

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

536

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.

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School

other names/site number Unalakleet Day School, BIA School and Quarters

AHRS Site No. UKT-00055

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2. Location

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street & number n/a

not for publication n/a

city or town Unalakleet

vicinity n/a

state Alaska

code AK

county Nome

code 180

zip code 99684

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 E. Bettner
Signature of certifying official

April 8, 2002
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

Edson B. Ball

 other (explain):

Joe
Signature of Keeper

5/22/02
Date of Action

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Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School

Nome, Alaska

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5. Classification

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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> 3 </u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u> 3 </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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Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School

Nome, Alaska

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Education Sub: School

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant/not in use Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation reinforced concrete

roof metal

walls wood

other _____

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

The community of Unalakleet, population 750, is located in northwest Alaska, approximately 148 miles southeast of Nome. The majority of the town is on a spit at the mouth of the Unalakleet River. Norton Sound is to the west. The Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School is located in the south central part of the town. An associated light plant and warehouse stand about fifty feet south of the school building.

The BIA constructed the building in 1933 for a day school in the community. A staff architect most likely designed the building. A similar design was used at several other BIA schools built at the time around Alaska. The Unalakleet school has Georgian Revival elements including classical balanced designs for the interior and exterior, pediments above the entrances, a cupola, and palladian windows. The BIA added shed dormers in 1937, and an addition to the west end of the building in 1954.

The building is oriented in an east-west direction. The original portion of the rectangular, two-and-a-half story building measures 68' by 40'. It has a reinforced concrete foundation, balloon framing, and beveled wood siding. The gable roof originally had asphalt shingles but is now covered with corrugated metal. The eaves of the roof have Greek cornice returns. A cupola is aligned with the original entry and houses the school bell. Most of the original window and door openings and architectural elements remain. Inside, the first floor has a partially recessed basement that

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8. Statement of Significance
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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)

Education

Period of Significance 1933-1978

Significant Dates 1933

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder n/a

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Antonson, Joan and Hanable, William S. *Alaska's Heritage*. Anchorage: Alaska Historical Society for the Alaska Historical Commission, 1986.

Barnhart, Carol. *Historic Status of Elementary Schools in Rural Alaskan Communities, 1869-1980*. Manuscript in the files of the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1985.

Breedlove, Agnes. Teacher at Unalakleet, 1964-1976. Personal communication, October 18, 2000.

Ducker, James H. "Curriculum for a New Culture, A Case Study of Schools and Alaska Natives, 1884-1947," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (Spring 2000):71-83.

Erickson, Heidi. Unalakleet resident. Personal communication, October 17, 2000.

Ivanoff, Art. Unalakleet resident. Personal communication, January 12, 2001.

National Archives and Records Administration. Record Group 38, BIA School Files, 1908-1935; and Record Group 75, Records of the BIA, Education Program Decimal Files, 1936-68. Anchorage, Alaska.

Report of the Governor of Alaska, 1932. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1932.

Sarren, Tony. Unalakleet resident. Personal communication, October 18, 2000.

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: National Park Service, Alaska Support Office

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Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 1 acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>04</u>	<u>412329</u>	<u>7083725</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u> See continuation sheet.</u>					

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

The buildings are in the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 3, Township 19 South, Range 11 West, Kateel River Meridian.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes what is historically and currently known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School building and associated light plan and warehouse. The fuel tanks nearby, while associated with the school, are not included.

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11. Form Prepared By
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name/title Janet Clemens, Historian

organization National Park Service, Alaska Support Office

date November 15, 2001

street & number 2525 Gambell St.

telephone 907-257-2458

city or town Anchorage **state** AK **zip code** 99503

and Joan M. Antonson, State Historian, Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, 550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565

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housed the kitchen, dining area, library, washrooms and storage. The second floor had five classrooms. Around the central hallway were two classrooms on the north, two on the south, and one on the west. The wood floors, plywood walls and ceiling, and chalkboards remain. The attic had two apartments.

The south facade of the school has the main entry in the center of the original building. Windows are symmetrically arranged on the sides of the door. Above the entry were two fluted pilasters supporting a broken, scrolled pediment. There are six 6/6 double-hung single windows on the first floor and two groups of five 9/9 double-hung windows on the second floor.

On the north elevation there are six 6/6 double-hung windows on the first floor, three on each side of the central door. The second floor has two groups of five 9/9 double-hung windows. At one time there was an exterior stairway that led to a door between the sets of windows on the second floor.

On the east elevation the corners of the roof have Greek cornice returns. The attic has a group of three palladian windows. The center window is a 6/6 double-hung window with an arched window above. Fixed eight paned windows flank it. On both sides of this window group are single small 6/6 double-hung windows. At the second floor level are two wood louver vents. A metal ladder is centered and affixed to the wall from the attic to approximately six feet above the ground.

The original west elevation became an inside wall when the addition was added in 1954.

The BIA converted the attic into two apartments in 1937 and added four shed dormers. The two dormers on the south facade have two side-by-side nine paned windows. Each dormer on the north elevation has a group of three windows, a 6/6 double-hung window flanked by fixed eight paned windows. The dormers are covered with asphalt shingles. The dormer roofs are corrugated metal with fascia boards.

The cupola has a square base and octagon upper walls. The octagon walls have siding of a different dimension than the square walls. The larger walls face the cardinal directions and have arched wood louvers. The eight-sided cupola roof is a concave curve with decorative molding under the roof overhand and an egg-shaped finial. The bell is in place and in working order.

In 1945 the north and south walls were reinforced. Seven timbers were affixed vertically to the exterior of the south facade and six timbers were placed on the north elevation. Horizontal 4" x 12"s were placed on the inside of the windows located above and below the groups of five windows. Metal tie rods spanned the interior width of the building and were secured to the vertical timbers.

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In 1954, the BIA constructed a 30' by 40' addition at the west end of the building. The foundation and exterior walls matched the original building. At the same time, the addition and original building roofs were covered with corrugated metal.

The south elevation of the addition has a door at the far right. It and the entry to the original building have concrete steps and stoops leading to double door entrances. This elevation has two 6/6 double-hung windows on the first floor west of the door, and a group of three 9/9 double-hung windows on the second floor. The west elevation of the addition has two groups of three 9/9 double-hung windows on the second floor. A wood louver is located under the gable peak. The eaves of the roof have Greek cornice returns.

As built in 1954, the windows on the first floor of the addition's north elevation were three 6/6 double-hung windows. After a skid loader ran into it, the wall was rebuilt and two of the window openings were eliminated. In 1972, a shortened metal door was installed to the east of the westernmost window. The second floor has one 9/9 double-hung window.

Today, most of the windows are boarded. The concrete stairs need repair. The original doors have been replaced with metal doors. The decorative pediment is gone. The paint is peeling. Yet the building is basically sound.

The school's light plant and warehouse stand about fifty feet south of the school. The light plant, built in 1954, originally measured 16' by 16'. In 1959, a 16' x 12' addition was put on the west end of the building. The building has a reinforced concrete foundation with a poured concrete floor. The walls of the original building are concrete to four feet above the floor. The addition walls have drop siding. The north elevation has a door and one 6/6 double-hung window. The west elevation has two doors that are centered. The south elevation has double-hung divided paned windows and a louvered vent. The east elevation has one 6/6 double-hung window. The gable roof, with the ridge running east/west, has metal roofing.

The warehouse, built in 1956, replaced an earlier warehouse at the same location. It measures 16' x 32'. The foundation is reinforced concrete with a poured concrete floor. The walls are wood. The north elevation has two doors at the west end. The west and east elevations each has one double-hung window. The gable roof, with the ridge running east-west, has corrugated metal roofing.

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Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
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Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs built a new day school at Unalakleet in 1933 to replace an earlier government school in the community. The school reflects the federal educational philosophy of the time for Native Americans that stressed reading, speaking and writing the English language, arithmetic, and practical skills. The course of study initially went through the eighth grade, and only in later years through the tenth grade. In almost every Alaska Native village the school was the most important agent of cultural change. For forty-five years, Unalakleet children and community residents used the school. The two-and-a-half story building was one of few public buildings, and among the major buildings at Unalakleet. The State of Alaska constructed a new school in the community in 1978 and the BIA discontinued its educational program at that time. The period of significance encompasses the time the BIA school served the Unalakleet community, 1933 to 1978.

Historic background

Education of Alaska Natives began when the Russians opened schools in Alaska at their major posts to provide education and vocational training for Creole and Native children. After the transfer of Alaska to the United States in 1867, the Russian Orthodox Church continued to support several of these schools around Alaska. The U.S. Government did not undertake responsibility for educating Alaska Native children until 1884, although it required the Alaska Commercial Company to operate schools for the Aleut children on the Pribilof Islands as a condition of the company's twenty-year exclusive lease to hunt fur seals on the islands. Shortly after the transfer, the residents of Sitka in southeast Alaska supported a public school for all children interested in attending, but it closed in 1870 when the city's economy declined. The Presbyterian Home Mission Society was the first American missionary group to open schools in Alaska for Native children. In 1877 their first school opened at Fort Wrangell in southeast Alaska. Finally, in 1884, Congress provided for the establishment and support of public schools in Alaska "for Native and non-native children" and appropriated \$25,000 for this purpose.

Sheldon Jackson, appointed by the Secretary to the Interior to be the government's first agent for education in Alaska in 1884, invited Protestant churches to open missions and schools around Alaska. The Swedish Covenant Church established schools at Unalakleet, Teller and Yakutat in 1887. Under Jackson's leadership, the federal government provided some support to the missions for the schools. At Unalakleet, as at other northwest Alaska villages, the mission managed the school and reindeer industry. Sheldon Jackson had started the Bureau of Education's reindeer program in 1890, hoping to develop a viable industry and provide food for the area residents. The mission recruited teachers, operated schools, and implemented a curriculum of reading, writing, arithmetic and practical skills.

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The Swedish Covenant Church school operated until 1895. A Bureau of Education contract school is reported to have operated between 1891 And 1895 that have been the same as the mission school. No school operated in the community between 1895 and 1901. The Bureau of Education opened a school in the village again in 1901.

After Jackson retired in 1906, and responding to criticism that the program crossed the boundary separating church and state, the Bureau of Education took from the missions still operating schools, the responsibilities to recruit teachers, operate schools, and set the curriculum. The bureau favored day schools over boarding schools. In 1908, the bureau approved the Unalakleet teacher's request for an industrial shop. Two years later the government built a new day school with a shop, called the "Teacherage" in the community. It was part of the Alaska Division of the Bureau of Education's surge of activity after Jackson's ouster. The new schools reached more Natives and broadened teacher's duties. The bureau perceived its employees as teachers of positive aspects of western civilization and protectors of the Natives from miners and traders who would corrupt them. The bureau's goal was not to have Natives adopt all of white lifeways, but to use elements to construct an economically viable way of life. Between 1907 and 1911 the number of the bureau's Native schools increased from 35 to 82.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs took over operation of schools for Alaska Native children from the Bureau of Education in 1931. The following year, the BIA added a staff architect to design school buildings, quarters, and hospitals for the Alaska service. In 1933 it began construction of a number of school buildings around Alaska using a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant of \$175,000 supplemented by \$30,000 in Territorial funds.

That year construction of a new, larger school started at Unalakleet. Its design was similar to several other BIA schools constructed in Alaska communities at the time. One of the new schools, the Mayflower School at Douglas, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places November 21, 1988. Four years after construction, in 1937, the attic of the Unalakleet school was remodeled to add apartments for a nurse and a teacher.

During the 1930s, the school enrollment at Unalakleet gradually increased. In 1933 there were 61 students (36 boys and 25 girls), and in 1937 there were 80 students (47 boys and 33 girls). The school provided education through the eighth grade and some vocational training beyond. The BIA continued the Bureau of Education philosophy "to establish a day school in each native community which would be the pivot of progress for the community. The teacher was supposed to be qualified not only to act as instructor in the village school but also to perform the duties of builder, social director and medical worker for an entire community." This philosophy owed much to the settlement house movement that had become popular around 1900. In sum, the program sought to make education practical and health care available.

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The Unalakleet principal noted in 1937, "All in all, our school year has abounded in activities directly connected with the life of the people here." These activities included gardening, building boats, sewing, and jam and meat canning classes. In 1937, a skin sewing teacher was hired and the girls made boots from reindeer skins acquired from Egavik, while the boys built the storage cupboards in the attic of the school, did all the minor repair work around the government buildings, and built a six-foot sled.

During the early 1940s the BIA Unalakleet school enrollment was around one hundred students. The community's population increased after World War II. This increase might have been a determining factor in keeping the school open, when, in 1947, BIA closed twenty-three Alaska schools as the Territory of Alaska assumed more responsibility for educating Alaska Natives. In 1954 an addition was put on the Unalakleet school. In 1958-1959 there were 163 students.

In addition to its use as a school, the building was used for a health clinic, community activities including Mother's Club meetings, movies, auctions, housing cannery workers, and in the 1950s as a courthouse.

During the early 1960s, the school weathered two storms that caused flooding and damage to the basement. After shoring up the building, school personnel focused on the need for additional classroom space. A 1963 visit by a BIA Education Specialist noted that six of the classrooms in the building were "below the present established minimum standards." This visit also noted the imminent conversion of the basement classroom to an inside bathroom. The BIA built a brick junior high school nearby for students in grades 9 and 10 that opened in 1964.

To finish high school, Unalakleet students either attended a public boarding school for Natives at Sitka or Nome, or paid tuition to attend the local Swedish Covenant Mission High School. The mission began teaching junior and senior high school students for a fee in the 1950s. An out-of-court settlement in the 1970s, the Molly Hootch case, determined that students without public high schools in their communities did not have fair education opportunities. As a result the State of Alaska began a \$143 million program to build high schools in villages that already had an elementary school. Also, the State agreed to take responsibility for education of all Alaskans and the BIA started closing its remaining schools around the state. Unalakleet's new school was built as an addition to the junior high building in 1978. The BIA closed its school in Unalakleet at that time and the Swedish Covenant Mission closed its school's doors in 1984. The State of Alaska now owns the BIA Unalakleet school building and the Bering Straits School District owns the light plant and warehouse.

For almost fifty years, Unalakleet children attended the BIA school. They hold a mixture of good and bad memories associated with the building. Located near the center of the community, the Unalakleet BIA School remains one of the dominant buildings in the community.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska

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Additional Documentation
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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)

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

name Bering Straits School District

street & number P.O. Box 225

telephone _____

city or town Unalakleet state AK zip code 99684-0225

and State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities,
3132 Channel Drive, Juneau, Alaska 99801-7898

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

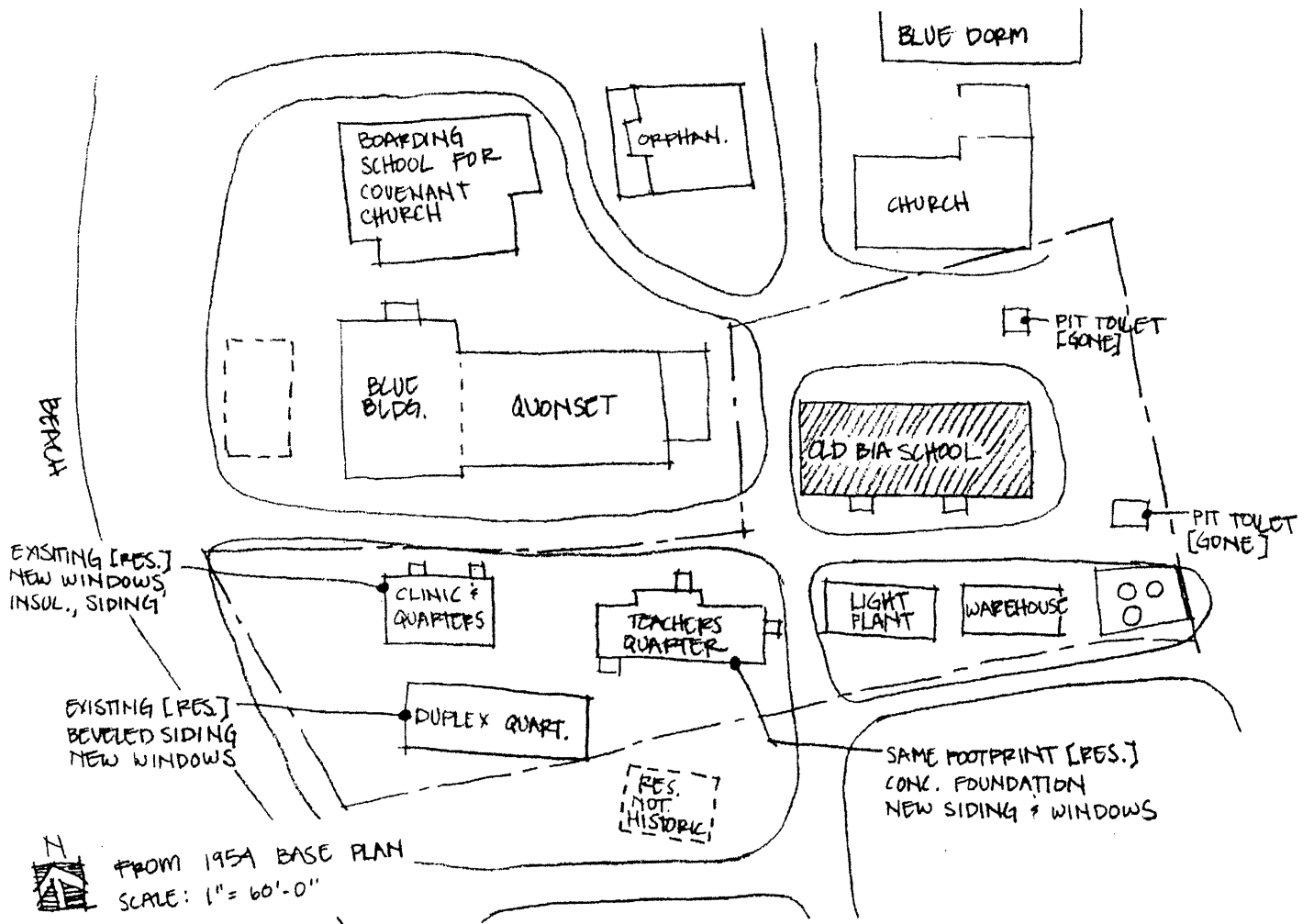
OMB No. 1024-0018

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photograph identification

1. Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska
Laura Houston
October 17, 2000
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, AK 99503
Looking north at the south elevation
2. Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska
Laura Houston
October 17, 2000
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, AK 99503
Looking southwest at the north and east elevations
3. Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska
Laura Houston
October 17, 2000
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, AK 99503
Looking southeast at the north and west elevations
4. Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska
Laura Houston
October 17, 2000
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, AK 99503
Looking west at the east elevation. From left: the light
plant, residence, teachers' quarters, BIA school, and a Swedish
Covenant Mission building
5. Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
Nome, Alaska
Laura Houston
October 17, 2000
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, AK 99503
Looking northeast at, from left: the light plant and warehouse, and in
the background, the BIA school



Site plan
 Bureau of Indian Affairs Unalakleet School
 Nome, Alaska