

Post Office & Courthouse
Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement
Administrative Center
Kalaupapa
Kalawao County
Moloka'i Island
Hawaii

HABS No. HI-77

HABS
HI,
3-KALA,
33-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO:
POST OFFICE & COURTHOUSE
Kalaupapa National Historical Park
Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement
Moloka'i Island
Kalaupapa
Kalawao County
Hawaii

HABS HI-77
HI,3-KALA,33-

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

ADDENDUM TO:
POST OFFICE & COURTHOUSE
(Building No. 290)
Kalaupapa National Historical Park
Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement
Moloka'i Island
Kalaupapa
Kalawao County
Hawaii

HABS HI-77
HABS HI,3-KALA,33-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ADDENDUM TO

POST OFFICE & COURTHOUSE (Building No. 290)

HABS No. HI-77

Location: Beritania Street, Kalaupapa Settlement, Kalaupapa National Historical Park, Moloka'i Island, Kalawao County, Hawaii

The Post Office & Courthouse building at Kalaupapa National Historical Park is located at latitude: 21.190148, longitude: -156.983536. The coordinate represents a point at the center of the building and was obtained in 2016 using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction on its release to the public.

Significance: The Kalaupapa Post Office & Courthouse was built in 1934 as part of a building campaign by the Territory of Hawaii Board of Health at the Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement. The goal was to upgrade and improve the community facilities for the patients and staff living in the village. The adjacent Kalaupapa Patient Store and the Gas Station were built at the same time; the Food Warehouse across the road was built just a few years earlier.

Description: The Kalaupapa Post Office & Courthouse is a concrete block structure with a multi-pitch hipped roof. The structure sits on a concrete foundation that is at grade on the Beritania St. side and higher where to the ground slopes away to the south. The concrete block walls are parged with a smooth finish. The roof encompasses a portico on all four sides of the building with a concrete floor scored into large squares. The wide eaves have curved exposed rafter ends with a gently curving bracket attached to the fascia. The simple wood posts supporting the edge of the roof at the portico have thick curved brackets on each side. At the south, or courthouse, half of the building the space between the porch posts is filled with simple wood horizontal railings. The roof is sheathed with asphalt composite shingles. A wind break of vertical boards with a wood louver clerestory is located at the northwest corner, protecting the Post Office entrance. A half wall of concrete block divides the east portico, separating the utility sink and service entrance for the post office from the courthouse portion of the building.

Windows include tall rectangular openings with six over six light wood double hung sash and a row of clerestory windows placed over the post office boxes accessible from the portico. Additional post office boxes have been placed into the lower sash of one of the windows on the east façade. The Post Office service window is located at the west elevation near the northwest corner. The Post Office doorway on the north elevation has a Dutch door configuration. Another

one-leaf door is located on the east elevation and two-leaf wood door with a five-light transom is located on the south.

History: Hansen's disease, commonly known as leprosy, is a disfiguring bacterial disease feared for centuries and often resulting in the forced isolation of its unfortunate sufferers. In the Hawaiian Islands, Hansen's disease emerged in the early nineteenth century and spread through the native population. Anxiety about the disease prompted King Kamehameha V and his Board of Health to purchase an isolated peninsula on the north coast of Molokai in 1865 to quarantine men, women and children exhibiting signs of infection. The initial settlement of Kalawao was located on the east side of the peninsula, but development began to shift to the village of Kalaupapa on the drier west side by the late nineteenth century. In the early 1930s the Territorial Government of Hawaii launched an initiative to improve community facilities in the modest "industrial" area near the Kalaupapa wharf. New buildings included a Food Warehouse, Patient Store, Post Office/Courthouse, and the Gas Station.

The combination Post Office/Courthouse was designed by the Hawaii Board of Public Works for the Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement and built in 1934. Starting in June 1931 the Board of Hospitals began discussing plans for "the proposed rehabilitation and improvements at Kalaupapa."¹ Guy Rothwell, an architect on the Board, raised the question of bringing in a private architectural firm to assist. Superintendent of Public Works Lyman H. Bigelow was invited to the next meeting, where he assured the Board that "he and his department are prepared to proceed with the preparation of detailed plans as soon as the Board submits to him a general scheme covering what is desired."² Bigelow allowed that although he preferred that the responsibility for detailed plans and specifications of individual buildings remain solely within his department, outside architectural assistance for a general plan of development at Kalaupapa would be acceptable. The minutes do not reveal whether a private architect was involved in the reconfiguration of the area around the Kalaupapa wharf but Board of Public Works architects proceeded with plans for the new buildings. A preliminary plan reviewed at the December 30, 1931 allowed the Board to "discuss the location of the warehouse, post office, service station, bakery and store at Kalaupapa."³ The locations were agreed upon and work on the detailed plans authorized.

A new Food Warehouse was built in 1932 but the other projects did not immediately move forward, likely due to economic conditions. In October 1933 the Board of Hospitals made plans to apply for federal National Recovery Administration (NRA) funds for Kalaupapa, including \$7,500 for a new patient

¹ Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement, (17 June 1931), Volume 1, Series 330 - Minutes of the Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement, 1931-49, Records of the Department of Health, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI [hereafter Minutes of the Board of Hospitals, Series 330, Hawaii State Archives].

² Minutes of the Board of Hospitals, (24 June 1931), Volume 1, Series 330, Hawaii State Archives.

³ Minutes of the Board of Hospitals, (30 December 1931), Volume 1, Series 330, Hawaii State Archives.

store, \$5,500 for the combination post office & courthouse, and \$1,300 for the Gas Station.⁴ For the Post Office & Courthouse the requested amount would cover \$3100 for materials and \$2400 for labor. Preliminary plans for these buildings were approved in December and detailed plans in March 1934. All three structures would be of “concrete tile” construction.⁵

By May 1934 the Department of Public Works had chosen W.S. Ching to receive the construction contract for the three buildings. He was the lowest bidder with a total proposal of \$16,790.50.⁶ Work proceeded rapidly and the minutes for the September 26, 1934 meeting of the Board of Hospitals noted that the “store, post office and service station buildings are practically completed.”⁷ The Board of Hospitals *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1934* noted:

Work under the contract for the construction of these three buildings was begun in May and when completed will be an important functional addition as well as a very pleasing feature in the “down town” section of the Settlement. The buildings are of semi-fireproof construction with concrete floors and concrete hollow tile walls, the tile having been manufactured at the site using local black and white sands with satisfactory results.⁸

The on-site manufacture of hollow concrete block was an effective solution to the difficulty of transporting bulky construction materials to the remote peninsula.

At the end of the 1934 fiscal year on June 30, the Superintendent’s *Annual Report* noted:

The new Post Office and Courthouse (combined in one building)... is well along and will closely follow the Store in the matter of completion as the sites are located within the same block and construction materials are practically identical. This well designed building which is fireproof as well as the new Store, will be located on one of the “key” corners of the Settlement and should very materially add to the appearance of the block.⁹

The new grouping of buildings, along with the recently constructed Food Warehouse, did markedly improve the appearance of an important crossroads in

⁴ Minutes of the Board of Hospitals, (25 October 1933), Volume 1, Series 330, Hawaii State Archives.

⁵ Minutes of the Board of Hospitals, (25 October 1933 and 27 December 1933), Volume 1, Series 330, Hawaii State Archives.

⁶ Minutes of the Board of Hospitals, (9 May 1934), Volume 2, Series 330, Hawaii State Archives.

⁷ Minutes of the Board of Hospitals, (26 September 1934), Volume 2, Series 330, Hawaii State Archives.

⁸ *Annual Report of the Superintendent Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement, of the Territory of Hawaii for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1934*, (Records of the Department of Health, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI), 2.

⁹ [Typescript], *Annual Report of the Superintendent, Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement of the Territory of Hawaii for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1934*, Folder - Annual Reports of Superintendent of Kalaupapa FY Ending 1932-34, Series 260 Records Relating to Hansen’s Disease, 1866-1981, Records of the Department of Health, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

the Kalaupapa Village. Shortly after in July 1934 it was reported that the contractor for the three new buildings was experiencing delays with shipping the millwork from the mainland, but the work had progressed as far as possible.¹⁰ By October both the Post Office/Courthouse and Patient Store had been completed.¹¹

Successful treatment of Hansen's disease with antibiotics in the post-World War II years lead to the opening of the community at Kalaupapa and the lifting of the mandatory quarantine in 1969. The unique history of the site was recognized by the establishment of Kalaupapa National Historical Park in 1980. However the natural geographic boundaries of the peninsula combined with the desire of the remaining patients to maintain their homes means that Kalaupapa is still a very isolated community. The Post Office continues to serve its original function.

Sources: *Annual Report of the Superintendent, Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement of the Territory of Hawaii for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1934* [typescript], Folder - Annual Reports of Superintendent of Kalaupapa FY Ending 1932-34, Series 260 Records Relating to Hansen's Disease, 1866-1981, Records of the Department of Health, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

Collection KALA-00095, Architectural Evaluation, Kalaupapa, Hawaii, (1977), Kalaupapa National Historical Park Archives.

Monthly Statistical and Narrative Reports by the Superintendent of Kalaupapa, July 1934-June 1936, Box 30, Series 260 Records Relating to Hansen's Disease, 1866-1981, Records of the Department of Health, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

Series 330 – Minutes of the Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement, 1931-49, Records of the Department of Health, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, Ph.D., HABS Historian

Project

Information: Documentation of the Post Office & Courthouse and other Kalaupapa Village buildings was undertaken in November 2016 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP), National Park Service (Catherine C. Lavoie, Chief, HABS; Richard O'Connor, Chief, HDP). The project was sponsored by Kalaupapa National Historical Park (KALA), Erika Stein Espaniola, Superintendent. Funding was provided in part by Hawaii Pacific Parks Association. Project planning was coordinated by Todd Croteau (HAER

¹⁰ [Typescript], July 1934 Monthly Report, Folder – Monthly Statistical and Narrative Reports by the Superintendent of Kalaupapa, July 1934-June 1936, Box 30, Series 260 Records Relating to Hansen's Disease, 1866-1981, Records of the Department of Health, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, HI [hereafter Monthly Report, Box 30, Series 260, Hawaii State Archives]

¹¹ Monthly Report – October 1934, Box 30, Series 260, Hawaii State Archives.

Architect and acting KALA Cultural Resources Manager). Field recording and measured drawings were completed by Dana Lockett (HAER Architect), Daniel De Sousa (HABS Architect), Ryan Pierce (HALS Architect), and Paul Davidson (HABS Architect). Lisa Pfueller Davidson (HABS Historian) served as project historian. Todd Croteau also prepared large-format photographs. Valuable assistance was provided by the staff of Kalaupapa National Historical Park.