

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Revised August 16, 1982

For NPS use only
received _____
date entered _____

1. Name

historic Burkhardt-Dibrell House (AHRS SITE NO. KET-111)

and/or common Monrean House

2. Location

street & number 500 Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town Ketchikan _____ vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Alaska code 02 county Ketchikan Division code 130

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mernsey and Mabel Monrean

street & number 500 Main Street

city, town Ketchikan _____ vicinity of _____ state Alaska 99901

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. State of Alaska District Recorder's Office

street & number 415 Main

city, town Ketchikan _____ state Alaska 99901

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Ketchikan Gateway Borough Survey State Inventory, AHRS, Office of History & Archaeology
of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 6-30-80 (File #586-C-1-1+ 1B) _____ federal _____ state county local

depository for survey records Ketchikan Gateway Borough Planning Dept., 344 Front Street

city, town Ketchikan _____ state Alaska 99901

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

(Addition to East)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This is the only significant Queen Anne style house remaining in Ketchikan. It represents a gracious turn-of-the-century design, once popular in the early decades of Ketchikan development. It is an Alaskan landmark of architectural distinction, which possesses distinguished association with two prominent Alaskan families.

The original portion of the gracious Queen Anne manse is three-storeys in height, with its commanding circular tower topped by a gold spire. A one-storey apartment and garage/basement area, added onto the east side of the main building some 60 years ago, did not affect symmetry, or detract from its basic style.

The "main" entrance on the west side (facing Main Street) features a glassed-in verandah, typical of both Ketchikan houses, with a gable above, decorated with latticed wood shingles, scroll brackets, and a raking cornice. Appropriately, the gable window is elaborately trimmed.

The imposing location of the house offsets its very simple cladding: 1 x 4 lap siding alternating with 1 x 12 bands at window heads and sill locations. The basement level is covered with cedar shingles. According to the second owners (Dibrell), cedar shingles were placed over the original vertical shiplap boards about 60 years ago.

All porch, basement and upper floor glazing is original. Although several main floor (and apartment addition) windows now have new glass without divided lites, all window frames are still original throughout.

The Burkhardt-Dibrell mansion was built in the earliest years of the town's incorporation when the thriving Ketchikan Spruce Mill had just been founded by "the father of Alaska's timber industry," H.S. Burkhardt. The building's first foundations were of solid wood beams; partially founded now on concrete. Walls are of 2 x 4 construction. The roof framing consists of 2 x 6 rafters, with special bracing supporting the tower. Floor framing is consistently 2 x 10s.

In the interior, the original stained oak stair balusters, doors, trim, and radiator covers are intact. The Dibrells' dining room furniture has also been retained. The front porch is unaltered (except for glazing) even to the light fixtures and planters. Other original items include: the dining room plate rail and pantry; metal radiators throughout; board ceilings in the east entry and stairs; the furnace and brick chimney; the kitchen cabinets (reused now for storage in the basement); the original root cellar with sawdust insulation; and interior door trim throughout. In the tower, the original sash windows, radiators and baseboards remain. Upstairs, even the original bathtub remains, but is framed into a contemporary setting. The original cabinet-maker crafted bathroom wall cabinets are intact.

Earliest photos of the building indicate a darker exterior color scheme, with the upper storeys being maroon, with white trim; and the basement a dark green color. The Monreans finally painted the exterior solid white. (The house is particularly difficult to paint with its steep sloping hill to the south and the tall three-storey circular tower.)

Four stepped-concrete garages were built parallel to the house, by the Dibrells. They still face Pine Street. Three of the four overhead garage doors are original. Built on the later addition which extended the property lot line, the garage roofs were surmounted by sod. The roofs were originally covered with tillable soil planted with flowers, but today, only with grass. A wooden trellis, located in the front yard, replicates an earlier structure built by the Dibrells. It enhances the gardening and landscaping which had always characterized the historic mansion.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		Local Landmark

Specific dates 1904

Builder/Architect H.Z. Burkhart

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The "house with the tower on Main Street" served as the landmark residence of two of the most prominent families in Alaska during the first three decades of this century. The most impressive Ketchikan mansion of its day, it was built in 1904 by H.Z. Burkhart, foremost pioneer in the timber products industry of Alaska. An exceptional architectural example, it is now the only Queen Anne style house extant in Ketchikan; and it is significantly associated with southeastern Alaskan history, persons (Burkhart and Dibrell), and events. H.Z. Burkhart came to Alaska after attending Iowa State University and gaining prominence in Idaho as a speaker of the State House of Representatives. Among the first to recognize the potential of Alaskan timber, Burkhart set up a single-boiler portable sawmill at Dolomi, in 1900, on Prince of Wales Island. He logged and sawed 286,658 feet of lumber there in the first year and more thereafter. Three years later, Burkhart came to Ketchikan to build the first large sawmill. He joined with J.J. Daly (of Ketchikan) and C.M. Summers (of Juneau) in founding Ketchikan Power Company; the first municipal power plant; and to enlarge a plant which became Ketchikan Spruce Mills, the largest in Alaska. He was eulogized as "The Father of Alaska's Wood Products industry," at the time of his death.

When H.Z. Burkhart died unexpectedly on October 28, 1909, his widow continued to live in the prominent turretted Queen Anne house which he had built at the head of Main Street; and helped manage the industrial properties. When Mrs. Burkhart retired in 1916, the home was purchased by Captain and Mrs. Walter C. Dibrell.

Captain Dibrell was already prominent as the first Superintendent of the U.S. Bureau of Lighthouses for the 16th District, representing all of Alaska. Created in 1910 within The Department of Commerce, the lighthouse bureau drastically improved safety for Alaskan coastal and oceanic shipping; almost eliminating shipwrecks which took 69 vessels between 1879 and 1910. Because of his work, Captain Dibrell "was more popularly regarded than was the various appointed Territorial Governors of Alaska." Under Captain Dibrell's strong leadership the total number of navigational aids in Alaska were almost trippled; from 230 in 1910, to 634 by 1923; while ship's losses (which had averaged 12 per year for many years) became almost non-existent.

Under the Dibrells, the most prestigious residence in Ketchikan acquired new features. An apartment was added at the side of the house on the main floor level; four reinforced concrete garages, with tillable soil on the roofs, were built facing Pine Street. (Initial plans for seven garages with apartments over them, which would have dominated the site, were scrapped.) Periodic reroofing had kept the house rainproofed. Captain and Mrs. Dibrell, about 1920, purchased a 35 foot wide strip of land extending 40 feet north and south; which was the same width as the original purchase lot. This was then cleared to become a popular playground for neighborhood children. The Dibrells also landscaped the sloping grounds south of the house. Here they planted many crocuses, other flowers and bushes, and two Japanese cherry trees, which still continue to bloom in season. In 1962, after 46 years of residency, Captain and Mrs. Dibrell sold the house. They moved to Texas (where Walter Dibrell celebrated his 105th birthday on February 11, 1980).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Correspondence with Captain and Mrs. Dibrell: 3-27-80 & 4-18-80
Ketchikan Museum: Photos from the Hunt Collection - #35, 40, 58.
History Research by: Mary Balcolm
Ketchikan Historic Properties Survey, Janet Matheson; Gateway Borough Planning Department

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property -1
Quadrangle name Ketchikan (B-5) Alaska USGS

Quadrangle scale 1:63 360

UMT References

A	<u>0 1</u> Zone	<u>3 3 2 1 5 0</u> Easting	<u>6 1 3 6 0 5 0</u> Northing	B	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

USMS 586, Parcel C, Block 1, Lot 1 & 1B (Ingersoll)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet M. Matheson AIA

organization Janet Matheson Architect

date 9-30-80

street & number Box 80567

telephone (907) 452-4640

city or town Fairbanks

state Alaska 99708

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

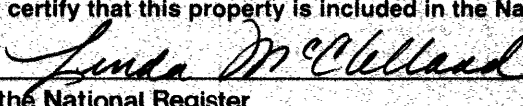
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date Aug 18, 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register


Keeper of the National Register

date 9-8-82

Attest: 

Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

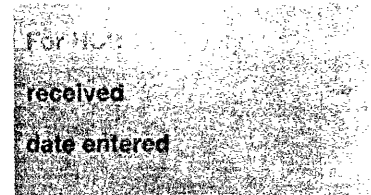
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Burkhart/Dibrell House

Continuation sheet (AHRS SITE NO. KET-111)

Item number 7

Page 1



Earliest photos of the building show a different exterior color scheme, with the upper storeys a maroon with white trim, and the basement a dark green color. The Monreans finally painted it solid white. (The house is particularly difficult to paint with its steep sloping hill to the south and the three-storey circular tower).

Four stepped concrete garages were built parallel to the house by the Dibrells. They face Pine Street. Three of the four overhead garage doors are original. Built on a later addition to the property, the garages have built-up roofs, surmounted by sod. They were originally covered with "tillable soil" and planted with flowers, but today, with grass. A wooden trellis, located in the front yard, replicates an earlier structure built by the Dibrells to enhance the gardening and landscaping which characterized the impressive historic mansion.

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Burkhart-Dibrell House (AHRS SITE NO. KET-111)
Continuation sheet

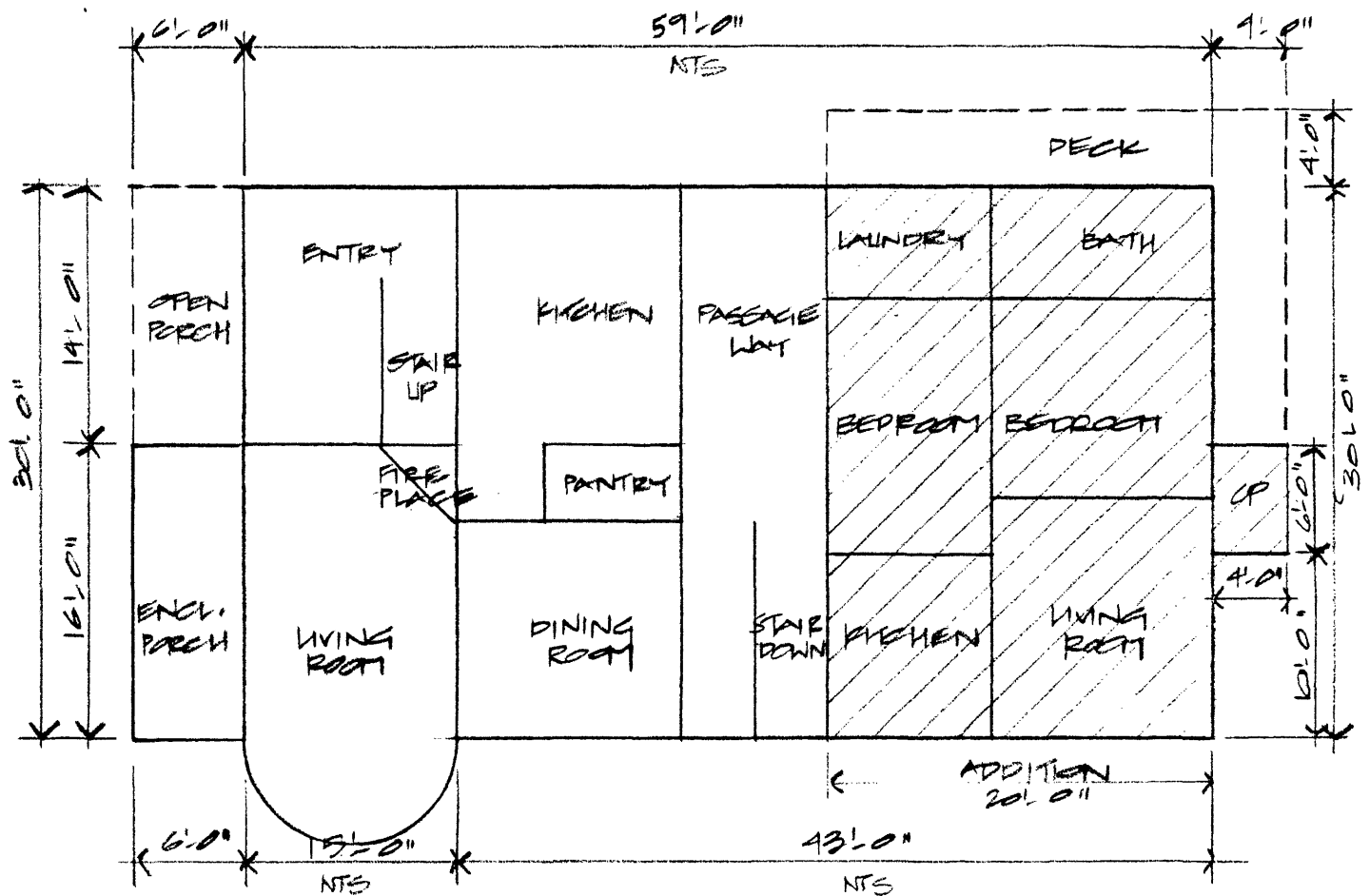
Item number 8

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Subsequent owners, Mr. and Mrs. James Walsh (Manager of Pan American Airlines) added the present stairs over the addition to the attic for a fire escape, and insulated the attic. Mr. and Mrs. Mernsey Monrean, who presently own the manse bought the property from the Walshes 14 years ago. They remodelled portions of the interior, modernized the bathrooms and kitchen, and installed new ceilings, in 1966. But the exterior of the building, especially the west side facing the stairs on Main Street, remains just as it has always looked. (The sun porch had been enclosed during the Burkhart era.) The dominant turret and spire continue to enhance this distinctive Ketchikan landmark. It still marks the head of Main Street to pedestrians along the waterfront below. The prominent tower remains visible all the way down to the Tongass Narrows and the pioneer Spruce Mill site beyond.

Because of its distinctive architecture; and through association with persons and events who made broad contributions to history, this structure possesses exceptional Alaskan significance.

MAIN FLOOR



BURKHART/DIBRELL/MONREAN HOUSE

500 MAIN

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"