

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

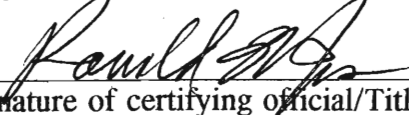
historic name Austin City Hall
other names/site number Austin Station House; Austin American Legion Hall; Austin VFW Hall

2. Location

street & number 90 South Street N/A not for publication
city or town Austin N/A vicinity
state Nevada code NV county Lander code 015 zip code 89310

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Signature of certifying official/Title
6-26-03 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- ___ 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): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
GOVERNMENT	city hall
GOVERNMENT	correctional facility
SOCIAL	meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
VACANT	

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Stone
walls	Brick
roof	Metal
other	Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1866-1953

Significant Dates

1866

1904

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Architect/Builder

Richardson, L. (contractor)

Pearce & Culbertson (flagpole builders)

McClellan, C. R. (painter)

Oberjohn & Co. (ironwork)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 0.16 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing	
1 11	493920 4371230	3 11	
2 11		4 11	

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>	date	<u>June 1, 2003</u>
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston St.</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>American Legion (contact: Walter Johnson)</u>		
street & number	<u>PO Box 111</u>	telephone	<u>(775) 964-2465</u>
city or town	<u>Austin</u> state <u>NV</u>	zip code	<u>89310</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description

Summary

The 1866 Austin City Hall is located at 90 South Street in Austin, Lander County, Nevada. Austin is situated at an elevation of approximately 6,600 feet above sea level in Pony Canyon near the northern end of the Toiyabe Range and near the geographic center of the state. The town lies in the watershed of the Reese River, a tributary of the Humboldt River, and it is served by US Highway 50. The northeast-facing building is built into the steep south slope of the canyon at the corner of South and Virginia streets. The two-story American-bond brick building has a granite foundation, a metal-sheathed front-gable roof, barred jail vents, a two-story metal-sided frame side addition built ca. 1904, and an upper-level frame rear addition (also ca. 1904) rebuilt in the late twentieth century. The simple interior has features related to the building's later use as a lodge hall such as grained dressing room closets.

Exterior

The building's simple character is defined largely by its two-bay front elevation. The front entry has an early twentieth century wood and glass panel door under a granite lintel. Next to it is a contemporaneous six-over-two window with a stone lintel and sill that have holes drilled into them for former iron bars. Above the door and window lintels the brick wall steps back, a condition that also occurs on the two side elevations. This construction detail may represent the economizing of bricks in the construction of the second story, or it may represent thicker wall construction on the first story, which contained the jail.

On the first-story southeast elevation are two small jail vents with granite frames, iron bars, and iron awning-type hatches or shutters with wrought-iron latches and hinges. One of the vents has been made into a stove flue opening, and there is a third opening toward the front of the building that appears to have been made for a stove flue. There are two identical jail vents on the northwest side inside the addition, as well as granite quoins at the back corner. The second-story front has two tall six-over-six windows with delicate shutter pintels, granite lintels, and wood sills. Mortises at the second-story window sill level and several associated cut nails with augmented heads may indicate the former presence of a porch or permanent awning that sheltered the first story elevation. On the southeast elevation are six-over-six windows with jack arches and wood lintels.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

Attached at the top of the front gable is an original wooden flag pole. At its base the pole is approximately four inches square and is held in place by an iron staple set into the brick. Above the roof the pole is chamfered, and it tapers so that it is round in section near the broken-off top. Bolts and what appear to be cut nails are used in its construction. The ends of wooden roof purlins are visible in the front gable but not the back.

The two-story shed-roofed addition on the northwest side has wire-nailed light framing members under rusted brick-pattern metal siding. Its front door is similar to that of the main section, and it has an opening to a storage area and second-story six-light windows on the northwest side. Across the rear of the original section at the second-story level is a shed addition with T1-11 siding and a poured concrete half-wall. The presence of several cut nails in the plate suggests the addition was rebuilt using materials from the original wing at the location or, because cut nails or present, perhaps lumber salvaged from another, late nineteenth century building.

Interior

The first floor, which originally contained a jail in the rear and probably a jailor or sheriff's office in the front, has a wood floor, plaster walls and ceiling, a vertical beaded board wainscot, and plain baseboard and trim. A beam and tie rod run down the center of the ceiling; there is evidence that the beam has been restructured to compensate for posts that may formerly have supported it. A doorway with molded recessed panels in its embrasure leads into the front of the side addition.

The side addition contains a wide stair with, at its foot, a turned newel with a ball finial. Over this stair on the formerly exterior wall of the original building is an opening, covered by a beaded batten shutter of cut-nailed construction, that originally served as an exterior second-story entry. Mortises for the stair that formerly rose up to this door are evident. The wall of the landing at the top of the present stair has wallpaper over lath. The second floor of the original section, originally a council chamber, has plaster walls painted green with a yellow chair rail strip, a plywood and batten ceiling, a wood floor, and plain trim.

A door at the front north corner leads into a dressing room in the front of the side addition. The room is lined with closets with four-panel doors and a cove cornice; the woodwork is crudely

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7, 8 Page 3

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

grained in imitation of oak. The walls have old beige wallpaper with a pattern of light blue stripes and red roses, and the ceiling has light gray, cream, and yellow lattice-pattern paper over cloth.

A four-panel door between the council chamber and the rear wing has a round peephole and a pottery knob. The rear wing contains a bar behind which are a long mirror and a painting of Stokes Castle in an idealized Italian landscape with cypresses, a bridge, and mountains. The formerly exterior brick wall of the original section is covered with several layers of old wallpaper over a cloth backing.

Integrity Statement

Austin City Hall possesses good architectural integrity from the period of significance. The overall form and exterior finishes of the building and its additions remain intact, as do features such as the flag pole and jail vents that are related to the building's original functions. The interior is somewhat more modified--partitions, cells, and other features associated with the original jail are missing, for example--yet other historic features and finishes survive including the dressing room associated with the building's use as a lodge hall during the early twentieth century. The building's setting includes nineteenth century commercial buildings on Main Street and the sagebrush-covered slopes of the south wall of Pony Canyon.

Section 8 Statement of Significance

Summary

Austin City Hall, located in Austin, Nevada, was built in 1866 soon after the prosperous silver-mining community of Austin was incorporated as a city. The two-story brick building includes original features such as a decorative wooden flagpole and barred vents for a former basement jail. L. Richardson was the building's contractor and local carpenters Pearce & Culbertson erected the flagpole. In 1904 the building was acquired by the Knights of Pythias fraternal organization, which added an enclosed stair and a dressing room with grained closet doors. The American Legion purchased the building in 1947 and it now serves as meeting space for the American Legion and the VFW.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Applicable Criteria

Austin City Hall meets Criterion A and is eligible in the politics/government area of significance as Austin's seat of government for most of the brief period (1864 to 1881) during which Austin had city status. The period of significance extends from the date of construction in 1866 until 1953, embracing the building's early use as a city hall and jail and later use as quasi-civic meeting space. (The building is not of exceptional significance for the period after 1953.) The Austin City Hall is eligible at the local level of significance. The building is located in the Austin Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. Information in support of eligibility appears throughout this section.

Acknowledgments

A number of organizations and individuals assisted in the preparation of this report. The nomination was sponsored by Lander County and the Austin Historical Society with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Nevada Commission of Economic Development, and it is one of ten nominations prepared for prominent historic landmarks in Austin in 2003. The nomination was assisted by the owner of the property, the American Legion, and by Walt Johnson of Austin. Others who provided assistance included Allen D. Gibson, Deputy District Attorney, Lander County; Christy Caronongan, Administrative Assistant, Lander County Executive Director's Office; Ray H. Williams Jr., Ray and Irene Salisbury, Phillip "Poncho" and Joan Williams, and Joy Brandt with the Austin Historical Society; Ray H. "Ramey" Williams III, Austin; Dee Helming and Herbert Wallace "Wally" Trapnell, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; and Mella Rothwell Harmon, Architectural Historian/National Register Coordinator, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Context

Silver was discovered in Pony Canyon in May 1862 and within a year the population of the nascent community of Austin and its immediate vicinity stood at nearly 1,000. The Comstock Lode boomtown of Virginia City provided a staging area for the settlement of Austin and in many respects served as a template for Austin's economic, demographic, and architectural development. Austin was made the seat of Lander County on September 2, 1863, and in November 1864 the

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Section 8 Page 5

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

town's population was reliably estimated at approximately 6,000, briefly making Austin the state's second largest community.

Austin's rapid growth inspired its incorporation as a city in April 1864 (a revised charter was issued in April 1865). The offices of mayor, city attorney, city clerk, and city treasurer, and a "Common Council" consisting of six aldermen, were established. Austin quickly passed through the three incipient developmental stages identified by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office as characteristic of the state's mining towns: the settlement stage (provisional architecture and haphazard organization), the camp phase (more permanent frame buildings and town platting), and the town phase (masonry construction, public buildings, established infrastructure, and stylistic sophistication).¹

By the end of 1866 Austin boasted two substantial brick churches (Austin Methodist and St. Augustine's Catholic), several banking houses, the *Daily Reese River Reveille* newspaper, the International Hotel (moved from Virginia City), and hundreds of brick, stone, wood, and adobe mining structures, commercial buildings, and dwellings. American-born whites constituted the majority of the population; Chinese, English/Welsh, Irish, and "civilized Indians" were important groups as well. Austin also experienced, to a degree, a fourth phase of Nevada mining town development: partial abandonment, as the silver played out and the town's economy and population contracted at the end of the nineteenth century. Austin's status as a trade center for central Nevada prevented it from becoming a ghost town, but the town's population declined to 702 by 1900 and stands at about 300 today.²

¹ Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 56; Hulse, *Silver State*, 79; Browne, "Reese River Country," 34; *Charter of the City of Austin*, 2-3, 6, 24-25; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 8-9. One authority claims a peak Austin population of 10,000 in the summer of 1863 (Nevada State Historical Society, *Nevada*, 259). Another suggests a peak population of approximately 8,000 (Smith, "Austin, Nevada," 7). According to Stanley Paher, Austin was incorporated as a city in January of 1864, not April (Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps*, 166).

² Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 58-59; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 9.

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Section 8 Page 6

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

In July 1863, before Austin was incorporated as a city, the *Reveille* suggested that a combination town hall, school, and worship space be erected. This suggestion was not followed, for in 1865 the city's Common Council met in rented quarters with a "station house" containing two jail cells on the first floor and a council chamber on the second floor (a functional arrangement followed in the present building). In 1865 the *Reveille* began to hint that a new station house was needed, and in October 1865 the city purchased the city hall site at the intersection of South and Virginia streets. In early March 1866 a committee was formed "to contract for the speedy erection of a Station House." By March 21 the committee had contracted with L. Richardson and in early April the Common Council appropriated \$1,750 for the building's construction. The work proceeded rapidly for at the end of April one C. R. McClellan was reimbursed for "extra painting on Station House." The building was ready for occupancy in July 1866 when City Attorney A. M. Hillhouse requested permission to locate his office in the "council chamber," also referred to as "the public hall of the city."³

Soon after the City Hall opened the Common Council paid carpenters Pearce & Culbertson \$82.86 for the erection of a "flag-staff" on the building. Richard Pearce was a frequent advertizer in the local paper, and with his partner Culbertson he also supplied coffins and undertaking services to the Austin public. The Pearce & Culbertson shop stood a half block northwest of the City Hall on South Street. Mayor P. M. Eder, a lumber yard owner, donated the lumber for the staff, and the flag itself was purchased from Block & Co. for \$140. In January 1867 the Common Council paid Oberjohn & Co. \$60 for making and installing iron shutters for the building. Presumably these were the iron hatches for the barred vents on the side elevations. A clue to the building's original interior arrangements is contained in a July 1871 issue of the *Reveille* when it was reported that a fire had ignited next to a wooden partition in the City Hall basement. This partition, which no longer survives, may have separated the rear jail cells from the front office.⁴

³ *Reese River Reveille*, August 5, September 1, and October 25, 1865 and March 7 and 21, April 4, 18, and 25, and July 6, 1866; Lander County Deed Book 28, pp. 514 and 689. Richardson received several additional reimbursements for lumber after the initial \$1,750 payment.

⁴ *Reese River Reveille*, April 4 and July 6, 18 and 25, 1866, January 9, 1867, and July 3, 1871; Pezzoni, "Austin Cemetery."

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 8, 9 Page 7

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Austin's new municipal building attracted the attention of the state's Surveyor General, who in his 1866 report noted: "A fine city hall of brick, with lock-ups, has been built by the City the last year." Austin was disincorporated as a city in 1881 and the city hall converted into a dwelling. In 1904 the building was put up for sale by Lander County acting for the town. The purchaser was the Toiyabe Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, which by 1907 had added the two-story frame stair hall and dressing room on the northwest side and the shed wing to the rear. In March 1947 the Knights of Pythias sold the property to the John F. Hiskey Post No. 45 American Legion.⁵

The John F. Hiskey Lodge No. 45 was chartered in 1945 and named after a local Navy pilot who was killed flying a Navy TBF bomber off the coast of Florida during the Second World War. The Post raised the \$500 purchase price for the old city hall by holding dances and raffles and through donations. In 1948 the Post's membership stood at 58, and in 1949 a Ladies' Auxiliary also existed. In 1977 the Lloyd W. Jackson Post 9065 Veterans of Foreign Wars was chartered and met in the building. The VFW Post was named for a Native American resident of the Austin area who was killed in a Hewey Helicopter crash in Vietnam in 1966 and who was buried in Austin's Indian cemetery with military honors. The VFW continues to use the building. There are plans to renovate the Austin City Hall as a memorial to all deceased Austin veterans.⁶

Section 9 Bibliography

Abbe, Donald R. *Austin and the Reese River Mining District: Nevada's Forgotten Frontier*. Reno, Nv.: University of Nevada Press, 1985.

Austin Historical Society Collection. Austin, Nv.

⁵ Smith, "Austin, Nevada, 1862-1881," 85; Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps*, 166; Sanborn maps; Lander County Deed Book 50, p. 114; and September 11, 1947 deed from the Grand Lodge of the Knights of Pythias of Nevada to the John F. Hiskey Post No. 45 American Legion.

⁶ "Visitor's Guide to Greater Austin;" 1949 *Castilleja*, advertizement section; and Walt Johnson and Ray H. Williams Jr. personal communication. The Lloyd W. Jackson Post was erroneously named the Clyde W. Jackson Post after Lloyd's brother when it was first formed.

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Section 9 Page 8

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 9 Bibliography, continued

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Section 9, 10 Page 9

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 9 Bibliography, continued

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Society, Reno, Nv.

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Collections Department, University of Nevada Reno Library, Reno, Nv.

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Preservation Plan." Carson City, Nv.: The Division of Historic Preservation and
Archeology and The Nevada Historical Society, 1991 (second edition).

Section 10 Geographic Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area corresponds to Lander County tax parcel 01-101-09.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated area correspond to the present boundaries of the parcel on which
the Austin City Hall stands.

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Section Photographs Page 10

Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

PHOTOGRAPHS

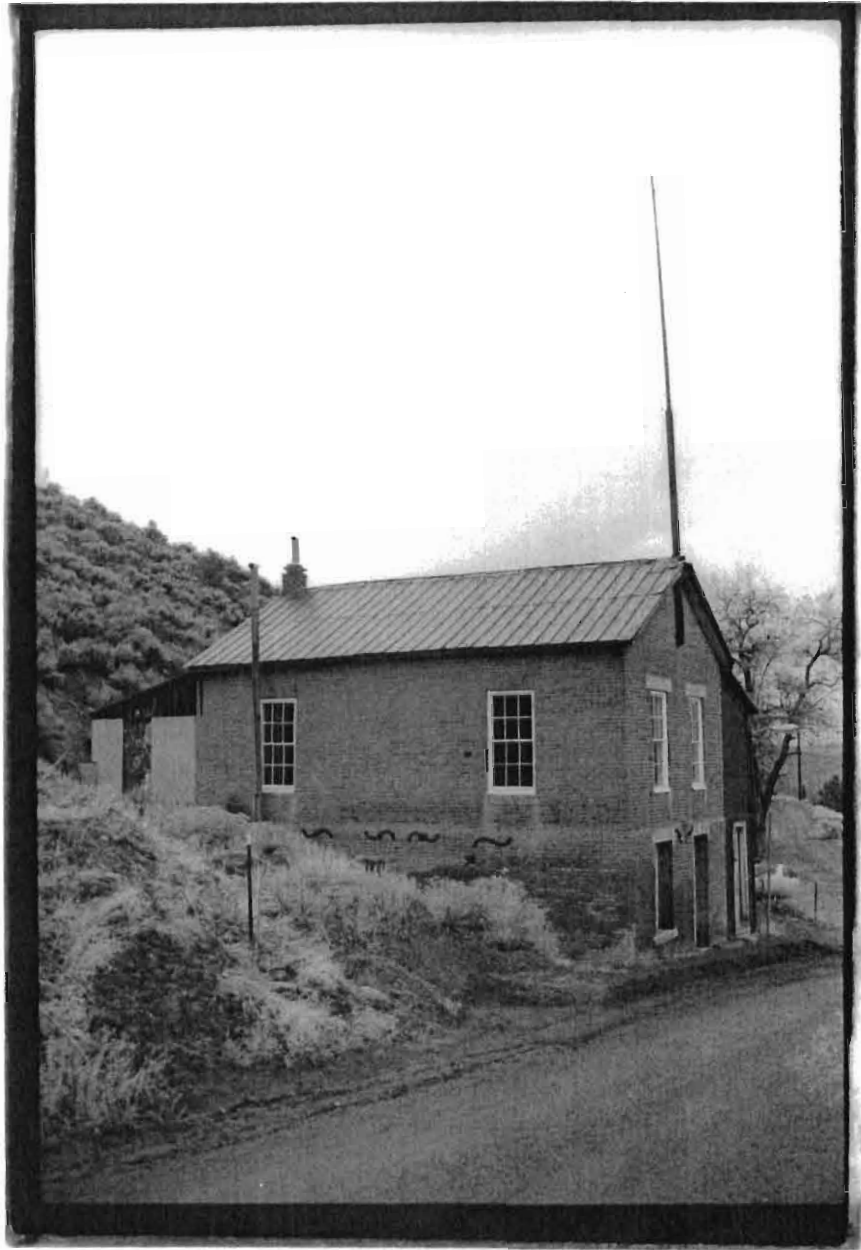
1. 1. Subject: Austin City Hall (same for all photos)
2. Location: Lander Co., Nv. (same for all photos)
3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)
4. Photo date: March 2003 (same for all photos)
5. Original negative archived at the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office,
Carson City, Nv. (same for all photos)
6. Description of view: Southeast and northeast (front) elevations.
View looking west.
7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)
2. 6. Northeast (front) and northwest elevations. View looking south.
3. 6. Northwest and southwest elevations. View looking east.
4. 6. Second-floor council chamber.

U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute Quadrangle
Austin, Nevada
Provisional Edition 1988

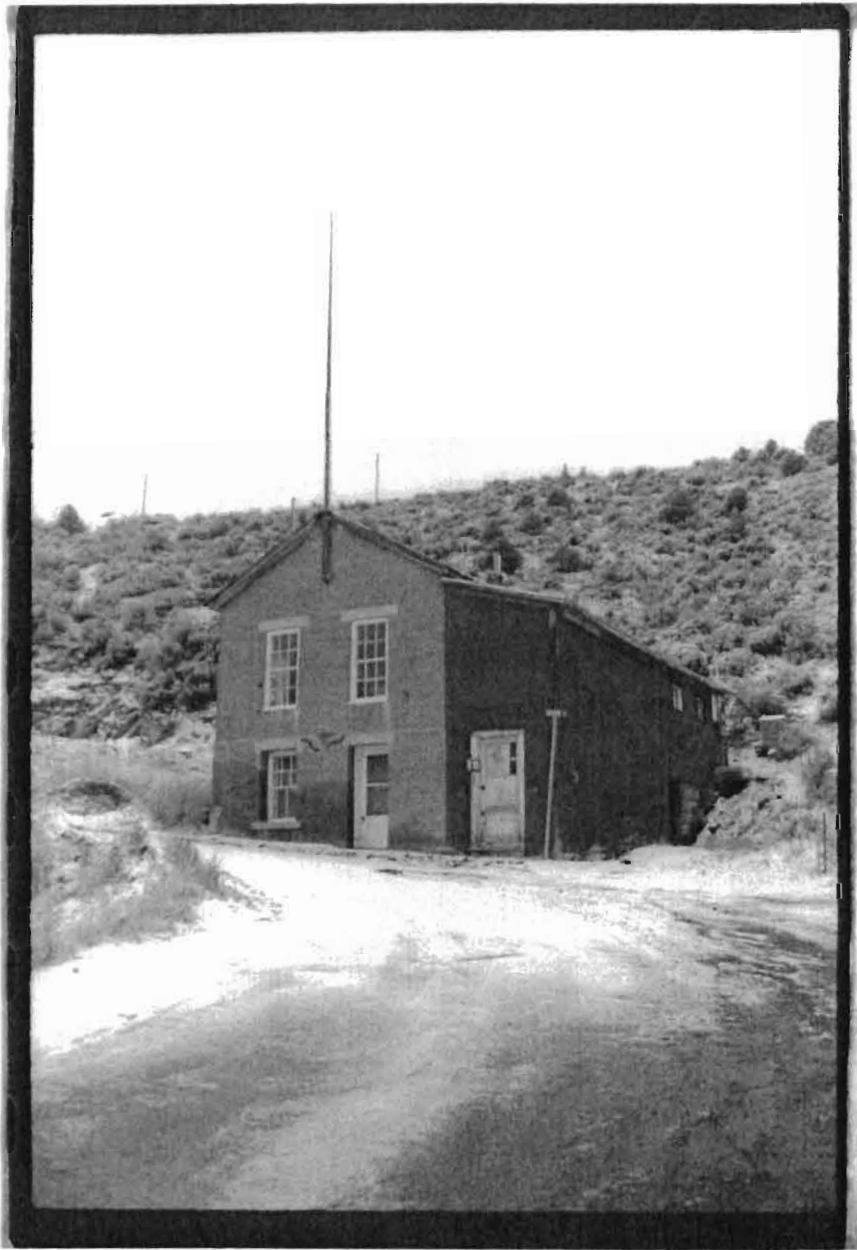


Austin City Hall

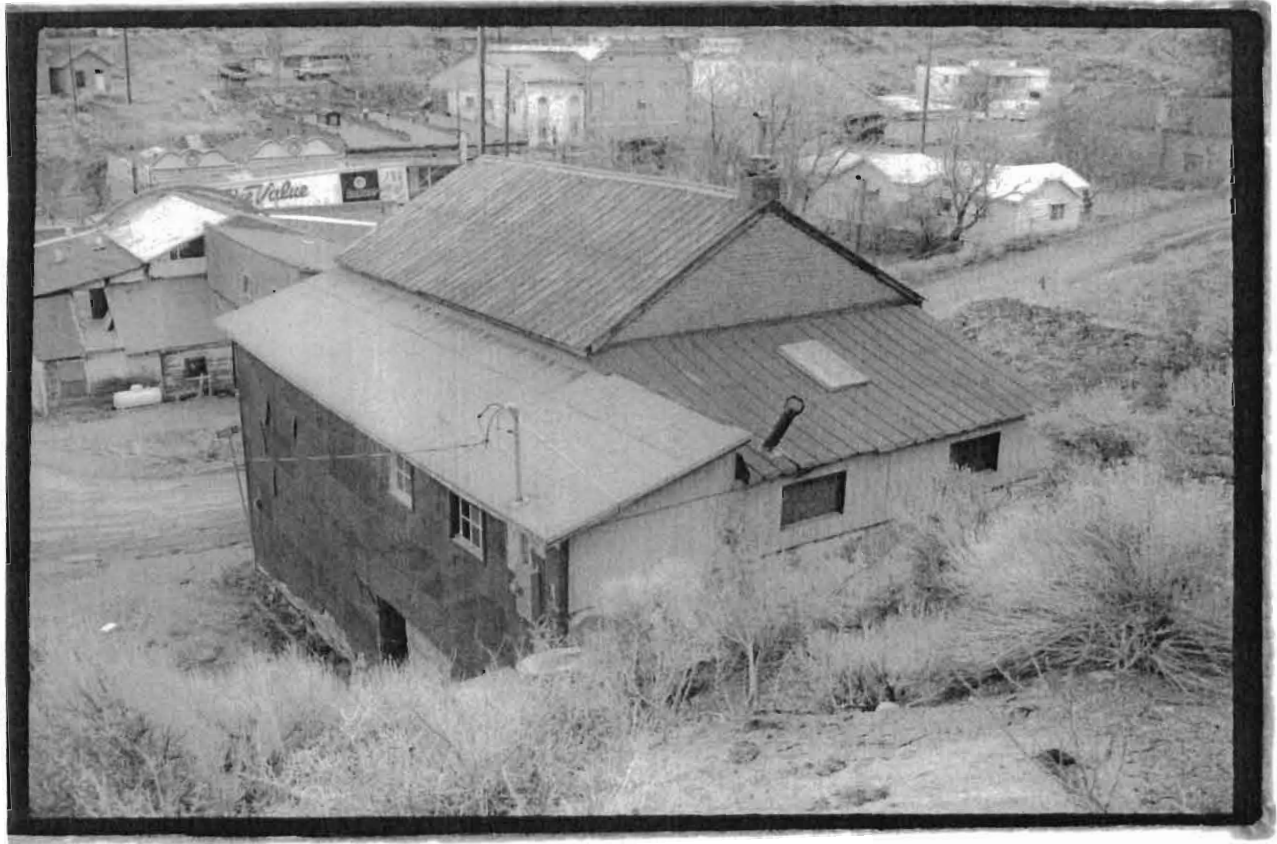




Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County



Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County



Austin City Hall, Austin, Lander County