

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: The Star

other name/site number: #5 Creek Street

AHRS Site No. KET-163

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2. Location

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street & number: #5 Creek Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Ketchikan

vicinity: N/A

state: AK

county: Ketchikan Gateway

code: 130

zip code: 99901

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Judith E. Bitner
Signature of certifying official

March 18, 1993
Date

Alaska
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other (explain):

for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic:	<u>Commerce/trade</u>	Sub:	<u>Business</u>
	<u>Commerce/trade</u>		<u>Restaurant (bar)</u>
Current:	<u>Vacant/not in use</u>	Sub:	<u></u>
	<u></u>		<u></u>
	<u></u>		<u></u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification: No style

Other Description: N/A

Materials:	foundation	<u>wood pilings</u>	roof	<u>wood shingle</u>
	walls	<u>wood frame</u>	other	<u></u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance. **See continuation sheet.**

The Star is located at #5 Creek Street in the City of Ketchikan. Constructed on pilings over Ketchikan Creek and towards the north bank, the building is only accessible by a wooden boardwalk. It is the largest and most commanding historic building along the boardwalk.

Of balloon-framed construction, the Star is a large two-story rectangular building measuring 62 by 30 feet with shiplap siding. Originally constructed around 1903, this was a 21 by 30 foot gabled two-story building. A two-story flat roofed addition was constructed between 1910 and 1913 to the south elevation. A hipped roof, added in the late 1920s, provided attic space and created the present roofline.

The south elevation of the addition had a bay window jutting out approximately three feet and extending approximately fifteen feet along the first floor level. This bay window contained four 1/1 double hung sash windows. Similar windows flanked the bay window. At an unknown date, the bay window was removed. In 1991, an additional 1/1 double hung sash window was added on the left side. The second floor of the south elevation has a pair of 1/1 double hung sash windows on the left and a 1/1 double hung sash window on the right.

The left-third of the west elevation is the original gabled building. Within the gable wall are two 1/1 double hung sash windows on the second floor. The original building's first floor has two 1/1 double hung sash windows placed in line with those on the second floor. The gable return still exists on this elevation. The addition at ground floor begins approximately five feet south of the original building, creating an umbrage porch approximately eight and a half feet deep that is covered by the addition's second floor. A door opens to stairs leading to the second

8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in
relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: social history

Period(s) of Significance: 1917-1943 _____

Significant Dates: 1917 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

The Star is the largest, most commanding building on the boardwalk known as Creek Street in the southern southeast Alaska community of Ketchikan. Although built earlier, the Star can be documented for its use as a house of prostitution from 1917 until 1954. By 1917, the original building had been enlarged to its present size and a few years later when a hipped roof replaced the flat roof on the addition the building took on its present appearance. The Star is the only remaining house of prostitution on pilings over Ketchikan Creek that retains its historic integrity. The period of significance ends in 1943, fifty years ago.

Discoveries of gold and copper and development of salmon salteries and canneries brought people to southern southeast Alaska in the 1880s. The town of Ketchikan began as a supply center for miners and fishermen. Typical of many towns in their infancy, Ketchikan grew haphazardly and unplanned. The white population settled to the north of Ketchikan Creek, and the Indians and various ethnic minorities settled to the south of the creek. Prostitutes were attracted to Ketchikan by the number of single men working in the booming industries. In 1903, the town council passed an ordinance requiring all "Bawdy Houses" to move south of Ketchikan Creek. Creek Street, located near the harbor where fishermen moored their boats, became the red-light district in Ketchikan. The Star was one of the town's houses of prostitution.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 - previously listed in the National Register
 - previously determined eligible by the National Register
 - designated a National Historic Landmark
 - recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 - recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- N/A

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: less than 1 acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>09</u>	<u>332625</u>	<u>6135925</u>	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

Lot 2, Block 24A, Tidelands Addition to U.S. Survey 437 according to official tidelands subdivision recorded as Plat 107, Ketchikan Recording District, First Judicial District, State of Alaska, measuring 62 x 30 feet.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Juan Munoz, Historical Researcher

Organization: _____ Date: June 10, 1991

Street & Number: 320 Bawden Street, #715 Telephone: (907) 225-1840

City or Town: Ketchikan State: AK ZIP: 99901

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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Section number 7

floor. Originally, this elevation had a single small sash window placed immediately to the right of the enclosed entry way and two 1/1 double hung sash windows placed side-by-side at approximate mid-point of the first floor. In 1991, a new 1/1 double hung sash window was added to form a pair with the window at the right edge. At the second floor level of the addition is a small single sash window placed directly above the first floor's single sash window. There were two 1/1 double hung sash windows on the second floor. Changes to this elevation consist of the placement of a door between the first floor's double 1/1 sash windows. At one time, a second door was immediately above this door. Scars suggest that the second floor door was at one time enclosed by a porch with a staircase to the boardwalk at the southwest corner of the building. In 1991, the owners removed the second floor door and window on the left and added a 1/1 double hung sash window to form a pair with the existing window on the right side. This pair is in line with the first floor pair.

The Star's north elevation is the side elevation of the original building. A small single sash window is placed at the left end of this elevation. To the right of this window are a pair of 1/1 double hung sash windows and then two single 1/1 double hung sash windows. At present, the two right windows are boarded.

The right-third of the east elevation is the original gabled building. A first floor bathroom extends out approximately three feet from the right-hand half of the elevation. This extension is topped by a closed gable roof. A wood panel door covered by a small, bracket support shed porch is centrally placed in the original elevation just to the left of the bathroom extension. A 1/1 double hung sash window is centrally placed between the door and the left edge of the original building. The second floor (original gable wall) has two windows placed just to either side of the gable wall's centerline. The right-hand side window is a single light single sash window, and the left-hand window is a 1/1 double hung sash window. The addition has two 1/1 double hung sash windows placed at 1/3 points on the second floor. The first floor of the addition has a door adjacent to the original building. A pair of 1/1 double hung sash windows are to the immediate left of the door and a 1/1 double hung sash window is further to the left. A wood stairway leads from the boardwalk to a door on the second floor required by city building codes. The new door is to the right of the window on the left side. It has a small, bracket support shed porch over the door that is similar to the one on the first floor.

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Inside, the original maple floor on the first floor is intact although some areas of the floor are damaged. In the center is an inlaid star of a darker color of wood.

The owners rehabilitated the building in 1991. With the exception of window changes made to the southwest corner that open the building's interior to its exterior, the building maintains its historic integrity.

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Under Territorial Law, a house of prostitution was defined as one with three or more women living in it. If only one or two women lived in a house, it was classed as a private residence and exempt from police inspection. Many shacks built on pilings and connected by a plank walkway with one or two residents lined Ketchikan Creek. The Star was an exception. Larger than the other buildings along the creek, the Star had more than three women residents.

The Star is believed to have been built in 1903. Around 1910, a sizeable addition was built. A dark star was inlaid in the maple floor on the first floor, from which the building derived its name. The addition was built before 1914, as a fire insurance map of that date shows the larger building and describes its use as "F.B. & Dance Hall". (F.B. stood for female boarders.) When Prohibition closed down Ketchikan's bars, liquor could still be purchased on Creek Street. Whiskey, smuggled in from Canada, was delivered at night when high tides allowed boats easy access to the houses along Creek Street. During the 1920s, business boomed along Creek Street, and opposition to the red light district grew among townspeople. The City of Ketchikan closed the Star at least twice, for a year in 1923 and again in 1929.

It is not clear when the Star became a house of prostitution. The earliest recorded sale of the building was by Mattie Wilkes to Mary Thomas in 1917. Mary Thomas, known as Black Mary, had just moved to Ketchikan when she bought the Star. Joining Black Mary at the Star was Dolly Arthur, who later became the most famous prostitute on Creek Street. In 1919, Dolly bought her own house on Creek Street. In Dolly's House, a biography of Dolly Arthur, she reportedly said that her only complaint about the Star was that it was always cold. In 1924, Black Mary sold the Star to Thelma Baker, who continued to use the building as a house of prostitution until 1954 when the city government "closed the Creek." After 1954, Thelma rented rooms in the Star. She died in a fire in the building in 1974. The building was vacant until rehabilitation work started in 1991.

For many years, fishermen, miners and loggers in southeast Alaska visited the Star. Today it stands as a reminder of Ketchikan's notorious red-light district.

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Company, 1982).

Balcom, Mary. Ketchikan, Alaska's Totem Land. 4th edition (Chicago:
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Driscoll, Freda. Personal communication, 1991.

Tongass Historical Society. Archives. Ketchikan, Alaska.

Tucker, Phil. Ketchikan - A City Historical Property Survey. (Ketchikan,
Alaska: Totem Press, 1984).

Whittaker, Dick. Personal communication, 1991.

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Section number Photograph identification

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1. The Star (AHRS Site No. KET-163)
Ketchikan, Alaska
From Dolly's House
ca. 1910
N/A
Looking north at the south and west walls of the building
2. The Star (AHRS Site No. KET-163)
Ketchikan, Alaska
E.L. Fisher
October 1930
Tongass Historical Society, 629 Dock Street, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
Looking south at Creek Street; the north roof and west wall of the Star are visible in the center of the photograph
3. The Star (AHRS Site No. KET-163)
Ketchikan, Alaska
Joan M. Antonson
February 1992
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Looking north at the south and west walls of the building
4. The Star (AHRS Site No. KET-163)
Ketchikan, Alaska
Joan M. Antonson
February 1992
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Looking southwest at the east wall of the building
5. The Star (AHRS Site No. KET-163)
Ketchikan, Alaska
Joan M. Antonson
February 1992
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Looking south at the north wall and roof of the building (cedar shakes, copying the original shakes, have since been put on the building)