

KODIAK NAVAL OPERATING BASE, BOAT HOUSE
(Kodiak Naval Operating Base, Bldg. No. 23)
U.S. Coast Guard Station
Kodiak
Kodiak Island County
Alaska

HABS No. AK-47-I

HABS
AK
12-KODI,
2I-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Alaska Regional Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

ADDENDUM TO:
KODIAK NAVAL OPERATING BASE, BOAT HOUSE
(Building No. 23)
(Boat Housing Spec and Hobby Shop)
U.S. Coast Guard Station, across the taxiway from Building No. 25 on
Nyman Peninsula
Kodiak
Kodiak Island Borough
Alaska

HABS AK-47-I
HABS AK,12-KODI,2I-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Historic American Buildings Survey

HABS AK-47-I

ARCHITECTURAL RECORDATION FORM

HISTORIC NAME OF BUILDING: Building 23 - Boat Housing Spec and Hobby Shop

SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF PROPERTY: United States Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Kodiak.

AHRS NO.: KOD - 636

COMPLETE ADDRESS (or PHYSICAL LOCATION): This building is located across the taxiway from Building 25 on Nyman Peninsula within the boundaries of the Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Kodiak.

UTM:

PRESENT USE: Marine environmental response equipment storage.

SIGNIFICANCE: When constructed in 1942, this building was designed and used as the torpedo shop. By 1958 the structure had been converted to the Exchange Auto Repair building. This structure is an early permanent structure designed by the architectural office of Albert Kahn for the base. Original drawings date the design to 1940; however maintenance records indicate a 1942 construction date. It was constructed by the Navy's main contractor at Kodiak, Siems Drake Puget Sound of Seattle, Washington at a cost of \$112,050. Although the structure has suffered typical wear and tear over time, it retains its overall architectural and historic character. The structure retains its integrity of materials, setting and location. It is within the period of significance, retains its overall integrity, and is within and contributes to the boundaries of the revised National Historic Landmark.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: 1942
2. Architect: Office of Albert Kahn, Inc.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building has remained under ownership of the United States Government. It was originally managed by the United States Navy and then by the Department of the Transportation, United States Coast Guard.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The construction contractor was Siems Drake Puget Sound.

HABS AK-47-I

5. Original plans and construction: Original design plans by Albert Kahn Inc. are dated March 22, 1940. Copies are available at Coast Guard ISC Kodiak, the National Park Service (Alaska Regional Office), and the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology.
6. Alterations and additions: Siding has been placed over the windows of the central roof monitor, but is a compatible material to the original. A mezzanine has been added within the central monitor. No other significant changes appear to have altered the structure.

B. Historical Context:

The United States Coast Guard Integrated Support Command at Kodiak Island, Alaska, is the original site of the Kodiak Naval Operating Base with the United States Army Forts Greely and Abercrombie in the near vicinity. These bases were the principal advance bases in Alaska at the outbreak of World War II. The site is approximately eight miles southwest of the City of Kodiak, the oldest permanent Russian settlement in Alaska. Construction at the site began in 1939 and the bases were formally established and operational by 1941. Two of the installations, the Naval Operating Base and Fort Greely, are adjacent to each other and are now one reservation administered by the Coast Guard. The Navy facilities were located between the head of Women's Bay and Buskin River and on Nyman Peninsula. Fort Greely's main developments were north of Buskin River, from Buskin Lake in the west to St. Paul Harbor in the east. Construction was first carried out by a civilian contractor. Then, at the beginning of 1943, Naval Construction Battalions (Seabees) gradually took over all construction activities for both the Navy and the Army. Today, many World War II naval buildings remain standing and are used by the Coast Guard; however, few Army structures remain at the Fort Greely site.

On the eve of World War II, Congress, anticipating conflict with Japan in the North Pacific, authorized construction of Naval Air Stations in Sitka, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor. Work began at Kodiak in 1939 and progressed furiously after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Japanese seizure of islands in the Aleutians, and other aggressions in the North Pacific, turned Alaska into a territory at war. Navy and Army troops, with their supplies, poured into Alaska. Kodiak, because of its protected harbor and shipping access, became one of the main depots supporting the air and sea war with Japan in the Aleutian Campaign.

HABS AK-47-I

The site selected for a Naval Air Station and Naval Operating Base was Women's Bay, south of the town of Kodiak, on Kodiak Island. It was designed to hold thousands of men and the equipment to service surface ships, submarines, and wheeled and amphibious aircraft. Massive earth-moving was required to carve out large runways, build numerous bunkers, dredge the harbor, and fill the land necessary for the base. To mobilize such men and equipment required experience. The federal government issued a cost-plus contract to a consortium of three major construction contractors, who took the name Siems Drake Puget Sound and immediately began assembling barge-loads of materials destined for Kodiak. Hangars and other large buildings were designed by the office of one of this century's premier industrial architects, Albert Kahn.

Kahn (1869-1942) became known as the world's best industrial architect, the father of modern factory design, and the man who perhaps more than any other architect helped create a new industrial architecture in America. Beginning in 1906, Kahn began designing large single-story buildings using reinforced concrete, steel, and large many-paned windows and skylights to light workspaces. Kahn's designs were well-received on the east coast by his clients, including industrialists George N. Pierce, Horace E. Dodge, Walter Chrysler, the Packard Corporation, the Fisher Brothers, and Henry Ford of Ford Motor Company.

While factory buildings became Kahn's specialty, he also designed the laboratory and hangar complex at the United States Aviation School at Langley Field, Virginia, as well as many military aircraft and tank factories. At the beginning of World War II Albert Kahn's office designed buildings for the Naval Operating Base and Naval Air Station at Kodiak, including the three main hangars at Kodiak as well as smaller warehouses and storage facilities.

At its peak in the late 1930s, the office of Albert Kahn employed a staff of over 600, producing 19 percent of all architect-designed industrial buildings in the United States. Although Albert Kahn died in 1942, his office, Albert Kahn, Associated Architects and Engineers, Inc., produced close to 2,000 architectural design for the United States Military.

HABS AK-47-I

As the war progressed and the Navy's needs changed, construction of some planned buildings was canceled, and the materials diverted to Dutch Harbor and elsewhere to be closer to military action, according to then-Base Commander John Perry. By the end of 1943, the Aleutians were freed of Japanese control and combat forces moved to other areas of concern. Most of the troops and much of the equipment followed, and the Army facility at Kodiak (Fort Greely) was placed in caretaker status in December of 1944. The Naval Operating Base at Kodiak remained an important site for training and supplies throughout the war.

Despite its readiness, the Kodiak base saw no direct combat during World War II. It was operational on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and served as the base of operations for the Aleutian theater of the War. The base provided supplies and reinforcements for the War in the South Pacific and provided air and sea patrols for the remainder of the War. As the historian Morison has noted, "During the rest of the war the Aleutians offer little of interest. . . But there was a constant improvement both of bases and of flying efficiency in these difficult northern areas. . . In any case, it was wonderful practice ground for armed forces; after a tour of duty in the Aleutians, every other field of action seemed good" (Morison, *The Two-Ocean War: A Short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War*. 271-272).

After 1943, when the Americans re-secured the Aleutian chain from the Japanese, Alaska was never again threatened by Japanese hostility. However, the war with Japan continued and naval, air, and land engagements in the South Pacific were reinforced by troops newly-freed from duty in Alaska. Within the larger context of Alaska's war effort Kodiak contributed greatly to both the Aleutian campaign and to America's continued race toward victory.

As the war moved south, Kodiak found itself further from combat and in an area of increased safety. Kodiak based air and sea patrols continued to monitor Japanese movement for the duration of the war. The submarine base, however, was decommissioned in May of 1945. With the end of World War II, the Kodiak Naval Operating Base was still a contributing element of Alaska's defenses and became a minor player in the escalating Cold War with the Soviet Union.

HABS AK-47-I

With the conclusion of the War in 1945, Kodiak Naval Air Station remained under Navy control. By 1947, United States Coast Guard personnel were added to the base to provide search and rescue expertise to the Navy and to maintain several lighthouses and Long Range Navigational Aid (LORAN) stations around Kodiak. Three cutters were assigned to Kodiak by 1953 to conduct fisheries patrols. The responsibilities of the Coast Guard continued to increase with the construction of additional LORAN stations and an expanded fisheries law enforcement mission. The Navy moved most of its personnel out of Kodiak in 1969, and transferred the base to the Coast Guard in July of 1972.

By 1972 numerous World War II military buildings, particularly smaller temporary structures, had been dismantled or sold. However, numerous structures, because of the quality of their construction, remained in service into the 1970s. Today, ISC Kodiak is the Coast Guard's largest facility. The runway has been expanded and now handles all of Kodiak's commercial air transportation, including large jets. ISC Kodiak is the Host Command for several units within the Coast Guard including the Air Station Kodiak, Communication Station Kodiak, and an Electronics Support Unit. In addition, several other state and federal agencies are tenants at the site, including the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Fish and Game, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Aviation Administration, NOAA Vessels, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Weather Service, U. S. Navy Special Warfare Group 1, U. S. Army Western Command, U. S. Postal Service, Kodiak Island Borough - Peterson School, and the Kodiak Electrical Association. Lastly, several private enterprises are tenants within the vicinity of the commercial airport.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

Building 23 is a tall, one-story, industrial building with glazing over much of the exterior walls. The structure has a central roof monitor with a low-angled gable roof. A mezzanine has been added within the central roof monitor. There is a four-foot high concrete wall foundation with bolted steel superstructure.

1. Architectural Character: This building has an overall industrial character.
2. Condition of fabric: This building is in fair condition.

HABS AK-47-I

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Building 23 is a tall, steel, industrial building with glazing over much of the exterior wall surface. The structure is approximately 30 feet tall, 71 feet in length by 61 feet in width and consists of 6,917 square feet in plan.
2. Foundations: Concrete slab upon a wood pile foundation. Finish floor elevation is 124.0' (local datum).
3. Walls: The north and south exterior walls are 18 feet in height, sheathed with ribbed metal siding with an asbestos/bituminous coating. A metal ladder is affixed to the west wall. The metal siding on the lower portion of Building 23 is original. Newer metal siding has been installed over the original central roof monitor windows on the north and south sides of the structure. The east wall is backed into a hillside.
4. Structural system, framing: The structural steel columns support steel roof trusses and curtain walls. A four-foot tall reinforced concrete stem wall surrounds the building.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies: None.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings - doorways and windows: The main, west facade has a large, centrally located garage door as its only entrance. The walls of the lateral sections, to the north and south of the tall central section, have large (11' high) industrial steel sash windows with eight vertical rows of seven panes each. The window sills rest upon the concrete stem walls. Each of the north and south walls also has a large (11' high) industrial style window. The gable end of the central section has a large (5' high) multi-paned window, with a light transom above the central garage door.
8. Roof: The structure has a central roof monitor with a low-angled gable roof. The gable ends are on the east and west faces of the building. To each side of this monitor are slightly sloped shed roofs. The original roofing was a ribbed metal material with an asbestos/bituminous coating.

HABS AK-47-I

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans: The original floor plan consisted of a large workshop, occupying 2/3 of the structure. The office, storage and air compressor rooms occupied the northern third of the building.
2. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior partitions are non-load bearing, constructed primarily of steel sash multi-pane glass and metal panels. Toilet room walls are cast-in-place concrete. Inside surfaces of exterior walls and ceiling are exposed structural steel spanned by tongue and groove wood planks.
3. Flooring: Exposed concrete.
4. Mechanical: Heating was provided by steam from the base central heating plant. Compressed air was provided by the air compressor.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: This building is located on Seafarer Drive, across the taxiway from Building 25 at the base of Nyman Peninsula within the boundaries of the Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Kodiak.
2. Historic landscape design: The structure sets up against the hillside. Asphalt and gravel surfacing surround the building.
3. Outbuildings: None

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: Dated 1940, available at USCG ISC Kodiak, National Park Service-Alaska Regional Office, and the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology. Maintenance records are located at USCG ISC Kodiak and at Coast Guard Island. Alameda, California.
- B. Early views: None found.
- C. Interviews: None conducted.

* HABS AK-47-I

D. Bibliography:

Architectural Resources Group. *Cultural Resource Inventory United States Coast Guard ISC Kodiak*. Prepared for United States Coast Guard Alameda California, August, 1997.

Kramer, Chin & Mayo, Inc. United States Coast Guard Support Center Kodiak Alaska Development Plan. 1979.

Makers Architecture & Urban Design. *ISC Kodiak Master Plan and Environmental Assessment*. Seattle, Washington, November, 1996.

Master Shore Station Development Plan United States Naval Station Kodiak. June 30, 1956.

Mobley, Charles M. *A Building History of the Kodiak Naval Air Station*. 1995.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. *The Two-Ocean War: A Short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963.

Northern Land Use Research, Inc. *Archaeological Survey at the U. S. Coast Guard Installation Support Command Kodiak, Alaska*. December, 1996.

Page, Roger. *This is Kodiak*. Kodiak, Alaska, 1982.

Real Property Records. Integrated Support Command Kodiak. Records Housed at Maintenance & Logistics Command Pacific. Coast Guard Island. Alameda, California.

Thompson, Erwin N. National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Kodiak Naval Operating Base and Forts Greely and Abercrombie. April 1984.

United States Coast Guard. *Land Use Plan: Integrated Support Command Kodiak*. U.S. Coast Guard, Alameda, California. 1986.

United States Navy. *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II*, Volume II. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.

HABS AK-47-I

Wall, Glennie Murray. *Integrated Support Command Kodiak Historic Resources Management Plan, Kodiak, Alaska*. U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Coast Guard, Maintenance & Logistics Command Pacific, Alameda, California. 1993.

E. Likely sources not yet investigated: None.

F. Supplemental material: None.

G. Prepared by:

Bridget Maley
Senior Associate / Architectural Historian
Architectural Resources Group
Pier 9, The Embarcadero
San Francisco, CA 94111

John Vogel
Environmental Engineer
United State Coast Guard
Facilities Design and Construction Center Pacific
915 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98174-1011