

**536 McLean Street  
Hilborn House – 1936**



Front Elevation



North and Front Elevation



Front and South Elevation

**Description**

Hilborn House is a charming one-and-a-half storey wood frame house built in 1936 that was relocated to this location on the east side of McLean Street in North Quesnel, BC. The historic place is confined to the building footprint.

**Heritage Value**

Hilborn House is located in North Quesnel which is an older residential neighbourhood in the city. Many houses of pioneering families have been moved to new locations in Quesnel as the community has grown. While not in its original form or location, the house is a physical reminder of the people who shaped the development of Quesnel. The house was built by well-known contractor Stephen Lundy Hilborn who moved it to this location. An addition onto the house was made in 1937 by Ed Hilborn.

The house is named for Stephen Hilborn who to Quesnel from Ontario in 1894 with his parents. In the early 1900s the Hilborn family moved into Quesnel and lived on a small farm located at the foot of Kinchant Street where Highway 97 North and Carson Avenue are now located. Josephine was born in Barkerville in 1876 and grew up in Quesnel. She was the daughter of pioneers, Joe and Georgina St. Laurent who arrived in Barkerville in the 1860s. Josephine was one of the original eleven students to attend the first school in Quesnel and was taught by Alice (Northcott) Earley. In 1885, Josephine was on the Honour Roll for Proficiency. Stephen married Josephine St. Laurent in 1896. He held the position of Vice-president on the Board of Trade and was a well-respected carpenter who built many of the buildings in Quesnel that are still in existence today. The Hilborn and St. Laurent families are recognized for their contribution to the development of the community with streets named in their honour.

In 1940, the house was purchased by John and Nina Cowan. John and Nina Cowan came to Quesnel from Ontario to purchase the Reid Estate holdings company from John's Aunt. John became known locally as 'Jack'. When he bought the James Reid Estate General Merchants business, he renamed it Cowan Supply Company. Unfortunately, his business was one of the eight buildings on Front Street that was destroyed in the fire of 1916. Luckily, most of Jack's stock was saved during the fire. He moved his business to an empty store down the street. In 1923, this building also caught fire when a bucket of tar being heated on the stove exploded.

Jack had a brick building constructed on the old Cowan Supply Company property. Jack installed a light and water plant in his new store. Jack then made a business arrangement with the other merchants in town where he would sell hardware items only if the other stores sold everything but hardware products. Once the other merchants agreed to Jack's proposal, he

renamed his store Cowan Hardware. Besides being a successful business owner, Jack was an undertaker and in the winter he used a homemade plough to clear the snow from the streets as a community service. When Jack retired he sold the hardware store to Dave Smith who then changed the store name to D. H. Smith Hardware.

In 1945, Jack and Nina sold this house to Howard and Irma Harnden. Jack and Nina moved into the house next door. Howard and Irma Harnden later sold this house to Richard and Myrtle (Lattman) Marsh in 1951. Richard worked with his father cutting and hauling wood, delivering ice, and baling hay. He started his own successful business, Marsh Sand and Gravel, which he later sold in 1959 to Quesnel Redi-Mix. Myrtle and Richard then owned and operated a small grocery store across from the Quesnel High School and Richard drove the school bus. Later he owned and operated Quesnel Appliance and Refrigeration until his retirement in 1978. The Marsh family is recognized for their contribution to the development of the community with streets named in their honour.

### **Character-Defining Elements**

The character-defining elements of Hilborn House include:

- a reminder of the historical association to the people who shaped the development of Quesnel;
- a one-and-a-half storey wood framed building with central entrance;
- relocated to this location in 1936 and put on a basement;
- a sympathetic addition was built onto its original form in 1937 by Ed Hilborn;
- a covered entrance with pediment;
- two-third split windows;
- simple decorative features;
- its original square form is still evident even though there were renovations made;
- a valuable contribution to the streetscape;
- it supports the overall setting of the block of houses that are similar in scale, proportion, and design.
- stucco exterior;
- brick chimney;
- three double pane window on façade.