

SITKA HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN



**Sitka Historic Preservation Commission
City and Borough of Sitka
Sitka, Alaska**

**Sitka, Alaska
September 2016**

A Guide for Cultural Resource Preservation, Protection, and Advocacy

The Sitka Historic Preservation Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This strategic plan provides goals, objectives, recommendations, and proposed actions for a historic preservation program within the City and Borough of Sitka. It was developed with the input and participation of many individuals and groups across the municipality, and with the assistance of the State of Alaska's Office of History and Archaeology under the Department of Natural Resources. Comments were received from surveys, public meetings, and personal communications. Over the next several years, in addition to survey and inventory work, we will focus on education and outreach, increasing funds for historic preservation, and on assisting the community of Sitka in land use planning and the promotion of sustainable development. In partnership with agencies, organizations and individuals, we will work to identify, interpret and preserve ancient and historic properties, both tangible and intangible, for the enrichment of the present citizenry and the benefit of future generations.

The development of this plan was made possible through a federal historic preservation fund-matching grant, administered by the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, and reserved for communities of Certified Local Government status. The match was provided by the City and Borough of Sitka and the in-kind services of Sitka Historic Preservation Commission members. The Commission, interested community members and organizations, and the Office of History and Archaeology reviewed and commented on the plan during its development; those comments were considered in the development of the plan.

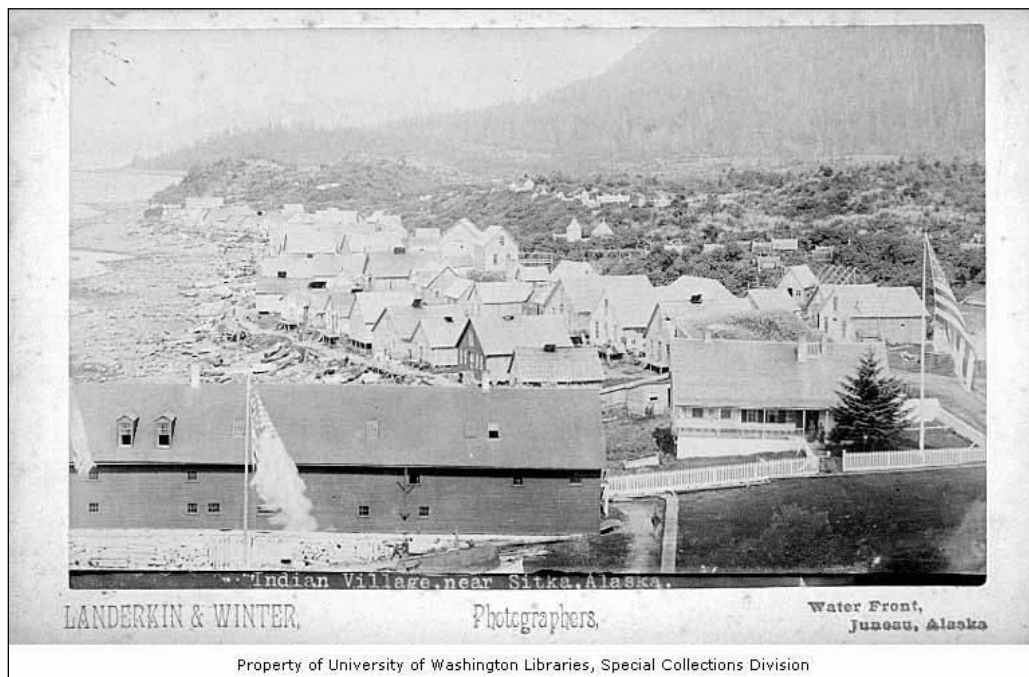


Figure 1 *Tlingit houses known as "Indian Village" with Russian Warehouse and American Flag in foreground, Sitka, ca. 1890. Landerkin and Winter Collection. PH Coll 334. (University of Washington Libraries)*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|---|
| AHRS | Alaska Heritage Resources Survey |
| ANB | Alaska Native Brotherhood |
| ANCSA | Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act |
| CBS | City and Borough of Sitka |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NFSR(s) | National Forest Service Road(s) |
| NHPA | National Historic Preservation Act |
| NPS | National Park Service |
| NRHP | National Register of Historic Places |
| OHA | Office of History and Archaeology (Alaska) |
| SHPC | Sitka Historic Preservation Commission |
| SHPO | State Historic Preservation Office(r) (Alaska) |
| STA | Sitka Tribe of Alaska |
| TNF | Tongass National Forest |
| USC | United States Code |
| USFS | United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service |
| USGS | United States Geological Survey |
| YBP | Years Before Present |

1. Introduction and Legal Basis for Historic Preservation

Historic preservation as a valid public purpose was established during the twentieth century. The U.S. Constitution recognizes that states have a right to use the police power to regulate use of private land and establish public controls (*Euclid v. Amber 1926*).

The U.S. Supreme Court specifically recognized historic preservation as a legitimate function of government and local historic preservation laws as an appropriate means to accomplish a community's historic preservation goals. This ruling was made in *Penn Central Transportation v. City of New York, U.S. 108 (1978)* and has not been reversed (Cornell University, 1978).

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 16 U.S.C. §470 et seq. (National Park Service, 2006), further declared historic preservation as an appropriate use of the government's legal powers and established the federal government's leadership role in this area. It also created State Historic Preservation Offices and, in subsequent amendments to the Act, the Certified Local Government (CLG) program was created. This partnership among federal, state, tribal, and local governments is the framework for public preservation activities nationwide today.

Sitka is one of thirteen communities in Alaska that qualify as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the State of Alaska's Office of History and Archaeology and the Department of the Interior's National Park Service. One of the requirements for status as a CLG is that the municipality prepares and regularly updates a historic preservation plan. In practice, historic preservation plans are updated every two to five years. The Sitka Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC) was established to serve the duties of a CLG and drafted a plan in 1994 after the 1993 adoption of Ordinances No. 92-1075 and 93-1105 (City and Borough of Sitka, 1992, 2010). These ordinances established and defined the scope of a municipal Historic Preservation Program at the time. This plan is an update and revision of the original plan and is intended to address a range of issues identified in the program's operations over the last twenty years, and meets CLG requirements for periodic review and revisions.

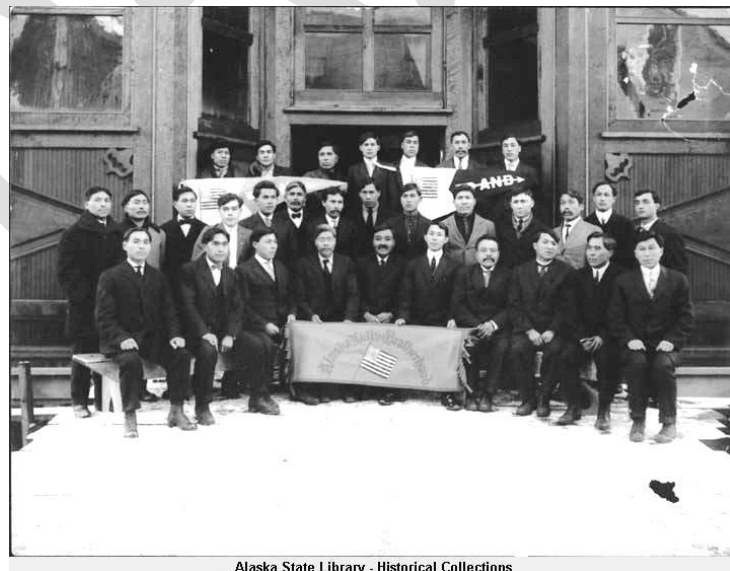


Figure 2 ANB Convention at Sitka, Alaska, 1914. Alaska State Library Portrait File Collection. Photo # ASL-P01-4570 (Alaska State Library - Historical Collections)

2. A Vision for Historic Preservation

By setting in motion goals outlined in this plan, Historic Preservation in the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) will be:

- An essential strategy for maintaining a community's unique sense of place
- A powerful tool for economic development
- A significant generator of jobs, income, and tax revenues
- An important way to understand how diverse cultures have come together to shape the community we know today
- A broad, inclusive movement that integrates its interests into community decision-making activities so that resources are identified, preserved, experienced, and enjoyed

In a community with such an abundant inventory of historic resources as Sitka, a preservation plan would obviously help to establish priorities for the designation and protection of National Register sites and national historic landmarks and districts. Sitka has such wealth of historic resources that it would be possible to list more than 300 properties on a local Sitka Register and further designate several local historic districts. As setting priorities can be difficult because there is insufficient information to decipher which resources are most important, what districts to protect, or how historic districts and landmarks fit into a large vision of the growth and development for the CBS. A first reason why a preservation plan is needed is to help establish priorities for what needs to be protected and preserved. Priorities for preservation also need to be examined in relation to new development and to other changes shaping the community economically, socially, environmentally and culturally. The CBS must be able to adapt to new and changing needs, as not every place can or should be preserved exactly as it is. In addition to assistance in setting priorities, a preservation plan can help address other issues such as, an often negative and inaccurate perception about the historic preservation, the lack of capacity of preservation organizations and their inability to improve due to lack of resources, and a growing realization that historic preservation contributes greatly to our quality of life. However, three specific factors suggest why a preservation plan is needed now.

Historic preservation is beneficial to the community in the following ways:

- **Culturally:** a community is richer for having the tangible presence of past eras and historic styles.
- **Economically:** a community benefits from increased property values and tax revenues when historic buildings are protected and made the focal point of revitalization and when the community is attractive to visitors seeking heritage tourism opportunities.
- **Socially:** a community benefits when citizens take pride in its history and mutual concern for the protection of the historic building fabric.
- **Developmentally:** a community benefits from having a concerted and well-defined planning approach for the protection of historic buildings while accommodating healthy growth.
- **Environmentally:** a community benefits when historic buildings are restored or rehabilitated rather than demolished and disposed of in the community landfill.
- **Educationally:** a community benefits through teaching local heritage and the understanding of the past and the resultant cultural respect by its citizens.

2.1. Comprehensive Planning

The CBS Planning Commission intends to update and revise the comprehensive and land use plans for the municipality. It envisions historic preservation being an explicit component of new plans. Its general view is that a new comprehensive plan will not only be a land use plan, but also will take more of the form of a policy statement and vision for the future, with long-term and short-term strategies to achieve that vision. The CBS Planning Commission further sees preservation as not simply a function of the SHPC, but one that should pervade many areas of municipal government. Clearly, it is important for historic preservation to be represented in a new comprehensive plan for the city and borough. Since the CBS Planning Commission is just beginning the development of an approach to a comprehensive plan, now is the appropriate time for the historic community to develop its ideas and contribute them to the CBS Planning Commission's work.

2.2. Zoning Reform

The CBS has also made a commitment to reforming the current zoning codes. One of the key ideas that have emerged from public discussions about zoning reform is the desire to create a code that will help to preserve the existing character of Sitka, particularly at the neighborhood and district level. Such a code would be of great benefit to historic presentation. Recent work on zoning reform in Denver, Colorado, has suggested that certain types of "form-based" zoning codes can be helpful to historic preservation and provide for strategic relationships between zoning, historic districts and conservation districts. The implementation of a new code through a neighborhood based re-mapping program would also benefit from historic data about neighborhoods generated by a citywide survey of historic resources.

2.3. Economic Development

In 2011, the National Trust for Historic Preservation commissioned a report of the economic impacts of historic preservation in the United States (Rypkema, 2005). This was part of an effort to encourage public policy makers to view historic preservation as a more important area of interest than merely preserving distinctive architecture or cultural sites. Their report concluded that in the practice of historic preservation (See Appendix for statistics):

- Rehab costs are roughly the same as building new
- Creates jobs
- Increases property values
- Conserves resources
- Uses existing public investment
- Supports small business
- Revitalizes main streets
- Attracts investment
- Attracts visitors
- Prevents sprawl
- Creates affordable housing
- Is good economic development

Clearly, historic preservation has the potential to be a significant factor in the economic development of the CBS, and a preservation plan would help to guide such efforts.

2.4. Statement of Historic Preservation Program Goals

City and Borough of Sitka Ordinance 2.58 (Ord. 93-1150 § 4, 1993; Ord. 92-1075 § 4[part], 1992.) identifies as one of the Sitka Historic Preservation Commission's duties to:

B. Develop a local historic preservation plan including provision for identification, protection, and interpretation of the area's significant resources. Such a plan is to be compatible with the Alaska Historic Preservation Plan and produce information compatible with and for the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS). The plan shall be subject to review and approval by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka.

Therefore, the goals of the Sitka Historic Preservation Plan are to provide guidance and direction for the community in the preservation efforts of its heritage resources. In order to meet these goals, specific **Recommendations and Actions** are identified and discussed in the last section of this plan.

Goal 1: Identify, preserve, protect, and enhance Sitka's historic, archaeological, architectural, traditional, cultural, and scenic heritage.

Goal 2: Encourage consideration of archaeological, historical, and cultural resources in the planning and decision-making processes of the public and private sectors.

Goal 3: Educate and foster community pride and enable citizens and visitors to enjoy and learn about local history through the retention of the visible manifestation of this history.

Goal 4: Contribute to the economic vitality of the City and Borough of Sitka through the promotion of cultural heritage tourism and encouraging the expenditures associated with rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

Goal 5: Encourage new partnerships to expand and strengthen the historic preservation community.

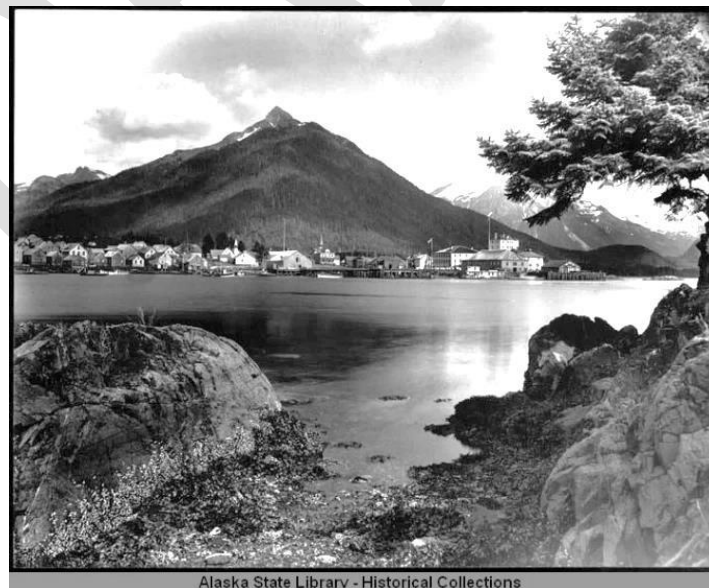


Figure 3 *Sitka.* (ca. 1913-1939), Wickersham State Historic Site Collection. Photographs, 1882-1930's. Photo # ASL-P277-002-072. (Alaska State Library - Historical Collections)

3. What Constitutes Historic Preservation Planning

3.1. Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation is the practice of protecting and preserving historic resources (also known as cultural resources) that reflect elements of local, state, or national cultural, social, economic, political, archaeological or architectural history. Preservation has many diverse purposes and rewards, including the strengthening of local economies, stabilization of property values, the fostering of civic beauty and community pride, and the appreciation of local and national history.

The history of a community contributes to its personality. Preserving the history of a place through its significant historic resources gives a community its unique character. Historic preservation provides a link to the roots of the community and its people. Overall, historic preservation adds to the quality of life. It involves much more than simply saving and restoring old buildings and sites of historic importance; there are economic, cultural, environmental, and educational benefits of historic preservation, all of which are inextricably connected to one another and to the living memory of involved communities.

3.2. Cultural Resources (Historic Properties)

Cultural Resources often referred to as *Historic Resources* or *Historic Properties*, are defined as districts, sites, structures, objects, or buildings that are significant in local, state or national history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. History encompasses all cultures, economic classes, and social, political, and private activities that form the background to the present.

3.3. Planning

Historic preservation efforts can be influenced by social, political, economic, legal, and other factors. These influences can come from private enterprises or public agencies. Successful preservation planning recognizes these influences and uses the process for resolving conflicts between various interest groups to reach consensus within the community.

With the adoption of a Historic Preservation Plan for Sitka's current and future residents, business owners and other property owners will know in advance how the community intends to develop over time and what it wants to preserve and protect. The plan will assist in providing for consistency among CBS policies that affect the historic, archaeological, and cultural landscape resources.

Why is Historic preservation planning is important:

- Clearly states the goals of historic preservation in the community
- Let residents know in advance how the community wants to grow and what the community wants to protect
- Assure consistency between various government policies that affects the community's historic resources
- Educate and inform citizens about their heritage and its value to the community
- Create an agenda for preservation activities and to create a way to measure progress in protecting historic resources
- Comprehensively address issues relating to tourism, zoning, traffic, and development patterns and designs that affect historic preservation
- Encourage economic development through the preservation of historic resources.
- Strengthen the political understanding of and support for historic preservation laws and policies



Figure 4 *Greek Church, Sitka, Alaska (St. Michael Cathedral, photographed in 1897). William P. Smith Collection, ca. 1897-1900. Photo #ASL-P339-15 (Alaska State Library - Historical Collections)*

4. Methods & Public Involvement

This plan has been prepared adhering to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation Planning* (see appendix). It began with research on the existing documents related to historic preservation within CBS government and the community's history and resources.

One of the goals in developing this plan was to obtain and incorporate comments from a wide range of people, organizations, and public agencies (see appendix). The following outreach efforts were implemented:

- In 2009, SHPC received a grant to write/update a Plan. The project was awarded to Arkos, Inc. of Glendale, AZ.
- During the winter of 2009/10, public meetings were held by the SHPC and consultant.
- With SHPC representatives, presentations were made to a number of organizations, business groups, and marketing professionals.
- Interviews were conducted with representatives of organizations involved in such aspect of preservation: as stewardship and interpretation of historic sites, protection of traditional cultural properties and landscapes, cultural heritage tourism, and advocacy.
- A one-page survey was distributed in key locations around the community, made available electronically on the CBS's website, and distributed via email to stakeholders.
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska representatives were invited to participate in public meetings.
- A draft from Arkos, Inc. was submitted and found by the SHPC to be, in effect, too general and lacking specific recommendations for Sitka.
- In 2011, due to grant time constraints, SHPC and the CBS contracted Sea Level Consulting of Sitka to take over the project and finalize the draft.

- A draft of the preservation plan was made available on the CBS's web page for public comment. A press release was also issued encouraging interested parties to review and comment on the draft.
- Since 2011, the Plan has been in draft with the volunteer commissioners tasked to edit and finish it.
- In 2016, the Planning Department began efforts to update Sitka's Comprehensive Plan. This intensified the need to complete a preservation plan for its incorporation into Sitka's Comprehensive Plan.
- In Fall/Winter 2016, the SHPC will submit this draft plan to the CBS Departments and Planning Commission and to the public for review of and comment. The SHPC will commence an educational campaign promoting the plan to the public.
- Following reviews, the SHPC intends to present the plan to the Assembly for adoption, anticipated in Winter/Spring 2017.

4.1. Public Survey

The following is a compilation of the 2010 public survey results in their ranking of concern:

Threats to Sitka's Historic Resources:

1. Lack of available funding for and/or maintenance
2. Lack of formal protection
3. Limited community awareness or appreciation
4. Little to no political support for historic preservation
5. Limited assistance to help preservation efforts
6. Poor physical conditions due to climate
7. Insensitive alterations to historic buildings
8. Re-development pressure
9. Historic buildings are obsolete, cannot meet today's functional needs
10. Non-local ownership

Address to Threats:

1. Educational programs
2. Technical help for restoration or rehabilitation
3. Award programs to recognize good preservation efforts
4. List of grants and resources available for historic preservation
5. Mandatory protections for historic buildings and areas
6. Written information about Sitka's historic buildings
7. Financial assistance for historic property owners
8. Protection for archaeological resources
9. Help in writing grant applications
10. Leadership on projects related to cultural heritage tourism

5. Historic Contexts and Themes

The significance, importance, of an historic property can only be judged and explained when it is evaluated within its historic context. As defined by the National Park Service:

Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear. Historians, architectural historians, folklorists, archeologists, and anthropologists use different words to describe this phenomenon such as trend, pattern, theme, or cultural affiliation, but ultimately the concept is the same. (National Park Service, 1997)

For example, the Alaskan Gold Rush Era between 1880 and 1914 is a context by which mining properties that remain and maintain integrity would be representative of this established historic era. NPS further describes historic context as “a comprehensive summary of all aspects of the history of the area.”

In order to decide whether a property is significant within its historic context, the following five things must be determined (National Park Service, 1997):

- The facet of prehistory or history of the local area, State, or the nation that the property represents
- Whether that facet of prehistory or history is significant
- Whether it is a type of property that has relevance and importance in illustrating the historic context
- How the property illustrates that history; and finally
- Whether the property possesses the physical features necessary to convey the aspect of prehistory or history with which it is associated

5.1. How to Evaluate a Property within its Historic Context

To identify what a property represents, its theme(s), geographical limits, and chronological period provide a perspective from which to evaluate the property's significance (National Park Service, 1997).

Historic contexts are historical patterns that can be identified through consideration of the history of the property and the history of the surrounding area. In accordance with the National Register Criteria, the historic context may relate to one of the following:

- An event or series of events, activities, or patterns that have made significant contributions to an area's development (Criterion A);
- Association with the life or lives of an important person (Criterion B);
- A building form, architectural style, engineering technique, or artistic values, based on a stage of physical development, or the use of a material or method of construction that shaped the historic identity of an area (Criterion C); or
- A research topic that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory potential to obtain more information (Criterion D)

A theme is a means of organizing properties into coherent patterns based on elements such as environment, social/ethnic groups, transportation networks, technology, or political developments that have influenced the development of an area during one or more periods of prehistory or history. A

theme is considered significant if it can be demonstrated, through scholarly research, to be important in American or local history (National Park Service, 1997).

5.2. Establishing Sitka's Historic Context and Themes

To assist the CBS in establishing a local historic context, an intensive survey of Sitka's cultural resources and historic properties was conducted in 1997 by Vanguard Research, Inc. The report is a thorough compilation of written reference materials that relate to historic properties identified, as well as historical, ethnographic, and archaeological publications, journals, travel guides and popular books that contain information about the history of Sitka and its surrounding environs. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of History and Archaeology, maintains a database repository of all cultural resources and historic properties identified in the State of Alaska, which is known as the *Alaska Heritage Resources Survey* (AHRS) database. Properties noted in the 1997 survey are included in the AHRS. The AHRS contains information on more than 45,000 reported cultural resources (archaeological sites, buildings, structures, objects or locations, etc.), from prehistoric to modern, and some paleontological sites within the State of Alaska. This data repository is restricted by state law to prevent unauthorized use and to protect identified cultural resources from unwarranted destruction (Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, 2015).

Themes in Alaska's history have been developed in the State of Alaska's *Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, and were also identified for Sitka in this 1997 report. Using established Themes, this plan continues to identify the pre-contact and historic make-up of the community in an effort to assist the community in creating local criteria for preservation and protection efforts. A thorough theme-based historic context can be found in the appendix.

5.3. Physical Setting

The City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, is located around Baranof Island and includes the southern portion of Chichagof Island among the Alexander Archipelago of the Pacific Ocean. It is the largest Borough in the United States by area and is surrounded by the Tongass National Forest, a coastal spruce forest environment, encompassing 2,811 square miles. The City of Sitka, on the west coast of Baranof Island, is the fifth-largest city by population (nearly 9,000) in Alaska. The name "Sitka" is derived from Sheey At'iká (a.k.a. Shee'tká) Kwáan, interpreted as "Outside Edge of a Branch Tribe" (Hope III 2003). The history of Sitka is partially told in its archaeological sites, historic buildings, artifacts, and rich oral traditions.

5.4. Abbreviated Cultural Chronology of Sitka (Historic Context, see appendix for context by Themes)

Pre-Contact (12,500+ YBP)

Much of the outer Northwest Coast was entirely ice-free and habitable at the end of the Pleistocene epoch near 14,000 years before present (YBP). Yet, evidence of settlement does not begin until the Holocene epoch, which correlates with the Paleomarine stage 12,500YBP, an archaeological stage of regional human occupation. Human occupation then underwent a Transitional stage at 6,500YBP, recorded to be in full development during the Northwest Coast Stage 4,500YBP. Archaeological discoveries continue to refine and update associated migration and settlement dates.

Sitka (Shee'tká or Sheey At'iká Kwáan) Territory (10,000-contact)

Human history of Southeast Alaska is part of the northernmost segment of the Northwest Coast cultural area, a region associated with the traditional territory of the Tlingit and, to a lesser extent, the Haida and Tsimshian. Evidence suggests the Tlingit have occupied the Alexander Archipelago from well into the prehistoric period and onward. The Sitka Tlingit are a tribe of the Northern Tlingit whose territory extends the full length of the Pacific coast of Chichagof and Baranof Islands from Point Urey to the north to Cape Ommaney on the southern tip of Baranof Island (de Laguna, 1990). Nearly all early ethnographic groups in the Northwest Coast culture followed settlement systems requiring movement between large, stable villages and smaller seasonal camps oriented toward specific resources. Although the Tlingit partook in hunting and trapping, salmon fishing was the dominant subsistence practice.

The first potential documented European contact with the Tlingit and Haida occurred in 1584, when Spanish explorers sailed up the Pacific coast as far as 57°30' north; however, no mention of contact with the native inhabitants was included in the documentation (Grinëv et al., 2005). In 1741, contact was reported to have been made when two boatloads of Russian sailors, under the command of Alexei Chirikov, disappeared in the vicinity of Kruzof Island (some scholars note Yakobi Island) near Sitka Sound. The men may have been killed by the local Tlingit; however, Tlingit oral history suggests these men had actually deserted because of the harsh conditions aboard their ship, and they later fled to an area around Klawock to avoid discovery by their compatriots (Grinev et al., 2005).

Establishment and Development of Sitka by Russians (1796-1867)

The Russians did not return to the area until the 1790s, and that was only to Sitka. In 1792, Catherine II of Russia granted a monopoly of the fur trade in Alaska to Grigori Shelikov of the Shelikof-Golikov Company. He, in turn, hired Alexander Alexeievich in 1790 to manage the fur enterprise in Russian-America. By 1796, they were in Southeast Alaska, trading arms for furs with the Tlingit and Haida. In 1799, Russian trading operations were consolidated into the Russian-American Company (RAC) and imperially chartered with a monopoly on the fur trade in Alaska. Alexander Baranov was made Chief Manager of this new consolidated venture, establishing two trading outposts; one in Yakutat Bay and another at what the Russians called Mikhailovsk or Redoubt Saint Michael (Old Sitka or Starrigavan Bay) (Arndt & Pierce, 2003).

During the fierce battle of 1804, the Russians drove most of the Tlingit on Baranof Island north allowing the Russian-American Company to take over the Tlingit Village at Sitka whereby Baranov relocated his company headquarters from Kodiak to Sitka. Sitka became known as the Russian capital of Alaska (Metcalf, 2011). However, by 1820, the Russians encouraged the return of the Tlingit and a substantial number of people who had left returned to Sitka and settled in an area allowed by the Russians known as the "Sitka Indian Village" located in downtown Sitka. The Village was also known as the "Ranche," a word the Russians had picked up doing business in California, and was separated from the rest of the town by a large wall. Between 1835 and 1837, a smallpox pandemic that affected much of northwest North America made its way through Southeast Alaska. The effects of the disease were devastating to the Native cultures of the region. It was lethal to the Tlingit, who generally experienced an overall 50 percent mortality rate (Boyd, 1999).

The Russians took advantage of large-scale harvesting of sea otters for pelts, and an ice trade with the continental United States, especially with miners of the California gold rush. However, the priority was the fur trade and mostly the sale of pelts to China with highly valued tea in return trade. The RAC branched into exports of lumber, fish, brick, and ice to California starting in the 1840s.

Purchase of Alaska by United States and Increased Resource Extraction and Economic Development (1867-1930s)

With the over-harvest and decline in sea otter populations, inconsistent cold weather for ice production, and the threat of the British in nearby Canada, Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867. After purchase, the U.S. Administration's District of Alaska established its first fort at Tongass, on the Alaska/Canadian border, and then Forts Wrangel(I) and Sitka. Sitka served as the *de facto*, and later the formal, seat of government. The Army departed in 1877, leaving territorial order to custom agents of the Department of Treasury. In the meantime, an influx of Euro-Americans began to settle and take advantage of abundant resources such as timber, fisheries, and minerals. As relations between the new settlers and Tlingit became evermore tense and resource extraction spiraled out of control, the U.S. Navy Revenue Service and a Marine troop stationed in Sitka attempted to regain and maintain control.

The Americanization of Alaska in the 1880s also brought American Presbyterian missionaries to Southeast Alaska, having a profound effect on the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people. Their institutionalized form of education and philosophy of public policy was radically different from that of the bilingual Russian Orthodox leaders. The Reverend Sheldon Jackson, who also served as U.S. General Agent for Education in Alaska in the late 19th century, led the campaign to acculturate the Native people.

In 1912, Peter Simpson, Rudolph Walton, and several other graduates of the Sitka Industrial School founded the Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB), and two years later, the Alaska Native Sisterhood formed. In the 1920s, the newly banded ANB began actively seeking equality and redress of grievances. They championed causes for voting rights, health and welfare, Native property rights, anti-discrimination laws, and the imposition of residency rights for commercial fishing (Metcalf, 2011).

Under the influence of the mining industry, the District of Alaska capital moved to Juneau in 1906, and Alaska became a territory in 1912.

World War I further boosted demand for canned fish. By the 1930s, Southeast Alaska became known as the salmon canning capital of the world. The commercial salmon industry was highly dependent upon the timber industry, as western hemlock was the preferred piling material for fish traps, wharves, and docks.

The Alexander Archipelago Forest Reserve was established by Theodore Roosevelt in a presidential proclamation August 20, 1902. On September 10, 1907, through another proclamation, Roosevelt created the Tongass National Forest. On July 1, 1908, the two forests were joined, and the combined forest area encompassed most of Southeast Alaska. Further proclamations of February 19 and June 10 of 1909 (in the last months of the Roosevelt administration), and in 1925 (by Calvin Coolidge), expanded the Tongass. The timber industry supplied the fishing industry with lumber for cannery crates, fishing boats, construction materials for employee housing, and more. In 1947, the Tongass Timber Act was passed, facilitating development of the Southeast Alaska timber industry by allowing foreign investment capital and export of timber products (Mackovjak, 2010).

Establishment of the Tongass National Forest greatly affected the Tlingit people, as they were not considered citizens of the United States. All lands not claimed as homesteads, mineral rights, or cannery property were now considered national forest and under U.S. government management. The Tlingit lost all legal access to their streams and waterways, as well as their land base (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994).

World War II, Post War Economic Development, and Statehood (1939-Present)

Sitka and its surrounding islands provided a strategic location to support military efforts of World War II. On August 29, 1939, Congress approved funds for Naval Air Stations at Sitka, Kodiak, and Dutch Harbor. From Sitka, air base planes covered the entire Southeast Alaska coastline and far out into the Gulf of Alaska.

Mass fish extraction continued until 1959 when fish traps were outlawed following passage of the Alaska Statehood Act. In Sitka, the commercial fishing industry still thrives. However, due to the closure of the local pulp mill in the 1990s and environmental pressures, the timber industry plays virtually no role in the current economy. Today, fishing, tourism, health care services, and a thriving industry centered on the arts help to maintain Sitka's population.

Table 1 Cultural Chronology Summary for Southeast Alaska (*Years Before Present)

| Period | Sub-period | Age | Characteristics |
|-------------|------------|--------------------|--|
| Prehistoric | Early | 10,000 to 5,000YBP | Marine mammal harvest, flaked stone tools |
| | Middle | 5,000 to 1,500 YBP | Shell middens, fish weirs, mass salmon harvest, ground stone tools |
| | Late | 1,500BP to 1741AD | Subsistence methods consistent with Middle period, introduction of forts |
| Historic | Early | 1741-1799AD | Russian, Spanish, French, English contact, beginnings of fur trade |
| | Middle | 1799-1867AD | Russian settlements, expanding trade |
| | Late | 1867-1950AD | American military rule, WWII, industry (fish, minerals, timber), population increase |
| | | 1950s-present | Recent past |

5.5. Sitka's National Register Sites

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources (National Park Service)

Table 2 National Register Sites and Districts

| Site Name | NR Date | AHRS No. | Period of Significance | Comments |
|--|---------|-----------|------------------------|--|
| Cable House and Station | 1977 | SIT-00212 | 1904-1910 | a.k.a. Communications Center and Quarters |
| Emmons House | 1977 | SIT-00258 | 1895-1899 | 601 Lincoln Street |
| Hanlon--Osbakken House | 1992 | SIT-00191 | 1892-1896 | 419 Lincoln Street |
| Mills, W. P., House | 1977 | SIT-00025 | 1915-1916 | 1 Maksoutoff Street, a.k.a Cushing House, Longenbaugh House, Island Home |
| Mills House | 1978 | SIT-00189 | 1911-1938 | 315 Seward Street, a.k.a. May Mills House, Rose Hill |
| Murray Apartments and Cottages Historic District | 1992 | SIT-00447 | 1911 | 200, 204, & 206 Seward Street |

| | | | | |
|--|------|-----------|------------|---|
| Murray Apartments | | SIT-00210 | 1921-1928 | 208 Seward Street, contributing to SIT-00447, a.k.a. Murray Flats, Baranof Apartments |
| See House | 1978 | SIT-00195 | 1905 | 611 Lincoln Street |
| St. Peter's By the Sea | 1978 | SIT-00029 | 1899 | 611 Lincoln Street, a.k.a. St. Peter's Episcopal Church |
| Sitka Pioneers' Home | 1979 | SIT-00097 | 1934-1935 | 120 Katlian Street, nomination includes Totem Square across the street |
| Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House | 1997 | SIT-00313 | 1938-1946 | 100 Lincoln Street |
| US Coast Guard and Geodetic Survey Seismological and Geomagnetic House | 1986 | SIT-00194 | 1916, 1929 | 210 Seward Street, a.k.a. Forest Service House |
| Sitka National Historical Park | 1966 | SIT-00012 | 1804-1910 | a.k.a Sitka National Monument (1910) and Shiske-Nu |

5.6. Sitka's National Historic Landmark Sites

National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States (National Park Service, 2016)

Table 3 National Landmark Sites and Districts

| Site Name | NR Date | AHRS No. | Period of Significance | Comments |
|---|---------|-----------|------------------------|--|
| Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall | 1972 | SIT-00001 | 1912, 1914 | Katlian Street, a.k.a ANBH, Sitka Camp No. 1 |
| American Flag Raising Site, Castle Hill | 1966 | SIT-00002 | 1804, 1806-1867, 1959 | Corner of Lincoln and Katlian Streets, a.k.a. Baranov Castle & Castle Hill. NHL 6/13/62 |
| Old Sitka Site | 1966 | SIT-00006 | 1799-1802 | a.k.a. Redoubt St. Archangel Michael, NHL 7/1/61 |
| Sitka Naval Operating Base and US Army Coastal Defenses | 1986 | SIT-00079 | 1939-1943 | Japonski Island and the series of smaller islands connected to it by the causeway that terminates at Makhnati Island |
| Russian-American Building No. 29 | 1987 | SIT-00013 | 1850 | 202 Lincoln Street, a.k.a. Tilson Building |
| Sheldon Jackson School | 2001 | SIT-00026 | 1910-1944 | 801 Lincoln Street, a.k.a. Sitka Industrial Training School; Sheldon Jackson Institute; Sheldon Jackson College |
| St. Michael's Archangel Cathedral | 1962 | SIT-00010 | 1844-1966 | Totally reconstructed per HABS |
| Russian Bishop's House | 1966 | SIT-00009 | 1842-1859 | 503 Lincoln Street, a.k.a. Russian Mission Orphanage, NHL 6/13/62 |

5.7. Historic Architecture

See Appendix for the Alaska OHA's Architectural Style Guide

6. Current Preservation Programming

Long before the City and Borough of Sitka's incorporation in 1971, historic preservation has been a grassroots philosophy in the community. These efforts are reflected in the rehabilitation and care of Sitka's many historic properties, its societies, non-profits, and museums.

6.1. Federal and State Level

Federal

In general, historic properties are protected and preserved through a variety of federal, state, and local laws, private organizations, and various incentives programs. Preservation efforts at the federal level can be traced back to the early 1900s with natural wilderness areas and battlefield parks. The Antiquities Act of 1906 provided some protection to historic sites, but it was not comprehensive in its scope. The Depression in the 1930s provided a boost to preservation activities with the Historic American Building Surveys in 1933 by the National Park Service, National Monuments, and the Historic Sites Act of 1935 that first established a national list of historically significant places, which later became the National Register of Historic Places.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)

Congress passed significant legislation in 1966 that reactivated the federal government's involvement in, and support for, preservation activities by both public and private groups.

NHPA mandated that all 50 states and the District of Columbia complete a comprehensive survey of historic resources and establish a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Act also established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation that was charged with advising the President and Congress on all matters pertaining to preservation. The Council reviews and comments on federally funded or licensed projects that could have a significant impact on historic resources that are listed on, or are eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places. This is commonly known as Section 106 Review and is administered by individual state historic preservation offices, as are most other federally mandated preservation activities.

In addition, the NHPA mandated the preservation of cultural properties of state and local, as well as national, significance. The Secretary of the Interior was authorized to expand the National Register of Historic Places, which is the official list of the nation's cultural resources designated for preservation. Federal listings in the National Register provide protection by requiring comment from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation concerning the effect of federally assisted projects on these resources. It also allows owners who rehabilitate certified historic income producing properties to be eligible for federal tax benefits. See Appendix A for details of the NHPA of 1966.

1980 Amendment and the Certified Local Government Program

The National Historic Preservation Act established the Certified Local Government Program to provide financial and technical assistance for preservation of historic resources at the local level.

To participate in the program, a local government needs to establish a historical preservation commission and a program meeting state and federal standards. Once the SHPO and the National Park Service (NPS) determine these are in place, the local government may then request certification and

participate in the program as a Certified Local Government (CLG). See appendix for details and requirements of the CLG program in Alaska.

Ten percent of annual Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) appropriations made to the states under the NHPA must be passed to CLGs through the SHPO office. In Alaska, this is done through grants. Various kinds of projects can be funded. These include nomination of a historic property to the National Register of Historic Places, survey and inventory of historic and archaeological resources, preparation of preservation plans, staff support for a local historic preservation commission, historic structure reports, archaeological testing of sites to determine their significance, and development of public education preservation programs. Technical assistance, training in historic preservation goals and programs, and guidance on how to conduct specific projects are available through the SHPO office.

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

NAGPRA is a U.S. federal law passed in 1990 requiring federal agencies and institutions that receive federal funding to return Native American cultural items and human remains to their respective peoples. Cultural items include funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony. In addition, it authorizes a program of federal grants to assist in the repatriation process. It is now the strongest federal legislation pertaining to aboriginal remains and artifacts. The Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the Sitka National Historical Park has been successful in repatriating items of patrimony that once belonged to the local Tlingit people.

Private-Level Federal Preservation

Private sector preservation efforts on the federal level are led by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). In 1949, the U.S. Congress chartered the NTHP and provided funding for this organization through the Department of the Interior. Several years ago, Congress stopped providing funding and now the National Trust supports its programs through donations, memberships, and program income. Today, the Trust provides information and advice to persons and groups on preservation issues, and is actively involved in the preservation efforts of communities across the nation through technical assistance and various grant, loan, and educational programs.

Grant funding obtained through the CLG Program (60% federal share award noted below):

- 2015 - \$15,000 Japonski Island Boathouse Door Rehabilitation
- 2014 – (2) \$10,652 for Japonski Island Marine Ways and \$19,995 North Pacific Hall Restoration, Sheldon Jackson Campus
- 2013 – No award
- 2012 – (2) \$3,761 for Alaska Native Brotherhood/Sisterhood Centennial Panels, Phase II and \$22,365 for Sheldon Jackson School Windows Workshop and Restoration
- 2011 – \$10,000 for Alaska Native Brotherhood/Sisterhood Centennial Panels, Phase I.
- 2010 – \$8,281 for Sheldon Jackson School, Sage Building Historic Structure Assessment
- 2009 – (2) \$16,050 for Preservation Plan and Preservation Training
- 2008 - \$12,000 to Hire a Consultant for a Preservation Plan, matched by CBS
- 2006 - \$6,050 for Architectural Planning for Renovation and Preservation of the Tillie Paul Manor
- 2003 - \$9,000 for the Japonski Island Boathouse Schematic Design
- 2002 - \$15,510 for Japonski Island Boathouse Structures Report and Condition/Haz-Mat Survey
- 1996 – (2) \$3,960 for Cultural Resources Inventory, Phase II for CBS and \$1,452 for Nomination of the Old Post Office (City Offices) to the National Register of Historic Places
- 1995 - \$4,355 for Cultural Resources Inventory, Phase I

TOTAL: \$158,431

The National Trust owns and operates a number of historic properties that are open to the public. The Trust only accepts ownership of properties if they are endowed to provide for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the property.

Other Federal Acts and Laws that affect Sitka's Cultural Resources include:

- 1916 - National Park Service Organic Act
- 1935 - Historic Sites Act
- 1949 - National Trust for Historic Preservation
- 1960 - Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act
- 1966 - Department of Transportation Act (4f)
- 1970 - National Environmental Policy Act
- 1978 - American Indian Religious Freedom Act
- 1979 - Archaeological Resources Protection Act

State of Alaska

The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology (OHA) carries out the responsibilities of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), with a lead Officer appointed by the Governor. In Alaska, the Governor has designated Judith E. Bittner the Chief of the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology as the SHPO officer. The responsibilities of the SHPO under the National Historic Preservation Act include (Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, 2010):

- Statewide historic preservation planning (Alaska's Historic Preservation Plan, revised 2010, 2018)
- Statewide survey and inventory of historic properties (Alaska Heritage Resources Survey)
- Nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places
- Administering the federal historic preservation grants-in-aid program
- Assisting local governments in developing historic preservation programs and in becoming certified to participate in the national program (Alaska's Certified Local Government Program)
- Advising and assisting in federal, state, and local historic preservation projects
- Participating in the review of federal, state, and local undertakings that may affect historic properties (Section 106 Review)
- Providing public information, education, training, and technical assistance in historic preservation
- Performing rehabilitation tax credit project reviews
- 1974 - Alaska Historic Preservation Act
- AS 11.46.482- Criminal Mischief in the Third Degree – to knowingly disturb grave sites, cemeteries, tombs, burials

State Level Preservation Organizations

Many entities assist in the preservation of cultural resources in the State of Alaska. Those that have importance on the local level include:

- Alaska Association for Historic Preservation
- Alaska Historical Society
- Alaska State Museums

6.2. Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA)

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska is a federally recognized Tribe representing the indigenous Tlingit people of this area. Below are some accomplishments on behalf of STA in the area of historic preservation. This is not a complete list and the efforts are insurmountable:

- 1995 – The Sitka Tribe of Alaska completed the Sitka Tribe of Alaska Historic Preservation Plan
- 1995 – National Park Service Preservation Grant to STA and Southeast Indian Cultural Center (now Southeast Cultural Center)
- Place Names Project - to document traditional place names and their associated cultural meanings
- 2003 – NPS Historic Preservation Fund Grant - A Celebration of Tlingit Weavers: the Doris Borhauer Basket Collection Documentation Project to document the lineage of the weavers, the origins of the baskets, and the construction methods for each piece of the Doris Borhauer Basket Collection, comprised of 92 Tlingit spruce root baskets
- 2008 – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Grant – Comprehensive Survey of the Tlingit language in Sitka, AK
- 2010 – At the time of this plan, efforts are underway and in the final stages by STA to nominate the Sitka Indian Village as a National Historic District

6.3. City and Borough of Sitka's Historic Preservation Program

Local Governance - City and Borough of Sitka

The threat of demolition of Sitka's U.S. Post Office located in downtown Sitka and built in 1934 led to a grassroots effort to protect Sitka's historic treasures. The Sitka Historic Trust Board formed and received funding from OHA to hire an architect to assess the building. This funding was allotted under the premise that the board apply for Certified Local Government status. It was decided by the Board in a March 1992 meeting that becoming a CLG would offer the community advantages not only for the preservation of the old Post Office, but would further provide opportunities for protection, preservation, and community awareness for the historic properties of Sitka. Upon promotion by the Trust throughout the community of these advantages and subsequent investigations commissioned by the Assembly, in January of 1993 the Assembly approved the conversion of the Post Office into a City Hall and established the Sitka Historic Preservation

The Sitka U.S. Post Office (Sitka's Municipal Offices)

The Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House housed the U.S. Commissioner, Customs, Marshal, Attorney, National Park Service, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and had a detainment jail cell. From 1938 until 1943, the building also housed the Sitka Public Library on the second floor. In the 1930s, the federal government built eight federal buildings in Alaska, most in the Modern style. At the time, most Sitka buildings were wood frame, and the solid concrete construction was symbolic of the strong federal government. The architectural style retained the classical symmetry, proportion, and facade organization of its predecessors, but was stripped of the architectural ornamentation found on earlier public buildings. Simple rectangular massing with smooth surfaces was accented by the use of low relief suggesting classical elements. Piers represented columns and were occasionally fluted but without capitals or bases. Fenestration in vertical, recessed panels and ornamental spandrels was combined with Art Deco motifs.



Figure 5 Sitka U.S. Post Office and Court House. (1940) (National Park Service, 1940)

Commission. In May of 1994, the Alaska OHA/SHPO notified the CBS they had recognized it as a Certified Local Government.

The conditions to maintain this status were to write a preservation plan, establish a review process, and develop an inventory of historic sites. A two-page plan was written by the Commission in 1994, and a flowchart of review, and an *Inventory of Historic Sites and Structures, City and Borough of Sitka* was created. *Part I* of this inventory research began in 1995 and contained a preliminary inventory and bibliography. Comments from the OHA resulted in *Part II* -- completed in 1997 -- that contained 325 historic and archaeological sites. These sites correspond with the State's AHRS database and a corresponding CBS site number. These sites include those not eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Place and sites on state and federal lands, though nearly all are within the boundaries of the city and borough. Also included in *Part II* were topographic maps of the borough and an enlarged map of the Sitka road system with site locations plotted according to the CBS and AHRS site numbers. Finally, included in *Part II* to be used with these maps is a flow chart for a CBS review process to be used by the Planning Department and Commission. This flow chart can be found in the appendix.

The Sitka Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC)

Although the SHPC works directly with the CBS Planning Department, it is under the direction of the CBS Assembly. It is made up of seven seats: (4) Community At-large, (1) Native At-large, (1) Sitka Tribe of Alaska and (1) Sitka Historical Society seat. Per CBS Ordinance, an Assembly liaison also partakes in meetings, but does not vote. See appendix for ordinance and commission duty details.

A duty of the SHPC is to review and recommend on local projects requiring a CBS building permit that may have an effect on historic properties. Through the years, this review process has been inconsistent and a burden to volunteers. An attempt was made in 2009 to streamline the review process by creating a checklist to be used by CBS officials, SHPC members, and the public to assist in determining if a project should go before the SHPC for review. An application for review and an internal review form was created to facilitate this process (see appendix).

Besides building permit project review, the SHPC is tasked to review federal and state projects (most often Section 106) that may have an effect on historic properties.

The SHPC also assists in listing several sites on the National Register of Historic Places and in the nomination of local National Landmark Sites. It also reviews and supports entities in the community to obtain CLG and HPF grant funding, as well as offers guidance in the managing of local historic properties.

Finally, it is the duty of the SHPC, by CBS ordinance, to act in an advisory role to the Sitka Historical Society, the CBS, and the Alaska Historic Sites Committee.

The following is a timeline of events and accomplishments by the CBS and SHPC at the local level:

Ordinances

- 1991 - CBS Ordinance 91-9754 – Established Historic Trust Board
- 1992 - CBS Ordinance 92-1075 – Established Sitka Historic Preservation Commission
- 1993 - CBS Ordinance 93-1150 – Established Commission as a CLG
- 1997 - CBS Ordinance 97-1409 – Established Confidentiality of sensitive sites
- 2007 - City and Borough of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan

Documents

- 1982 - Downtown Commercial Building Historical and Structural Survey, prepared by Stocker Construction, Inc. (HUD planning grant)
- 1997 – Inventory of Historic Sites and Structures of Sitka – prepared by Vanguard Research
- 1994 – Sitka Historic Preservation Plan – Prepared by the SHPC

Current Local Review Process

As a condition of CLG status under Ordinance 93-1150, the SHPC is to review projects in need of a CBS building permit to determine their effect on historic properties. See Appendix for Municipal flow-chart of review. The following is this process abbreviated:

- Applicants submit a request to the municipality for a building permit for their undertaking
- If the undertaking is determined by CBS staff to have a potential effect on a historic property, the applicant is required to submit a request for review to the SHPC
- The SHPC will review the undertaking and recommend appropriate measures to avoid adverse effects to the historic property

Local Level Preservation Organizations

Sitka also has several organizations working to preserve culture and heritage. They include:

- Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum
- Cape Decision Lighthouse Society
- Sitka Maritime Heritage Society
- Sheldon Jackson Museum
- Sitka Fine Arts Camp
- U.S. Forest Service
- National Park Service – Sitka National Historical Park - Friends of Sitka National Historical Park
- See House Committee – St. Peters by the Sea
- Sheldon Jackson Historic Site Preservation Society Inc.
- Sitka Historical Society – manager of the Sitka Museum housing Sitka’s collections



Figure 6 Postcard of people netting herring, n.d. Catalog # 89.19.58, photo 788. (Sitka Historical Museum)

7. Recommendations & Actions

Recommendations, objectives, and actions related to activities that could be undertaken to improve the operation of the Sitka historic preservation program. Where possible, there has been an attempt to identify funding and other support for action upon the recommendations made. Recommendations and actions will be taken up as separate projects to improve Sitka's Historic Preservation Program.

Recommendation 1: Amend and Update Current CBS Historic Preservation Ordinance

Objective:

A historic preservation ordinance is the primary method by which towns, cities, counties, and boroughs can protect historic structures and districts. An updated ordinance will further clarify and strengthen procedures for designating and protecting historic properties.

Action:

➤ *Obtain a CLG grant to update the current ordinance to include a local register and policies associated with the protection, management, and promotion of Sitka's historic resources.*

➤ *Create Toolbox for Review Process*

Besides criteria for designation and procedures identified in an ordinance revision, CBS Staff, SHPC members, and the applicant should have the means necessary to make informed decisions. Due process should be adhered to: (1) notice of the government action, (2) a hearing, (3) fair and informed decision-making, and (4) delivery of results and recommendations.

a) For CBS Staff:

- create a **GIS and Zoning Overlay** of historic resources to aid in the initial evaluation
- create protocol for Section 106 compliance by all city departments

b) For SHPC members, the ruling principles should be:

- know legal guidelines, standards, and regulations
- avoid conflicts of interest
- be professional
- be familiar with previous cases
- review all applications and know the property
- ask questions and be open-minded
- protection and preservation of historic properties

c) For the applicant the process should be:

- transparent
- accessible (applications on CBS website)
- consistent

Recommendation 2: Promote Historic Preservation in the Municipal Agenda**Objective:**

To avoid adverse effects on the community's historic character, the SHPC wishes to assist the Municipality with growth and new development by establishing a framework for thoughtful decision-making in dealing with the myriad issues associated with preservation and appropriate physical changes within a historic environment. In the planning of all CBS projects and those requiring CBS approvals, assure that consideration be given to the diverse assortment of values related to the community's religious, ethnic and racial makeup.

The economic impacts and benefits of historic preservation are both far-reaching and profound. Preservation is a vital economic development tool for communities and regions. While at the same time, it is a proven means for creating jobs, attracting investment, generating tax revenue, and supporting small business and affordable housing.

Action:

➤ *Develop a Main Street Program through the National Trust for Historic Preservation*

- See appendix for more information on the economic and social benefits of a Main Street Program

➤ *Engage Cultural Sensitivity in Planning*

CBS planning and development should take into account the diverse ethnographic makeup of the community and incorporate such differences to bring a cohesive understanding and mutual respect for all. Preserving our heritage includes recognizing the language of the first people to settle the area.

- A protocol for place naming and other such undertakings should be established and adhered
- Update and adhere to the CBS's street naming policy
- Ensure cultural sensitivity and consultation when appropriate
- Encourage the diverse cultures of Sitka to participate in the Municipality's preservation program

➤ *Participate in SHPC and CBS Staff Development and Assessments*

- SHPC members and CBS staff should continue to develop the skills and knowledge to manage local resources by partaking in annual trainings and review, and other such opportunities associated with cultural diversity
- Create orientation kits for new SHPC members to easily transition to the important decision-making position noted on the commission
- Conduct a periodic review of all policies, programs, and documents in relation to historic preservation to maintain standards of operation

Recommendation 3: Update Historic Resources Inventory**Objective:**

In order for Sitka to gain full comprehension of its resources, a Local Register with appropriate criteria should be developed and used to compile a useful inventory for the community.

A *Historic Properties Survey* is a study designed to identify and evaluate properties in an area (community, neighborhood, rural area, etc.) for their historic significance. The survey is used during the planning review process to determine whether there may be historic, architectural, archaeological, and/or cultural resources affected by the project. The current inventory contains more than 400 sites on Baranof Island, some on federal or state lands. The majority of these sites have not been thoroughly investigated for their significance and eligibility for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places.

Action:

- *Pursue CLG and/or other grant funding to update and conduct historic surveys*
- *Encourage and facilitate the creation of Historic Districts and National and Local Register Sites*

Survey Benefits

- **Enables Forward Looking, Proactive Local Preservation:** By surveying areas that have not been designated, you can identify areas where future preservation activity should take place before the resources disappear
- **Defines Character-Defining Features in Detail:** Not just for documentation, but also to inform Commission's decisions
- **Increases Public Awareness and Appreciation of Historic Resources:** Use the survey and survey process to help educate the community. Surveyors can distribute information, answer questions, and serve as preservation ambassadors while in the field
- **Look Beyond Buildings:** To include all visible aspects of the environment that combine to form the local historic fabric, such as archaeological, cemeteries, gardens, lighthouses, parks, etc.

Recommendation 4: Advocate for the Creation of a CBS Staff Position and Seek Funding for Current Staff Training**Objective:**

For the review process to run efficiently municipality-wide, professionally qualified staff support is needed. Currently, the community is missing many opportunities and funding due to the absence of this vital position. A CBS position will also allow for research for items of review so SHPC members are fully prepared and informed.

Action:

- *Continue to lobby the Assembly and CBS Administration to support training and staffing for a cultural resource position*
- *Inform the Assembly and public of the social and economic opportunities this position may provide our community*

Recommendation 5: Promote Heritage Tourism

Objective:

Paradoxically, it is the intangible benefits of historic preservation that foster one of its most significant and tangible benefits, heritage tourism. The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.”

Actions:

- *Continue to educate the public and visitors of our cultural resources and the need to protect and preserve them*
 - Possible means are “Buy Sitka” programs, brochures and walking tour maps, etc.
- *Continue to promote the connection between sustainable heritage tourism and the careful maintenance of an area’s historic character and authenticity*
 - In order to create a sustainable tourist destination, communities cannot allow new development to shape community character. The community’s historic character must inform new development
- *Development partnerships between the SHPC and local entities*
 - Partnerships between such groups as Visit Sitka (formally the Sitka Convention and Visitor’s Bureau) can enhance the promotion of Sitka and its historic treasures

Heritage Tourism Benefits

For communities that take the time and effort to identify, preserve, and promote their cultural and historic legacy, heritage tourism provides the following community benefits:

- The heritage traveler spends more, does more, and stays longer than other types of tourists.
- For vacationers, visiting historic and cultural sites is second in popularity only to shopping.
- One in three international visitors to the U.S. tours a historic or cultural attraction.
- Create jobs and economic activity. The number of business and employment opportunities increases from heritage tourism.
- Use assets that already exist. A dynamic and memorable travel experience begins with the stories and places of the past. As developer and economist, Don Rypkema recently stated, “A community’s strength is not homogeneity with its differentiation from anywhere else” (RYPKEMA, Donald, 2005).

By caring for its heritage, a community can become an attraction in and of itself.

Recommendation 6: Promote and Increase Public Awareness of Historic Preservation

Objective:

Schools

The educational opportunities offered by historic preservation are virtually limitless. For students, teachers, and community partners, engaging in historic preservation efforts brings home the importance of such efforts, and reinforces historical education by allowing all those involved to participate in its conservation and protection.

Historic preservation takes place in such varied settings that students have opportunities to learn real-world lessons not only in history but also in mathematics, sociology, environmental studies, urban planning, transportation issues, economics, building crafts, and many more disciplines.

Actions:

- *Assist in the development of educational programs about the historic, architectural, archaeological and cultural resources of Sitka that are open to the public. Prepare related handouts. Specifically invite those that conduct tours or otherwise interact with visitors.*
- *Prepare lesson plans on the community's history. Organize a workshop for teachers to explain how heritage education based on local resources can enrich the learning process.*

Community

Historic preservation helps keep communities beautiful, vibrant, and livable, and gives people a stake in their surroundings. It connects people with their past and with one another. History is a great educator, and coming to know the history of a community and its historical sites fosters an individual's sense of belonging and community pride. Old structures and historic spaces often present the human scale of history. Their design and construction tell us much about the cultures that created them and about the traditions and events from which our society grew.

Historic preservation has been shown to be a key ingredient in stabilizing older communities and bringing citizens together. Historic buildings provide a sense of stability and provide a tangible link with the past that all can experience.

Action:

- *Organize social events to celebrate state and national preservation events*
- *Work with other local entities such as the Sitka Historical museum and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska to foster community awareness of historic preservation*

Historic Preservation Resources

- [Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)
- [Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation](#)
- [American Association for State and Local History](#)
- [The Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums](#)
- [National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials](#)
- [National Preservation Institute](#)
- [National Railway Historical Society](#)
- [Historic Roads](#) - Center for Preservation Education and Planning
- [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)
- [Saving Graves](#) - Cemetery Preservation Alliance

Environmental

Razing historic structures has a triple negative effect on scarce resources, by throwing away materials and their embedded energy; by replacing them with new raw materials; and by expending transport energy for both. Each existing building is an investment of energy, time, and resources. If these structures are simply destroyed, that investment is wasted. Active historic preservation efforts can help

to curb some of the detrimental environmental effects of suburban sprawl, including increased traffic burdens, energy consumption, and environmental degradation. By safeguarding the historic cores of towns and cities and encouraging reinvestment in them, many adverse effects of growth can be greatly reduced.

Actions:

- *Support the restoration, preservation, rehabilitation, interpretation, stabilization or other appropriate treatments for historic and cultural resources*
- *Identify funding sources, including grants and capital projects that encourage preservation of historic and cultural resources*
- *Encourage stewardship of traditional cultural properties and archaeological sites. Restoring buildings, rather than building new ones, or demolishing existing ones, is environmentally responsible. It is usually more environmentally friendly to rehabilitate existing structures, and maintain and improve existing infrastructure than to simply destroy and replace them.*
- *Develop a partnership with the Sitka Conservation Society to address these issues*

Recommendation 7: Pursue Historic Preservation Opportunities

Objective:

The Historic Preservation movement over the last decade has flourished, with increasing opportunities for funding, partnerships, and technology for preservation efforts. Work to build the capacity of the SHPC so it can better perform its advisory and coordination role with the CBS Planning Commission, the Sitka Historical Society, and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Actions:

- *Foster preservation partnerships with local, government, nonprofit, and corporate entities.*
- *Support and encourage National Register Nominations for public and private historic properties throughout the city and borough.*
- *Pursue and inform the community of grant opportunities.*

Historic Preservation Grant Opportunities

- **Certified Local Government Grants**

Local governments with approved historic preservation programs and designated Certified Local Governments are eligible for historic preservation projects, must be matched, and are awarded on a competitive basis.

- **Historic Preservation Fund Development and Predevelopment Grants**

OHA often makes available funds to help owners of historic preservation properties with rehabilitation projects. Individuals, non-profit organizations, businesses, Native and local government entities can apply.

- **Alaska Historical Commission Grants**

The Alaska Historical Commission promotes special initiatives, such as commemorating anniversaries of significant events in Alaska history, when there is widespread state support for them. The commission works with the OHA to make funds available for planning, research, interpretation, public education, and development projects to assist these initiatives.

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