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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Austin Hall
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Austin College, Austin College Building

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 1741 University Ave
CITY OR TOWN: Huntsville
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Walker CODE: 471 ZIP CODE: 77340
 NOT FOR PUBLICATION
 VICINITY

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer Date 10/30/12
Signature of certifying official / Title
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

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 Date
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the 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 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain See continuation sheet.

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 1-2-13

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY

contributing	noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: Education / college

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: Education / college

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

MATERIALS: **FOUNDATION:** Brick
WALLS: Brick
ROOF: Flat-Seam Metal
OTHER: Wood

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-8)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

Property:

- A** is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** is 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 possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Education and Architecture

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1852 - 1962

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1852, 1879, 1927

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT / BUILDER: Barrett, William M. (Builder)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-15)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-16)

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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: Texas Historical Commission, Austin
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University: Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas
- Other -- Specify Repository:

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

COORDINATES: Based on WGS84 Datum
Latitude: 30.715579 Longitude: -95.550052

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Austin Hall is bounded on the east, south, and north by the existing perimeter sidewalks and on the west by a retaining wall that serves as the eastern edge of Jewel Garden. Each of these boundary markers lies approximately twenty-five feet from the historic building.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: Austin Hall sits amid more than three hundred buildings on the Sam Houston State University main campus. The boundary for Austin Hall is drawn to include the historic building specifically.

11. FORM PREPARED BY w/ assistance from Carlyn Hammons, THC Historian

NAME / TITLE: Mac Woodward, Curator of Collections, Sam Houston Memorial Museum
Mary Holland, Campus Space Planner, Sam Houston State University
Allison W. Chambers, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP, Preservation Specialist,
Ford, Powell and Carson Architects and Planners, Inc.

ORGANIZATION: Sam Houston State University **DATE:** July 2012

STREET & NUMBER: 1402 19th Street **TELEPHONE:** 936-294-3931; 936-294-1866

CITY OR TOWN: Huntsville **STATE:** Texas **ZIP CODE:** 77340

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-17 through Map-18)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-26)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS (see continuation sheets Figure-19 through Figure-25)

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Sam Houston State University; Dr. Dana Gibson, President

STREET & NUMBER: Box 2026 **TELEPHONE:** 936-294-1013

CITY OR TOWN: Huntsville **STATE:** Texas **ZIP CODE:** 77341

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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Austin Hall, the oldest building on the campus of Sam Houston State University, was designed in the Greek Revival style in 1852. Situated on top of the site once known as "Capitol Hill," the two-story, red-orange colored brick building with large white Tuscan columns and onion domed cupola is the anchor building at the north end of the campus quad in the historic heart of the campus. Located at 1741 University Avenue, Austin Hall has two equally important elevations, one facing 17th Street to the north and the other facing the campus quad to the south; both serve as main entrances to the building, although the north entrance is the original.

Austin Hall has been remodeled and then restored several times throughout history, but today appears very similar to when it was completed by Huntsville builder W.M. Barrett in 1853. One of the most interesting architectural features has developed over time as students have carved their names into the soft molded bricks on the lower six feet of the building. The 80' x 50' rectangular plan has two 42' x 12' rectangular porches on each of the long elevations facing north and south. Four double-height Tuscan columns finished with Portland cement plaster support the porch roofs. Each elevation is lined with tall nine over nine lite double hung wood windows. The three wood doors on the exterior have transom windows once used to ventilate the schoolrooms. The entire building, including the porches, is capped with a large wood cornice with simple detailing. A 22' tall octagon shaped cupola clad with wood siding and four pointed arch openings facing the cardinal directions sits in the center of the flat-seam, hipped metal roof. The cupola is topped with a metal onion dome with a ball and spire finial.

GENERAL SETTING

Austin Hall was the first building constructed on the site once known as "Capitol Hill," which overlooks the city of Huntsville and the surrounding countryside. It stood alone on the hilltop until September 1888 when construction began on a Gothic Revival building known as "Old Main" a few feet to the north. In 1982, Old Main burned to the ground, severely damaging Austin Hall and prompting a major restoration. Old Main was not reconstructed, but portions of the foundation walls were developed into a memorial garden and today, in 2012, the north façade of Austin Hall is once again visible from a great distance.

Presently, in 2012, Austin Hall is the anchor building of the campus quad, a large tree-covered lawn divided by a series of diagonal sidewalks located directly south of Austin Hall. Academic buildings surround the quad and the two nearest Austin Hall are the Dan Rather Communications Building (1985) to the southeast and the John W. Thomason Building (1952) to the southwest. Located to the east of Austin Hall, downhill from the quad is the historic Peabody Memorial Library (1902). Several small trees surround Austin Hall on the east and west elevations; a small sunken garden is located due west of the building; and a bronze statue of Sam Houston (1979, Trace Guthrie) stands in the Quadrangle just south of Austin Hall. None of these properties are located within the nominated boundaries, however.

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THREE-DIMENSIONAL FORM

The massing of Austin Hall consists of one rectangular 2-story volume with two double-height porches on the north and south elevations. The natural grade slopes toward the north so that the north porch is accessed by nine steps from grade. The four large columns on the north and south elevations and large wood cornice surrounding this symmetrical building are the defining characteristics of the Greek Revival style. A central cupola with an onion dome crowns the low-pitch hipped roof.

NORTH AND SOUTH ELEVATIONS

The north and south elevations share equal importance as main entrances to Austin Hall and are very similar in appearance. Each elevation is divided into seven bays defined by windows and doors that break up the continuous running bond of red-orange brick with a sanded finish. The building once had a plaster skirt that was removed and replaced with several courses of more modern brick in 1985. It is unknown if this plaster skirt was an original feature or was added at a later date. Four Tuscan columns define the porch areas. All of the wood windows, lintels, doors, columns, cornice and cupola are painted white, while the shutters on the windows and cupola are painted dark green. The porch floors are covered with granite pavers, as are the steps and platform leading to the north porch entrance.

The low-pitched, flat seam metal roof is hidden behind the parapet of the wood cornice; however, the cupola atop Austin Hall is seen from every elevation. The octagon shaped cupola is clad with wood ship-lapped siding and vertical wood trim at each corner. The cardinal elevations have pointed arched openings covered by wood shutters. The onion shaped metal dome sits on top of a wood cornice and is crowned with a ball and spire finial.

After ascending nine steps to the north porch from grade, a small platform with two additional steps leads to the main entrance in the central bay. The main entrance consists of wood stile and rail double doors flanked by fixed side lites and a fixed transom window. Each door has two lites over two panels, while the side lites have four lites over one panel; the fixed transom has eight lites. The entire entrance is grouped within a wood frame. Above the main entrance on the second floor is a nine over nine double-hung wood window with two fixed three over three side lites. This window is capped with a wood lintel. The remaining six bays of the north elevation consist of a single nine over nine, double-hung window with wood lintel on each floor level. The windows in the four outer bays, which fall outside the cover of the porch roof, have wood shutters. Brick pilasters are located on the corners of the north elevation as well as between the two outer window bays.

The columns on the south side of Austin Hall were added in 1927 to match those on the north elevation; but as a result, they subtly disturb the symmetry created by the slightly different fenestrations on the south elevation. The outer two bays of this elevation have a single nine over nine lite double-hung window with wood lintel and shutters on each level. The next two bays have the same window on the second floor, but with a two panel stile and rail wood door and seven lite fixed transom on the first floor. The transom is capped with a wood lintel. The next two bays that flank the main entrance have a nine over nine lite double-hung window on the first floor with wood lintel, but without shutters. On the second floor of these bays is a pair of nine over nine double-hung windows with

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a continuous lintel. The innermost window of the pair aligns with the window on the first floor. The central bay of the south elevation consists of a pair of double doors with an eight lite fixed transom capped with a wood lintel. Each wood stile and rail door has six lites over two panels. Centered above this entrance on the second floor is a pair of nine over nine lite double-hung windows with a continuous wood lintel.

EAST AND WEST ELEVATIONS

The east and west facades are the more minor elevations of Austin Hall. Each elevation is divided into four bays characterized by a nine over nine lite, double-hung window with wood lintel and shutters on each floor. The only difference between the two elevations is found on the west; in the second bay from the north, the first floor has a stile and rail, two panel door with a three over three lite fixed transom and wood lintel that leads into the kitchen.

EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS

The first documented change to the exterior appearance of Austin Hall dates to 1882 when a third floor with a mansard roof was added to solve the problem of a leaking roof and the demand for additional space. The bell in the cupola was removed at this time and presented to Austin College in Sherman, the founding college responsible for the construction of Austin Hall.

In 1927, the third floor and mansard roof were removed and the porch columns on the south elevation were added to match those on the north side.

On February 11, 1982, the roof of Austin Hall was destroyed as flames spread from a fire that destroyed the building known as "Old Main" located directly north of Austin Hall. The destruction extended to the interior, mostly in the form of water damage, but the load bearing walls were still intact. A temporary roof was immediately erected until further action could be taken. Austin Hall was fully restored by 1985. Today, in 2012, Austin Hall is once again undergoing a major restoration effort lead by Ford, Powell, and Carson, Architects and Planners of San Antonio to correct damage caused by water infiltration; however, no work will change the exterior appearance of this important Texas landmark.

It is unclear, due to the lack of documentation and the major fire that occurred in 1984, which of the major features of Austin Hall's exterior might be original. However, it is clear that the load-bearing brick walls where students have carved their names for generations are original. It is also believed that the columns on the north elevation are original, but they have been replastered numerous times. Other major features of Austin Hall's exterior have been reconstructed to resemble the original using historic photographs, such as the flat seamed metal roof and onion domed cupola. The shutters are not historic based on their modern construction techniques. Overall, however, the building is in very good condition and exhibits a high degree of integrity.

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INTERIOR CHARACTERISTICS

When Austin Hall opened in 1853 as Austin College, the first floor of the interior was divided into an entrance hall on the north with two staircases leading to the second floor, a large central assembly room behind the entrance hall and four classrooms toward the corners of the building. The second floor plan echoed the first floor.

Austin Hall had many changes in use throughout its history, but the interior changes were not always documented. In 1919, the YMCA took over the management of the building as a student center known as the "Social Center." They began renovations that were completed in 1927 including a spacious new reception hall on the first floor, a restroom, a kitchenette, and offices.

Today the first floor consists of an entrance hall with a pair of staircases leading to the second floor. The entrance hall leads to the men's and women's restrooms in the east and west corners respectively, as well as the reception hall to the south. The elevator is located on the east side of the reception hall. The assembly hall is just south of the reception hall and the south entrance opens directly into this room. In the southeast corner is the seminar room, which has a door to the electrical room to the north. Inside the electrical room is the elevator machine room, which shares a common wall with the seminar room. The southwest corner of the first floor houses the dining room. Both the dining room and the seminar room have an exterior door exiting to the south. North of the dining room is the kitchen, which has an exterior door that exits to the west. The finishes throughout Austin Hall generally consist of wood floors, plastered walls with wood base, wood picture rail moldings, and wood slat ceilings. The restrooms have tile floors, plaster walls, and plaster ceilings. The kitchen is being remodeled as part of the 2012 work into a serving kitchen for caterers. The finishes include a rubber tile floor, rubber base, vinyl panel walls, plaster walls, and an acoustical tile ceiling. The kitchen also includes a tall cabinet for hiding the fire sprinkler riser pipes, an all-in-one stainless steel sink and countertop unit, and a refrigerator.

The second floor of Austin Hall has a large reception room on the north side of the building where the staircases empty into the space along with the elevator. To the south of this room is a large meeting room. The west end of the second floor has an office on the south side and a conference room on the north. The adjoining wall of these rooms has a door connecting the two. Next to the door are back-to-back sinks, one for each room. A single toilet room opens into the office, while a closet containing the attic ladder opens into the conference room. The east side of the building has an office in the southeast corner and a storage room in the northeast corner. Inside the storage room is a door that leads to a mechanical room. A door also connects the storage room to the office.

As part of the 2012 restoration work, the only changes to the interior finishes are occurring in the kitchen, all other rooms will maintain the existing finishes. Due to the number of modifications made to the interior of Austin Hall throughout its history and significant water damage after the 1984 fire, it is believed that few if any original finishes remain. There is little documentation on the original interior finishes, but restoration efforts after the fire were in keeping with the typical finishes found in a regional building from the 1850s.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1852, the nominated property has continuously served a succession of the state's finest institutions of higher education, including Austin College, Sam Houston Normal Institute, Sam Houston State Teachers College, Sam Houston State College, and Sam Houston State University. The building accommodated the state's first law school, as well as the first tax-supported teacher training institute, and has served the state's various educational interests for 160 years. Austin Hall is the oldest extant college building in Texas, and one of the oldest college and university buildings in continuous use west of the Mississippi River. Austin Hall's Greek Revival design, quite popular in antebellum Texas, conveys strength and refinement and exemplifies the ideals of the classical education taught to those earliest college students.

Though it has undergone some stylistic change since its original construction, Austin Hall's characteristic features remain in place and with a high level of integrity. It was designated a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1964 and a State Archeological Landmark in 1982. Austin Hall is now nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance under Criterion A for its early, important, and long association with higher education and public education in the state, as well as at the local level of significance under Criterion C for architecture, as a good example of the Greek Revival style.

AUSTIN COLLEGE

High atop one of the prominent hills of Huntsville stands Austin Hall, or as some fondly still call it, the "Old" Austin College Building. The history of this important structure dates back to the pivotal years of 1849 and 1850 and includes many of the prominent figures in early Texas.

Founded in 1835, Huntsville was well established and strategically located in the populated area of Texas in 1850. The county seat of Walker County, it had recently been chosen as the site for the Texas State Penitentiary and the home of Senator Sam Houston. With about 1,000 residents, the newspapers of the day reflect a significant number of attorneys and merchants. Also, advertising promoted the abundant tracts of land for sale. A letter in the *Galveston News* on September 5, described Huntsville as "rapidly rising into importance, and already taking rank among the most enterprising populations and improving of our interior towns, with high hopes of becoming the political metropolis of the State."

The 1845 Texas Constitution provided for an election in 1850 in which voters would determine the location of their capital for a period of twenty years. On September 1, 1849, a group of thirty residents of Walker County drafted a "Bond and Proposals from Citizens of Walker County in relation to the location of the Seat of Government in 1850." In addition to pledging \$40,000, they guaranteed to convey to the State of Texas five acres of land, and the construction of a building, one hundred feet long from east to west and fifty feet wide, to be three stories high, "at our own expense." In December, when Washington-on-the-Brazos pledged \$50,000, they promptly delivered the Walker County proposal to the Secretary of State.

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At the same time, the Presbyterian Church had actively pursued establishing church schools, academies, and colleges in early Texas. Daniel D. Baker, an enthusiastic and dedicated minister, returned to Texas from Mississippi in 1848 to pastor a church in Galveston. "In short order he emerged as a leader in the Brazos Presbytery." The Presbytery of Brazos appointed a three-man committee in June 1849, including Baker, to evaluate the area between the Brazos and Trinity Rivers for a site to establish a Presbyterian College.

In August 1849, Baker conducted a series of church meetings as part of his effort to find a suitable location. While in Huntsville, Baker "mentioned to some prominent citizens of the place that the Presbytery of Brazos had resolved to take measures for the establishment of a Presbyterian College." In his diary, Baker recalled that on August 10 "a town meeting was immediately called. Colonel Y. (Yoakum), Mr. W. and other gentlemen made speeches in favor of the enterprise. Subscription papers were then put in circulation, and in a few days some eight thousand dollars were subscribed, to be paid in five annual installments, for the erection and support of a College by the Presbyterian Church, at or within a mile of Huntsville, Texas; to be called Baker College."

At Baker's request, "Col. Henderson Yoakum drew up the charter of the College, making such alterations as I suggested." Baker submitted the charter and the subscriptions on October 13, at the next committee meeting of the Presbytery near Independence. After carefully reviewing the charter, the committee approved the proposal and appointed a committee to secure consent from the Texas Legislature. Reverend Baker declined the honor of naming the college after him, as originally suggested, and at the next meeting he found "that the Institution was named Austin College, in honor of Stephen F. Austin, the great pioneer."

The legislature approved the charter and Governor Wood signed into law the "Act to Incorporate Austin College" on November 22, 1849. The "Act" named Henderson Yoakum, Daniel Baker, Sam Houston, Robert Smither, J. Carroll Smith, John Branch, John Hume, Hugh Wilson, James W. Miller, Joseph McCormack, Anson Jones, Abner S. Lipscomb, and J. W. Hampton as the Board of Trustees. Reverend Baker spent the winter selecting a president and organizing a program for the Trustees approval at their first meeting in the spring.

Huntsville's hopes were dashed when, on March 4, 1850, the voters of Texas decided that the capital would remain in Austin. Huntsville finished fourth, receiving support from counties between the lower Trinity and Brazos Rivers. While Huntsville's dream of becoming the capitol city for the new state wouldn't come true, it was soon poised to become one of the state's most important educational centers.

On April 5, 1850, the Board of Trustees of Austin College gathered in Huntsville for their first organizational meeting. The Board passed a motion to appoint a permanent building committee to report the next day. The next day the Board convened to hear the committee report and decided on an appropriate site. "Capitol Hill," the prominent site just south of the downtown square, was selected as the site.

On August 30, 1850, the Executive Committee of Austin College, composed of President McKinney, Henderson Yoakum, and Robert Smither, contracted with William M. Barrett, master carpenter, for the construction of a building. He was to supply all materials, except for the brick, lime, cement, and tin for the roof, and complete construction by the last Wednesday in July 1852, in a "neat and workmanlike manner."

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William Barrett had been the master carpenter in the construction of the State Penitentiary under the direction of Superintendent and well-known master builder Abner H. Cook. Governor Wood appointed Cook as the first Superintendent of the Texas State Penitentiary in 1848. There has always been speculation as to Cook's role in the design of the Austin College Building, but there is no documented evidence as to his participation. Cook's biographer, Dr. Kenneth Hafertepe, wrote that "Cook may have had time to discuss possible plans for the college, but the college as built does not strongly relate to anything Cook built before or after and was probably the work of Barrett and the trustees." Cook returned to Austin early in 1850 so any role he played in the discussion would have been limited. Also, the executive committee reported to the board of trustees that the plan "after undergoing some modifications (still in keeping with the outline laid down by you at your last meeting) has been tastefully been drawn up by our architect Wm. M. Barrett, Esq., and is here presented for your inspection."

On December 31, 1850, William Barrett contracted with Samuel Reed to do "all the brickwork of Austin College." Like the penitentiary, the bricks for Austin Hall were purchased locally in Huntsville. The executive committee reported in 1851 that they "purchased of Messers. Conner and Royal three hundred thousand bricks, most of which have been received, and all paid for." They also purchased "a kiln of bricks in addition to these, of the State Penitentiary and Mr. Samuel Reed."

On June 24, 1851, the cornerstone for the Austin College Building was leveled by the Masons from the Forrest Lodge #19 in Huntsville. Although the cornerstone has not been located it would have been placed at the northeast corner of the building and possibly engraved with a Masonic symbol. Newspaper accounts reported that the event was attended by a "large and respectable number of visiting ladies and gentlemen." During the ceremony, the venerable General Sam Houston rose to hold an umbrella over the head of Samuel McKinney, first president of Austin College. Classes began in the Austin College Building in the fall of 1852, although work was not completed until the next year.

The Austin College building is a fine example of Greek Revival of the antebellum era. The dimensions are eighty-by-fifty feet with the exterior of brick purchased from the newly established Texas State Penitentiary. The original building enclosed eight classrooms which measured twenty-two and one-half feet square and two assembly rooms of thirty-five by forty feet. Four large Tuscan columns supported the north front balcony. Above the roof a grand cupola reached a height of seventy feet. Austin College, visible for miles, towered above downtown Huntsville and the surrounding area.

Austin College was the site of many important contributions to early education in Texas. In 1855, the first law school in Texas began there. Prior to this time, law training was provided through apprenticeship. Austin College conferred four degrees the following year, but then discontinued the program. Austin College also became one of the six hundred weather reporting stations across the country in response to the Smithsonian Institute's meteorological project which later became the National Weather Service.

Austin College struggled through the Civil War and the yellow fever epidemic of 1867 and suffered financial and enrollment problems during Reconstruction and the early 1870s. In 1876 the college closed and relocated to Sherman, Texas. Citizens convinced Austin College faculty member, Professor Charles P. Estill, to remain in Huntsville and continue to conduct classes in 1876 and 1877. The Methodist Church purchased the Austin College

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Building and for a brief period it housed Mitchell College for Boys. Following the closing of Mitchell College, the building remained inactive for a short time. When it reopened, it was at a pivotal moment in the state's first serious attempts to develop its public education system.

SAM HOUSTON NORMAL INSTITUTE

Though states in the northeast experienced a common school revival as early as the 1830s, the tuition-free public schools were never a priority in Republic-era or antebellum Texas, leaving educational roles to individual communities, or more often, to religious organizations. Then, in 1870, following the return of Texas to the Union, the Legislature enacted a statute that all children from six to eighteen must attend school. While in control, the Republicans generally ignored this law. Following the end of Reconstruction, Democrats gained control and revived efforts to provide a free public education system. Chief among these efforts was the provisions in the Texas Constitution of 1876 which provided provisions for a perpetual public school fund.

In 1878, as the new public education system gradually took hold, and as the population began to boom, rumors were that the State would establish a normal school for teacher training to accommodate the increased need for qualified teachers. The idea gained support from Governor Oran B. Roberts, particularly after his interactions with Barnas Sears of The Peabody Education Foundation. The Peabody Foundation was particularly active in the Southern states after the Civil War. In Texas, agents of the Peabody Foundation promoted establishing city schools, the importance of teacher training, and the importance of public education. Sears promised Governor Roberts that the foundation would match an appropriation of \$6,000 each year for the first two years if the state would establish a "first-class" normal school. After that, financial support would be on a year-to-year basis. Within two weeks, the bills were introduced in the legislature.

The citizens of Huntsville wasted no time acting on this opportunity. They sent a letter to the legislature informing them that a campus and building were ready to be occupied. Prominent citizens, led by Sandford Gibbs, had purchased the Austin College site and were prepared to donate the land and building to the state in the bill passed to establish a normal school. Senator James Russell Burnett of Huntsville introduced "an Act to Establish a State Normal School to be Known as the Sam Houston Institute and Located at Huntsville, Texas." Under the leadership of Speaker of the House John Cochran and Senator Burnett, the bill passed by three votes. On April 21, 1879, Governor Roberts signed the law establishing Sam Houston Normal Institute as the first tax-supported teacher training institution in Texas and now the third oldest college in Texas. The first classes were held on October 10, 1879, with four faculty members and 110 students.

Tuition-free scholarships allowed for at least two students from each senatorial district to attend the institute, ensuring that all communities—regardless of remote location or weak political influence—would benefit from the instruction. The State also picked up the tab for the students' room and board, and Huntsville residents eagerly welcomed the students into their homes. The added income was significant for many of them still struggling to recover the crippling economic effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction. In return for their scholarships, the students agreed to return to their hometowns and teach at local public schools for at least the same amount of time they spent training at the normal school, which for most was a two-year course of study.

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As these students returned to their respective communities and assumed teaching responsibilities alongside untrained counterparts, the benefits of formal training became readily apparent. Demand for these teachers increased rapidly and the enrollment at Sam Houston Normal Institute doubled in the 1880-81 academic year and continued to grow. In 1882, a third floor was added to Austin Hall to meet the need for additional classrooms. The cupola and bell were removed and the new French Modern/Mansard roof replaced the Greek Classical roof of the original building.

For the first eleven years of Sam Houston Normal Institute, Austin Hall was the primary building on campus, and it was here that students received their education in pedagogy as well as elements of a classical liberal arts curriculum. Most Saturdays, the Austin Hall auditorium served as the stage for spirited debates between Philomathians and the Quarrelsome Vagabonds. In 1890, the imposing Main Building was completed to accommodate even more educational and administrative functions. It is possible that because the Main Building was built directly north of Austin Hall that the building might be removed. Austin Hall does not appear on the 1913 master plan.

However, Austin Hall continued to serve the "Normal" with classrooms for natural science and biology courses until 1916, when the Science and Administration Building opened. The building also housed a teacher training school until the construction of the Education Building in 1918. During World War I, from September through December 1918, it became a dorm for the Student Army Training Corps. In 1919 the building was called the "Social Center," becoming the first student center, with the YMCA on the first floor and literary societies and clubs on the second. The third floor also served as the school chapel and as offices for the school paper, *The Houstonian*, and the yearbook, *Alcalde*.

SAM HOUSTON STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE — SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

The state legislature changed the name of the school to Sam Houston State Teachers College in 1923, which reflects the ever-expanding curriculum offered to the students. In 1927, Austin Hall's third floor was removed and the roof returned to its original design. Changes to the interior of the building included a reception hall, restroom, and kitchen, offices for the Dean of Women, the college nurse, and instructors. By this time new buildings had been built south of Austin Hall in a quadrangle encompassing a large open space. To match the front of the building a columned portico was constructed on the south side of the building. Austin Hall was first air-conditioned in 1952. The college grew, once again expanding their academic offerings, and was renamed Sam Houston State University in 1969.

By 1982, alumni offices and a faculty reception area were located downstairs in Austin Hall, with the Department of Military Science and Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) occupying the second floor. Tragically, on the morning of February 12, 1982, the university community and Huntsville awoke to discover Austin Hall on fire. A fire had broken out in the "Old" Main Building overnight and it quickly spread to the neighboring building. When it was determined only one building could be saved, students turned their efforts to Austin Hall. They formed lines to move items from Austin Hall to the nearby Women's Gym and Industrial Arts building. By that evening "Old" Main

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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

was no more, but Austin Hall, although the roof had been severely damaged, survived. One of the charred timbers from the building was carved into the ceremonial mace now used at Austin College in Sherman.

Following the fire it was decided to restore Austin Hall to its original grandeur with a new cupola. Over the next few years the building was repaired and the interior updated. A tradition, which dates back to the early days of Sam Houston Normal and continues today, consists of seniors carving their initials or names into the bricks of Austin Hall. Those bricks were saved and Austin Hall was rededicated in October 1986. From that time until today, Austin Hall has served as the site for many university functions including the Bi-Centennial Birthday of Sam Houston in 1993 and the 125th Anniversary celebration in 2004.

In 2008, Sam Houston State University began planning for a major restoration of Austin Hall. Design development documents were prepared by Ford, Power & Carson Architects & Planners Inc. of San Antonio and accepted by the Texas State University System Board of Regents. The Texas State University System approved \$2.2 million in funds for this project. This restoration is now almost complete.

Austin Hall has endured hurricanes, fires, sometimes neglect, renovations and repairs, and the passing of time. Texans recognized the path to establishing a great state required an educated population. Austin Hall stands as a tangible symbol and lasting structure that attests to the importance of achieving that goal. Now, 160 years later, Austin Hall and Sam Houston State University continue to "Serve the People of Texas." Already named a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and designated as a State Archeological Landmark, Austin Hall is now nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Summary of Significance under Criterion A: Education

Austin Hall is historically significant for its role in the development of higher education and public education in Texas. State-supported institutions of higher education weren't established in Texas until 1876 (Texas A & M). Until that time, colleges were private endeavors, typically supported by religious organizations. Austin College, chartered in 1849 and supported by the Presbyterian Church, was among the earliest colleges chartered in the newly established State of Texas. Although Austin College eventually moved to another city, Austin Hall continued to play a significant educational role, particularly when it became the home of Sam Houston Normal Institute. With help from the Peabody Educational Fund (an educational philanthropic organization that tirelessly promoted the value of public schools and formally trained teachers), Texas took serious steps towards establishing a public education system during Reconstruction. As the new public education system gradually took hold, and as the population began to boom after Reconstruction, the demand for qualified teachers grew exponentially. Texas responded by opening two state-supported teacher training institutes in 1879—Sam Houston Normal Institute (for whites) and Prairie View Normal Institute (for African Americans). The founding of these Texas normals is illustrative of a national trend in education. The number of state normal schools in America doubled between 1869 and 1879, demonstrating the value Americans placed on free, quality education for its citizens. As the educational needs of the state evolved, so too did the curricula at institutes of higher education. Austin Hall's story reflects this evolution. First constructed as a private, religiously-affiliated college, the building subsequently served a public institution's growth from a normal school to a college to a university. Thus, Austin Hall is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance under Criterion A in the area of education.

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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Summary of Significance under Criterion C: Architecture

Austin Hall is a fine local example of Greek Revival public architecture. Identifying features include the wide entrance portico supported by prominent columns, symmetrical composition, a low pitched hipped roof, a wide cornice line, tall multi-light windows, and an entrance door surrounded by narrow rectangular sidelights and transoms. Though the design incorporates elements that are not purely Greek—the porticos' Tuscan columns and the cupola's pointed arches—the overall impression is Greek Revival, a style that dominated American architecture in the early to mid-19th century. In antebellum Texas, almost all public buildings shared a similar design. Large rectangular masses with a formal composition, they were generally crowned with a commanding tower or, more often, a simple cupola. Austin Hall is representative of this style and reflects the level of cultural and economic development of Huntsville in the early 1850s. Austin Hall is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of architecture.

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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

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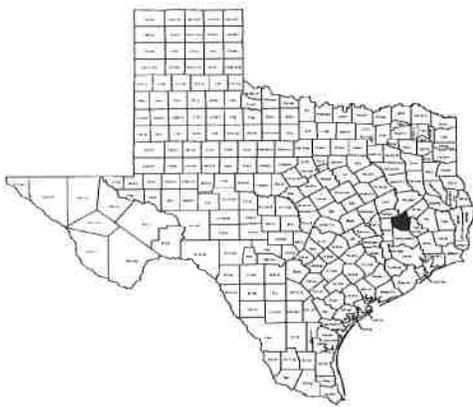
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Austin Hall
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Map 1 (top): Walker County (shaded) is located in central East Texas.

Map 2 (bottom): Austin Hall is centrally located in Huntsville. Google Earth Map, accessed August 10, 2012.



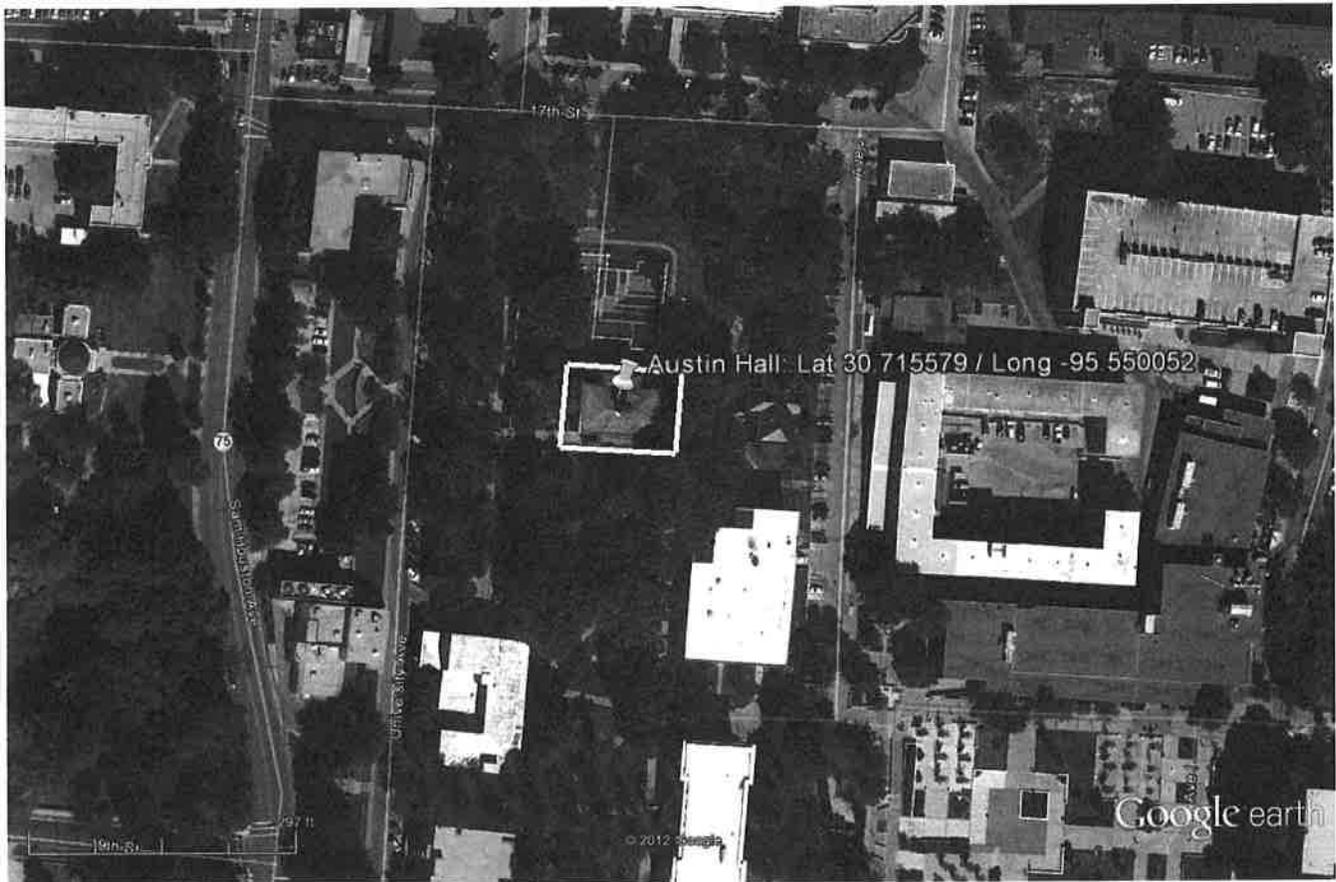
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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Map 3: Scaled Google Map depicting latitude and longitude locational data for Austin Hall. Accessed October 25, 2012. Boundary polygon is approximate. Boundary is described in Section 10, page 4.



Google earth



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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Figure 1: Austin Hall, circa 1853.



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Section FIGURE Page 20

Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Figure 2: First Faculty and Student Body, Sam Houston Normal Institute, 1879-1880, on the north porch of Austin Hall.



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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Figure 3: Outdoor Reception held at the south porch of Austin Hall, date unknown.

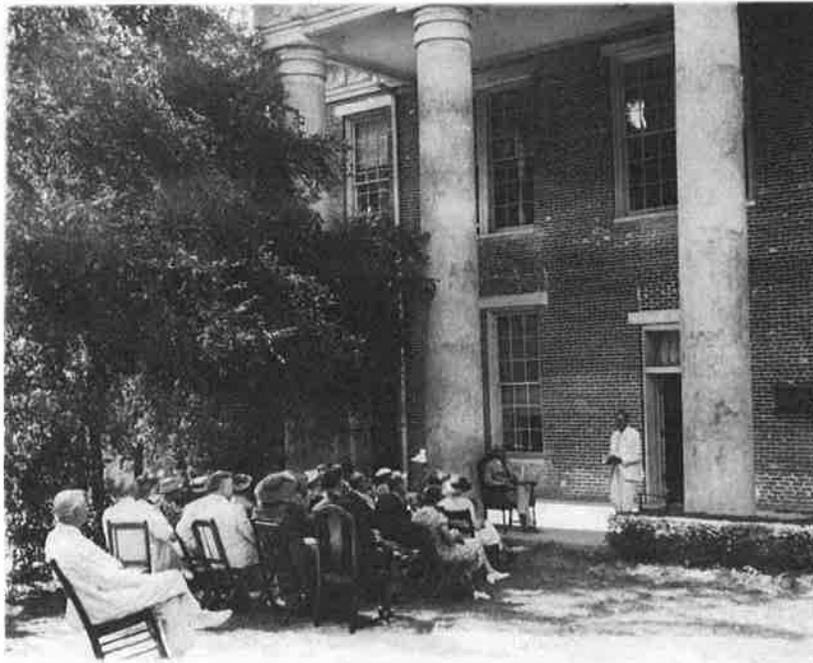


Figure 4: YWCA Reception Room in the College 'Social Center,' date unknown.



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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Figure 5: South elevation of Austin Hall, circa 1925. Note the third floor and mansard roof. Old Main is visible in the background.



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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Figure 6: Austin Hall (left) was saved from the fire that destroyed Old Main on February 12, 1982.



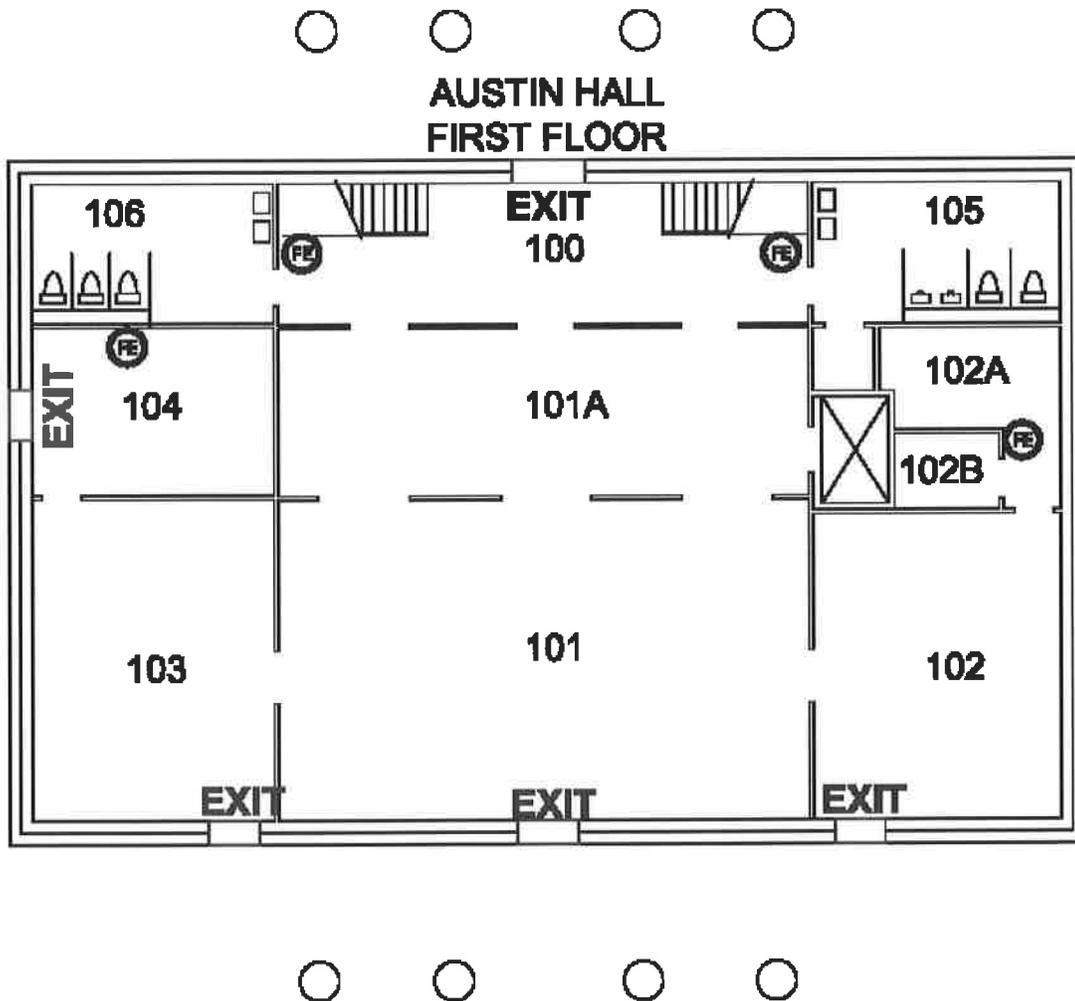
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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

Figure 7: Austin Hall Floor Plan, Level One, 2011. Top edge of image is north.



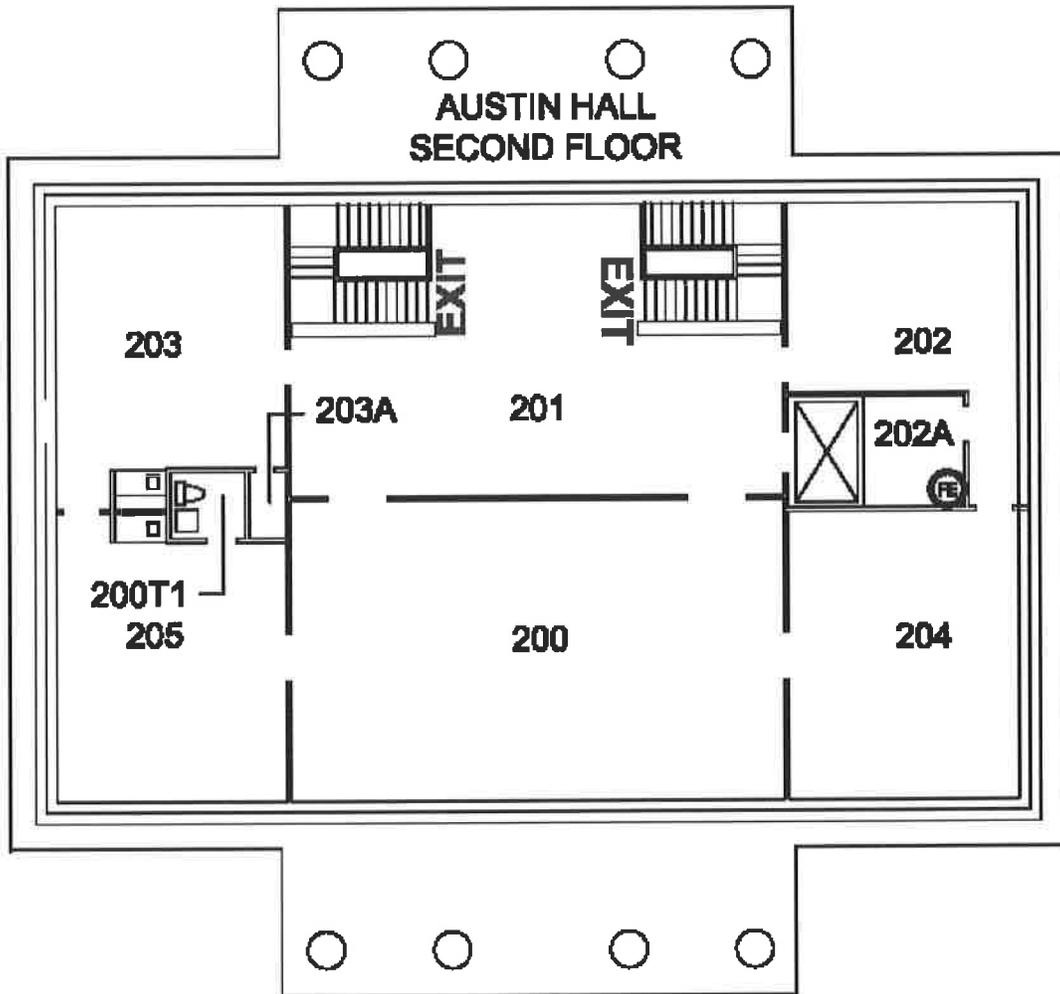
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Austin Hall
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Figure 8: Austin Hall Floor Plan, Level Two, 2011. Top edge of image is north.



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Austin Hall
Huntsville, Walker County, Texas

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

All photographs share the following information and are printed on HP Premium Photo Paper with HP Vivera ink.

Name of Property:	Austin Hall
City:	Huntsville
County:	Walker
State:	Texas
Name of Photographer:	Casey Roon
Date of Photographs:	October 4, 2012
Location of Original Files:	1836 Sam Houston Avenue, Huntsville, TX 77340
Number of Photographs:	10

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0001
East elevation, camera facing west

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0002
North elevation, camera facing south

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0003
West elevation (right) and portion of north elevation (left), camera facing southeast

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0004
Brick exterior detail

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0005
Cupola detail

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0006
Copper downspouts detail

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0007
South elevation as seen from University Quadrangle, camera facing north

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0008
First floor entrance area and reception room, camera facing northeast

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0009
First floor south entrance, camera facing southeast

TX_WalkerCounty_AustinHall_0010
South elevation, camera facing north









PETE K.

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JAC F H

LARRY B 1949

LEVERN

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MISS. R

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G. SPEER 1988

41-101

11-101

MINER 1943

W. BRIZ

W. BRIZ

W. BRIZ







