

HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION
of the
ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
(Merchant's Wharf)
JUNEAU, ALASKA



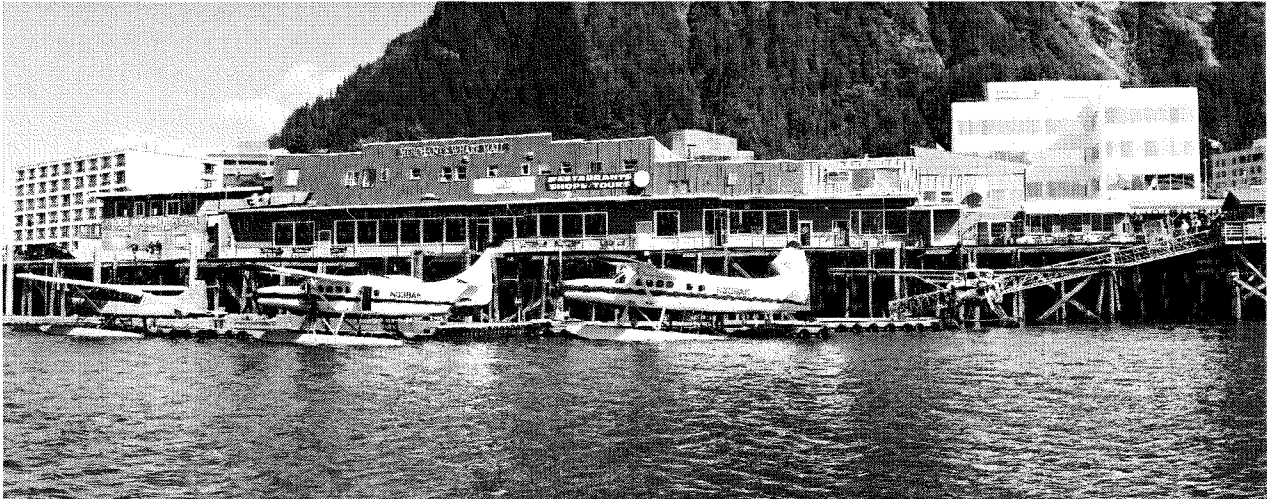
CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
★ **ALASKA'S CAPITAL CITY**

September 2006

HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION of the **ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR** (Merchant's Wharf)

Alaska Historic Resources Number: JUN-120
City & Borough of Juneau Historic Resources Number: CBJ-I-1

JUNEAU, ALASKA



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge and thank individuals who shared their experiences and knowledge about aviation history in Juneau's harbor. Dean Williams, a former owner of Southeast Skyways (one of the airlines that operated out of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar), provided information about operations and early modifications to the building. Barbra Wilmot who led an effort to preserve the Merchant's Wharf building supplied us with information and documents about the history of the various airlines that operated out of the building. Norm Miller, a former employee of Alaska Coastal Airlines, shared his knowledge about the development chronology of the building. Jim Ruotsala, local aviation historian and author, shared his impressive photograph collection and general knowledge of Southeast Alaska aviation. Daniel Glidmann, manager of the Merchant's Wharf building provided information about recent remodeling at the site. Finally thanks to John George, owner of the Juneau Steamboat Company, for providing transportation in the harbor for photographic documentation of the current building from an important perspective that is not evident from the land.

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Cover Photograph: Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar
Norm and Betty Miller Collection

INTRODUCTION

In May 2006 the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) awarded a Historic Preservation Fund Grant to the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Community Development Department. The purpose of the project was to perform a historical evaluation of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf). The scope of work required researching the history of the building, documenting the current condition of the building, describing the changes made to the building throughout the years, and evaluating the historic significance and integrity of the building. The results of this work was to be documented in a written report with photos, maps, and other information as appropriate.

The property at the Juneau waterfront that eventually was the site of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar held an important role in the community's development since 1901. At that time it was a major shipping wharf and warehouse of the Pacific Coastal Steamship Company. In 1929 the first air flight landed at this location and started a long standing air transport industry. Although the cargo has changed from goods and services for the local community to that of a tourist economy, this waterfront site remains a major sea port for ships and float planes. The former hangar building was converted to a mixed retail facility in the early 1970s and continues in that use today.

In 2004 the CBJ Assembly adopted a Long Range Waterfront Plan that recommends the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) be demolished to accommodate the expansion of Marine Park and the construction of a Seawalk and smaller retail facilities. The plan also calls for the float plane facilities to be relocated out of downtown. Currently the owners of the Merchant's Wharf have the property listed for sale.

Given the uncertain future of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) the Juneau Historic Resources Advisory Committee determined that a historic property evaluation would be a valuable asset to the community's body of knowledge about Juneau's history. It would also instill a better understanding of the role of this property in the early development of the community.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) is located within the City and Borough of Juneau in Southeast Alaska. This region, also referred to as Alaska's Panhandle, is comprised of the narrow strip of land bordering Canada and the nearby array of islands of the Alexander Archipelago. Southeast Alaska encompasses 42,000 square miles and extends approximately 500 miles from Icy Bay to Dixon Entrance at the United States and Canadian border.

The boundaries of the City and Borough of Juneau are defined by Lynn Canal to the west, the Canadian border to the east, Point Coke to the south, and the Haines Borough to the north. Juneau contains over 3,250 square miles, about 90 percent of which is water, mountain ranges, or glacial ice fields.

Juneau's climate, like the rest of Southeast Alaska, is clement compared to other regions of Alaska. The mild weather can be credited to the warming influence of the Japanese Current. A large portion of the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) is located within the Tongass National Forest. The predominant trees in the area are Sitka Spruce and Hemlock.

Populated areas of the CBJ include: Downtown Juneau, the north-eastern side of Douglas Island, the Mendenhall Valley, Auke Bay, Lena Cove and Tee Harbor. The majority of urban areas of Juneau (excluding Douglas Island) are located on the narrow section of flat land between the coastal mountain range and the coastline, defined by Gastineau Channel, Auke Bay, Lena Cove, Tee Harbor, and Favorite Channel. The coastal mountain range rises abruptly from sea level to elevations of nearly 4,000 feet. The rugged terrain surrounding Juneau makes transportation difficult. Juneau is only accessible by air or by sea. No roadways or railways lead out of Juneau.

The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) is located in downtown Juneau, situated on the coast of the mainland at the narrowest part of Gastineau Channel, nestled between Mount Juneau and Mount Roberts. The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar is located within the Tideland's Historic Neighborhood, one of Juneau's eight historic neighborhoods as defined by the draft Historic Preservation Plan of 1997. The borders of the Tideland's Neighborhood are defined by the Gastineau Channel to the south, Willoughby Avenue to the north and east, and Gold Creek to the west. The Tideland's Addition to the original Juneau Townsite was created by placing waste rock from the Alaska Juneau Gold Mine into the channel's tidal flats.

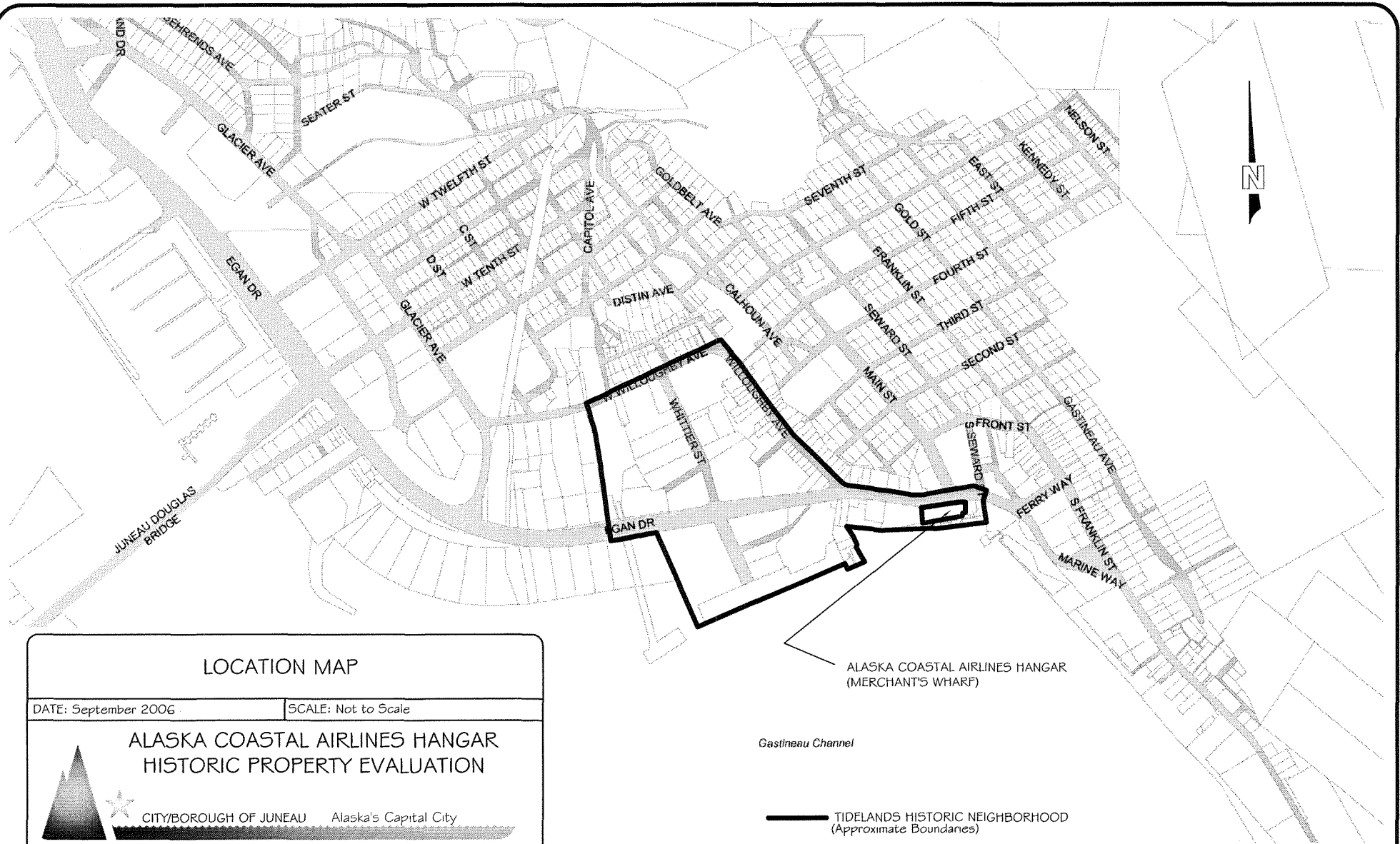
VICINITY MAP



LOCATION MAP

The following map shows the location of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) within Downtown Juneau. The Tidelands Historic Neighborhood is overlaid on a modified copy of the map titled, "Downtown Juneau & West Juneau Base Maps." The City and Borough of Juneau Community Development Department originally produced the map in December, 2002.

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LOCATION MAP

DATE: September 2006 SCALE: Not to Scale

ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION



CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU Alaska's Capital City

SOURCE: Downtown Juneau & West Juneau Base Map, prepared by CBJ/GIS-Community Development Dept., dated December, 2002

ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
(MERCHANT'S WHARF)

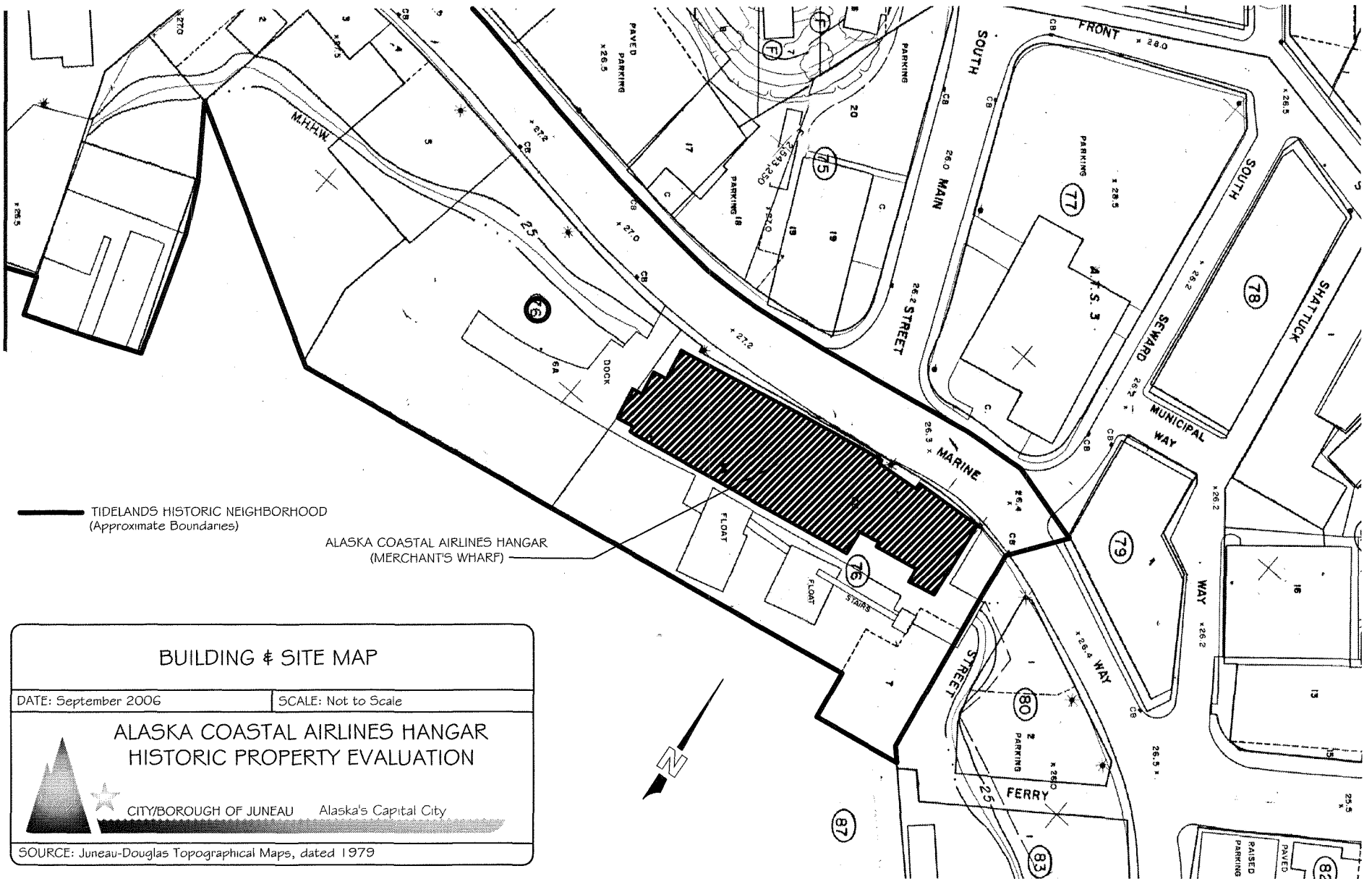
Gastineau Channel

— TIDELANDS HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD
(Approximate Boundaries)

BUILDING AND SITE MAP

The following map shows the location of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) and site within the Tidelands Historic Neighborhood. The outline of the historic neighborhood is overlaid on a modified copy of the map titled, "Juneau-Douglas Topographical Maps." The City and Borough of Juneau Community Development Department originally produced the map in 1979.

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— TIDELANDS HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD
(Approximate Boundaries)

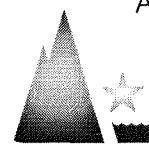
ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
(MERCHANT'S WHARF)

BUILDING & SITE MAP

DATE: September 2006

SCALE: Not to Scale

**ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION**



CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU Alaska's Capital City

SOURCE: Juneau-Douglas Topographical Maps, dated 1979

HISTORY

Alaska Native Tlingit and Haida people reportedly occupied Southeast Alaska for hundreds of years prior to European contact. The Haida lived primarily in the southwestern portion of Southeast Alaska while the Tlingit resided in the rest of the region. The Auk, Taku and Sumdum tribes of Tlingit people lived in what is now the City and Borough of Juneau at the time George Vancouver's crew noticed smoke from a campfire at an Auke Bay village. This first recorded account of the Auks was in 1794.

In 1867 The United States bought Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million dollars. Gold was known to exist in Southeast Alaska as early as the 1860s located in a string of highly mineralized deposits along the coastline from Windham Bay to Berners Bay. George Pilz, a Sitka miner, was convinced that gold existed in the Gastineau Channel area when Chief Kowee of the Auk people brought him ore from the mouth of what was to be called Gold Creek. He outfitted two prospectors, Richard T. Harris and Joseph Juneau, and sent them to investigate. Following the creek to its headwaters in Silverbow Basin they staked a claim on October 4, 1880.

Harris and Juneau established a 160 acre town site at the beach near the mouth of Gold Creek on October 18, 1880 and named it Harrisburgh. In early 1881 a town meeting resulted in the name being changed to Rockwell in honor of the Naval Commander that was sent to the area to establish law and order. By the end of 1881 Joe Juneau lobbied the local miners, complaining nothing in the district had been named for him, and it was agreed to change the town's name to Juneau. In 1900 Juneau was incorporated and named the seat of government for the Alaska Territory.



*Mill operations of the Alaska Juneau Gold Mine, ca. 1918
Courtesy of Alaska State Library*

As early placer mining operations gave way to large underground mines, transportation of vast amounts of goods, materials, and people became increasingly important. The glacial, mountainous, and coastal terrain surrounding the Juneau area made overland transportation impossible. The only reasonable options were by sea and later air. Juneau's harbor developed with a number of ship docks to handle the influx of commerce to support the growing community.

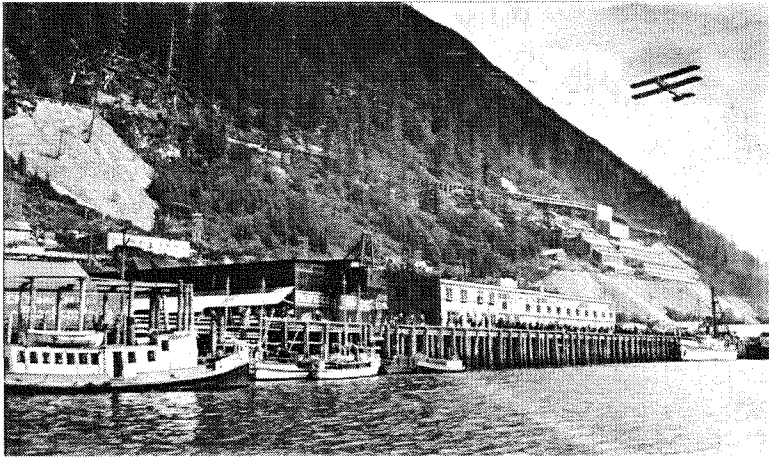
By 1901 the Pacific Coastal Steamship Company had a wharf and warehouse facility at the subject site. The facility served the shipping needs of the community until 1924 when Pacific Coastal was purchased by Admiral Line, a competing shipping company, and moved to another location on Juneau's waterfront.

*Pacific Steamship Warehouse,
ca. 1901
Courtesy Alaska State Library*



The Juneau Motor Company purchased the property in 1924 and erected a garage and office on the wharf to serve their new business. This was Juneau's first Ford dealership as automobiles became popular.

Aviation history was made on April 15, 1929 when Enscl Eckmann flew into Juneau in his Lockheed Vega named "Juneau." It was the first non-stop flight from Seattle to Alaska. Shortly after arriving, Eckmann formed Alaska-Washington Airways, Juneau's first airline. Alaska-Washington Airways operated out of a hangar built atop a large log raft anchored in front of the Juneau Motor Company facility. During the 1930s there were a number of companies providing floatplane service out of the Juneau Harbor. These included Alaska Southern Airways, Pacific Alaska Airways, Panhandle Air Transport, Alaska Air Transport, and Marine Airways.



*First plane spotted over Juneau,
ca. 1929
Courtesy of Alaska State Library*

In 1936 the Juneau Motor Company's building and dock were demolished by Alaska Air Transport (AAT) to make way for a hangar and repair shop. Local investors funded the hangar which was built to house five planes. The 5,000 square foot hangar was used in conjunction with a floating hangar already owned by AAT. A wood and steel ramp connected the new hangar to the sea level floating dock allowing loading/unloading of passengers and cargo. In addition, a lift system, composed of a long boom, slings, pulleys and railroad tracks, was developed to lift planes out of the water and transport them into the hangar on the wharf. The 'crane' was designed by Shell Simmons and used for the first time to lift AAT's Bellanca on August 27, 1936.

Fire destroyed the Alaska Air Transport hangar on June 10, 1938. The Daily Alaska Empire (currently Juneau Empire) reported the fire started from a welding torch that ignited the fabric of a Bellanca Skyrocket floatplane. Damage from the fire was estimated at \$25,000 and included destruction of the Bellanca Skyrocket, substantial damage to the building, and destruction of machinery, parts and tools. The building was insured and plans were made to rebuild. Sheldon "Shell" Simmons, owner of Alaska Air Transport, was quoted as saying, "We're in the flying business same as usual." Between 1938 and 1939, a new Alaska Air Transport hangar was constructed.

In July 1940 Alaska Air Transport and Marine Airways merged to become Alaska Coastal Airlines. After the merger the new company purchased the hangar from the private owner from whom they had been leasing. In 1946 the building underwent a major renovation including a hangar addition of approximately 10,000 square feet. In addition, office space was added in 1951 and a baggage handling area was constructed in 1957.

In the 1950's Alaska Coastal Airlines served 33 towns throughout Alaska, only four of which had airports. Alaska Coastal Airlines was recognized as a model of independency because they were at least 1,000 miles away from

any repair-shop or parts department, thus all servicing and repairs were done in house.

In the July 1959 issue of Popular Mechanics the article, "Alaska's Flying Bus Line", praised Alaska Coastal Airlines as being, "...a most unique air operation that's a tribute to old-fashioned American ingenuity." Many innovations came out of the Alaska Coastal Airlines hangar over the years, in order to combat the harsh Alaska climate and lack of available parts as well as making planes more efficient. Alaska Coastal Airlines retrofitted the first "Turbo Goose" by replacing the original engines with Pratt and Whitney PT6A turboprops.



*Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar, ca. 1946
Courtesy Alaska State Library*

In 1962, Alaska Coastal Airlines merged with another large southeast airline called Ellis Air Transport to form Alaska Coastal Ellis Airline. Bob Ellis had been operating Ellis Air Transport out of Ketchikan since 1940. Alaska

Coastal Ellis Airlines continued their operations out of the Alaska Coastal hangar. They owned and operated the greatest exclusively amphibian airline in the world, with the largest fleet of the legendary Grumman Goose in private hands. Today five of Alaska Coastal Ellis Airline planes sit in museums around the world. These museums include the McChord Air Force Museum in Washington, DC, the National Canadian Aviation Museum in Ottawa, the Tongass Historical Museum in Ketchikan, the Yanks Air Museum in Greenfield, California, and the Swedish Air Force Museum in Linkoping.

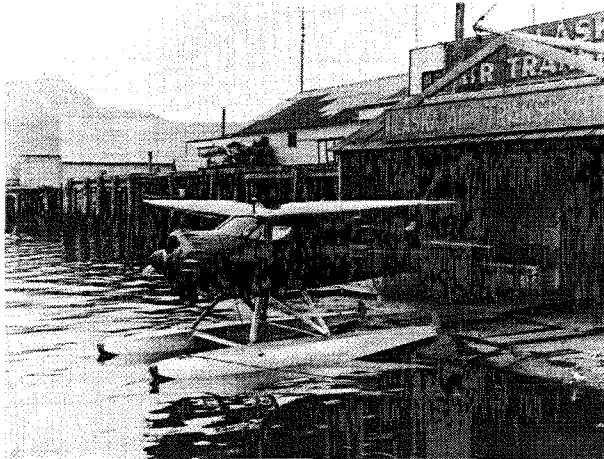
In 1968, Alaska Airlines purchased Alaska Coastal Ellis Airlines. Alaska Airlines did not wish to continue floatplane operations based out of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar building, so Dean Williams and Bill Bernhardt formed Southeast Skyways in late 1968 to fill the void, renting the hangar facility from Alaska Airlines. Southeast Skyways was strictly charter until 1969, when Alaska Airlines asked Southeast Skyways to take over the former Alaska Coastal Ellis Airline routes.

In 1974, Henry Camarot, Louis Dischner, and Frank Irich purchased the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar. The building was remodeled for use as a retail center with restaurants, shops, and offices. They named the building "Merchant's Wharf" which continues to serve as a retail center today.

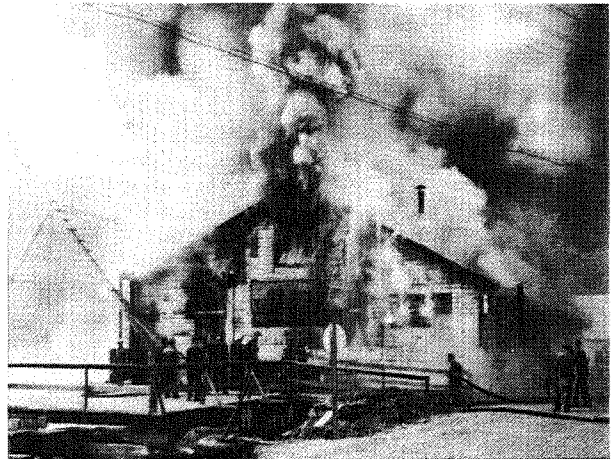
About this time Southeast Skyways was purchased by Wings of Alaska. Although the hangar and repair facilities have been converted to retail uses, Wings of Alaska continues to operate from a floating dock to serve the tourist trade. These floats and associated aircraft activity are reminiscent of former operations at this location and serve as a reminder of the history and historic events of this aspect of Juneau's past.

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS

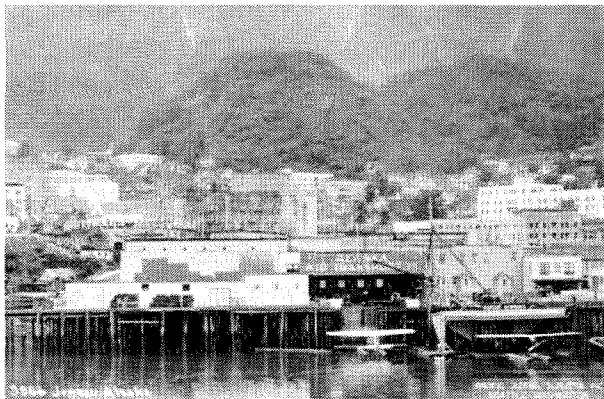
The following photographs document the historical appearance of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar and other structures on the site.



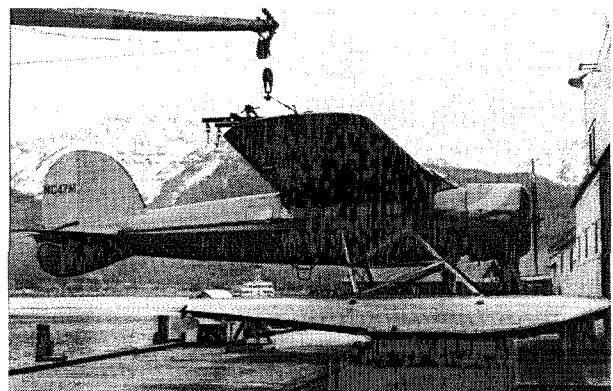
Alaska Air Transport's floating hangar, (1936). *Ray Renshaw Collection courtesy of Jim Ruotsala.*



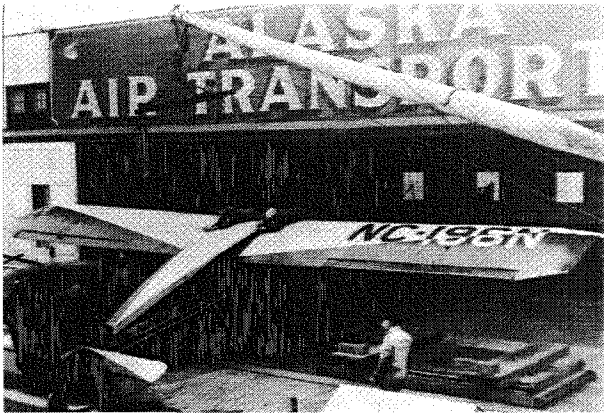
Fire at the Alaska Air Transport hangar, on June 10, 1938. *Ordway Photo courtesy of Jim Ruotsala.*



South elevation of the Alaska Air Transport building, ca. 1937. *Courtesy of Juneau-Douglas City Museum.*



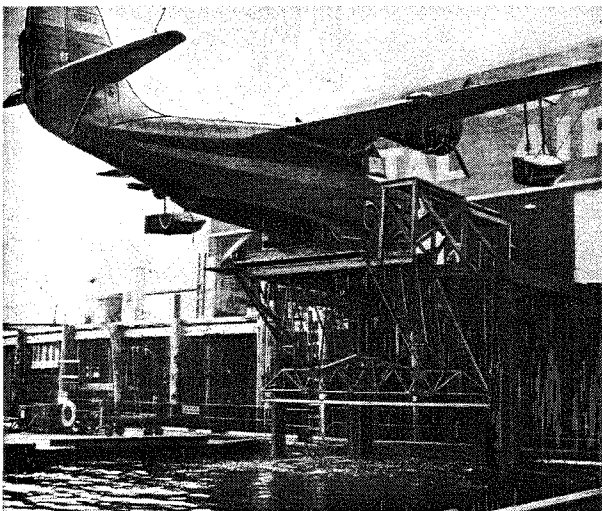
Alaska Air Transport's Lockheed "Vega" attached to the crane lift system in front of the hangar, 1936. *Keith Petrich Photo courtesy of Jim Ruotsala.*



AAT's Bellanca "Pacemaker" outside the Alaska Air Transport hangar, ca. 1937. *Keith Petrich Photo courtesy of Jim Ruotsala.*



Southeast elevation of Alaska Coastal Airlines building, ca. 1940. *Photo courtesy of Wings of Alaska.*



Alaska Coastal Airlines plane on the hydraulic elevator outside the hangar, ca. 1940. *Courtesy of Popular Mechanics.*



Floatplanes docked at the Alaska Coastal Airlines hangar, ca. 1940. *Courtesy of Popular Mechanics.*



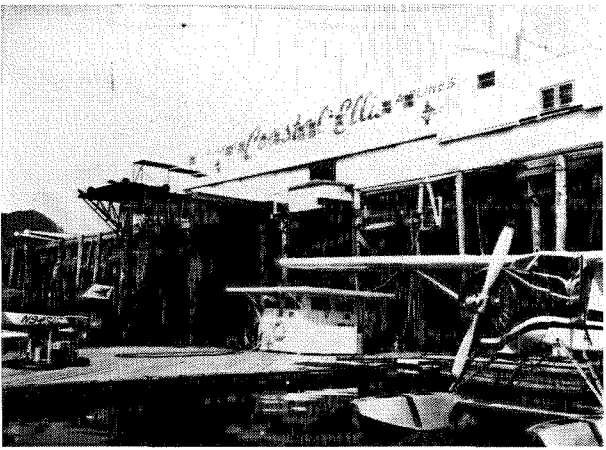
Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar, ca. 1940. *Courtesy Alaska State Library.*



Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar, ca. 1960. *Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.*



North elevation of Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar, ca. 1960. *Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.*



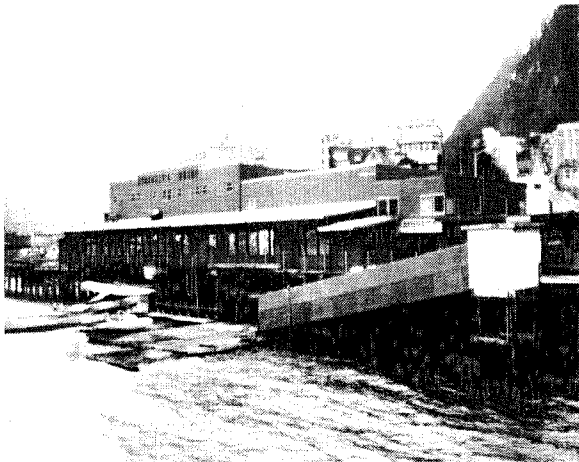
East elevation of Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar, ca. 1968. *Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.*



Northeast elevation of Merchant's Wharf building, 1976. *Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.*



Southwest elevation of Merchant's Wharf building, 1976. *Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.*



South elevation of Merchant's Wharf building, 1976. *Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.*



Northwest elevation of Merchant's Wharf building, 1976. *Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.*

PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCE INVESTIGATIONS

The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) is identified as having historic significance in the 1997 Draft Historic Preservation Plan developed by the CBJ Community Development Department. The building is listed as, "Coastal Steamship Company/Merchant's Wharf" in the document's "List of Historic Resources in Juneau." It was first identified as a historic resource in the "Inventory of Historic Sites and Structures" report of March 1986. Recent research has revealed that the Coastal Steamship Co. building was demolished a number of years prior to the construction of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar.

The eligibility of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places was evaluated in 1985 for a planned hotel development on the site by Capital City Incorporated. The project required a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers which set in motion the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Peratrovich Nottingham and Drage Incorporated, the engineering firm working on the hotel project, was assisted in the Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places by Holden Gerken & Associates.

Ernst Mueller of Holden Gerken & Associates asserted that the property was not eligible for listing in the National Register because at that time (1985) the earliest portion of the building had not yet reached fifty years of age and that there was a significant loss of integrity. Judith Bittner, Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with their determination.

The proposed hotel project was not developed thus the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) remains today essentially as it did in 1985. It is the policy of the State Historic Preservation Officer to revisit determinations of eligibility when more than five years have passed. Therefore a new determination of eligibility would be required if a project was enacted by a federal agency, required federal permits, or received federal funding.

Since the site is located on coastal waters of the state of Alaska, future development would require Coastal Management Review which may stipulate provisions of the Alaska Historic Preservation Act.

METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Methodology

A comprehensive historical study of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) and the surrounding site in downtown Juneau was performed during the summer of 2006. Principal investigators Gary Gillette, Historical Architect, and Matthew Halitsky, Historic Preservation Planner, directed the study and oversaw the work of student interns Jason Bradford and Matthew Majoros. Mr. Gillette and Mr. Halitsky meet the qualifications established by the Secretary of the Interior for performing services related to historic preservation projects and have performed similar work in the past.

Field work for this project consisted of a comprehensive survey of the site, building, and wharf structure. Methods included visual inspection, photographic documentation, and materials inventory. Information research included review of documents, articles, and photographs of the CBJ Tax Assessor, Alaska Historical Library, CBJ Community Development Department, CBJ Building Department, Internet resources, and Juneau Empire newspaper archives. In addition, numerous oral interviews were undertaken with former owners, employees, and local historians.

The information gathered was the basis for this report and evaluation of the historic significance of the property. The report describes the physical features of the building, site and surrounding area; discusses changes to the property over time; documents the history of the building and its uses; and provides an historical analysis of the property.

Evaluation Criteria

The National Register of Historic Places is the official Federal list of districts, sites, objects, buildings, and structures significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Although this is not a National Register Nomination the criteria established by the National Park Service for listing is widely accepted in evaluating historic properties.

There are three concepts that are used to evaluate historic properties: historic context, historic significance, and historic integrity.

Historic Context: Through examination of the architectural and historic trends of region and community the historic context of the property can be

established for its period of significance. Historic context is information about historic patterns and trends by which properties are grouped. Contexts are organized by theme, place, and time.

Historic Significance: Historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community, state or nation. To demonstrate historic significance, a property must meet one of the following criteria:

- A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. Property that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. Property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Property that has yielded or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Historic Integrity: In addition to its historic significance, a property must also have maintained historic integrity. Historic integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's period of significance. These characteristics include:

Location - the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred

Design - the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style

Setting - the physical environment of a historic property

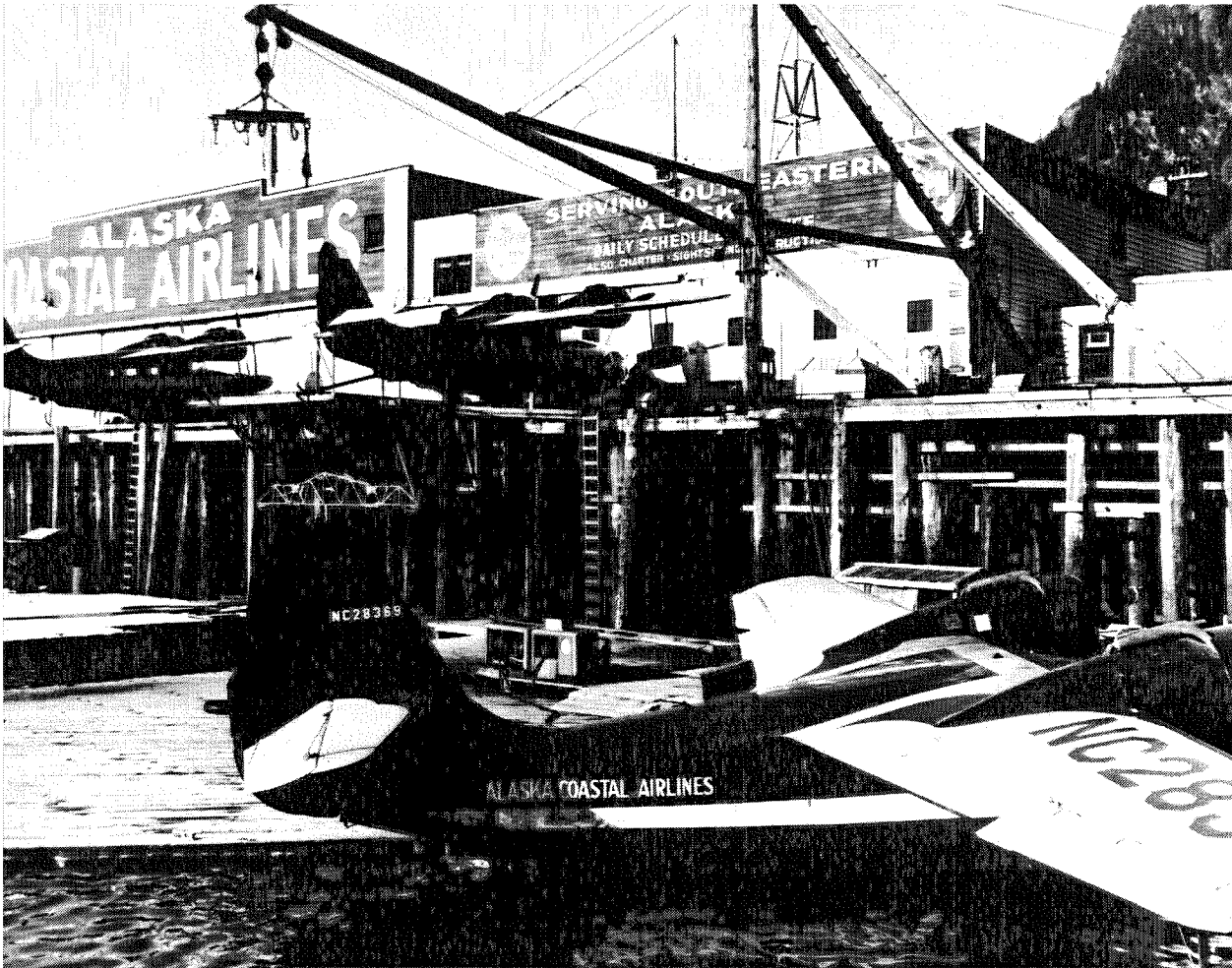
Materials – the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property

Workmanship – the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory

Feeling – a property’s expression of the esthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time

Association – the direct link between an important history event or person and a historic property

To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is important for a property to convey its significance.



*Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar, ca. 1946
Courtesy Alaska State Library*

CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

1901 Pacific Coastal Steamship Company Warehouse

The site of the current Merchant's Wharf building was first used as a warehouse by the Pacific Coastal Steamship Company. A building and staging area was constructed on top of a wooden wharf structure located on the site.

1924 Juneau Motor Company Warehouse

The Pacific Coastal Steamship Company merged with Admiral Line, another shipping firm, and moved from the site. The property was remodeled and served as sales, service, and office space for the Juneau Motor Company.

1936 Alaska Air Transport Hangar

The Juneau Motor Company building was demolished and a hangar for Alaska Air Transport was built in its place atop the wharf structure. The building was destroyed by fire in 1938.

1939 Alaska Air Transport / Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar

A new hangar building was constructed for Alaska Air Transport. In 1940 Alaska Air Transport and Marine Airways merged to become Alaska Coastal Airlines. The new company took over the hangar.

1946 Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar Expansion

The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar was expanded to the west with a hangar of about 10,000 square feet. This section is the largest portion of the current building and is clearly identified by a stepped false front. The false front concealed the arched shape of the hangar roof created by tied arch roof trusses which remain in the building.

1951 Office Addition

A two story addition was constructed for office space and ticket sales counter. This section was added to the east of the original 1939 hangar.

1957 Baggage Handling

A baggage handling building for Alaska Coastal Airlines was constructed about 20 feet to the east of the 1951 Office Addition. This is the most eastern part of the current building.

circa

1960 Covered Loading Area

The area between the 1951 Office Addition and the 1957 Baggage Handling addition was connected with a roof structure to provide a covered loading area. Eventually end walls were added to make this an enclosed space. Currently this area is a corridor within the building envelope.

1974 South Addition

A group of investors purchased the building and remodeled it as a retail center. A long narrow single story addition with a pitched roof was built on the southern side of the building to serve more retail uses. The large hangar doors were removed with this addition.

1979 West Addition

A two story addition was constructed to the west side of the building. The first floor houses a restaurant kitchen and the upper floor features office and storage space.

1995-

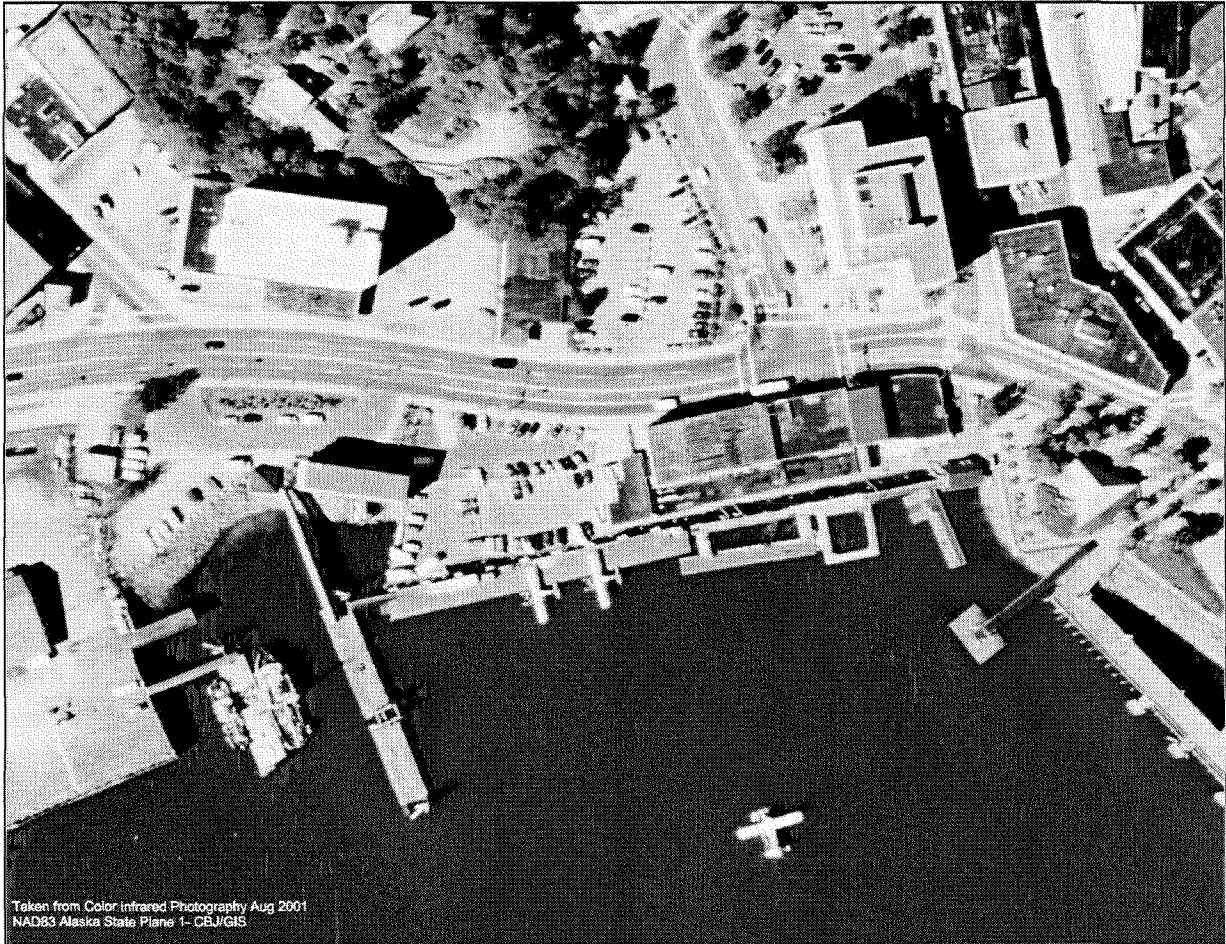
2006 Minor Additions

Over the past decade the building has received a number of small additions and other upgrades. These include a small addition on the south side for a restaurant tenant; a pitched roof on the south side for outdoor restaurant seating; and an addition to the east side for trash storage. Also, the flat roof over the 1957 Baggage Handling Addition and the Covered Loading Area received a new pitched roof which was constructed over the original flat roof structure.

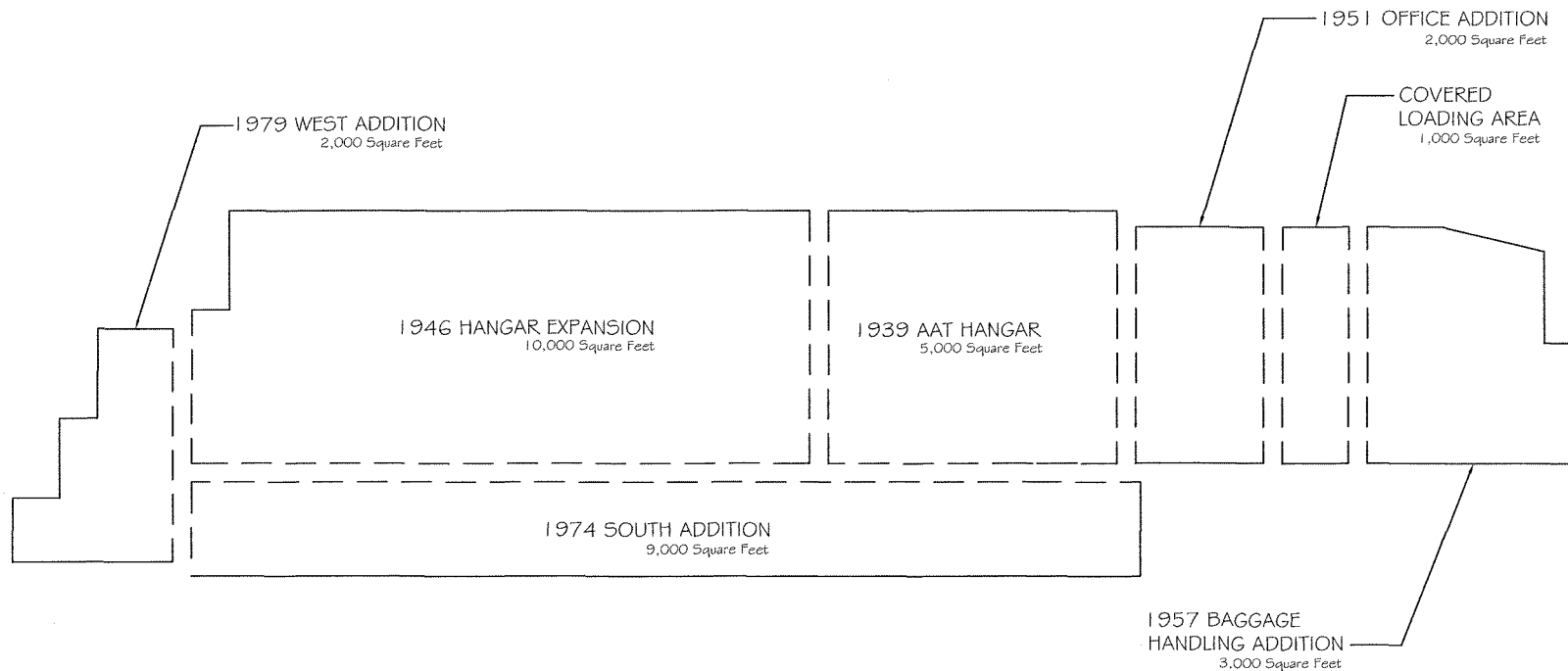
Note: Refer to the Construction Chronology plan on the following page for diagram of building additions.

CONSTRUCTION CHORONOLOGY DIAGRAM

The following drawing illustrates the various additions to the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf).



*Aerial Photo of Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf)
and surrounding area, 2001
Courtesy of CBJ Community Development Department*



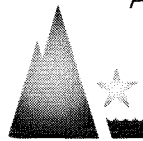
Approximate Total Area:
32,000 Square Feet

CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY DIAGRAM

DATE: September 2006

SCALE: Not to Scale

ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION



CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU Alaska's Capital City

SOURCE: Drawn by Jason Bradford. Dimensions provided by CBJ Assessors Files.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Site

At the time Juneau was established the subject site was comprised of tidal flats as the shoreline occurred approximately 500 feet north at what is now Front Street. As the town grew, wharfs and docks were built over the tidelands to reach deep water for ship access. These structures were built of wood pilings with wood timber pile caps and wooden planking. From early photos of the area it appears that the Pacific Coastal Steamship Company warehouse was constructed on top of these wharf structures.

Over time the tidelands were filled with waste rock from the Alaska Juneau Gold Mine. Fill was placed to the northern edge of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar leaving the building sitting on the wharf structure. Roadways, including the current Egan Drive, were built on the fill material adjacent to the building. The extant building and adjacent parking area remain on wood wharf structures.

Building

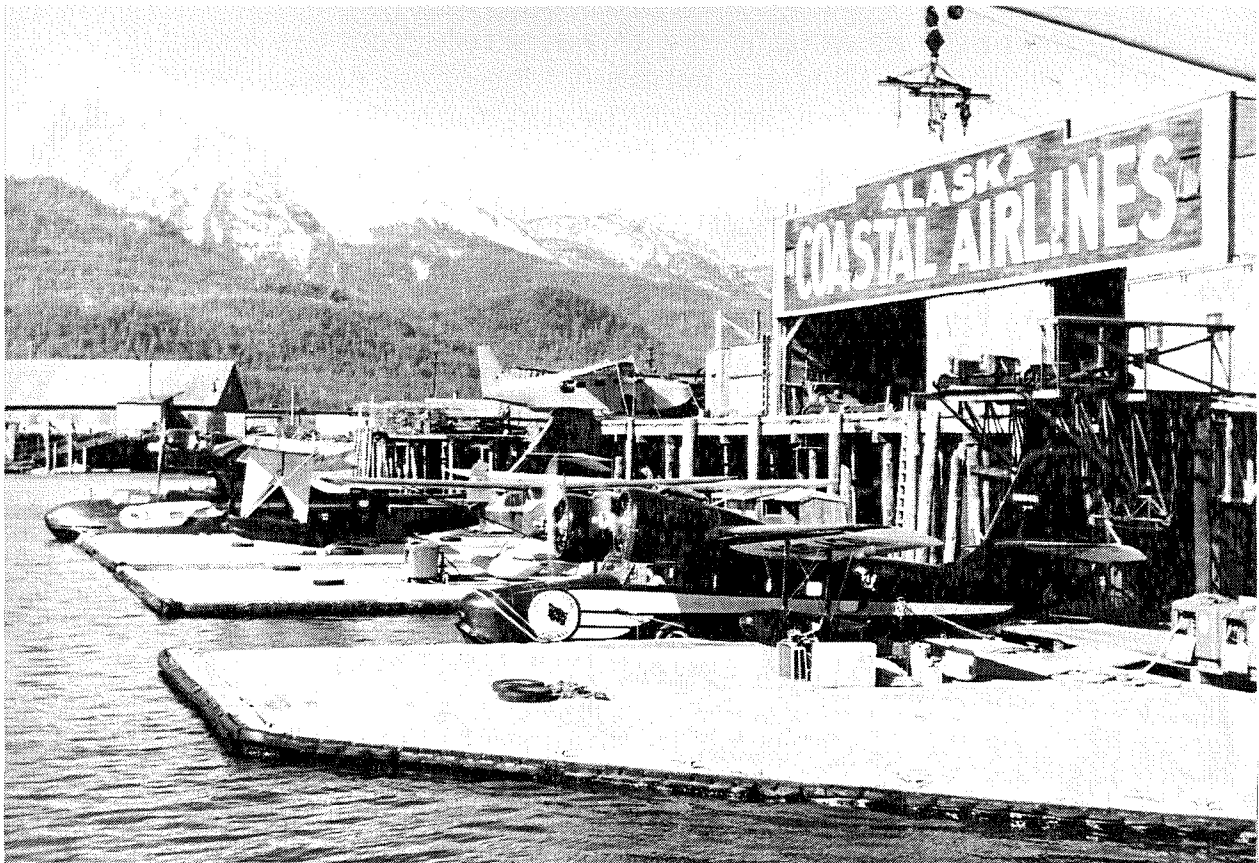
In 1901 a wooden wharf and warehouse was built for the Pacific Coastal Steamship Company. Based on available information this building was remodeled and additions were constructed in 1924 to house the Juneau Motor Company. In 1936 the Juneau Motor Company buildings were demolished to make way for a five-plane hangar and repair shop for Alaska Air Transport. On June 10, 1938 fire destroyed the hanger and its contents. By 1939 a new hangar was constructed to take its place. In 1940 a new company, Alaska Coastal Airlines, took over the building.

The extant building (Merchant's Wharf) incorporates the original Alaska Air Transport hangar dating back to 1939. Numerous additions over time account for the current building size of approximately 32,800 square feet.

The Alaska Air Transport Hangar (later Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar) was constructed on top of the wooden wharf. This seems to have been a common practice in the early development days. The wharf was constructed of wooden piles and pile caps with a heavy timber decking. The wharf provided enough support for the building thus new pilings were not installed. The hangar was approximately 100 feet wide at the water side and 50 feet deep for a 5,000 square foot facility. The building was of wood frame construction and clad with horizontal wood lap siding. The building featured a flat roof

with the eave line approximately 20 feet above the wharf deck. The roof was supported by wooden trusses of approximately 60 feet in length to provide an area large enough to house aircraft. On either side of the open area were spaces for shops and offices.

By 1940 Alaska Coastal Airlines occupied the building and in 1946 an addition was constructed of approximately 200 feet wide along the waterfront and 50 feet deep for a 10,000 square foot building. The wood frame structure was clad with wood horizontal lap siding. A significant structural element of this addition was a series of arch topped wooden trusses which provided a clear span for aircraft. The waterside facade of the building featured a stepped eave that hid the arch of the roof trusses. The eave line of the building stepped from approximately 24 feet to 25 feet.



*Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar, ca. 1946
Courtesy Alaska State Library*

In 1951 an addition was constructed east of the original Alaska Air Transport Hangar. It was a two story wood frame structure with flat roof to be used for office space. In 1957 a single story wood frame stand alone building was constructed about 20 feet east of the office addition. The wood frame building was used for baggage handling for seaplane passengers. Eventually

a roof was constructed between these two newer buildings to serve as a sheltered drop off area.



Alaska Coastal Airlines, ca. 1960.
Courtesy of CBJ Assessor.

In 1974 the building was purchased by an investment partnership and converted to retail and office use. At the waterside of the building the new owners constructed a 9,000 square foot one story addition that would house a restaurant and retail shops. The structure is wood frame with large windows facing the water. The wood framed shed roof is a low pitch and slopes to the water side of the building. The addition did not extend out to the end of the original wharf thus a "sea walk" was created that has been used by the public as access along the waterfront.

In 1979 an addition of approximately 2,000 square feet was added to the west side of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar. It is a two story wood frame structure with low pitched shed roof. This addition houses a restaurant kitchen on the first floor and office space on the second floor. The exterior was clad in T1-11 vertical plywood siding. Over the years the entire building has been clad with T1-11 vertical plywood siding. According to the building manager the T1-11 siding was installed over the historic horizontal wood shiplap siding.

It does not appear that any original windows remain in the current building. The existing windows vary in size and materials. The windows on the first floor are primarily fixed plate glass wood framed units. There are some steel frame window units on the first floor along with steel frame glass doors that form a store front configuration at the main entrances to the building. The windows on the second floor are primarily wood casement units. Based on review of historic photos and discussions with the building manager it

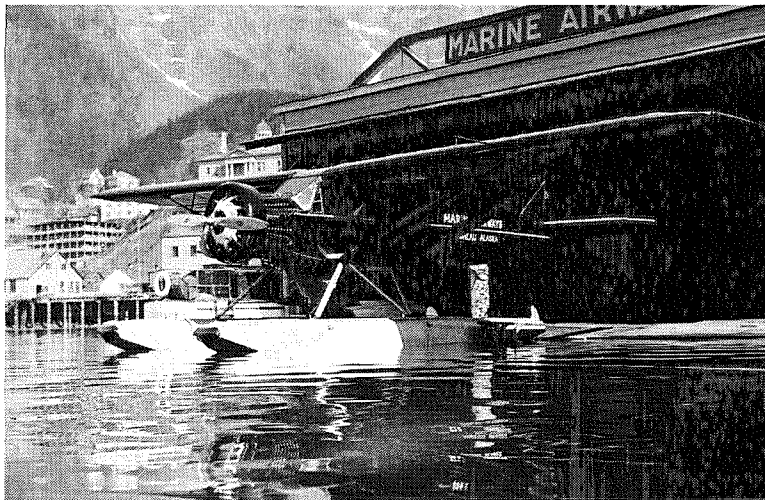
appears that window units have been added randomly throughout the building, often as a response to certain tenant's requirements. The roofing material is built-up roofing felt and hot asphalt. Some newer additions have used preformed delta-rib metal roofing.

Two large wood beams protruding from the wharf sit on wood pilings that were once part of a hydraulic lift used by Alaska Coastal Airlines to raise floatplanes to the hangar level. These features are in poor condition.

The extant Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) sits on wooden decking supported by wood pilings, many which have been replaced or repaired over the ensuing years. To the west of the building is a parking deck also constructed of wood decking and piling. The parking area has received substantial repair in recent years.

A small wood frame building was constructed in recent years for the Taku Glacier Lodge and Wings of Alaska tourism businesses. A ramp leads from the building to several floats on the water at the base of the wharf. These floats are used to dock floatplanes during the summer.

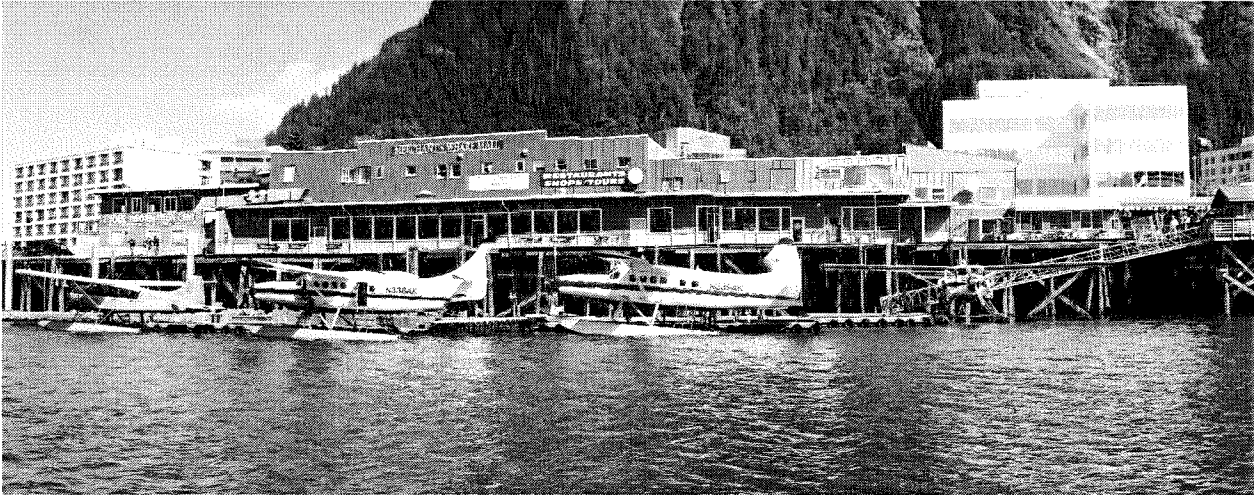
The interior of the building has received significant remodeling since 1974. Originally there were large open spaces for the housing and repairs of floatplanes. These large areas have been subdivided into smaller spaces for restaurants, shops, and offices. The first floor corridor has exposed heavy timber decking that remains from the original decking of the wharf. It has been painted and shows wear from years of use. The remaining flooring within the building has been covered with a variety of materials.



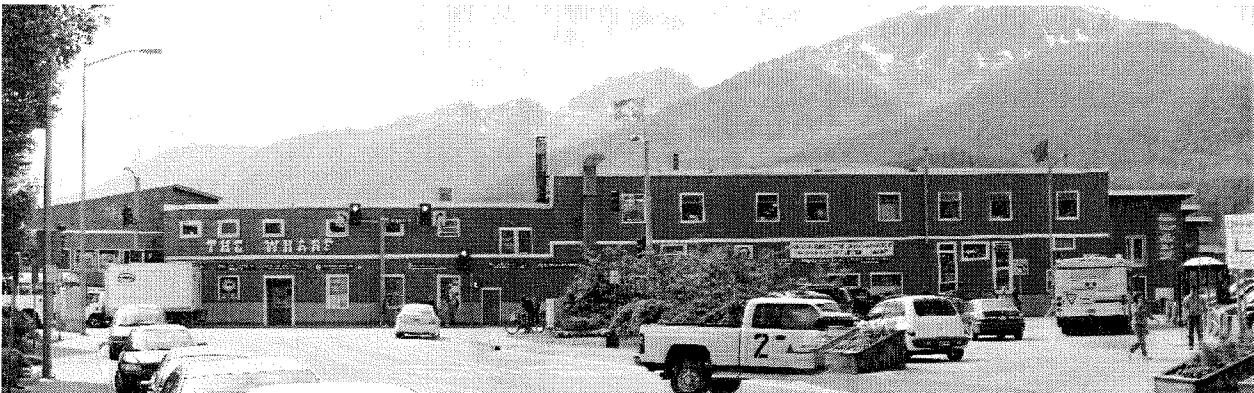
*Marine Airways Floating Hangar, ca. 1939
Courtesy Alaska State Library*

CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

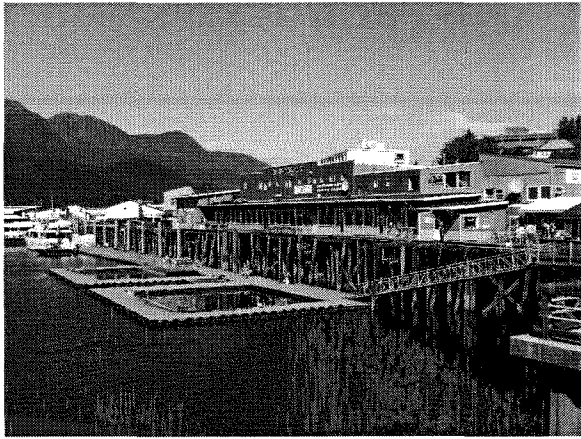
The following photographs show conditions of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) on July 5, 2006. The weather was sunny with clear skies and temperatures of 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Photos were taken by Jason Bradford and Matt Majoros.



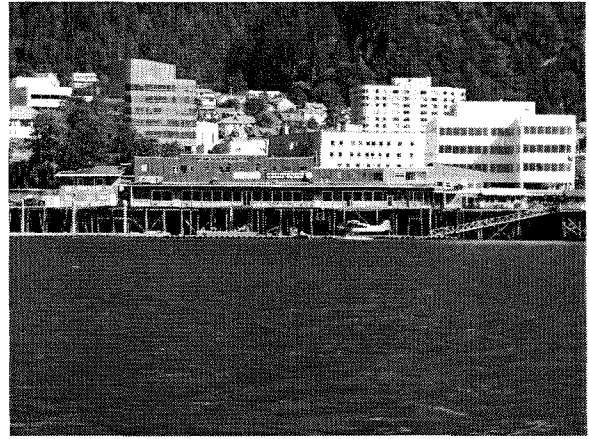
CP-01: South Elevation



CP-02: North Elevation



CP-03: South Elevation w/ Floats



CP-04: Site Context



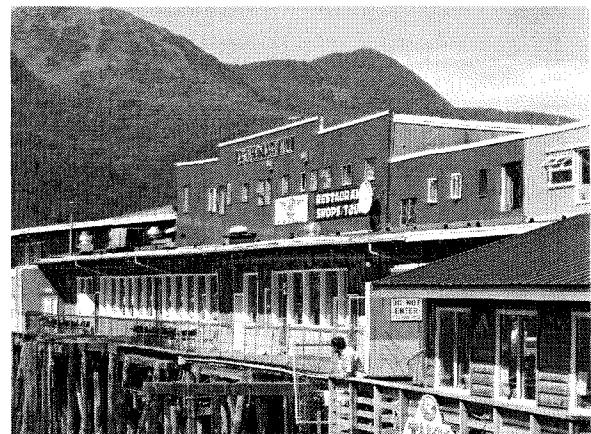
CP-05: West Elevation



CP-06: North Elevation



CP-07: North Elevation



CP-10: South Elevation w/ 1974 Addition



CP-11: East Elevation

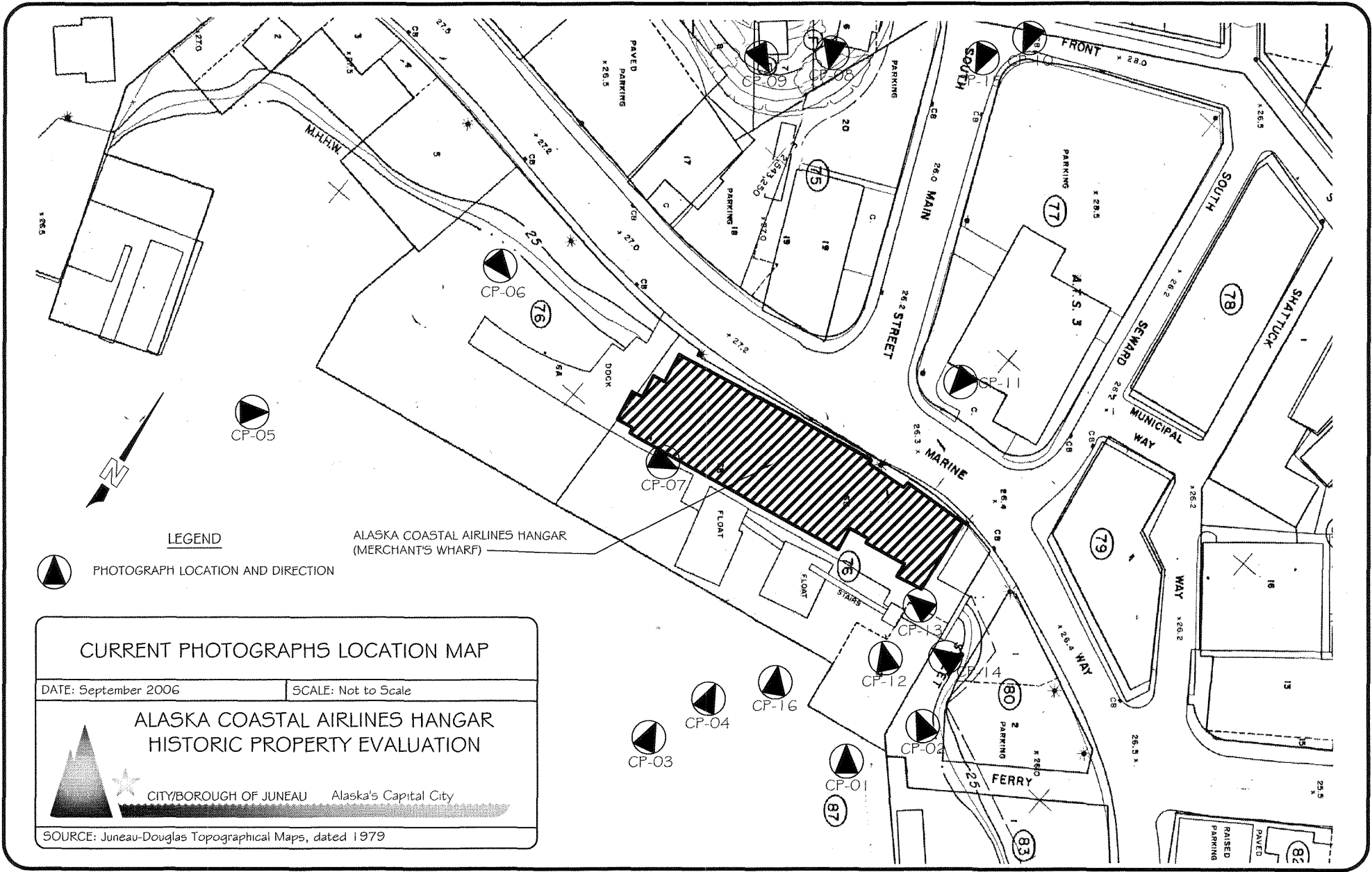


CP-12: Remnant of Floatplane Lift


CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS LOCATION MAP

The map on the following page indicates the location and direction of photographs taken to document the extant Merchant's Wharf building. Jason Bradford and Matt Majoros took the photos on July 5, 2006.

The map was overlaid on a modified version of the map titled, "Juneau-Douglas Topographical Map." The City and Borough of Juneau Community Development Department originally produced the map in 1979.



LEGEND

 PHOTOGRAPH LOCATION AND DIRECTION

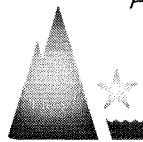
ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
(MERCHANT'S WHARF)

CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS LOCATION MAP

DATE: September 2006

SCALE: Not to Scale

**ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION**



CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU Alaska's Capital City

SOURCE: Juneau-Douglas Topographical Maps, dated 1979

HISTORICAL EVALUATION

Historic Context

The subject site served Juneau as an important transportation link since the late 1890s shortly after the community was established along the shores of Gastineau Channel. A wooden wharf was first constructed to reach deep water for the docking of incoming ships laden with supplies, materials, and people. By 1901 a wooden building was constructed atop of the wharf and served as a warehouse for the Pacific Coastal Steamship Company. By the mid 1920s the steamship company had merged and moved to another site and the warehouse building served as a sales and service facility for another transportation oriented business, the Juneau Motor Company.

In 1936 the motor company building was demolished to make way for a five stall hangar built by Shell Simmons for his newly formed business, Alaska Air Transport. Thus was started another chapter in the transportation theme of this important Juneau site. The Alaska Air Transport hangar was destroyed by fire in 1938 but was promptly rebuilt. In 1940 Alaska Air Transport merged with Marine Airways to form Alaska Coastal Airlines which continued to use the hangar. The company merged with Ellis Airlines of Ketchikan to become Alaska Coastal Ellis Airlines which was later purchased by Alaska Airlines and moved to the Juneau Airport. Dean Williams started Southeast Skyways to fill the gap left by Alaska Airlines' move. The company remained in the hangar until it was bought by entrepreneurs and converted into a retail center in 1974. Air transportation, catering to the tourism market, continues from floats located on the water in front of the building.

The period of significance for the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) is 1939 to 1957. The period begins with construction of the Alaska Air Transport hangar after a 1938 fire destroyed the former hangar. The period ends with a significant addition to the facility of a baggage handling building. Although there were earlier ties to the historic transportation theme no physical elements remain from those periods. For this reason the 1939 to 1957 period of significance was chosen.

Juneau's main economic engine during the period of significance was the Alaska Juneau Gold Mine which operated until 1944. Fishing also contributed to the local economy. Juneau's position as the seat of territorial government provided additional local jobs and related business opportunities. With the end of World War II a robust national economy spurred new development as the community expanded into the Mendenhall Valley.

Air flights into Juneau began in the late 1920s and were instantly popular for providing a relatively easy and fast mode of transportation to Seattle. Previously the only travel option was by steam ship. Due to the rugged coastal mountains and ice fields overland routes to southeast Alaska were not feasible.

A number of entrepreneurs began small airline companies based out of Juneau's harbor. Most were single person operations until the mid 1930s when regional transportation was growing rapidly. Juneau was a major hub of southeast Alaska. As the industry grew, most of the smaller airlines merged to form larger and more competitive businesses. Soon the floatplane became a critical link to outlying communities.

In the late 1930s the Juneau Airport was constructed in the Mendenhall Valley to serve wheeled aircraft. The Juneau Harbor continued as the hub for floatplane activity as most outlying communities had no air strips available for wheeled aircraft. By the early 1970s a float pond had been constructed at the Juneau airport which served local and regional float plane providers. Since then the float plane companies using facilities in the Juneau Harbor have almost exclusively served the tourism market.

Historic Significance

The building's historic significance lies in its role as a support facility to local and regional air transportation. The site was significant as early as 1901 as a major transfer point for delivery of materials to the expanding Juneau community. Later, as a seadrome, it supported Juneau's floatplane industry by providing hangar facilities and a base of operations for several important Alaska float plane operations.

Alaska Air Transport, started by local aviator Shell Simmons, was one of the first financially successful airline operations in Juneau. This airline permanently established commercial aviation in Juneau and was housed in a new building at the subject site constructed in 1936. Airlines before Alaska Air Transport were short-lived and operated out of small floating hangars. In 1940 Alaska Air Transport merged with Marine Transport and became Alaska Coastal Airlines and enjoyed even more success, expanding the area of the hangar, expanding their routes, and adding to their fleet. Alaska Coastal Airlines joined Ellis Airlines to become Alaska Coastal Ellis Airlines. They became the largest scheduled airline exclusively operating amphibians and had the largest fleet of Grumman Goose in the world.

Alaska Coastal Ellis Airlines was an important acquisition for Alaska Airlines in 1968. Shell Simmons and Bob Ellis, owners of Alaska Coastal Ellis Airlines

are both recognized as Alaska Airlines Pioneers. Simmons, Ellis and partner Ben Benecke all became members of the Alaska Airlines board of directors. Simmons was named director emeritus in 1981. Today Alaska Airlines is Alaska's premier commercial air carrier.

The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) meets the 50 year threshold for designation as a historic property. Many of the additions to the building over the years are also over 50 years of age and thus achieve historic significance. The building description section of this document outlines the original building as well as many of the additions.

The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) meets Criterion A of the historical evaluation criteria; "Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." During the period of significance (1939-1957) the building and site was the base of operations for early aviation companies in Juneau which served local and regional needs of general transportation; transportation of mail and goods; aeronautical engineering research activities; commercial airline development; commerce; and aerial photography and mapping. Alaska Coastal Airlines was the longest standing tenant of the building during the period of significance. For these reasons the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) establishes significance because of its contribution to the broad patterns of the history of Juneau and Southeast Alaska.

Historic Integrity

In addition to historic significance a property must retain historic integrity as established by the following seven characteristics. The following discussion evaluates the historic integrity of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf).

Location - The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) retains integrity of location as it has not been moved from the site of its original construction. It remains perched on top of some of the original pilings over the tidelands of Juneau's waterfront.

Design - Design of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) was utilitarian in its plan, massing, and detailing. The original building and additions constructed during the period of significance were generally flat roofed with the exception of the 1946 hangar addition which featured an arched roof over the main aircraft bay. The exterior of the building and additions featured horizontal wood lap siding. No windows were on the south elevation as it contained large doors for aircraft access. There were windows on the north side of the building for natural lighting into the hangar.

Many alterations to the building have occurred since 1974 when the building was converted from a seadrome to a retail commercial facility. The interior floor plan was completely remodeled and subdivided into numerous retail spaces and a second level was constructed in the high ceiling hangar areas.

The exterior of the building has seen numerous changes since 1974. Although the general massing of the building has not changed dramatically over time, there have been a couple additions that have not followed the historic practice of flat roofs. The 1979 addition to the west of the building features a shed roof form. Also, a shed roof was added over the original flat roof of the 1957 Baggage Handling addition to address leak problems.

One major change to the overall design of the building has been the removal of the large hangar doors on the south side of the building. In 1974 an addition to the south side extended beyond the wall line of the original doors. The doors were removed but were not filled thus the current interior of the building is open at the original wall line. Another change to the exterior appearance of the building is the addition of many new windows throughout the building as new uses have been accommodated. The original building and additions had windows primarily on the north side. It is difficult to pinpoint which of the current windows might be in original locations as there have been many changes over time. All window units have been replaced throughout the years thus no original units remain.

The original building and the various additions can be identified by changes in roof elevations and wall setbacks. The historic false front of the 1946 hangar addition is clearly visible and the arched roof behind it is apparent from some vantage points.

A particularly unique attribute of the building is its structural base of wood pilings and decking. This aspect remains and gives the appearance from the waterside (south elevation) of the building levitating above the water below. The general view of the structural piling and the building above has not changed from the time of the period of significance.

Setting – Over the years some of the surrounding buildings and structures have changed in the near vicinity of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf). However, the building's relationship to two main physical features of the setting has not changed. These are the Gastineau Channel on the south side of the building and the adjacent roadway on the north side. Sanborn Maps indicate that a road has existed to the north of the site as far back as 1927. The building has always had primary water and road access which remains today.

Materials – There are two primary elements of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant’s Wharf); the wharf structure and the building. There are some original materials that remain of the wharf structure. The most prominent are the pilings and beams of the former plane lift that sits on the south side of the wharf at the water’s edge. Numerous repairs of the wharf structure have been completed over the years. These repairs have used wood materials in the same dimension and appearance thus the integrity of materials has been retained for the wharf structure.

The original building materials were built-up asphalt roofing and horizontal wood lap siding. With the exception of two pitched shed roof sections on the east and west ends of the building the historic flat roof forms remain. The horizontal wood siding has been covered with T1-11 plywood in a reverse board and batten pattern. According to the current building manager, the plywood siding, for the most part, was applied directly over the original horizontal wood siding. Detailing of roof overhangs or cornices were very simple standard dimensional board treatments. Modifications over the years have continued this simple approach thus there are no significant changes to the detailing design or materials.

Workmanship – The construction techniques utilized for the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant’s Wharf) were basic and simple. This was primarily due to the fact that all materials were shipped to Juneau from Seattle, there was a lack of high quality craftsmen in Alaska, and there was a need to get facilities constructed quickly. The building was of utilitarian design and workmanship. Much of the details have been obscured by installment of new materials. The new work has been done at the same level of craftsmanship thus reflective of the original utilitarian methods.

Feeling – The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant’s Wharf) retains much of its historic feeling despite the use of updated building materials on the exterior. The variety of roof heights give a feeling of a building that has seen numerous additions, which it did over the period of significance. The south side of the building retains a strong feeling of connection to the water. The setting between the water of Gastineau Channel and the roadway give a sense of the historic fabric with direct access to the waterway and the roadway of the community.

Although the interior of the building has seen much renovation since the days of hangar use, the main corridor retains the original heavy timber floor material. This gives a feeling of the original deck flooring of the building.

Association – The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant’s Wharf) retains its association primarily due to the water access on the south side of the

building. This water access was critical for the function of the hangar which served float planes throughout the period of significance and to the present. Some physical features such as the pilings and pile caps of the former hydraulic aircraft are extant and clearly visible on the water side. The continued use of the water access for floatplanes further establishes this direct connection to the past.

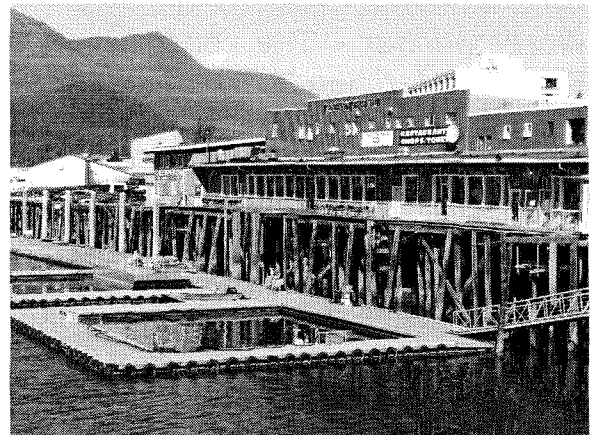
Conclusion

The Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf) is historically significant because of its association with broad patterns of Juneau's history, specifically the role played in providing local and regional transportation.

The building's integrity of design has eroded due to newer additions of conflicting design. Many of the significant materials have been lost or obscured from view, thus the integrity has been compromised. However, the building retains overall historic integrity as it maintains integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, and workmanship.



Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (1960)



Merchant's Wharf (2006)

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Concurrence Request to Judith E. Bittner. October 2, 1996.

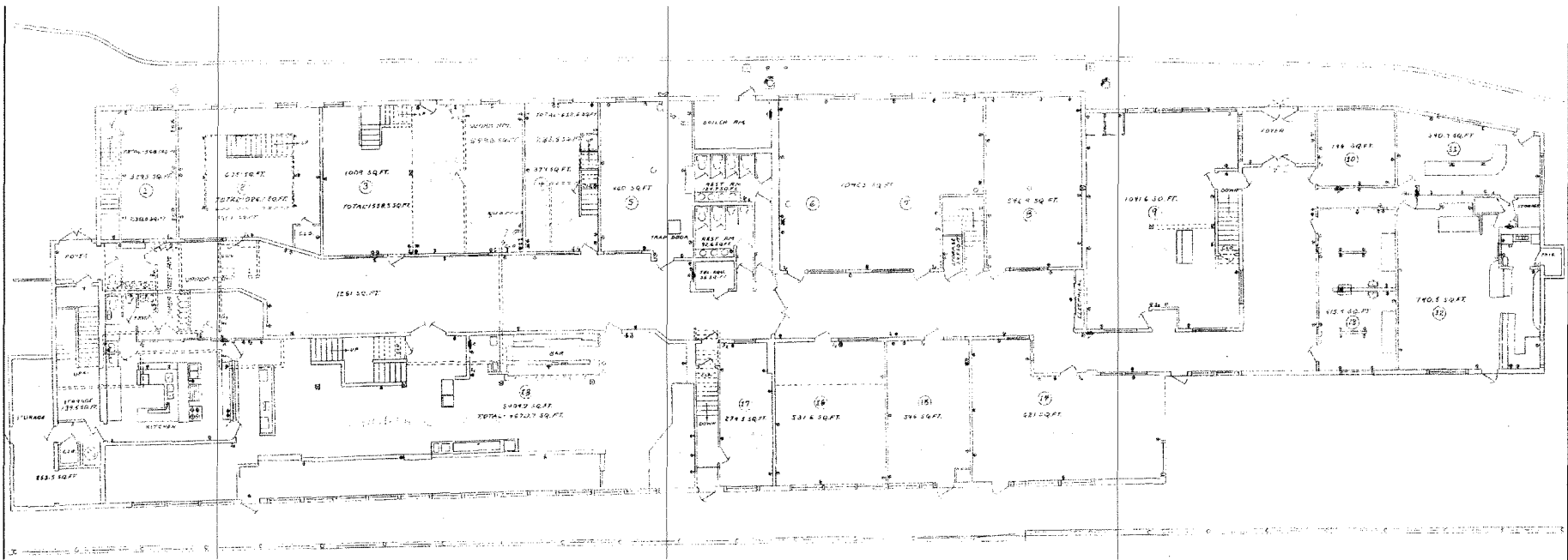
Williams, Dean. Personal Interview; Owner of Southeast Skyways.
June 2006.

Wilmot, Barbara. Telephone Interview; Local resident June 2006.

APPENDIX A

The following drawings show the floor plans and elevations of the Alaska Coastal Airlines Hangar (Merchant's Wharf). The floor plans as-builts drawings dated 1976. The elevation drawings are dated 1998. Drawings were obtained from the CBJ Community Development Department.

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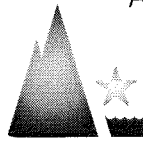


FIRST FLOOR - 1976

DATE: September 2006

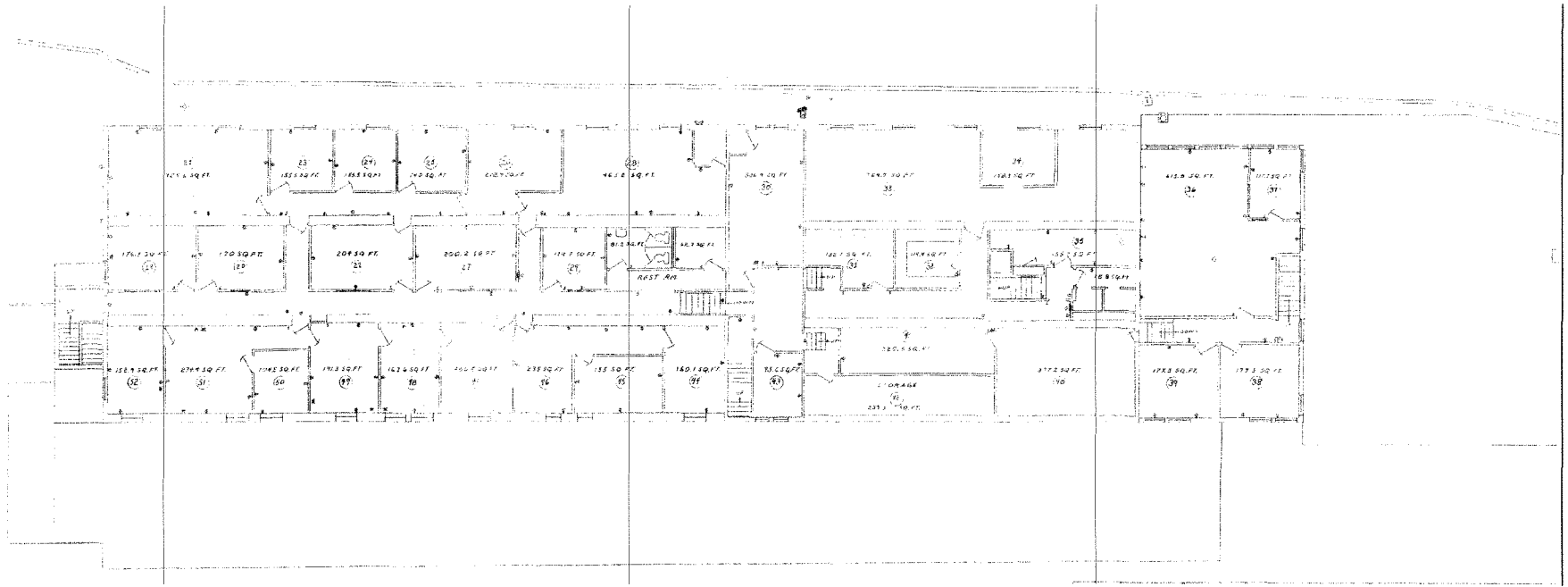
SCALE: Not to Scale

ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION



CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU Alaska's Capital City

SOURCE: Merchant's Wharf As-Builts, dated 6/04/76, obtained from the CBJ Building Permit Office

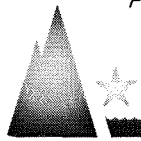


SECOND FLOOR - 1976

DATE: September 2006

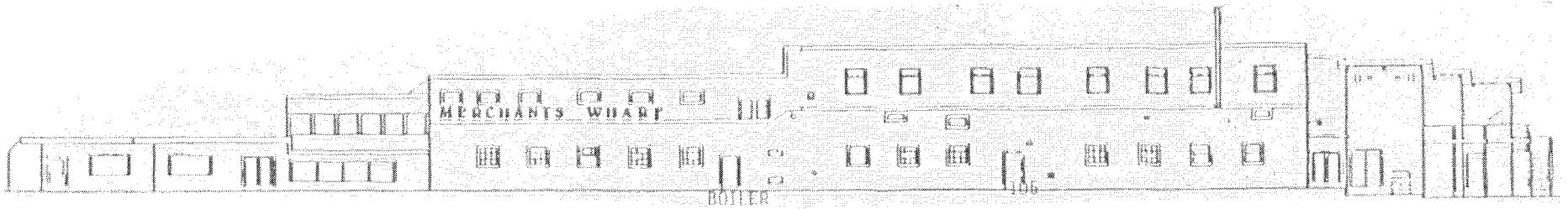
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ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION



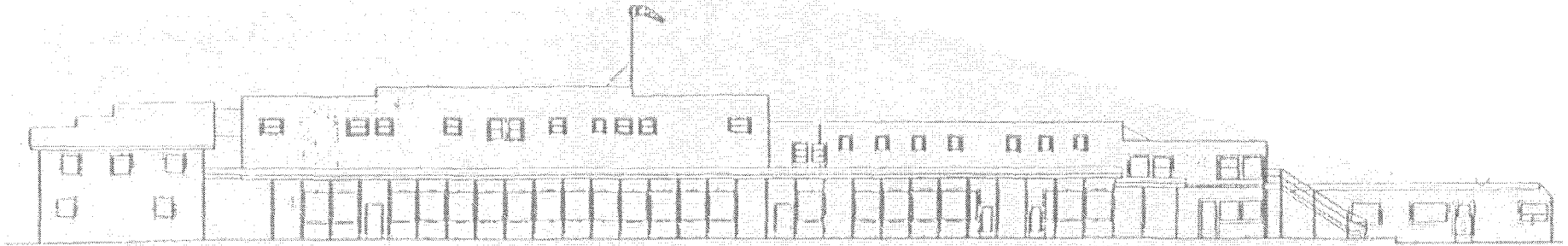
CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU Alaska's Capital City

SOURCE: Merchant's Wharf As-Builts, dated 6/04/76, obtained from the CBJ Community Development Dept.



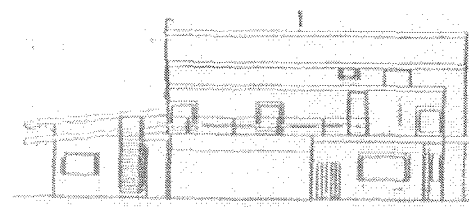
NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE: Not to Scale



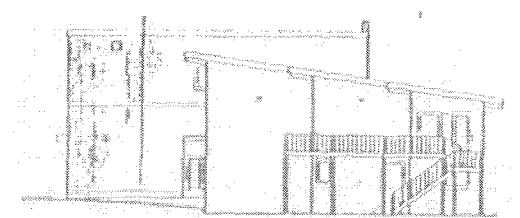
SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE: Not to Scale



EAST ELEVATION

SCALE: Not to Scale



WEST ELEVATION

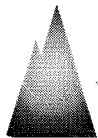
SCALE: Not to Scale

ELEVATIONS

DATE: September 2006

SCALE: Not to Scale

ALASKA COASTAL AIRLINES HANGAR
HISTORIC PROPERTY EVALUATION



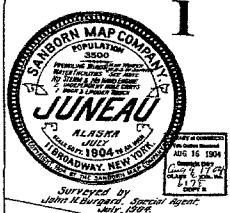
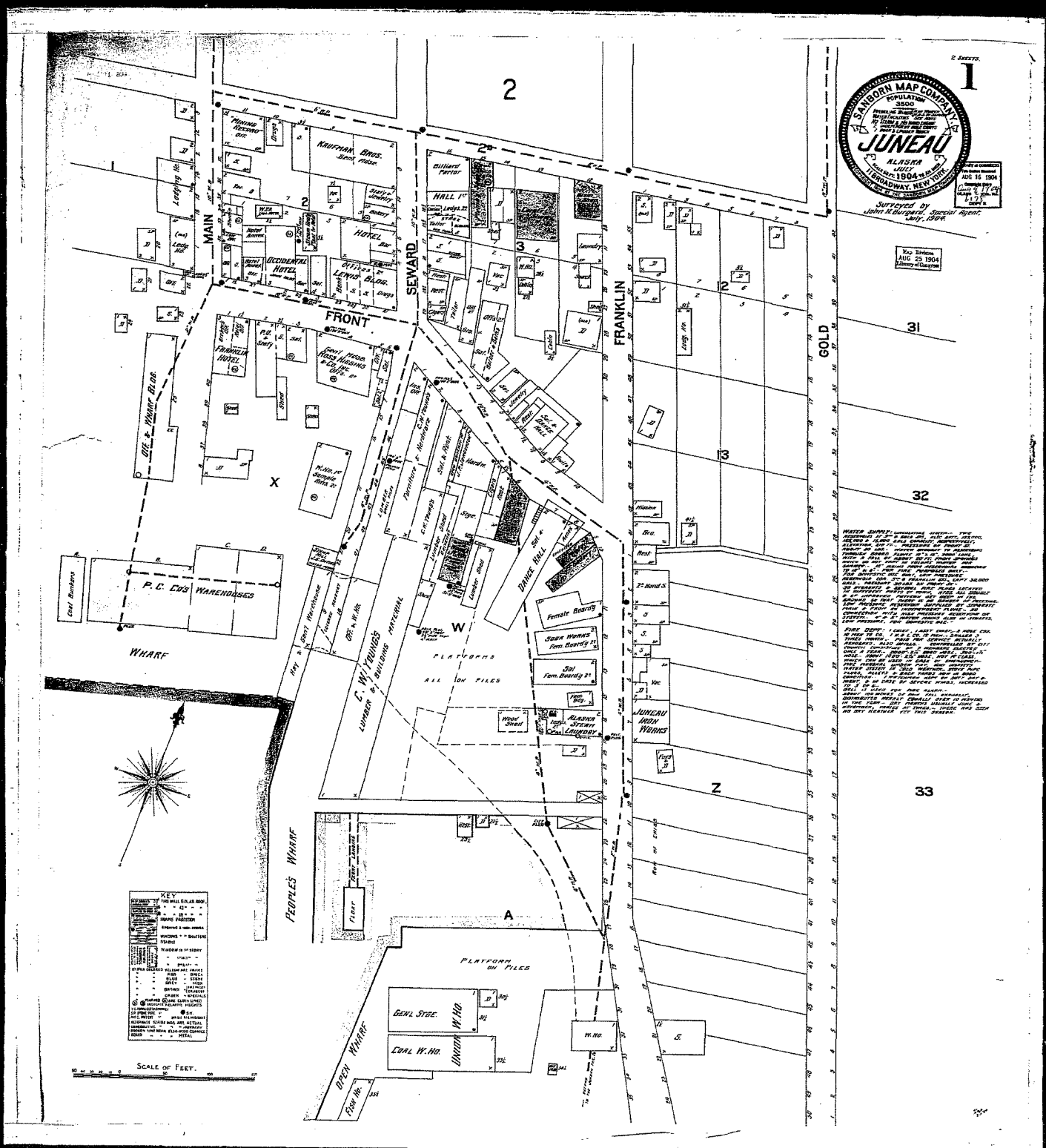
CITY/BOROUGH OF JUNEAU Alaska's Capital City

SOURCE: Obtained from CBJ Community Development Dept. dated April 1998

APPENDIX B

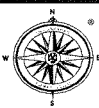
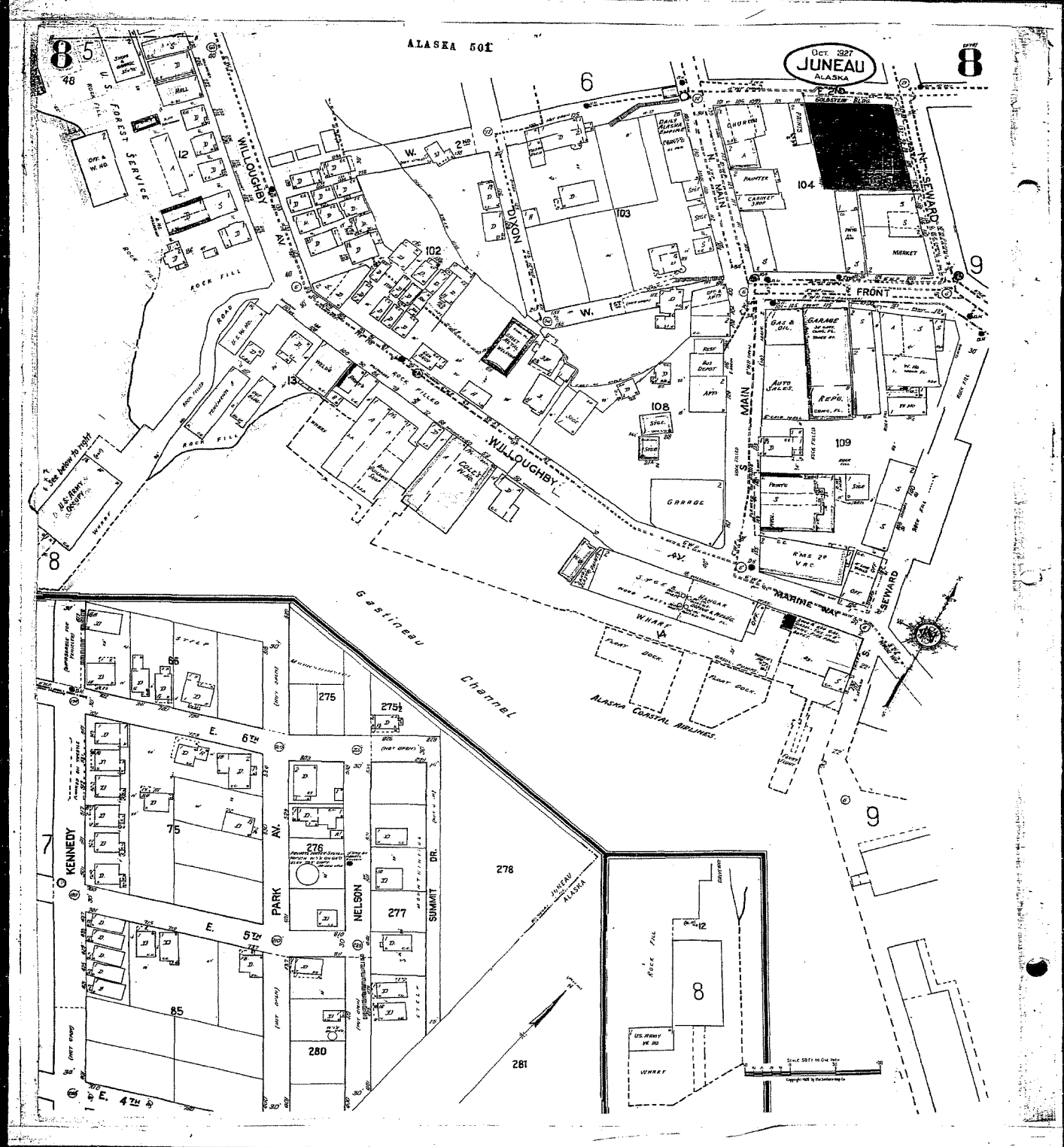
The following maps depict the Merchant's Wharf building/site during different periods. These maps were compiled by the Sanborn Library, LLC.

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Map Surveyed
 AUG. 23 1904
 Albany of Oregon

WATER SUPPLY INFORMATION: THE WATER SUPPLY OF JUNEAU, ALASKA, IS PROVIDED BY THE JUNEAU WATER SUPPLY COMPANY, INC., WHICH HAS A CONTRACT WITH THE STATE OF ALASKA FOR THE SUPPLY OF WATER TO THE CITY OF JUNEAU. THE WATER IS TAKEN FROM THE JUNEAU RIVER AND IS TREATED AT THE JUNEAU WATER TREATMENT PLANT. THE WATER IS THEN DISTRIBUTED TO THE CITY OF JUNEAU THROUGH A SYSTEM OF MAINS AND BRANCHES. THE WATER SUPPLY COMPANY, INC. IS A PRIVATELY OWNED COMPANY AND IS NOT A PUBLIC UTILITY. THE CITY OF JUNEAU HAS NO CONTROL OVER THE WATER SUPPLY COMPANY, INC. OR ITS OPERATIONS.

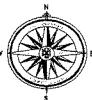
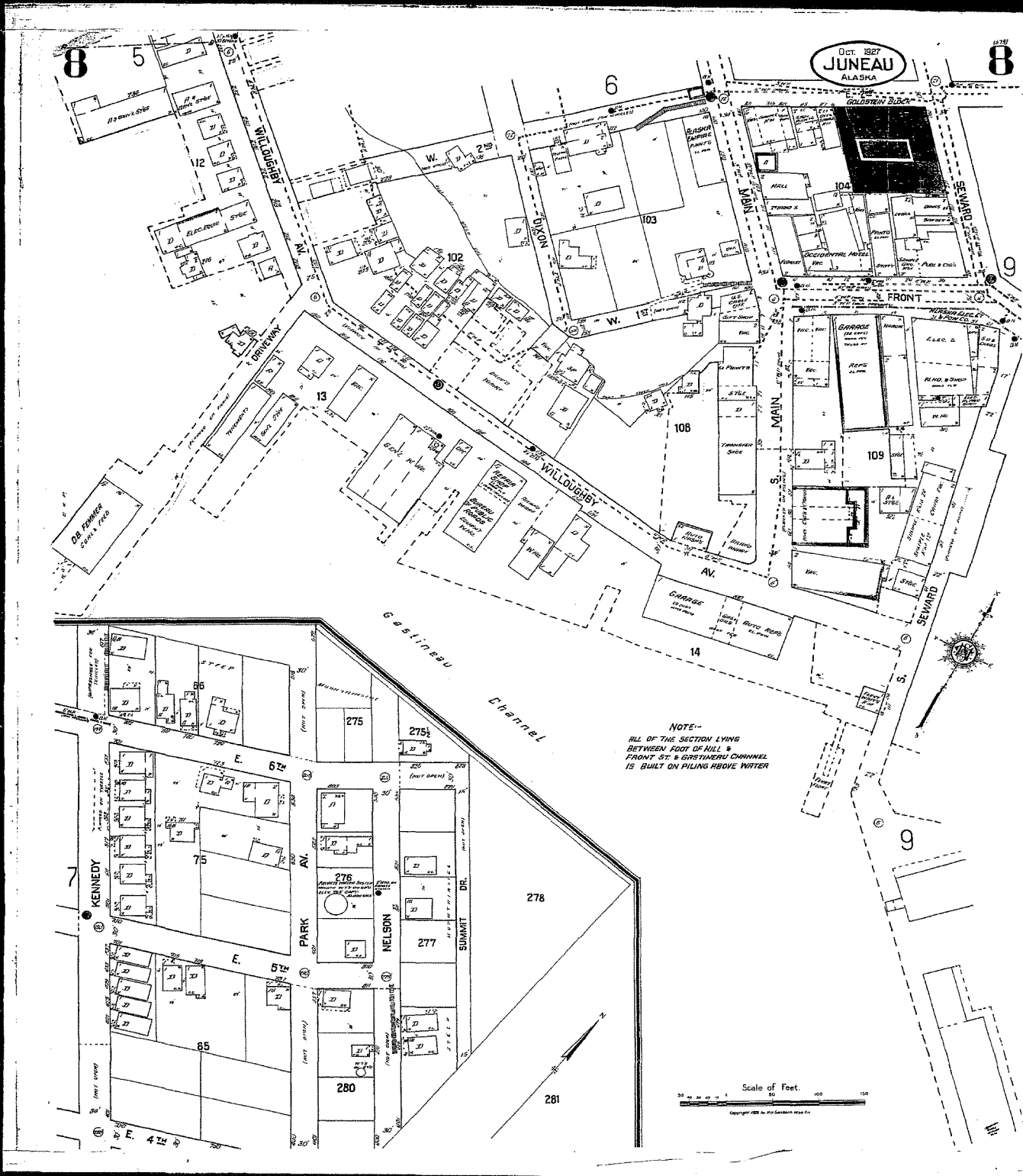


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Year: EDR Research Associate

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