

Architects Designing Native Student Residence Hall

The needs of native Alaskan students who will leave their rural villages to attend the regional high school at Sitka are being studied sensitively by the architects designing their new residence hall.

The contract to write the

program and develop conceptual drawings for the residence hall was awarded to the Anchorage firm of Naramore, Bouillon, Skilling & Blomfield.

Both the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the architects are anxious to see that the needs

of the students are fully explored before plans are finalized. Two aspects of their approach to this assignment are unusual.

First, the architects will visit southeastern Alaskan villages to become familiar with the environment from which the students came. According to Charles Blomfield, Alaska natives have rarely had an opportunity to talk to the architects planning their housing.

Secondly, most of the actual work will be done in Sitka, with the architects conferring extensively with school board members, citizen groups and students.

During their first trip, scheduled for December, they will gather data and develop a program. Their second trip will be to develop conceptual drawings. The contract calls for completion of this phase in February.

One goal expressed by the Greater Sitka Borough School Board is to preserve worthwhile aspects of the students' village experience and culture, while at the same time introducing them to urban life.

The second goal, according to board president Charles Con-

way, is to create a residence hall with a home-like atmosphere, rather than an institutional one. There will be older "live-in" couples in the hall to act as houseparents.

Recreational facilities, individual study areas, some degree of privacy, and a cheerful use of color and design are specified in order to make the transition from village life to residence

hall as pleasant as possible.

The residence hall will house 192 students. It is part of the regional high school program introduced by Senator Mike Gravel when he was Speaker of the House in the Alaska legislature.

It enables Alaskan youth from rural areas to continue their education in their own region. The residence hall is a necessary adjunct of this program.