

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received JUN 16 1987

date entered JUL 16 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Seward Depot (AHRS SITE NO. SEW-001)

and/or common Seward Station

2. Location

street & number 501 Railway Avenue not for publication

city, town Seward vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county Seward code 122

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Seward

street & number P.O. Box 167

city, town Seward vicinity of state Alaska 99664

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Seward Recording District (3rd Judicial District)

street & number State of Alaska, P.O. Box 596

city, town Seward state Alaska 99664

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alaska Heritage Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1971 federal state county local

depository for survey records Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001

city, town Anchorage state Alaska 99510-7001

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date 1928

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

"Terminal depot will be modern in all respects" - See map the building of the W.C.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.6

Quadrangle name Seward (A-7)

Quadrangle scale 1:63 360

UTM References

A

0	6	3	6	4	3	8	10	6	6	4	2	10	15
Zone		Easting				Northing							

B

Zone		Easting				Northing							

C

Zone		Easting				Northing							

D

Zone		Easting				Northing							

E

Zone		Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing							

G

Zone		Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of Seward Depot is shown in red on the accompanying plat map entitled "City of Seward Waterfront Tracts, September 1, 1969." It is roughly 100' x 30' in size.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Carberry

organization Planning and Preservation Services

date September 14, 1986

street & number 3424 Old Muldoon Road

telephone (907) 337-2202

city or town Anchorage

state Alaska 99504

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

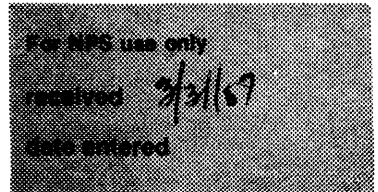
national state local

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.

[Handwritten signature]

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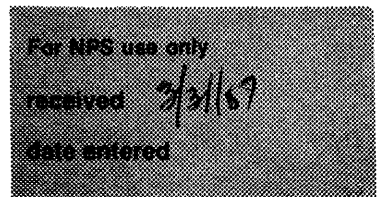
The Iditarod National Historic Trail: Resource Inventories. Iditarod National
Historic Trail Project Office, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 4700 East 72nd
Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99504, 1982.

Determined Eligible: Yes
Federal

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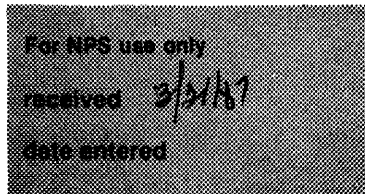
freight and baggage room. The office was finished in bead board and plaster, with an interior counter that ran around the room to the frosted glass ticket window with its bronzed grille. The equipment to control signals on track was built under the counter with semaphore leavers within reach of the station master. Even the rest-rooms were finished with bead board and plaster, and had latticed doors on the stalls. The freight room was finished in shiplap on the walls and ceilings. The doors throughout the building all show the Craftsman attention to detail in their design. Six interior doors have five panels and two light transom, and four exterior doors show a wood panel below a plate glass sash with carefully-lettered signs. Even in the utilitarian freight room, the two, tracked, double freight doors each contain three bead board panels with handsome six-light transoms. Five eight-light transoms are located around the room to provide natural light. The elegant fixed dormer windows contain three banks of three lights each.

The building is virtually the same today as it was in 1917. The freight doors have been removed and the original opening closed. Both door frames are, however, intact; one is visible. The exterior has been painted blue, and the original shingle roofing was replaced with asphalt shingles and metal sheeting at the roof-line--a standard practice in Alaska to prevent building-up of ice on overhanging roofs. The minor loss of the freight doors does not detract from the integrity of the structure; sufficient detail is given in the blueprints to reconstruct them, if needed. The painted exterior, also a reversible measure, does not damage the historic fabric of the building, and provides temporary protection against the elements. The new shingles match the original ones in size, color, and texture. They were installed to provide fire protection for the frame building. A small, square, frame hut has been placed under the eaves of the roof, outside the passenger lobby. It is a temporary building, and not permanently connected to the depot. The hut's siding and corner boards are similar to the shiplap siding found on the depot. This accretion does not attempt to imitate the larger depot and is clearly a modern insert.

The depot was moved in 1928 following the Alaska Railroad's completion of new dock facilities at the foot of Fifth Avenue. To provide efficient passenger and freight transfer, the railroad moved the structure from its original location at Adams Street to the new maritime gateway. Today the depot maintains its long-time association with transportation. The 1964 Earthquake brought havoc to Seward's maritime activities, almost demolishing the freight and ferry terminals. Given the need for a ferry terminal facility, and the decline in railroad passenger operations, the depot was placed in service as the new passenger office for the Alaska Marine Highway system. Refreshingly, both its original interior and exterior architectural details have been preserved.

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Reorganized as the Alaska Northern in 1909, the rail line reached Kern Creek, 72 miles from Seward, before going bankrupt. Company creditors envisioned purchase by the federal government as their financial salvation as early as 1911. Hope of such a purchase surfaced during the Taft administration when the first of two federal commissions was sent to the territory to study Alaska railroad development. The Alaska Railroad Commission, or the Taft Commission as it was commonly known, recommended in January 1913 two routes from tidewater to the interior: one embracing the route of the Copper River & Northwestern, the other as an extension of the Alaska Northern. With Taft's lame duck status, a decision was not made. In 1914, Congress passed a bill to "locate, construct and operate a railroad in the Territory of Alaska." President Wilson was authorized to appoint a commission and select a route. He selected William C. Edes, a M.I.T. engineering graduate with 30 years of railroad locating and construction experience, as chairman of the Alaska Engineering Commission (AEC).

Joining Edes on the commission were Frederick J. Mears, a U.S. Army officer, and Thomas J. Riggs, who had been the chief surveyor for the Alaska Boundary Commission. After extensive reconnaissance during the summer of 1914, the commission submitted its report to Wilson. The President selected the so-called western route which embraced the Alaska Northern. Seward was the initial headquarters for the AEC. The depot at Seward was constructed in 1917 when passenger and freight service began. By 1923 the railroad connected Seward with the major community in interior Alaska, Fairbanks. President Warren G. Harding came west to demonstrate his concern for the western U.S. interests and to dedicate the railroad which had become a major Interior Department project.

Harding arrived at Seward on July 13, 1923. The presidential party used the railroad depot to greet Seward residents. The Seward Gateway of July 14 described the scene: "Following this ceremony (Harding's address at the Odd Fellows Hall) the President and Mrs. Harding walked to the train, shaking hands and chatting with Seward citizens. Arriving at the station, a half hour was spent in mingling with the vast crowd, both the President and Mrs. Harding giving all who wished a chance to snap their pictures."

Following this cordiality, the Hardings proceeded up the line with the President enjoying the comfort of what is now called the Harding Car (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) on July 15. At Nenana, Harding drove the golden spike in place marking completion of the Alaska Railroad. Nenana is the site of Seward Depot's "sister station." (That station, built in the early 1920s, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.) These two stations are among the eight established along the 460-mile railroad; towns were few and far between in the northern frontier. Of the eight, the Wasilla (1917), Nenana, and Seward depots are the only original stations that survive. Those at Anchorage, Broad Pass, McKinley Park (the relocated Windy Station Depot), College, and Fairbanks stations have been lost.

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Brown, Charles Michael. The Alaska Railroad: Probing the Interior. Anchorage: Alaska Division of Parks, 1975.

Clifford, Howard. Rails North: the Railroads of Alaska and the Yukon. Montana: Pictorial Histories, 1981.

Fitch, Edwin M. The Alaska Railroad. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967.

Prince, Bernadine. The Alaska Railroad. 2 volumes. Anchorage: Ken Wray Printing, 1969.

Seward Gateway, April - October 1917, and July 1923.

Wilson, William H. Railroad in the Clouds: The Alaska Railroad in the Age of Steam, 1914-1945. Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1977.