

KODIAK NAVAL OPERATING BASE, WAREHOUSE
(Building No. 93)
(United States Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Kodiak)
U.S. Coast Guard Station, Seafarer Drive
Kodiak
Kodiak Island Borough
Alaska

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ALASKA SUPPORT OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
240 West 5th Avenue, Room 114
Anchorage, AK 99501

Historic American Buildings Survey

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ARCHITECTURAL RECORDATION FORM

HISTORIC NAME OF BUILDING: Building 93 - Warehouse

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

AHRS NO.: KOD - 639

COMPLETE ADDRESS (or PHYSICAL LOCATION): This building is located on Nyman Peninsula on Seafarer Drive (previously Avenue B) within the boundaries of the Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Kodiak.

~~UTM~~ Lat / Longitude: 57.7196510, -152.520347

PRESENT USE: Storage

SIGNIFICANCE:

Constructed in 1943 by the main contractor at the Navy's base, Siems Drake Puget Sound, this warehouse served the Navy Base as a storage facility. The building is similar in design to several other warehouses constructed by the Navy on the site. The warehouse is one of many support structures present in this area of the base. Warehouse 93 retains its overall historic character and integrity. As with Warehouse S-14 and 96, the addition of T1-11 siding to Warehouse 93 is a simple but visually-dominant change to the building, which otherwise appears largely intact in its original setting. The building is within the period of significance, retains its overall integrity and is within the boundaries of and contributes to the revised National Historic Landmark at the site.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: 1943
2. Architect: Unknown
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 of Seattle, Washington.

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5. Original plans and construction: Limited maintenance records at USCG ISC Kodiak and at Coast Guard Island. Alameda, California. No original drawings were found.
6. Alterations and additions: Building 93 has had few character altering alterations. The original building siding had a limited lifetime and was recently replaced with T1-11 siding. The roof has been modified to accommodate several roof vents. It's continued use as a storage facility has meant few modifications have been necessary.

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. A civilian contractor first carried out construction. 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.

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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. The office of one of this century's premier industrial architects, Albert Kahn, designed hangars and other large buildings.

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.

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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.

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.

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

Warehouse 93 is about the same size and configuration as several other warehouses on the site including warehouses 96, S-13, S-14, and S-15. There are three sliding freight doors, which open onto a loading dock with a gravel ramp approaching it perpendicular to the building at the west end. The building is sheathed in T1-11 and has no windows. Warehouse 93 was built in 1943, but some of the original building materials have been replaced, including the siding.

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

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: This single story building is rectangular in shape (156'-4" x 60'-6") and contains a total of 9,450 square feet. Gable ends are on the east and west.
2. Foundations: The building rests on a continuous perimeter concrete foundation, backfilled with gravel. Finish floor elevation is approximately three feet above grade.
3. Walls: The walls are 10'-8" high, wood framed, and sheathed in T1-11 siding.
4. Structural system, framing: The building is wood framed. The roof is supported by wood trusses.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies: A concrete loading dock runs the length of the south elevation adjacent to the access road. Stairs access a pedestrian entry at the east end of the building.
6. Chimneys: Several vents are present including four metal rotary vents along the roof ridge.
7. Openings - doorways and windows: There are pedestrian entrances at the west and east ends of the building. Doors are flush, solid core wood, measuring 3'-0" x 6'-8". The building has no windows.

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8. Roof: The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles, has a number of metal vents, and a gutter runs along the roof ridge.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans: The floor plan is generally open, with a boiler room and office located at the eastern end of the building.
2. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior partitions are non-load bearing, wood framed, finished with plywood or gypsum wall board. Inside surfaces of exterior walls are exposed wooden studs. Ceiling is unfinished with exposed trusses.
3. Flooring: Exposed concrete.
4. Mechanical: Heating was provided by a fuel oil burning boiler.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: This building is located near the southern end of Nyman Peninsula on Seafarer Drive (prev. Avenue B), across from outer Women's Bay. It is oriented toward the southwest facing Seafarer Drive. Building 93 was the southernmost of the Nymen Peninsula warehouses.
2. Historic landscape design: The building sets up against the hillside. Gravel surfacing exists along the front and ends of the building. Opportunistic vegetation occurs along the backside of the warehouse.
3. Outbuildings: None

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: Limited maintenance records at USCG ISC Kodiak and at Coast Guard Island, Alameda, California. No original drawings were found.
- B. Early views: None found.
- C. Interviews: None conducted.

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E. Likely sources not yet investigated: None.

F. Supplemental material: None.

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