

Austin Pass Warming Hut  
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest  
Washington Highway 542  
Glacier Vicinity  
Whatcom County  
Washington

HABS No. WA-195

HABS  
WASH  
37-GLAC.Y,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
AUSTIN PASS WARMING HUT

HABS No. WA-195

HABS  
WASH  
37-GLACIY,  
1-

Location: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest  
Washington Highway 542  
Glacier vicinity  
Whatcom County  
Washington

USGS Mt. Shuksan, Wash. Quadrangle (15')  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
10.596600.5411950

Present Owner: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest  
21905 64th Ave. W  
Mountlake Terrace, Washington 98043

Present Occupant: Same

Present Use: Temporary housing

Significance: The Austin Pass Warming Hut is associated with Federal efforts to promote the welfare of the American people, as a result of its construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Constructed in 1940, it was the last major project of Washington Junior Company 2915, based at Camp F-12 near Glacier. The Warming Hut is also an excellent example of the Pacific Northwest Region rustic architectural style. Although not an administrative site, the Warming Hut shares many of the attributes of Depression-era administrative site design identified by Gail Throop (1983: 125-127): irregular plan, roof and porch projections, intersecting gables, dormers, multi-paned windows and variations in exterior texture.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1940
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Austin Pass Warming Hut has been the property of the USDA Forest Service since its construction (USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie N. F. Lands files). When constructed, it was located within the Mt. Baker National Forest. The Mt. Baker National Forest was merged with the Snoqualmie National Forest to form the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie in 1974.
4. Builder, contractor, supplier: Civilian Conservation Corps, for the USDA Forest Service.
5. Original plans and construction: The Warming Hut did not employ a standard plan, and no copies of the original plans are extant. However, a sketch of a similar building is included in a Forest Service recreation handbook issued in the 1930's. (Photo 17).

The Warming Hut is a nailed-wood frame building on a poured concrete foundation veneered with native andesite. It employs a T-plan and is 2-1/2 stories in height. The roof is gable-type with a steep pitch and a covering of wood shingles. Exterior walls are covered with horizontal weatherboard, 10 inches to weather. There are six-light fixed sash windows on all elevations of the first floor; nine-light fixed sash windows on all elevations of the second floor, a six-light casement window in the dormer, and paired louvered vents under the gables. The principal entry is via a braced board door off the second floor porch at the rear of the building. First floor entries on the front porch and offset left on the rear provide access to unfinished basement space.

6. Alterations and additions: The building was extensively remodelled in the 1970's, when it was converted from use as a recreational facility to use as a University of Washington research station barracks (Photo 18). The original panelling on the

second floor was removed and replaced with sheetrock, the main second floor room was partitioned, stairs providing access to the basement were enclosed, and a room added at the rear of the building to house an oil storage tank supplying an electric generator. Propane tanks were buried along the rear driveway.

- B. **Historical Context:** The Austin Pass Warming Hut was constructed by the Forest Service to promote use of the Mt. Baker Ski Area (Heller 1980: 45). Although it was rare for the Forest Service to construct such facilities for private sector activities, the Warming Hut is not unique. Timberline Lodge at Mt. Hood presents the most striking example.

When constructed, the Warming Hut served as a day-use ski shelter. The interior included a large waxing room on the first floor and a warming room and lunch room on the second, but lacked facilities for cooking (Heller 1980: 45).

The Warming Hut saw limited use, owing to financial difficulties experienced by the ski area. Gasoline rationing during World War II restricted skiing and led the State highway department to discontinue plowing of the road, resulting in financial collapse of the ski area. Following the war, management difficulties prevented new management from developing a successful operation until the late 1950's. The Warming Hut may not have been open at all during some years (Heller 1980: 46-56).

A major expansion of ski area facilities in 1970 included construction of a new day lodge that may have eliminated need for the Warming Hut. Another (later) warming hut in the base area, known as the Heather Warming Hut, was expanded to form the new day lodge, which had four times the square footage of previous base area facilities and permitted centralization of skier services (Heller 1980: 66). In 1972 the Forest Service issued the University of Washington a permit to use the Austin Pass Warming Hut as a field station for natural science research. The new use included overnight and long-term occupancy, which necessitated the alterations and additions previously described.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural character:** The Warming Hut displays many elements of the Pacific Northwest Region rustic architectural style described for administrative buildings by Gail Throop (1983): native materials, varied materials, heavy timber posts, multi-paned windows, covered entries, dormers, and interior chimneys. The following discussion is drawn from her analysis.

Native materials were believed to be responsive to and appropriate for the environment of the Pacific Northwest. Wood reflected local building traditions and the local economy. Wood structural materials, siding and roofing in the Warming Hut display this design emphasis. In addition, the use of local andesite as a veneer on the first floor exterior blends the building with the local environment, creating the impression of a structure which grows from it.

Varied exterior treatment created visual interest through the application of materials different in size, shape, orientation, and finished surface. In the case of the Warming Hut, the contrast between vertical boards under the gables, horizontal boards on the second floor, and a chevron under the dormer window create a building of unusual interest, enhanced by the juxtaposition of the contrasting texture of the andesite veneer.

Gabled roofs were common, and were adapted to the prevailing precipitation conditions; pitch was adjusted to total precipitation and snow loads. The extreme loads at this site dictated a steep pitch. Again, visual interest is enhanced by the intersecting gables and dormer employed at the Warming Hut.

Heavy timber posts carried through the use of native materials, reflected the massive timber of the Region's forests and projected an image of strength and permanence appropriate to public architecture. At Austin Pass, they were employed in the main porch posts, exposed beams in the second floor, and in the roof trusses. In contrast to the timbers employed in many of the Region's

buildings, those at the Warming Hut were left round rather than squared.

Multi-paned windows decorated as well as illuminated the Regions's buildings, and had the incidental effect of recalling the Nation's historic roots by reflecting an element of Georgian architecture.

Covered entries, here reflected by the main porch, reflected the prevailing climate of the Pacific Northwest, and in particular were adapted to the snow cover at this high-elevation site.

Dormers lighted the upper levels of buildings, an important consideration at the Warming Hut, which lacked electric service when constructed. They also added to the visual interest of the building, and here were used as an opportunity to enrich the building's exterior texture, through the use of a chevron pattern for the siding under the window.

Interior chimneys reflected the prevalence of wood and coal fuels in the Region. Masonry technique in the Warming Hut chimney reflects that of the exterior veneer, relating the building to the landscape. It also conveyed the function of the building: as a place for skiers to gather to warm themselves after a day on the slopes.

2. Condition of fabric: Remaining original fabric consists of the foundation, structural members, exterior siding, and windows. It is sound.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 48' x 53 feet
2. Foundation: Poured concrete with andesite masonry veneer (Photos 8 & 9).
3. Walls: Masonry veneer on first floor; 10 inch boards applied horizontally on second floor, vertically under gables (Photos 5-10).
4. Structural systems, framing: Wood frame construction of 2 x 6 inch studs. Double-Y roof truss of round timbers.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Main porch on west elevation (Photos 2-4), covered by extension of the main roof. Areas at north and south ends have exposed round rafters; area under dormer is flat. Porch railings consist of 8 inch horizontal logs and six-inch verticals. Secondary porch at southeast corner, accessed by wood stairs added in 1970 (Photo 11). Original access was by plank bridge from the knoll to the south (Photo 15). Original railings were likely heavy round timbers, as used in main porch rails. Replaced in 1970 with 2 x 4 inch railing.
6. Chimneys: Masonry, at center of cross-gable and intersection with primary gable.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: X-braced wood doors, centered on main porch and at right side of secondary porch (Photo 11). Plain wood door on east elevation, first floor (Photos 8 & 9).
  - b. Windows and shutters: Six-light, fixed sash windows in all elevations of first floor; nine-light fixed sash windows in all elevations of second floor, except under dormer, where six-light casement window is used (Photos 5-10). Shutters are plywood pieces cut to fit openings and are not original.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Intersecting gables with cedar shingles (Photos 8 & ).
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Eaves with exposed log rafters, east and west sides (Photos 5, 8 & 9).
  - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of interior:

1. Floor plan: T-shaped (Photo 18).

2. **Stairways:** L-shaped stairs at northeast corner of main room provide access between first and second floors (Photo 13). Stairs in kitchen provide access to sleeping loft under roof at base of T.
3. **Flooring:** Concrete on first floor, 1 x 4 inch board on second.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Exposed concrete, gypsum board and rigid foam insulation on first floor (Photo 13). Gypsum board on second floor (Photo 12). Gypsum board ceiling (installed 1970) on second floor. Attic and sleeping loft are unfinished.
5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** Plain hollow-core doors control access to all interior rooms, except a storage room in the northwest corner of the first floor, which has a board door.
  - b. **Windows:** Unfinished.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** None.
7. **Hardware:** Plain round knob and rectangular plate on French door accessing dormer. Plain round knob on basement storage door. Recent round brass knobs on 1970's doors.
8. **Mechanical equipment:**
  - a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** Fireplace; propane-fired furnace (recent) in basement.
  - b. **Lighting:** Fluorescent with egg-crate fixtures (kitchen); incandescent in other rooms, with a variety of fixture styles. All lighting was installed in 1970; the building originally lacked electric service.
  - c. **Plumbing:** Two toilet rooms on the first floor were removed in 1970. Existing plain porcelain toilet and sink on second floor were installed in 1970; there is no kitchen sink.
  - d. **Other equipment:** None.

9. Original furnishings: None.

D. Site:

1. **General setting:** The Warming Hut is sited off roads and trails overlooking the Bagley Lakes and Bagley Creek in the Heather Meadows Recreation Area (Photos 1 & 2). It is located on the top of a small knoll of columnar andesite, with a few subalpine fir and mountain hemlock immediately adjacent to the building (Photos 6 & 14). The building blends well with its surroundings, except for the application of a coat of blue paint which tends to make it more obvious.

When originally constructed, the building was accessed by a long dirt drive. During a renovation of recreation facilities at Heather Meadows in the 1960's, the parking area east of the building was enlarged, and picnic tables placed to the west and south. The 1970's rehabilitation of the building resulted in the placement of metal propane tanks at the base of the access drive (Photo 7), and construction of an exposed concrete wastewater tank on the slope east of the building.

2. **Historic landscape design:** The original landscape plans, if prepared, are no longer extant. The arrangement of the the building and nearby features (both Depression-era and recent) is informal, with few straight lines or regular geometric shapes.

Drives and paths are bordered with andesite columns, and there are indications that this was a feature of the original design, although the current configuration reflects alterations made from the 1960's to the present.

3. **Outbuildings:** None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. **Architectural drawings:** None found
- B. **Historic views:** Recreation files, Mt. Baker Ranger District; Recreation files, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Supervisor's Office.
- C. **Interviews:** None.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker Ranger District,  
Sedro-Wolley. Recreation files.

USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National  
Forest, Supervisor's Office, Mountlake  
Terrace. Lands files.

USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National  
Forest, Supervisor's Office, Mountlake  
Terrace. Recreation files, cultural resource  
site folder CR06-05-03-13.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Heller, Ramon  
1980 Mount Baker Ski Area: A Pictorial History.  
Mt. Baker Recreation Company, Bellingham.

Schmierer, Alan C.  
1983 Northing Up the Nooksack. Pacific Northwest  
National Parks and Forests Association,  
Seattle.

Throop, E. Gail  
1983 A characteristic expression: a thematic  
evaluation of Forest Service Depression-era  
administrative buildings in the Pacific  
Northwest. Contract Abstracts and CRM  
Archeology 3(2): 123-129.

E. Likely sources not yet investigated: USDA National  
Agriculture Library, Beltsville, MD (historic views).

F. Supplemental material: None.

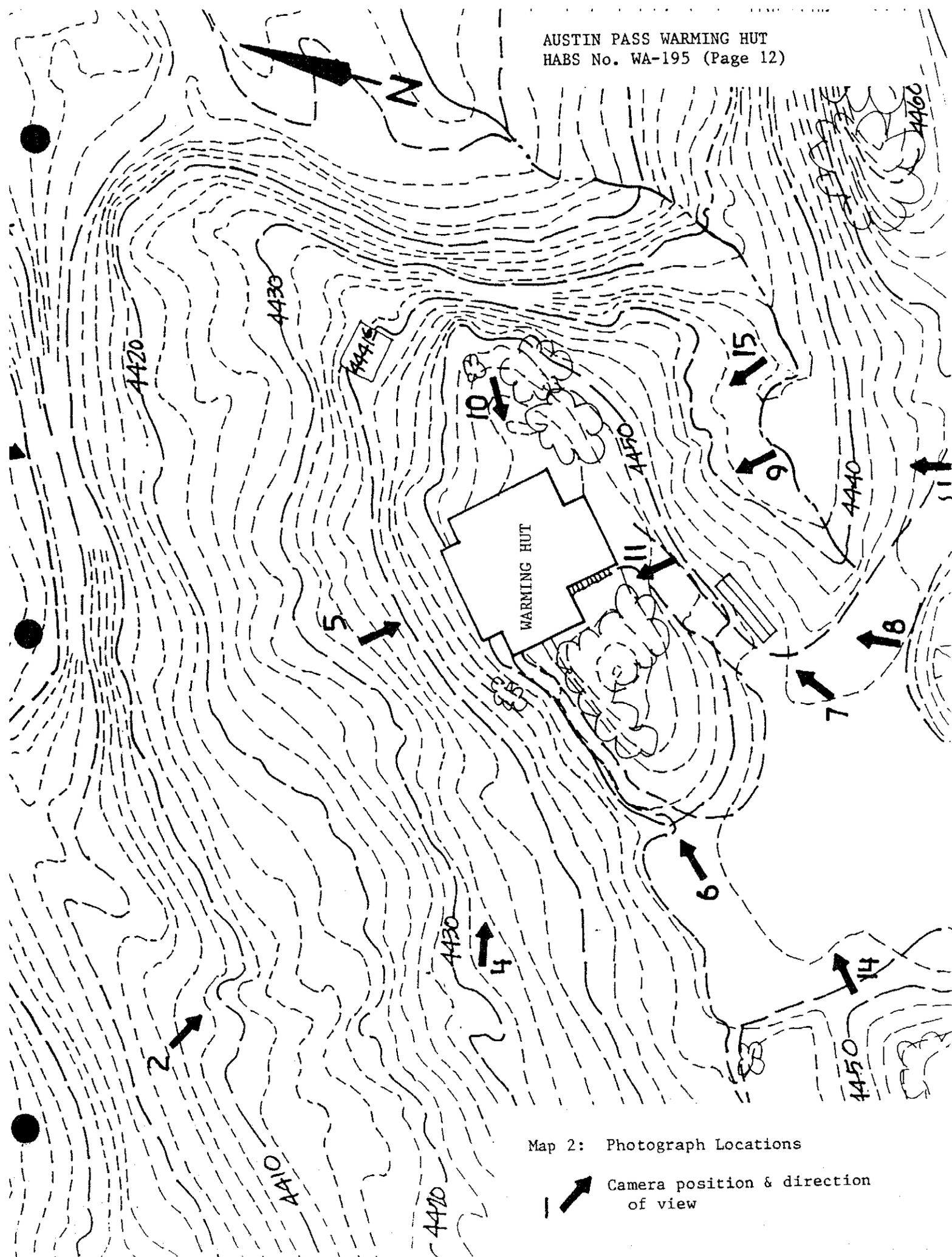
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was prepared to mitigate the effects of a  
rehabilitation project, as stipulated in a Memorandum of Agreement  
between the USDA Forest Service, the Washington State Historic  
Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic

Preservation, and dated March 2, 1989. The USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, prepared this documentation, completed February 7, 1992

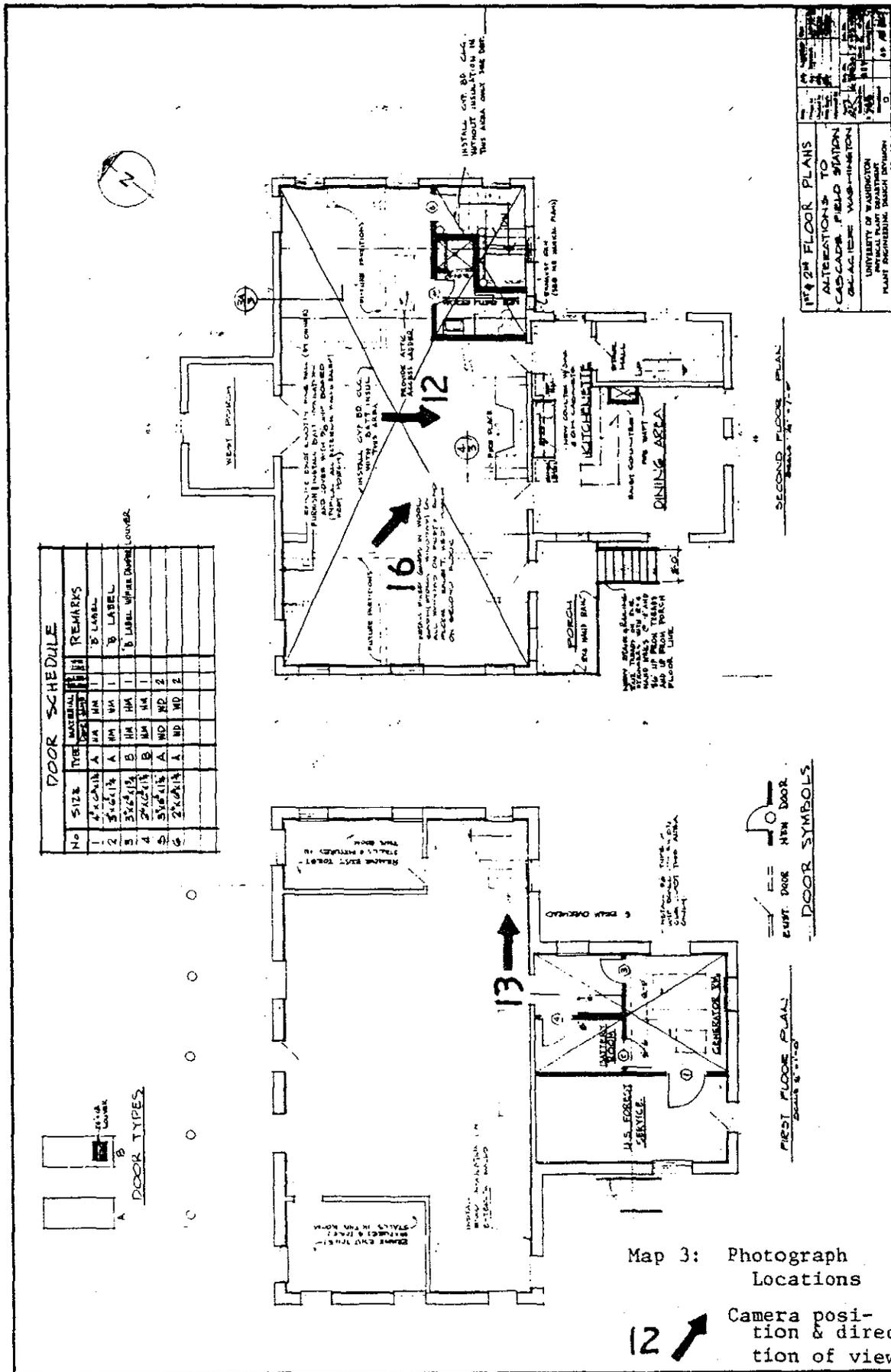
Prepared by: James A. McDonald  
Title: Archeologist  
Affiliation: Coronado N. F.  
Date: February 7, 1992





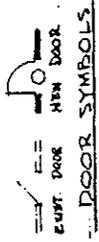
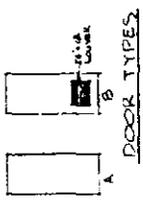
Map 2: Photograph Locations

➔ Camera position & direction of view



**DOOR SCHEDULE**

No	SIZE	TYPE	MATERIAL	REMARKS
1	2' x 6' 1/2"	A	HM	B LABEL
2	3' x 6' 1/2"	A	HM	B LABEL
3	3' x 6' 1/2"	B	HM	B LABEL
4	2' x 6' 1/2"	B	HM	B LABEL
5	3' x 6' 1/2"	A	MD	
6	2' x 6' 1/2"	A	MD	



Map 3: Photograph Locations

12 → Camera position & direction of view

**1st & 2nd FLOOR PLANS**  
ALTERATIONS TO  
CASCADE FIELD STATION  
GALACIERE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
MOUNTAIN PLANT DEPARTMENT  
PLANT DISTRIBUTION, TACOMA DIVISION

**SECOND FLOOR PLAN**  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

INSTALL CFT. BD. CGLC.  
WITHOUT INSULATION IN  
THIS AREA ONLY THE WEST.

REMOVE ATTIC  
ACROSS LATHES  
INSTALL CFT. BD. CGLC.  
WITH BATT INSUL.  
IN THIS AREA.

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