

NSB honors Elders with housing

by Beverly Patkotak Grinage

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The North Slope Borough has decided to pay tribute to borough Elders by building them a senior citizens group home in Barrow.

The L-shaped group home will consist of 30 - 24 feet by 26 feet, one-bedroom efficiency units; with a commissary or multi-purpose room in the center, and a cold storage and cutting area for Native foods.

The building will be two stories high with an elevator. It will have a view of the tundra, along with a southern exposure. The two sites that the borough is considering are located just outside of Barrow and are within half a block from the bus routes.

"The idea is not to isolate them (the Elders), but to bring them together," said Tom Polak,

NSB Capital Improvement Project Planner. Construction should begin in late fall of 1984 or in 1985. The planning Department is still working on the final design of the building and the cost estimate. The funds for this group home will be coordinated into the budget ordinance in June. After the funds have been set aside the next stage is to work out the land acquisition from the Ukepeavik Inupiat Corporation.

The land acquisition has been made possible under the ANCSA 14-C3 because it calls for a lot to be used for an Elderly housing complex.

The group home will allow the Elders to be relatively on their own. "It's not a nursing home; it's a group home," said Polak. "By building the group home we will be able to keep the Elders from the North

Slope from having to move to other homes located in places like Fairbanks or Anchorage."

The North Slope Borough has worked very closely with the Elders in the planning and designing of this group home so that they will be able to retain their subsistence lifestyle.

Although the home is designed to be somewhat private, it will still be very communal.

The North Slope Borough Health Department will manage the home.

Other features of the home include some drying racks to be placed outside, a laundry

room on each floor, security doors, and 2 units set aside for elderly guests from out-of-town.

Polak said that the group home is on Mayor Eugene Brower's priority list for funding because it's a way of saying thanks to the Elders from the community.