

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED

AUG 29 1977

DATE ENTERED

JAN 31 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Mills House (AHRS SITE NO. SIT-189)

AND/OR COMMON

May Mills House; Rose Hill

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

315 Seward Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Sitka

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Alaska, at large

STATE

Alaska

CODE
02

COUNTY

Sitka District

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

Mr. and Mrs. David Knapp

(907) 747-8048

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 746

CITY, TOWN

Sitka

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska 99835

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

District 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 ___ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Drive, Suite 210

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99501

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of this building dominates the downtown section of Sitka from a hillock which provides a view over the top of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral southward to the Harbor and the sea. This is a handsome rectangular cottage, consisting of a full basement set in a foundation lined by concrete block and concrete, and two living floors, surmounted by a medium gabled roof with twin dormers front and back. Fenestration in the attic and decoration at the front provide this building with identity as a Federal-type structure.

The basement is full and deep, with overall measurements of forty two and one-half feet in width and thirty five feet in depth. The basement is half in the ground and half above ground so that it is illuminated by a series of transom-type windows all around, four on each side wall, and a pair each at the front and back walls.

rectangular

The body of the house is the front seven and one-half feet of the basement being surmounted by a one-story glass enclosed sun porch, providing an outstanding porch area that takes advantage of the view from the site. In this way the architect appears to have solved the problem of providing an area useful to the house which also took advantage of the view. The fenestration of the sun porch consists of a series of glassed-in panels, each containing twenty small panes of glass, with the center doorway panel two panes wider, to provide a side-light panel in imitation of a squared-off version of a classic Federal style door light.

The squared-off two story body of the house is lighted all around by a series of double-hung windows, with each upper sash of eight small panes and lower sashes of one-piece glass. There are four upper and four lower window openings on each side wall, with the placement of windows on the front and back walls balanced to comport with the front and back entranceways and to balance Federal-type decorative features.

Above the main cube of the house it is capped by an attic under a medium dormer roof that provides the central design element of the house. The peak of the roof line centers on the lateral centerline of the basement, not on the centerline of the two living floors, with the front overhang of the roof paralleling the front line of the basement and the front porch. Extending up through the glassed-in front porch wall up to the front line of the roof are a series of four pillars, representing the traditional Federal-style portico or veranda. These are square, but probably originally were round in shape. The roof cornices are boxed and plain, and the frieze and the belting between the first and second floors are unadorned. A major design element of the exterior of the house consists of four matching sets of Palladian windows, one at each end of the attic, under the eaves, and one each set into dormers, front and back. Under the fan light in each of these sets is a balanced set of four double hung small windows, the outer pairs one-half wider than the inner pair, providing balance and scale to the design. Squared-off reflexive continuation of the attic front Palladian window

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input 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	1911-1913	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Clyde A. Maclaren, Seattle, Wash. Architect
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house is significant for its architectural conception and execution, an example of early Twentieth Century cottage architecture on a Federal-period model, effective adaptation of design to the site, incorporating innovations in the utility system which enhance the quality of life in the house, and providing pragmatic utilization of good design elements for a house whose qualities are both obvious and enduring.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

The home was designed for Miss May Mills by Seattle architect Clyde A. Maclaren in July of 1911. It was completed two years later, and Miss Mills lived here from 1913 to 1938. She was a member of the most important business family in Sitka at that time, and a sister of W. P. Mills, who built the lovely "Island Home" in Sitka for his wife, two years after May Mills occupied "Rose Hill". While Miss Mills apparently lived alone, she had many interests in the community, and utilized the spaciousness of her house to provide a home for orphaned children, and had as many as eight living with her at one time.

The large Balm of Giliad tree in the front yard was planted by Miss Mills soon after construction of the home. In a Daily Sitka Sentinel article Garrison Turner some time ago had this to say about the tree:

There is a so-called Balm of Giliad tree (very much like a cottonwood but a fancier name) growing on the May Mills property, now owned by others, which sends its roots hunting food almost all over the yard. In 1936 that tree had practically ruined the front grass, so that it was very difficult to mow because of the bumps, and hollows. I supervised taking up the sod and piling it for use later. The roots on top of the ground were cut, a good grade established and the sod laid back. We had a snowstorm before we were through, but the grass did not mind.

The tree still stands and has become a local landmark.

Miss Mills sold the home in 1938 to Mrs. Kate Banvard for \$4,500. Mrs. Banvard's residence was succeeded in 1960 by that of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Brodie. Dr. Brodie was a Sitka dentist. The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. David Knapp, purchased the property from the Brodies in the fall of 1972.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Knapp, David, "Residence at 315 Seward Street, Sitka, Alaska." 2 pages. Typescript. Report for the Sitka Chapter of the American Association of University Women. January 13, 1977.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	0 8	4 7 9	6 0 0	6 3 2 2-9 5 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
C					D			

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

May 16, 1977

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 Sheehan

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE Aug 12, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *Charles A. ...*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 1/31/78
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE 1/31/77

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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Mills House (AHRS SITE NO. SIT-189)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1 of 1

is continued in the design of the central front window of the second floor and the front entranceway, but these are obscured by the entryway and by the busyness of the porch enclosure, creating a severe disjointure in an otherwise effective employment of an attractive pattern. The result is a compromise which detracts somewhat from what might have been a clear statement of the architect's intentions. It is possible that the porch enclosure was an afterthought, at least in its present form.

Within, the living spaces are formed around a central squared stairwell, which ascends upward and into the attic through a trap door. The living spaces on the first and second floor have been renovated for use as one-family apartments on each floor, and by the installation of some modern conveniences. No major structural renovations have been made and no major changes have been made in the configuration of the interior walls. The attic is a finished and floored room unbroken by any partitions. It is not used for a living space, due to lack of a fire escape. The sensitivity of the present owner to the integrity of the building decided him against installing an exterior fire escape that would make this a revenue producing rental space. The room is made available to the apartment residents for social use, and is desirable both for its finish and for the superb view from the windows over the town and the harbor. By tradition the attic has been known as the "ballroom", but it is unlikely that the original owner used it for that purpose.

The interior woodwork and cabinetry of the house is of the same high quality found in many houses of Sitka during this period of time, one of the fine qualities recommending this house and other fine houses in Sitka as examples of fine wood craftsmanship.

The building contains two utility innovations that merit description. The ceiling light fixtures throughout are original from the date of construction, though some of the glass lenses are missing. The light fixtures were made, and equipped to illumine either carbide gas or electric light bulbs. The carbide gas generator has long since been removed, but the supply pipes are still in place as part of the building's utility system, and probably could be made operative again. Another major innovation in the original construction was the installation of a central vacuum cleaning system, with the main vacuum pump in the basement, and outlets in each room and hallway throughout the house. During the residence of its original owner, May Mills, a full-time gardner was employed, and the property was known -- due to its floreal adornment -- as "Rose Hill".