

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED OCT 16 1979  
DATE ENTERED DEC 21 1979

**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

St. Peters Episcopal Church (AHRs SITE NO. SEW-028)

AND/OR COMMON

St. Peter's Church; M.E. Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Southwest corner, Second Avenue & Adams Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Seward

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Alaska, at large

STATE

Alaska

CODE

02

COUNTY

Seward

CODE

210

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- 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
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. Donald M. McCloud, Senior Warden, St. Peter's Episcopal Church

(907) 224-3078

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 564

CITY, TOWN

Seward

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska 99664

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

District Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 596

CITY, TOWN

Seward

STATE

Alaska 99664

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs)

(907) 274-4676

DATE

June 10, 1972

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, Suite 210, 619 Warehouse Drive

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 church building and rectory are situated in the southwesterly corner of the Original Seward Townsite. About fifty yards behind the buildings the ground rises abruptly into tree-covered craggy foothills, which form the community's natural western border. From the front stoops of the two buildings, elevated about fifty feet above the Resurrection Bay shoreline, one looks out upon a picturesque mountain-encircled harbor scene. The lower floor of the church, called the undercroft, was built into a concrete shell, as solid as the best of Seward's contemporary buildings. The undercroft of the church was built during the summer and autumn of 1904, and pressed into service immediately, for church and community purposes.

The basement and foundation outer walls of the church are distinguished by the ample number of window spaces crennelating its surface. This is a vestige from its first decade, when the present basement floor was the complete structure. The present undercroft was the entire structure until construction was resumed in 1916, when the main chamber and roof, with the original belfry, were built. The resulting building, with outside dimensions approximating 33 feet wide by 70 feet deep, appeared then very much as it does today.

The major alterations have been the rearward relocation of the steeple, after the original was blown off in a 1953 storm, the cosmetic rebuilding of the entrance steps, and enclosing of the entranceway.

The main floor of the building is entered from the outside through a vestibule, which serves as an air lock during the extremely cold, windy, or precipitous weather, characteristic of the local climate. The outer entryway is a double-door, each one two-paneled, with double glass panes in their upper halves. The double doors are capped by unadorned panels and set into a plain bordered frame, centre-pointed at its peak. This centre-pointed shape is repeated in the windows on either side wall of the entranceway, two in the front wall, and in three windows repeating the same design on each side wall of the chapel. The six side wall windows are of decorative leaded glass. These frames were installed during construction of that part of the building in 1917.

The windows in the front wall and on the side walls of the entryway are glazed with unadorned lights. The two windows on the side walls of the entryway were installed in 1929, during extensive renovations.

When the exterior of the present structure was completed in 1917, the original heating plant was installed and the walls of the main auditorium were plastered. The chimney was rebuilt, from the undercroft upwards, in 1923. In 1929, when the church was wired, electric lights were installed, and the undercroft walls were treated with tar for protection from moisture penetration. Also in 1929, the entranceway was enclosed, and fenestration provided on both sides of the entryway, while railings were built on either side of the front outside stairway.

# 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 checked="" 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 Church: 1904  
Rectory: 1917

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Church Builder: Rev. F.C. Taylor/  
Rev. George J. Zinn

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Rectory: Architect: Frank L. Baker  
Builder: Rev. George J. Zinn

This church and its rectory are significant in their association with events that have contributed to the broad pattern of the history of the community of Seward, Alaska, as the oldest surviving Protestant church building on the Kenai Peninsula; the location of the first public school classroom in the town of Seward; and as the location of an early reading room, a precursor of the Seward Community Library.

These buildings embody the distinctive characteristics of a type and period of rural frontier social service facility, and church architecture, that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Study of these buildings has yielded information important in the history of the Seward community and of the habitation and cycles of population growth and recession in this part of Alaska.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Soon after the town of Seward was began, in the summer of 1903, Rev. F.C. Taylor, with headquarters at Valdez, began making periodic round trips to Seward, and holding services in a tent. The first service was conducted by Rev. Taylor officially on June 12, 1904. Services were held in Moor's Hall, and then in a semi-permanent tent-church, soon destroyed by gale force winds. Contributions were received towards a church building. Foundation work and the basement, or undercroft, were built during the fall of 1904 on the site of the present church, and that construction constitutes the lower level of the present building.

The first formal religious service was held in the undercroft on February 19, 1905. The first formal session of the Seward grammar school was held in this same place on February 26, 1905, conducted by Miss Louise Kurth, one of the two teachers sent to Seward by Sheldon Jackson, to open a public school. The church undercroft was utilized in conjunction with space in the Ballaine Building. The Ballaine Building was situated two lots to the south, and later was sold to the town as its first permanent school. Until that transaction was completed, the undercroft of the church provided one of the two school rooms.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY -1

QUADRANGLE NAME Seward (A-7)

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:63,360

UTM REFERENCES  
A 04 364082 6665075  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 12, Lots 1 and 2, Original Seward Townsite.

### 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, Architect, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Alaska Division of Parks

DATE 30 September 1977

STREET & NUMBER 619 Warehouse Drive, 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 X 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 Shanable*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 10/8/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Carol O. Skell*

DATE 12-21-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *W. Ray*

DATE Dec 21, 1979

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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In 1945 the roof of the church was replaced, a new heating plant installed, and the interior of the church was painted, as it was again in 1949, and has been several times since. In the fall of 1950 the church steps were rebuilt to their present appearance, and the front entranceway completely enclosed by a storm door, while interior wall wainscoting was replaced to cut off a major source of drafts.

On January 25, 1952, the original steeple was blown off the building during a storm in which the winds were reported at 105 miles per hour. The rafters were then strengthened and bolted, by members of the congregation; the west (rear) wall was strengthened as a gift, by James Cameron, with timbers donated by the Kenai Lumber Company; and additional braces were fitted into the roof over the choir. The blown-off steeple was replaced in June 1953 with the present steeple, set further toward the rear of the high gable roof.

The west wall of the church, behind the altar, is adorned by a mural painting of the Resurrection. The painting utilizes the familiar figures of the Ascension of Christ, showing the empty Tomb. Instead of the familiar scene near Jerusalem, the background illustrated here is Resurrection Bay, Alaska; instead of the Apostles standing about, the artist shows individuals representing the people of Alaska, including an Indian, an Eskimo, a prospector, a trapper, and homesteaders. The painting was executed on commission in October 1925 by Jan van Emple, an artist of Dutch origin, who lived in Seward for a period of time, beginning in November 1924. This is an eclectic work of art, and appropriate for this particular Alaskan location.

In 1917, at the behest of The Reverend Peter Trimble Rowe, Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, local people acquired the lot adjoining and south of the church for the church rectory. The Rev. George J. Zinn sketched plans for the building, which were detailed by Frank L. Baker, a Seattle architect. The rectory is in a bungalow style, simple in construction, but practical and durable, a one-story building with a basement. The main floor was designed to contain a study, living and dining room combined into one, two bedrooms, and a kitchen, serviced by community electric and water systems. Construction was completed during the autumn of 1917. In 1947 a new hot-water heating plant and storm windows were installed. In 1951 a rear segment of the foundation was rebuilt. In addition to these repairs and renovations, the house has been painted a number of times.

In the present absence of a resident ordained minister, the rectory is leased out as a residence, and church services are conducted by lay readers.

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The feverish period of Seward settlement passed, following the failure of the initial great promise of construction of the Alaska Northern Railroad. Beginning of construction of the Alaska Railroad in 1915 brought renewed activity, population, and money, to the town, and the church structure was completed during 1916 and 1917. At the same time the lot immediately south of the church was purchased, and the rectory built there in 1917, between the church and the former Ballaine Building, which had become the Seward Elementary School.

When construction work on the railroad revived, activity in the town revived, and with it the need for social and personal amenities, such as churches, schools, hospitals, and libraries. The Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, Peter Trimble Rowe, sent Rev. George J. Zinn to Seward, to complete construction of the church and to arrange construction of the parsonage for a resident minister. Rev. Zinn obtained a gift of the detailed building plans for the rectory, and raised \$5,000 for labor, materials, and furnishings, locally, during the height of railroad building activity. The church structure was completed by the spring of 1917, and the rectory was completed that fall.

The church has served as a center of its intended religious activity, as it has served other social purposes through the decades since then. It has also housed a library reading room, beginning in 1929, and the undercroft has been the location of the Seward Golden Age Club during recent years. The economic activity in Seward during the same decades has only rarely been sufficient to support a resident clergyman. Consequently, offices of the church usually have been performed by lay Readers, or else, when possible, have awaited the periodic visits of ordained clergymen. The church has continued to serve its original purpose. Through the years, whenever there has been need for labor or materials to maintain the building in first class condition, members of the church, and others in the community, have contributed, so that the building is in good condition, and maintains the integrity of its original design, condition, and function.

In 1954 the Golden Anniversary of the church was celebrated over a period of several months, beginning with an Alaskan Clergy Conference on April 13-19, and terminating in a series of services on June 27, 1954. The present congregation will celebrate its Diamond Jubilee on June 12, 1979, and the 75th Anniversary of the first religious service in that building on February 19, 1980.

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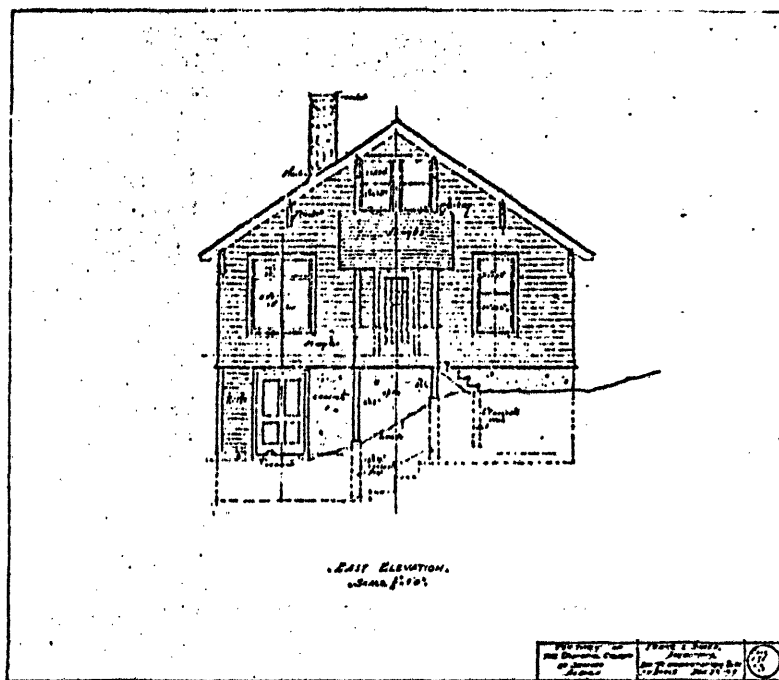
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Rowe, Bishop Peter T., "Historical Data of the Alaska Missions," The Pathfinder, Valdez, Alaska, I, No. 11, September 1920, page 4.



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Frank L. Baker, Architect, 212 Transportation Building,  
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