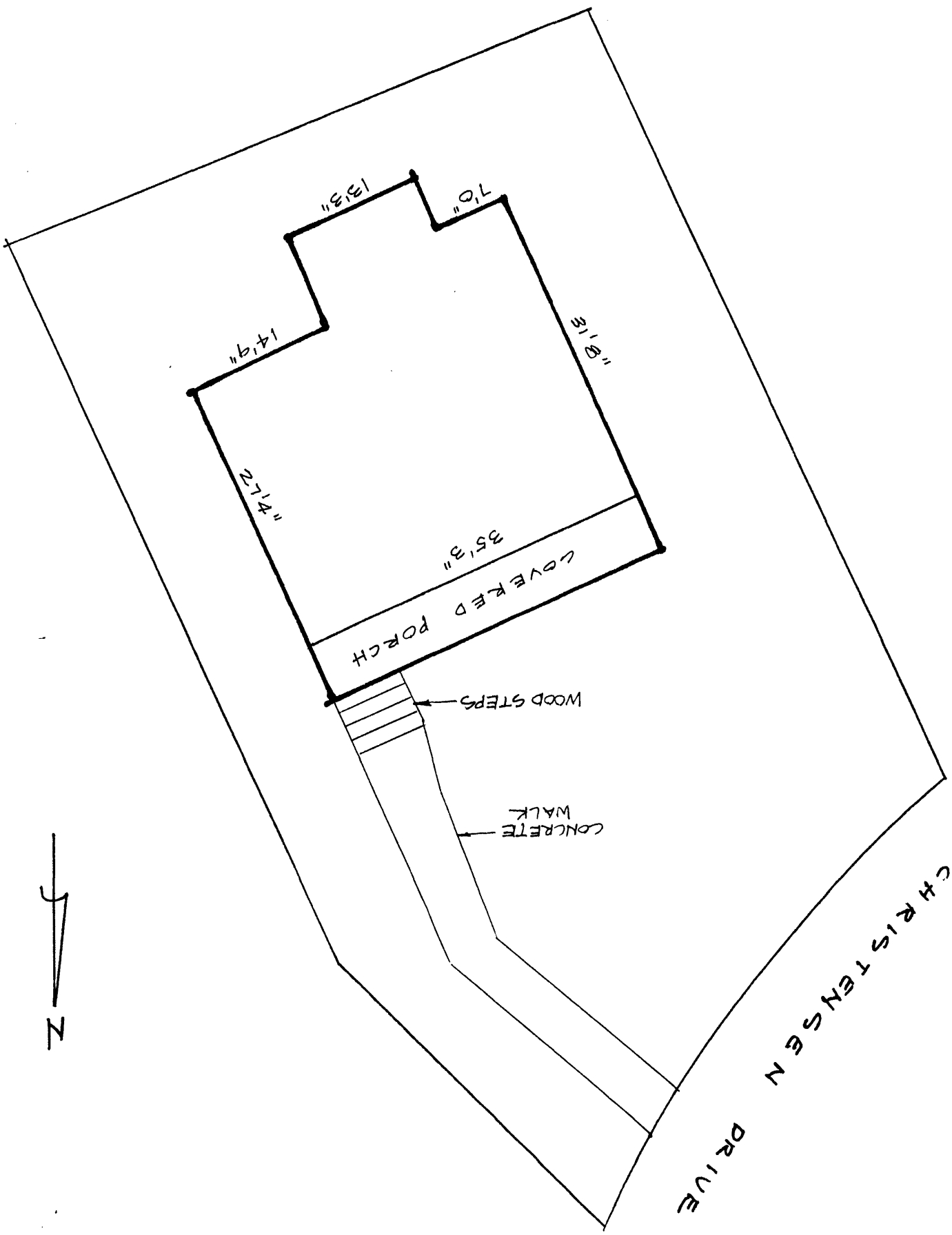


REMOVED/DEMOLISHED
EXISTING



A.E.C. COTTAGE NO. 25
(AARS SITE NO. ANC-325)
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
FEBRUARY, 1990

AEC COTTAGE 23
AHS SITE: ANC - 325



CHRISTENSEN DRIVE

