

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received MAY 27 1982

date entered

1. Name

historic Red Dragon Historic District (AHRS #COR-170)

and/or common Red Dragon Reading Room and Episcopal Church

2. Location

street & number Lake Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets and Copper River Highway — not for publication

city, town Cordova — vicinity of — congressional district Alaska at large

state Alaska code 02 county Cordova-McCarthy Division code 080

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Episcopal Diocese of Alaska (907) 452-3040

street & number 1205 Denali Way, P.O. Box 441

city, town Fairbanks — vicinity of — state Alaska 99707

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. District Recorder (907) 424-7207

street & number P.O. Box 696

city, town Cordova — state Alaska 99574

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title AHRS has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date April 15, 1975 — federal state — county — local

depository for survey records Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks
619 Warehouse Avenue, Suite 210

city, town Anchorage — state Alaska 99501

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Original Appearance - "Red Dragon" Club house

This large one room Mission structure was preceded on the virgin site by a tent and an outhouse. When finished, the Mission--2nd completed structure in Cordova--was painted a bright red, with paint obtained from the CR&NW railroad. There was a short boardwalk in front of the mission, which later was extended, down to the main street of early-day Cordova. The Rev. E. P. Newton, founder and first director of St. George's Mission (which speedily became known as the "Red Dragon") described it in an 1910 article in the Alaska-Yukon Magazine:

"The Club house is a plain, well-built frame building, twenty-four by thirty-six feet in size, one room, with a porch entrance. Its center of (mission) life is the open fireplace, kept burning for cheer when a large stove is also in commission for warmth. There are easy chairs, a large davenport, and couches with pillows, a large table well stocked with magazines and writing materials, some six hundred volumes on the shelves, four card tables, chess, and other games, boxing gloves, a piano and one pool table. On Sunday, presto, an altar is lowered from a landing above on the rafters; things are whisked aside and the place is ordered for services and Sunday school." (1910-403,4).

Original Physical Appearance - St. George's Episcopal Church

Situated about 100 yards from the Red Dragon on the downgrade of a steep, low hill, St. George's Church was silhouetted against Mount Eccles (the most prominent peak in the area) some two miles away. A boardwalk here, also, was constructed to provide mudless access to the building. The first, and only, Episcopal church is described in the building specification contract papers of April 1918:

"It shall measure 24 feet by 36 feet inside, and have a basement 18 feet by 24 feet under the rear of the building; the foundation shall be built of concrete up to the first floor . . . the building shall be one story and of frame construction, but the basement shall have a flooring of concrete; . . . the height of the outside walls shall be ten feet; there are to be four segment top windows on each side . . . outside walls to be covered by common boards, and then tar paper and shingles . . . the building to have a steeple . . . to have a brick chimney 12 x 12, . . . There shall be a stairway leading to the basement on the rear end of the building . . . a porch 8 x 12 with steps leading thereto. . . stain the shingles and paint the trim white . . ." (Bishop Rowe to Bartley Howard, contract document, 4-10-18).

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1908 and 1918-1919 **Builder/Architect** Church-Bartley Howard/E.P. Ziegler

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Comprising a cohesive historic district, "the Red Dragon" (reading room, as it has always been popularly called) rather than St. George's Episcopal Mission--and at the opposite end of the site--The Episcopal Church, St. George's--are deeply interwoven into the fabric of the life and growth of Cordova. For those of the faith, this site has always been the heart of Cordova's Episcopalianism--a shrine in Alaska's church history. The two buildings are richly associated with the Missionary-Artist Eustace Paul Ziegler; the dynamic church leader, Bishop Peter Trimble Rowe; and the brilliant railroad-builders, Michael J. Heney and his Chief Engineer on the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad. (It was "Guggenheim-Morgan-Alaska Syndicate" railroad which created Cordova as the seaport terminus for the fabulous Kennecott Mines.) Although now relatively small in size this historic district has large and deep significance in the history, art, and folklore of Alaska.

Early History

The "Red Dragon" and St. George's Episcopal Church have been significantly interwoven with the lives of people, and history of Cordova since the camp first came into existence as the southern terminus and port community for the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad--built to transport copper from the Kennecott Mines (196 miles away). The railroad was completed in 1911, after six years of rugged effort. Old Cordova continued to grow until the 1930's.

The "Red Dragon" received its name, inevitably (despite official dedication as St. George's Episcopal Mission) due to its bright red color--the vivid trademark of the CR&NW RR. Founded as a recreational-rest club house for the railroad workers, the "Red Dragon" was a viable alternative to the many local saloons and gambling dens. It was the second building in Cordova--and is now the oldest one extant. The land on which the old structure stands was donated by the railroad along with a sizable sum of money for building construction given by M. J. Heney, builder of the railroad (and previously chief engineer-designer of the White Pass & Yukon Railroad, connecting Skagway to the Klondike).

In January 1909, Eustace P. Ziegler arrived from Michigan as lay Missionary in charge of the "Red Dragon". Soon he was the designer also of St. George's Church, when it was finally built in 1919. He also became known as one of the foremost artists of Alaska. It was while at the Red Dragon (St. George's) that Ziegler's artistic talent became widely recognized, well beyond Alaska, by mid-century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Alaska Churchman, Vol. 3, May 1909, pp. 40-41, Fairbanks, AK
 Vol. 5, No. 1, November 1910, Fairbanks, AK
Anchorage Historical & Fine Arts Museum, Eustace Ziegler, A Retrospective Exhibition,
 Anchorage, Alaska, 1977, 36 pages. (continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Cordova C-5, USGS

Quadrangle scale 1:63 360

UMT References

A

0	6	5	6	8	2	6	0	6	7	1	2	2	1	0
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 Block 2, Church Reserve, USS 2981.

On 1920 Cordova City plats; identified as Parcel 202, adjoining Block 5 of the original townsite. The East boundary is approximately 175'; the north boundary 200'; and west-by-south boundary, converging diagonally, follows the right-of-way.

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 Nicki J. Nielsen and Michael S. Kennedy (State Historian)

Episcopal Diocese and ADP-OHA

organization 619 Warehouse Drive (Kennedy)

date September 25, 1980
(907)

street & number 4938 Mills Drive (Nielsen)

telephone 333-1481 or 279-0461

city or town Anchorage

state AK 99501

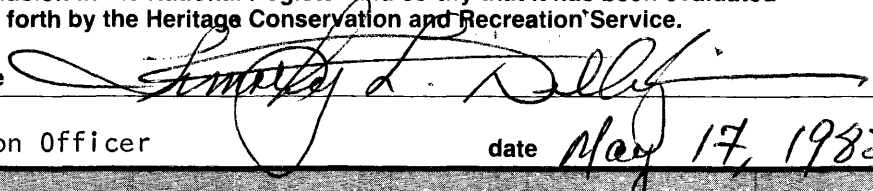
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 17, 1982

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for 
Keeper of the National Register

date 8-31-82

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Red Dragon Historic District

Continuation sheet AHRs # COR-170

Item number 7

Page 1 of 2

For HCARS use only
received
date entered

A lead article in the Cordova Daily Times, the day before the consecration, described it further:

"The church. . . of English architecture . . . will be stained dark brown, with a moss green roof The interior is fir paneled in oak finish. The altar piece is a copy of Reuben's Descent from the Cross A rich red carpet covers the chancel and choir. An indirect lighting system has been installed, and the latest heating appliances keep the chapel comfortable." (4-19-1919).

Present Physical Appearance - "The Red Dragon"

The basic structural design of the Mission Club House (soon known as "the Red Dragon") has had virtually no exterior alteration from its original plan. The entryway porch, . . . also appears to have little structural change. The original shingle roof, however, has been replaced by a metal one; and the original wood siding was recovered by light, green-gray asbestos shingles. An (approximately) 3'4" by 4'1" outside lean-to shed, for the heating plant, was added on the east side of the building; and next to this an oil tank when the furnace was converted. The original chimney had to be rebuilt in 1956-1957, after it fell down; with the second one now covered up (and used for a Franklin stove) in the original location. Parts of the original chimney are still visible on the exterior wall.

The original large interior single room with its separate exterior outhouse, in 1946 was completely remodeled to provide modern living quarters for the local priest; and a better room for parish meetings (the outhouse was eliminated after almost 40 years of use). Further modest renovations have been added in the past ten years. At present there is a partitioned off, enclosed bathroom; and another partition for a large bedroom. The rest of the structure basically remains an open room (although a 3'8" high counter now divides kitchen space from the rest of the building.) The rafters--originally open--have been covered (at two different times)--first to make it usable as a parish hall, and second in the last decade, as a false ceiling of metal strips with movable panels. Fluorescent lighting panels have been added. The original wooden floors are now covered, in part, by linoleum and carpeting. The walls are now covered by plaster, in part of the structure--and paneling elsewhere.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Red Dragon Historic District

Continuation sheet AHRS # COR-170

Item number 7

Page 2 of 2

"The Red Dragon" now stands on a slight bluff--due to the need for a retaining wall being added about 15 feet away from the building--in 1964 when the State Highway Department had straightened out the curve into First Street. This also took a considerable chunk of land from the part of the block on which the "Red Dragon" is located. Just before this the whole Red Dragon Building was threatened when highway engineers called for the road to go right through the site of the building. Again, in 1969, the building was condemned. But several church members took a loan to finance the needed work; which resulted in it being used during the past decade as a rental structure providing income for the church.

Present Physical Appearance - St. George's Church, Cordova

Picturesque St. George's Church, now surrounded by large pine trees, stands as an excellent example of late 19th century English church architecture. The original wooden boardwalk, repaired and replaced over the years, has been replaced by a gravel walkway. In general, the church exterior (except for cosmetics) is as it was when first built. The building was painted a reddish color (on much of the exterior) in 1979--although part of the steeple and some area at the rear have not yet been completed. The roof now leaks, and is in sore need of replacement. The exterior stairway that led from the sacristy had to be removed, due to snow damage. The stair door is now blocked on the inside, by a large bookcase. A dossal cloth hangs behind the altar--replacing one original Ziegler oil painting (that had so deteriorated that the paint was falling off). Another painting (Christ on Calvary) by the Rev. E. P. Ziegler hangs in the rear of the church. The original red interior carpet has been replaced by a similar type. The stairway leading to the basement (from the rear of the church) was temporarily torn down at its base (summer of 1980) to facilitate laying of the full concrete basement. The heating system was totally modernized in 1980, with 3/4" or 1" pipes buried in the cement for the eventual addition of full plumbing to the basement. (There has never been running water in the church.) Digging was also done, in 1980, around the foundation, with tiles placed to improve drainage and to keep water out of the new concrete basement.

Platted in 1927 as parcel 202, just off Block 5, the designated historic site is somewhat triangularly shaped--with north boundary abutting Block 5; a 200' east boundary and 175' along 2nd Street. The west-by-south boundary converges diagonally along the curvature of Lake Avenue as it leads into 1st Street. The historic district now comprises a church reserve site approximately half the area of a standard Cordova city block, but adequate for anticipated future use. Yet here, insitu are the only two major buildings which ever occupied the grounds. Both the "Red Dragon" and St. George's Church structures are sited--just as built early in this century--within the now proposed historic district.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

RED DRAGON HISTORIC DISTRICT

AHRS #COR-170

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1 of 4

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

The Kennecott Copper Corporation (Morgan-Guggenheim) recognized the Episcopalian's valuable services by giving a generous contribution for construction of St. George's Church--dedicated to the memory of E. C. Hawkins, chief engineer of the Copper River & Northwestern Railroad--a communicant to the earlier Mission, and life-long member of the Church.

In 1925 the Cordova Church Women's Guild decided to re-open the once library facilities in the Red Dragon; and it served for many years thereafter as Cordova's first Public Library.

Early History of Cordova

The City of Cordova owes its existence to the dream of an All-American railroad--to open the gold fields of the Klondike and the Arctic Interior of the 1890's--also to the discoveries that occurred in the Copper River area, beginning in 1899, with the Nikolai copper lode discovery. This was followed by discovery of the Bonanza Mine (later the great Kennecott complex); discovery of gold on the Bremer River and on the Nizina Rivers; the rise in copper prices; and the anticipated production of the Bering River coal fields. (Construction, actually, was begun on five separate competitive railroads.) Due to President Theodore Roosevelt's withdrawal of all of Alaska's coal fields, only the Copper River and Northwestern was completed. The 1911 completion resulted largely from heavy financial backing of the giant Guggenheim-Morgan interests.

M. J. Heney (already a legendary figure) named this new seaport "Cordova," as it sprang up near the older Native fishing village of Eyak. By 1905, Heney had completed his survey, filed the right-of-way, and purchased an old abandoned cannery at Eyak, as headquarters. He began construction in the spring of 1906, after the expensive Katalla breakwater had washed away, and the Morgan-Guggenheim syndicate purchased Heney's right-of-way. They hired Heney to build "with great dispatch" the Copper River & Northwestern Railroad --so that it could service their high-grade copper mines at Kennecott.

During this race to build railroads in the area, the Episcopal church sought to serve the hundreds, and eventually thousands, of people who came in during construction. The church had built missions in Alaskan boom areas before. Thus the Rev. E. P. Newton felt, as he walked through the old town of Eyak in December 1907, that a Christian recreation center, "open day and night, seven days a each week," would be more useful for the early boom days--than a formal church. Thus was born "The Red Dragon," located on donated railroad ground, just off the original townsite. July 14, 1908, was its opening day. The St. George's Mission was the second building in Cordova--just four days after the Northern Saloon (whose owner had outbid Rev. Newton for a pile of scarce lumber) won the race to be the first completed structure in the new boom camp of Cordova.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Red Dragon Historic District Item number 8
AHRS #COR-170 Page 2 of 4

M. J. Heney (generous man that he was; and friend of Episcopal Bishop Rowe), offered and gave a substantial first donation for building the Mission. Rev. E. P. Newton, its founder, later described the facility:

"In the first year of the town, "the Red Dragon" offered the best facilities for social life. It was free, and open to anybody and everybody Men drop in at all times, in varying numbers. Over one hundred (were) counted at one time. . . Its hospitality much enjoyed by those who have wintered in town, often with very slender margins of cash. Such persons spent hours daily in the club room. And when storms are raging, we put our coffee pot and chaffing dish into commission. And with such viands as we could be scraped together, was served a light luncheon to the crowd so that none of us needed to foresake the cozy hearthstone and face the storm. Social evenings were a feature of life, the men entertaining each other; each (and all) contributing to the general pleasure!"

Built well to fill a much existing need for wholesome fellowship and recreation among railroaders and miners, this bright, railroad-red-painted St. George's Mission was affectionately dubbed "The Red Dragon," the name it has always since been called.

Eustace P. Ziegler

Into this lively camp, on a cold day in January 1909, landed Eustace P. Ziegler. A short, well-educated, slender and fastidiously dressed man (he scarcely looked like the kind of a "boomer" found in a rough Alaskan frontier setting.) But this 27 year old Lay Missionary actually had spent his boyhood years on the Detroit docks; and he had worked, summers, at odd jobs in Michigan's rough logging camps. Ziegler soon traveled widely, up and down the railroad line, with other seagoing visits along the coast--missionary trips that were to furnish colorful subject material for the artistic career that would develop during his initial years at the Red Dragon and then at St. George's Church (which he designed and then served, as its first minister).

Eustace Paul Ziegler's activities (at the Red Dragon) included staging boxing bouts on Saturday nights, and keeping plenty of reading matter on hand. At every opportunity he traveled Alaska extensively--by rail, foot, dogsled and boat. He painted graphic, stylish modern portraits of the Alaskans that he met, exciting scenery (generally included to show human activity), renditions of traditional religious scenes, and even did some oil paintings on building windows (the Red Dragon and elsewhere). His paintings were displayed and for sale, in a local drugstore. Shortly after Ziegler's marriage, in 1911, Bill Fursman (from the drugstore) asked him to do his largest (16' x 20') oil--a

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Red Dragon Historic District

Continuation sheet AHRS # COR-170

Item number 8

Page 3 of 4

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

mountain scene--for public display. E. T. Stannard, President of Alaska Steamship saw and purchased this great masterwork. Later Mr. Stannard figured prominently in the effort to bring Ziegler to Seattle where he enjoyed years as a popular, established, Northwest Coast artist of national reputation and acclaim.

As Cordova continued to grow; so did the need for a formal Episcopal church. Ziegler had already decided to study for the priesthood. He attended formal seminary, and was ordained an Episcopal priest on September 17, 1916. He continued his art work with gusto. Several copies of famous old masters (in his own special style) were done during this period--including a "Nativity Scene" and a "Crucifixion", for St. Stephens Church at Fort Yukon, Alaska. When the Bishop decreed that a permanent Cordova Church building was imperative, Ziegler designed, in the English architectural tradition, St. George's. For its altarpiece he painted a large derviative oil of Reuben's "Descent from the Cross," (unfortunately now so damaged by dampness and frost that it has been removed and possibly lost). A "crucifixion" painting by Ziegler is also displayed in the rear of the church.

In 1920, Ziegler took a year's sabbatical to study at Yale University School of Art. After his return, and while on a missionary trip with Bishop Rowe, he received the telegram offering him a commission to paint a series of murals for the Alaska Steamship offices in Seattle. Bishop Rowe persuaded the minister to accept the commission. Upon completion of the painting, Ziegler returned, briefly, to Cordova. He then moved, permanently to Seattle in September of 1924, becoming a leading regional figure in the art world. Well into the 1960's, however, he returned to Alaska nearly every summer, to continue his arts and water color artistry. His various activities included the illustrating of books. He designed the cover of the Alaskan Churchman which has been used continuously since 1923. His series of drypoint etchings, reproduced on Alaska Steamship menus, in addition to his many paintings are now placed in prominent private and public collections of the Nation.

In 1958, Ziegler described his "splendid" years in Cordova, saying:

"I wish I was as rich and prosperous now as I was at that time, getting \$750 a year and living in the Red Dragon-a tent beside it. The Red Dragon and Cordova paid me more than I can express." (Hodgkins Letter, 5-11-58).

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Red Dragon Historic District
AHRS COR-170

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4 of 4

For HCRS use only

received

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The Red Dragon has indeed served Cordova well since its beginning. From the initial role as a seven-day-a-week club house (and auxillary place of worship) it became headquarters for the American Red Cross during World War I; then editorial offices for the Alaska Churchman in the 1920's under Rev. Ziegler, and others. Sunday school classes, meetings of both secular and religious groups, have been, and continue to be held there; a priest's residence for years and now; once again--as well as a refuge of lonely men--who needed a wholesome place to rest and reflect. In 1925, the church Women's Guild reopened the Red Dragon as a Public Library; a function that served for many years. (By 1938 it held over 5,000 volumes.)

After St. George's Church was built, the Red Dragon was freed from the need to also be used for worship services. St. George's Church has performed the requirements well for more than half a century.

Many persons prominent in the building and operation of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad were benefited by both the Red Dragon and St. George's Church.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

Red Dragon Historic District

AHRS # COR-170

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

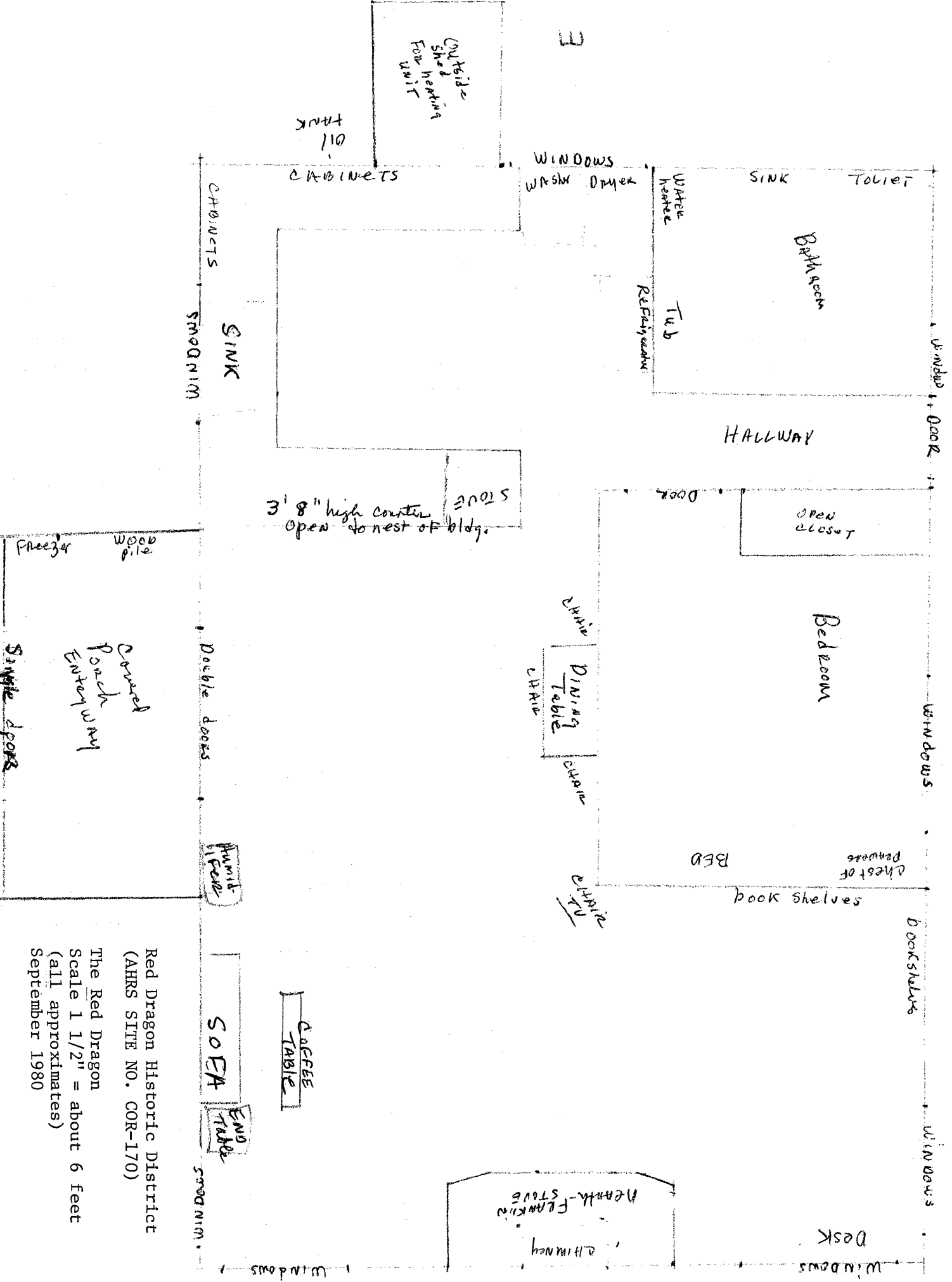
Page 1 of 1

For HCRS use only

received

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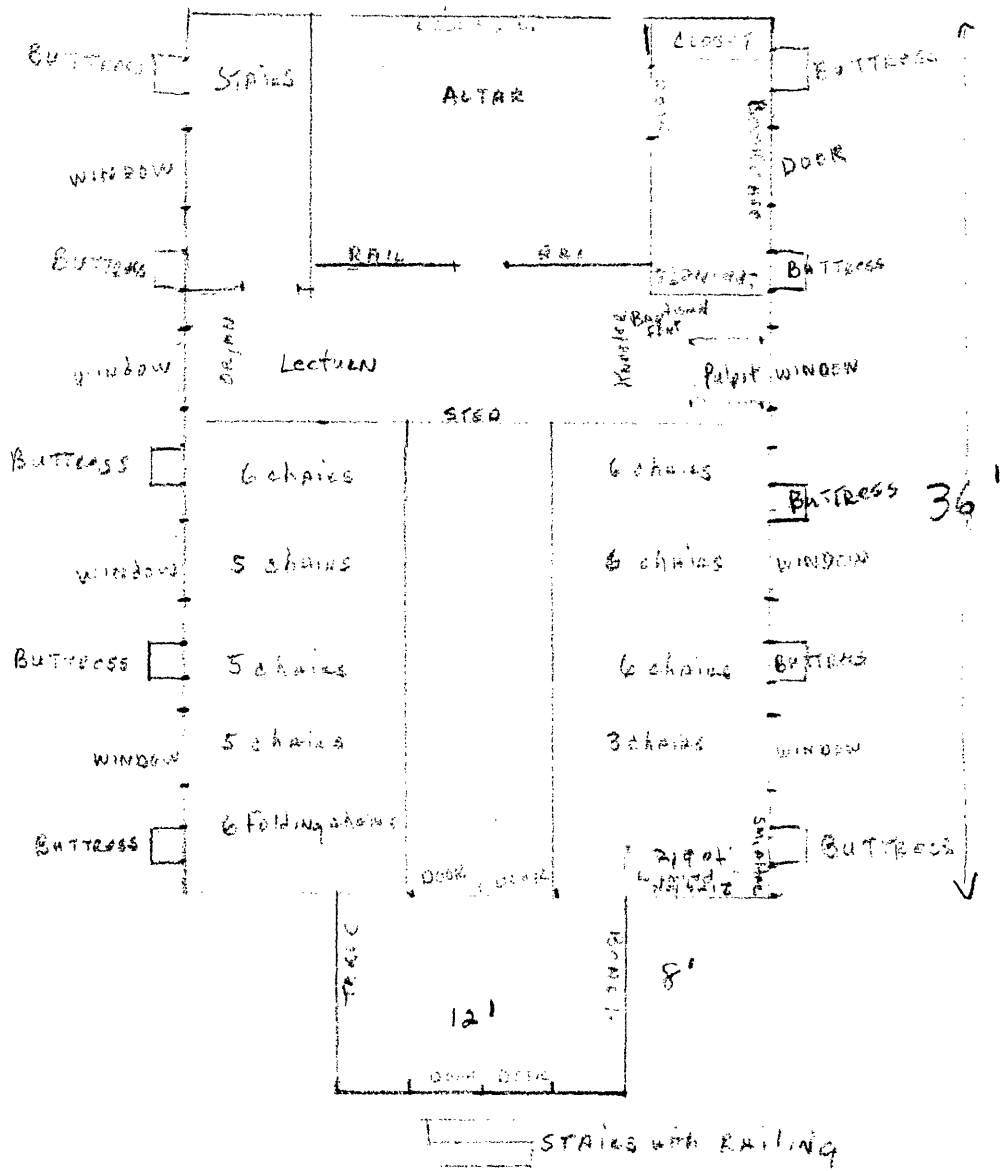
- "Dedicate Episcopal Church Tomorrow," The Cordova Daily Times, April 19, 1919.
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Anchorage, AK 1975.
- Hoffman, Fergus, "The Active Life of Eustace Ziegler," Seattle Post-Intelligencer,
January 19, 1969.
- Newton, E. P., "The Red Dragon of Cordova," Alaska Yukon Magazine, December 1910,
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- St. George's Church Building Contract, April 10, 1918.
- Ziegler, Eustace P., Letters to the Rev. Lewis Hodgkins, January 4, 1957, and
May 11, 1958.



Red Dragon Historic District
 (AHRS SITE NO. COR-170)

The Red Dragon
 Scale 1 1/2" = about 6 feet
 (all approximates)
 September 1980

24'



Red Dragon Historic District
(AHR SITE NO. COR-170)

St. George's Church (Floor plan)

Scale 1/8" = 1'

COPPER RIVER & NORTHWESTERN R.R. CO.
TOWN & SHOPS

NOTE: THE RAILROAD COMPANY HAS BEEN ADVISED THAT THE
TOWN OF RED DRAGON IS A PUBLIC PLACE AND THE
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Red Dragon Historic District
(AHR SITE NO. COR-170)
Church Reserve 202
Cordova Townsite
Sanborn Map, August 1927

SCALE 100 FT TO AN INCH



235

4

2ND

5

1ST

2

A. AV.

FRONT

WATER

One Inch

200

201

Orca

Inlet



RED DRAGON
202

CORDOVA MILL & LUMBER CO.

SPIN MILL, METAL PLANING MILL
CAPT. 25,000 IN 4-HOURS
NO NIGHT MATCHES
POW. STAY MILL HOUSE
CITY WATER 100' TO HOUSE

LUMBER SHED

PLANING MILL

SPIN MILL

CHEMICAL