

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
Office of History & Archaeology

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April 14, 2021

File No.: 3130-1R NPS / 2021-00241

Jeanette Koelsch Superintendent Bering Land Bridge National Preserve PO Box 220 Nome, AK 99762

Subject: Roof Replacement on Bunkhouse at Serpentine Hot Springs, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

Dear Ms. Koelsch:

The Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (AK SHPO) received your correspondence (dated March 2, 2021) regarding the subject project and Determination of Eligibility for the Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse on March 8, 2021. Our office has reviewed the referenced undertaking under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Following our review of the documentation provided, we concur that the Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse (BEN-00168) is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and believe that a finding of no historic properties affected is appropriate. However, we encourage the use of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for all historic building rehabilitation projects. For the bunkhouse rehabilitation, we recommend that the current shiplap decking be replaced only as necessary and that shiplap is used for replacement instead of plywood to retain as much historic character as possible.

As stipulated in 36 CFR 800.3, other consulting parties such as the local government and Tribes are required to be notified of the undertaking. Additional information provided by the local government, Tribes, or other consulting parties may cause our office to re-evaluate our comments and recommendations. Please note that our response does not end the 30-day review period provided to other consulting parties. Should unidentified archaeological resources be discovered in the course of the project, work must be interrupted until the resources have been evaluated in terms of the National Register of Historic Places eligibility criteria (36 CFR 60.4), in consultation with our office. Please note that some sites can be deeply buried and that fossils are considered cultural resources subject to the Alaska Historic Preservation Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Sarah Meitl at sarah.meitl@alaska.gov if you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely.

Judith E. Bittner

State Historic Preservation Officer

JEB:sjm

Eligible _____Not Eligible __X__

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse

Other name: Iyat Bunkhouse, WWII Knockdown, WWII KD, Kitchen-Dorm,

Dormitory, Main Building

AHRS number: unassigned, Associated with BEN-00168

FMSS Location: 58891

This document is to ascertain the stand-alone significance of the Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse outside of previously being determined non-contributing to the Iyat Traditional Cultural Property (BEN-00168). This document in no way impacts the already determined boundaries or significance of the Iyat TCP.

2. Location

Map sheet: USGS Bendeleben (D-6) SE, Alaska

Aliquot: Kateel River Meridian, Alaska T. 5 N., R. 29 W., sec. 12, NW1/4

Latitude: 65° 51′ 6.5736″N **Longitude:** -164° 41′ 54.9564″W

City or town: 55 Miles Southeast of Shishmaref in the Bering Land Bridge National

Preserve, AK

Borough: Nome Census Area

Land Status: Federal

Verbal Boundary Description: Boundary is the footprint of the bunkhouse.

Boundary Justification: The entire lyat valley has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) and for that analysis the Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse was determined ineligible for those purposes. This document is looking specifically at the stand-alone eligibility of the structure itself outside of the justification for the TCP.

3. Description

Ownership of property: National Park Service

Category of property: Building

Property's function:

Historic: DEFENSE/military facility; DOMESTIC/institutional housing;

Current: DOMESTIC/institutional housing

Architectural Classification: World War II Temporary Building

Materials:

Wood, Rolled Asphalt Roofing, Metal Roofing

Summary Paragraph:

The **Serpentine Hot Spring Bunkhouse** is a 20' x 55', side gable, single-story, wood frame building, which consists of three rooms. The exterior of the walls are finished with red asphalt rolled roofing, held in place with batons and features a variety of metal roofing materials on the gable. This building kit is commonly referred to as a "knockdown" or "KD" structure due to ease of construction and disassembly, a favored structure by the military in Alaska during World War II. The building was transported to the site in 1946 and rests on a timber frame foundation.

Setting

The **Serpentine Hot Spring** is located within the Iyat bowl on the Seward Peninsula. Located in western north-central Alaska, the Seward Peninsula is surrounded by the Kotzebue Sound to the northeast, the Chuckchi Sea to the northwest, and by the Bering Sea to the southwest and Norton Sound to the south. The peninsula is one of the dominant geographical features on the landscape of Alaska and comprises the westernmost continental point in North America. Within the southwest portion of the Iyat bowl, a small cluster of facilities is situated adjacent to the current geothermal heat seepage known as the Upper Hot Springs or Serpentine Hot Springs, consisting of bathhouse, bunkhouse, privy, and an airstrip.

Narrative Description:

The **Serpentine Hot Spring Bunkhouse** is a 20' x 55', side gable, single-story, wood frame building, with a mixture of metal roofing, and is clad in red asphalt rolled roofing. This building kit is commonly referred to as a "knockdown" or "KD" structure due to ease of construction and disassembly, a favored structure by the military in Alaska during World War II, which will be explored further in the Section 4. This rectangular structure is located about twenty feet southeast of the bathhouse and immediately south of Serpentine Hot Springs.

Transported to the site in 1946 and placed on a non-continuous timber grade beam foundation, the bunkhouse is wood construction with plywood walls and a gabled roof covered with plywood and metal roofing. The exterior elevations also covered with red rolled asphalt and additional exterior baton framing is attached approximately every three feet.

The northeast elevation features the entrance to the building, a board door with a metal handle. To the northwest (right) the elevation features two modern vinyl sliding sash windows and one modern vinyl casement windows. To the southeast (left) the elevation features three windows, two modern casement windows and then a modern sliding sash window. The southeast elevation of the bunkhouse features three casement windows, the two to the southwest are single light modern vinyl casement windows with "four-light" 2/2 false muntons while the one to the northwest is a single light modern vinyl casement window. The southwest elevation features six windows and a no longer operational panel door, slightly

northwest of the center. From northwest to southeast, the first four windows are modern vinyl sliding sash windows, the following two are modern vinyl casement windows. The southwest elevation of the roof features a metallic chimney aligned between the two windows to the northwest of the in operational exit. The northwest elevation features four windows. Two modern vinyl sliding sash windows are centered in the wall with two additional two-by-three wood windows sit just underneath the gable.

The interior of the bunkhouse is divided into three rooms. The central room is accessed upon entry to the building and doors on the immediate left and right allow access to the southeast and northwest rooms respectively. The central room is approximately 16'x20' and serves as a gear and tool cache as well as a message center. A large corkboard covers most of the southeast elevation of the center room featuring National Park Service literature. Waist high shelves adorn the southwest and northwest elevations with a second set of higher shelves in the south and west corners of the room. Along the northeast elevation, just northwest of the door is wooden cabinet for fuel storage. Benches are featured in the southern corner of the room running from the building entrance to the door which accesses the southeast room. Cultural graffiti depicting the names, dates, and some experiences of visitors is spread throughout all three rooms, though concentrated in the kitchen/dorm sections.

The northwest room features a heating stove in the center, three tables and five cots and is approximately 20'x20'. A preparation table sits along the southwest elevation in the western corner of the room and a small table for a camp stove is situated adjacently and on the northwest elevation. A large table with two seating benches completes a "U" shaped setup of the dining area. The cots are organized along the remaining perimeter and clotheslines are strung along the ceilings.

The southeast room also features a heating stove in the center of the room and is approximately 20'x20'. A preparation and cooking table sits in the eastern corner along the southeast elevation underneath a pair of triangular shelves, also in the corner. A large table and two searching benches are aligned against the southeast elevation underneath two levels of shelves. Six cots surround the remaining perimeter of the room which also contains clothes lines as well.

Unfortunately, the location of the building is over minor vents of the thermal features and within the annual flood plain of Hot Springs Creek. This coupled with harsh winters and wildlife break-ins have caused substantial damage to the bunkhouse creating the need for extensive repairs. These changes took place in a piecemeal fashion as repairs became warranted. It is possible that the only original material and features remaining in the some of the walls along with the roof system of trusses and ceiling joists.

Chronology of changes to the structure:

Based off a review of maintenance files held at the park and other documentation the following chronology of changes to the structure has been developed.

An article from The Nome Nugget states that the bunkhouse was transported to the site in February 1946 by miners from the surrounding area.

"The main structure was also cleaned up and repaired with new interior plywood and corrugated metal roofing – an interior yellow paint job has extensive graffiti, the earliest dated April 29, 1977, suggesting a confirmation of the 1976 rehabilitation." (Schoenberg, 1983)

1976-77: Shishmaref received \$25,000 from State of Alaska for construction of bathhouse and repair of bunkhouse. A fire destroyed records describing repairs. Supplies purchased in 1976 and flown to site in November 1976. (Curran, 2003, p35)

1980: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve established; National Park Service begins stewardship of the area.

1986: Request for federal funds in Fiscal Year 1986 (FY86) states "structure badly needs exterior siding, now covered with rolled asphalt roofing." (BELA Administration Files)

1987: Requests for funding for rehabilitation of the exterior of structure and request for supplies to reroof. (BELA Administration Files)

1988: Job order shows budget of \$11,060 that includes sixteen windows, thirty-eight pieces of T1-11 exterior siding, trim and dimension lumber, stain with notes "cover old roofing paper siding with modern exterior and stain, present exterior is falling off with age need aesthetic minimum impact exterior. Replace all multipurpose fixed windows with modern single pane energy efficient units, replace and paint trim. There is no evidence of T1-11 siding currently installed on the building. (BELA Administration Files)

Job order to replace the bunkhouse roof with metal, budget for fifty-eight pieces metal roofing, trim, and ridge. (BELA Administration Files)

1992: Interior of cabin repainted, cabinets installed, repair of windows and other minor repairs, including replacing one wood burning stove with oil fired (1992, notes from April 30 Shishmaref public meeting)

Cultural graffiti, dating to at least the 1960s, was documented being painted over. (2020, Conversation with Ken Adkisson)

1992: AKSO Historical Architect determined that the buildings at Iyat did not contribute to the historical significance of the site as a TCP. (Curran, 2003, p.18)

1996-2001: NPS completed major repairs to bunkhouse, noted in files that all windows were replaced. After NPS assumed maintenance, replaced tarpaper roof with metal corrugated. (Curran, 2003, p17)

Paperwork for supplies for Serpentine Hot Springs shows multiple bottle jacks, 72 - 6x12x12s, 2x4x10s, framing anchors, 12 sheets exterior ¾ inch plywood, 10 sheets ½ inch exterior plywood, 2 doors, 2 windows that accompany sketch of 20x56 dimension building with 9 foot walls (BELA Administration Files)

1996/1997: Jacked-up building, replaced foundation timbers with a new "foundation pad" of two stacked 6x12s, replaced old floor joists with 2x8 timbers, replaced all or most of the plywood flooring. (AKRO Maintenance Files)

1998: Covered attic windows on southeast gable end of building, replaced half of wall on north side

2002: Repainted plywood flooring

2012: Repair side vent on building, repair roof angle sheet metal and flat sheet metal

2018: Additional windows replaced due to fire egress requirements, extending some framework and window openings. Only original windows remain in the northwest gable end.

4. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

Criterion A: Yes Criterion B: No Criterion C: No Criterion D: No

Criteria Consideration B. Removed from Original Location: Yes **Areas of significance:** Entertainment/Recreation, Conservation

Significant date(s): 1946, World War II KD structure moved to Serpentine Hot Springs; 1988, Significant alterations to the exterior of the structure by the NPS;

1996, Significant alterations to the exterior of the structure by NPS

Period of significance: 1946-1988

Level of significance: Local

Statement of Significance:

The Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse was examined for significance at a local level under Criterion A in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation and Conservation as an example of recreational opportunities on the Seward Peninsula and as embodiment of the enabling legislation of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve (ANILCA, 1980) which specifically calls out the importance of the recreational access for the public of the Serpentine Hot Springs area.

This World War II KD building, constructed of relatively lightweight materials, originally intended for ease of relocation and assembly, was moved to the Serpentine Hot Springs in 1946. The provenience is currently surmised to be from the "Nome Air Base", was acquired from the Alaska Territorial Guard, disassembled and transported to the site by George Bodis, Eddie Gross, and Oscar Lay and reconstructed in February 1946 in response to the population of Nome requesting the development of a recreational resort at the site. Significant alterations to the structure occurred in 1988, providing a period of significance of 1946-1988. The Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse retains minimal integrity in areas of location, design, and setting and lack sufficient integrity of materials, workmanship, feeling and association to be considered eligible for the National Register. The property is no longer able to convey its significance as it is likely only the form, massing, and roof structure remain of the original structure.

Historical information1:

Serpentine Hot Springs

Entertainment/Recreation

¹ To reiterate, this document will **not** outline the rich and well documented association of the Iyat bowl since *time immemorial* the Iñupiat have come to Iyat for medicinal healing in the hot springs, shamans travelled there for spiritual training, the Iñupiat have linked cultural traditions to the site, and the people harvested game animals, water fowl, sedges and roots in periods of scarcity.

In the early 1900s, miners in the area began using the lower springs as a place of rest, recuperation, and recreation at the end of the work season (GMP, p. 17). They constructed a bunkhouse, bathhouse, and hot tub, naming the site "Arctic Hot Springs." In 1946, evidently in response to the deterioration of the buildings at the lower springs along with a change in the water, miners moved a World War II KD building, constructed of relatively lightweight materials, originally intended for ease of relocation and assembly, and installed it at the better source of water at the "Upper Hot Springs", now known as Serpentine Hot Springs. The February 20, 1946 Nome Nugget article states that a structure from the "Nome Air Base", was acquired from the Alaska Territorial Guard, disassembled and transported to the site by George Bodis, Eddie Gross, and Oscar Lay and reassembled in a direct response to the population of Nome requesting the development of a recreational resort at the site.

Documented in the Nome Nugget as a local request ranging from 1934 - 1946, various articles and public meetings advocated for the development of a range of facilities at Serpentine Hot Springs, from a shelter cabin to a tuberculous resort.

Military Connection

The **Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse** is closely associated with the military's presence in Nome during World War II. It is a typical, modular "knock-down" World War II Army structure. An attic rafter has the stenciled lettering: "Res. Engr. U.S. E.O. Nome Bldg, W6899, 20x80 Bath and Latrine, 7 of 25, 5' modules." This suggests that the structure was shipped to Nome as part of the Alaska Defense; by December 6, 1942, there were 776 such "KD" buildings and quonset huts in Nome. After WWII they were surplused and numbers of these are still in use in Nome (1983).

From the basic shape, fenestration pattern, and materials the bunkhouse appears to be a "CCC type building" which was a prefabricated sectional wood panels with tarpaper roofs and drop siding, known for being knockdown and portable. (Klein et al, 1987, 2-44, 2-25, 4-26). It is very similar to other CCC era structures in the State of Alaska, like the C-Camp Mess Hall at Denali National Park and Preserve (Figure 6). It is likely that the original siding was a drop siding and that the roof was covered in tarpaper. No photographs are known to exist currently of the structure shortly after its reconstruction at the Serpentine Hot Springs. This knowledge can change with future research. If these were the original finishes, the harsh arctic environment quickly took its toll. At least two layers of asphalt rolled roofing currently exist on the exterior of the structure. Recent bear damage reveals that drop cove siding is intact in the areas revealed.

In 1992, NPS Historical Architect Steve Peterson concluded that the bunkhouse "is of little or no architectural significance because there are so many examples of this type of construction still standing." The bunkhouse has undergone numerous physical changes in a way that decreases the integrity of building.

Conservation

Enabling Legislation of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve (ANILCA, 1980) specifically calls out the importance of the recreational access for the public of the Serpentine Hot Springs area. The General Management Plan (GMP), approved in 1986, recognized the importance of the bunkhouse both for its value for recreational and traditional uses and as an emergency shelter in winter. The GMP calls for the structure to be maintained in conditions that allow its continued public use.

Application of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Criteria:

- **Criterion A** If the **Serpentine Hot Spring Bunkhouse** had retained sufficient integrity, it would have been significant under the NRHP Criterion A, for its association with the recreational development of the Seward Peninsula.
- **Criterion B** The building is not known to be associated with the lives of significant persons, and is ineligible under Criterion B.
- **Criterion C** The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. While closely associated with the military's presence in Nome during World War II, it is a typical, modular "knock-down" World War II Army structure. An attic rafter has the stenciled lettering: "Res. Engr. U.S. E.O. Nome Bldg, W6899, 20x80 Bath and Latrine, 7 of 25, 5' modules." This suggests that the structure was shipped to Nome as part of the Alaska Defense; by December 6, 1942, there were 776 such "KD" buildings and quonset huts in Nome. After WWII they were surplused and during the establishment of the National Preserve it was noted that several the KD buildings were still in use in Nome. Original provenience is noted to be on the "Nome Air Base", was acquired from the Alaska Territorial Guard, disassembled and transported to the site by George Bodis, Eddie Gross, and Oscar Lay and reconstructed in February 1946. In 1992, NPS Historical Architect Steve Peterson concluded that the bunkhouse "is of little or no architectural significance because there are so many examples of this type of construction still standing."
- **Criterion D** The building is unlikely to yield further information important in understanding local, regional, or national history, and is ineligible under Criterion D.

5. Major Bibliographic References

Curran, Michelle J. Iyat (Serpentine Hot Springs) – Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. A report for the National Park Service - Cultural Landscapes Inventory Report. Anchorage: National Park Service, 2003. Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service, Anchorage, AK.

Klein, Joel L., James L. Nolan, Jannette Warren Findley, William A. Brenner, Richard E. Gillespie, John Vitter. *World War II in Alaska: A Historic and Resources Management Plan.* US Army Corps of Engineers, Anchorage, AK, 1987.

Morris, David. "C-Camp Messhall" National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form DRAFT, History Files, Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage, AK, 2013.

Patrick, Andrew. "Bathhouse at Iyat/Serpentine Hot Springs." National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form DRAFT. CLI Files, NR Folder, Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage, AK.

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Williss, G. Frank. "It is a hard country, though": Historic Resource Study Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. A report for the National Park Service Denver: Denver Service Center, 1986. Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

Williss, G. Frank. "A New Beginning: The NPS in Alaska, 1950-1960" in *Do Things Right* the First Time: Administrative History: The National Park Service and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, 1985.

Newspaper Articles

"A Worthy Object." *The Nome Nugget*, November 14, 1938.

"Annual Report of the President of the N.W.A. Chamber of Commerce." *The Nome Nugget*, February 20, 1942.

"Chamber Holds Noon Luncheon." The Nome Nugget, October 9, 1940.

"George Bodis - Visitor in Nome." *The Nome Nugget*, February 20, 1946.

"Republican Legislative Program." The Nome Nugget, August 7, 1934.

"Serpentine Hot Springs is Brot [sic] Attention C of C." *The Nome Nugget*, November 11, 1938.

<u>Archival Collections</u>

BELA Files, Cultural Resources, National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage, Alaska.

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, Administrative Files, Accessed May 2020.

CLI Files, Archives, National Park Service, Alaska Support Office, Anchorage, Alaska. Facilities Management Software System (FMSS). Accessed October 2020.

Personal Communication

Personal communication, Ken Adkisson, Integrated Resource Manager, BELA. November 25, 2020.

6. Form Prepared By: Heather Feil, Architectural Historian, National Park Service Alaska Regional Office

7. Additional Material

Maps:

Map 1. Topographic Map, USGS Bendeleben (D-6) SE, Alaska, Sites in Vicinity of Serpentine Hot Springs

Map 2. APE and Associated Sites of Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse, Orthometric

Figures:

Figure 1: Article, The Nome Nugget, Wednesday, February 20, 1946, Page 6

Figure 2: Bunkhouse, pre-1976, note tent over hot springs area, CLI Program Files

Figure 3: Bathhouse and Bunkhouse, pre-1976 due to old bathhouse in photograph, CLI Program Files

Figure 4: Cold water diversion ditch and bermed pool (no longer extant), pre-1996, with Bunkhouse and Bathhouse in background, CLI Program Files

Figure 5: Field Sketch, Plan and Gable Ends, David Snow Historical Architect, National Park Service, 1983

Figure 6: Field Sketch, East and West Elevations, David Snow Historical Architect, National Park Service, 1983

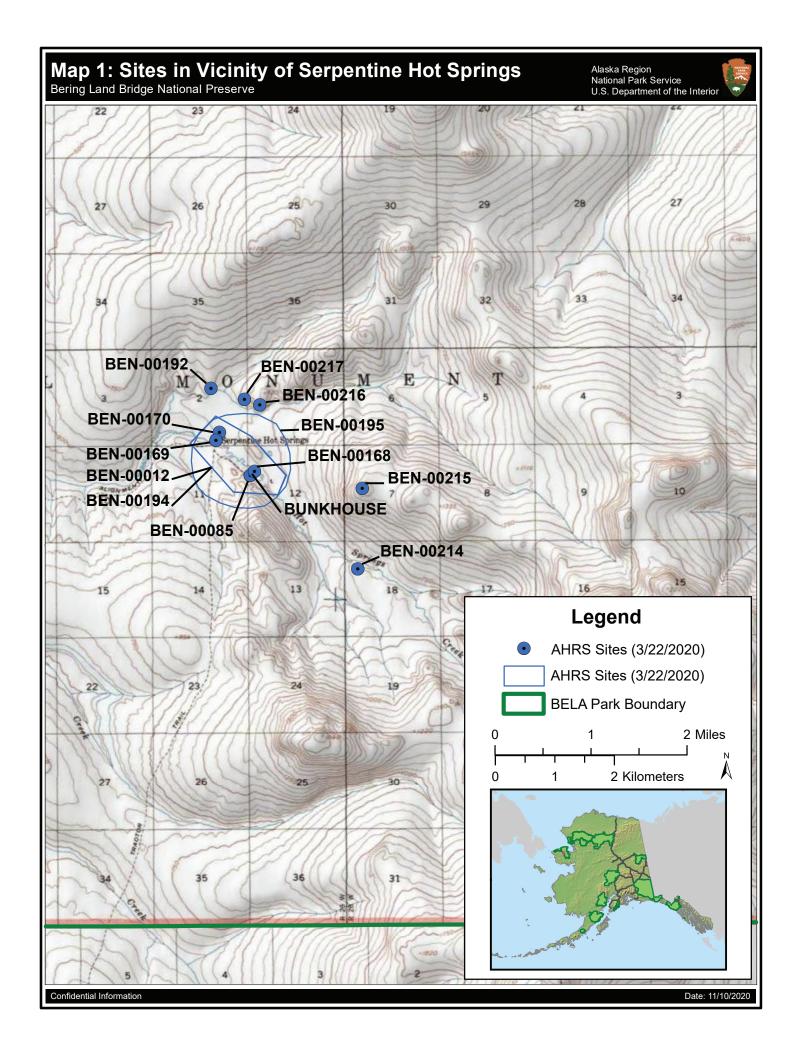
Figure 7: C-Camp Mess Hall, Denali National Park and Preserve, Similarities in Modular Construction, 2013

Photographs:

Photo 1: Overview of facilities at Serpentine Hot Springs, Bunkhouse, Bathhouse, Privy, Airstrip, Toward Southeast, BELA Files, 2017

Photo 2: Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse, Toward North-Northwest, BELA Files, 2015

- Photo 3: Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse, Gable End, Toward Northwest, BELA Files, 2018
- Photo 4: Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse, Toward Northeast, BELA Files, 2020
- Photo 5: Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse, Interior, Southern Room, BELA Files, 2018
- Photo 6: Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse, Interior, Northern Room, BELA Files, 2020



Alaska Region National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior Map 2: APE & Associated Sites of Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse Bering Land Bridge National Preserve **BEN-00195 BEN-00170 BEN-00169 BEN-00168** BUNKHOUSE **BEN-00085** Legend AHRS Sites (3/22/2020) BEN-00012 AHRS Sites (3/22/2020) **BEN-00194** 1,000 Feet 0 500 400 Meters 200 Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNESAMidus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Confidential Information

Figures

GEORGE BODIS VISITOR IN NOME

George Bodis, who arrived a few days ago from the Kougarok on Dick Creek, reports that he has been busy, since the closing of the mining season, moving a roadhouse from Bunker Hill to the Serpentine Springs. The building which was knocked down at the Nome Air Base and transported The central part for a cooking last fall to the end of the railroad. is being moved in sections across one for men and the other for wocountry to its destination and was men.

acquired from the ATG last fall for that purpose. Mr. Bodis states that part of the building is still at Fox Bar but he plans to leave in a few days and complete the project.

Eddie Gross and Oscar Lay, who left a few days ago for the Springs will assist in the reconstruction of the building, which is planned to be completed into three unit and a dormitory on both ends,

Figure 1: Article, The Nome Nugget, Wednesday, February 20, 1946, Page 6



Figure 2: Bunkhouse, pre-1976, note tent over hot springs area, CLI Program Files



Figure 3: Bathhouse and Bunkhouse, pre-1976 due to old bathhouse in photograph, CLI Program Files



Figure 4: Cold water diversion ditch and bermed pool (no longer extant), pre-1996, with Bunkhouse and Bathhouse in background, CLI Program Files

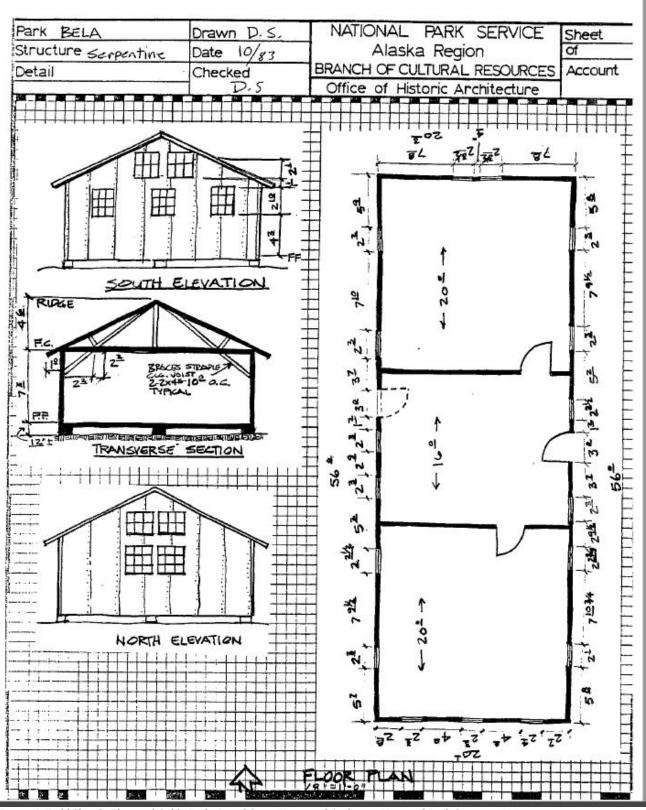


Figure 4: Field Sketch, Plan and Gable Ends, David Snow Historical Architect, National Park Service, 1983

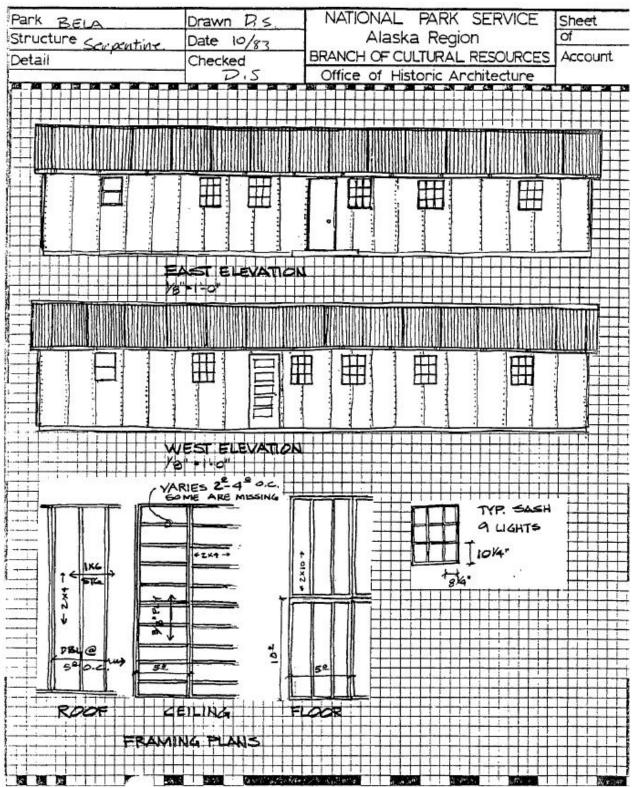


Figure 5: Field Sketch, East and West Elevations, David Snow Historical Architect, National Park Service, 1983



Figure 6: C-Camp Mess Hall, Denali National Park and Preserve, Similarities in Modular Construction, 2013

Photos



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Photo 5: Serpentine Hot Springs Bunkhouse, Interior, Southern Room, BELA Files, 2018



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