

Case Study: The Historic Preservation of the Sitka Hotel Sitka, Alaska

Proposed Renovations and City
Commission review



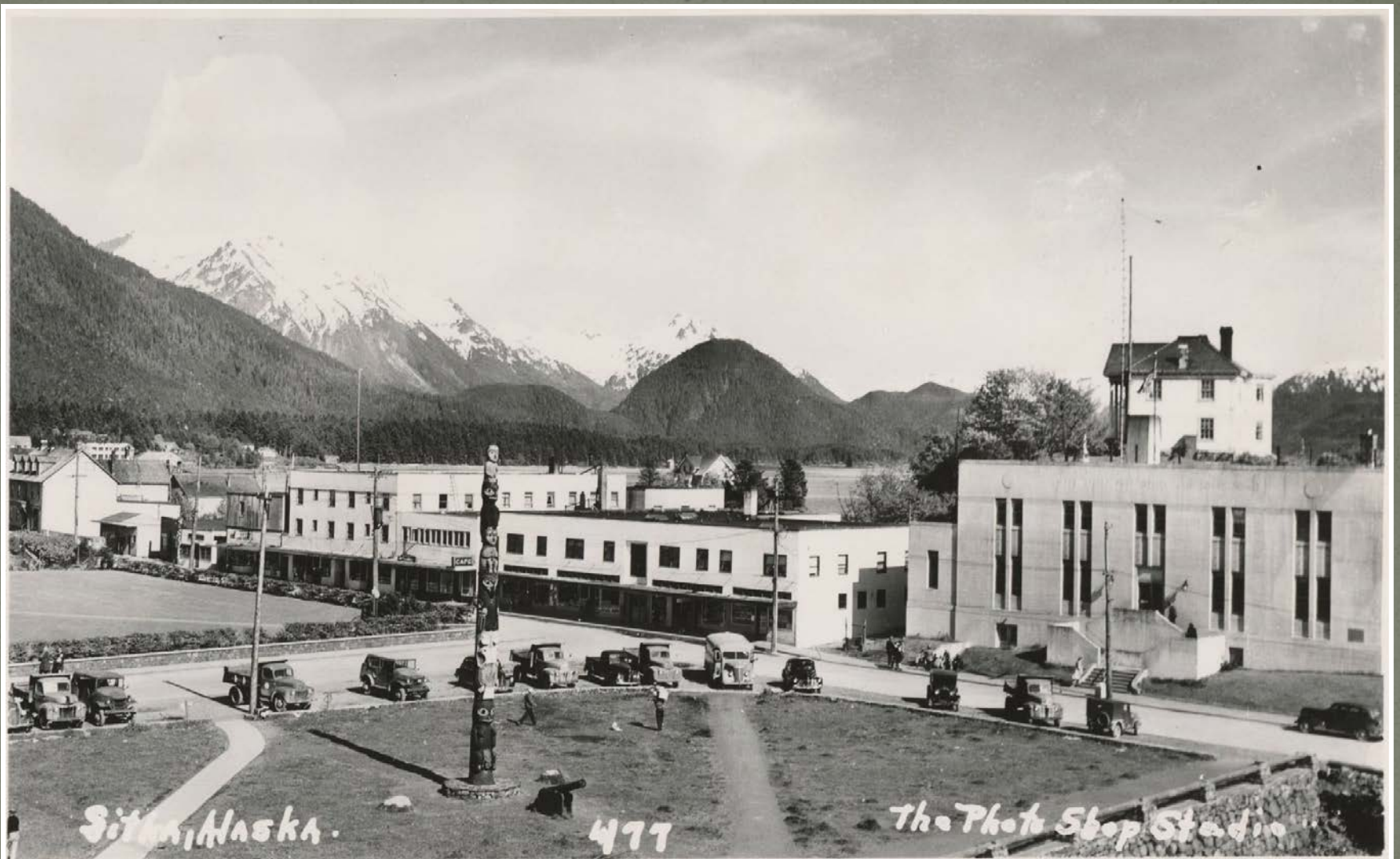
Background

- Constructed in 1940 to house contractor Seims Drake during the construction of the World War II-Sitka Naval Operating Base and U.S. Army Coastal Defenses (National Landmark)
- Hotel annex added in 1941. 67 rooms and three business establishments, the Sitka Café (Bakery), Sitka Liquor Store and the barbershop all received some damage (DeArmond, n.d.)
- 1982 – Included in the *Downtown Commercial Historical and Structural Survey* (Construction Engineering Services, Stoker Construction, Inc., 1982)

Background cont'd

- 2014 – Included in the *Historic Structures Survey Report (HSSR)* and *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Narrative for Lincoln Street, Sitka, Alaska* Recorded in AHRS as SIT-00988 (True North Sustainable Development Solution [TNSDS,2014]) per efforts of the Sitka Revitalization Group
- Sitka Hotel recorded in AHRS as SIT-0967 and recommended as Eligible for the National Register (TNSDS, 2014)
- Building suffered from neglect for many years
- Building purchased by private wealthy real estate investor in 2014 who proposes renovations to the property in 2015.

Historic/Current Façade



Seward, Alaska.

477

The Photo Shop Studio

204 June 2, 1944

Historic/Current Façade cont'd



Current Façade Condition



Historic Features Identified in the 2014 Historic District Survey

(TNSDS, 2015)

Primary Features:

- Parapet
- Storefront
- Awning
- One-to-Three stories

Secondary Features:

- Wood lap or spray concrete siding
- Ordered and pronounced fenestration patterns and groupings
- Commercial entity signage
- Ornamented/pronounced kickplate below the storefront
- Windows

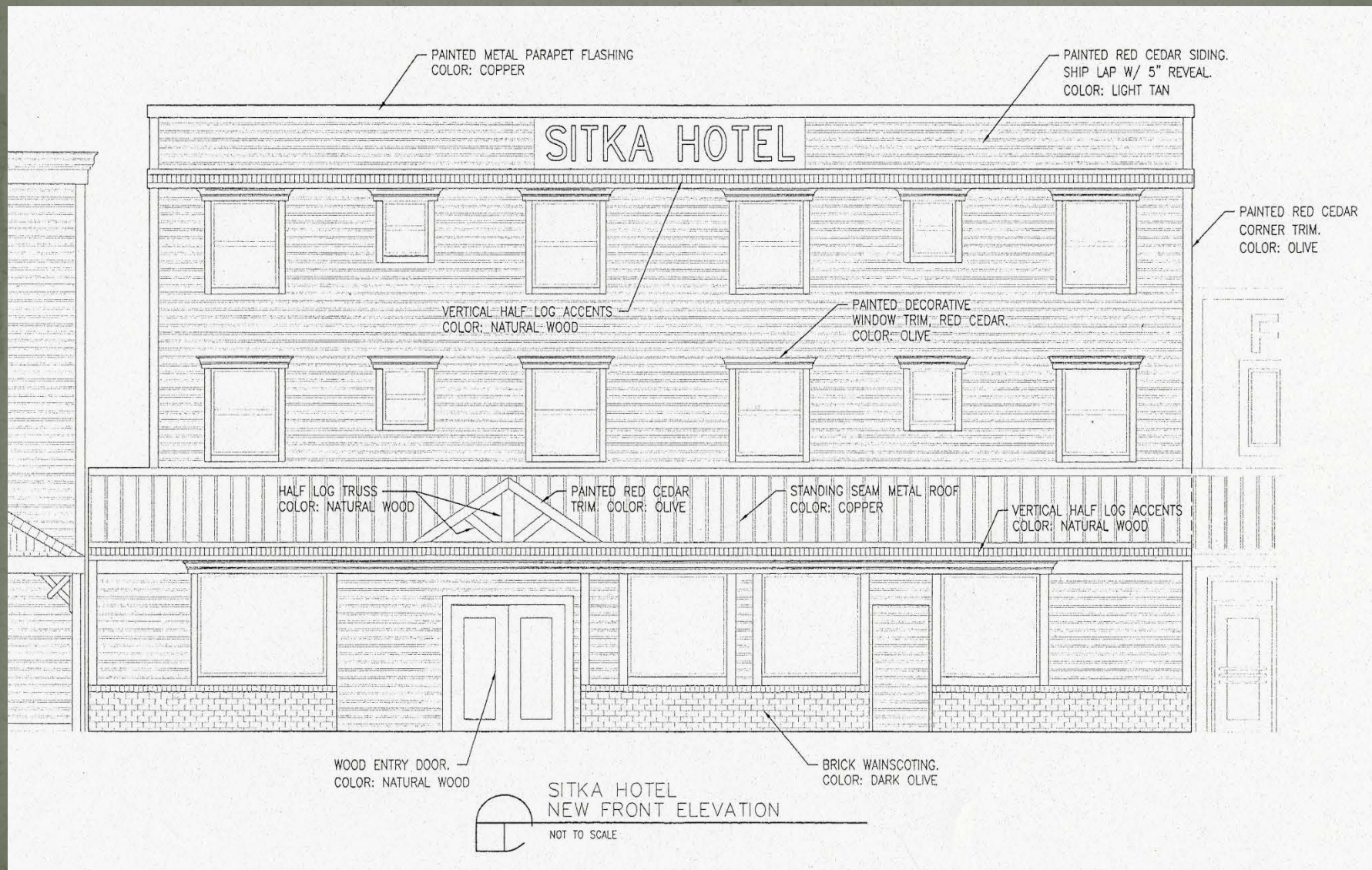
A second feature type is a character-defining feature.



These include:

- Stone retaining wall
- Sidewalk paving style – materials, patterns, etc.
- Viewshed
- Purpose and use of the building

Proposed Alterations



Application for Review by the Sitka Historic Preservation Commission

B. Agency undertaking project: (circle)

Private

City

State

Federal

Department RECEIVED OCT 05 2015

C. Date Agency received proposed project: _____

D. Are Federal funds involved (grants, funding, agency)

yes no

E. Are State funds involved (grants, funding, agency)

yes no

F. Will the project affect a National Historic Landmark or a site in the National Register of Historic Places? (See Appendix A)

yes no

G. Is the site listed in the Alaska Heritage Resource Survey inventory?

yes no

If yes, Site Number _____ Preservation Status _____
(refer to AHRS inventory for more information)

H. Is the Project within the Sitka Indian Village or Downtown Sitka

yes no

I. Build date of current structure 1938-1940?

J. Describe the proposed project

New Siding, Roofing, Entry Door

K. Purpose/Objectives for the undertaking

To Beautify Building & Eliminate water infiltration

Historic Preservation Opportunities Shared with the Applicant

- 20% Federal Tax Credit
- Rehabilitation Grant Opportunities
- Marketing Opportunities (Tourism top industry in Sitka)
- Social Contribution to Community (history lesson)
- Aesthetically cohesive with other downtown structures
- Community pride

Sitka Historic Preservation Commission Challenges

- Historic District Survey and Nomination in draft form
- No downtown design guidelines
- Lack of knowledge of Historic Preservation protocols and resources by Commission members

Sitka Planning Department Staff Challenges

- New to Position
- No design guidelines or enforceable preservation ordinances
- Neutral position with Commission

Results of Commission Review

- Applicant informed of opportunities for maintaining historic character
- Majority Commission passed renovations as presented by the Applicant

Consequences of Passage

- Applicant will move forward with renovations that take this property out of its historic character
- Alterations to this contributing property compromise the Lincoln Street Historic District nomination and economics opportunities for this status
- A neglected building is seeing new life

Concurrent Review of Rehabilitation of the Sitka Pioneer s' Home

- At the same Commission meeting, Applicant and Historic Architect Sean Boily, on behalf of the State of Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services submitted a request for review concrete repairs to the Sitka Pioneers' Home
- Built in 1934, the Home (SIT-00097) is on the National Register of Historic Places



Pioneers' Home Application for Commission Review

B. Agency undertaking project: (circle)

Private

City

State

Federal

Department

DHSS

C. Date Agency received proposed project: ~~9/1/15~~ 10/1/15

D. Are Federal funds involved (grants, funding, agency) yes no

E. Are State funds involved (grants, funding, agency) yes no

F. Will the project affect a National Historic Landmark or a site in the National Register of Historic Places? (See Appendix A) yes no

G. Is the site listed in the Alaska Heritage Resource Survey inventory? yes no
If yes, Site Number SIT-097 Preservation Status _____
(refer to AHRS inventory for more information)

H. Is the Project within the Sitka Indian Village or Downtown Sitka yes no

I. Describe the proposed project

REPAIRS TO CONCRETE FACADE OF BUILDING - ENTRY PORTICO

J. Purpose/Objectives for the undertaking

REPAIR TO DETERIORATING MATERIALS, REPLACEMENT OF WINDOWS w/ HISTORIC PROFILE.

K. Attach:

- Copy of a map of the proposed project including latitudinal and longitudinal information
- Property owner information
- Any other pertinent information

→ ATTACHED SUBMITTAL TO STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE..

Mail Coversheet and attachments to:

Sitka Historic Preservation Commission
C/O City and Borough of Sitka
100 Lincoln Street
Sitka, Alaska 99835

→ SENT VIA EMAIL 10/1/15

Excerpt from Cover Letter to State Historic Preservation Office for Review

- Along with the application, NorthWind Architects attached a very extensive report, the *Sitka Pioneer Home Limited Concrete Façade Condition Survey (NorthWind, 2014)*
- *Report included current condition photos and detailed analysis of efforts to maintain or restore historic features.*
- *Historic architects, and a forensic architecture and engineering firm consulted*

As you are aware the Sitka Pioneer Home is listed on the National Register of Historic places. I have been contacted by the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to assist them with historically appropriate repairs to this structure, and I in turn have enlisted the assistance of a forensic architecture and engineering firm with extensive expertise in repairs to historic concrete structures. This expertise shall guide the repair process.

Our current work scope is to design repairs to the front entry portico and roof, where water is infiltrating the concrete parge coat and deteriorating both the finishes and the structural concrete. We intend to remove the non-historic vinyl windows and repair the surrounding concrete, and then finish that concrete with a new parge coat, textured to match original, followed by an all-acrylic paint coating. We will replace the windows with new windows profiled similar to the originals (the originals being long gone). We shall remove the sheet membrane roofing, and after repairing the concrete deck we shall install a new applied membrane roof with wall terminations that will better keep water from penetrating the surrounding concrete. Our expectation is to conduct repairs that will restore both the integrity of the weather skin of the structure and retain the original aesthetic and detail. We believe this work will have no adverse effect on the historic building.

With this letter you will find two documents that first identify issues with the Sitka Pioneer Home, and second illustrate and trial repair completed this summer with photos documenting the process. We intend to base ongoing design and subsequent construction on this process, and will follow up with a submittal of those design documents to your office for review and confirmation prior to bidding and construction in the spring of 2016.

NorthWind, 2015

Photos from the *Limited Concrete Façade Condition Survey* (NorthWind Architects, 2014)



Figure 7. Debonded paint coating with organic growth under coating.



Figure 8. Cracks with organic growth in cementitious parge coat at porch parapet.

Results of Commission Review

- Applicant praised for extensive efforts in rehabilitation and restoration of this significant historic property.
- By unanimous vote, Commission passed restoration as presented by the Applicant

Consequences of Passage

- Historic character will be preserved
- Serves and an example of the procedures for rehabilitating, restoring, and renovating historic properties

Actions by the Sitka Revitalization Group

- Pursue CLG grant funding to review and complete the Lincoln Street Historic District nomination
- Look to future grant opportunities to establish design guideline
- Group will develop talking points and approach the property owners on individually expressing appreciation for restoring the building, and sharing their mission of downtown economic revitalization and the role historic properties play in this efforts

Conclusions

- Without local preservation ordinances, Sitka's City Staff are helpless to protect resources and Sitka's historic properties continue to be threatened
- Without an educated and effective Commission, Sitka's historic properties continue to be threatened
- We are fortunate to have legally established State and Federal protections for historic properties

Historic photos courtesy of Bonnie Brenner



Downtown Sitka circa 1940s