

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 6 1987

date entered

MAY 18 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic First Lutheran Church AHRS SITE NO. KET-141

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 1200 Tongass Avenue not for publication

city, town Ketchikan vicinity of

state Alaska 99901 code 02 county Ketchikan code 130

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name First Lutheran Church

street & number 1200 Tongass Avenue

city, town Ketchikan vicinity of state Alaska 99901

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. State of Alaska District Recording Office

street & number 415 Main Street

city, town Ketchikan state Alaska 99901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Ketchikan Gateway Borough Survey of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 30, 1980 (File #437-D-1-16) federal state county local

depository for survey records Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Office, 344 Front Street

city, town Ketchikan state Alaska 99901

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Ketchikan is built upon a narrow ribbon of relatively flat land located along the steep shoulder of Minerva Mountain on one side, and bounded by the waters of Tongass Narrows on the other. The First Lutheran Church is built into the bedrock of a hill in that strip of land to symbolize the solidity of the church's faith. Its imposing, solid mass is countered by strong vertical elements that include the rhythm of tall, arched windows, sharply-pointed gable ends, and a tall steeple.

The church stands at the corner of Water and Tongass Streets. It is a two story, wood frame building on a concrete foundation. A simple gable roof covers the single nave within, with an east-west transept at the north end of the building sheltered under two projecting gable roofs. The tall, lancet windows on the second floor are arranged in groups of two and three. They are set in rectangular frames with tracery filling in the frames above the arch. The ground floor windows are arranged in the same grouping of two or three, and are simple, triple-hung, rectangular windows. Stained glass windows are located in both end walls of the nave and windows along both sides of the sanctuary. Projecting from the southwest corner is a three-story tower, its entry capped with a four-centered arch with a transom, and containing flat- and pointed-arched windows with hoods in the walls. The tower is capped by a spire and a cross, facing out to sea.

The building's surfaces are elegantly simple, reflecting the traditional and careful attitude of the congregation toward the danger of excess ornate detailing. This conservative attitude tempered the exuberant twentieth century style's fascination with new forms and shapes. Examples of this measured sincerity are found in the stark simplicity of the sanctuary walls and railing, the reserved elegance of the patterns of the windows in the north wall, and the restrained keyhole arches in the bottom panels of the sanctuary doors. On the exterior, controlled forms are developed through the use of narrow, exterior hoods above the arched windows, in wall surfaces unadorned but for the texture of the 6" siding and cornerboards, and in the rigidly plain cornices. The design has sought refuge in its great mass and taken simplified Gothic elements for its restrained ornamentation. Reflective of its time, the design provided a familiar ecclesiastical atmosphere without venturing into the frivolity of the modern style.

Functionally, the church was designed to provide all its services within the organization of a single building that included the parish house, parish hall, kitchen, classrooms, and house of worship. It is built on two stories, the ground floor contains a centrally located Sunday school auditorium, flanked by a classroom, kitchen, stairs, and lavatory on the south side, and a three bedroom apartment for the pastor on the north. The auditorium (43'-2" by 32'-2") is divided into four bays by plastered 10" x 16" girders on 10" x 10" posts that run across the width of the room to support the church auditorium above. On the main floor, the church auditorium occupies a central location with the restroom, lobby and entrance on the south; the sacristy is in the northwest end of the transept, and the robing rooms are in the northeast side.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1930

Builder/Architect W.G. Brust/Carl Foss

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

First Lutheran Church of Ketchikan helped many Norwegian immigrants to the southeast Alaskan town acculturate to the United States and also retain portions of their Norwegian heritage. It is the only non-residential structure representative of the whole of the Norwegian experience in Ketchikan. The church's history is connected with the historic settlement of Ketchikan, Norwegian immigration to and ethnic heritage of the community, and the fisheries industry in the area.

Between 1890 and 1940 the halibut industry was a primary contributor to Ketchikan's economy, second only to salmon. The halibut fishing season was much longer than the salmon fishing season in southeast Alaska, enabling many halibut fishermen to remain in town year-round. The fishermen, boat captains, and individuals working in support industries (diesel fuel, banking, cold storage, marine outfitters) contributed significantly to Ketchikan's population and economy.

During this period, most of the halibut fishermen, ship captains, and their families in Ketchikan were Norwegian immigrants. For most, their port of entry was either Ketchikan or Seattle. Review of voter registration records shows that the majority of the Norwegian halibut fishermen who entered the U.S. through another port moved to Ketchikan within a year of their arrival in the country. Therefore, Ketchikan became a primary site for the immigrants' acculturation. In 1930, when First Lutheran Church was built, 184 halibut schooners made Ketchikan their home port. About half of the men lived in Ketchikan year-round. Of the 115 people who joined the church its first year, 94 were either in the fishing industry or its support industries or were women married to men working in these industries. Of those 94, 87 were Norwegian immigrants. Of the 21 who did not work in the fishing industry, all but four were Norwegian (three of those four were of Scandanavian descent).

Norwegian immigrants to the Midwest had established the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America and were seeking Norwegian communities interested in affiliating with them. In 1922 the church sent a missionary to Ketchikan to serve the Norwegian fishermen who worked in the halibut industry. A home and hostel for itinerant fishermen, The Seamen's Center, opened in downtown Ketchikan in 1923. Two months later, a number of the Norwegian women in Ketchikan formed a support group for the center. Two years later, a small Norwegian Lutheran congregation was established. The congregation called itself First Lutheran Church of Ketchikan. In January 1926, they prepared a church constitution in both Norwegian and English, and in July 1927, the church was incorporated.

The congregation, 96.5% of whom were Norwegian immigrants, set about finding a site and constructing a church. Three areas of town were considered, downtown Ketchikan, Newtown, and Charcoal Point. The Newtown site was favored and selected because it

9. Major Bibliographical References

Minutes, Lutheran Ladies Aide, 1923-1945.

Minutes, First Lutheran Congregation, 1925-1950.

Building Specifications, W.G. Burst Company for the First Lutheran Church of Ketchikan, 1930

Voter Registration Rolls, City of Ketchikan, 1928-1933.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Ketchikan (B-5)

Quadrangle scale 1:63 360

UTM References

A

0	1	3	3	1	2	5	0	6	1	3	6	1	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

USS 437, Parcel D, Block 1, Lot 16

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Suellen Liljeblad, Historian

organization First Lutheran Church

date March 31, 1986

street & number 1200 Tongass Avenue

telephone (907) 225-5922

city or town Ketchikan

state Alaska 99901

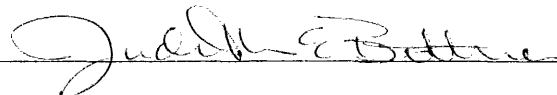
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date Mar 25, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for William B. Bushong
Keeper of the National Register

date 5/18/87

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

(AHRs No. KET-141)

Continuation sheet First Lutheran Church

Item number 6

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date entered

Title: Alaska Heritage Resources Survey
Date: May 4, 1981
Depository: Department of Natural Resources
Office of History and Archaeology
P.O. Box 107001
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-7001
Determined Eligible: No X state

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet First Lutheran Church

Item number 7

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date entered

The character of the First Lutheran Church arises from its simple, open plan and atmosphere of quiet dignity that supports solemn worship. Except for the tall Gothic windows, lancet-arched railings and hanging light fixtures in the house of worship, the hall is a large, simple room. The roof is supported by scissor trusses with a collar beam crossing the lower chord below the point of intersection of the scissor "legs". The ceiling, in cross-section, follows the lines of the bottom chord of the trusses, forming a high ceiling, 25'-6" above the nave with sides that slope to the walls. This tall, open space directs worshiper's attention upward during services. The emphasis continues to be on utility, in the ground floor auditorium, with its low ceiling and uncluttered, multi-purpose floor space. In the parish house, the rooms are small (average 90 sq. ft.) and support the concept of simple utility. The single character-defining feature is the corner fireplace in the living room with plaster cove and wood picture molding at the ceiling and recessed niche above the mantle.

Installing stained glass in the sanctuary windows was planned during construction but was delayed because of lack of funds. In 1958, designs relating to the sea were selected by the congregation and stained glass with painted/fired detailing was installed in existing window frames of the north wall of the sanctuary. The north sanctuary wall contains three major windows in existing frames centered above the altar. In the middle, Christ stands erect, symbolizing the foundation of the church; this window is flanked by designs showing humanity as passengers aboard a storm-tossed ship (on the left) and sailors reaching out to be rescued from the water (on the right). Both windows symbolize Christ as the savior of humanity, traditional Norwegian Lutheran themes. In 1984, a member of the congregation and professional stained glass artist, Carol Suring, donated her skills to make and install the remaining side windows. Because no designs had been created in 1930 the congregation chose the six liturgical seasons of the Lutheran Church as historically appropriate designs. The zinc came were repaired and the original, obscure painted glass was used as the background. Five small, square, inserts were made from new, colored glass and were installed on the central axis of each window. The completed windows, with new inserts, were then reinstalled in the existing frames. Work was completed in 1986.

The following changes have been noted to the building: The front stairs rose from the west, originally, and were turned to the south in 1946 when Cliff Avenue was widened to create Tongass Avenue. Shingles in the attic portion of the front gable have been replaced with siding, and asphalt shingles have replaced wood shingles on the roof of the church and tower. The tower's galvanized iron cornice has been lost. The low parapet wall and the steep tower roof line has been covered with siding. The squinch spire has been converted to a broach form by wider coverage of the base of the spire with new asphalt shingles, creating a slightly concave hip roof. In 1978 vinyl siding was installed over the wood siding that matched it in width, direction, color, and texture. This has badly deteriorated. In spite of these modifications, the exterior massing, placement and rhythm of the openings, color, texture and ornamentation has not appreciably changed since the church was built.

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On the inside, the building is as originally constructed and retains its arched tripple-window design that is repeated in insets and hallways, and subdued Gothic revial woodwork. The only major modification was done in 1936 when the pastor's residence began to be used for office and Sunday school space. The arched opening between the kitchen and the dinette area was filled in; the wall between bedroom No. 2 and No. 3 (see plans) was removed; and the wall surfaces and floor tile in bedroom No. 3 was replaced. All the rooms retain most of their original features, including built-in book cases, dinette table and ironing board, windows and glass, cupboards, sinks, tubs, and closets.

The highly visible, white church has served as a landfall for both the fishing vessels that operated out of Ketchikan and, during World War II, for the merchant ships coming into port. The church continues to serve as a local landmark. As a whole it retains its integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling, association, and, with minor exceptions, materials.

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was closest to the docks where the halibut schooners tied up, the homes of halibut captains, and the businesses serving the industry. Many residents around Cliff Avenue (today called Tongass Avenue) were Norwegians. The other two areas did not have Newtown's advantages. The purpose of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America was not to facilitate acculturation as much as it was to help preserve Norwegian values. The Ketchikan congregation leaders thought that having home, businesses, and church in close proximity to one another would help preserve their values. For the first ten years the church officers and trustees were all Norwegians and were all either fishermen or in related support industries. One of every three services was conducted in the Norwegian language, the church constitution was printed in both languages, Sunday School was taught in both languages, Norwegian movies were shown for social events, and Norwegian dress was worn for dinners and dances.

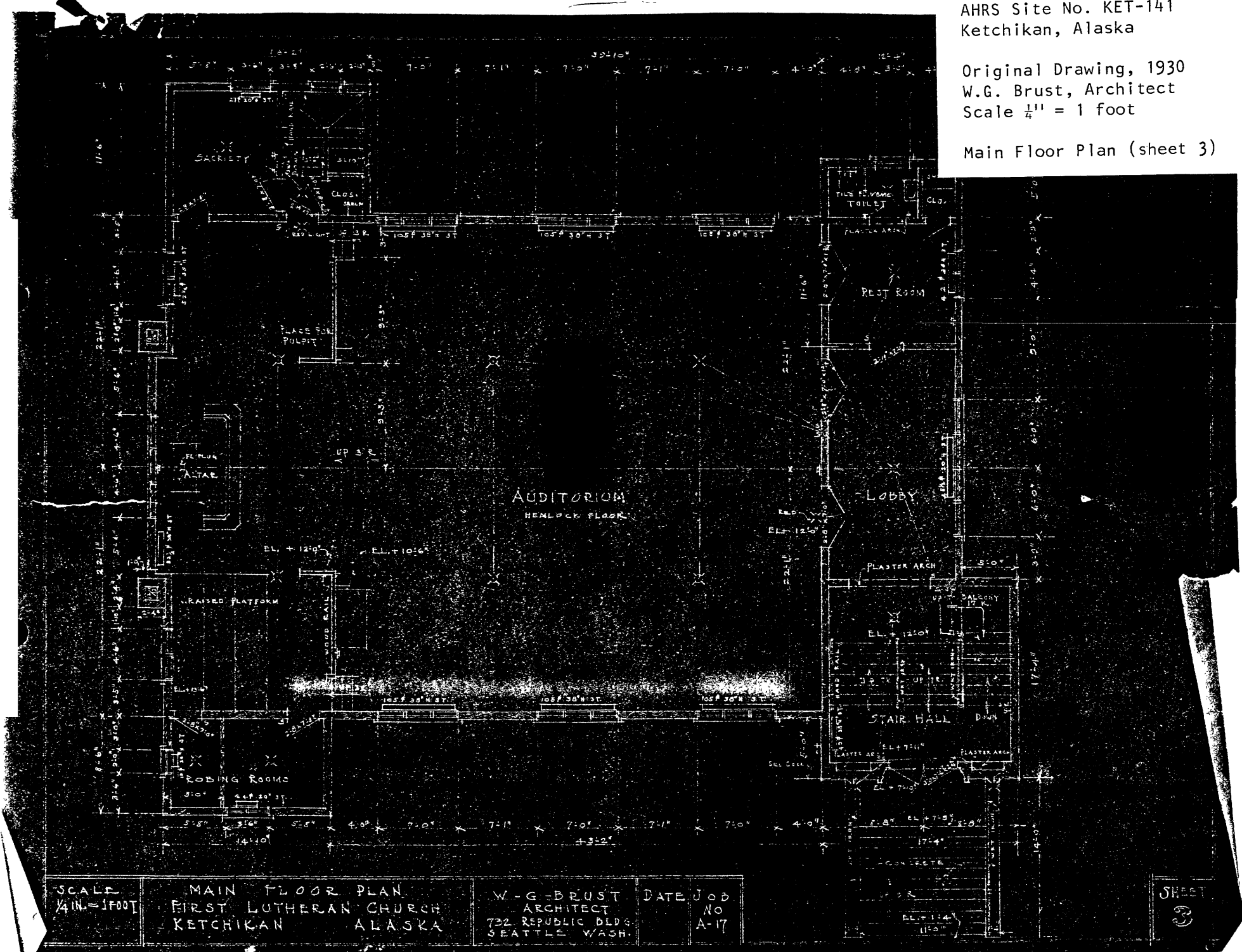
A lot on the corner of what is now Tongass Avenue and Water Street was purchased for \$5,000. Excavation began July 23, 1930 with no money in the bank and a debt of \$4,000 for the land. The congregation hired architect W.G. Brust of Seattle to design the church and prepare building specifications. Builder Carl Foss of Ketchikan came in with the lowest bid, \$17,250 (actual cost was \$23,756). (Foss built the Walker Broderick House in Ketchikan that has been listed in the National Register.) The building was ready for occupancy in October, 1930, although it was not completed until a year later. Congregation members did much of the interior woodwork and the Ladies Aide raised funds for the materials.

While the church retained allegiance to the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America and took on the role of preserver of ethnic values, it also was an active group in the local community. The congregation supported the Seamen's Center through volunteering member's time, donating materials and food, and raising funds for the center's operations. Directed at sailors, many of whom were Norwegian and in the halibut industry, other itinerants who traveled to Ketchikan found temporary housing and ate at the center. The congregation also supported two orphanages, one on nearby Prince of Wales Island begun by the church's first pastor, and one in a home immediately behind the church. These operated from 1927 through the 1930s. While little is known of these two endeavors, oral accounts indicate they served both Native and non-Native children. Finally, several of the congregation's activities became large community events. They hosted yearly Blessing of the Fleet and Welcoming Home of the Fleet community dinners. Neither of these were initiated as fund raisers, but were given to support the fishing industry. The church bazaars and food sales also were a welcome part of Ketchikan's social activities. The community dinners, bazaars, and sales continue to be popular annual events.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
AHRs Site No. KET-141
Ketchikan, Alaska

Original Drawing, 1930
W.G. Brust, Architect
Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ foot

Main Floor Plan (sheet 3)



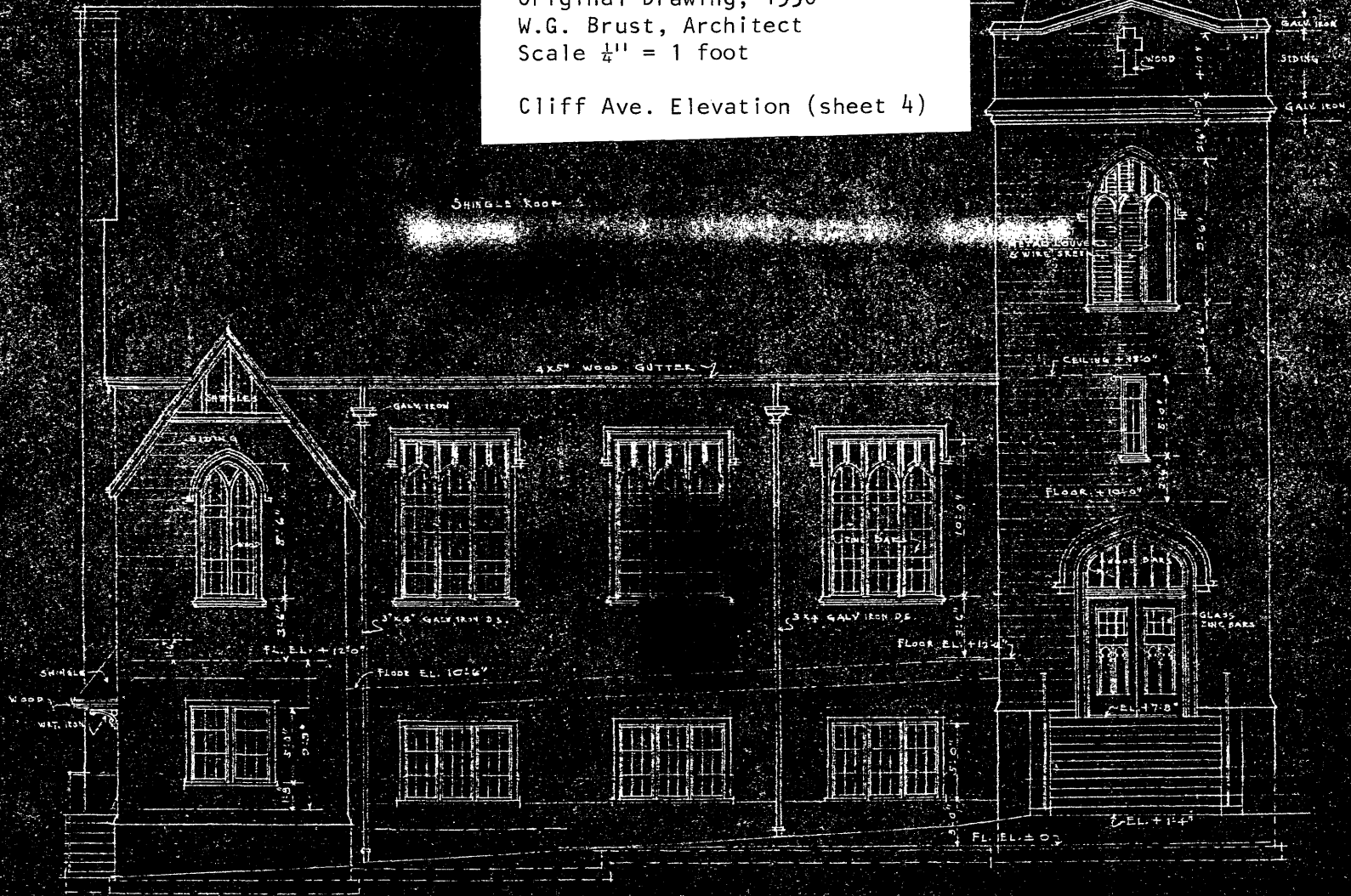
SCALE $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ FOOT	MAIN FLOOR PLAN FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH KETCHIKAN ALASKA	W. G. BRUST ARCHITECT 732 REPUBLIC BLDG. SEATTLE WASH.	DATE JOB NO A-17
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SHEET
3

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
 AHRs Site No. KET-141
 Ketchikan, Alaska

Original Drawing, 1930
 W.G. Brust, Architect
 Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ foot

Cliff Ave. Elevation (sheet 4)

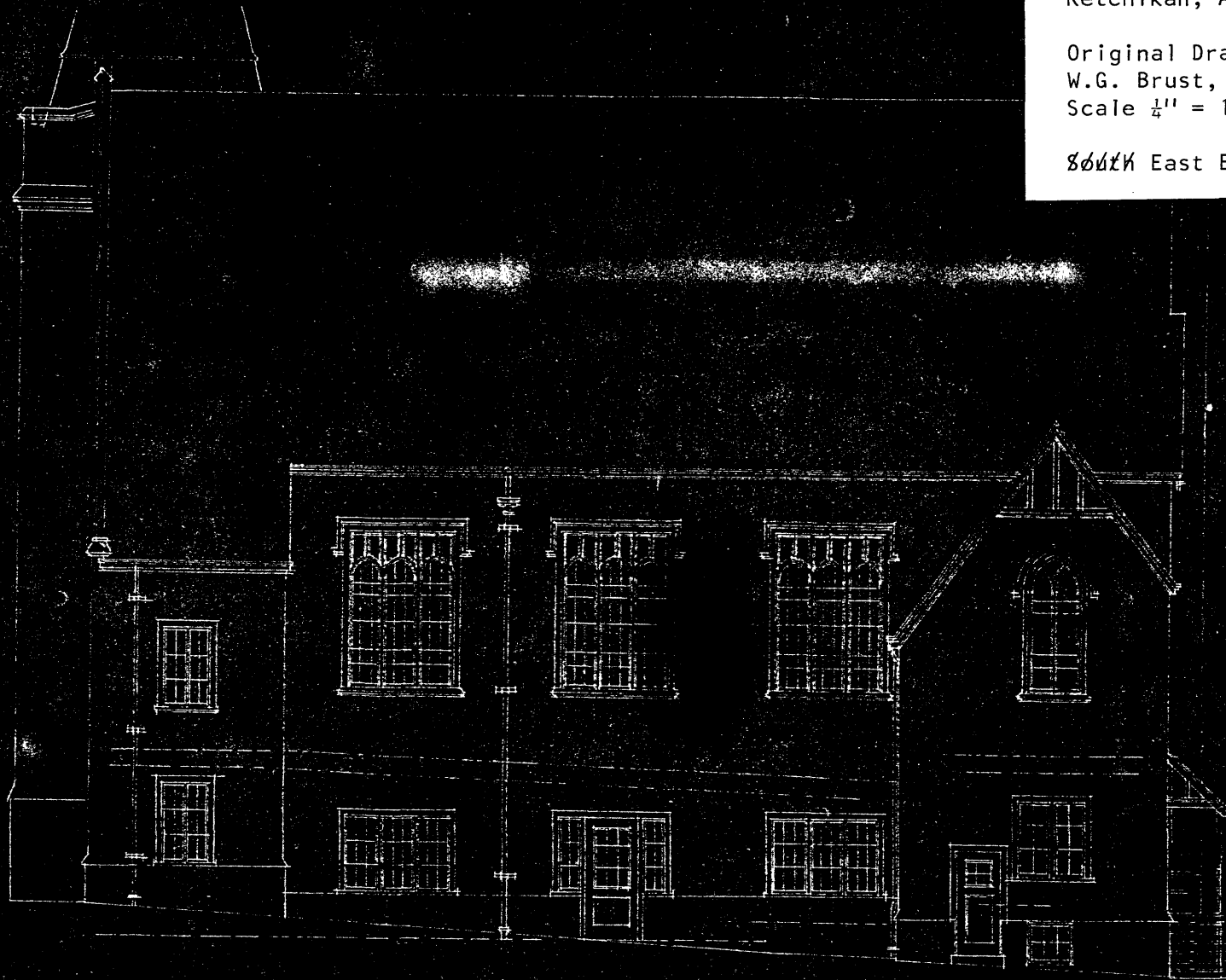


SCALE $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ FOOT	CLIFF AVE. ELEVATION FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH KETCHIKAN ALASKA	W. G. BRUST ARCHITECT 732 REPUBLIC BLDG. SEATTLE WASH.	DATE A-17	JOB NO A-17	CHEST 4
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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
AHRS Site No. KET-141
Ketchikan, Alaska

Original Drawing, 1930
W.G. Brust, Architect
Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ foot

South East Elevation (sheet 5)

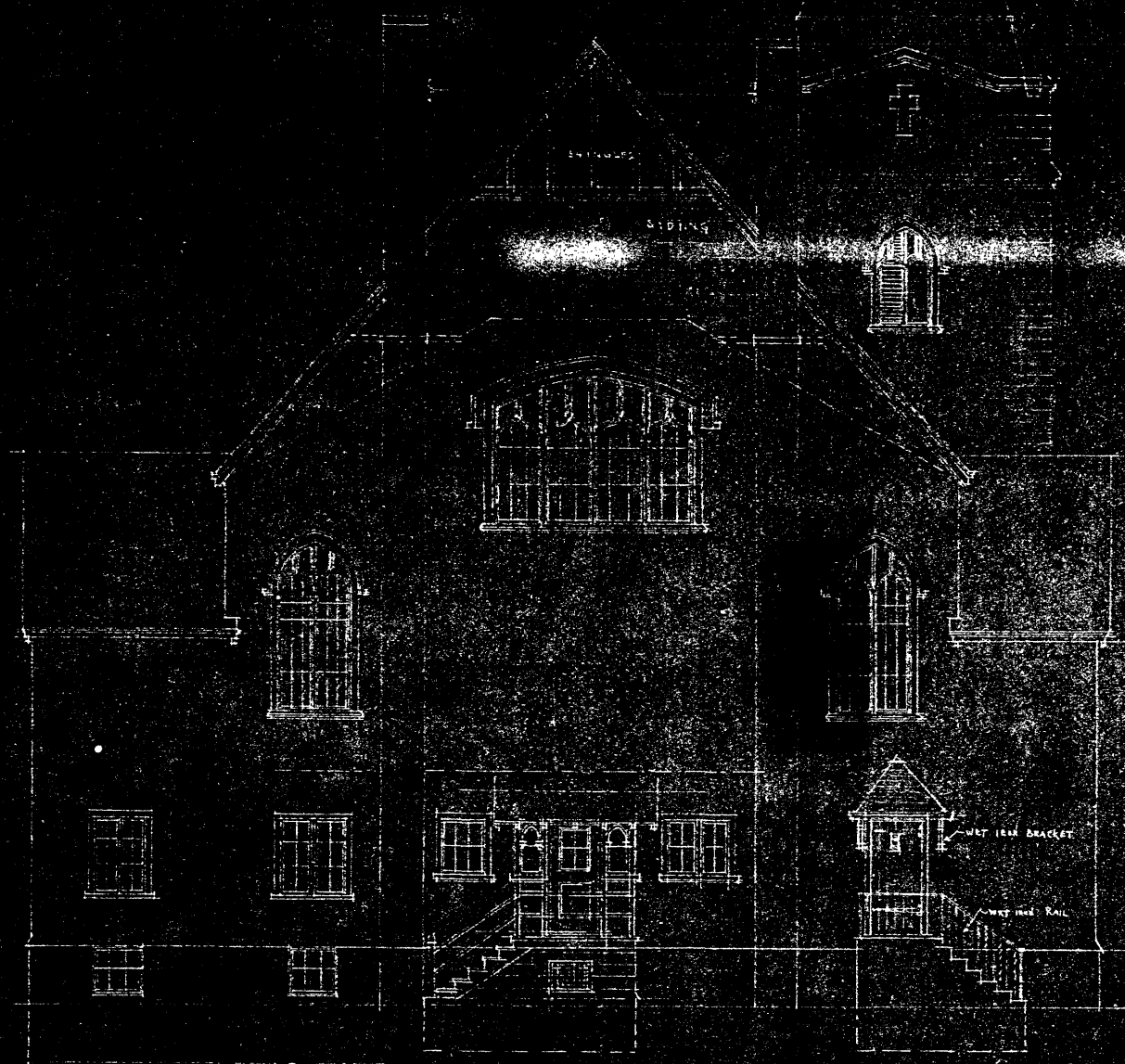


SCALE $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ FOOT	SOUTH ELEVATION FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH KETCHIKAN ALASKA	W-G-BRUST ARCHITECT 732 REPUBLIC BLDG. SEATTLE, WASH.	DATE	JOB NO A-17	SHEET 5
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FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
AHRs Site No. KET-141
Ketchikan, Alaska

Original Drawing, 1930
W.G. Brust, Architect
Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ foot

~~East~~ North Elevation (sheet 6)



SCALE
 $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ FOOT

EAST ELEVATION
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
KETCHIKAN ALASKA

W. G. BRUST
ARCHITECT
732 REPUBLIC BLDG.
SEATTLE WASH.

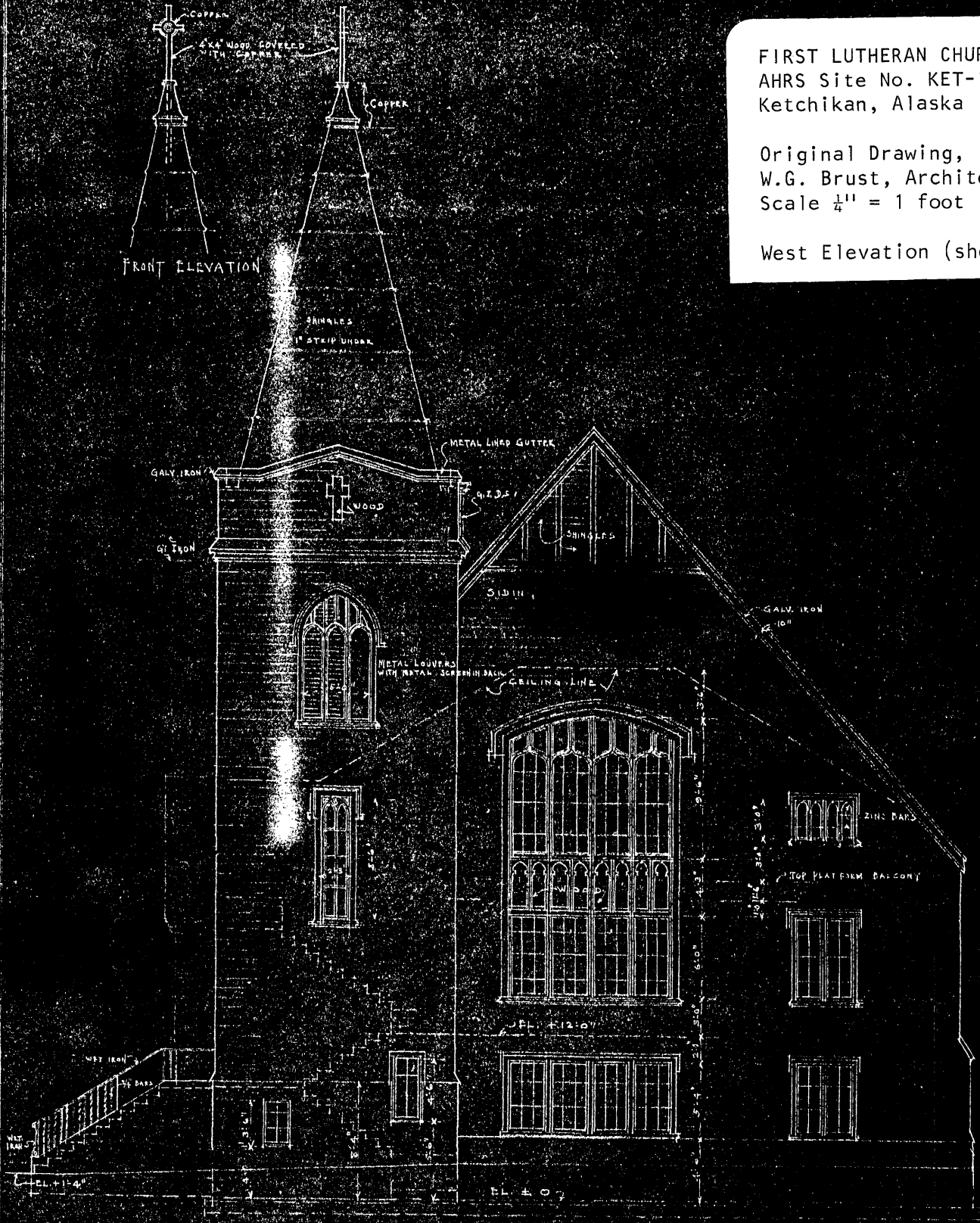
DATE JOB
NO. A-17

SHEET
6

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
 AHSR Site No. KET-141
 Ketchikan, Alaska

Original Drawing, 1930
 W.G. Brust, Architect
 Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ foot

West Elevation (sheet 7)



SCALE
 $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ FOOT

WEST ELEVATION
 FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
 KETCHIKAN

W. G. BRUST
 ARCHITECT
 102 REPUBLIC BLDG.
 SEATTLE, WASH.

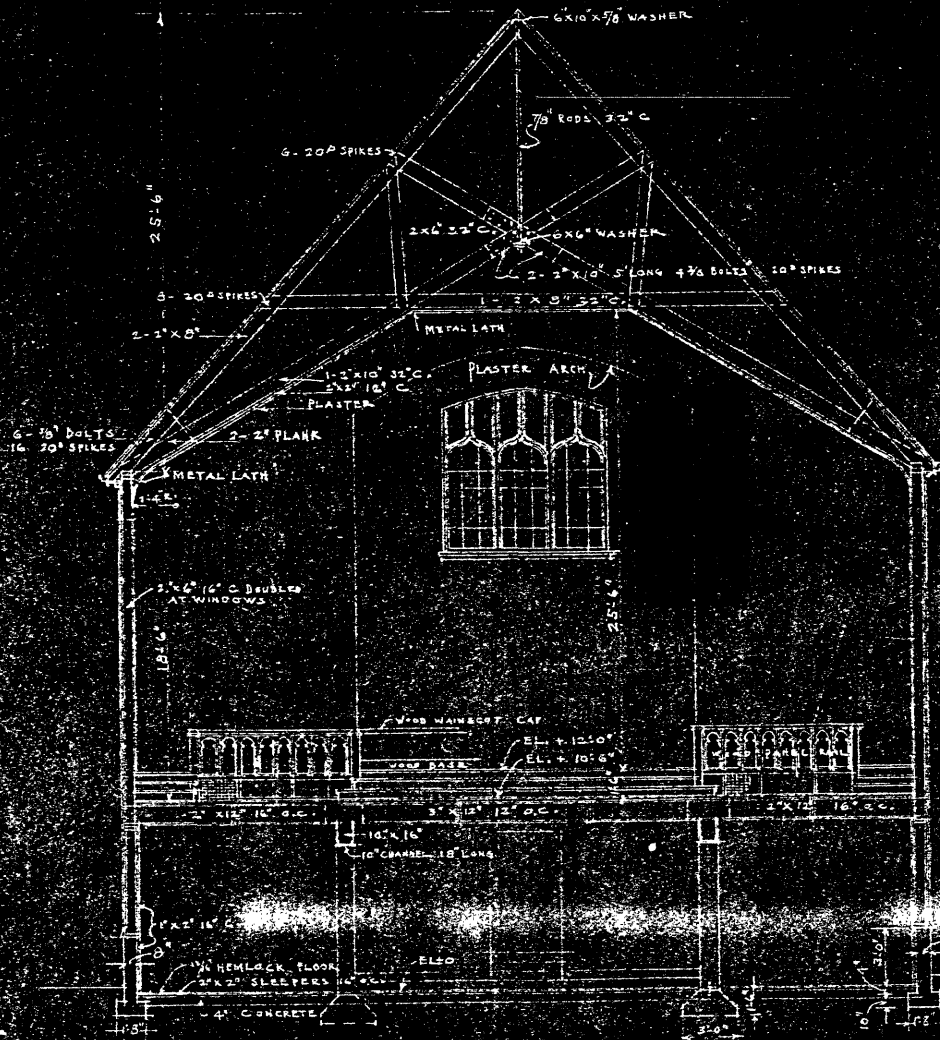
DATE JOB NO.
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SHEET
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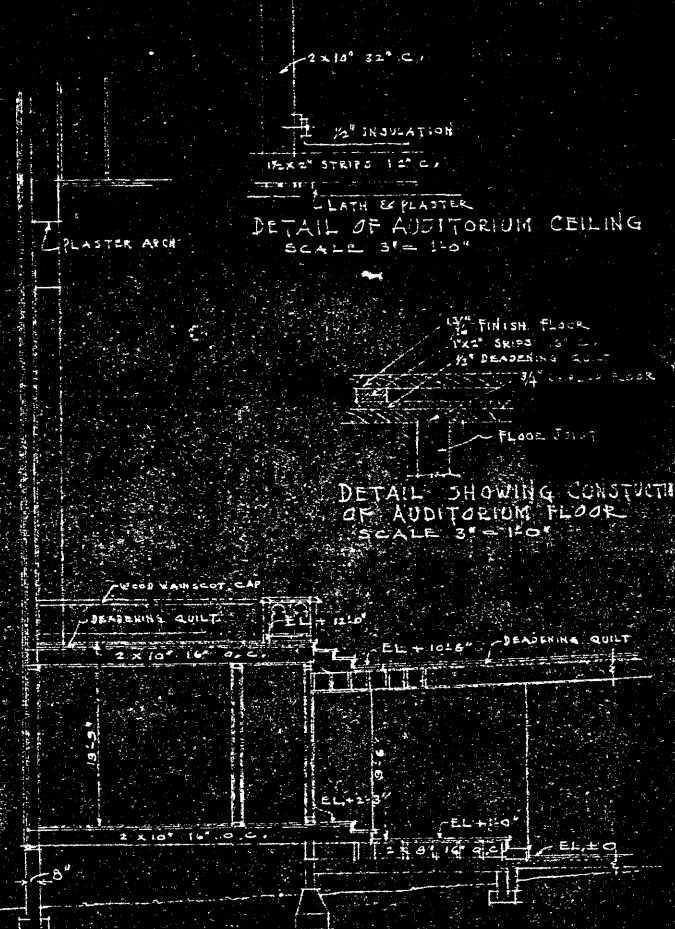
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
 AHR Site No. KET-141
 Ketchikan, Alaska

Original Drawing, 1930
 W.G. Brust, Architect
 Scale $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1$ foot

(cross section) (sheet 9)



CROSS SECTION



LONGITUDINAL SECTION

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
 KETCHIKAN ALASKA

W-G-BRUST
 ARCHITECT
 732 REPUBLIC BLDG.
 SEATTLE WASH.

DATE
 JOB NO
 A-17

SHEET
 9

