



Sitka National Historical Park

FOUNDATION STATEMENT

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Elements of a Foundation Statement

The Foundation Statement is a formal description of Sitka National Historical Park's (park) core mission. It is a foundation to support planning and management of the park. The foundation is grounded in the park's legislation and from knowledge acquired since the park was originally established. It provides a shared understanding of what is most important about the park. This Foundation Statement describes the park's purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, primary interpretive themes, and special mandates.

The legislation that created Sitka National Historical Park guides the staff in understanding and documenting why Congress and the President created the park. The Foundation Statement includes the following elements:

- **Purpose Statement**

The purpose statement identifies why Congress and the president established the park as a unit of the national park system. The purpose of the park is based on the enabling legislation.

- **Significance Statement**

Guided by legislation and the knowledge acquired through management, research, and civic engagement, statements of significance define what is *most important* about the park's natural and cultural resources and values.

The significance statements are used to guide planning and management decisions to ensure that the resources and values that Congress and the president wanted preserved are the first priority.

- **Fundamental Resources and Values**

The National Park Service preserves those resources and values fundamental to maintaining the significance of Sitka National Historical Park. Through identifying and understanding the resources and values that support each significance statement, managers and their staff gain a clearer understanding of what is truly most important about the park. That which is *most important* about the park could be jeopardized if these resources and values are degraded.

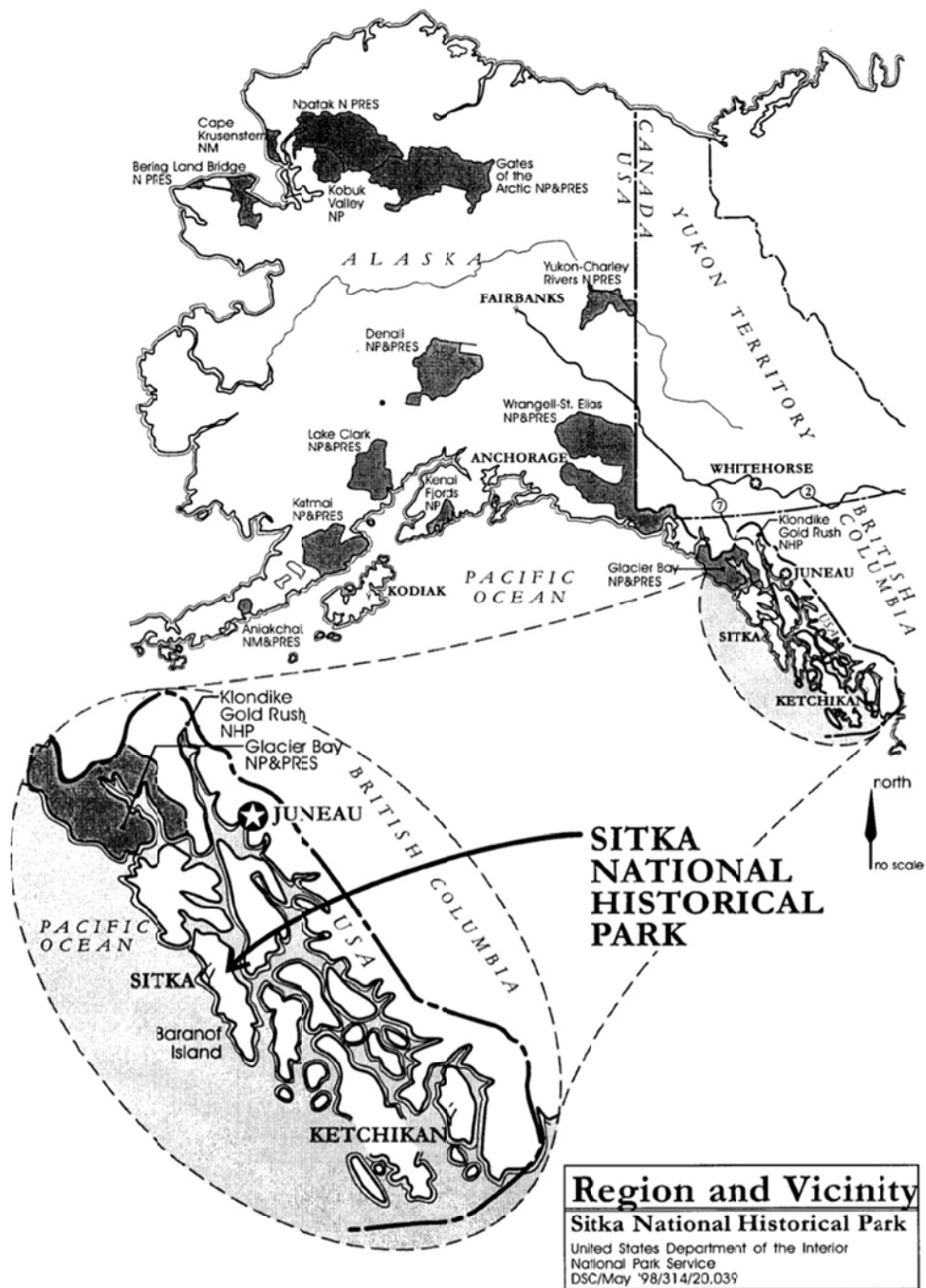
- **Primary Interpretive Themes**

Primary interpretive themes describe the key stories or concepts that help visitors understand and appreciate the purpose and significance of the park. The primary interpretive themes provide the foundation on which the park's educational and interpretive program is based.

- **Special Mandates**

Special mandates are legal requirements and administrative commitments that apply to the park. These special mandates may include direction from Congress or formal agreements with other public or private entities that are consistent with NPS legal mandates and policies. The special mandates are identified to ensure their consideration in planning and decision making for Sitka National Historical Park.

Regional Context



Sitka National Historical Park is situated in the community of Sitka, Alaska, which lies on the outer shore of Baranof Island in southeast Alaska, about 100 air miles southwest of Juneau. The park preserves historically and culturally significant sites and artifacts related to the 1804 Battle of Sitka between the Native Alaskans (Kiks.ádi and other Tlingit clans) and the Russians, the Russian-American period in Alaska, and the Native people of Southeast Alaska.



Much of the land now in the park was originally dedicated as a public park by President Benjamin Harrison on June 21, 1890. On March 23, 1910, President William Howard Taft signed a proclamation designating Sitka National Monument, which added several tracts of land. On February 25, 1952, President Harry S. Truman signed a similar proclamation that readjusted the boundary. In 1972 President Richard Nixon signed Public Law 92-510. This expanded the designated area, added the Russian Bishop's House, and changed park's designation from national monument to Sitka National Historical Park, emphasizing preservation through public ownership of an area that illustrates a part of early US history by commemorating czarist Russia's exploration and colonization of Alaska.

The park consists of two units comprising approximately 113 acres, including 49.5 acres of tidelands that are within the authorized boundary. The Fort Site Unit includes the visitor center, which houses park headquarters. This unit also contains the Totem Trail, other adjoining trails, the site of the historic Kiks.ádi Tlingit fort, the battleground of the 1804 Battle of Sitka, the survival march memorial, and the Russian Memorial.

The Russian Bishop's House unit, near Sitka's central business district, contains the Russian Bishop's House National Historic Landmark and two adjacent historic buildings: the Priest's Quarters and the Old School (formerly a school operated by the Russian Orthodox Church). The Russian Bishop's House is one of only four remaining examples of Russian colonial architecture in North America.

Summary

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Sitka National Historical Park preserves and interprets, for public benefit, a culturally and historically significant landscape that tells the story of Southeast Alaska Native peoples, signature totemic art forms, the 1804 Battle of Sitka, and Russian exploration and colonization.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

1. **The Battle of 1804:** Sitka National Historical Park was the site of the most significant major armed resistance of Alaska Native people to Russian colonization, and is now the place where the conflicts between two rich and contrasting cultures are interpreted.
2. **Totemic Art:** Sitka National Historical Park preserves and interprets totemic art that showcases the talents and cultures of Native peoples throughout Southeast Alaska.
3. **Russia in the New World:** Sitka National Historical Park features our nation's best example of Russian colonial architecture, the Russian Bishop's House, which stands as a symbol of the enduring influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on Alaska's history and communities.
4. **Museum Collections and Partnerships:** Through relationships with local Tlingit clans and the Orthodox Church, the park provides museum care, while supporting the traditional use of ceremonial and liturgical objects.
5. **Southeast Alaska Native Culture:** Sitka National Historical Park fosters the preservation and interpretation of Southeast Alaska Native culture.
6. **Indian River Estuary:** The convergence of Indian River, the coastal resources, and the sea provides an inspiring, biologically rich environment that is critical to understanding the events that took place here.

Park Purpose

Sitka National Historical Park preserves and interprets, for public benefit, a culturally and historically significant landscape that tells the story of Southeast Alaska Native peoples, signature totemic art forms, the 1804 Battle of Sitka, and Russian exploration and colonization.



Sitka National Historical Park displays the work of generations of totem carvers.

The Battle of 1804

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Sitka National Historical Park was the site of the most significant major armed resistance of Alaska Native people to Russian colonization, and is now the place where the conflicts between two rich and contrasting cultures are interpreted.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

- **Fort Site**
The park protects the area where the *Kiks.ádi* fort stood during the Battle of 1804.
- **People**
The Tlingit, Russian, Alutiiq, and Aleut people represent the multiple cultures connected to the battle site through their oral and written histories and the strong emotional connections that are present in these cultures today.
- **Landscapes**
The surrounding historic landscapes and viewsheds enrich the story of the Battle of 1804.



The Battle of Sitka, a painting by Louis S. Glanzman, depicts details of the 1804 battle between invading Russian forces and Kiks.ádi Tlingit at the mouth of Indian River.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEME

This cultural landscape preserves the memory of a major event defining future relations between Russians and Native Alaskans.

Totemic Art

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Sitka National Historical Park preserves and interprets totemic art that showcases the talents and cultures of Native peoples throughout Southeast Alaska.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

- **Totem Trail**
The park maintains the historic totem-lined trail where E.W. Merrill placed the first totem poles in Sitka.
- **Brady Collection**
Sitka National Historical Park is the repository for the 18 Haida and Tlingit totem poles collected by the Territorial governor John Brady in the early 1900s.
- **Civilian Conservation Corps Totems**
Sitka National Historical Park preserves and displays replicas of the original Brady Collection carved by the Native CCC workers in the 1930s and 1940s.
- **Contemporary Totemic Art**
The park fosters the preservation and perpetuation of this traditional art form through contemporary carvings.



The K'alyáan pole is an example of modern-era totemic art.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEME

The park's collection of totemic art ensures the preservation of Southeast Alaska Native history, stories and traditions.

Russia in North America

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Sitka National Historical Park features our nation's best example of Russian colonial architecture, the Russian Bishop's House, which stands as a symbol of the enduring influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on Alaska's history and communities.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

- **Russian Bishop's House**
The restored Russian Bishop's House represents the most intact of four remaining structures left from Russian colonization of America.
- **Collections and Artifacts**
The Russian Bishop's House houses original artifacts from the Russian era including furnishings, a library, and a functioning chapel with the original icons.
- **Partnerships**
The park's partnership with the Russian Orthodox Church helps keep traditions, such as the use of the chapel, alive.
- **Historic Significance**
The Russian Bishop's House, a National Historic Landmark, was the seat of Russian ecclesiastical power in Alaska for 129 years and was the residence of St. Innocent.
- **Cultural Significance**
The Russian Bishop's House served as a center of Russian Church administration, an orphanage, and an institution of learning, development, and exchange between Russian, Tlingit, and other cultures.



The Russian Bishop's House is best example of Russian colonial architecture in North America.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEME

Russia's political, economic, and religious endeavors significantly influenced the history of Sitka, Alaska and the United States.

Museum Collections and Partnerships

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Through relationships with local Tlingit clans and the Orthodox Church, the park provides museum care, while supporting the traditional use of ceremonial and liturgical objects.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

- **Tlingit Ceremonial Objects**
Authentic Sitka Tlingit crest hats, ceremonial robes, house posts, and crest screens support park exhibits and interpretive themes while the park provides local safekeeping for irreplaceable, locally-owned Tlingit clan property.
- **Russian Orthodox Ceremonial Objects**
Original icons, liturgical objects, and furnishings of St. Innocent support park exhibits and interpretive themes while the park provides local safekeeping for irreplaceable Church property still in use.



Services continue to take place in the Russian Bishop's House Chapel of the Annunciation .

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEME

Caring for traditional cultural property is integral to maintaining Sitka National Historical Park's relationship with the local community.

Southeast Alaska Native Culture

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Sitka National Historical Park fosters the preservation and interpretation of Southeast Alaska Native culture.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

- **Clan Relationships**
Sitka National Historical Park supports local Native groups in the perpetuation of their culture and traditions. Clans guide the park in traditional ways and protocol.
- **Partnerships**
Through partnerships, Sitka National Historical Park serves as a center for cultural preservation and interpretation.
- **Cultural Programs**
Interactive programs by Native artists and other culture-bearers provide the public with opportunities to receive traditional instruction in culture.
- **Interpretive Programs**
Sitka National Historical Park provides opportunities for visitors to experience intellectual and emotional connections to Native culture.



Supporting Native artists is one way the park fosters cultural preservation and interpretation.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEME

Sitka National Historical Park preserves and perpetuates traditional art and culture for visitors.

Indian River Estuary

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The convergence of Indian River, the coastal resources and the sea provides an inspiring, biologically rich environment that is critical to understanding the events that took place here.

FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

- **Salmon Migrations**
Visitors have the opportunity to witness the same salmon migrations that originally drew people to the banks of the Indian River.
- **Water Quality**
Excellent water quality in Indian River provides healthy aquatic habitat and a valuable water resource.
- **Intact Landscape/Vegetation**
Sitka National Historical Park preserves a historic natural landscape in the heart of a temperate rainforest.
- **Healthy Intertidal Communities**
Sitka National Historical Park protects rich intertidal ecosystems, important to early and contemporary inhabitants of Southeast Alaska.



The mouth of Indian River supports a biologically rich environment.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEME

The Indian River ecosystem provided a rich natural environment producing spiritual and physical sustenance for the Tlingit, and profitable resources for European colonists and Americans, all of which continue to attract residents and visitors today.

Special Mandates and Administrative Commitments

Loan Agreements

Sitka National Historical Park has various loan agreements with clans, tribal entities, and individuals wherein the NPS agrees to provide museum care for cultural artifacts of great value which are still in use by the Tlingit people. These agreements also allow the NPS the privilege of displaying and interpreting these artifacts for general benefit of the American people.

Use of the Russian Bishop's House by the Orthodox Church of America

Through an agreement, the Orthodox Church of America continues to use the Russian Bishop's House NHL for ceremonial purposes. As part of this agreement, specific items having not only historical and cultural value but also special religious significance to the Church, and that are in current use, are on permanent loan to the NPS. The loan shall continue as long as the Russian Bishop's House is a historical site and the church permitted to hold religious services in the chapel. The NPS has full curatorial responsibility for the artifacts.

Russian Bishop's House National Historic Landmark (National Register Number: 66000025)

The Russian Bishop's House is designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL). The NHL includes the two-story log structure of Russian vernacular design that served as the administrative headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sitka and the official residence of the Bishop (1843-72, 1903-69), as well as office, mission school, and personal chapel of the first bishop of Alaska. It is among the best surviving examples of a 19th-century Russian residence in the United States.

Participants

Sitka National Historical Park

Chad Corey, Chief Ranger
Samantha Cox, Ranger
June Degnan, Ranger
Ana Dittmar, Chief of Resources
Carin Farley, Protection Ranger
Jon Fish, Ranger
Eric Hayden, Ranger
Michael Johnson, Maintenance
Dusty Kidd, Administrative Officer
Anne Lankenau, Ranger
Randy Larson, Superintendent
Becky Latanich, Chief of Interpretation
Ralph Moll, IT Specialist
Joshua Montanai, Ranger
John Rouse, Maintenance
Craig Smith, Biologist
Kelly Smitherman, Education Specialist
Annette Talerico, Facility Services Assistant
Sue Thorsen, Museum Curator
Michael Trainor, Chief of Maintenance
Clarence Wadkins, Ranger
Tami Weissberg, Administrative Support Assistant

Alaska Regional Office

Zach Babb, Planner
Carin Vadala, Planner

Appendix A – Legislation

Appendix A includes the legislation related to the purpose of Sitka National Historical Park.



Sitka National Historical Park has been an integral part of the local community since its establishment in 1890.

A Public Park in Sitka, Proclamation Unknown, June 21st, 1890

“The tract of land bounded on the west by the line as established by the survey made for the Presbyterian Mission, and along the shore line of the Bay at low tide to the mouth of Indian River, and across the mouth of said river and along its right bank for an average width of 500 feet, along said bank to the point known as Indian River Falls, and also on the left bank of said river from said Falls, an average width of 200 feet, from said Falls to the eastern line or boundary as shown on the Mission plat, for a public park.”

Enacted by Benjamin Harrison, as recommended by Interior, the US Navy, and the Territory of Alaska

Sitka National Monument, Proclamation 959, March 21st, 1910

WHEREAS, within the limits of the public park created by proclamation June 21, 1890, near Sitka, Alaska, is located the decisive battle ground of the Russian conquest of Alaska in 1804, and also the site of the former village of the Kik-Siti tribe, the most warlike of the Alaskan Indians; and that here also are the graves of a Russian midshipman and six sailors, killed in the conflict, and numerous totem poles constructed by the Indians, which record the genealogical history of their several clans, and

WHEREAS, under the general laws of Alaska it has been found difficult to prevent vandalism within the reserved area,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, William H. Taft, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the power vested in me by Section two of the Act of Congress approved June 8, 1906, entitled, "An Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities", do hereby set aside, subject to any vested right, as the Sitka National Monument, a tract of land near Sitka, Alaska, situated within, or chiefly within, the public park which embraces the mouth of Indian River and adjacent territory, created by proclamation of June 21, 1890 the same being more definitely located and described as follows:

Beginning at corner No. 2 of the Presbyterian Mission site on the easterly side thereof; thence north twenty-four degrees, fifty-four minutes east, along the line of said mission tract, crossing Indian River, to a point seven chains and fifty-eight links from the right bank of said river; thence south forty two degrees east, thirty-three chains and eighty-five links, to a point north fifty-one degrees, thirty minutes east, ninety-one links from a post on high tide line designated "Haleys Initial Post"; thence south fifty-one degrees, thirty minutes west, crossing the mouth of Indian River to a pine tree on Indian Point; thence following the meanders of the high tide line of Sitka Bay southwesterly and northwesterly to the place of beginning; embracing approximately fifty-seven acres of land, as shown upon the diagram hereto attached and made a part of this proclamation.

Warning is hereby expressly given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure or destroy any feature of this National Monument, or to locate or settle upon any of the lands reserved by this proclamation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

DONE at the city of Washington this 23rd day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and thirty-fourth.

WM. H. TAFT

Sitka National Monument, Proclamation 2965, February 25th, 1952

WHEREAS errors have been discovered in the description of the area now constituting the Sitka National Monument, Alaska, as contained in Proclamation No. 959 of March 23, 1910 (36 Stat. 2601), establishing the said monument; and

WHEREAS a certain tract of land adjoining the said monument has been donated to the United States to provide a suitable entrance to the monument, and a certain tract of public land near the monument is needed for the administration thereof ; and

WHEREAS certain privately-owned lands adjoining the said monument are needed for the administration and protection thereof, and the United States desires to acquire such lands for such purposes and

WHEREAS it appears that it would be in the public interest to redefine the boundaries of the Sitka National Monument (1) to correct, the above-mentioned errors of description, (2) to add to the monument the said tract donated to the United States and the said tract of public land, and (3) to include within the boundaries of the monument the said privately-owned lands, with a view to making such lands parts of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, HARRY S. TRUMAN, President of the United States of America, under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by section 2 of the act of Congress approved June 8, 1906, 34 Stat. 225 (16 U. S. C. 431), do proclaim that, subject to valid existing rights, (1) the lands now owned by the United States within the exterior boundaries of the following-described tracts of land shown on the diagram attached hereto and hereby made a part hereof shall constitute the Sitka National Monument, and (2) the privately-owned lands within such boundaries shall become parts of the monument upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States:

The said Proclamation No. 959 of March 23, 1910, is amended accordingly.

Executive Order No. 8854 of August 16, 1941, reserving the lands comprising the said Tract No. 2 and other lands for the use of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Department of Commerce, as a magnetic and seismological observatory site, is hereby revoked as to the lands comprising the said Tract No. 2.

The Director of the National Park Service, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, shall have the supervision, management, and control of this monument, as provided in the act of August 25, 1916, ch. 408, 39 Stat. 535 (16 U. S. C. 1-3), and acts supplementary thereto or amendatory thereof.

Warning is hereby expressly given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this monument and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this 25th day of February in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and seventy-sixth.

HARRY S TRUMAN

Sitka National Monument, Public Law 92-501, October 18th, 1972

AN ACT

To authorize certain additions to the Sitka National Monument In the State of Alaska, and for other purposes.

Sitka National Monument, Alaska.

Additional lands; name change.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assemble, That in order to preserve in public ownership for the benefit and inspiration of present and future generations of Americans an area which illustrates a part of the early history of the United States by commemorating czarist Russia's exploration and colonization of Alaska, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to acquire by donation, purchase or exchange, for addition to the Sitka National Monument, the lands and interests therein, and improvements thereon, including the Russian mission, as generally depicted on the map entitled "Proposed Additions, Sitka National Monument, Sitka, Alaska" numbered 314—20,010—A, in two sheets, and dated September 1971, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Lands and interests in lands within such area owned by the State of Alaska or any political subdivision thereof may be acquired only by donation. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may erect permanent improvements on lands acquired by him from the State of Alaska for the purposes of this Act.

Administration.

SEC. 2. The Sitka National Monument is hereby redesignated as the Sitka National Historical Park, and it shall be administered, protected, and maintained by the Secretary in accordance with the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1, 2-4), as amended and supplemented, and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

Appropriation.

SEC. 3. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated not to exceed \$140,000 for land acquisition and \$691,000 (June 1971 prices) for development, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuations in construction costs as indicated by engineering cost indexes applicable to the types of construction involved herein.

Approved October 18 , 1972.