Pioneer Hall
Ketchikan

Pioneer Hall is a two-story, wood frame building on post foundations constructed over bedrock. The building footprint is approximately 1,786 sf. It has a steep, modified hip roof with an unfinished attic. The building has been altered on all four elevations and in its interior. Modifications were made to its Front Street facade in its early years and continued to be made to visible facades along Pioneer Way. It was built on a prominent site overlooking the waterfront and its 50’ flagpole was a beacon for early seafarers coming to Ketchikan. As the town grew rapidly in the years that followed, many—now historic—buildings began to surround Pioneer Hall. By the late 1920s, the commanding view earlier enjoyed by the Pioneer Hall was eclipsed by larger buildings including the Gilmore Hotel and the City Hall. The building is situated on historic Pioneer Way which is a stairway/pedestrian alley connecting Front Street to Main and Grant Streets.

The Pioneer Hall is an iconic Ketchikan landmark from the community’s earliest days. It was the first Customs House located in Ketchikan (1900-1907) and has been a prominent landmark in the community since 1900. In 1922, it began a new life of serving the Pioneers of Alaska (Igloo No. 16 and Igloo 7). The Pioneers have continued to meet in this building over the ensuing nearly 100 years and continue to carry out many civic activities. This is the Downtown Historic District’s and the City of Ketchikan’s oldest building and a contributing building to the District’s National Register of Historic Places designation. While the building has been altered over the years, the Pioneer Hall is individually eligible for the National Register by virtue of its place in Ketchikan’s history.

The building needs considerable rehabilitation to meet health and safety standards that would enable the Pioneers to continue to use the property. The building needs immediate attention to its foundation and structural deficiencies as well as extensive upgrades to its mechanical and electrical systems. There are numerous code issues that render the building unsafe to its members and visitors and that, if corrected, would enable older members to visit the building and remain active in the organization for a longer period. The building’s deficiencies have been enumerated in the draft report of the Historic Building Assessment.