

Final Narrative Report

Project Name: Whitmore Hall Facade, Sheldon Jackson School

HPF Grant # 16003

This project was to:

- restore the facade of Whitmore Hall, on the Sheldon Jackson School National Historic Landmark;
- replace an ADA accessible ramp;
- present a public slide show about the building's architects, the firm of Ludlow and Peabody;
- hold an open house to present the work; and,
- put information about the work on the Fine Arts Camp website: **“Campus History and Restoration,” on www.fineartscamp.org, under the “Programs” tab**

In addition to the above, we

- did presentations and gave handouts about historic preservation, archaeology, and campus history to the Historic Preservation Commission,
- included this and other information on the Fine Arts Camp preservation web page;
- organized a city-wide History Walk on the anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act,
- completely restored some of the main floor windows.

Preservation Work

The main work was the preservation of the facade of Whitmore Hall, accomplished July 11 through August 8, 2016. A crew of 16 college students and recent graduates, the Historic Restoration Team, received training in historic preservation and in safe work methods. Under the leadership of crew leader Larry Jackson, woodshop foreman Randy Bartholomew, and construction contractor Pete Weiland, this crew documented, removed, refabricated where necessary, and put back the shingles and trim on the front of Whitmore Hall and a portion of the west wall which was in poor condition.

Before this work began, the volunteer opportunity was advertised to college students, and applicants vetted and selected. Larry Jackson and Fine Arts Camp staff prepared the dorm rooms, a gathering space/storage area/classroom, and the woodshop. Working with contractor Pete Weiland, wood and other materials were ordered, and the new accessible ramp was designed and a building permit applied for.

In July materials were purchased and delivered and scaffolding rented and delivered. Larry and the Fine Arts Camp staff also made sure the students had fun and educational activities outside the working hours, as well, arranging museum tours and outdoor recreation.

Section 106 concurrence was received July 5. We also submitted an Environmental Screening Worksheet as part of the project, because this project is part of a National Historic Landmark.

In May, the National Park Service held a Vanishing Treasures workshop on the Sheldon Jackson Campus, an intensive historic preservation planning workshop by NPS Alaska Senior Historic Architect Grant Crosby and historic preservation structural engineer James Mason. This was attended by Pete Weiland, our contractor, by Fine Arts Camp director Roger Schmidt, and Bill Workman, the head of maintenance on the campus.

Larry Jackson is a retired occupational injury specialist with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and has a deep skill set in workplace safety, and in leading and supervising workers.

Pete Weiland was chosen as the contractor because of his experience with these campus buildings, and his familiarity with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*, and especially how best to apply these to buildings in this cool maritime climate. He also has extensive experience in new construction and general remodeling.

Randy Bartholomew owned a floor and window treatment business that included installation, plus he has done extensive remodeling and cabinet building. In addition, these three are all natural teachers, who genuinely care about the students benefiting from learning skills and the pleasure of work well done.

**Detail of the preservation work
(See attached Photographic Report for day-by-day activities)**

Individuals were assigned from the start to 1) document each part of the building before dismantling, by marking them with chalk and then photographing; and 2) to compile this documentation into a report.

While the work on the overall building has been according to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standard for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Standards for Rehabilitation* (because the interiors of the buildings have been altered for slightly different uses today), the exterior fits under the **Standards for Restoration**, because panels under the windows were uncovered and restored to what it was during most of the period of significance (1911-1967).

Standard 1, that the property be used for a new use that reflects the property's restoration period, applies here, as the building is used for dormitory-style housing, which reflects its use for housing students.

Standard 2 is that materials and features from the restoration period – in this case, when this was a boarding school, 1911-1967 – will be retained and preserved, which we did. **Standard 3**, that work to stabilize is documented and distinguishable, has also been followed.

Standard 4 is that everything that characterized other historical periods was documented, in this case, the shingles that covered the original panels below the windows. Overall, we were fortunate that this building is, other than weathering and covering the panels below the windows, exactly as it was built.

Standard 5 is that we preserved distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques.

Standard 6 is most applicable to this project, in that shingles and many pieces of trim were too deteriorated to save, but we were able to replicate them exactly. We also had abundant physical evidence of missing or deteriorated trim, on other, more protected parts of this and the other four buildings of the campus quadrangle, following **Standard 7**.

Standard 8 was followed when we did have to repaint, and prepared the surface by hand scraping. We did not affect any archaeological resources (**Standard 9**), and we did not construct anything that was planned but never there (**Standard 10**).

The project began with the lowest part of the building, that could be reached without scaffolding. The lower shingles were removed, but the lines of shingling marked on trim board so they could be exactly replicated (as level lines would not follow the way the building has settled over the years).

As on North Pacific Hall, the original panels which are seen under each window in old photos were still in place. Wood filler pieces had been added to attach shingles to, and apparently some decorative trim had been removed, but the panels were basically intact. Surviving panels elsewhere on the building were used as a model to replace the missing parts, small-diameter decorative trim. Panels were carefully removed, Vycor flashing placed behind them, and they were put back, with repairs as necessary.

New window trim was made (the original long length, instead of the shorter pieces that stopped above the panels), and tacked into place, so that the lines of the shingles could be marked before removal. Vycor self-adhesive flashing was used around all the windows, lapping the building felt used on the walls under the shingles. This is superior for the tight bends to the stiff building felt, and does not show in the finished building.

As on North Pacific, the sagging shingles were not the result of rotten sheathing but due to rusted shingle nails; the sheathing was all in good condition, except for the west corner.

The west end of the building was repaired, not that long ago, and insulation had been put in the wall, which apparently caused rot. It is significant that the original construction lasted for over a hundred years, and poorly-designed alteration resulted in rapid deterioration.

The rest of the restoration proceeded in the same manner, with original trim documented, removed and replaced or repaired, infiltration barrier applied (building felt, Vycor around windows), and trim and shingles put back.

The window sills, which are an integral part of the window jamb, could not be replaced as this would have meant taking off the interior window trim and plaster. So these were treated in place, with liquid epoxy and epoxy putty. The team was also able to repair broken sash cords, because the sash weights were exposed when the exterior trim was removed.

After the restoration Larry Jackson returned the shop and workspace to its original condition.

The accessibility ramp was removed from the front of the building, where it was contributing to deterioration of the facade, and rebuilt on the east end of the building in time for the October 15th open house.

Three complete windows (two 12-pane sash each) were later completely restored in the winter of 2016-17.

Public Activities, Publicity, and Historic Preservation Web Page

Website Materials:

Over this course of this project, we developed quite a bit of educational materials about historic preservation, and campus preservation and history, all of which is now on our new web page, "**Campus History and Restoration,**" on www.fineartscamp.org, under the "**Programs**" tab. A complete overhaul of the website is planned for late 2017, when the history and preservation material will move up to its own tab.

The spark for developing these materials came when we were applying for this grant, in late 2015, when it turned out that not all of the members of the Historic Preservation Commission were aware of the goals, methods, and, in particular, the regulatory process of historic preservation.

In January 2016 we made a presentation to the Historic Preservation Commission, which included a slide show and handouts about **historic preservation in Sitka, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and the National Historic Preservation Act**. The presentation was well received (lots of pretty pictures).

In the spring of 2016 we completed landscaping and drainage around the Allen Memorial Building, which is immediately to the west of Whitmore. We made presentations to the commission in January on **how we researched and planned the work, the basics of drainage, and the history of the area**, then in April, on **what we found and what we learned**. The area excavated had been disturbed, but had some artifacts like brick, ceramics, and shoe parts. The Alaska Anthropological Association annual meeting was held on campus during the project, and so we were able to consult with historical archaeologists, including one who had done monitoring, and a well-researched monitoring plan, for utility work in 2003. **We put all this together into a piece for the website.**

We also presented progress reports to the Historic Preservation Commission throughout the project.

In October of 2016 we presented an application for a grant for our next project, restoring the facade of Fraser Hall, to the commission. We used that opportunity to present on **the National Historic Preservation Act and the roles and interactions of the State Historic Preservation Office, the local Historic Preservation**

Commission, and what it means to be a Certified Local Government. This was well received by commissioners, most of whom had not had this information about their role and the overall process. In 2016 the Commission also got training (from City staff) in parliamentary procedure and open meetings law, because it turned out this was another gap. This points to the need for Historic Preservation Commission members to get more training when they are appointed, but also how the Fine Arts Camp website could be a resource for commissioners, as well as for the general public.

Public Presentations and Activities:

We realized that we really need to educate the public about the value of historic preservation. This led to expanding the Whitmore Hall open house into a **city-wide walking tour of historic buildings, which included an all-campus open house.**

We built a temporary website, **HistoricPreservationSitka.wordpress.com**, to promote the activities and historic preservation.

At Whitmore Hall we had a **public reception** with information on the project, on Sheldon Jackson School National Historic Landmark, artifacts and photos from the landscaping, information on the National Historic Preservation Act, and maps for a walking tour of historic buildings. At least 50 people came through.

We had cookies and coffee, photographs and information, brochures on the National Historic Landmark and a color booklet on all of Sitka's NHLs by the Park Service, and, nifty lapel pins for the 50th anniversary of the NHPA, also courtesy of the NPS. Cookies and bling probably helped because the weather was terrible.

And, we did an **interview on the radio about historic preservation in Sitka.**

By coincidence, 2016 was the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the city-wide "History Walk" was on the actual anniversary of the NHPA being signed.

James Poulson, who is working on a Master's degree in architectural history, did a presentation on the **architecture of the Sheldon Jackson School and architects Ludlow and Peabody**, on October 20th 2016. This was very well attended, by more than 60 people.

This project not only did some solid work restoring Whitmore Hall, but educated a team of young adults in the methods and goals of preservation. This project also spread knowledge and publicity about the value of historic preservation in the Sitka community. The materials on the website will continue to educate and to be of value and interest, world-wide. It's been an honor to be involved in such a great project, with so many stellar volunteers.

Contact information

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