

ACT I: ON HISTORY



Fig. a. FOURTH PREVIOUS PAGE:
Site Plan 2017. Self. November 2017.

This axonometric drawing illustrates the Wireless Station in its current form. The green hatching represents the extent of the National Historic Site.

Fig. b. PREVIOUS FACING PAGE:
Site Plan 1917-1930. Self. November 2017.

This axonometric drawing illustrates the original Wireless Station building. The 28'-square structure sat in a clearing on Government Hill, east of several houses. A trail connected the building with the houses. Wires from the building connected to the aerial antennæ strung between two masts.

In the beginning, Alaska was frozen in ice. The early peoples crossed the land bridge and followed the animals into the lowland tundra as the ice receded. Other biomes developed that attracted different animals, and the lowlands transformed into forested lands. The Dena'ina followed the caribou into southcentral Alaska and learnt a new lifestyle from the peoples already in the area, called the Sky People. When the caribou left the area, the Dena'ina stayed in the lush flat lands west of the Chugach and Kenai Mountains. They grew connected to the estuaries and waterways, and began using boats to fish and travel.

History is a method for preserving stories, both of people and events, but also places. It provides a written or spoken description of a site, and can be more inclusive of other non-human actors that other preservation techniques occlude. Buildings have histories of their own, even as conventional

histories cast them as settings but rarely actors. The phrase: "if these walls could talk, the stories they tell," describes the concept.ⁱ Alternatively, the Spanish have the notion that "the walls can hear" (*larparedes oyen*). These are both metaphors for ideas of privacy or intimacy, but their pervasiveness allows further investigation into their meaning.

The theory that a building is not only an actor but also a participant in the lives of humans and other beings is not new. Eyal Weizman writes in his book *Forensic Architecture*ⁱⁱ about how buildings record events in their scars and bruises manifested on walls, floors and ceilings, and which forensic investigators can tie the marks together to reconstruct the crime. In this way, the building is a witness to events, and could offer testimony for an investigation. Aside from crime, however, the concept that a building can relate information with its own elements is important to understanding how a building may retain stories, and create its own history. Buildings are not only witnesses, but also plaintiffs. Historic architects become the voices of the building, which can not speak on its own, but the history is that of the building. Buildings fight constantly against the passage of time, the decay of materials, the damages of occupation,ⁱⁱⁱ and the change of their own significance.^{iv}

The Wireless Station carries specific marks of its past uses. The photographs of the interior and exterior conditions document the effects of time on the building. The storage of rock cores caused the floors to sag over time, and pull away from

the walls to reveal layers of plaster and wood. These delaminated seams, along the floors and at corners, expose the materials, but also the process of construction. The physical raising of the framed walls, then their plastering, their painting, and finally trimming, the laying of the floor with horsehair insulation below reify the weekly reports in the Alaska Railroad Record that describe its construction during the summer of 1917.

Two walls in the northern addition to the original building bear the signs of a map that once stretched across the two. The clear profile of Alaska fills one wall while the Aleutian Chain extends onto the other. What the purpose or detail of the map is forever gone, but the shadow of its former place, so distinctive in shape, remains. A sign hanging above a door in the T-Shaped building reads "HOSPITAL", which relates a former use. The rusted plumbing fixtures and electrical conduit illuminate other occupations and needs.

Other modifications are less permanent, or irrefutably significant, such as the odd business card left behind. Papers with addresses, pages torn from phone books, and even the position of furniture all relate narratives of use, and abandon. A tag from a rock core lies on the floor of Building #2. A lone, empty, can of Mountain Dew sits on a table strewn with broken glass in the south addition to the original structure. These items are not significant in themselves, and their connection with individuals was temporary, but they do represent the levels of stories, the richness of spirits, and the layers of history the building

contains. Alternatively, the wasp nests in the attic space tell a history of their own, completely apart from that of the human occupants.

Another concept this Thesis engages is the celebration of minor narratives. In most historic writing, the author creates a singular narrative that follows the successes and failures of one group. Although this narrative technique is effective for raising interest, it does not offer room for other supporting roles or movements. At the same time, the narrative arch can not disappear for the sake of pluralism, and the balance is difficult to achieve. However, histories become far richer, and more nuanced, when they step out of academia and onto the street. The work of Dolores Hayden was critical to this polemic. She worked with minority and marginalized communities, especially Blacks, to identify significant sites for them to preserve and reclaim. She conducted her *Power of Place* in Los Angeles, and in neighborhoods of changing populations. The gentrification and displacement of the historically Black neighborhoods distanced that community from their heritage.

What was most intriguing about her methods was that she did not rely on the National Historic Register to ascribe significance with its lofty criteria. She sought out places that have specific significance to one population and association with an important figure. Her designs did not rely even on the presence of a building. She identified a significant place for the community and gave them the power to reclaim it, even for a short time. Hayden also developed comprehensive histories of

i. Reference: *Power of Place*. Hayden. 1995. p. 201.

ii. Reference: *Forensic Architecture*. Weizman. 2017.

iii. Reference: *Once Upon a Time*. Mollner. 2015.

iv. Reference: "Fixing Historic Preservation". Mason. 2004.

Fig. c. PREVIOUS FACING PAGE:
Station 2. Self. March 2018.
This watercolor shows the second of twelve stations on the journey to the Wireless Station from Ship Creek, the path along Whitney Road.



Fig. d. CURRENT PAGE, ABOVE LEFT:
Alaska Map. Self. December 2017.
In the north addition to the original building.

Fig. e. CURRENT PAGE, ABOVE RIGHT:
Sink in T-Shaped Building. Self. March 2018.
In the stem of the T-Shaped Building.



Fig. f. CURRENT PAGE, BELOW LEFT:
Mt. Dew. Self. December 2017.
In the original building.



Fig. g. CURRENT PAGE, BELOW RIGHT:
Wasp Nest. Self. December 2017.
In the south addition to the original building.



the significant individual vis-à-vis the community, and used that as the true resource. The preservation work she conducted in Los Angeles was not that of buildings and sites, but of memories and stories, too often silenced.^v

The realization that the building need not be present to have its story told was inspiring. The memories of the early community leaders had disappeared from the collective conversations, and she used narrative and design to preserve the history, not the built fabric. The Wireless Station was beyond repair and history provided a freedom that the Standards did not. The history itself was not just a document, but also preserved, reconstructed even, the original. This simulacrum achieves a significance of its own. Oral histories act in the same way with people. The Municipality conducted and published an Oral History of many long-time residents of Government Hill.^{vi} The stories of the often elderly interviewees were not altogether nationally significant, nor even did they carry much significance in Anchorage. Nevertheless, for the neighborhood, the document became a repository of memories that would have been lost had the individuals died. Their stories formed a chorus that supports the historic narrative of Government Hill, and Anchorage.

Elders retain the stories of the past, but also of themselves. They carry these memories with them, the good and the bad, and some need sharing. The development of physical incapacities make living in their homes often impossible, and they move to Adult Care Homes away from their neighbors, and often friends. This is isolating for the

individual, but also a loss for the neighborhood. Government Hill experiences the same emigration of its elderly, many of whom have lived in the neighborhood most of their lives. They take with them their memories and stories, and remove their voices from the narrative of the neighborhood. They themselves are repositories of intangible resources, and these too are worthy of preservation, alongside the architecture. They can be the voices for the buildings and surroundings and the translators of place spirits^{vii} into real significance. Elders can guide younger residents in interacting with history, music, and community, and providing a space where that occurs is crucial.

The Wireless Station is an elderly resident of Government Hill, seeking support at the end of its days, as its fabric disintegrates and its consciousness transcends to another realm. With each passing day, the site itself, the very earth, absorbs more of its retained stories as the escape the decaying building. These become place spirits that remain in place but are rarely understood or experienced; they require translation. Uncovering, recalling, and transmitting the stories bridges the present physical and timeless metaphysical worlds, and transports occupiers of the former to the latter.

I had never seen, nor heard of, the Government Hill Wireless Station until the summer of 2017. I had lived in Anchorage all my life, but had never had reason to go to Government Hill. As I discovered more history about the building, and the development of Anchorage, I became aware that I had to bring awareness of the buildings to the

v. Reference: *Power of Place*. Hayden. 1995.

vi. Reference: *Government Hill Oral History*. MOA. 2012.

vii. Reference: "The Role of Beggesh and Beggesha in Precontact Dena'ina Culture". Boraas & Peter. 2008.



Fig. h. CURRENT PAGE:
*Government Hill Wireless
 Station. Bunnell, Kristine.
 2014. Courtesy of MOA.*

residents of Anchorage, and become the champion of the Wireless Station. These little buildings had lost all significance to the city, and their memory only survived in a few aging residents on Government Hill. In fact, the buildings had died on 10 June because the RFP for their reuse closed without a single proposition; the significance of the buildings had vanished from the collective memory of Anchorage, and were it not for this Thesis, its place spirits would have dissipated.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

Modern development of Government Hill occurred in several phases, but the Dena'ina people lived in the area for more than a thousand years before white settlers arrived. The natives kept nichils-subterranean Winter dwellings-on Government

Hill. Lodges along Dgheya Kaq' (trans. Stickleback Creek), now Ship Creek, were the location of the First Salmon ceremony each summer. Oral histories and archaeological evidence suggest the significance to the Dena'ina of the area.^{viii} The Dena'ina had several travel routes through the area, as many of the places had cultural and sustaining significance. Tak'at, now near Cairn Point, was an important settlement and fish camp. Several families kept caches and dip nets in Knik Arm and the mouth of a small creek that drained from the tableland. Less than a quarter of mile from the coast was a small hill, on and around which were several lodges, smoke houses, and a bath house. The last potlach at Tak'at was either in 1939 or 1940. Natives traveled by boat, along the shore on foot, or overland to this location from their permanent settlements at Nughay Bena (Knik), Tyonek, and Ch'aghalnikt (Point Possession Village), as well as other camps in the Anchorage area. As Elmendorf Airforce Base and Fort Richardson formed in the early 1940s, the troops and aviators began dumping garbage around Cairn Point, as there was a permanent road to the site, and burnt the lodges and caches to the ground. The only remains are some circled stones at the coast and depressions in the ground, but many living Dena'ina elders remember visiting the site and recall its significance.^{ix}

When the first homesteaders John Whitney and Jim St Clair arrived at Ship Creek in the early 1910s, the Dena'ina still fished and trapped along Dgheyay.^x They had other camps at Chanshtnu kaq' (Chester Creek Mouth) and Nuch'ishtunt (Point Woronzof), and a trail snaked along the coast from as far as the Potter Valley. An overland

route wound over the tableland between Chanshtnu and Dgheya called Deggech', probably around Gambell Street,^{xi} and thence over a narrow portion of the creek before climbing up the hill. This trail extended all the way to Tak'at, and possibly even to Idlughet (near Eklutna). On top of Government Hill the trail met with another that climbed from Dgheya kaq' and eventually led to Chanshtnu Kaq'.^{xii} White settlers appropriated these trails to reach their homesteads, and several road patterns reflect the curving early routes.^{xiii} St Clair and his family likely moved into Tent City and later Anchorage. Neither he nor Whitney had legal claims to the lands, still part of Chugach National Forest. The Alaska Engineering Commission forced Whitney and his family up the valley to a legal homestead. Whitney first guided survey parties, and later supplied pork and timber to the early railroad construction workers, and there was little ill will between them and his family. For several decades, he had a railroad section named for him, and the road of his same name follows his early trail. The Whitney section house moved to the railyards in 1952, and now is in Wasilla at the Alaska Museum of Transportation and Industry. Whitney stayed active in the community until 1945. Because of age and the loss of his lands in 1941 to the new Fort Richardson, he moved his family to Ashland, Oregon.^{xiv}

ALASKA ENGINEERING COMMISSION ARRIVAL

President Woodrow Wilson formed the Alaskan Engineering Commission in 1914, and named Fred Mears as chief engineer, Andrew Christensen as chief surveyor, and William C. Edes as chairman.^{xv} Their task was to develop a government railroad from the mines of Interior Alaska to the coast; where

private enterprise failed, the military stepped in. By this time, muddy wagon roads connected disperse mining and military camps. Additionally, the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System connected Alaska with the outside world through a complex network of telegraph, undersea cables, and radiotelephony.^{xvi}

The *AEC Reports* explain that the first ship arrived at the mouth of Ship Creek on 6 June 1914, called the Digiuro of Seattle. The team responsible for the area of track from the termination of the failed Great Northern Railroad at Kern Creek to Knik was Survey Party #3. The party set out on 18 June to work on the Whittier to Anchorage line, and the following day Survey Party #4 began working north to Knik. It is important at this point to explain the many villages called Knik, although the task of locating and mentioning all that have existed is exhaustive. Briefly, the first Knik was an ancient village on the north shore of Knik Arm. After a particularly destructive jökulhlaup wiped out the village, the surviving people settled on the south shore, new where Eklutna is today. This became Old Knik. The new Knik developed sometime in the 19th century, on the north shore of Knik Arm, about 12 miles due East from Eklutna. This now abandoned town was the largest settlement on Knik Arm at the beginning of the 20th century. It was the northernmost ice-free port in Alaska, and prospectors and coal miners heading to the Innoko, Iditarod, and Matanuska fields started there. This booming town outpaced the communities of Sunshine, Hope, and Glacier City on Turnagain arm, and the more stable tides in Knik Arm made navigation less dangerous. The first surveyors for the railroad stayed there until the camp developed at Ship

viii. Reference: *Historic Preservation Plan*. MOA. N.P.

ix. Reference: *Shem Pete's Alaska*. Kari. 2003.

x. Reference: *Historic Preservation Plan*. MOA. N.P.

xi. Reference: "Dena'ina Place Names". Anchorage Museum. N.D.

xii. Note: This conclusion comes from information in *Shem Pete's Alaska*, the *MOA Historic Preservation Plan*, and AEC and BLM maps.

xiii. Note: Such roads include Spenard and Campbell Airstrip Roads.

xiv. "John 'Bud' Whitney". *Alaskahistory.org*.

xv. Reference: *Alaska Engineering Commission Reports*. AEC. 1914.

xvi. Reference: *Wires, Wireless and Wilderness*. Blanchard. 2010.

Fig. i. FACING PAGE:
*Plat of Anchorage Townsite
with South, East, and Third
Additions. AEC. 1917. Courte-
sy of MOA.*

Creek. For some reason, however, the Commission did not set up a camp there. Knik was an important stopover point on the Iditarod Trail. In winter, sleds could cross the shallow channels of Knik Arm and in summer boats plied to the docks. The railroad would have passed near the town, because of its existing infrastructure, but the route would have had too much southing, and would have crossed over marshy lands. The ground between Knik and the Susitna Valley was boggy and a trestle across Knik Arm would have been expensive. Additionally, prospectors discovered gold and other precious minerals in Willow Creek, 24 miles north. A dock at Kroto slough on the Susitna River usurped Knik as the freight depot for the northern portion of the railroad, spelling the town's demise. Ship Creek became the location of the AEC headquarters and camp; to be sure, it had many redeeming qualities including fresh water and timber (although most lumber came from Puget Sound). The decision to avoid Knik, however, doomed the town to oblivion. A roadhouse is all that remains of the town, although the old church at Eklutna came from Knik, as did some houses in Anchorage. Knik was only the first of many urban victims of Anchorage's prowess, as this history will illuminate.

The reports from Survey Party #3 indicate the preferred route continued north from Rabbit Creek with a spur line to the anchorage. "Leaving Turnagain Arm at about Mile 51 [from Whittier], the line turns toward the north and runs in quite a direct line toward the summit opposite Ship Creek."^{xvii} The report continues to note swamps with small birches and spruce, thick with moss, between miles 54 and 61. The estimated cost is \$15,200 per mile. "A line from the water front

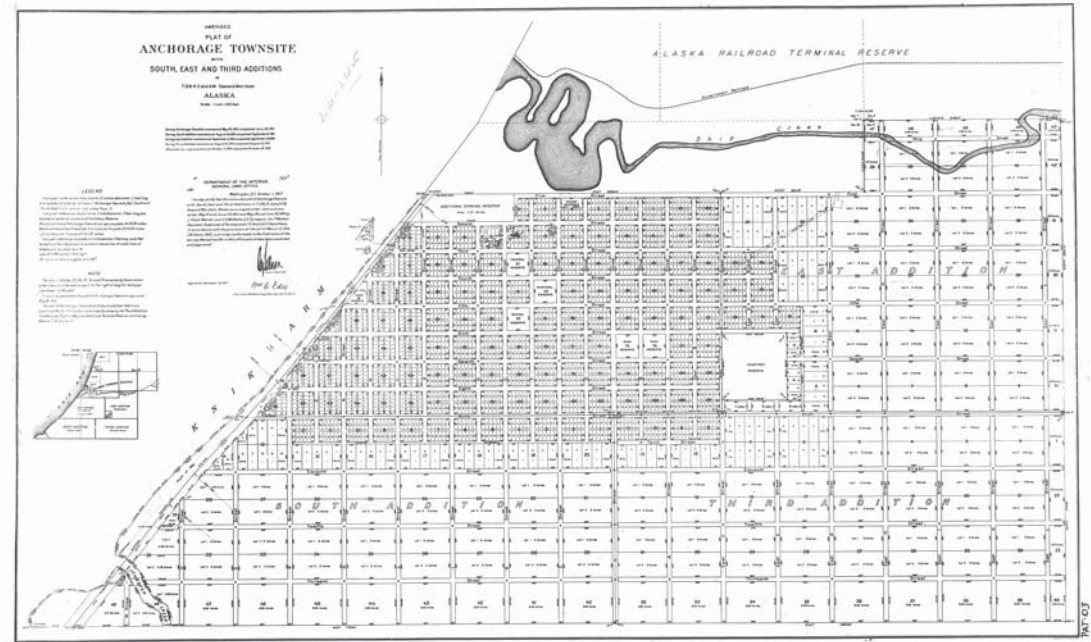
at Ship Creek would reach the main line [...] in a distance of 4.89 miles".^{xviii} The total cost of the spur and line from Turnagain Arm to Ship Creek Summit would be \$123,635. Such a sum is equivalent to over \$3 million today. To reduce cost the Commission chose a route that brought the rails to Knik Arm at Fish Creek, and then headed along the shore into the Ship Creek drainage. In 1915, the engineers built a wooden trestle bridge over Ship Creek for the line. Today it is a pedestrian bridge. The section about Ship Creek concludes that Ship Creek would be a good place for coal export, though observes, "That there may be a few lean years for a pioneer railroad while the country is building up is possible, in fact quite probable, but that it will eventually be a success cannot be doubted."^{xix}

These reports go on to explain why Anchorage was a better choice than Seward was. First it had "unlimited storage", further, the crews could work in two directions, and finally, it was close to the Matanuska coalfields. The commission remarked on the area's similarity to Finland in its character and ability to accommodate year-round freight and agricultural land. This decision set expansion of Seward from a rough settlement of impermanent structures to a small town back at least a decade. Swiftly a rough Tent City developed on the banks of Ship Creek. The workers cleared trees from "Ship Creek Summit" for lumber and pitched tents along its bluff. They cleared a space at the foot of the hill for a baseball field, and the games between rival construction teams were much-attended events.^{xx}

A TOWN IS BORN

In 1915, President Wilson approved the platting of a permanent town site at Anchorage. Surveyors under the direction of Christensen laid out a regular street grid starting at Ship Creek and working south.^{xxi} By this time, an informal settlement of eight cottages had developed on the West End of Government Hill, overlooking the mouth of Ship Creek. These mirrored similar cottages on the tableland to the south, where the town site would be, but their isolation caused many to reflect on the promontory's similarity to a hill in Panama City, whence many workers and officers had come. As a result, they applied the same name, "Government Hill", to the low bluff.^{xxii} The AEC brought much equipment from Panama as well, even a locomotive and Section House.^{xxiii} Evidently, they brought architectural styles and construction techniques as well.

The town site consisted of 300'-square blocks with 60' streets. A 20'-wide alley bisected many of the blocks, which had twelve 7000 sf lots. Each double block has an area of 10 acres, which was the reason for the atypical spacing. Even with the generous allocation of land, critics abounded. An urban planning student at the time reflected, "[the AEC] created a T-square community [that was] a place to die in". The rather large "cemetery reserve" and pittance of park parcels was a shortcoming, but in hindsight, the cemetery was able to accommodate several subsequent decades of deaths. Other reserves included a Federal Reserve, a School Reserve, a Municipal Reserve, and an Indian Lands Reserve. The commission vacated the Tent City and sold off the lots to residents on 10 July 1915. For five years, the Commission ran the



town under the auspices of the Federal Government, with strict laws regarding commerce and conduct. On 23 November 1920, a federal judge overruled a lower court announcement that a vote for self-rule had failed, creating the Anchorage of today. The results of the election included several question ballots that created much confusion in the question of incorporation.^{xxiv}

As the town grew below Government Hill, more cottages sprung up on the West End. The narrow road sliced diagonally up the bluff from C Street to Brown's Point. From this entrance, the West End grew north. The other branch up the hill led northeast along a well-travelled route, following the former Iditarod Trail. In 1917, this road led to a shooting range and farther north. Also along

xvii. Reference: *Alaska Engineering Commission Reports*. AEC. 1914. p. 51.

xviii. Reference: *Alaska Engineering Commission Reports*. AEC. 1914. p. 62.

xix. Reference: *Alaska Engineering Commission Reports*. AEC. 1914. p. 84.

xx. Reference: *Alaska Railroad Record*.

xxi. Reference: "The Founding of Anchorage". Wilson. 1967.

Fig. j. FACING PAGE:
Wireless Station on Government Hill. Jessie Noble Collection; Anchorage Museum, B1995.025.83. 1917. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum.

this road, the commission built the first Government Hill Water Tower in 1914, near where the current one stands. In the summer of 1917, the commission built the Wireless Station in the center of a large clearing between the road and the West End. At this time, a fur farm north of the cottages, the "Alaska Labrador Fur Farm", (today Al Miller Memorial Park) was the only non-residential operation on the hill.^{xxv}

A STATION IS BORN

The Alaska Railroad Record provides invaluable information about the construction of the Wireless Station. The building was originally 28' square with wide eaves and a low roof, in an Italianate style. With the declaration of war in 1917, President Wilson militarized all naval communications. In the previous two years, the AEC had used the radio equipment on board the steamer *Omineca* to communicate with the Lower 48 and coordinate their Alaska operations. Before that, the radio equipment had been kept in the Power Plant, and because the noise was unbearable, the communications moved offshore. The presidential decree forced the AEC to construct a dedicated permanent communications structure. By the first week of January 1917, the commission had completed the communications switchboard in the Power Plant. The following month, the crews had installed the first radio antennæ, a lone wire strung from the water tower to the Power Plant smokestack. The first radio station, inside the Plant, was completed in early April. It had 2 kilowatts of power and could communicate with boats in the harbor and Cook Inlet. The antennæ wires were connected with trees next to the water tower on Government Hill. Even with noise problems from the Power Plant, the operators

received and sent radiotelegraphic messages with Kodiak, Dutch Harbor, and some Japanese steamers over 1000 miles distant.

However, the declaration of war at the end of April prevented communication with the commercial boats in the harbor, and the radio set was moved to the steamer *Omineca* that plied between Anchorage and Kroto. In the second week of July, crews began clearing land on Government Hill. They dug holes for antennæ masts as well. The 24 July edition of the Alaska Railroad Record ran a feature article on the new station, even though only the foundations and structural anchors were complete. By the last week of July, the bases of the masts were in place. The arrival of August brought heavy rains that delayed mast erection, and the work was only 75% complete by the seventh. Within the next week the masts were in place, although lacked paint and the area for the grounding (or as the Record reports the "counterpoise") was cleared. Steel halyards for hoisting the ærials went up in the next several days, and workers began digging trenches for pipes, and excavating the foundation and cesspool for the station. As August turned to September, the foundation and framing of the station were complete, and all the pipes were in the ground, as was the cesspool. The conduit ditches were next, and by the fourth, the generator was connected to the switchboard. By 11 September, the station was 75% complete. Roofing, siding, and electric fixtures were in place, and conduit connected the fixtures to the generator and switchbox to the starting compensator. The spars for the ærial were also in preparation for hoisting. The first snows of the season came by 18 September, and the building was now 80% complete. The masts

were painted and the grounding and cesspool plowing were finished. A water pipe now connected the water tower to the station, and the building now had power.

By the end of September, all the carpenter work was complete in the station, but the doors and windows were late in arriving. The only exterior door faced west, towards Officer's Row. The foundation for an on-site generator was poured. By 2 October the painting, plumbing, and wiring was complete, and the grounding was in place. The workers installed the starting compensator and motor in the first week of October, as well as began covering the grounding. The next week saw the cross arming of the poles and the stringing of the aerial wires. Conduit connected the harbor and town site to the station. In the following week, the workers connected the grounding to the station and cleared the masts. Finally, in the last week of October, the Commission moved the radio set from the *Omineca* to the new station.

In the first week of November, power meters were installed, and the following week the windows and doors arrived. All carpenter work was complete by 20 November and painting and varnishing was done in the following week. All the control panels were moved from the Power Plant and tested at the new location. The temporary aerial was relocated to the masts in the first few days of December, and by the 11th, that station was "practically completed, with the exception of a few minor details." In this week, the AEC had presented the new schoolhouse to the town.



xxii. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

xxiii. Reference: *Alaska Railroad Record*.

xxiv. Reference: "The Founding of Anchorage". Wilson. 1967.

xxv. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

Fig. k. CURRENT PAGE:
A.E.C. Radio Station, Anchorage, Alaska December 22, 1917. H.G. Kaiser, Alaska Railroad Collection; B1979.002.AEC.H29. 1917. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum.
The Wireless Station is the small building in the lower portion of the photo. The view faces southeast, and the dark structures in the bottom left are the water towers.

Fig. l. FACING PAGE:
A.E.C. Wireless Station, Anchorage, Alaska December 22, 1917. H.G. Kaiser, Alaska Railroad Collection; B1979.002.AEC.H28. 1917. Courtesy of Anchorage Museum.
This image shows James Upchurch outside of the new station.





H.C.K.

H.E.C. WIRELESS STATION. ANCHORAGE ALASKA. DEC. 22-1917.

S.P.C.

F.E.C.
H.C.
-28-

On 7 May 1918, the Record reported that the radio station was operating commercially and officially.^{xxvi} It seems that with the arrival of hard winter and the cessation of most construction work for the season, the station shut down temporarily until the spring. James F. Upchurch was the first wireless operator for the AEC, but W. R. Rathbun joined in 1919.^{xxvii} In the first week of June 1919, the operator W.R. Rathbun received the first radiotelephonic message at the station from the gunboat *Vicksburg*, even though he was not able to respond.^{xxix} The AEC never installed the transmitting equipment for radiotelephony, and the station lacked this infrastructure until the 1920s.

The new station had two 200' masts with a 6-wire aerial array. The antennæ measured 30' by 400'. The building had an operating room, generating room, and living quarters for two men. (NPS). The 2kW 500-cycle transmitter had an operating range of 500 miles, and some reports note communication from a ship 1000 miles away.^{xxx} In addition to providing communication, anecdotally its cupola and mast provided navigation assistance to mariners.^{xxxi} Early photographs promote its prominence, as its aerial masts were the tallest structures around. By the 1920s, however, the Commission updated the system, and the Wireless Station could broadcast radiotelephonic messages throughout the State, and to the rest of the world. This station, like the concurrent WAMCATS, was a non-controlled non-commercial communications system. Beginning in 1921, any resident could send and receive messages through the station.^{xxxii} As a result, residents revered it as the only connexion to the world for

the young Anchorage. Until 1931, it was the only radiotelephonic and telegraphic connexion to the outside world for Anchorage.

WORLD WAR I

The Alaska Railroad Reports Volume #12 from 30 January 1917 notes that "at the mouth of Ship Creek, where the town of Anchorage is located, and at which point there was nothing but wilderness in 1914, there is to be found a thriving town of approximately 5000 people, with the following business houses established: 3 hotels, 10 lodging houses, 22 restaurants, 3 drug stores, 4 hardware stores, 3 paint stores, 7 grocery stores, 4 bakeries, 6 laundries [of which one was steam], 4 tailors, 5 jewelers, 3 novelty stores, 13 pool halls [the "pool halls" were often fronts for gambling and drinking establishments, both outlawed at the time], 5 cigar stores, 10 barber shops, 3 meat markets, 4 sheet metal works and plumbers, 1 daily newspaper, 3 weekly newspapers, and 11 miscellaneous businesses."^{xxxiii} A current resident of Anchorage might wonder at the numbers of some choice businesses, of which the city now has few, though might benefit in resurrecting. Additionally, the town had a labor temple, and masonic hall.

During World War I, many of the officers and construction workers went overseas to fight. Additionally, the AEC donated beds to an hospital in Fance.x The enormous labor attrition caused the Commission to hire many foreigners and Alaska Natives to continue the construction. The significance of this employment of Alaska Natives and their contributions to the railroad construction should be apparent.^{xxxiv} It is possible that some

Dena'ina men operated the Wireless Station and Section Houses. The AEC built the Kern Section house in 1920, following a standard kit-home plan popular at the time.^x The AEC sold the cottages to private owners, although they were still railroad employees, in 1928. The properties remained part of the Railroad Reserve until 1935.^{xxxv}

WAMCATS

The Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS) acquired the Wireless Station in 1924, after completion of the Railroad. Even for the WAMCATS, the structure was an oddity, though also a luxurious space. Most of their buildings at the time were hastily constructed shacks or kit-houses. The WAMCATS had operated in Alaska since 1900 when Brig. Gen. Greely began assembling men from the U.S. Signal Corps to build a telegraph line to Fort St Michael on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and the small town of Nome on the Seward Peninsula, at the time undergoing a gold rush. Additionally, as early as 1865 the government dreamed of a trans-continental telegraph line connecting through Alaska to Russia and Europe. The Federal government had approached several private companies, including Western Union, to construct the line, but these companies feared it would be too expensive to build and impossible to maintain. Therefore, Colonel G. Randall recommended that the U.S. Army construct the line, at least as far as Nome; this would be the first of many federally funded infrastructure projects in Alaska. The first line stretched along the coast to connect Nome to Fort Davis at Port Safety in September 1900, and then under Norton Sound to Fort St Michael in October. The winter ice, however, destroyed the line during the winter. Meanwhile, troops set out

east from Nome to Fort Gibbon, near Fairbanks, and continued east to connect to the Canadian telegraph system, terminating at Dawson City. In 1901, the Signal Corps completed this connexion. A new technology was creating much news at the time, however, and that got Captain Leonard Wildman thinking about the failed connexion between Fort St Michael and Nome.^{xxxvi}

In 1903, the Signal Corps began construction of a wireless station at Fort St Michael and at Fort Davis. For good measure, they laid a new, thicker cable between the two as well. Each station had 210' towers, although David Jessup writes the "necessary technology to operate them did not exist". Capt. Wildman was busy in the Lower 48 trying to find equipment that would work. On 6 August 1903, the first messages passed between Fort Davis and Fort St Michael. That same year, a cable ship laid a line from Skagway to Seattle, and messages could travel at unprecedented speed between Fort St Michael and Washington, D.C. eventually more lines stretched throughout Southeast and from Sitka to Valdez. The main wireless stations were in Ketchikan, Cordova, and Fort St Michael. However, when the WAMCATS acquired the AEC Wireless Station, and updated its equipment, the station quickly outpaced Cordova, which closed in 1933. The existing communication infrastructure at Anchorage made other stations in Southcentral obsolete, causing Anchorage to grow even more in importance. (Jessup) The Anchorage station used the call letters WXE.^{xxxvii}

xxvi. Reference: *Alaska Railroad Record*. v. I #9-v. II #5. 1917.

xxvii. Reference: *Alaska Railroad Record*. v. II. #26. 1918.

xxviii. Reference: *Alaska Railroad Record*.

xxix. Reference: *Alaska Railroad Record*. v. III. #31. 1919.

xxx. Reference: "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form". NPS. 2015.

xxxi. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

xxxii. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

xxxiii. Reference: *Alaska Railroad Record*. v. I. #12. 1917.

xxxiv. Reference: *Patterns of the Past*. Carberry, et al. 1986.

xxxv. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

Fig. m. CURRENT PAGE:
ACS Telegram. McClain. N.D.
Courtesy of UAA/APU Consor-
tium Library.



A year after the WAMCATS took over the Government Hill Wireless Station, in 1925, a diphtheria epidemic broke in Nome. Anchorage received the distressing news of depleted serum stores in Nome via the radio, and sent the message over the telegraph to Seward.^{xxxviii} Were it not for this important communications link and subsequent wireless management of the storied “serum run”, the outbreak may have been much worse. In 1930, the WAMCATS installed a medium frequency transmitter at Anchorage, as well as several other stations. They constructed a repeater station the following year, seven miles north of Anchorage. The head of the WAMCATS in Anchorage was not particularly amiable, and many signalmen recalled harsh working conditions and poor treatment. Of particular note, the officer at Anchorage forced signalmen to wear their uniforms at all times.^{xxxix} In 1934, the WAMCATS built a second structure to the east, a gabled

one-storey affair with a large room and loft. This history will refer to it as Building #2, although the Nomination refers to it as Building C. The ADEC report refers to the structure as Building #2.^{x1} The south addition to the Wireless Station included a full-height basement and large ground-floor room. This extra room drastically altered the original structure, as the entire southern wall became an interior wall, and large portions were removed. A steep concrete stair vestibule provided access to the basement from the original doorway, and fit under the original eave. Where three windows had been became a single opening, connecting the stair to the interior. The addition also removed most of the south wall of the original building, and added an entrance on the new south wall.

By this time, the building had been resided to wooden drop siding, covering the original board and batten.^{xli} The basement included a boiler and operating room, and a room used as a bunkroom for some time. Congress formed the Alaska Communications System out of the remains of WAMCATS in 1936, although it was still a part of the Army Signal Corps.^{xlii} This entity operated the station as part of a larger communication system in Anchorage. In the 1930s, the WAMCATS had transferred some of their operations to a small building in the townsite, at the future location of the Old Federal Building. They constructed an array at Whitney, as well. Transmission occurred Downtown, but the receiving equipment was still in the Government Hill structure. The ACS expanded the transmission structure in the late 1930s before moving into the Federal Building in 1939. Around

this time, they changed the call sign to WXFA, to fit within the greater Alaska Defense Network system.^{xliv}

WORLD WAR II

The Railroad closed its Kern Section in 1930.^{xliv} A decade later, the Army Corps of Engineers built two cottages at Brown's Point in 1941, completing the ring of cottages along the bluff. Some years later, the Alaska Railroad built 10 duplexes north of the AEC cottages to house its wartime employees.^{xliv} At this point, the roads of Government Hill developed according to geographic features, curving along the bluff, and were narrow. Until about 1940 the AEC cottages, a water tower, and the Wireless Station were the only structures on the Hill. When the Federal Government transferred railroad lands to create Elmendorf Air Field and Fort Richardson, military personnel and private citizens moved onto the Hill.

During World War II, the Railroad hired one of its surveyors to lay out the 360' grid, established in 1915, on Government Hill.^{xlvi} This development divided the Wireless Station properties, and forced the relocation of Building #2 to its current location, north of the station building. These changes led to its disuse as a telecommunications hub. By this time the ACS had opened a second station at Campbell Point (near the Airport), as well as on Fort Richardson.^{xlvi} The White Alice Communications System (WACS) operated several stations in the Anchorage area, supplementing the ACS system.

The Railroad purchased surplus Quonset Huts and placed one on each 7000sf lot, with an intention that the residents would build permanent structures within five years. Additionally, the Railroad constructed more duplexes on the West End. In 1946, when the City of Anchorage formally annexed the neighborhood and enforced zoning and building standards, they forced the Quonset dwellers to build permanent houses—though to be sure, the residents needed no more convincing than enduring cold winters in uninsulated structures.^{xlvi}

In 1943, ACS built a third building to the east of the Wireless Station. This structure housed a garage and some accessory rooms, as well as a possible bunkroom. This history calls it the T-Shaped Building. The "t" stem was shorter initially, but extending in the late 1950s. Bollards and a cleared pad to the North, at the intersection of Manor and Boyd, indicate a carport was there at one time. During that decade, the ACS also built two additional rooms to the Wireless Station, on the north side, as well as a new entrance vestibule, which like the stairs, fit under the east eave of the roof. The western access was boarded over as well as two sets of windows. Around this time standing-seam, metal roofing was added to all the structures.^{xlvi} The new dimensions of the Wireless Station are about 29' x 60'. Many of the ACS officers were hardened and seasoned men and women, much accustomed to drinking and other habits. The Anchorage post was the luckiest, as it had the greatest access to these; however, isolation forced the more rural station operators to be more creative. They crafted their own liquors in excess insulator tubes, and invented more nefarious uses for equipment. Additionally, McClain relates a

xxxvi. Reference: *Wires, Wireless and Wilderness*. Blanchard. 2010.

xxxvii. Reference: *Conquering the Unconquerable*. McClain. N.P.

xxxviii. Reference: "Balto". Cleveland Museum of Natural History. N.D.
The exchange reportedly went thus: Nome calling...Nome calling...We have an outbreak of diphtheria...No serum...Urgently need help...Nome calling...Nome calling...

Seattle calling...Seattle calling...Fresh serum available here...Airplane standing by to fly to Nome...

Anchorage calling...Anchorage calling...300,000 units of serum located in railway hospital here...Package can be shipped by train to Nenana... Package weighs 20 pounds... Could serum be carried to Nome on Iditarod Trail by mail drivers and dog teams?

xxxix. Reference: *Wires, Wireless and Wilderness*. Blanchard. 2010.

x1. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA. 2017.

story of one Anchorage officer was a well-known homosexual who surrounded himself with young, good-looking male operators.¹

POST-WAR GROWTH AND CHANGE

Along the west edge of the property is a railroad-tie fence, built before 1949. Comparing historic photographs to the contemporary building, either the buildings and fence settled or the soil height has increased. Nevertheless, the rail is very low and partially buried. Surveys of the properties indicate that two Quonset Huts once stood in the northwestern corner of the property and that there were several underground fuel tanks.¹ⁱ

The East Side developed in the late 1940s and 1950s, with the introduction of a new street grid that reflected the newer grid of Anchorage. These blocks were on 330' divisions, forming equal divisions of a mile. Developers formed subdivisions in these blocks. In the early 1950s, the Railroad, still under federal management, built three apartment complexes at the East End of Government Hill. These accommodated the increased housing demand railroad expansion and freight transportation caused. The complexes had romantic names, Richardson Vista, Panoramic View, and Hollywood Vista, and continue to offer dense housing for the neighborhood. Similar development occurred along East Loop Road. Commercial buildings opened, including the first strip mall in Anchorage: the Hollywood Shopping Center. A bowling alley, dance club, and curling rink opened in the subsequent decades, built by railroad employees but donated to the community. Additionally, the Government

Hill School opened in 1956. Between 1958 and 1963, Urban Renewal drastically altered the appearance of the East Side. The city paved the streets, added curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. On the West Side, however, these improvements were less. Although the streets were paved and Quonset Huts discouraged, sidewalks did not appear. Residents still walked down the streets and alleys, as they had done for decades.¹ⁱⁱ The first commercial radio station, KENI, started broadcasting from a building south of Downtown Anchorage in 1948. Their building is on the National Register of Historic Places, as well.

The U.S. Army took over the Wireless property from ACS in the 1952, after the ACS ceased communications operations there. It might be more accurate to say the ACS continued using the structures, as the U.S. Army controlled the ACS, but to avoid confusion with the historic and contemporary Alaska Communications, once called ACS, the occupants were members of a branch of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, known as the ACS.¹ⁱⁱⁱ Documents from the transfer refer to the site as the ACS Storage Annex, and until the U.S.G.S. moved in the site was legally called the Storage Annex, preceded by the name of whichever agency occupied it. The Quonset Huts disappeared from the property in the 1950s. By this time, other more powerful radio stations, including the Elmendorf array two and an half miles to the north, performed the military communications. Civilian use of the military radio was reducing, especially in the urban Southcentral region, and private communications companies had moved into the state. The U.S. Army transferred the property to the U.S. Air Force after ten

years,^{liv} and for several decades, the station was a vehicle and equipment repair facility, as well as storage.

The Good Friday, or Great Alaska, Earthquake on 27 March 1964 caused much destruction throughout Southcentral Alaska, and Government Hill was no different. Although the quake proved the theory of plate tectonics, its shaking caused the land to sink on average six feet, and caused several local slides throughout Anchorage. Government Hill Elementary School fell victim to one such slide, which cleaved the building in two, and swallowed as many as two houses. Because the day was a holiday, and the quake struck at 5:36 PM, there were no fatalities in the school. The janitor was working at the time, but survived the shaking. Almost immediately, bulldozers demolished the school and graded the slope, and 21 years later, the site opened as a park. In early 1965, the new Government Hill Elementary School opened at its present location, on lands donated from Elmendorf Airforce Base. The Wireless Station suffered almost no damage. The West End is more stable than the East Side, and most Government Hill residents recall broken dishes and furniture, but nothing more than cosmetic damage.

Port construction began in 1959, and two years later, the 700-foot Terminal #1 officially opened. In its first year, 38,000 tons of marine cargo moved across its single berth. Because the Port of Anchorage was the only port in Southcentral Alaska to survive the 1964 earthquake, it became the major shipping hub of the State. Its expansion fueled the local economy into the early 2010s. Of

course, the noise, odors, and potentially hazardous vapors cause much concern for Government Hill residents, and conflicting land use plans create contested areas, especially along the west and north bluffs of Government Hill.^{lv}

WIRELESS STATION REUSE

In 1962, the U.S. Airforce took over ACS from the Army, and sold the communication system to RCA Alaska Communications, Inc. (RCA Alascom) in 1970. This was the first private ownership of the original communication network in Alaska. From 1971 to 1976, the U.S.A.F. leased the buildings to RCA, although the use during that period is unknown.^{lvi} In the 1975, Port Access Bridge was built as the Port expanded. This four-lane viaduct spans the Ship Creek drainage, starting at 3rd Avenue and ending at the bottom of Government Hill. The bridge connects A and C Streets with East and West Loop Roads, and descends from about 90' to about 50' about sea level, an average of 50' above Ship Creek. At this time, the U.S. Coast Guard was using the structures for housing and equipment repair. Anecdotally they ran a health clinic for Guardsmen, as well.^{lvii} In 1975, the Borough of Anchorage and the City of Anchorage merged to become the Municipality of Anchorage, the forth-largest municipality in the world, by land, that now controls an area about the size of Delaware.

The Wireless Station changed hands once more in 1976 when the U.S.A.F. surrendered the property to the General Services Administration, which transferred it to the U.S. Geologic Survey.^{lviii} However, the U.S.G.S transitioned the decaying

xli. Reference: "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form". NPS. 2015.

xlii. Reference: "Connecting Alaska". Jessup. 2007.

xliii. Reference: *Conquering the Unconquerable*. McClain. N.P.

xliv. Reference: *Patterns of the Past*. Carberry, et al. 1986.

xlv. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

xlvi. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

xlvii. Reference: *Conquering the Unconquerable*. McClain. N.P.

xlviii. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

xlix. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA. 2017.

1. Reference: *Conquering the Unconquerable*. McClain. N.P.

structures to storage. In 1983, the U.S.G.S. had sanctioned a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, but the process was never completed. The U.S.G.S. vacated the property in 1985, but maintained ownership. It became the Alaska Core Library, although the illustrious name lends more gravity to the use than it should, and remained cold storage until 1994.^{lix} During this period, the plumbing fixtures and any remaining communications equipment were removed. The absence of human residents and the storage of the heavy samples accelerated the structures' decay, and caused the floors to sag and break. This exacerbated the deformation of the structures as their foundations rotted and settled asymmetrically.

In 1979, Pacific Telecom, Inc. bought RCA Alascom and changed the name to Alascom, Inc. Between 1983 and 1984, the corporation acquired roughly 10 acres north of Government Hill, and only three blocks away from the Wireless Station, and built their headquarters there. AT&T bought Alascom a decade later, and renamed its Alaska operations AT&T Alascom. This descendant of the WAMCATS still provides telecommunications to Alaska.

In 1989, several organizations approached the Railroad to purchase the Girdwood Section House. The railroad no longer needed the structure, and offered to pay for the cost of its removal. Although Challenge Alaska, a ski school, had a strong application, the owners of Alyeska Ski Resort, Challenge Alaska's landlord, did not approve the proposal. As a result, the second-place applicant received the structure.^{lx} In the early 1990s, Eklutna Native Corporation moved

the building from Girdwood to its present location in Eklutna, across from St Michael's Church. It sustained damage during the move, and has sat vacant ever since. On Government Hill, Hollywood Vista, the apartment complex on the East End, was demolished in 1996,^{lxi} and the vacant lands were redeveloped and subdivided. The new streets curve along the bluff, and new houses occupy all the lots.

WIRELESS STATION ABANDONMENT

After several years of occupation, the U.S.G.S. undertook an environmental cleanup of the site in 1997 and 1998.^{lxii} Surveyors found polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), Lead, Benzene, trichloroethylene (TCE), diesel range organics (DROs), and residual range organics (RROs) in the soil, and DROs in groundwater. This cleanup effort included the removal of underground storage tanks and soil boring near the former Quonset Huts. One storage tank was directly south of the original building; another south of the T Building, in the crook of the "T", and the third was west of Building #2. The former drywell was north of the T-Shaped Building, where the gravel-parking pad is today. This drywell evidently collected the run-off from the adjacent garage. The remediation affected the property, and may have destroyed some landscape features that would have explained its historic use. Several monitoring wells were installed to collect groundwater samples. More cleanups occurred in 2000 and 2002 and in 2001, more wells were installed. The U.S.G.S. continued to facilitate groundwater monitoring until 2008. A 2009 survey concluded, "The contaminant concentrations remaining on site do not pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment and no further

remedial action will be required". The report goes on to describe, "Three underground storage tanks, a dry well, and a Quonset hut used for vehicle maintenance". However, it does note, "it is assumed that DROs remains in soil at this location [of the former Quonset Huts]." The drywell may have TCE in the soil still, and the location of the storage tanks may still have DROs in the soil. The decision of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation reads, "There is no unacceptable risk to human health or the environment, and this site will be granted Cleanup Complete". The ADEC warns, "Future change in land use may impact the exposure assumptions". Continued groundwater monitoring continued until late 2013, and the remaining wells were decommissioned the following year.^{lxiii}

WIRELESS STATION PRESERVATION

Although the U.S.G.S had approached the Anchorage Historical Society in the late 2000s,^{lxiv} and the AHS entertained the possibility of its reuse as a museum and its offices, the AHS went bankrupt before the deal could go through. Finally, the GSA transferred the property and the three buildings to the Municipality in 2012, with several strict stipulations, the forfeiture of which would "forfeit all right, title and interest in said Property":

The [Municipality] shall maintain the Property in a manner that will preserve those qualities that make the Property eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. To ensure such preservation, the [Municipality]

shall not undertake, nor permit to be undertaken, any construction, alteration, or remodeling of the Property (exterior, interior, or historic landscaping) without the prior written approval of the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Any such construction, alteration, or remodeling shall be conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings (32 CRF Part 67), and shall be reviewed and accepted by the SHPO.^{lxv}

The SHPO took the opportunity of the transfer to process the nomination and approval of property for the National Register in 2015.^{lxvi} Some feel that the SHPO did not provide the Municipality with adequate notification, but the Assembly and Mayor failed to respond within the 30 days allocated for comment. As a result, the controversy surrounding the transfer of the property, especially the strict clauses of the Quitclaim Deed, and the nomination of the Wireless Station continues to this day. Nevertheless, the entire complex is on the National Register of Historic Places. The property met Criteria A of local significance, and the nomination lists all three structures as contributing, with the period of significance from 1917-50, with significant dates of 1917 and 1936. Of interest, the nomination describes the exterior of the buildings in detail, but has general descriptions of the interiors.

ii. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA. 2017.

iii. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

iii. Reference: "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form". NPS. 2015.

iv. Reference: "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form". NPS. 2015.

iv. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

vi. Reference: "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form". NPS. 2015.

vii. Note: This information comes from longtime resident Bobbie Bianchi.

viii. Reference: "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form". NPS. 2015.

ix. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA. 2017.

Fig. n. FACING PAGE, ABOVE:
Schematic Axonometric. Scher, Connor. 2017.

Fig. o. FACING PAGE, BELOW:
Government Hill Wireless Station. Self. December 2017.

In 2012, in preparation for the Knik Arm Crossing, a multilane viaduct between Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, AKDOT seized properties and demolished buildings. The tabling of the bridge project resulted in a significant gash through the neighborhood. This preparation cost the neighborhood its gas station and businesses. Today, the neighborhood is appropriating the land for a community garden and park.

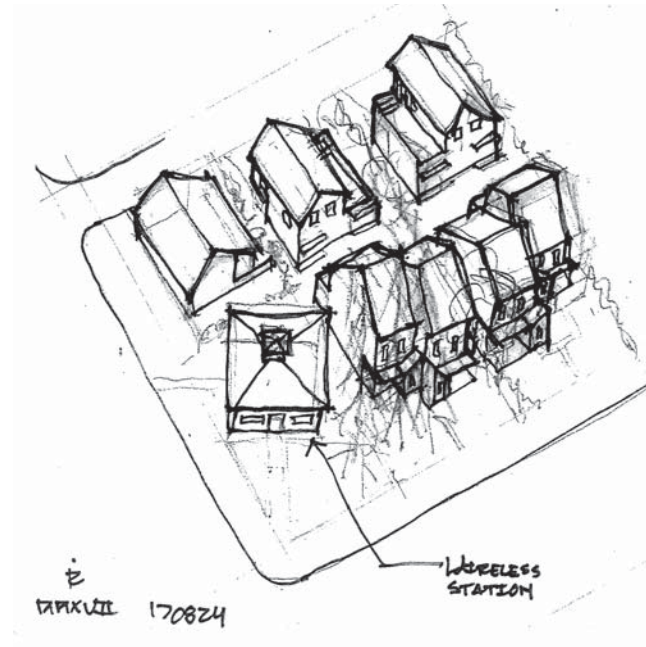
WIRELESS STATION REHABILITATION

The Municipality has pursued the development of the Wireless property, beginning in May 2017 with a Request for Proposals.^{lxvii} At that time, they envisioned a multi-use development that included residential units and some other non-residential use. The intention was to further several area plans that suggested mixed-use buildings and zones. The previous year had involved meetings with the Government Hill Community Council, concerned residents, and potential developers to brainstorm ideas for its repair and reuse. The neighborhood remains committed to this goal, and offered up ideas such as a park, a community craft shop, an artist residence or studio, a museum, maker space, bakery, housing, a bank, an office, and other civic uses. They desired community access, regardless. The RFP suggested several actions and goals for development, as well as descriptions of the existing conditions and regulations. The RFP closed at 1700 on 10 June, marking the death of the Wireless Station and the erasure of its significance to the community. The Municipality had received no responses, likely because local design professionals and developers fear the National Historic Register and its requirements. Additionally, any “multi-use”

development would require an expensive rezone and replat of the property. Two of the buildings, the original Station and the T-Shaped Building cross property lines. Further, the concession that the buildings all contained Lead and asbestos materials, as well as minimal, though present, ground contamination appeared prohibitive to development.

In August 2017, the Municipality of Anchorage Historic Officer Kristine Bunnell presented Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission with a proposal for converting the Wireless Station properties into affordable housing units. A contractor with the Commission interning with the Office of Economic and Community Development Long Range Planning Division had offered to sketch some initial plans and axonometrics for redevelopment. Connor Scher was a graduate student at the Portland State University School of Architecture, and had started the contracted internship in June of that year. His main job, and the main task of the Commission at this time, was the development of a Municipality-wide Historic Preservation Plan. However, the Commission still had interest in developing the Wireless Station, and had approached some developers. Receiving initial approval from Municipal planners, Scher presented the proposal to the Commission. The plan recommended the construction of two duplexes with detached garages on two lots, a single-family residence on one lot, and the transfer of the original Wireless Station building to the corner lot. The Wireless Station would be restored to its 1917 condition, with appropriate mitigation for its additions, and made into a library. Building #2 and the T-Shaped Building would be demolished, because of their environmental hazards.

This proposal opened latent divisions on the Commission, and the fallout continued well into the next few months. Consequent modifications to propose adult care homes and a childcare home did not appease several members of the Commission, and the Wireless Station vanished from the Commission's agendas. Evidence exists that Scher was supposed to continue developing the project for the Municipality, but the Commission amended his contract in September; he would only work on the Historic Preservation Plan. Scher returned to his studies, and began his Master's Thesis, on the Government Hill Wireless Station.



ix. Note:
This information comes from personal familiarity with the concerned documents.

ixi. Reference: *Government Hill Neighborhood Plan*. MOA. 2012.

ixii. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA. 2017.

ixiii. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA. 2017.

ixiv. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA. 2017.

ixv. Reference: "Quitclaim Deed". GSA. 2012.

ixvi. Reference: "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form". NPS. 2015.

ixvii. Reference: "Request for Proposals". MOA Real Estate Department. 2017.



Fig. p. CURRENT PAGE, ABOVE LEFT:
Anchorage from the Hillside. Self. March 2018.
This view west shows the Bowl and Mt Susitna in the distance.



Fig. q. CURRENT PAGE, ABOVE RIGHT:
Anchorage from the Hillside. Self. March 2018.
This view northwest shows Downtown Anchorage.

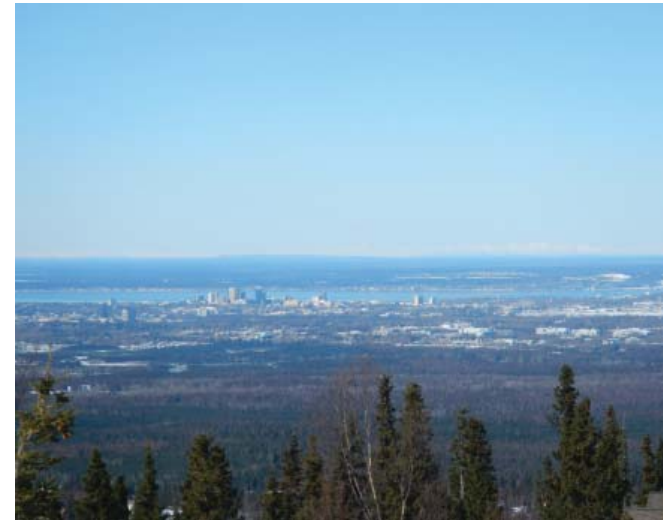


Fig. r. CURRENT PAGE, BELOW LEFT:
Downtown from the Boat Launch. Self. March 2018.
This photograph looks southeast.



Fig. s. CURRENT PAGE, BELOW RIGHT:
Government Hill from the Boat Launch. Self. March 2018.
The Water Tower and AT&T radio tower are just visible above the bluff. This is the view that would have greeted the AEC as they arrived.

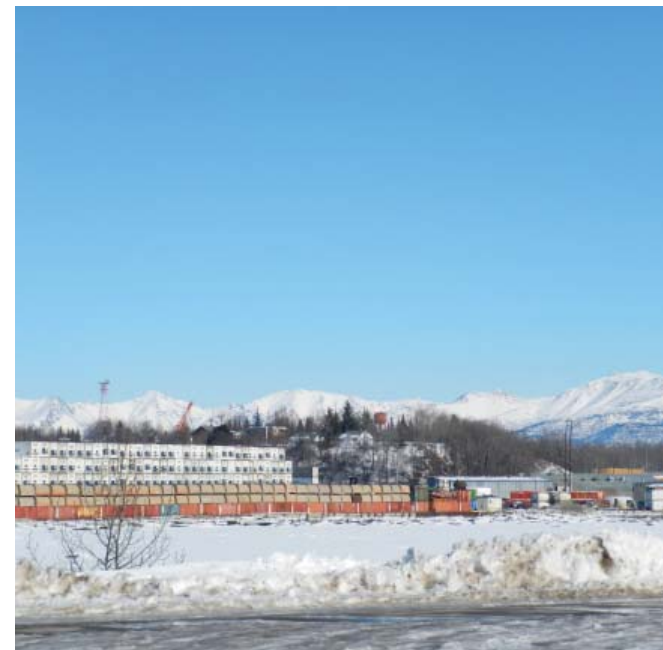


Fig. t. FACING PAGE, ABOVE:
Anchorage from Arctic Valley. Scher, Robert. February 2018.

Fig. u. FACING PAGE, BELOW LEFT:
Cairn Point from the Boat Launch. Self. March 2018.

Fig. v. FACING PAGE, BELOW RIGHT:
Downtown from South Bluff Park. Self. March 2018.

