Form No. 10-306 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 16 1986
DATE ENTERED NOV 25 1986

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
UNITED STATES COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY SEISMOLOGICAL AND GEOMAGNETIC HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON
FOREST SERVICE HOUSE (AHRS #49 SIT 194)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
210 Seward Street — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Sitka — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Alaska

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Alaska 99835	02	Sitka	220

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC Forest Service	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*
USDA FOREST SERVICE, ALASKA REGION

STREET & NUMBER
P.O. Box 1628

CITY, TOWN
JUNEAU — VICINITY OF

STATE
ALASKA 99802

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Sitka Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
304 Lake Street

CITY, TOWN
Sitka,

STATE
Alaska 99835

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)

DATE
March 7, 1977 — __FEDERAL X STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys

CITY, TOWN
Pouch 7-028
Anchorage,

STATE
Alaska 99510

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at 210 Seward Street in downtown Sitka, Alaska, the Forest Service House is a two-story rectangular wood frame building with a full cement basement built into bedrock. The house exhibits early 20th century gambrel-roofed cottage architecture. The exterior of the house measures approximately 36 by 26 feet. The wood clapboard exterior walls are painted white with brown trim.

A covered front porch measures 7 by 8 feet and is reached by seven straight wood steps. This is an open porch supported on piers with plain wood posts. The entrance leads into a vestibule which is flanked to the left by a bedroom, and to the right by the living room. The rear porch is also covered, measures 4 by 4 feet, and leads directly into the kitchen. According to early (1958) blueprints, this porch was originally enclosed with lattice work.

While many of the windows have been replaced, many of the original windows are still in place. All of the windows maintain a flat structural opening. All basement windows are 3-paned, pivoted in simple wood frames. On the north elevation, the second story has one double-hung window in a simple wood frame. The first story has one 4-paned fixed window on the porch, one fixed single-pane and two double-hung six vertical over one windows, all in simple wood frames. The west elevation has one double-hung one over one window in the pediment gable, and two double-paned fixed windows on either side of the porch; all are in simple wood frames. The front door is a six-paned over two-panel center door in a plain wood frame located in the main facade. The south elevation has a double-hung window in a simple wood frame on the second story and three two-paned fixed windows (one over one) on the first story. The east elevation has one double-hung one over one window in the shed-styled dormer. The first story windows are two single-paned fixed windows side by side in simple wood frames and one double-hung one over one in a simple wood frame. The two doors consist of a four-paned over two-panel door, which enters down into the basement, and one single-pane over a single-panel door located in the main facade which enters the kitchen; both are in simple wood frames.

The gambrel roof has a shed dormer in a central position on the east and west elevations. Covered with red cedar shakes and copper flashing, the roof has a single chimney of brick offset to the right (from the north elevation) center. The first and second floors are separated by a plain cornice and overhanging eaves. On the north and south elevations, this is achieved by the use of a narrow apron roof. The eaves are soffited. Gutters are made of wood all around but are attached to metal downspouts.

The interior of the house has a total of seven rooms. Upstairs there are three bedrooms and one bathroom; downstairs are the kitchen, dining-living room, and what was originally an office-darkroom combination. The living room houses a fireplace which has its foundation in the basement but functions from the main floor. The original heating is thought to have been by coal furnace, as suggested by the presence of two coal chutes on the southern basement wall, and an ash pit located next to the present oil furnace.

The house was originally built in the summer of 1916 by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Coast and Geodetic Survey, to serve as housing and office space for the observer in charge of the Sitka Magnetic Observatory, which had been established in 1901. Since its construction, the structure's exterior has remained virtually unchanged.

In 1922, when A. K. Lundy was observer in charge of the Magnetic Observatory, wires were run between the observatory buildings and the office (Forest Service House).

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	X SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	X POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1916 BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Forest Service House is one of the last surviving examples of gambrel-roof cottage architecture in Sitka today. A 2-story house with a cement basement built into solid rock, used to house the scientific instruments of the Geodetic Observatory, the site commands a spectacular view of the surrounding area.

The land for the House was acquired from the Russians under Alexis Pestchouroff, Commissioner for Russia. Records of the transaction are published in House Executive Document Number 125, 40th Congress and session to wit. Under terms of the treaty for the purchase of Alaska, certain areas of Sitka were set aside for governmental use; this parcel of land was withdrawn under that agreement.

Since its construction in 1916, the Forest Service House has had a long history of government use. Originally owned by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (U.S.C.&G.S.), the house functioned as office and living space for the observers in charge of the first United States magnetic and seismic observatories in Sitka. (A Russian magnetic observatory was in operation between 1842 and 1867 on Japonski Island just west of Sitka.)

Sitka was selected as the site of a permanent magnetic observatory for several reasons. First, of the then-existing magnetic observatories, Sitka was nearest the North Pole at 61^{0} North Latitude. Further, Sitka is only a short distance from the auroral zone. Records from the Sitka magnetic observatory have proven to be valuable in the study of magnetic phenomena in the Arctic as well as for regions of lower magnetic latitude. Also, in higher magnetic latitudes, there is a tendency for greater fluctuations in the ranges of the magnetic elements. By situating the magnetic observatory in Sitka (a relatively lower magnetic latitude), it was possible to avoid the expense of special instruments which would have been required at higher magnetic latitudes in order to collect the same data. Other factors influencing the decision of locality included temperature considerations, accessibility, and uniformity in the distribution of magnetism for the general locality. A field survey by J. A. Fleming in the summer of 1901 confirmed that the Sitka locality was unusually free from local magnetic disturbances.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ulrich, Franklin P., Outstanding Features of the Magnetic Results from the Sitka Magnetic Observatory, reprinted from the Proceedings of the Fifth Pacific Science Conference, Victoria and Vancouver, B.C., 1933.

Bauer, L.A., and J.A. Fleming, The Magnetic Observatories of the USC & GS in Operation July 1, 1902, reprinted from the Annual Report of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, 1902.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	0 8	4 7 9 6 7 5	6 3 2 2 9 0 0
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION As taken from USC&GS No. 1473

Located in Sitka Townsite Block 5, starting from the intersection of American and Seward Streets, property boundary extends 141.69 ft. at 69°23' E of N, thence 76.44 ft. at 88°00' E of S, thence 87.83 ft. at 10°48' E of S, thence 154.21 ft. at 68°53' W of S, thence 27.36 ft. at 25°05' E of S, thence 34.00 ft. at 64°55' E of N, thence 92.94 ft. at 25°05' to return to the point of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Karen Swanson, Archeologist, and Stanley Davis, Forest Archeologist — DATE: 24 September 1985

ORGANIZATION

USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, Chatham Area, Tongass NF

STREET & NUMBER — TELEPHONE

204 Siginaka Way — (907) 747-6671

CITY OR TOWN — STATE

Sitka — Alaska 99835

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X NO ____ NONE ____

Judith E. Bittner

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ____ National ____ State X Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE Evan L. DeBloois

TITLE AGENCY PRESERVATION OFFICER — DATE SEP 26 1986

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William B. Bushong — DATE 11/25/86

for DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: — DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 892-303

The observatory buildings were located to the north on Observatory Street at that time. The connection was made in order to monitor the instruments from the office rather than having to go to the observatory to read them.

In 1929 two concrete piers (3 feet high) were constructed in the basement's northwest corner in order to accommodate a single component Wood Anderson seismometer for the Sitka Seismic Observatory. Beginning in 1904, the seismometer functioned simultaneously with the magnetic observatory located in the seismic building, also on Observatory Street. In order for these piers to be constructed, the bedrock floor of the basement had to be drilled into and the concrete poured.

In 1940 the Sitka magnetic and seismic observatories and offices were moved from their locations on Observatory and Seward Streets (respectively) to Geodetic Way, a site located northwest of the original site. The reasoning behind this move was to accommodate the growth of the observatory, which could not be met in its original setting due to the expansion of the residential area of downtown Sitka.

The Alaska Communications System acquired the house in 1940 and transferred it to the Forest Service in 1961. Since then, modifications have consisted of maintenance activities such as replacing the furnace. Throughout its history, the interior floor plans have remained unchanged.

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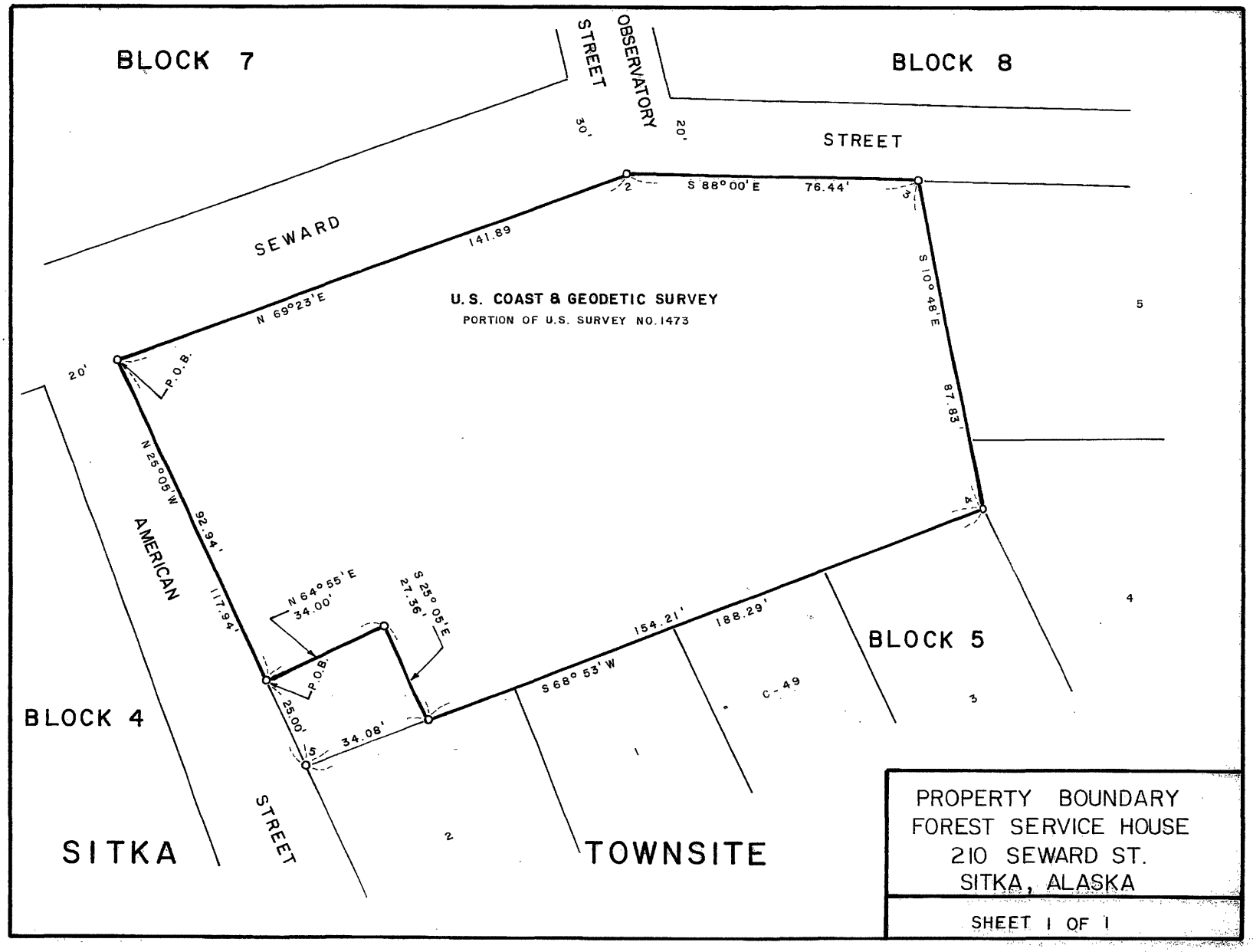
The magnetic and seismic observatory buildings, where the instruments were housed, were located on Observatory Street to the north of the Forest Service House. The Forest Service House began functioning as the magnetic observatory in 1922 when a remote hookup was established between it and the observatory buildings for the purposes of monitoring. In 1929 the house served as the seismic observatory when a single component Wood Anderson seismometer was moved from the seismic building to the basement of the house, where two concrete piers had been specifically constructed in order to accommodate the instrument.

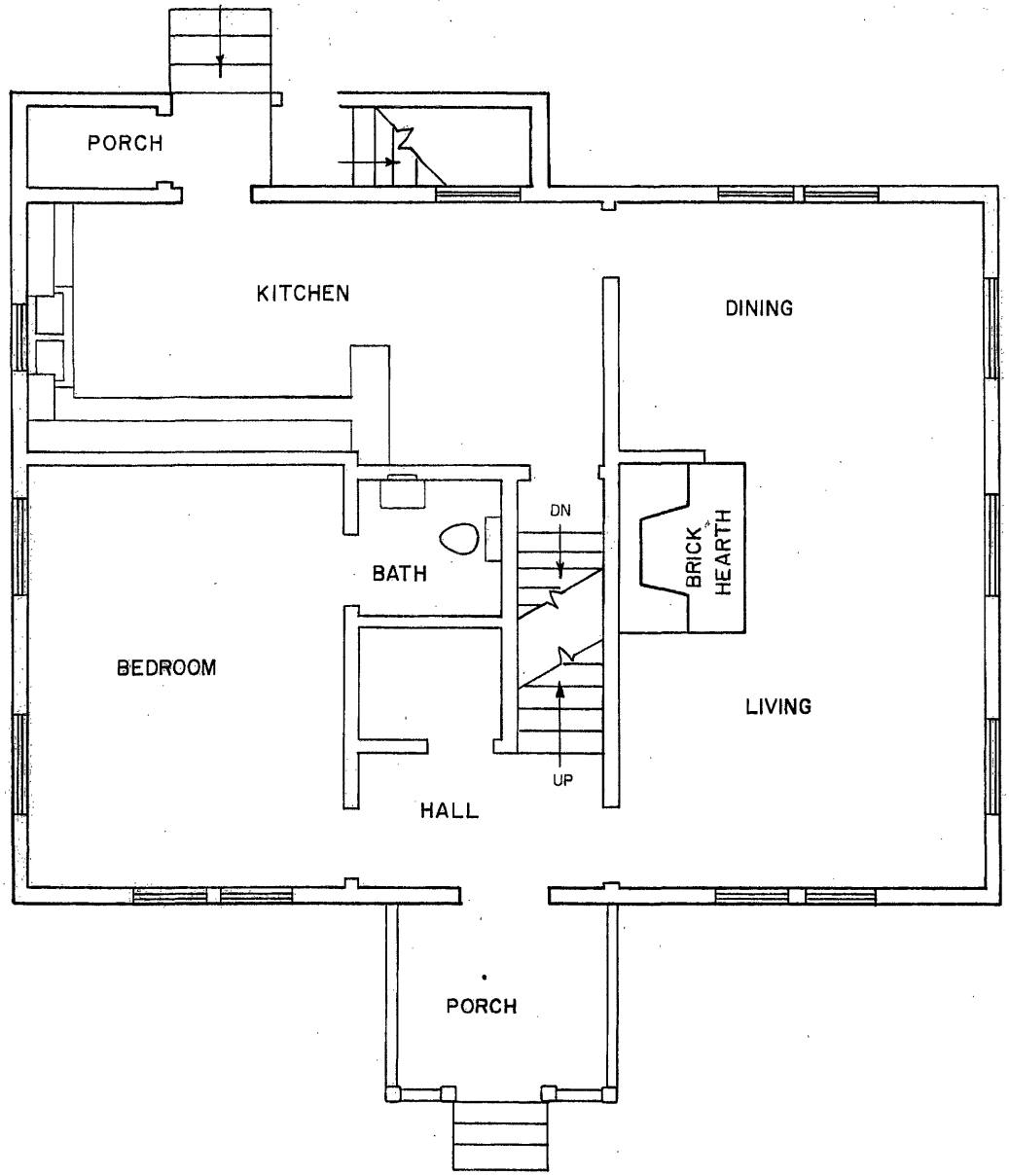
The Forest Service House continued as the headquarters for the U.S.C.&G.S. Magnetic and Seismic Observatories until 1940, when the headquarters was moved to its present location on Geodetic Way. At that time the house was placed in an "Entrustment of Custody" to the Department of the Army. In 1954 a "permanent" transfer took place giving the Alaska Communications System (ACS) custody. In 1958 the ACS remodeled the house and utilized it as housing.

The house was acquired by the USDA Forest Service in 1961. Since that time it has served various functions including housing and office space, and presently is used as a medical educational facility.



PROPERTY BOUNDARY
FOREST SERVICE HOUSE
210 SEWARD ST.
SITKA, ALASKA

SHEET 1 OF 1

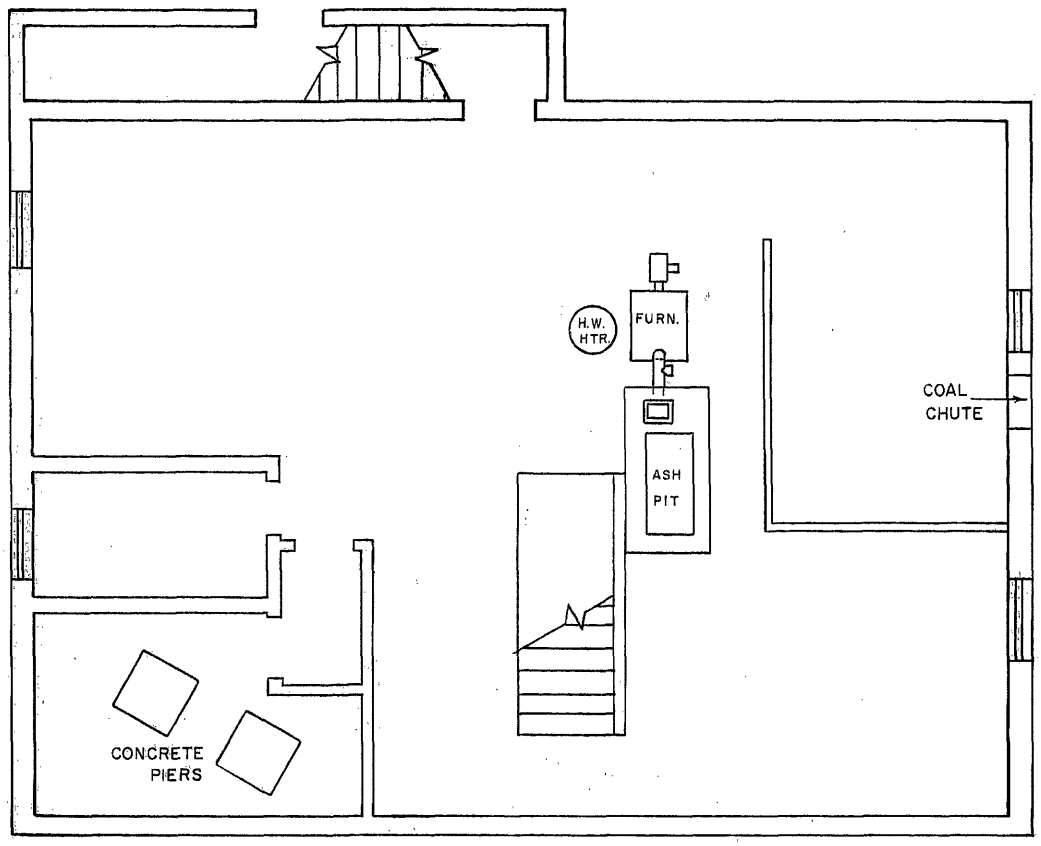


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

FOREST SERVICE HOUSE
210 SEWARD ST.
SITKA, ALASKA

SHEET 2 OF 3



BASEMENT PLAN

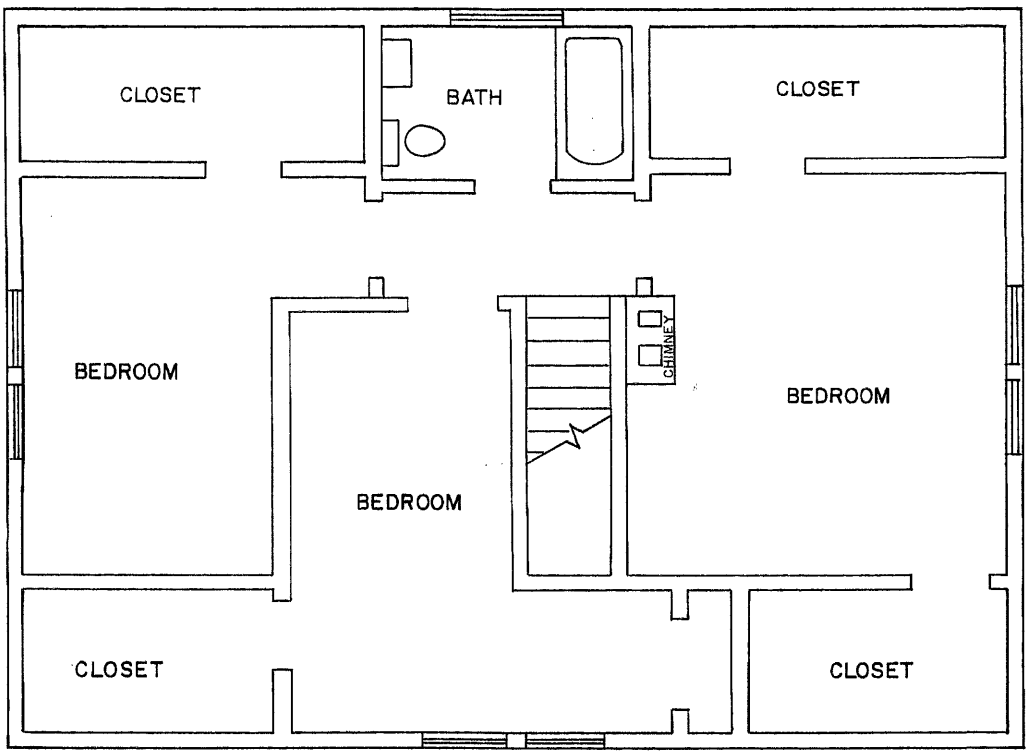
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

FOREST SERVICE HOUSE

210 SEWARD ST.

SITKA, ALASKA

SHEET 1 OF 3



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"

FOREST SERVICE HOUSE
210 SEWARD ST.
SITKA, ALASKA

SHEET 3 OF 3