

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH050282 / DATA SHEET
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 22 1977
DATE ENTERED MAR 30 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC ****** See House (AHRS SITE NO. SIT-195)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

611 Lincoln Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Sitka

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Alaska

VICINITY OF

Alaska, at Large

CODE
02

COUNTY

Sitka Division

CODE
220

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT
 BUILDING
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mrs. Clyde Tennant, Senior Warden (907) 747-3503

STREET & NUMBER

St. Peters Church, P.O. Box 1156

CITY, TOWN

Sitka

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska 99835

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 910

CITY, TOWN

Sitka

STATE

Alaska 99835

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)

DATE

March 7, 1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99501

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

Let's build 11/3/76 see plus

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This house was designed and built to complement St. Peter's-By-the-Sea. It was designed to be Gothic in appearance, though not in construction principles. The first Bishop of Alaska, Peter Trimble Rowe, drew his conception for the house in the fall of 1898, at the same time he drew sketches of his conception of what St. Peter's should be. Architectural plans for the house appear to have been executed by Philadelphia architect H. L. Duhring, Jr., at the expense, and as a benefaction, of George C. Thomas, of Philadelphia. The house was not built in 1899, when the church was built, due, apparently, to lack of funds.

The shape of the house is an almost irregular rectangle, with bays jutting out to the west from the side walls, to take advantage of the view over Beach Road (now Lincoln Street) to the harbor and the sea. The building is set upon a solid foundation which appears to be primarily of concrete or cement. The basement was used from its earliest days for classrooms, meetings, and other church functions, as it is today. The main second floors have the exposed timber appearance of a Gothic mansion, lightened by large windows on all sides which illumine the basically good proportions of the rooms and provide an aura of natural illumination providing welcome leaven to the otherwise somber cast of the design. There is a large kitchen and pantry, and oversize living, dining and family rooms, all of which appear to have been designed with a view to their uses as functional elements of the church organization for St. Peter's, and as the headquarters for the Episcopal Church in Alaska, as well as the home of the Bishop's family. The second floor has a bath, three bedrooms, and the Bishop's study.

Since the house functions now as the Rectory for St. Peter's Church, and the church is now between Rectors, the house is being used now only for church business, and the family bedrooms are unoccupied and unfurnished. The study on the second floor, is, however, partially furnished. The last Rector had the room redecorated somewhat garishly. This should be considered for return to the period of Peter Trimble Rowe, which could be done in the course of normal redecoration for an incoming Pastor.

The attic is a full finished floor which has been used at various times for day classes and Sunday school classes, and is used still for storage of church records. In one place in the attic are personal records and possessions of Peter Trimble Rowe, apparently placed here at the time of his burial in 1942 on the lawn of St. Peter's Church. These artifacts include personal reference books, including a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica, his personal portable piano organ, and apparently a quantity of his personal notes and diaries -- all of them of great potential as archival and historical documents and museum artifacts.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1905

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

H. L. Duhring, Jr. from design
by Peter Trimble Rowe; built by

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Peter Trimble Rowe

This building is significant as the home and headquarters of Bishop Peter Trimble Rowe, the First Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, which he conceived in his own mind, built with his own hands, and from whence he went forth on seven of his approximately 46 journeys, often alone, to the far north and west reaches of the Alaskan sub-continent, building and staffing hospitals, libraries and schools, and establishing mission churches on the last American frontier.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Peter Trimble Rowe was the first Episcopal Bishop of Alaska. In April 1896 he established his headquarters at Sitka, found quarters for his family, and left immediately for the interior to see for himself what it was he must do in his newly accepted charge. He traveled over the Chilkat Trail to the Yukon, transporting his own dunnage and building his own boats, as necessary -- two years before the Klondike gold stampede. He early established that he would be a leading missionary in fact to both Alaskan Natives and to Sourdoughs -- as well as in name. During the ensuing years that he served -- from 1895 until his death in 1942 -- he made approximately 46 such journeys between southeastern Alaska, the length of the Yukon River, north to Nome, and west to the Aleutians, often all in the same trip. He established and staffed hospitals, libraries, and schools, and established mission churches to serve the needs of both the Natives and the incoming Sourdoughs. He worked tirelessly to create a bridge for the Natives between their past and their future, and to provide aid and succor to the Sourdough hordes who often mindlessly descended upon the vast wilderness unprepared to cope with its relentless demands upon the human mind and body. He was the Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, but he was also, to the rest of the country, the Bishop from Alaska, becoming a nationally celebrated figure, based upon his accomplishments in Alaska and the effectiveness with which he carried his message of need to the Eastern establishment of the church and of the government, and to the press. Over the 47 years of his service to Alaska he repeatedly rebuffed attempts to transfer him to elevated positions of authority and honor in the church at places of far less demand upon his physical powers.

The fame and honors bestowed upon Bishop Rowe are legion, and a brief account of them must inevitably fall short of any adequate treatment. What is important here is that the house he built represents one of the few physical legacies of his work that remain as he created them.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

0,8	48,0	150	6323-000
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	

B

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Not Applicable

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Alfred Mongin, Architectural Historian

and

Isabel Miller (907) 747-3405
P.O. Box 1672
Sitka, Alaska 99835

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

619 Warehouse Avenue, Suite 210

TELEPHONE

(907) 274-4676

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99501

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William M. Hanover

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

Aug 10, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles W. Cole

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3.30.78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3.10.78

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On the inside the house design appears very busy. Its very design element conveys a place of activity, which is what Bishop Rowe intended to convey. The main floor, with its ceiling beams and exposed timbers conveys strength and durability. The second floor, on the other hand, provides relief from this busyness, even though it continues the same basic designs. This different environment on the second floor, which was the only place in the house reserved exclusively for his family, as well as the location of his study, provides a measure of the success of the Bishop's conception for his house, in relation to his needs for his family's measure of privacy away from his public activities, and for his own need for a haven in which to do his writing and planning for the massive tasks he continually undertook.

The exterior is now partially exposed field stone, but is mostly sheathed in shingles. Study is required to determine whether this is in keeping with the original appearance, but would, in any event, not require major alteration. The window frames and woodwork, inside and out, are full and heavy, through appropriately in keeping with the Gothic atmosphere created by the conception of the building. The house is capped by a roof designed in a series of broken line forms, hips at east and west ends, and a gable facing the (south) front, giving, once again, a great bustle and busyness to the design and presenting an effect of massiveness which belies the relatively modest overall proportions of the building.

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Since funds were adequate in 1899 to build only St. Peter's Church, he deferred construction of the See House, for which he already had architect's plans, based upon his conception for the house. In 1905, while Mrs. Rowe was in Victoria for the first of a series of operations, the Bishop stayed in Sitka, rather than journeying to the interior, and he occupied himself with building the See House. It was at that time apparently, that the site was purchased from Peter Panamarkoff or his estate, as the adjoining church property had been purchased earlier. Bishop Rowe described his work on the house:

"Mrs. Rowe has left Sitka for Victoria for medical treatment. I am alone, not a new experience. I get my own meals and keep the new house progressing to a finish. I find it hard after using the trowel or plane, shovel or hammer, wheelbarrow or paint brush, lifting and placing rocks all day, to handle easily or conveniently at night so small an article as a pen. Building this house is a pretty difficult contract in Sitka, owing to the scarcity of good workmen and the long delayed shipments of materials. While the house is going to be the most complete thing of the kind in Alaska, yet it ties me down, and will do so until November. Then I shall hang up the trowel and the hoe and be off to the work that is calling loudly for me. I shall have to hit the trail this winter."

In addition to creating the house he had earlier envisioned, his work of that summer solved the problem of lack of money for construction. It also probably served him well in his concern for the health of his beloved wife, who lived only 12 years longer. Their attachment to this place is evidenced in that upon his death 37 years later they were both reinterred here in the lawn of St. Peter's Church.

After the house was completed, the family occupied it for seven years. In 1912, with the transfer of the major resources of the capital of Alaska to Juneau, Sitka declined in importance. Access to ships which Bishop Rowe needed to set out on his annual pilgrimages to the Bering Sea, the Yukon, and the Aleutians, became unavailable, except by journeying first to Seattle. This, in addition, the increasing need of Mrs. Rowe for constant medical attention, decided a move of the See from Sitka to Seattle. The See House, while retaining that name, became the home of the resident clergyman of St. Peter's Church, rather than the actual headquarters of the Bishop of Alaska. Ultimately, of course, the See was relocated in Fairbanks, where it is now.

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There are many fine houses in Sitka, and also in other communities in Alaska. However, this is the only house in all Alaska, conceived and built by one who stands among the foremost humanitarian figures in the history of the Territory and state. Its design was unusual and was his own unique contribution. The construction was unusual, and was his own unique contribution. The years between 1905 and 1912 when Bishop Rowe and his family occupied the house were seminal years for the Territory, for the development of the large number of hospitals, clinics, libraries, schools, orphanages, and mission churches, that he located, instigated, staffed, and nurtured; and they, too, were his unique contribution. For that period of time this house stands as his homeplace, the home to which he returned, planned for the future, and then set out again for journeys which in number, length, and difficulty, are yet unequalled by any man in the modern history of Alaska as a Territory or a state.

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Willoughby, Barrett, Sitka, Portal to Romance. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1930.