

## COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

**Architectural Inventory Form**

Page 1 of 12

**Official Eligibility Determination  
(OAHF use only)**

OAHF1403

Rev. 9/98

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

- Determined Eligible – National Register  
 Determined Not Eligible – National Register  
 Determined Eligible – State Register  
 Determine Not Eligible – State Register  
 Need Data  
 Contributes to eligible National Register District  
 Noncontributing to eligible National Register District

**I. IDENTIFICATION**

1. Resource number: **5BL.536.21** Parcel number(s): **131503311006**  
 2. Temporary resource number: **N/A**  
 3. County: **Boulder**  
 4. City: **Longmont**  
 5. Historic Building Name: **Dickens House**  
 6. Current Building Name: **Dickens Manor Apartments**  
 7. Building Address: **303 Coffman Street**  
 8. Owner Name: **WJRP Properties**  
 Owner Organization:  
 Owner Address: **Po Box 11183**  
**Boulder , CO 80301**

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 44. National Register eligibility field assessment: | <b>Not Eligible</b> |
| Local landmark eligibility field assessment:        | <b>Not Eligible</b> |

# Architectural Inventory Form

Page 2 of 12

## II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **6th** Township: **2N** Range: **69W**  
**NW ¼ of SE ¼ of NE ¼ of SW ¼ of Section 03**
10. UTM reference  
 Zone: **13** **491123 mE** **4445986 mN** **(NAD83)**
11. USGS quad name: **Longmont**  
 Year: **1968 (photorevised 1979)** Map scale: **7.5**
12. Lot(s): **Lots 26-27-28 Blk 62**  
 Addition: **Longmont Original Town** Year of addition: **1872**
13. Boundary description and justification:  
**This legally defined parcel encompasses but does not exceed the land historically associated with this property.**  
 Metes and bounds?: Describe:

## III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building plan (footprint, shape): **Rectangular Plan**
15. Dimensions in feet: **Length: 115 feet x Width: 37 feet**
16. Number of stories: **2 1/2**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Brick**
18. Roof configuration: **Gabled Roof**
19. Primary external roof material: **Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof**
- Other roof materials:
20. Special features: **Porch**  
**Chimney**  
**Window/Segmental Arch**  
**Roof Treatment/Flared Eave**  
**Roof Treatment/Decorative Cornice**  
**Dormer**

21. General architectural description:

The imposing 2.5 story building at 303 Coffman Street is supported by an unpainted sandstone foundation, which extends to approximately 3' above grade. Its original walls are made of pressed grey brick, laid in running bond, while a large 37' by 32' 2.5 story addition to the east elevation has brown brick walls. The steeply-pitched front gable roof is covered with brown asphalt shingles, while painted turquoise color modillions appear beneath the flared eaves. A large brown brick chimney is located on the exterior of the north elevation, and very large, non-historic, shed-roofed dormers extend from the north and south roof slopes. A two-story canted bay, with four 1/1 double-hung first story windows, and three 1/1 double-hung second story windows, is set beneath a gable roof on the south elevation. Elsewhere, the original windows are primarily 1/1 double-hung sash, with sandstone lugsills, and with segmental brick arches. The remains of the home's original wrap-around front porch still exist on the south elevation. Approached by four sandstone steps, the remains of the porch features a wood plank floor, paired, painted turquoise color, Tuscan columns, a wood railing, and a low-pitched hipped roof with modillions. A non-historic wood-paneled door, with nine upper sash lights, leads from the porch into the building. An original entry door, with a segmental brick arch header, enters the building near the west end of the north elevation. A non-historic utility entry door is also located on the north elevation. A black metal staircase leads to a second-story entry door near the building's rear southwest corner. Another black metal staircase

## Architectural Inventory Form

Page 3 of 12

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leads to a second story entry near the east end of the south elevation. Another primary entry door, centered on the east elevation, leads into the building directly from the sidewalk along Coffman Street.

A 20' by 22' two-story flat-roofed section at the west (rear) end of the building was constructed as an attached garage between 1918 and 1930. It has also been converted into apartment units and incorporated into the overall building.

22. Architectural style: **Late Victorian**  
 Building type:
23. Landscape or special setting features: **This property is located at the northwest corner of Coffman Street and 3rd Avenue, a block west of downtown Longmont. This area is home to a mixture of commercial and residential uses. This building now fronts directly onto the concrete sidewalk which parallels Coffman Street on the east elevation. A planted grass lawn extends along the long south elevation, paralleling 3rd Avenue to the south.**
24. Associated buildings, features or objects:  
 1: Type: **N/A**

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### IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of construction: Estimate: Actual: **1902**  
 Source of information: **Town of Longmont Water Rent Collection Records; Sanborn Insurance maps, 1900, 1906; Longmont city directory, 1903.**
26. Architect: **Unknown**  
 Source of information: **N/A**
27. Builder: **Unknown**  
 Source of information: **Longmont City Directory, 1903.**
28. Original owner: **William H. Dickens**  
 Source of information: **Town of Longmont Water Rent Collection Records.**
29. Construction history:  
**The original portion of the imposing building at 303 Coffman Street was built in 1902, as a residence for the William H. Dickens family. Among the region's earliest pioneers, Dickens was one of Longmont's wealthiest and most influential citizens during the late 1800s and early 1900s. By 1930, the building had been converted into the St. Vrain Hospital, and by the early 1960s, it had become an apartment building. During these years, a 37' by 32' addition was built onto the east elevation (façade), covering most of the original wrap-around front porch. Very large shed-roofed dormers, extending along the north and south roof lines, were also installed when the building was converted into an apartment building in the late 1950s or early 1960s. An attached brick garage at the rear of the property was built between 1918 and 1930, and was also later converted into apartment units.**
30. Original location:  Moved: Date of move(s):

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### V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): **Domestic/Single Dwelling**
32. Intermediate use(s): **Health Care/Hospital**
33. Current use(s): **Domestic/Multiple Dwelling**
34. Site type(s): **Former single family dwelling; presently an apartment building**

## Architectural Inventory Form

Page 4 of 12

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35. Historical background:

The imposing dwelling at 303 Coffman Street was built in 1902 as the residence for William H. and Ida (Kitley) Dickens. William Henry Dickens was among northern Colorado's earliest and most successful pioneers. The son of John H. Dickens (born 1813 in England) and Mary Ann (Harris) Dickens (born 1816 in England), W.H. Dickens was born May 26, 1842 on board a ship sailing from England to North America. The Dickens family, including parents John and Mary Ann and children Elizabeth, John, and William Henry, first settled in Canada. John Dickens died in 1847, and the family now fatherless soon moved to Wisconsin. Later that year, Mary Ann married her second husband Alonzo Nelson Allen in Columbus, Wisconsin.

Born in 1820, Allen had become a successful businessman and farmer, but lost much of his capital during the financial panic of 1857. Seeking a new start, he headed west in the Pikes Peak gold rush of 1859. Allen spent much of 1859 and 1860 prospecting in Boulder Canyon before settling on the south side of the St. Vrain River at what was to become the town of Burlington. Although he failed to strike it rich quickly, Allen realized the region had great potential and he soon sent word to Wisconsin asking for his stepson William Henry to come west as well. In the spring of 1860 Dickens traveled to Omaha on horseback and then followed the Platte River west to join his stepfather at Burlington. Allen and Dickens together are credited with building the first log cabin at Burlington, and both filed on 160 acre homestead patents along the St. Vrain River soon after the Homestead Act was passed in 1862. Having decided to settle permanently in the St. Vrain Valley, Allen arranged for the rest of his family, including his wife Mary Ann and their children Rodolphus 13, Mary Ann 11, George 9, Charles 7, and Alonzo H. 3, to come west to Colorado Territory. Traveling first by train to St. Joseph, Missouri and then overland by wagon train, Mary Ann and the children arrived at Burlington in the summer of 1863.

The following year Mary Ann contracted with the Overland Stage Company to operate a stage house to lodge the company's passengers and employees. Allen and Dickens built the stage house out of grout and rough wood. It was located near the log cabin they had constructed earlier. In 1865 a second-story addition was built onto the stage house's north end, and the building subsequently served as the Allen's home as well as a hotel. The Allen's stage house and cabin were among the earliest buildings that formed the start of Burlington.

As he grew to adulthood on the Colorado frontier, Dickens lived the rugged independent life that western legends are made of, and he ultimately became one of the region's wealthiest businessmen and landholders. In 1863 he became a member of the newly formed "Burlington Home Guards" a locally organized militia that was created primarily to protect pioneer settlers from possible Indian uprisings. Members of the Burlington Home Guards, including Dickens, participated in the Sand Creek Massacre campaign led by Colonel John Chivington in November 1864.

During the late 1860s and early 1870s Dickens served as the Burlington town constable. In this capacity he became involved in the killing of a man named Bill Dubois, who had been accused of killing another man, and earlier of having participated in robbing the U.S. mails from the Overland Stage line near Cheyenne. Known as the "Dubois Affair" this incident became the basis for fictional western stories that popularized and sensationalized the incident. As reported in contemporary newspaper accounts and in later secondary sources, in early January 1870 Dubois had been arrested in Burlington for his alleged role in robbing the stage line. After being held for some six weeks in Denver, Dubois and the other alleged participants were released without being charged. According to the sources, Dubois sought financial restitution and revenge from several Burlington area men that he believed were responsible for his arrest and incarceration. Among these were Constable Dickens, Assistant Postmaster Ed Kinney, and John H. Wells, an attorney. On February 22, 1870 Wells and Kinney were

## Architectural Inventory Form

Page 5 of 12

---

returning to Burlington by wagon from the Big Thompson River when they encountered Dubois on horseback. As reported in the Rocky Mountain News, Wells later stated that Dubois first demanded money from Kinney and then shot and killed him with a revolver. Wells drove the wagon on into Burlington and spread the alarm while Dubois rode west toward the foothills near Left Hand Creek. Dickens quickly organized a posse and set out in pursuit. Catching up with Dubois two days later, the Dickens-led posse killed him in a shootout near Table Mountain.

In the 1870s Allen and Dickens continued to acquire land in tandem so that by the end of the decade they controlled much of the prime bottom land west of Burlington between the St. Vrain River to the north and Left Hand Creek to the south. During these years the two men also acquired several hundred acres of prairie land north of the St. Vrain River. The Dickens family established a farm on a portion of this land, southeast of the present intersection of Hover Road and 17th Avenue (see the inventory form for the Stroh/ Dickens Farm, 5BL.1436). The land where the farm was located had originally been homesteaded by George W. Coffin, agent for the Chicago Colorado Colony.

In 1881 Dickens built the Dickens Opera House in downtown Longmont and founded the Farmers National Bank that used the first floor of the Opera House for its offices. Dickens was also a key organizer of the Farmers Mill and Elevator Company which owned several grain elevators in northern Colorado. His primary interest, though, was in raising stock. Dealing in both the beef and wool industries, Dickens raised high-grade Shorthorn cattle and Shropshire sheep, as well as blooded Percheron-Norman horses and brood mares. By the early 1890s Dickens personally owned some 880 acres in the St. Vrain Valley and an additional several hundred acres in Weld County that he leased for grazing.

Dickens had married Ida Kitely on December 13, 1876 in Longmont. Born in Wisconsin in 1854, Ida had come with her family to Colorado in 1872. William and Ida Dickens raised five children: William Arnette (born October 6, 1877); Rienzi Charles (born August 1880); Mary Ida (born December 1882); Artalissa Marie (born 1885); and John Henry (born November 1888).

On November 30, 1915 William Henry Dickens met an untimely death when he was shot through the window of this house at 303 Coffman Street by an unknown assailant. His son, Rienzi Charles was charged with the crime and initially convicted of second degree murder in May 1916. The conviction was overturned by the Colorado Supreme Court and in a second trial held in 1921 Rienzi Dickens was acquitted. No motive for the murder was ever established and the case remained officially unsolved. With his passing William Henry Dickens helped bring to a close the pioneer era of the St. Vrain Valley. Few of the region's first settlers that had arrived in 1859 and 1860 now remained, and among these none were as financially successful or prominent as Dickens. Dickens was preceded in death by his father-in-law and mentor Alonzo Nelson Allen, in July 1894. His wife Ida (Kitely) Dickens died in March 1933.

By the early 1930s, the imposing Dickens House had been converted to use as the St. Vrain Hospital, and it remained in use in this capacity, or by the St. Vrain Hospital Association, through the late 1950s or early 1960s. By 1965, however, it had been converted to use as an apartment building, which for many years was called the Columbine Guest House. The building remains in use as an apartment building in 2006.

# Architectural Inventory Form

Page 6 of 12

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36. Sources of information:

## BOOKS

Crossen, Forest. *Western Yesterdays, volt 1*. Boulder: Boulder Publishing Co., 1963, pp. 25-30.

Large, Dorothy. *Old Burlington: First Town on the St. Vrain 1860 - 1871*, Longmont: St. Vrain Publishing Co., 1984, pp. 124-126.

Newby, Betty Ann. *The Longmont Album History and Folklore of the St. Vrain Valley*. Boulder: The Donning Company Publishers, 1995, pp. 25-30.

*Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity Colorado, vol. 1*, Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1898, pp. 489-490. On file at the Carnegie Library, Boulder, CO.

*They Came to Stay: Longmont, Colorado 1858 - 1920*, Longmont: St. Vrain Valley Historical Association, 1971, p. 66.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

Allen, Alonzo H. "Early Days in Longmont." *Colorado Magazine*, 14: 191-198, (September 1937).

\_\_\_\_\_ "Pioneer Life in Old Burlington, Forerunner of Longmont." *Colorado Magazine*, 16: 145-167, (July 1937).

Block, Augusta Hauck. "Old Burlington." *Colorado Magazine*, 19: 15-17, (January 1942).

## INTERVIEWS

Dickens, Jack. Interview conducted by Carl McWilliams, 16 June 1996. (Mr. Dickens is a nephew of William Arnette Dickens.)

Dickens, Ralph Maurice. Interview conducted by Carl McWilliams, 16 June 1996. (Mr. Dickens is the son of William Arnette Dickens.)

## NEWSPAPER ARTICLES [arranged chronologically]

"Marriage of William. A. Dickens and Hanna Marie Johnson in Longmont Yesterday." *Boulder Daily Camera*, 5 April 1900, p. 4.

"Murder of Wm. H. Dickens." *Longmont Ledger*, 3 December 1915, p. 1.

"Murder in Second Degree." *Longmont Ledger*, 26 May 1916, p. 1.

# Architectural Inventory Form

Page 7 of 12

---

"New Trial for Renzi Dickens." Longmont Ledger, 10 October 1919, p. 1.

"Verdict is 'Not Guilty'." Longmont Ledger, 14 October 1921, p. 1.

"Mrs. Ida Dickens Dies in California." Longmont Ledger, 17 March 1933, p. 1.

## UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

"Boulder County Treasurer's Ledger 39, p. 107." [record of Boulder County homestead patents] On file at the Carnegie Library, Boulder, CO.

Boulder County Assessor records.

"Colorado Historical Society Historic Building Inventory Record" form, dated 9 June 1986, on file at the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department, 2045 13th Street, Boulder.

"Colorado Territory 1870 Census" (index) published by the Weld County Genealogical Society, Greeley, 1977.

Dickens, Ida E. "Last Will and Testament." recorded in Will Book 9, page 108, dated 26 September 1922. On file at the Colorado State Archives, Denver, Colorado.

"Directory of Farmers for Boulder County in 1892," on file at the Carnegie Library, Boulder, CO.

Gladden, Sanford S. comp. "Boulder County Colorado Census records for 1860, 1870, 1880, 1885." Compiled circa 1989, on file at the Carnegie Library, Boulder, CO.

"Recognition of Merit, City of Longmont Colorado Landmark Designation Commission, Dickens-Stroh Barn 2045 17th Avenue" dated 7 December 1993.

Taylor, Juanita A. comp. "Allen - Dickens Family Tree June 18, 1978." On file at the Carnegie Library, Boulder, CO.

# Architectural Inventory Form

Page 8 of 12

## VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation:    Yes            No     Date of designation:

Designating authority:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;

B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguished entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see Manual).

Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

Longmont Standards for Designation:

2.56.040-A (1)    The structure or district has character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or nation.

2.56.040-A (2)    The structure or district is the site of a historic event with an effect upon society.

2.56.040-A (3)    The structure or district is identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society.

2.56.040-A (4)    The structure or district exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.

2.56.040-B (1)    The structure or district portrays the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

2.56.040-B (2)    The structure or district embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen.

2.56.040-B (3)    The structure or district is the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of Longmont.

2.56.040-C (1)    The structure or district, because of being part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif.

2.56.040-C (2)    The structure or district, due to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city.

39. Area(s) of significance:    **Not Applicable**

40. Period of significance:    **Not Applicable**

41. Level of significance:    National:                            State:                            Local:

## Architectural Inventory Form

Page 9 of 12

42. Statement of significance:

**Built in 1902, this property was historically significant for its association with the theme of community development in Longmont during the early 1900s, and for its association with William H. and Ida (Kitely) Dickens which extended into the 1920s. William H. Dickens was a particularly significant person who made notable contributions to the region's history; however, this property is probably not best suited to convey Dickens' significance. The imposing dwelling was also architecturally significant for its Late Victorian architectural characteristics, and for its fine pressed brick construction and architectural details. Due to a substantial loss of integrity, though, the property is no longer able to convey an adequate sense of its historic and architectural significance when it was associated with the Dickens family. For this reason, the property may be considered ineligible for individual listing in the national and state registers, and ineligible for local landmark designation by the City of Longmont.**

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

**This property exhibits a below-average level of integrity, relative to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service and the Colorado Historical Society - location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Physical additions and alterations to the building, when it was converted from a residence into a hospital, and then later into an apartment building in the late 1950s and early 1960s, have seriously compromised its integrity relative to its original use as the Dickens' family residence. The additions and alterations, however, are approaching fifty years of age, and given the property's rich history, they may be viewed as historically and architecturally significant in their own right within the next few years.**

### VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Not Eligible**

Local landmark eligibility field assessment: **Not Eligible**

45. Is there National Register district potential? Yes                      No                     

Discuss: **Properties in this block are outside the boundaries of Longmont's existing Westside Historic District. There appears to be minimal potential that the district's boundaries could be expanded to include this block.**

If there is National Register district potential, is this building:    Contributing    Noncontributing    N/A:

46. If the building is in existing National Register district, is it:    Contributing    Noncontributing    N/A:

# Architectural Inventory Form

Page 10 of 12

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## VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

47. Photograph number(s): **CLG Grant #08-05-20407-027 -** Negatives filed at: **City of Longmont**  
**CD-2, Images 153-160,**
48. Report title: **Eastside and Westside Neighborhoods: Historic** **Department of Community**  
**Context and Survey Report** **Development, Planning**  
**Division**
49. Date(s): **01/07/06** **Civic Center Complex**
50. Recorder(s): **Carl McWilliams** **350 Kimbark Street**  
**Longmont, Colorado 80501**
51. Organization: **Cultural Resource Historians**
52. Address: **1607 Dogwood Court**  
**Fort Collins, Colorado 80525**
53. Phone number(s): **(970) 493-5270**

# Architectural Inventory Form

## Sketch Map



