

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NOV 1987  
NPS/DOI

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Murray Apartments and Cottages

other name/site number: Murray Flats/Baranof Apartments  
200 Seward Cottage and 204 Seward Cottage  
AHRS Site Nos. SIT-208, SIT-209, SIT-210

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2. Location

=====

street & number: 200 Seward, 204 Seward, 206 Seward

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Sitka vicinity: N/A

state: AK county: Sitka code: 220 zip code: 99835

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: District

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Judith E. Butler
Signature of certifying official

Mar 16, 1992
Date

Alaska
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other (explain):

Autawieck Price 4/27/92
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic:	<u>Domestic</u>	Sub:	<u>Multiple dwelling</u>
	<u>Domestic</u>		<u>Single dwelling</u>
Current:	<u>Domestic</u>	Sub:	<u>Multiple dwelling</u>
	<u>Domestic</u>		<u>Single dwelling</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification: No style

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Wood shingle, metal  
 walls Wood shingle other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

The Murray Apartments and Cottages, constructed on their Sitka lots in 1921, are bounded to the north by Seward Street, to the east by American Street, and to the west by Barracks Street. The southern edge of the district abuts a vacant lot, fifty feet south of Seward Street. The three buildings (200 Seward, 204 Seward, and 206 Seward) are located on the edge of Sitka's central business district in an area with a mix of residential, commercial, and multi-family dwellings.

200 Seward Cottage (AHR Site No. SIT-208) is a one-and-one-half story frame cottage with a gable roof. Wood shingles sheath the building which has a poured concrete half basement at the rear of the building and a sloped crawl space under the front half. The ground plan measures 26.5' by 26.5' and 34', with orientation perpendicular to Seward Street. The building is sits on the right front of a corner lot. From the front of the building, at street level on Seward Street, the lot slopes southeastward so there is an elevation difference of approximately ten feet between the front and back of the lot. Thus, the basement of the rear addition is fully exposed and has an entrance. A three-foot picket fence encloses a sloping yard on the left side; a small strip of land separates the house from Barracks Street on the right side. The back yard is enclosed by a picket fence.

The gable roof, with a moderate pitch, is covered with corrugated sheet metal, which was installed over the original cedar shingles at an unknown date. A brick chimney, which in recent times was covered with a layer of concrete, is located in the center peak of the roof. The front facade has unbalanced fenestration: three double-hung, sash windows with plain trim and sills, and an off-center entrance. A central window is placed in the gable wall. The two lower level windows are positioned asymmetrically. Wooden storm windows are clipped into the frames at the street level. The entrance, located on the extreme right, has been altered by enclosing the original gabled porch. Access is through a plain, wooden slab door.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: Commerce  
Community planning and development

Period(s) of Significance: 1921-1928

Significant Dates: 1921 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Abner Murray

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

The Murray Apartments and Cottages are an example of Sitka's early commercial rental properties. In 1921, Abner Murray meticulously dismantled these three buildings in the town of Douglas, Alaska, and re-erected them, structurally the same, on their current sites in Sitka. The Murray Apartments building was the first multi-family dwelling to be erected in Sitka after the Russian transfer of Alaska to the United States. The Murray cottages were probably the first single family dwellings specifically erected for rentals. The location of these properties, at the edge of the town's business center, made them a convenient place to live. The period of significance ends when Abner, 78 years old at the time he constructed the buildings in Sitka, died in 1928.

In 1921-1922 when Murray's cottages and apartment building were being constructed, single men in Sitka lived in hotels such as the Erler, or rooming houses like the Franklin or Baranof House. Meals were available at either of Sitka's two restaurants or were provided by the rooming house. Hotels, which were defined at that time as having ten or more rooms, also had a kitchen to provide meals for its patrons. In the early 1920s, a man who temporarily brought his family to Sitka could rarely find a place to rent because there were few single family dwellings or apartments available. Historian Robert DeArmond, who lived in Sitka at this time, remembers that the Murray Apartments was the first building which provided a multi-family configuration, although there were a few single-story duplex buildings where the owner had added an apartment to supplement his income. The apartment building was also the first multi-family dwelling constructed after the Russian transfer. The Russians had the "Beehive" and the "Club House", the latter for unmarried officers.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1 acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>08</u>	<u>479635</u>	<u>6322860</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

The nominated buildings occupy all three portions of Lot 1, Block 4, original Sitka Townsite, U.S. Survey No. 1474 A and B, measuring 150 x 50 feet.

Boundary Justification: \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

The boundaries include the three buildings and the lots that have historically been associated with them in Sitka.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Patricia Roppel

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: May 14, 1991

Street & Number: P.O. Box 1211 Telephone: (907) 747-5023

City or Town: Sitka State: AK ZIP: 99835

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7

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The only interior structural modification to 200 Seward Street has been the removal of a non-load bearing wall on the main floor to create a living room that extends across the full width of the house. The only significant exterior alteration to the cottage is a shed roofed addition at the rear.

204 Seward Cottage (AHRS Site No. SIT-209) was originally identical to 200 Seward Cottage. It is a one-and-one-half story frame cottage on a poured concrete half basement. The ground plan measures 26.5' by 40', with orientation perpendicular to Seward Street. The building sits slightly off center, to the right, on its lot. The front of the building is at street level. The lot slopes southeastward so there is an elevation difference of approximately ten feet between front and back lot. Thus, the basement of the rear addition is fully exposed and has a wooden door on the rear right side. On the left side of the addition are large double doors.

The shed roofed addition at the rear is six feet longer than that of the 200 Seward Cottage. The first floor of the addition and the rear gable are covered with vertical wooden siding, and the main body of the cottage is sheathed with the original sawn cedar shingles. Like the 200 Seward Cottage, the gable roof is covered with corrugated sheet metal. The original brick chimney is located in the center peak of the roof. A metal chimney has been added in recent years on the right side, approximately one-third of the distance from the eave.

Similar to 200 Seward Cottage, the front facade is asymmetrical, has a double-hung, sash window with plain trim and sills in the gable wall and two similar, lower level windows. Non-functional exterior shutters, adorned by Pennsylvania Dutch or German heart-shaped openings, have been added by a recent owner. Turned posts with knobs support a gabled hood over a small portico on the right side. Photographs of the original building show square wooden support posts. Over the slab wood door is a transom of leaded glass, a recent addition. A second entrance has been added in the middle of the building's right side. A boardwalk with a railing from the street to an open stairway provides access to this entrance.

The interior of the 204 Seward Cottage has not been altered.

The Murray Apartments (AHRS Site No. SIT-210) is a two-and-one-half story frame structure with hip roof. Both the building and the roof are covered with sawn cedar shingles. Hipped dormers are located in the front and back facades. Each has a pair of double hung, sashed windows. A brick chimney is at the ridge of the front dormer and another is on the rear hip.

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Section number 7

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The original ground plan was square, measuring 40.3', with first and second floor porches extending from the rear elevation 7.7 feet. At some time, probably in the 1940s, the rear porches were enclosed. The building sits on the front center of the lot. The site begins several feet below the street elevation and gradually drops an estimated vertical distance of twelve feet along American Street. The last remaining publically maintained board sidewalk in Sitka runs along the front of this building as well as in front of the 200 and 204 Seward cottages.

The facade of the building is symmetrical. Six double hung, sash windows with plain trim and sills are on the second floor. On the first floor, two double sets of windows flank the main entrance; each adorned with a small bracketed, narrow, hipped, shingled shed roof. Similar brackets are placed along the cornice, aligned with the second floor windows. This cornice bracket ornamentation is used throughout the building at the street level. However, when the rear porches were enclosed, six-pane, single sash windows were used. Four separate entrances serve the apartments and are sheltered from the weather by a bracketed, hipped shed roof overdoor. Four wooden, glass-paneled doors with three panes have plain glass transoms.

The current owner remodeled the basement level of the building by excavating a full basement and adapting the newly created space for commercial use. An open staircase, with rail, on the right side of the building and added door now gives access to all of the apartments by way of the enclosed porches at the rear.

The interior of the building consists of four three-room apartments, side by side on the ground and second floors. The flats on each floor are mirror images of each other. A large attic area is unfinished and used for storage. The interior layout of the building is essentially unchanged from its 1921 appearance.

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Abner Murray, the owner and builder of the three structures, was an entrepreneur in Douglas early in the century. He owned a number of businesses, among them the City Water Works, the sawmill, and Douglas' Murray Apartments. He built a number of other buildings for investment. During those years, Douglas was an incorporated community adjoining the Treadwell lode gold mines, but after the mines were flooded in 1917, the population dwindled. In 1920, Murray, at that time 77 years old, visited Sitka to size up the business situation. He found the town prosperous, with not a vacant house in town but with a demand for more homes. Murray purchased the three vacant lots where the Murray Apartments and Cottages stand today. During the Russian period, 1805-1867, public vegetable gardens had been tended by the residents on this site. Mr. DeArmond remembers using the area for pasturing the family cow when he was a young boy. The lots were on the edge of town, but only a block from its center.

Returning to Douglas, Murray dismantled his apartment building and loaded it aboard a scow, towing it nearly 200 miles to Sitka, where he began re-erecting the building on its present site during 1921. The current owner found Murray had numbered each board with chalk to indicate its location; some of the boards are marked "port" and "starboard", nautical terms indicating which side of the building the pieces came from. Mr. DeArmond remembers seeing Murray straightening the original shingle nails so they could be reused.

Luella Campbell, who now resides in the Sitka Pioneer Home, remembers coming to Sitka in the summer of 1922 with her husband, the captain of U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey ship Surveyor. They rented one of the new apartments. She remembers that the Murray Apartments was considered "the prestigious place" to live at that time.

After completing the Murray Apartments, Murray began construction of the two cottages, probably in 1922. At some time before 1924, Murray added uncovered porches with handrails to the rear of these buildings. In addition to the cottages and apartments, Murray dismantled a hotel in Douglas in 1921, again shipping it to Sitka where he re-erected it and called it the Bayview Hotel.

During the early 1920s, Sitka, a sleepy village after Alaska's capital was moved to Juneau, began to grow. In August 1922, the residents of Sitka voted to change its incorporation status from a second class to a first class city. Booth Fisheries had constructed a cold storage plant in 1913, and in 1918 canneries were erected by Sitka Packing Company and Pyramid Packing Company. All three companies were processing fish during the summer seasons of 1921 through 1923, at which time the Sitka Packing Company operations were consolidated at the Pyramid Packing Company plant. This salmon cannery



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Section number 8

provided seasonal work for Sitkans during the 1920s. The cold storage, which mainly processed halibut, ran year round. A crab cannery also operated in the early 1920s. Sitka began to acquire more and more of a fishing fleet around this time, especially trollers of king salmon who were extending their fishing grounds farther north of their traditional grounds near Sitka Hot Springs (Goddard). Some fishermen brought their families to settle in Sitka. Mild cure businesses of king and coho salmon began to thrive.

The gold mines at Chichagof and Hirst Chichagof, north of Sitka, were operating in the early 1920s. Although the activities did not contribute much to Sitka's growth and economy at the time, a few of the people, such as the Sarvellas and Petersons, chose to cease working at the mines and moved to Sitka where they became active business people.

Because of the abundant timber in the vicinity, Sitka had one or two sawmills operating as early as Russian times. During the time that Abner Murray operated his rental properties, the W.P. Mills sawmill cut lumber for shipment to other parts of Alaska, for cannery construction, for salmon boxes, and for box shooks for Sitka's cold storage. When Murray repaired his apartment building in spring 1925, he probably purchased lumber from this sawmill.

Although the capital of the territory had moved to Juneau in 1906, the United States Government continued its presence in Sitka during the early 1920s and some of its employees needed to rent properties during their stays. The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey based its ship Surveyor in Sitka during the summer months when it continued the much-needed surveys of the commercial routes through the Inside Passage and along the outer coast of southeast Alaska. The U.S. Army Signal Corps, which operated the Cable Office, had about a dozen men, approximately half of whom were single and lived in the hotels. The others, with families, had to find places to live.

Abner Murray died at Sitka on September 13, 1928. At that time, his successful rental properties passed to his heirs who eventually sold them. The Murray Cottages, under a succession of owners, continued to be used as single family dwellings, sometimes as rentals. The Murray Apartments building, under various names and owners, has always been used as rental apartments.

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Alaska Daily Empire, Juneau, July 23, 1920, August 19, 1920.

Andrews, Clarence L. The Story of Sitka. Seattle: Lowman and Hanford, 1922.

Annual Report No. 1, for the year 1949, Alaska Fisheries Board and Alaska Department of Fisheries, Juneau, Alaska: Alaska Department of Fisheries, 1949, p. 34.

Campbell, Luella. Interview, Alaska Pioneer Home, Sitka, Alaska, May 6, 1991.

DeArmond, Robert N. Interview, Alaska Pioneer Home, Sitka, Alaska, May 6, 1991.

Douglas Island News, March 19, 1920, May 7, 1920.

The Pathfinder of Alaska, The Pioneers of Alaska, Valdez, Alaska, January 14, 1925.

Poulson, James T. (Thad). Interview, Editor, Sitka Sentinel, Sitka, Alaska, May 7, 1991.

Report of the Governor of Alaska to the Secretary of the Interior, 1921-1928, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922-1929.

Roppel, Patricia. "Sitka and Its Island Home," Alaska Geographic, 1982.

Sitka Sun, October 30, 1920, December 11, 1920, October 1921.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Photograph Identification

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1. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Unknown  
circa 1923  
Sitka Historical Society, negative with Thad Poulson, P.O. Box 799,  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Abner Murray
2. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Unknown  
1921 or 1922  
Luella Campbell, Alaska Pioneer Home, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking west on Seward Street at the cottages under construction
3. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Winter & Pond  
1921 or 1922  
Alaska Historical Library, P.O. Box F, Juneau, Alaska 99811  
Looking northeast, the back facades of the Murray buildings are visible  
at the left of the photograph and the cottages are under construction
4. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Robert DeArmond  
1937  
Thad Poulson, P.O. Box 799, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking southeast at the front facades of the three buildings
5. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Thad Poulson  
May 8, 1991  
P.O. Box 799, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking southeast at the three buildings; taken from the East Russian  
Cemetery, nearly the same site as photograph 4. The U.S. Coast and  
Geodetic Survey House (listed on the National Register) is the fourth  
house in the row, and the spire of St. Michael's Cathedral (listed on  
the National Register) is visible on the right.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number Photograph Identification

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6. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Thad Poulson  
May 8, 1991  
Thad Poulson, P.O. Box 799, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking south at the front of 200 Seward Cottage
7. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Thad Poulson  
May 8, 1991  
Thad Poulson, P.O. Box 799, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking east at the side of 200 Seward Cottage
8. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Thad Poulson  
May 8, 1991  
Thad Poulson, P.O. Box 799, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking south at the front of 204 Seward Cottage
9. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Patricia Roppel  
May 15, 1991  
Thad Poulson, P.O. Box 799, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking south at the front of the Murray Apartments with the U.S. Coast  
and Geodetic Survey House visible on the left
10. Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Sitka, Alaska  
Thad Poulson  
May 8, 1991  
Thad Poulson, P.O. Box 799, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
Looking west at the American Street side of the Murray Apartments

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000402 Date Listed: 4/27/92

Murray Apartments and Cottages  
Property Name

Sitka                      AK  
County                      State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* *Rutvenicki*  
Signature of the Keeper

5/4/92  
Date of Action

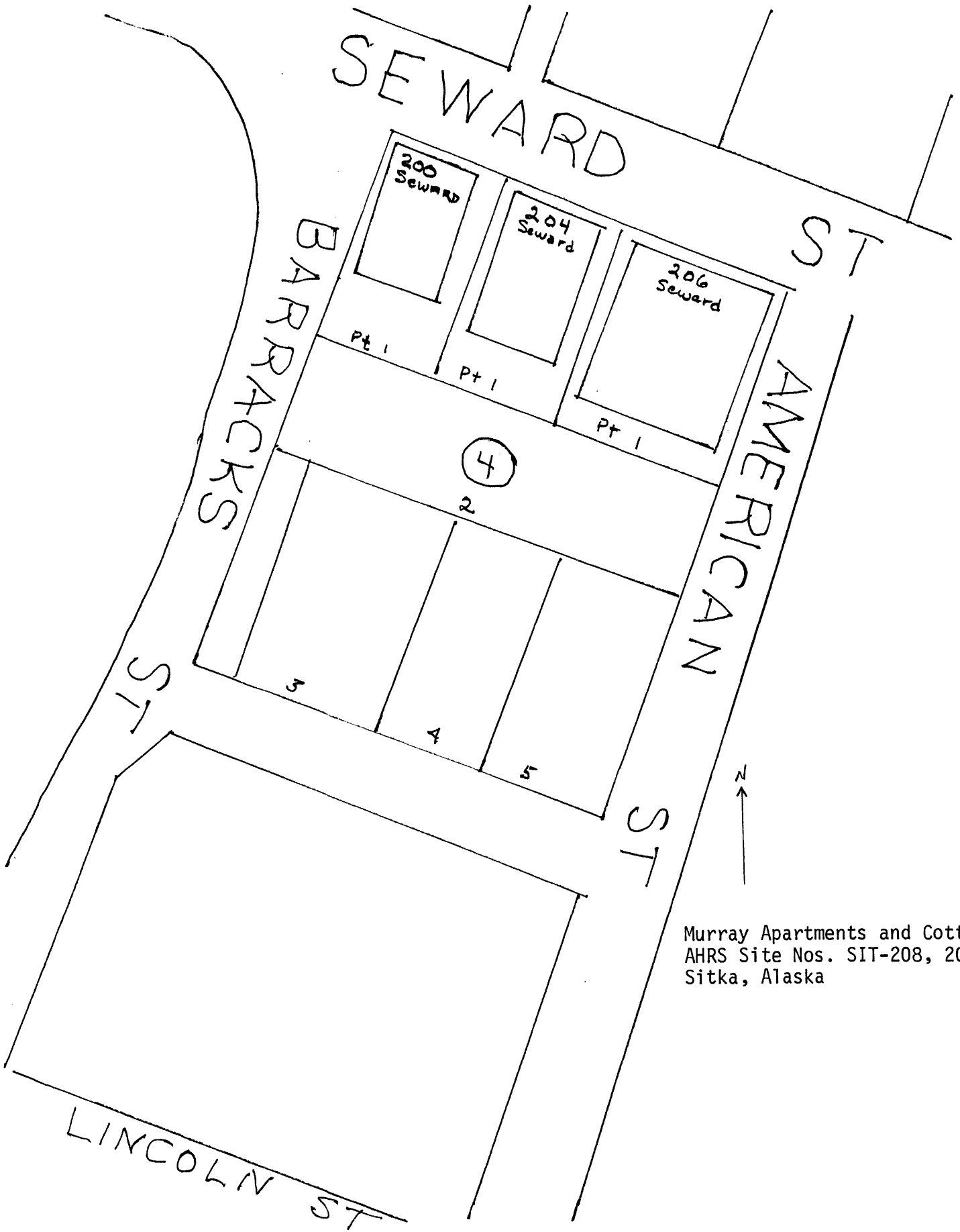
=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Statement of Significance: Under Criteria Considerations (Exceptions), E is added.

This information was confirmed with Jo Antonson of the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office.

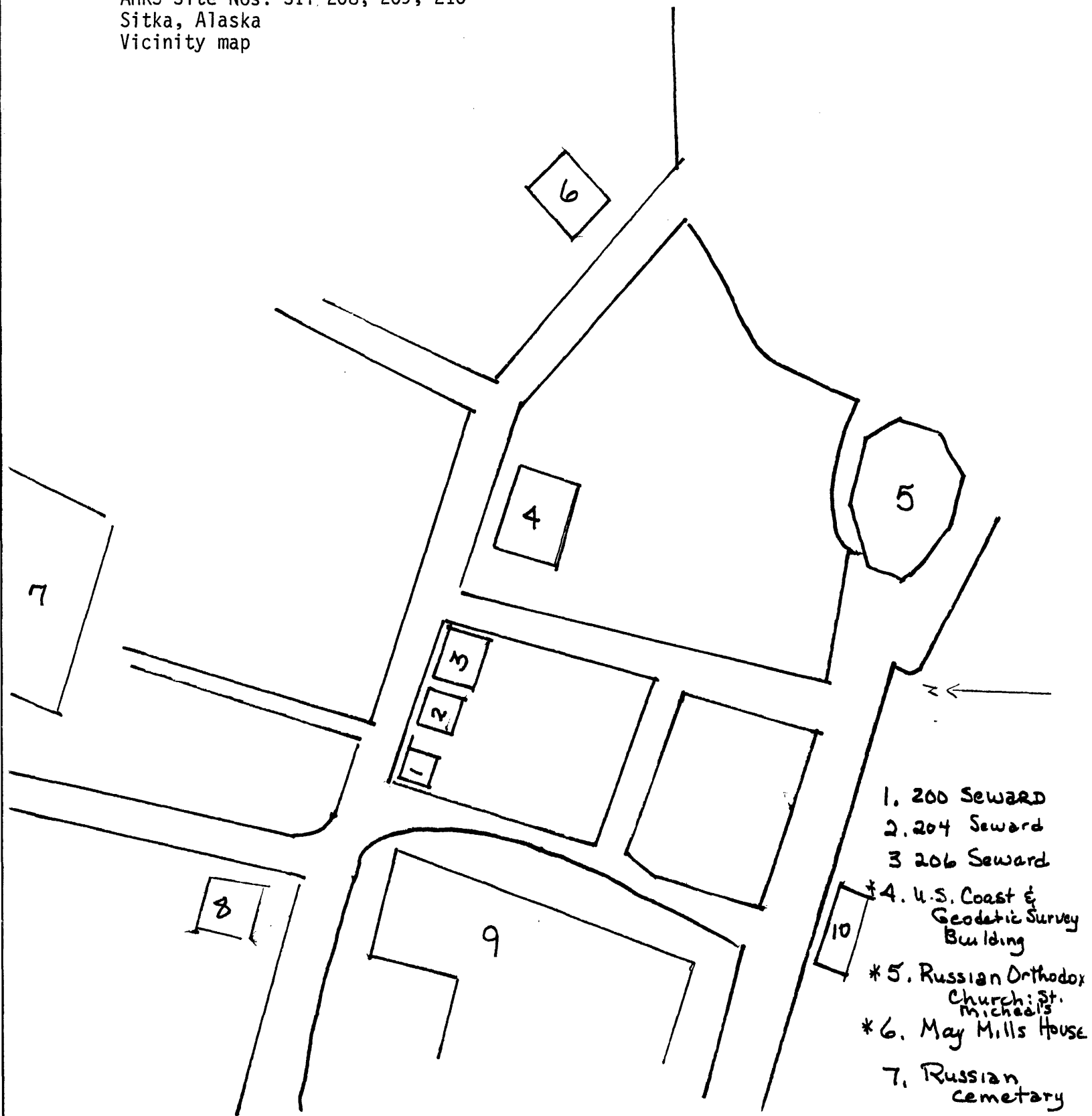
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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



Murray Apartments and Cottages  
AHRs Site Nos. SIT-208, 209, 210  
Sitka, Alaska

Murray Apartments and Cottages  
 AHS Site Nos. SIT-208, 209, 210  
 Sitka, Alaska  
 Vicinity map



- 1. 200 Seward
- 2. 204 Seward
- 3. 206 Seward

\* 4. U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey Building

\* 5. Russian Orthodox Church: St. Michael's

\* 6. May Mills House

7. Russian cemetery

8. E. Russian Cemetery

\* 9. Pioneer's Home

\* 10. Tilsen Buildi.

\* on the National Register of Historic Places