

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 Ketchikan Federal Building

other names/site number AHRS Site No. KET-00466

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 648 Mission Street

not for publication n/a

city or town Ketchikan vicinity n/a

state Alaska code AK county Ketchikan Gateway code 130

zip code 99901

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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>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u> </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u> </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<u> </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: post office
Government courthouse
Government customs house
Government correctional facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: government office
Government courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation steel piles/concrete
roof concrete
walls cast-in-place reinforced concrete

other _____

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

The Ketchikan Federal Building, built in 1937-1938, is a six-story L-shaped structure. The main section measures 50 by 117 feet. A single story wing on the northwest side of the façade measures 49 by 51 feet. The building is located at the southwest corner of Mission and Stedman streets in downtown Ketchikan. Designed by the Cleveland, Ohio architectural firm of Garfield, Stanley-Brown, Harris and Robinson, the building is an example of a simplified Modern Movement architectural style building. The design was coordinated through the Public Buildings Branch of the Treasury Department. The supervising architect was Louis A. Simon, a graduate of M.I.T. and further educated in Europe. The building has flat, plane-like surfaces, no ornamentation, a flat roof, and large window openings. The verticality of the Ketchikan Federal Building is in response to the limited level land available in the city.

Unlike federal buildings constructed in other places around the United States at the time, the Ketchikan building is an example of the multi-functional buildings constructed in the territory of Alaska. The facility combined governmental offices, including the post office, federal courthouse, customs house, and jail. Federal buildings in Anchorage, Sitka, Wrangell, Nome, Cordova, Fairbanks, and Juneau built about the same time also served multiple government agencies. Still used for government offices, the U.S. Forest Service occupies the first floor of the building, and courtrooms are on upper floors.

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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 1938-1955

Significant Dates 1938

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Garfield, Stanley-Brown, Harris and Robinson
J. B. Warrack Construction Company

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

The Alaska Year Book. "Ketchikan," *Alaska Weekly*, Seattle, Washington, 1927.

Allen, June, and Patricia Charles. *Spirit – Historic Ketchikan, Alaska*. Ketchikan: Historic Ketchikan, Inc., 1992.

Boyle Wagoner Architects. "A Review of the Historic Significance of the Ketchikan Federal Building." Copy in files of General Services Administration, Seattle, Washington. 1996.

Brice, Gene. "Fish and Lumber Lead in Ketchikan," Alaska Statehood and International Development edition. *Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle*.

Campbell, Douglas M. *Historic Downtown Ketchikan: A Restoration Handbook*. Ketchikan Historic Commission, 1986.

Craig, Lois. *The Federal Presence*. Boston, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1978.

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

Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle, Ketchikan, Alaska, January 6, 1939.

Kolva, J. H. Multiple property documentation on historic U.S. Post Offices in Alaska, 1900-1941. Spokane, Washington: Institute for Local and Urban Studies, 1989.

Ratio Architects. *BPP (Building Preservation Plan) Federal Building – Ketchikan, Alaska (Building #AK005AK)*. Indianapolis, Indiana: 1996.

Tobin, Emery. "Ketchikan's Progress in Industrial Leadership," *Cordova Daily Times All-Alaska Review for 1927*. December 24, 1927.

U.S. General Services Administration. *Growth Efficiency and Modernism*. Washington, D.C., Office of the Chief Architect.

U.S. Treasury Department, Procurement Division. Original design drawings, June 23, 1936. Microfilm in files of General Services Administration, Northwest Arctic Region, Design and Construction, Auburn, Washington.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Bibliographic Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles, California: New Age Publishing Co., 1956.

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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
=====

Acreege of Property 1.74 acres

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

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 09 332549 6135788 3 -- _____

2 _____ 4 _____

See continuation sheet.

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

All of Block 25A, Tract A, Ketchikan townsite as outlined on the attached plan.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the nominated property include the entire city lot historically associated with the building given to the federal government by the City of Ketchikan in the 1920s.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Nielsen, GSA Region 10 Intern, and Erin Brasell, NCPA Intern

organization General Services Administration, Center for Historic Buildings

date April 15, 2005

street & number 400 15th Street, SW

telephone 253-931-7192

city or town Auburn **state** Washington **zip code** 98001-6599

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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 General Services Administration – Region 10

street & number 400 15th Street, SW

telephone 253-931-7192

city or town Auburn **state** Washington **zip code** 98001-6599

The Ketchikan Federal Building was to meet the needs of a growing community and replace the existing 1905 courthouse that did not provide ample space and was in disrepair. Like most other office and commercial buildings in the community at the time, the Ketchikan Federal Building was constructed on piles. It differed from other Ketchikan buildings, however, because the piles were steel not wood. Contractor J. B. Warrack boasted in the local *Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle* on March 4, 1938, "there is no other building in the northwest or the Territory with a similar foundation."

The building is on a pie-shaped lot approximately 315 feet long on the northeast water edge, 393 feet along the southwest land side, 250 feet along Mission Street, and 199 feet along Stedman Street. The north and east sides are bounded by sidewalks and a lawn. The south and west sides are bounded by concrete and asphalt parking lots and driveways.

The building has a six-story tower along Stedman Street (east), and the tower and a one-story wing facing Mission Street (north). The inside of the "L" had a one-story boiler room and loading dock, and now has two additions. The building is constructed of cast-in-place reinforced concrete and sits atop a raised, slightly projecting concrete foundation wall. The wall surfaces have a rubbed finish and are smooth except for horizontal reveals at the sills and heads of the windows on each floor. The elevations have grouped window openings which align from floor to floor. Most of the original wood frame doors and windows have been replaced with aluminum units. Some window openings have been filled. A slightly recessed concrete parapet cap terminates the elevations.

The main façade of the building faces north. It has a three-bay, six-story tower to the east, and a three-bay, one-story wing to the west. The granite corner stone is located at the east end. A concrete walk and ramp with metal railings leads to the main entrance centered on the tower section. This entry originally had three paneled wood doors with clear-glazing set in a molded wood frame with multi-light, clear-glazed transom windows. Today, the doors are modern anodized aluminum and glass units set in an aluminum frame below a single-light transom. Wrought iron coach lights and cast bronze letters reading FEDERAL BUILDING KETCHIKAN ALASKA highlight this entrance. The windows above the entry are paired around concrete panels with beveled cat reeds detail. The outer two bays of the tower section have paired windows around wood mullions.

The elevation facing east is six stories at its northern end and only five stories at its southern end. A high-walled open-air jail promenade occupied the fifth floor roof area. This elevation is divided into six bays with door and window openings. A secondary entrance, originally the jail entrance, is located near the north end of the first floor. The elevation facing south is five stories at the east end and one story at the recessed west end. The elevation facing west has five stories at the south end, six stories at the north end, and one story associated with the building's wing. A single-story concrete and metal clad addition to the rear of the building was added in 1953-1954 to expand the postal workroom and replaced the boiler room and loading dock. A second addition was added a few years later. Although the additions differs in construction from the original building, they are located on the back of the main building and do not detract from the primary north and east facades.

The first floor, formerly the post office lobby now has offices. Most of the character-defining features were lost when the post office moved in the 1970s. The most significant historic space in the building is the fifth floor courtroom. The one-and-a-half-story space is accessed through a pair of solid wood doors. The room retains its

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original decorative red cedar millwork finishes, its original spatial volume, and its overall historic character. The walls have a four-foot high wainscot with reeded cap moldings. The wall surfaces above the wainscot are smooth painted plaster. The judge's platform, jury box, railing and seating are polished red cedar. The flat banded ceiling originally had pendant style fixtures that have been replaced with fluorescent fixtures and infill panels of acoustical tile. The building has four wall murals painted directly on the concrete walls of the original jail recreation area.

After the post office moved out of the building, the General Services Administration remodeled the first floor for offices in 1976-1977. All evidence of the quarry tile floors and wainscoting in the lobbies has been removed except for a small area at the northeast stairway. The original clerestory windows and workroom skylight remain. Other interior alterations over the years necessitated filling some of the original window openings. The Modern style opalescent entry light fixtures have been replaced with carriage lanterns. An entrance ramp with metal railings is a recent addition to the main entrance.

The Ketchikan Federal Building has been a government facility used by various federal agencies since its construction. Changes in tenants necessitated renovation and modification of interior spaces. Changes to the exterior have been to doors and windows on all sides, and additions on the back of the building not visible from the principal elevations. These modifications have not impacted the building's ability to convey a federal presence in Ketchikan, Alaska.

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

The Ketchikan Federal Building is associated with the presence of the federal government in the southeast Alaska community and contextually relates to the politics and government in the territory before statehood. Ketchikan was founded in the 1880s and quickly became the regional supply center for southern Southeast Alaska, a distinction the city retains to this day. The building meets National Register criterion A, marking a point in the city's pattern of development and its prominence in the territory. The poured concrete six-story building, completed in 1938, provided residents with a new post office, court and jail, and replaced an earlier wood structure. The Ketchikan Federal Building is an example of how the federal government adopted the building to Alaska's unique territorial needs and housed several federal offices in one building. It still serves as a center for federal government services in Ketchikan today, including the federal courthouse, however the end of the period of significance is 1955, fifty years ago.

Historical background

Ketchikan is called Alaska's "First City" because when one travels along the coast from the western U.S. and Canada it is the first city in Alaska along the route. The site had been used for years by Native people to catch fish. In the 1880s non-Natives started salmon canneries at the site and established businesses to serve area gold and copper miners. The City of Ketchikan incorporated in 1900.

Cities in Alaska sought to get federal buildings in the second decade of the twentieth century, but most were delayed due to World War I. Between 1924 and 1941, eight combined post office and federal buildings were constructed in the territory, including one at Ketchikan. The Alaska federal buildings were unique, designed simply, and to be of poured concrete. They were designed to house a number of federal agencies in one facility instead of several.

Post World War I was a period of expansion for Ketchikan. A 1927 newspaper described the town as "one of the fastest growing communities in Alaska today." The abundance of natural resources provided jobs in fishing, mining, and timber for 6,500 residents. Tourism brought 13,000 to 15,000 people annually to the town out of the total territorial tourism visitation of 17,000 to 18,000 in 1926 and 1927.

"Ketchikan is noted as an Alaska city that has continuously progressed industrially" wrote another newspaper in the same year. New streets were permanent, not boardwalks. Graded and surfaced roads extended out of town for scenic drives and canneries. Within town new construction, especially of "fire-proof" buildings, thrived. Concrete was the building material of choice after fires that had devastated the wooden urban landscape. Hotels, apartments, schools, utility and commercial buildings expanded the town in the late twenties, along with a Masonic Temple, churches, a hospital, two lumber mills, and six freight lines. Ketchikan was growing and eager for federal services to continue expanding and modernizing.

On July 16, 1924, the Common Council of the City of Ketchikan adopted a memorial to petition the federal government to make "ample appropriations" for construction of a new courthouse or federal building. The Ketchikan's Women's Council described the 1905 courthouse in use at the time as "inadequate for present

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needs, and unfavorably located in a residential section with its jail in close proximity to the school.” The group proposed the old site become a playground for its new school and a federal building be located and built downtown. Two years later Ketchikan and Fairbanks were notified there were funds to plan new federal buildings. In 1931 construction funds were approved for federal buildings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Ketchikan.

The city donated land at the corner of Mission and Stedman streets for the federal building. The Cleveland, Ohio architectural firm of Garfield, Stanley-Brown, Harris and Robinson received the design contract. The design is characterized by its absence of ornamentation, box-like shape, expansive windows, smooth wall surfaces, and cantilevered building extensions.

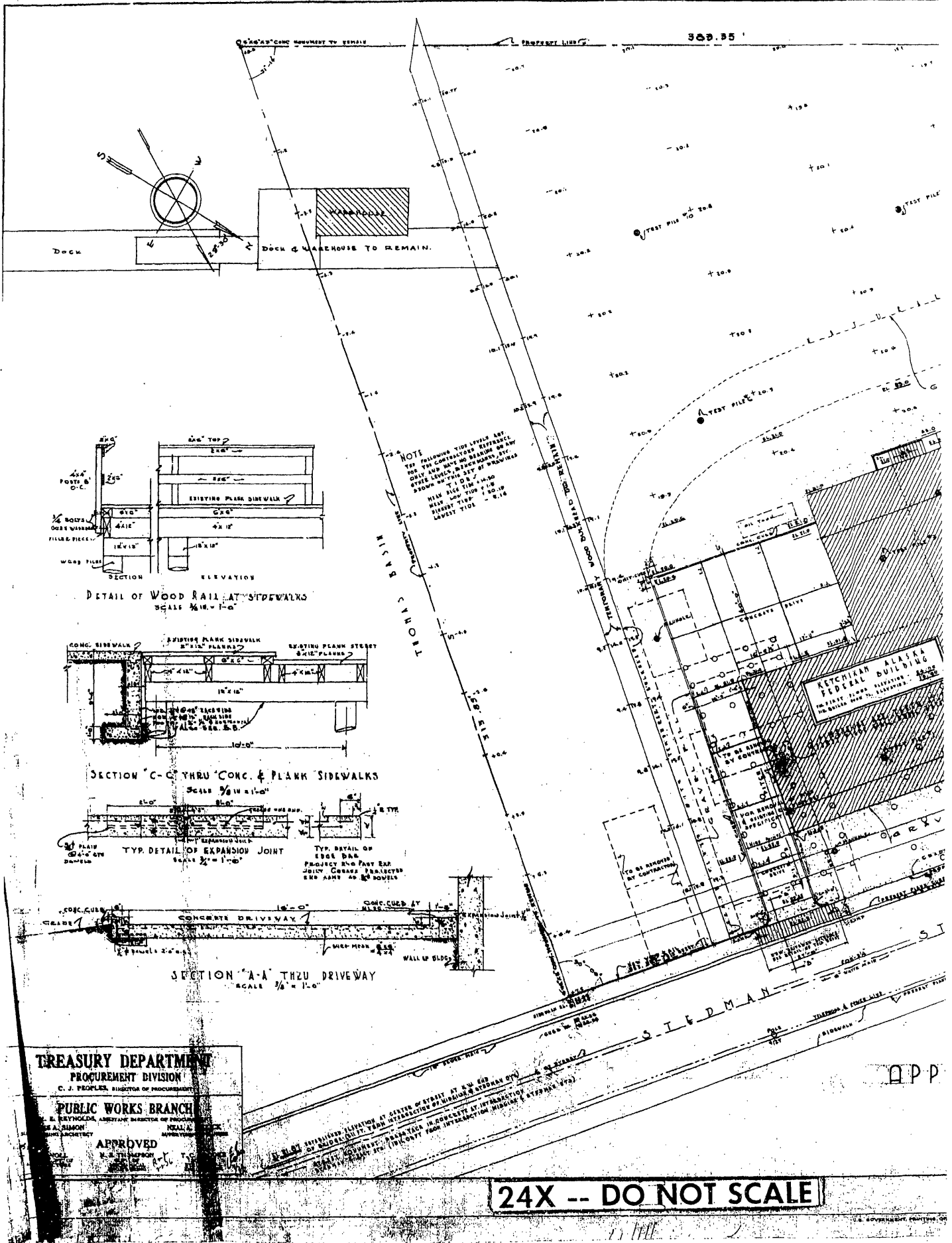
The J. B. Warrack Construction Company received the construction contract of \$320,000, not including the elevator, fixtures, and furnishings. Two hundred and seventy-six copper-bearing steel piles were driven, their tops cut off level, and concrete poured around the groups to form the foundation for the building. This was a departure from the standard wooden piling system used on previous waterfront buildings in Ketchikan. The rest of the building consists of reinforced concrete girder and beam construction.

The building officially opened March 5, 1938, a year and a day after ground was broken. (The same year Pan Am World Airways began Clipper flights from Seattle to Ketchikan.) The building was five times as large as the average federal building constructed in other cities of around 5,000 people. It originally housed eleven government departments and bureaus. The post office occupied the entire first floor. The district courtroom, offices, and jail cells were on the fifth floor.

The postal work space was extended in the mid-1950s, and another addition was constructed at the rear of the building in the late 1950s. After the post office moved to a new facility, the postal service transferred ownership of the building to the General Services Administration (GSA) in 1976. In 1977-1978, GSA remodeled the building to create office space. The building currently houses the U.S. Forest Service, District/Bankruptcy Court, and GSA staff.

Ketchikan Federal Building

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT
PROCUREMENT DIVISION
 C. J. PEOPLES, DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT

PUBLIC WORKS BRANCH
 R. B. REYNOLDS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT
 W. A. SIMON, ARCHITECT

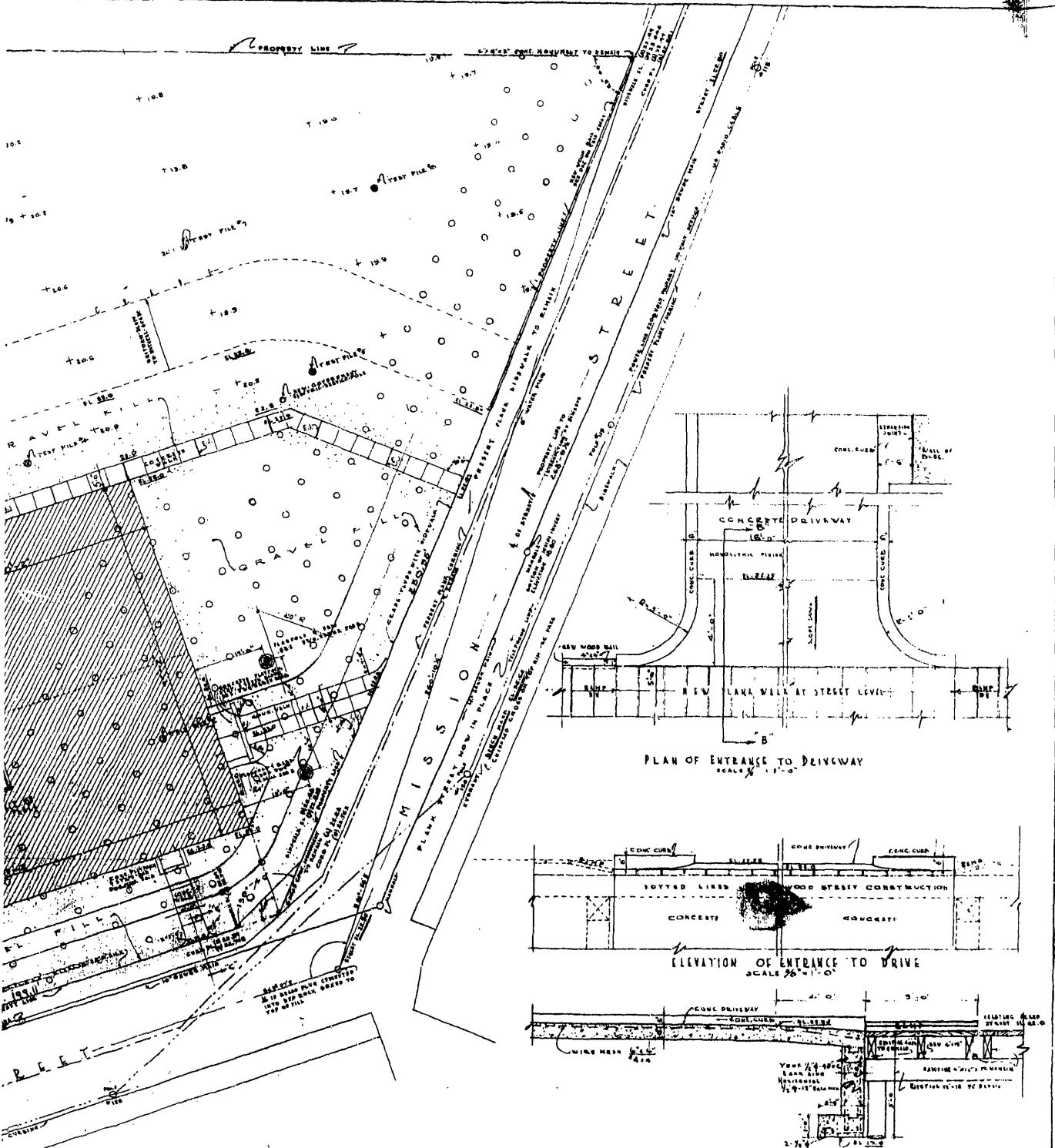
APPROVED
 [Signature]

OPP

BLOCK 25A

Ketchikan Federal Building

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PLAN OF ENTRANCE TO DRIVEWAY
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

ELEVATION OF ENTRANCE TO DRIVE
SCALE 3/8" = 1'-0"

SECTION 'B-B' THROUGH ENTRANCE TO DRIVEWAY
SCALE 3/8" = 1'-0"

ROACH PLAN

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

GENERAL NOTES:

EXISTING CONDITIONS ARE INDICATED BY DASHED LINES AND DIMENSIONS THEREOF ARE SHOWN BY DASHED DIMENSION LINES.
 ALL DIMENSIONS ARE UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.
 SEE SPECIFICATIONS FOR MATERIALS AND METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION.
 THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.
 THE TEST PIT SHALL BE LOCATED AS SHOWN ON THE DRAWING.
 CONTRACTOR SHALL MAINTAIN ACCESS TO ALL EXISTING UTILITIES.
 SEE SPECIFICATIONS FOR MATERIALS AND METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION.

FOR CONCRETE REINFORCEMENT AND SIZE OF STRUCTURAL MEMBERS SEE STRUCTURAL DRAWINGS

GARFIELD STANLEY-BROWN HARRIS AND TORRIDGE ARCHITECTS O. C. ROACH CLEVELAND, OHIO	BUILDING DESIGNED BY STANLEY-BROWN ENGINEER CONSULTANTS CITY OF KETCHIKAN-ALASKA DRAWN BY P.M. DATE: 2-23-35 CHECKED BY C.P. PELLOW DATE: ... DRAWING NO. GS-101, I B
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TRACT A

AK00522

RETURN TO...