

WALTER KIRSCHBAUM FIBERGLASS KAYAK
Grand Canyon Boats
Grand Canyon National Park
Grand Canyon Village
Coconino County
Arizona

HAER AZ-85
HAER AZ-85

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

WALTER KIRSCHBAUM FIBERGLASS KAYAK

HAER No. AZ-85

Location:	Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon vicinity, Coconino County, Arizona Walter Kirschbaum's fiberglass kayak is located at latitude: 36.050189, longitude: -112.132891. The point represents the building housing the Grand Canyon National Park Museum Collection. It was obtained from Google Earth on April 22, 2021, and there is no restriction on its release to the public.
Date of Construction:	late 1950s
Builder:	Walter and Ruth Kirschbaum
Original Owner:	Walter Kirschbaum
Present Owner:	National Park Service
Significance:	The fiberglass kayak is significant for its association with Walter Kirschbaum, who was the first kayaker to paddle through all the rapids of the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon. He accomplished this milestone in June 1960.
Description:	The 14' long kayak has a 1'-10" beam. ¹ Kirschbaum wanted the strength of fiberglass but also a lightweight boat. He accomplished this by building a boat with a fiberglass bottom and a canvas top. The canvas was kept secure and taut by a wood gunnel rail placed along the perimeter of the kayak. The canvas shows signs of repairs with stitching and application of canvas patches. Unlike modern kayaks, Kirschbaum's kayak does not have a seat.
History:	Walter Kirschbaum, originally from West Germany, won a gold medal at the 1953 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. He emigrated to the United States in 1957 and shortly thereafter he and his wife, Ruth, built the kayak in the attic of their Denver home. Kirschbaum had difficulty obtaining the necessary permit to kayak the Colorado as the National Park Service had banned kayaking in the park. Finally, the NPS relented but before they would grant him a permit, he had to first kayak Cataract

¹ Walter Kirschbaum Fiberglass Kayak has been accessioned as Catalog No. GRCA 50581.

Canyon, which he accomplished. Kirschbaum then completed the Colorado River run from Lee's Ferry to Lake Mead in six days in June 1960. He tragically died in 1972 after falling in his bathtub and drowning.²

The boat was stored in Grand Canyon National Park's Museum Collection large object room from 1999 to September 2011. It was then moved to the Maintenance Warehouse until December 2013, and finally, along with the park's historic boat collection, relocated to a new storage area in the Powell Building.

Sources:

The report is based on information from the Grand Canyon Museum Collection and the following additional sources.

Martin, Tom. "Chapter 13 1960 Kirschbaum Kayak." On Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/482381953>, accessed April 2021.

Webb, Dennis. "Remembering a river forerunner." *The Aspen Times*, February 28, 2007. Available online at <https://www.aspentimes.com/news/remembering-a-river-forerunner/>, accessed April 2021.

Project**Information:**

Walter Kirschbaum's fiberglass kayak was documented as part of the Historic American Engineering Record's Maritime Recording Program. The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) is part of Heritage Documentation Programs, a division of the National Park Service. Todd Croteau, HAER Architect, served as project manager. Ryan Pierce produced the measured drawings in 2012. Grand Canyon National Park staff provided information for the historical report, which was formatted by Justine Christianson, HAER Historian, in 2021.

² Dennis Webb, "Remembering a river forerunner," *The Aspen Times*, February 28, 2007, available online at <https://www.aspentimes.com/news/remembering-a-river-forerunner/>, accessed April 2021; Tom Martin, "Chapter 13 1960 Kirschbaum Kayak," on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/482381953>, accessed April 2021.

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Photos taken in the storage warehouse.

INDEX TO BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

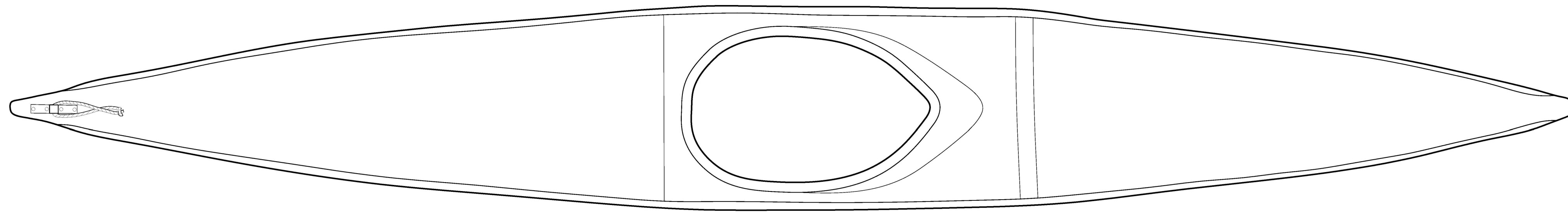
Michael C Quinn, photographer, 2012

AZ-85-1	Starboard side elevation.
AZ-85-2	Port side elevation.
AZ-85-3	Top view.
AZ-85-4	Bottom view.
AZ-85-5	3/4 view from the bow looking aft along the starboard side.
AZ-85-6	3/4 view from astern looking forward along the port side.
AZ-85-7	Detail of cockpit opening from the top view.
AZ-85-8	Detail of bottom.

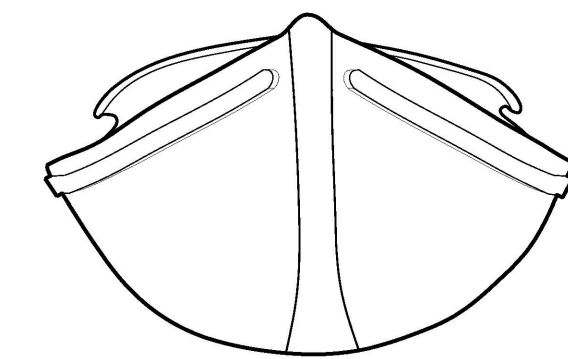
Walter Kirschbaum Fiberglass Kayak

Colorado River Boat

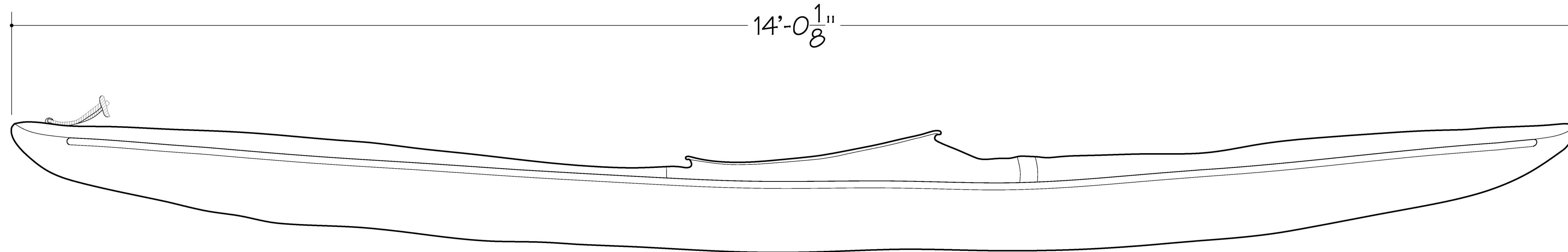
Plan/Elevations



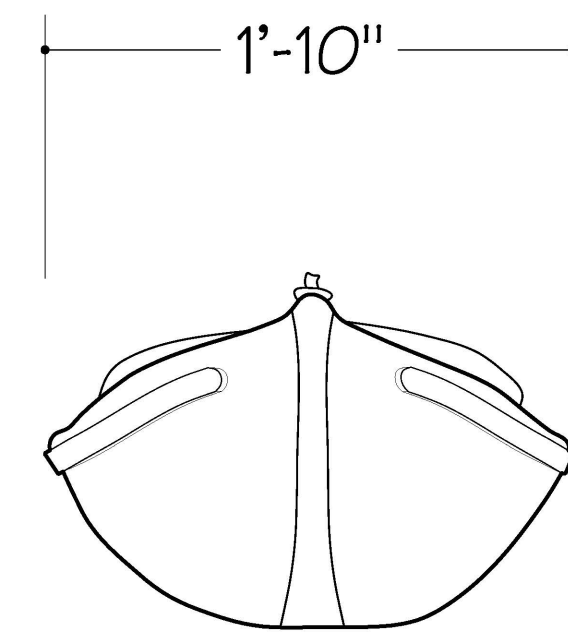
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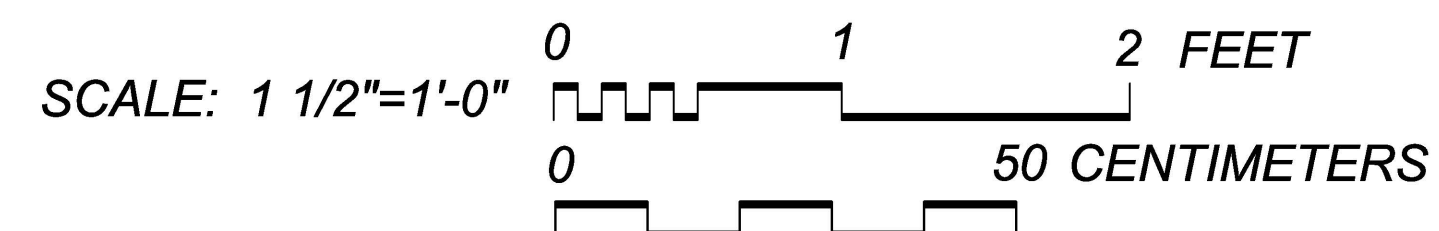
Bow Elevation



Starboard Profile



Stern Elevation

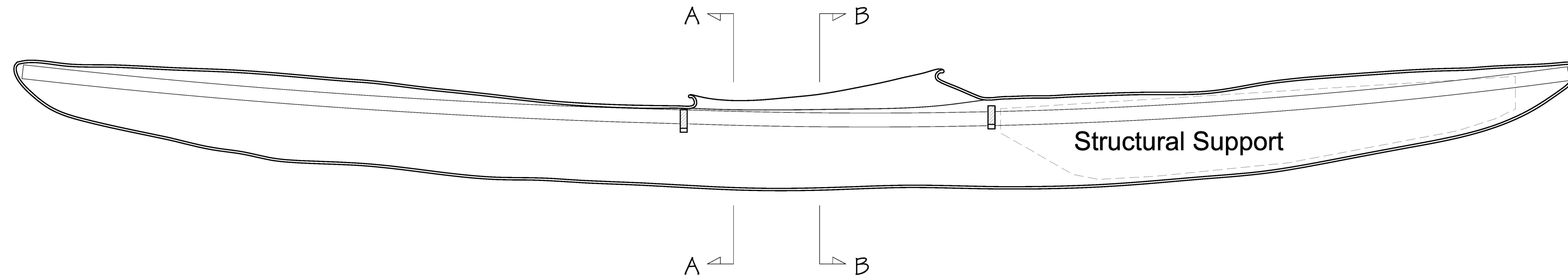


Note: The boat is constructed of fiberglass and has been drawn based on existing conditions with deformations.

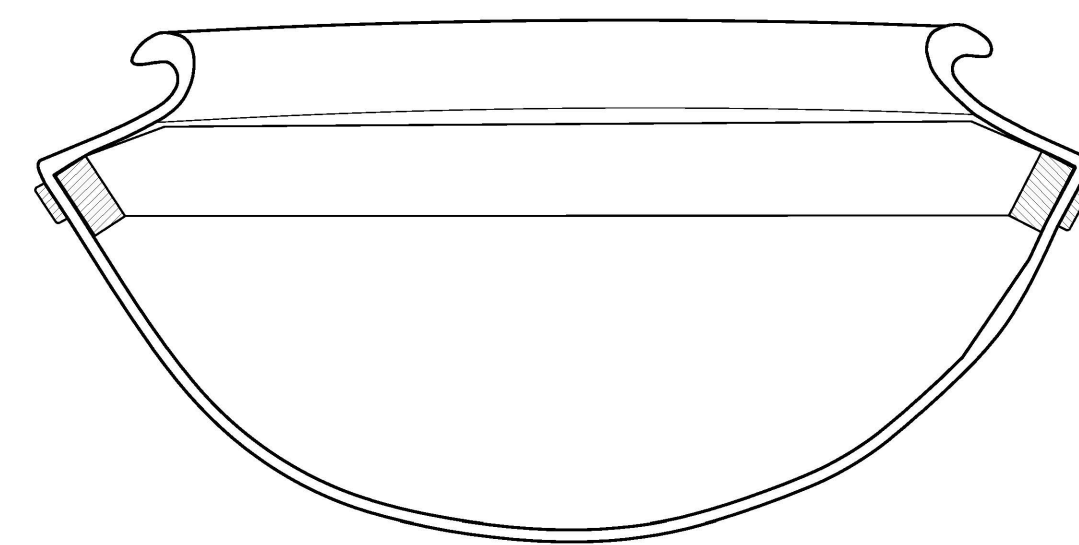
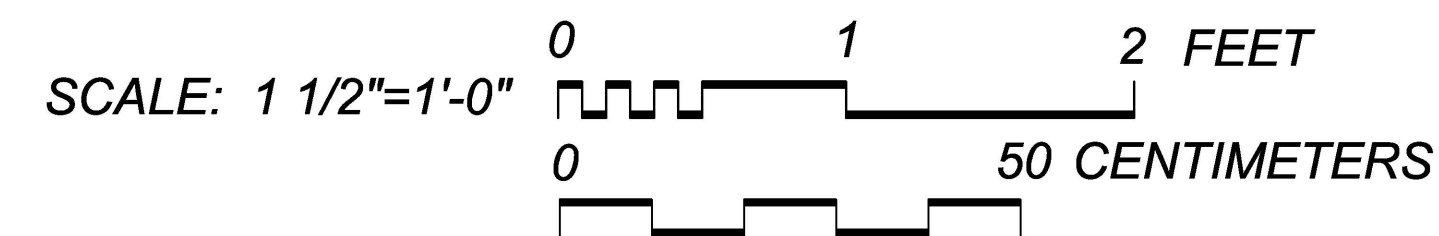
Walter Kirschbaum Fiberglass Kayak

Colorado River Boat

Inboard Profile/Sections

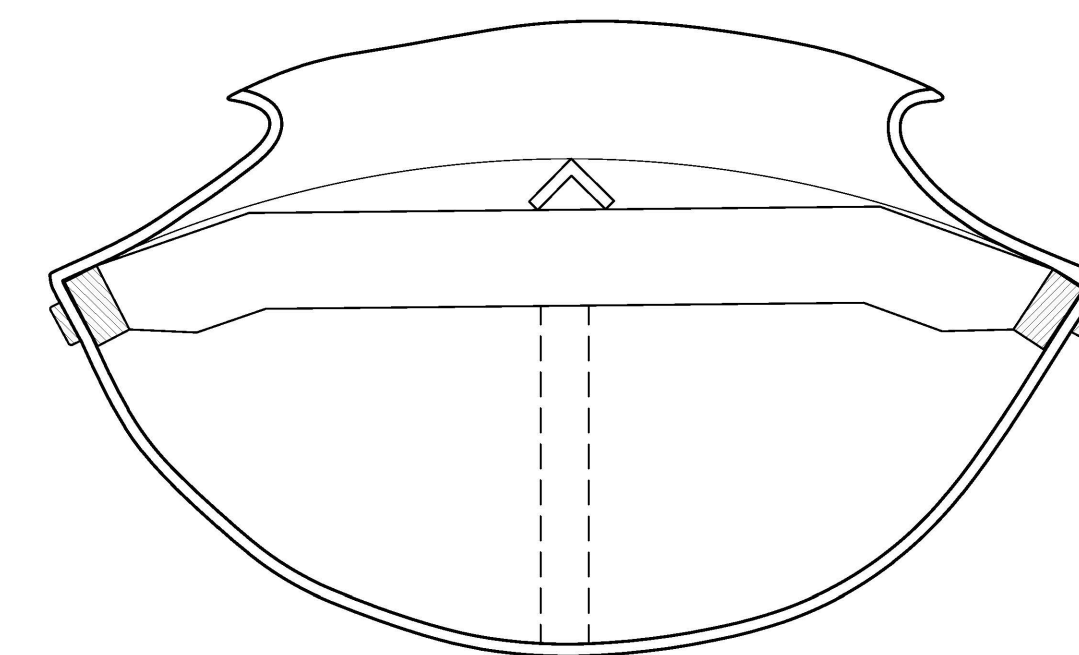
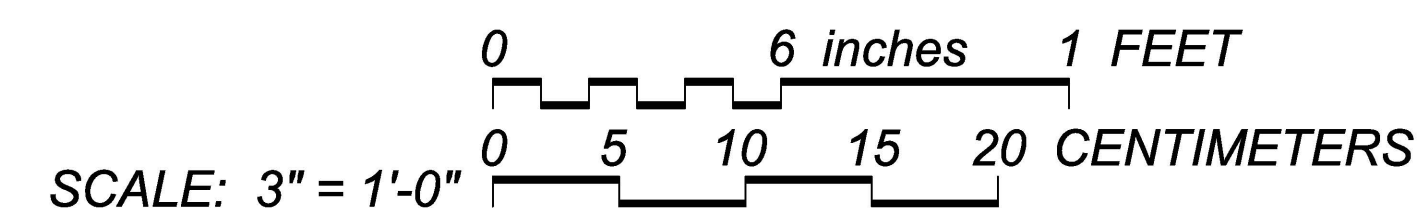


Inboard Profile



Section A-A

Looking Aft



Section B-B

Looking Forward

Note: The boat is constructed of fiberglass and has been drawn based on existing conditions with deformations.

Walter Kirschbaum Fiberglass Kayak

Colorado River Boat

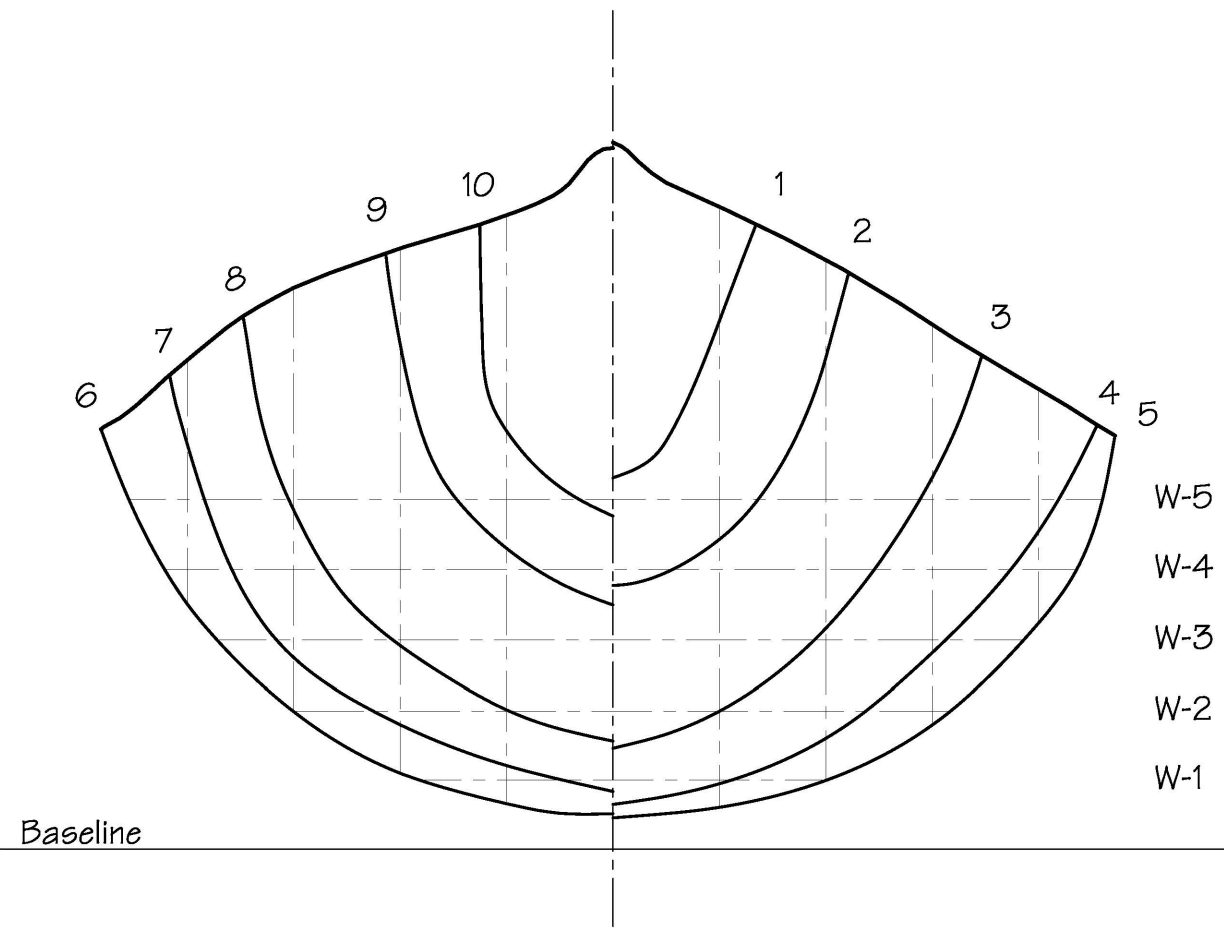
Lines

Table of Offsets

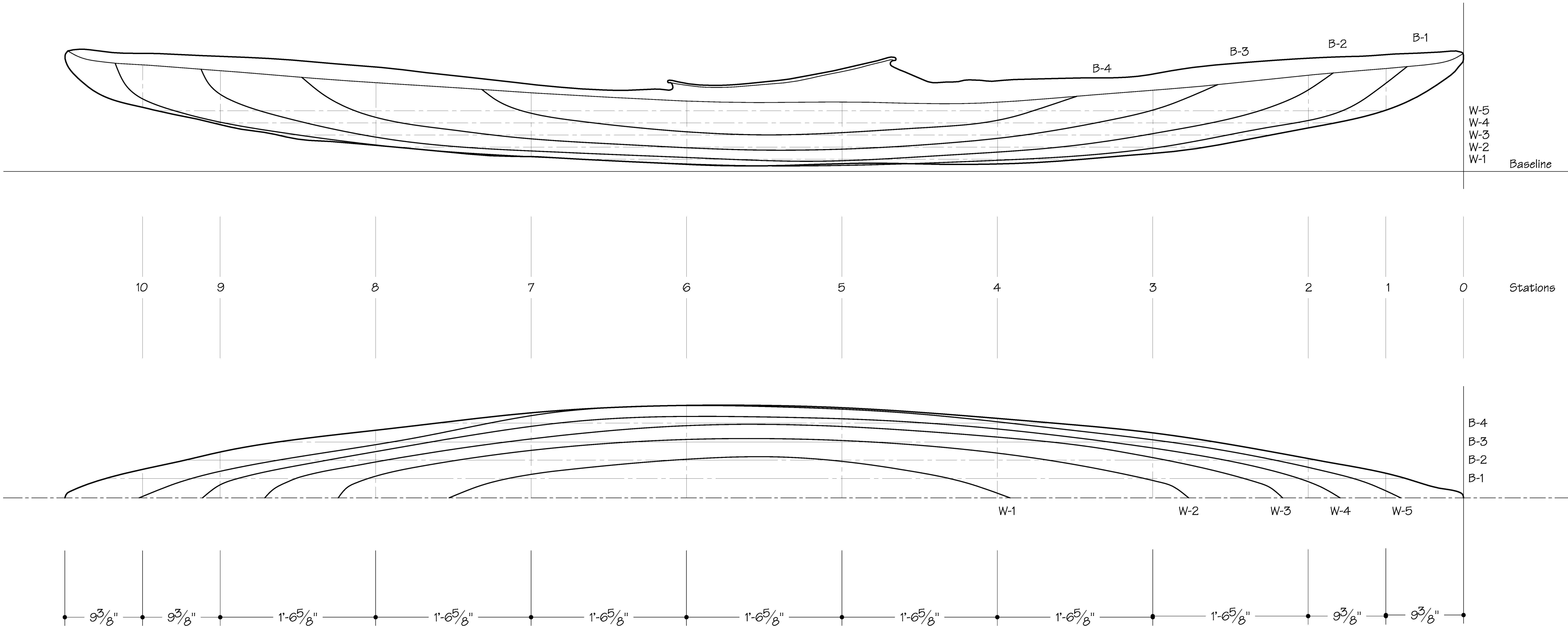
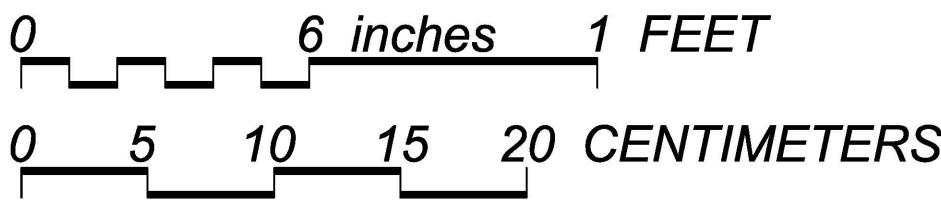
Offsets in Feet-Inches-Eighths Offsets are to outside of skin

Stations		0.000	1.000	2.000	3.000	4.000	5.000	6.000	7.000	8.000	9.000	10.000
X-Positions		0- 0-0	0- 9-3	1- 6-5	3- 2-8	4- 8-0	6- 2-5	7- 9-3	9- 4-0	10- 10-6	12- 5-4	13- 2-6
Heights Above Baseline	Buttock 0- 0-0											
	Buttock 0- 2-2		0-11-0	0-6-4	0-2-7	0-1-3	0-7-0	0-7-0	0-1-6	0-2-7	6-2-0	0-8-6
	Buttock 0- 4-4			0-10-2	0-4-5	0-2-3	0-1-4	0-1-5	0-2-4	0-4-2	0-10-5	
	Buttock 0- 6-6				0-7-6	0-4-1	0-2-5	0-2-7	0-3-7	0-7-1		
	Buttock 0- 9-0					0-6-5	0-4-6	0-5-1	0-8-3			
Halfbreadths From Centerline	Sheer	1- 2-1	1- 0-3	0- 11-4	0- 9-6	0- 8-3	0- 8-3	0- 8-4	0- 9-3	0- 10-5	1- 0-1	1- 0-6
	WL 0- 1-4					0- 2-4	0- 4-4	0- 4-0	0- 1-4			
	WL 0- 3-0				0- 2-2	0- 5-2	0- 7-0	0- 6-6	0- 5-1			
	WL 0- 4-4				0- 4-2	0- 6-7	0- 8-4	0- 8-2	0- 7-1			
	WL 0- 6-0			0- 1-2	0- 5-4	0- 8-3	0- 9-6	0- 9-3	0- 8-0	0- 1-5		
	WL 0- 7-4			0- 3-0	0- 6-3	0- 9-2	0- 10-2	0- 10-1	0- 8-4	0- 3-2	0- 0-6	
	Sheer		0- 3-0	0- 5-0	0- 6-6	0- 10-0	0- 10-4	0- 10-6	0- 9-7	0- 11-0	0- 4-6	0- 2-6

NOTES: Lines were taken from a LEICA ScanStation pointcloud. Lines were drawn "as is" with minimal or no fairing. The vessel orientation is shown in situ in its storage cradle, actual waterline is unknown.

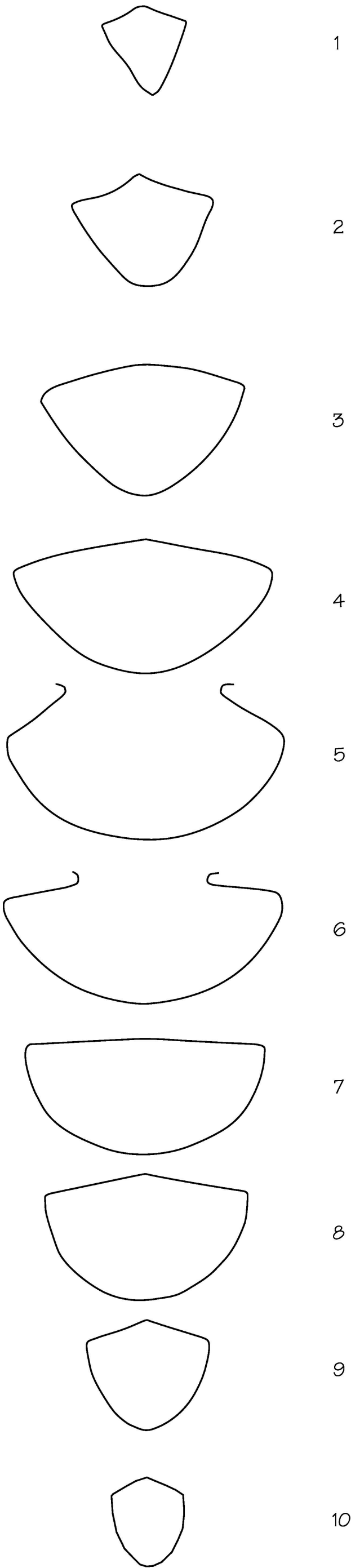


SCALE: 3" = 1'-0"

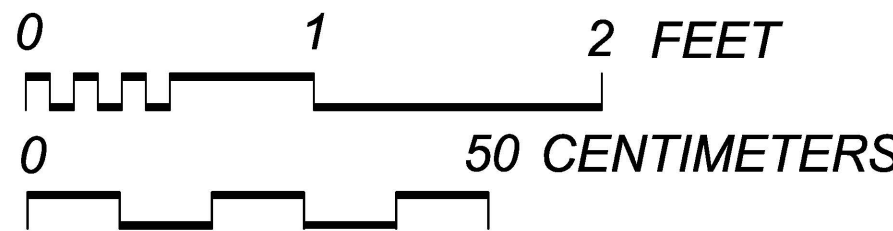


Note: The boat is constructed of fiberglass and has been drawn based on existing conditions with deformations.

Sections at Stations



SCALE: 1 1/2"=1'-0"



DELINEATED BY: JEREMY MAURO, 2012

HAER MARITIME
RECORDING PROGRAM
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

GRAND CANYON VICINITY

WALTER KIRSCHBAUM FIBERGLASS KAYAK
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK
COCONINO COUNTY

ARIZONA

SHEET
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HISTORIC AMERICAN
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