

PH050385 DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 12 1977

DATE ENTERED JAN 31 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 *##*

St. Peter's Church (AHRS Site No. SIT-029)

AND/OR COMMON

St. Peter's Episcopal Church; St. Peter's by the Sea

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

611 Lincoln Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Sitka

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

Alaska, at large

STATE

Alaska

CODE

02

COUNTY

Sitka

CODE

220

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

___DISTRICT

___PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

___AGRICULTURE

___MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

___UNOCCUPIED

___COMMERCIAL

___PARK

___STRUCTURE

___BOTH

___WORK IN PROGRESS

___EDUCATIONAL

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

___ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

___OBJECT

___IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

___GOVERNMENT

___SCIENTIFIC

___BEING CONSIDERED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

___INDUSTRIAL

___TRANSPORTATION

___NO

___MILITARY

___OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Clyde Tennant

(907)

747-3503

Senior Warden

STREET & NUMBER

St. Peter's Church, P.O. Box 1156

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

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)

DATE

October 24, 1972

___FEDERAL STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, Suite 210, 619 Warehouse Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99501

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The general plan for this building was described at the organizing conference of the Building Committee in June 1899, as follows:

The Chapel is designed to seat one hundred and thirty people and is 30 x 50 feet inside, and of a composite gothic style of architecture. The foundation, walls and buttress are of stone masonry, above which walls are of open timber frame work to a height of 9 feet, filled with stone, allowing the timbers to show on the wall. Above the roof, the walls will be finished with stained shingles. A small belfry will be mounted on the roof.

Windows and door of stained glass will add attractiveness to the interior which will be finished in oiled spruce with open roof trusses also oiled. The interior finish of the roof will also be ceiling spruce in panels, oiled in the same manner.

This is how it was envisioned, that is how it was built, and that is what it looks like to this day. There are some additional details, not mentioned above, such as the entry porch, but these are mere details, and were integrated into a design fully envisioned by the architect from the instructions communicated to him in person by Peter Trimble Rowe, The Bishop of Alaska. While the structure is in the Gothic style, it has little of Gothic structural elements, but embodies effectively the centre pointed design throughout its major interior and exterior elements in the major design finish and fenestration of the lights in the entrance (south) and altar (north) walls, in the parallel rows of stained glass small windows along the side (east and west) walls of the chapel. A soft north light illumines the altar through a large nine panel centre pointed window, while the view from the front steps is of the harbor and the sea, literally at the doorstep of this church, set here for the beauty of the site, which this building has enhanced since 1899.

This country church is deceptively simple in appearance. Its design at first glance appears similar to many other small country churches, and to a few others in Alaska. Upon further examination, it appears that the design has been executed with a unity of purpose, in complement to the site, that results in a building whose form is expressive of its function in every dimension.

At a later date an adjoining building lot, adjoining the church lot on the north, was acquired, and the See House was built to a design complementing the church building. The remains of the first Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, Peter Trimble Row, and those of his first wife and one of their sons, are buried on the front lawn of the Church, marked by unobtrusive ground level grave stones.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input 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	1899	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Architect: H.L. Duhring, Jr. Philadelphia, Penn.
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			Builder: John W. Dudley, Sitka, Alaska

This country church is significant for its architectural design. It embodies design elements, and a unity of conception related to its distinctive site location, that give it high artistic value and represent the work of master builders of that time and place.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Tradition relates that Episcopal lay services were held in Sitka, Alaska, between 1867 and 1885, first by an anonymous Army colonel and subsequently by a Mr. Austin. After 1885 there were no Episcopal services in Sitka until the arrival of the First Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, Peter Trimble Rowe, in 1896.

Bishop Rowe arrived in Sitka in April 1896, following his November 30, 1895, consecration in the Cathedral of St. John the Devine, New York City. The newly installed Bishop immediately obtained quarters for his family, and departed for the Yukon River, via the Chilkoot Trail, to observe first hand the nature of the responsibility which he had accepted. Upon returning to Sitka in November, Bishop Rowe conducted services on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1896 -- a year following, and a world distant, from the scene of his consecration. From then onward Bishop Rowe conducted services regularly when he was in Sitka. He immediately saw the need for a church for his new Bishopric one that would be somewhat more imposing than the cabin-chapels he then had available, but not so expensive as to be unreachable.

An affluent couple from Utica, New York, who visited Sitka the summer of 1897, contacted Bishop Rowe upon returning to their home, and offered \$2,000 toward the building of a church in Sitka. It was remarked, in later years, that the Bishop was ". . . such a darned human, lovable cuss, somehow, that wherever he goes he starts a stampede for heaven." This offer was the first move in what became a stampede to build this church.

A committee formed to locate and purchase a suitable site. The committee included the U.S. Attorney for Alaska, Burton E. Bennett, William Millmore, and Edward de Groff. A committee of women raised money for the purchase. These women included Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. DeGroff. A lot of the crescent of the harbor was chosen and purchased for \$800 (some accounts say \$750) from Peter Panamarkoff.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	0 8	48 0 175	6 3 2 7 9 1 1	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot C115, Block 13.

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

March 15, 1977

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

619 Warehouse Avenue, Suite 210

(907) 274-4676

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

Alaska

STATE

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 Skeneable

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

8/23/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

~~MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

ATTEST:

Charles A. ...

DATE

1-31-78

DATE

1-31-78

REGISTER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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St. Peter's Church

(AHRS SITE NO. SIT-029)

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The road along the crescent then called Beach Road, is now called Lincoln Street. While the largest individual contributors included Bennet, Millmore, deGroff, James Shoup, and W. P. Mills, the full list of donors was a long one, including such names as C. L. Andrews, later notable for his writings on Alaskan and Sitka history, and C. C. Georgeson, an official of the Department of Agriculture and pioneer experimenter in Arctic farming techniques.

Bishop Rowe prepared specifications of his conception of what the church should look like and how it should be designed, and what the Rectory (the "See House") should look like and contain. A meeting of a committee of the town's leading citizens convened early in September 1898 at the Bishop's house to discuss these ideas and their execution. Present were Messrs. deGroff, Bennett, and W. L. Distin, John W. Dudley, and G. D. Clayett. Following discussion, a motion carried unanimously that the Bishop's conceptions for the church and house be conveyed by the Bishop to an architect to translate into working drawings and specifications, during the Bishop's forthcoming trip to the East Coast. The meeting also elected a building committee for the project, with deGroff as Chairman, Dudley as Secretary, and C. S. Johnson, Col. W. L. Distin, and W. P. McBride, completing the membership.

Soon after the meeting in Sitka, Bishop Rowe traveled to the East Coast on the business of his See. A Philadelphia philanthropist, George C. Thomas, engaged Philadelphia architect, H. L. Duhring, Jr., to prepare plans and specifications for the church and the See House. George C. Thomas, many times a benefactor of missionary work in Alaska, was Treasurer of the Board of Missions of the Episcopal Church. In his professional life he was Manager of the banking firm of Drexel, Morgan and Company, a major affiliate in Philadelphia of J. P. Morgan and Company. Mr. Thomas' interest in Alaska might have been related also to the investment activities in Seattle and in southeast Alaska of J. P. Morgan's little known, but most important, son-in-law, William Hamilton.

The cornerstone laying was scheduled for Thursday, June 29 -- St. Peter's Day, and the church would be called "St. Peter's-By-The-Sea". John W. Dudley, Recorder in Sitka for the General Land Office (now the Bureau of Land Management) had undertaken to supervise construction according to the architect's plans. Only the church was to be built at that time, the See House deferred to a later date. Mr. Dudley had completed the foundation work by June 29, and had erected a temporary shelter over the foundation, large enough to accommodate the town's clergy and the congregation. This was fortunate, because rain fell, in typical Sitka fashion, all day, without intermission, and continued through the 4:00 p.m. hour set for the cornerstone ceremony. Consequently, in typical Sitka fashion, the turnout for the impressive and solemn service was relatively large and enthusiastic.

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Forming with Bishop Rowe for the ceremony were Father Anthony and Father Kaiakokonok of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Rev. M. D. McClelland of the Presbyterian Church. Following the Order of Service -- Psalm, Versicles, Special Prayers, Scripture Lesson, and Psalm 136 -- Bishop Rowe introduced Lt. George T. Emmons, USN, who delivered a paper on the History of Sitka -- written for deposit in the cornerstone. Bishop Rowe then read a list of the materials to be deposited in the cornerstone of the church:

The Alaskan issue of June 24, 1899.

The Church Standard, June 3, 1899, published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

A list of Bishops of the American and Anglican branches of the Catholic Church from the Apostles to the present day.

The historical sketch of Sitka, prepared and read that day by Lt. George T. Emmons, USN.

A list of the clergy of Alaska.

Names of the church building committee, contractor, etc.

Coins of the National currency, a Queen's Jubilee crown, a Columbian half-crown, a cent of 1803, a half-cent of 1804 and other coins presented by Mr. F. Woodcock, a Russian coin presented by Father Anthony; an English penny, half-penny, and a Canadian five cent piece, presented by Miss M. G. Hindshaw.

A shell from the Sea of Galilee.

Two small size American flags.

Rev. W. M. Partridge next delivered a short address relative to cornerstones and the historical significance of laying cornerstones. The choir and congregation sang, "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name," and the service closed, with the Benediction, pronounced by the Bishop.

In September 1899, as the church construction near completion, an offer was accepted from a Mr. and Mrs. Bauer to furnish three stained glass windows, and from Miss Mary Rhineland, of New York City, to provide a communion service. Miss Rhineland, like Mr. Thomas, shared family and business interests with J. P. Morgan and Company, and was a benefactor of many good causes.

As construction progressed, Bishop Rowe, in his characteristic way, did much of the stone work himself, and the front wall of the church he built entirely with his own hands. The Bishop's biographer, Thomas Jenkins, wrote that one day while Bishop Rowe worked at the wall a man came sauntering along. "Well, Bishop," he remarked, "you are working to beat the devil." Replied the Bishop, "Yes, he's the very one I'm trying to beat!"

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The new church witnessed its initial service on November 26, 1899, a Thanksgiving Service in which Bishop Rowe shared the rostrum with Father Anthony of the Greek Cathedral, and at least 10 different denominations of Christians were in attendance. A formal service of consecration for the building was held on Easter Sunday, April 15, 1900. As the home church of the Bishop, this was the most important Episcopal Church in Alaska. This picturesque building lost its importance with the decline of Sitka, when the capital was removed and all the courts and officials of the District were removed to Juneau, where the District would become a Territory. Due to other factors than merely the decline of Sitka with the removal of the capital to Juneau, Bishop Rowe moved his See to Seattle, and continued his yearly crusades from there, both to the farthest reaches of Alaska, and to the far reaches of the Eastern United States, from whence had to come his moral and legal support and the wherewithall for him to serve his flock throughout Alaska.

This lovely little church, conceived in the fertile brain of one of the most indescribably of men who ever served humanity in Alaska, Peter Trimble Rowe, continues its serene way, serving the Episcopal congregation now as in 1899, while continuing to draw attention to itself as an architectural jewel in the diadem of Sitka's Crescent Harbor shore.

One visitor, Ella Higginson, poetized her impressions of St. Peter's-By-The-Sea, and sent it to Bishop Rowe. It reads, in part:

The little Church at Sitka--
It is so dim and still!
The doors stand open to the sea,
The wind goes through at will
And bears the scent of brine and blue
To the far distant hill.

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