

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 National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings (Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation)

Other Names/Site Number: Buena Vista School, McGinnis Gymnasium/5CF140

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & Number: 506 and 516 East Main Street/113 and 205 North Court Street

City or town: Buena Vista

State: CO

County: Chaffee

Not for Publication: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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national state local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D


Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

2/2/23
Date

History Colorado

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title:
Government

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal

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4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

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

Contributing	Non-contributing	
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: 2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):

- GOVERNMENT/Courthouse
- GOVERNMENT/Correctional Facility
- GOVERNMENT/Public Works
- EDUCATION/School
- EDUCATION/Education-Related
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/Sports Facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):

- RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum
- GOVERNMENT/Government Office
- EDUCATION/Education-Related
- WORK IN PROGRESS

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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.):

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE, CONCRETE
walls: BRICK, CONCRETE
roof: METAL
other: STONE/Sandstone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Chaffee County Courthouse and associated buildings are located near the east end of the downtown business district in Buena Vista, Colorado. The complex includes the 1883 Italianate-style courthouse with its 1936 gymnasium addition; the 1883 Italianate-style jail and sheriff's residence adjacent to the northwest; and a circa 1960 county repair shop farther north. After the county seat moved to Salida in 1932, the courthouse became a public school serving the town, and it received a rear gymnasium addition constructed by the Public Works Administration. The jail then served a variety of purposes, including use as the school lunchroom and meeting place for the local chapter of the Grange. The county repair shop was constructed at the north end of the complex in about 1960, with a gravel parking area separating it from the older buildings. The included Sketch Map shows the nominated area boundary, contributing status of resources, features of the site, and photograph locations. The included Legal Boundary Map delineates the nominated area boundary and shows component parcels.

The Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 10, 1979 (NRIS.79000575). The county shop was not yet fifty years old at that time and was not included in the nomination. The document did not specify a period of significance, articulate all relevant areas of significance, or delineate the intended boundary with clarity. The courthouse with its rear gymnasium addition and the jail building adjacent to the west were described in the nomination but were excluded from the original boundary description. In 2009 History Colorado staff discussed the nomination with the National Register Washington reviewer, who confirmed that both buildings were within the nominated area.¹ The buildings retain excellent historic integrity, and all are contributing resources within the nominated area.

This nomination is intended to amend the earlier document to clearly delineate the boundary of the nominated area and expand it to include the circa 1960 county shop building; to add Social History as an area of significance; to establish the periods of significance; and to provide additional documentation on the architectural and historical significance of the courthouse complex.

¹ Chris Geddes, National and State Register Historian, History Colorado, email to Shelly Mueller, Student Data Manager, Chaffee County School District R-31, October 1, 2009. Geddes consulted with reviewer Linda McClelland, National Park Service, Washington. Two contributing resources are shown in the National Register database for this property.

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Narrative Description

The 1.53-acre nominated property consists of a long, generally rectangular area located at the northeast corner of East Main Street and North Court Street in Buena Vista, Colorado (see Sketch Map and Legal Boundary Map).² Chaffee County is situated in the central Colorado mountains, roughly eighty-eight air miles southwest of Denver. Buena Vista, Chaffee County's second largest municipality, is located in the northern part of the county in the Upper Arkansas Valley at an elevation of 7,965'. The downtown commercial area extends to the west along East Main Street.

The nominated area includes three resources (Photographs 1 through 4). The two-story Italianate-style courthouse is located farthest south, facing East Main Street, with a one-story concrete block gymnasium addition extending northward from its rear wall. The one- and two-story Italianate-style jail and sheriff's quarters building stands northwest of the courthouse along North Court Street. Behind the buildings to the north is a gravel parking area, and farther north is a one-story, concrete block former county shop building. Southeast of the shop is a small, front gable roof, frame shed clad with T1-11 siding. It does not have a foundation and was placed on the site after 2020; it is not included in the count of resources.

The landscape includes concrete public sidewalks along East Main and North Court Streets in front of the courthouse and jail. A wrought iron fence borders the sidewalks. A sidewalk laid diagonally with red-tinted concrete pavers extends from the East Main Street sidewalk to the front steps of the courthouse. Evergreen trees flank the courthouse steps. The area between the courthouse and the sidewalks on the south and west is in grass and contains a tall Blue Spruce west of the courthouse, an evergreen tree near the southwest corner, and two deciduous trees on the west between the sidewalk and North Court Street. A metal flagpole stands south of the jail, at the north end of the west courthouse lawn. The courthouse grounds hold a number of historical artifacts placed in the area since 1974, when its service as a museum began, including: a concrete pad west of the courthouse holding various pieces of mining equipment (Photograph 5); two railroad signals flanking the courthouse steps; a woolly mammoth statue near the southwest corner; and four signs along East Main Street—a sign displaying the name of the Buena Vista Heritage Museum, an interpretive sign explaining the history of the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railway, a sign posting museum hours, and a sign for the Buena Vista Model Railroad Society. These items are considered features of the site and are not included in the resource count.

At the southeast corner of the parcel a gravel driveway extends into the property from East Main Street. A chainlink fence with privacy strips encloses part of the east property line between the gymnasium and shop and continues north of the shop. Along North Court Street two deciduous trees stand on the property line west of the gravel parking area and a section of woven wire fence is located west of the shop.

After this nomination was submitted for review, underground geotechnical exploration revealed an underground brick vault just north of the stage section of the gymnasium (Photograph 45). The discovery corresponds to the location of the courthouse privy shown on Sanborn fire insurance maps. Current co-owner Katy Welter explained this "appeared to be the north side of the underground brick latrine vault wall north of the gym, about 11' deep. The hole had to be filled again, but we seem to have confirmed that the north stage was built on top of the latrine pit."³ When work in that area occurs, an archaeological investigation is planned to determine if any artifacts are present.

² Only real property, not water rights (per 365 CFR 60.6), is the subject of this nomination.

³ Katy Welter, Buena Vista, Colorado, email to Thomas H. Simmons, October 26, 2022.

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The individual resources are discussed below.

Chaffee County Courthouse, Buena Vista School/McGinnis Gymnasium, 506-516 East Main Street, Resource 1, 1883, 1936, 1999, building, contributing, photographs 6 through 29

The centerpiece of the nominated property is the 1883 two-story Chaffee County Courthouse with its rear 1936 one-story McGinnis Gymnasium addition to the north.⁴ The two components are described separately below.⁵

Courthouse

The two-story, south facing, Italianate-style, red brick courthouse measures approximately 87' x 72' (not including elevator tower) (Photographs 6 through 21 and Figures 1 through 3 for floorplans). The building stands on a raised stone foundation composed of coursed, rock-faced rhyolite tuff (a type of lava stone) and includes a slightly projecting stone water table with an angled top. The brick walls are laid in a running bond pattern with every seventh row end bricks. The first-story walls are approximately 21" thick, while those of the second story are approximately 16" thick. The red brick walls contrast with the buff/tan sandstone used for the window sills and lintels and the grayish stone of the foundation.

The front, west, and east walls feature slightly projecting, pedimented central bays. The tympanum of each pediment is clad with molded metal. The corners of the building and of the central bays display tooled sandstone quoins; each quoin is chamfered and has a tooled margin and a cross-hatched center. The building's tall, narrow windows are double-hung, two-over-two-light or one-over-one-light wood windows. The windows have smooth sandstone lug sills and decorative sandstone hood or label molds with corner blocks and keystones (Photograph 9).

The building has a hipped roof with overhanging eaves and a molded metal frieze with modillions and single and paired metal brackets. Projecting from the center of the roof in an area surrounded by decorative metal cresting is the soaring, domed, octagonal lantern. Combined with the courthouse's raised foundation and two-story height, the lantern easily made the courthouse the tallest building in town and a geographic landmark. Each face of the lantern alternately holds a round arch opening with a four-light window or a louvered panel. The lantern reflects the design of the entablature of the building with paired brackets and features a segmental metal-clad dome crowned by a tall metal windvane with a stag-shaped ornament appropriate to the mountain community. A short red brick chimney with metal coping stands on the north roof slope near the center.

Front (South). The symmetrical front is divided into three bays. The east bay contains two, two-over-two-light windows on each story. The first story windows are flat-headed with sandstone label molds and sills, while the second story windows have segmental arch sandstone hood molds and sandstone sills. The slightly projecting center bay contains a center segmental arch main entrance. The decorative sandstone hoodmold above the entrance features a keystone and corner blocks; the

⁴ The street grid within this area is rotated slightly west of north, to align with the former railroad line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, which cuts north-northwest/south-southeast through the town. To simplify building descriptions, it is assumed the buildings face south rather than south-southeast. However, in the photographic log true compass directions are provided.

⁵ In addition to fieldwork, information for the descriptions of the courthouse and gymnasium and jail was drawn from several recent historic structure assessments: Form+Works Design Group, *Buena Vista Historic Jail, 113 North Court Street, Buena Vista, Colorado 81211: Historic Structure Assessment and Preservation Plan*, Draft (Denver: Form+Works, February 2022) and *McGinnis Gymnasium, 516 E Main Street, Buena Vista, Colorado 81211: Update to Historic Structure Assessment and Preservation Plan*, Final (Denver: Form+Works, February 2022); Scheuber + Darden Architects, LLC. *Chaffee County Courthouse Historic Structure Assessment* (Parker, Colorado, Scheuber + Darden Architects, LLC, March 26, 2018) and *McGinnis Gym Historic Structure Assessment* Final (Parker, Colorado, Scheuber + Darden Architects, LLC, November 29, 2017).

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surface is tooled in a cross-hatch pattern. The entrance holds paneled and glazed wood double doors surmounted by a seven-light transom and a large two-light overdoor. The doors open onto a flight of stone steps flanked by metal pipe railings descending to the sidewalk. Above the entrance is a sandstone plaque with the inscription: "Dedicated to Justice 1882," as appropriate to the building's original purpose. The second story of the central bay contains paired one-over-one-light wood windows with a shared sandstone sill and a shared segmental arch hoodmold with a keystone and corner blocks. The west bay displays the same window configuration as the east bay.

A smooth rhyolite tuff cornerstone with chamfered edges is present at the southwest corner of the building above the water table.⁶ The south face is inscribed "Co. Com. T. I. Briscoe, C. A. Montross; and Jos. Hutchinson" (the county commissioners serving at the time of construction) and the north face reads "Laid by the A. F. & A. M. June 8 A. L. 5882. A. D. 1882" (indicating it was laid by the Masonic order).⁷

West Wall. The west wall is divided into three bays. Second story windows feature segmental arches, while those on the first story are flat-headed. The windows exhibit sandstone hood or label molds and sandstone sills as described for the windows on the front of the building. The south bay of the west wall holds two, two-over-two-light windows on each story. At the south end of the second story is a flush metal door that opens onto a landing accessing a metal fire escape that descends north to the ground. The projecting center bay holds a tripartite window on each story, consisting of a taller center window flanked by shorter ones. All of the windows in the center bay are one-over-one-light wood windows and have lintels and sills as previously described. The north bay contains two, two-over-two-light windows on each story.

North (Rear). The gymnasium addition abuts and obscures most of the first story of the north wall. This wall does not feature a projecting center bay. At the west end of the north wall, only the upper half of a first-story window is visible; the second story holds a two-over-two-light window. The center part of the second story is unfenestrated. Toward the east end of the wall, the second story contains a paneled door that opens onto a metal landing accessing a metal fire escape that descends east to an intermediate landing and then turns south to descend to ground level. East of the door is another two-over-two-light window.

East Wall. The original design of the east wall appears to have been identical to that of the west wall. The east wall was modified in 1999 by the addition of a projecting two-story elevator tower to the center projecting bay in order to improve access to the building. The red brick tower is set away from the wall of the building by a frame "hyphen" containing eight-light vertical ribbon windows on its north and south walls. The brick tower is unfenestrated and has orange brick quoins. The center section of the tripartite window was removed and the shorter flanking windows reduced in width to access the tower. The south bay of the east wall differs from the south bay of the west wall in that it does not contain a fire escape. An uninscribed cornerstone is present at the southeast corner of the building above the water table.

Interior. The interior arrangement of the Buena Vista building was typical for courthouses of the period, according to historical architect C. Eric Stoehr: "County offices on the first floor usually flank a central hallway or open space, and stairways, often at both ends of building, lead to second-story courtrooms."⁸ The front entrance opens into a space containing the long flight of stairs to the second

⁶ *Courthouse HSA* (2018), 16. The 2018 HSA judged the cornerstone to be concrete painted silver. To the preparers of this nomination, given its 1882 installation date and physical appearance, it is more likely to be painted, smoothly finished rhyolite tuff (the same material used in the foundation).

⁷ A.F. & A.M. stands for Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

⁸ C. Eric Stoehr, *Bonanza Victorian: Architecture and Society in Colorado Mining Towns* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 116.

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story. The 2018 historic structure assessment described the stairs as having “two multi-faceted newel posts with maple inlays and concentric circle tops. The balusters are octagonal with square bottoms. The stringers have applied decorative scroll work.”⁹ The central stair hall continues to the rear of the building.

Each corner of the first story of the building contains a large room, originally used for county offices and later for school rooms. Restrooms and smaller office spaces occupy the center of the building on either side of the hall. On the second story, the stairs open onto a U-shaped stair hall, flanked by large rooms in the southwest and southeast corners of the building and a small office directly south. The large, open, former district court courtroom occupies the north half of the building.

Alterations. The metal fire escape at the northeast corner of the building was installed in 1999. The building originally had four chimneys; only the rear one remains. To improve accessibility, in 1999 a two-story brick elevator tower was added to the east wall of the courthouse. The lantern, windows, and the front double doors recently have been restored under Colorado State Historical Fund grants.

McGinnis Gymnasium

The McGinnis Gymnasium addition was completed in 1936 abutting the rear (north) wall of the courthouse (Photographs 22 through 30 and Figure 4 for floorplan). The southern portion of the gymnasium measures approximately 81’ north-south by 62’ east-west, plus a 28’ x 15’ north projection holding the stage.¹⁰ The narrow flat roof section of the gymnasium next to the courthouse is lower than the center section to the north, apparently to avoid covering the earlier building’s second-story windows. The large center portion of the building has a roof with a center deck and steeply sloping sections on each side, steel roof trusses, stepped parapets at its north and south ends, overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, and asphalt composition shingles.¹¹ The stage projection on the north is lower than the center section and displays similar roof construction. The building has a concrete foundation and walls principally composed of gray 16” x 9” concrete blocks (some painted); the stage addition is brick, as is part of the center section’s north wall. All windows are flat-headed, steel frame, multi-light windows; the windows have movable center awning sections.¹² In 1960 a small, L-shaped, flat roof, semi-subterranean locker room was added at the northwest corner of the building.

Front (West). The concrete block west wall is painted red. The lower, flat roof section of the gym abutting the courthouse contains an eight-light factory-style window with an operable center section; the window has a concrete lug sill and lintel. At the south end of the taller section of the gym is a slightly inset entrance holding a flush metal door with a rectangular light. The entrance has been modified by infilling with concrete block; it originally held double doors. The current single door opens onto a concrete stoop with a step and a metal pipe railing. The center section of the west wall is divided into five bays by slightly projecting wall piers. The southmost bay holds two short steel frame windows; the remaining four bays each contain a taller steel frame window (all are covered with plywood). The windows are located near the top of the wall and display concrete lug sills and metal lintels with a brick soldier course.

Wrapping onto the west wall (and also abutting the east wall of the jail) is the low 1960 locker room addition. Its south wall, composed of painted concrete blocks, holds a center entrance with a flush metal door. This section of the building has a plain fascia board and a flat roof. The locker room

⁹ *Courthouse HSA* (2018), 66. Prior to 1999, the stairs were damaged by fire and rebuilt.

¹⁰ *McGinnis Gym HSA* (2022), 111.

¹¹ *McGinnis Gym HSA* (2022), 111. The *HSA* described the roof as “mansard style.”

¹² This type of window is often referred to as “factory-style,” since they were often employed in manufacturing and industrial settings.

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extends beyond the north end of the jail. Its west and north walls are composed of unpainted concrete block.

North Wall. The north wall of the taller center section of the gym has a stepped parapet and is unfenestrated. Portions of the upper part of the wall are composed of red and yellow sections of brick, but most of the wall consists of unpainted gray concrete blocks. The projecting stage component is lower and has a stepped parapet and red brick walls.

East Wall. The east wall of the stage projection contains a covered window with a steel lintel and a contrasting rowlock brick sill. The east wall of the center section of the building is composed of unpainted gray concrete blocks. The east wall is similar to the west wall and is divided into five bays by slightly projecting wall piers. The four northern bays each contain a tall boarded up window; the northernmost bay also holds a boarded up door below the window. The windows are located near the top of the wall and display concrete lug sills and metal lintels with a contrasting (yellowish) brick soldier course. The southernmost bay contains two, shorter steel frame windows; below is a slightly inset entrance holding a single metal door with a rectangular light. The entrance has been modified with concrete block infill. The lower flat roof section of the addition abutting the courthouse contains an eight-light steel frame window with an operable center section; the window has a concrete lug sill and lintel.

South Wall. The south wall abuts the courthouse and is not visible.

Interior. Access from the courthouse is at the center of the south wall of the gymnasium. A single door opens onto a stair landing at the level of the first story of the courthouse; two sets of wood stairs descend from the landing to the level of the gymnasium floor. North and south of the stairs are men's and women's restrooms. The gymnasium space is open without vertical supports. Once used for high school basketball games (among other activities), it features a hardwood floor (possibly maple) and basketball hoops and backboards at its north and south ends. At the north end of the space is a raised stage flanked by wall piers. Doors flanking the stage lead to stairs at each side of the stage. The stage has a wood floor, and a theatrical fabric stage curtain (visible in historic photographs) is still in place. The ceiling is clad with rectangular cellulose fiber tiles (possibly Celotex) in varying shades of tans, creams, and browns, installed in a running bond pattern.

Alterations. The entrances on the east and west walls have been narrowed and the original double, paneled and glazed wood doors are replaced with single, flush metal doors (date unknown, post 1959). The door at the north end of the east wall was added after 1960. The bleachers along the east wall of the gym were removed after 1964. A number of windows have been covered and some window glazing is broken or missing. The locker room at the northwest corner was added in 1960. The 2022 *Historic Structure Assessment* found the locker room to be in "poor condition" and recommended its removal, followed by rehabilitation of historic exterior finishes in that area.¹³

Chaffee County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, Buena Vista School Administration Building, 113 North Court Street, Resource 2, 1883, building, contributing, photographs 31 through 39

Located northwest of the courthouse and west of the gymnasium, the former jail and sheriff's office and residence faces south toward the courthouse lawn (see Figures 5 and 6 for floorplans). The southern section (the former sheriff's office and residence) is two stories, while the cellblock area to the north is one story. The hipped roof building measures about 77' north-south and 40' east-west and displays a raised, coursed stone foundation with a slightly projecting water table. Unless

¹³ *Courthouse HSA* (2022), 24.

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otherwise noted, all windows are single, double-hung, one-over-one-light, wood windows with smooth sandstone segmental arch hood molds and lug sills.

Front (South). The front is divided into three bays. The east bay holds one, one-over-one-light window on each story. The hoodmolds of the two-story part of the building feature corner blocks and keystones, but lack the decorative tooling employed in the courthouse. The center bay holds a segmental arch entrance, containing double paneled and glazed wood doors surmounted by a single-light overdoor. The second story features paired one-over-one-light windows with a shared sandstone hoodmold and sill. The west bay has the same configuration as the east bay.

West Wall. The south portion of the two-story section of the west wall is unfenestrated. Farther west the first story displays a segmental arch entrance containing a paneled wood door with a covered transom. The door opens onto a concrete stoop with a metal railing and stairs to the south. The entrance is flanked by one-over-one-light windows. The second story contains two similar windows aligned above those on the first story. The northern one-story part of the building holds (from south to north) a narrow one-over-one-light window, a paneled wood door with a covered transom that opens onto a concrete stoop with a railing and steps to the south, and three one-over-one-light windows. The segmental arches for the windows in the one-story section of the building are simply smooth sandstone without keystones or corner blocks. All of the windows on the west wall have metal security grilles.

North Wall. The north wall is unfenestrated.

East Wall. The 1960 locker room addition to the gymnasium abuts the north end of the east wall of the jail, covering the lower half of the two northmost windows. Farther south is a segmental arch entrance holding a paneled wood door. The door opens onto a concrete stoop with a metal railing and has stairs descending to the south. South of the entrance is a one-over-one-light window.

The first story of the two-story section contains a segmental arch entrance with a paneled wood door and a covered transom. The door opens onto a concrete stoop with a metal railing and stairs to the south. The entrance is flanked by one-over-one-light windows. The second story contains two similar windows aligned above those on the first story. The southern section of the east wall is unfenestrated.

Interior. The entrance hall contains a single flight of stairs accessing the second story. The hall continues toward the rear, opening onto a large room formerly used as a cellblock for the jail and now as the meeting room for the school board. The entrance to the room displays a metal cell door and a solid steel door that secured the cellblock. The southern part of the first story contains three offices, a small meeting room, and restrooms, while the second story holds four offices.

Alterations. Based on the National Register photograph of the jail, the following changes occurred after 1978: addition of a switchback concrete pedestrian ramp with metal railings at the main entrance (made to improve building accessibility); installation of security bars on the windows of the one-story part on the west wall; replacement of doors; removal and rebuilding of the porches on the west wall and installation of railings; replacement of two-over-two-light windows with one-over-one-light windows; and re-roofing with standing seam metal panels. Many of these changes appear to have occurred in 1985-86, when the building was remodeled for use as an administration building for the school board.

Chaffee County Shop Building, 205 North Court Street, Resource 3, circa 1960, building, contributing, photographs 40 through 44

The one-story, L-shaped, side-gable roof shop building has a concrete slab foundation and faces south toward a gravel parking area. The original circa 1960 part of the building displays painted

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concrete block walls, while the 1992 addition at the southeast corner is frame with T1-11 clad walls.¹⁴ The gable faces are covered with flat vertical metal sheets. The building has a slightly overhanging roof that is clad with standing seam metal panels.

The front (south) contains three overhead sectional metal garage doors; one section in each door is glazed. A 1992 shed roof addition projects at the east end of the front. The west wall of the addition contains a paneled and glazed wood door with a large rectangular light to the north and an overhead sectional metal garage door to the south. The addition's south wall holds a single-light fixed window with a plain wood surround.

The west wall of the building features a six-panel pedestrian door to the south. To the north are three, sixteen-light factory-style steel windows with wire-drawn brick sills. The four-light center section of each window is operable. The gable face contains a six-light metal window. A full-height concrete block chimney stands near the northwest corner of the building.

The north (rear) wall at the center holds a projecting gable roof open porch with a concrete deck, metal post supports and a standing seam metal roof. A metal door with a large rectangular light opens onto the porch. The rest of the wall is unfenestrated. The east walls of the older part of the building and the addition are both unfenestrated. The east gable face is clad with flat, metal vertical panels and does not contain a window.

Alterations. The eastern garage door opening was added after 1986. The small (20' x 20') shed roof addition at the southwest corner of the building was constructed in 1992 to provide additional storage for supplies.¹⁵

Integrity

The Buena Vista Courthouse and Jail buildings retain excellent historic integrity. The property retains integrity of *location*, since all of the resources are in their original locations. The courthouse assemblage retains integrity of *setting*, located in a prominent location in Buena Vista's downtown. The area to the east once held athletic fields associated with the complex's era as a school. Today it holds a public elementary school. Commercial buildings extend west along East Main Street. The courthouse grounds remain and feature a variety of trees and a grass lawn. The complex retains excellent integrity of *design* in terms of its historic layout of buildings. No new buildings have been added since 1960. Except for the addition of a 1999 elevator to the side of the courthouse to improve accessibility, none of the buildings display nonhistoric additions. Door and window fenestration has minimally changed since the historic period. The buildings of the complex retain very high integrity of *materials*, including brick and concrete block walls; stone foundations, quoins, window sills, and hood and label molds; wood windows; and decorative metalwork. The original metal roofs on the courthouse and jail were replaced with like materials. Integrity of *workmanship* is exhibited in the skillful stonework of the foundation, quoins, window sills and lintels, and cornerstone. Skillful masonry is evident in the brick walls. Talented tinsmithing is evident in the courthouse lantern windvane, molded frieze, brackets, modillions, and roof cresting. The property continues to be *associated* with its historic educational role. The courthouse still serves an educational purpose as a public museum and historical research archive, while the jail is used by the local school district as its administration building. The shop serves as a maintenance and repair facility for school district. The assemblage of buildings near the end of East Main Street strongly conveys integrity of *feeling*, as a group of public

¹⁴ Walter C. Keil, "Property Appraisal Report, 205 N. Court Street, Buena Vista, Colorado" (Buena Vista, Colorado: Arkansas Valley Realty, September 8, 1986). The appraisal reported a 1960 date of construction based on county commissioners' minutes. Some local sources had suggested a 1970 year built, but the building appears on an August 1969 aerial photograph of the town.

¹⁵ Chaffee County, building permit number 10004, issued to Town of Buena Vista, February 1, 1992.

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buildings differing from the tightly packed commercial buildings to the west. The setback from the public street, presence of the grassy lawn, and the imposing height of the courthouse with its lantern and windvane signals that these buildings served a special civic purpose.

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.)

X	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.
X	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:

	A	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
	B	Removed from its original location
	C	A birthplace or grave
	D	A cemetery
	E	A reconstructed building, object, or structure
	F	A commemorative property
	G	Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.):

- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- LAW
- EDUCATION
- SOCIAL HISTORY
- ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance: 1883-1972

Significant Dates: 1928, 1932, 1935, 1936, 1960

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name): King, George E.
Fisher, Diedrich
De Mordaunt, Walter
Public Works Administration

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance for Politics/Government extends from 1883, the year the courthouse and jail were completed until 1932, when county administrative uses ended after the county seat moved to Salida, and from circa 1960 to 1972, when the complex housed the county road and bridge repair shop. The period of significance for Law begins in 1883, the year the courthouse and jail were completed, until 1932, when county judicial uses ended after the courts moved to Salida. The period of significance for Education extends from the acquisition and use of the courthouse as a school in 1935 until 1972, when the

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school classes ceased. The period of significance for Social History is 1936-1972, beginning with the construction of the gymnasium addition by the Public Works Administration as a New Deal public works project and reflecting diverse community uses of the school, gymnasium, and jail. The ending year for Social History is fifty years before the present, following National Register practice. The period of significance for Architecture is 1883 for the original construction of the Italianate-style courthouse and jail and 1936 for erection of the gymnasium addition. Significant dates include 1928, the year county voters approved moving the county seat to Salida; 1932, when county functions moved to Salida; 1935, the year the courthouse and jail were transferred to the local school district; 1936, when the gymnasium addition to the courthouse was built; and circa 1960, the year the county shop building was erected.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): None

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Chaffee County Courthouse complex in Buena Vista, Colorado, reflects the construction and evolution of a group of governmental buildings from their initial completion in 1883 through much of the twentieth century, as they were adapted to serve a variety of new functions as changing circumstances warranted. The buildings are significant under **Criterion A** in the area of Politics/Government for housing county administrative officers from 1883 until 1932, a period when Buena Vista served as the county seat of Chaffee County, and from 1960 to 1972, when a portion the complex housed the county repair and maintenance shop. The property is also significant in the area of Law for housing judicial and law enforcement activities from 1883 until 1932, when judicial personnel and court sessions moved to Salida. The complex is also significant in the area of Education, having served as a school and housing related administrative and support functions for the local Buena Vista school district from 1935 until 1972. The complex is further significant in the area of Social History, as the 1936 gymnasium addition to the courthouse was constructed as a Depression-era New Deal Public Works Administration project, creating jobs and aiding the town's economy. The gymnasium and jail also served as venues for a variety of school and community events and meeting places for social and civic groups in succeeding decades. Under **Criterion C** the property is significant in the area of Architecture with the courthouse and jail comprising excellent examples of the Italianate style applied to a local courthouse and jail. The buildings are also significant as representative of the work of British-born architect George E. King, who practiced in Colorado from 1875 to 1886. They are his only surviving Chaffee County works and his only remaining Colorado county courthouse design. All significance areas are at the local level of significance. The complex retains historic integrity and continues to serve educational and community uses.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A. The Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail buildings are significant in the area of Politics/Government for housing the county's elected officers and administrative staff, as well as, providing a venue for public meetings and serving as the seat of government. The complex was a symbol of local county government and the place where county inhabitants came to transact business and discuss issues of public importance. Securing the county seat ensured Buena Vista's long-term prominence within the county and bolstered the local economy. In addition to the direct impact of county jobs, the status as county seat greatly benefited the town by stimulating associated economic activity, as political scientist Thomas J. Wood enumerates: "contractors for the construction and maintenance of county buildings; the provision of food, drink and lodging to lawyers, judges, plaintiffs,

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and defendants attending court; a newspaper to print notices of court actions; the sale of paper and other office supplies for the county offices; and in general the increased traffic a courthouse generated as people came to attend court, record deeds, obtain marriage licenses, and so forth.”¹⁶ The period of significance extends from 1883 until 1932, the period when Buena Vista served as the county seat of Chaffee County, and from 1960 to 1972, when the county repair and maintenance shop was located at the complex.

In the area of Law, the Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail complex is significant as the place where disputes were settled and justice was dispensed, providing office space for judicial and law enforcement personnel and including a jail for housing prisoners serving sentences or accused persons awaiting trial. The courthouse housed judges and court clerks and archived judicial records of past and pending civil and criminal cases. The jail building served as the office and residence of the county sheriff, the highest elected law enforcement officer of the county. County inhabitants came here to resolve civil disputes or to seek justice in serious criminal matters. Chaffee County’s only legally authorized hanging occurred at the complex in 1888. The period of significance for Law extends from 1883, when the courts and sheriff were first housed here, until 1932, when these functions moved to Salida.

The courthouse complex is further significant in the area of Education, serving as a school and containing related administrative and support functions for the local Buena Vista school district. After Buena Vista lost the county seat to Salida, the school district, under the leadership of School Superintendent Harry L. McGinnis, acquired the courthouse complex to replace its 1882 school on the west side of town. Using bond funding, the school district converted the courthouse to a schoolhouse serving grades one through twelve; the jail was used as a lunchroom. Classrooms were expanded to the jail building in the mid-1950s, and the complex continued as the town’s only school until additional facilities were constructed in the late 1950s. The period of significance for Education extends from 1935, when school uses began, until 1972, when the last classes were held in the courthouse.

The courthouse complex is additionally significant in the area of Social History. The 1936 gymnasium addition was constructed under a grant received by the school district from the Public Works Administration (PWA), a federal New Deal agency. The project provided needed work for local men during the Great Depression and stimulated the local economy through the purchase of building materials. As in many small towns throughout Colorado, the new gymnasium was the largest facility in town for public gatherings. The gymnasium served as a venue for a variety of school athletic and entertainment events, including basketball games, plays, musical performances, banquets, and commencements. The gymnasium also served as an important place for broader community events and a meeting place for social and civic groups in succeeding decades, including memorials and funerals, flower shows, dances, and plays. The period of significance in Social History begins with the completion of the gym in 1936 and continues until 1972, a date fifty years before the present in keeping with National Register guidance.

Criterion C. The property is significant in the area of Architecture, with the courthouse and jail representing excellent examples of the Italianate style applied to local governmental buildings. The courthouse in particular displays key character defining features of the style, including its two-story construction; tall, narrow windows with decorative stone window labels; low-pitched hipped roof with overhanging eaves, cornices, decorative brackets, and metal cresting; and a soaring cupola with

¹⁶ T.J. Wood, “Political Centers,” in *The American Midwest: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*, ed. Andrew R. L. Clayton, Richard Sisson, and Chris Zacher (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2007), 1106.

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decorative metal windvane.¹⁷ The building is one of just four nineteenth century Italianate-style courthouses extant in Colorado, as well as being a rare example of a courthouse with a detached jail and sheriff's residence.¹⁸ The jail and sheriff's residence is a less elaborate example of the style, but exhibits one- and two-story construction; tall, narrow windows with decorative hoodmolds; and a low pitched hipped roof with overhanging eaves and decorative brackets. The period of significance for Architecture is 1883 (completion of the courthouse and jail) and 1936 (construction of the gymnasium addition to the courthouse).

The courthouse and jail buildings are also significant Colorado works of British-born architect George E. King, who practiced in the state from 1875 to 1886, designing a number of residential and commercial buildings in Boulder and Leadville. The Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail are rarer examples of public buildings designed by King. He prepared plans for only one other county courthouse in Colorado, the 1880 Lake County Courthouse in Leadville, which was demolished in the mid-1950s. The Chaffee County Courthouse is the only extant example of a courthouse designed by King in Colorado.

Developmental History/Additional Historic Context Information

The Creation of Chaffee County and Selection of Buena Vista as Its County Seat

Buena Vista is located within Chaffee County in north-central Colorado, situated in the northern portion of a high valley, bounded by the Sawatch Range and the Continental Divide on the west and the Mosquito Range on the east. The valley is drained by the Arkansas River, which flows southeast between the two mountain ranges. The river and its tributaries supply water for agricultural, residential, and commercial uses. The flat valley floor and relatively easy access over Trout Creek and Poncha Passes prompted three railroads to build through the area in late nineteenth century to reach the silver bonanza of Leadville to the north and other gold and silver mining camps to the west and southwest.

The land of Chaffee County was originally part of Lake County, one of Colorado's original seventeen territorial counties created in 1861. The early mining camp of Granite became the Lake County seat in 1868. As growth and development occurred in the state, more counties were created in the mountains, the Western Slope, and eastern plains, eventually totaling sixty-three by 1913. In February 1879 the legislature reduced Lake County to its current size and split off its southern part into a separate jurisdiction: Chaffee County, named for Colorado U.S. Senator Jerome B. Chaffee.¹⁹

Granite, at the extreme northern end of the new county, became the Chaffee County seat, and the first meeting of county commissioners took place there in March 1879.²⁰ Granite quickly saw Buena Vista emerge as a rival. Buena Vista's population rapidly increased as a result of its status as a shipping point on the Denver, South Park & Pacific Railway and the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad and its role as an agricultural supply center for the northern part of the county. As early as November

¹⁷ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 282-302; C. Eric Stoehr, *Bonanza Victorian: Architecture and Society in Colorado Mining Towns* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 117. Historic architect C. Eric Stoehr noted that cupolas were popular elements on nineteenth century courthouses.

¹⁸ The other remaining nineteenth century Italianate-style courthouses are located in Fairplay (Park County, 1874); Telluride (San Miguel County, 1888); and Lake City (Hinsdale), 1874. The Lake City courthouse is frame. The Fairplay courthouse also has a detached jail.

¹⁹ Frederic L. Paxson, "The County Boundaries of Colorado," 3 *University of Colorado Studies* (August 1906): 207.

²⁰ Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado* (Chicago: Blakely Printing Company, 1895), IV:78.

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1879, Buena Vista residents advocated moving the county seat to their town, and the local land development company set aside an entire block for the construction of appropriate county buildings.²¹

The 1880 US Census reported a population of 2,141 for Buena Vista, compared with just 133 for Granite. Recognizing the importance of becoming the county seat, Buena Vista inhabitants offered \$5,000 toward construction of a courthouse in their town. The Buena Vista Land Company matched this amount, as well as pledging the use of a building until a courthouse was completed.²² Voters selected Buena Vista as the county seat at the election in November 1880. In a final gesture of defiance, Granite refused to give up the official county records. In response, a group of Buena Vista men removed them from the courthouse at gunpoint late at night, with the further insult of taking the furniture and heating stove, and transporting the materials back to Buena Vista by railroad.²³

Construction of the Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail

Having claimed the county seat, Buena Vista set about erecting suitable facilities for governmental and criminal justice administration. A tract of land at the northeast corner of East Main Street and North Court Street provided by the Buena Vista Land Company was chosen as the site of the courthouse and jail. The Chaffee County commissioners selected George E. King to prepare plans for the new buildings. The choice of King may have been due to his successful completion of the 1880 Lake County Courthouse and Jail buildings in Leadville, which were well-received. That city's two-story brick courthouse with tower cost \$50,000. The *Leadville Weekly Democrat* judged: "The building presents a very elegant appearance and is one of which the city is justly proud."²⁴

Architect George Edward King. British architect George Edward King (1852-1912) was born and raised in Greater London. His architectural training is unknown, but his brother, John W. King, was a builder. George King emigrated to the United States in 1871, initially settling in St. Louis, where he married Harriet Smith. The couple relocated to Boulder, Colorado, where he established an architectural practice in 1875. In Boulder King designed a number of residences and commercial blocks. His 1877 Arnett-Fullen House in the city is individually listed in the National Register (NRIS.08001376).²⁵

By 1878, King relocated to Leadville, which enjoyed a booming mining economy. Leadville was the state's second most populous municipality in 1880 (after Denver). King designed a great many commercial blocks, schools, and residences in the "Cloud City" during the late-1870s and early 1880s. Several of his works are within the Leadville National Historic Landmark district (NRIS.66000248), including: the Tabor Opera House (1878); Tabor Grand Hotel (1885); frame Carpenter Gothic-style Temple Israel Jewish synagogue (1884); and Hotel Delaware (1886).²⁶ King left Leadville about 1886 to move to El Paso, Texas. Establishing an office there as well as in Mexico City, Mexico, he designed buildings in west Texas, New Mexico, and many cities of Mexico. King died in El Paso in 1912.

Construction of the Courthouse and Jail. The *Leadville Daily Herald* described the planned Chaffee County Courthouse in 1882: "The foundation is made of lava stone from the Nathrop quarries, and the main building above foundation will be of cut stone from Wright's quarries, while the caps to

²¹ *Rocky Mountain News*, November 29, 1879, 8.

²² June Shaputis and Suzanne Kelly, *A History of Chaffee County* (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1982), 43.

²³ Suzy Kelly, *Buena Vista's Tales from the Past* (Buena Vista, Colorado: Suzy Kelly, 2000), 13.

²⁴ *Leadville Weekly Democrat*, January 1, 1881. The building is no longer extant.

²⁵ "George Edward King," King Family Tree, Ancestry.com, accessed September 19, 2022; Robert-George de Stolfe, "George Edward King," Biographical Information Sheet (Leadville, Colorado: Temple Israel Foundation, 2018), <http://www.jewishleadville.org/georgeking.html> (accessed August 12, 2022).

²⁶ See *Leadville Daily Herald*, January 1, 1881. George E. King was joined by his brother John in Leadville.

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windows and doorways will be of Canon City sandstone cut in the penitentiary at that place. The roof will be of tin and the greater portion of the woodwork will be of hard wood [sic]. In the basement is a large furnace room for heating the entire building.”²⁷ The “lava stone” employed appears to be very durable rhyolite tuff.²⁸ Tan sandstone was also employed for the quoins. Nathrop is about seven miles south-southeast of Buena Vista, and Cañon City sixty-four miles east. A shortage of building stone led commissioners to approve a change in wall materials to brick, which also saved \$3,020.²⁹

The county commissioners awarded the \$23,345 contract for erecting the courthouse to Cañon City builder Diedrich Fisher. The jail added an additional \$10,000 to the project total.³⁰ The firm of Pierce and Wadsworth received the contract for the stonework. German born Edward Krueger, Sr., a local hardware store owner and tinsmith, fabricated the roof, cresting, cornice, and the stag weathervane atop the courthouse cupola.³¹ Diedrich Fisher also constructed the Fremont County Courthouse in Cañon City in 1881-82 (no longer extant). In accepting the latter building the Fremont commissioners observed that the building was “a worthy monument of his skill as a contractor and of his honesty and integrity of character.”³²

The courthouse foundation was completed by June 1882, when the cornerstone at the southwest corner of the building was laid in an elaborate Masonic ceremony. The *Leadville Daily Herald* reported that “the trains from both directions emptied their cargoes of human beings from the extremities of the county into the heart of the lively little city of Buena Vista.”³³ A crowd of two thousand persons attended the occasion to hear speeches by Colorado Gov. Frederick W. Pitkin, other state officials, and county and city officeholders. Construction proceeded over the next year, and the complex was dedicated on May 14, 1883. Sanborn fire insurance maps and a drawing of the complex also show a one-story, hipped roof, brick privy located north of the jail (see Figure 7).

Service as the Political and Judicial Center of Chaffee County

The courthouse contained space for the county administrative functions on the first story, including a room for the county commissioners, clerk and recorder, surveyor, county superintendent of schools, and treasurer (see Figure 8). Office space for transacting business with the public and vaults for storing county records were provided. The courthouse contained areas on both floors for judicial functions. The first story held a space for the county court and a grand jury room. The second story featured the spacious 60' x 40' district courtroom at its north end, two grand jury rooms, the district court clerk's office, and judges' chambers.³⁴

Discussing the importance of Colorado's courthouses, historian William L. Virden noted the many roles they played: “Because they served all people in the county, they became the central meeting place. Annual county fairs, Fourth of July celebrations, and notable trials brought county residents together *en masse*, while the conduct of personal or public business drew individuals to the county seat to register a deed, to serve on a jury, to record a marriage, or to file a land claim.”³⁵

²⁷ *Leadville Daily Herald*, June 9, 1882.

²⁸ Jack A. Murphy, *Geology Tour of Denver's Buildings and Monuments* (Denver: Denver Museum of Natural History and Historic Denver, Inc., 1995), 16.

²⁹ Shaputis and Kelly, *A History of Chaffee County*, 43.

³⁰ *Mountain Mail* (Salida), February 4, 1882. Other sources suggest a higher total cost for the buildings.

³¹ Thomas J. Noel, *Buildings of Colorado* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 357; Shaputis and Kelly, 121.

³² *Fremont County Record* (Cañon City), January 7, 1882.

³³ *Leadville Daily Herald*, June 9, 1882.

³⁴ *Leadville Daily Herald*, June 9, 1882.

³⁵ William L. Virden, *Cornerstones and Communities: A Historical Overview of Colorado's County Seats and Courthouses* (Loveland, Colorado: Rodgers and Nelsen Publishing, Company, 2001), 3.

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The one- and two-story jail building to the northwest served a law enforcement role and included cells, as well as an office and living quarters for the sheriff. Robert Ray served as the county's first sheriff (1881-83).³⁶ Hugh Crymble, sheriff from 1887 to 1893, lived in the building with his wife Marcella, and children. Local historians June Shaputis and Suzy Kelly recalled that "while Hugh was sheriff, Marcella ran the jail, known locally as the Crymble Hotel. She had a small pistol of her own for the job. The children remembered bringing meals to the prisoners from their mother's kitchen."³⁷ Bedbugs were a constant problem in the jail, and Mrs. Crymble's duties included painting cedar oil on cracks and baseboards as a deterrent.³⁸

The 1888 Execution. On August 23, 1888 the courthouse complex became the site of the only judicially authorized execution in Chaffee County history. The county erected a substantial wood gallows in the jail yard, located east of the jail and north of the courthouse, where the McGinnis Gymnasium would later be built. Italian immigrant and railroad worker Nicolo Feminella was convicted of murdering Irish immigrant and fellow railroader Pat Casey in a drunken fight the preceding March. The *Salida Mail* reported "the morning trains brought in a large number of visitors to witness the execution. About seventy-five people in all were admitted into the jail-yard. A high board fence surrounded the yard, and shut in the ghastly scene from the crowd outside."³⁹

The gallows operated with a pulley and rope attached to a noose on one end and a 275-pound-weight on the other. Sheriff Crymble repeatedly tested the gallows with sandbags in the weeks leading up to the execution. When the rope was cut, the device jerked Feminella 5' off the ground, breaking his neck (see Figure 9).⁴⁰ The *Buena Vista Democrat* observed "we are glad to give our sheriff credit for conducting this affair so well and without any of the horrors so frequently attending an execution."⁴¹

The Ratcliff Trial. In 1895 and 1896 the courthouse served as the site of the sensational multiple murder trial of Benjamin Ratcliff. Ratcliff shot and killed three school board members at the Michigan Creek School in rural Park County and then surrendered in Fairplay. Ratcliff's lawyer requested and received a change of venue to Chaffee County after talk of lynching arose. The trial was held in 1895 in the Buena Vista courthouse, where Ratcliff was convicted. He appealed and received a retrial, resulting in a second conviction, followed by his execution at the state penitentiary in 1897.⁴²

The courthouse and jail continued to serve Chaffee County in the twentieth century. By the early 1900s the courthouse had received a frame vestibule at its main entrance (see Figure 10). The jail continued as the residence of the sheriff. Joseph M. Hutchinson served as sheriff 1919-26, and his son, Joseph D. Hutchinson, provided detailed recollections of the layout and building uses during that period (see Figure 11). In a hand-drawn map prepared later in life, Hutchinson showed a "nice lawn" east of the jail and north of the courthouse, with a vegetable garden and a trellis for sweet peas. The brick privy (divided into separate spaces for men and women) was at the end of a sidewalk from the courthouse. The jail area featured a three-cell iron cage with a tin bathtub in the northeast corner. A

³⁶ Shaputis and Kelly, *A History of Chaffee County*, 47.

³⁷ Shaputis and Kelly, *A History of Chaffee County*, 184.

³⁸ Faye Shake, Hugh Crymble and family recollection, undated, on file Chaffee County School District R-31, Buena Vista, Colorado.

³⁹ *Salida Mail*, August 24, 1888.

⁴⁰ Michael L. Radelet, *The History of the Death Penalty in Colorado* (Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2017), 196-97. Feminella's first and last names appear in accounts with a variety of spellings. Following his conviction, Feminella asserted he had acted in self-defense, an argument that might have spared him the death penalty had he presented it at trial. Ethnic prejudice existed against Italians, with newspaper accounts referring to Feminella and his Italian co-workers as "Dagos."

⁴¹ *Buena Vista Democrat*, August 23, 1888. The "horrors" might have included decapitation or slow strangling in place of a cleanly broken neck.

⁴² Linda Wommack, *Colorado's Historic Schools* (Lanham, Maryland: Twodot Book, 2022), 172-75.

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ice-cooled walk-in refrigerator was attached to the east wall of the jail, and a clothesline was located at the northwest corner of the building. In the area north of the privy were three small attached frame barns with an area for hay storage; Hutchinson speculated this area may have been used to shelter jurors' or visitors' horses. The courthouse is pictured on the map with a frame coal bunker adjacent to its east wall and a frame garage used to store the sheriff's car at its northeast corner.

The courthouse and jail in Buena Vista served Chaffee County as its seat of government for nearly half a century (see Figure 12). Population dynamics soon put Buena Vista in a position similar to that of Granite. In 1880 Buena Vista boasted a population of 2,141, contrasted with just 300 for Salida. By 1890, however, Salida became ascendant, with 2,586 residents compared to Buena Vista's 1,317. The trend continued in the early twentieth century. Buena Vista's population declined from 1,006 in 1900 to 751 in 1930. Salida expanded from 3,722 residents in 1900 to 5,065 in 1930.

Loss of the County Seat and the Beginning of School Functions

Just as Buena Vista had wrested the county seat from Granite a half century earlier, voters in 1928 approved the transfer of county government to Salida. The dilemma was that Salida had no facilities to accommodate county space needs, nor were funds available for new construction. The Salida post of the American Legion veterans group agreed to guarantee funding for a courthouse and rent the building to the county until rental payments covered the construction costs. Groundbreaking for the Art Deco courthouse designed by architect Walter De Mordaunt took place in February 1931, and county functions finally were moved to the completed building in 1932.⁴³

With the removal of county offices to Salida, the Buena Vista complex was no longer needed by the county. In 1935 Chaffee County conveyed the land containing the courthouse and jail to Chaffee County School District Number 9.⁴⁴ The district formed in 1880 and served the Town of Buena Vista as well as rural territory to the east and west.⁴⁵ In 1882 the district built a two-story brick school at the southwest corner of West Main and South Gunnison Streets that housed all grades.⁴⁶ Buena Vista School Superintendent Harry L. McGinnis (1871-1969), who led the district from 1919 to 1941, asserted that "the policy of the school is reasonable study, good discipline, equal rights to all and special privileges to none."⁴⁷

Acquisition of the courthouse by the school district was part of an effort to upgrade the town's school facilities. Writing in 1939, Superintendent McGinnis explained that town voters in 1936 approved ten thousand dollars in school bonds, which the district employed to remodel the courthouse into a school (see Figure 13 and 14). The old school building on the west side of town ceased educational uses and was leased to social and civic groups, such as the American Legion and the Grange.

The first story of the former courthouse was repurposed to hold four classrooms housing grades one through eight, with two grades per room. The high school occupied the upper story, which McGinnis described: "The high school now has, in addition to the assembly room, three recitation rooms, a library room, a typing room and a laboratory. ... This year [1939] noon lunches have been served under a WPA set-up to an average of sixty pupils each day. A business course has been added to the

⁴³ Virden, *Cornerstones and Communities*, 204.

⁴⁴ Chaffee County to School District Number Nine in Chaffee County, deed, Book 205, Page 453, November 30, 1935. The transfer excluded the north 42' of the Court House Reservation abutting Chestnut Street.

⁴⁵ Chaffee County Extension Homemakers, Western Fremont County Homemakers, and Chaffee County Extension Clubs, *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986* (N.p.: n.p., ca. 1986), on file Salida Regional Library, Salida, Colorado.

⁴⁶ *Leadville Daily Herald*, January 15, 1882. George E. King also designed the two-story brick school.

⁴⁷ Harry L. McGinnis, "History of Buena Vista Public Schools," *Chaffee County Republican*, March 31, 1939; Shaputis and Kelly, *A History of Chaffee County*, 224. More biographical background on McGinnis is provided in the latter reference.

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curriculum.”⁴⁸ The second story also held a small space for the school board and district administration.

The School District Adds a Gymnasium to the Complex

Acquiring Funding for a Gymnasium. Superintendent McGinnis saw the potential for utilizing federal New Deal grants to further improve the town’s school facilities with little outlay of local funds. In 1936 he successfully applied for and received a grant from the Public Works Administration (PWA) to construct a gymnasium. The PWA was created in 1933 as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s National Industrial Recovery Act. Unlike other New Deal programs, which were oriented toward direct work relief for out-of-work individuals, PWA funds were distributed to governmental entities, who hired private contractors with experienced workers to undertake projects. Headed by Harold Ickes, the PWA aimed to stimulate the economy through the purchase of building materials and the creation of jobs for architects, engineers, and skilled workers. Historian Robert S. McElvaine argued that Ickes “saw the PWA as a means of bringing about recovery, but also as a way to provide valuable projects for the American people.”⁴⁹

The PWA completed approximately 206 projects in Colorado totaling \$46.1 million, with most completed under the direct supervision of the PWA or by another federal agency.⁵⁰ The Buena Vista gymnasium was one of the 22 percent of awards where the PWA provided funds to the state or a local jurisdiction which administered the project.

Construction of school gymnasiums was a popular project type funded during the Depression by New Deal agencies. They were constructed as either additions to existing schools or as freestanding buildings and often included a stage. Architectural historian Abigail D. Christman, discussing gymnasiums built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), observed:

The new gymnasiums allowed school districts to improve their physical education instruction and host regional games. The gymnasiums constructed also included a stage at one end of the playing court giving them a dual use as auditoriums, providing a performance space for school theater and music performances. ... These buildings served as community centers (they were often the largest public building in a community), holding a variety of celebrations, dances, and other community activities.⁵¹

Architect Walter J. De Mordaunt. The school district engaged architect Walter Julius De Mordaunt of Pueblo to prepare plans for the gymnasium addition. De Mordaunt (1894-1962), a native of Butte, Montana, was educated at the University of Utah. He moved to Pueblo about 1923 and worked in the architectural office of William Stickney. When Stickney retired in 1926, De Mordaunt acquired the practice. His works include a number of properties listed in the National Register: the *Star-Journal* Model Home in Pueblo (1927, NRIS.84000886); Pueblo YWCA building (1935, NRIS.80000921); McClelland Orphanage in Pueblo (1935, NRIS.91002043); and Lamar Post Office (1936, NRIS.86000179). Shortly before his work on the gymnasium addition, De Mordaunt designed the 1932 Chaffee County Courthouse in Salida (Colorado State Register, listed 1996). In addition to the Buena Vista gymnasium, De Mordaunt completed several other projects in the 1930s under PWA or

⁴⁸ McGinnis, “History of Buena Vista Public Schools.”

⁴⁹ Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Times Books, 1984, 1993), 152.

⁵⁰ Tolbert R. Ingram, comp. and ed., *Year Book of the State of Colorado, 1939-1940* (Denver: Colorado State Planning Commission, 1940), 339.

⁵¹ Abigail D. Christman, *The Legacy of the New Deal on Colorado’s Eastern Plains* (Denver: Colorado Preservation, Inc., 2008), 14.

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WPA funding, including several schools in southern Colorado. De Mordaunt continued to work in Pueblo until his death in 1962.⁵²

Construction and Use of the Gymnasium. The school district advertised for bids in June 1936, and by October the concrete block and brick gymnasium was nearing completion.⁵³ It abutted the rear of the courthouse and featured an interior connection to the older building (see Figures 15 through 18). Superintendent McGinnis noted the gym was “equipped with a stage, bleachers, locker rooms and showers.”⁵⁴ McGinnis also secured a WPA grant to create athletic fields on the school land east of the courthouse. In recognition of the role played by McGinnis in upgrading school facilities and to honor his long service as superintendent, the gymnasium was named for him by 1938.⁵⁵

The gymnasium played a very important role in the social and recreational life of Buena Vista, comprising the only community space capable of hosting large gatherings, from its completion until the construction of a new high school in the early 1960s. The building immediately began housing a variety of school athletic contests and community events. In December 1936 the Buena Vista High School Demons basketball team lost their inaugural game in the gym.⁵⁶ A Lions Club play was staged in the gym in 1939. High school class plays and musicals were performed on the gym’s stage. Suzy Kelly, who attended school in the courthouse from 1949 to 1959, recalled the gym as the venue for a 1958 production of the musical “My Fair Lady,” directed by music teacher Harlan Boye. Kelly commented that “the acoustics were not too bad considering it was a gym.”⁵⁷ The rodeo dance associated with the Collegiate Peaks Stampede was held in the gym from the 1940s to the 1990s. The high school football banquet took place in the gym, as did graduation commencements and the junior class carnival. The high school band practiced in the gymnasium and presented concerts there. The gym accommodated community art shows, garden judging contests, funerals and memorials, and the town Christmas celebration.⁵⁸

Uses of the Jail and Courthouse. The northern part of the first story of the jail/sheriff’s residence was employed as the school lunchroom. In 1955 the upper story of the jail was converted to classroom use.⁵⁹ The jail also served as a meeting place for community social groups. The College Peaks Grange Number 414 met in the western part of the jail from about 1965 until at least 1978.⁶⁰ The courthouse continued to be used by the school district for classes from the 1940s through the early 1970s.

⁵² “Walter De Mordaunt,” Colorado Architects Biographical Sketch, History Colorado, May 19, 2004, on file History Colorado, Denver, Colorado; US Census Bureau, Census of Population, World War I Draft Register Cards, and Marriage Records, www.Ancestry.com.

⁵³ *Chaffee County Republican*, June 5, 1936 and October 2, 1936.

⁵⁴ McGinnis, “History of Buena Vista Public Schools.” McGinnis did not indicate the location of the original locker rooms, but they likely were within the restrooms at the south end of the building. A small locker room was added at the northwest corner of the gymnasium in 1960.

⁵⁵ Bessie M. Shewalter, “Chaffee County Schools,” in *Under the Angel of Shavano*, George G. Everett and Wendell F. Hutchison (Denver: Golden Bell Press, 1963), 513; *Chaffee County Republican*, December 9, 1938. McGinnis also served as County Superintendent of Schools 1900-04 and as secretary of the Buena Vista district following his tenure as superintendent. The 1938 newspaper article referred to the facility as the McGinnis Gymnasium.

⁵⁶ *Chaffee County Republican*, December 11, 1936.

⁵⁷ Suzy Kelly, Buena Vista, email to Editor, *Chaffee County Times*, September 18, 2022.

⁵⁸ *Chaffee County Republican*, various issues, 1936-39; Suzy Kelly, Buena Vista, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, July 20, 2022; Kelly, *Buena Vista’s Tales from the Past*, 104.

⁵⁹ Kelly, *Buena Vista Tales from the Past*, 14.

⁶⁰ While the mountain range to the west is the Collegiate Peaks, the name of the Grange is shown as College Peaks in legal documents, historic building signage, and in a publication on state grange history.

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Chaffee County Erects a County Shop

In about 1960, Chaffee County constructed a county shop at the northern end of the nominated area, on a parcel owned at that time by the county (see Figure 19).⁶¹ The decision to build this new facility came at a time of robust expansion in the local economy, driven by employment growth at Climax Molybdenum, thirty-seven miles north. Between 1950 and 1960 Buena Vista's population expanded from 783 to 1,806, a 130.6 percent increase. Many Climax workers lived in Buena Vista, and subdivisions were platted in the town to accommodate the employees and their families. The utilitarian concrete block facility stored and maintained county road and bridge equipment.⁶²

School Classes End but New Functions Emerge

Expanding school enrollment in the post-World War II period required increasing the capacity of school facilities and brought changes to the courthouse complex. In 1958 the Buena Vista school district merged with four smaller districts in northern Chaffee County to form Chaffee County School District R-31.⁶³ The new school district erected Irving Avery Elementary School east of the courthouse in 1959. In 1960 a small, semi-subterranean, concrete block locker room was constructed at the northwest corner of the gymnasium. A building in the southern part of town containing the middle school and high school was built in 1964.⁶⁴ The district constructed an addition to Avery Elementary, but the courthouse still was used for overflow classes and the gymnasium remained functioning. The final school classes were held in the courthouse in 1972, but the school district continued to use the gymnasium (see Figures 20 and 21).

In 1975 the district transferred ownership of the southwest corner of the complex, containing only the courthouse, to the Town of Buena Vista, which then leased it to Buena Vista Heritage, a local historical group.⁶⁵ Buena Vista Heritage formed in October 1974 as a nonprofit corporation by Robert E. Welker, Robert W. Smith, and Suzanne Kelly, with an initial goal of saving the courthouse from demolition. The group obtained Bicentennial grants to begin rehabilitation of the building and opened two spaces with museum exhibits in 1976.

In 1978 the Town commissioned a feasibility study to assess the suitability of using the courthouse for town offices. The report by Community Services Collaborative of Boulder concluded that the courthouse could be updated and remodeled to meet the ten- to twenty-year space needs of the Town.⁶⁶ However, this option was not pursued. The courthouse and its gymnasium addition and the jail buildings were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

The courthouse accommodated other functions in the late twentieth century, including the 1984 installation on the second story of an HO gauge model railroad layout by the Buena Vista Model Railroad Club.⁶⁷ In 1986 the Chaffee Council on the Arts began restoring the second-story courtroom as an exhibit and event space. Local historian Suzy Kelly reported: "The Courtroom Gallery has been used for Quilt shows, Art Displays, Workshops, writers meetings, and plays and musical

⁶¹ Walter C. Keil, "Property Appraisal Report, 205 N. Court Street, Buena Vista, Colorado" (Buena Vista, Colorado: Arkansas Valley Realty, September 8, 1986), 3. The appraisal report cited "records from the county commissioners" for the circa 1960 construction date.

⁶² Shelly Mueller, Chaffee County School District R-31, Buena Vista, Colorado, email to Thomas H. Simmons, September 14, 2022.

⁶³ Shewalter, "Chaffee County Schools," 513.

⁶⁴ Chaffee County Extension Homemakers, et al, *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986*.

⁶⁵ Chaffee County School District R-31 to Town of Buena Vista, deed, Book 397, Page 925, August 15, 1975. This transfer did not include the jail or the gymnasium. The latter component is physically attached to the courthouse.

⁶⁶ Community Services Collaborative, *A Feasibility Study on the Use of the Buena Vista Courthouse* (Boulder, Colorado: Community Services Collaborative, October 30, 1978), 2-3.

⁶⁷ The layout modeled the routes and terrain of the railroads serving the Buena Vista area in the nineteenth century.

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productions.”⁶⁸ To improve the building’s accessibility, an elevator tower was added to the east wall of the courthouse in 1999. In 2004 the Town transferred ownership of the courthouse to Buena Vista Heritage, which continues to operate a museum and a historical archive in the building.⁶⁹

The school district retained ownership of the jail and gymnasium. In 1985-86 the school district remodeled the jail for its administration building.⁷⁰ The northern end of the building’s first story, which originally held jail cells, became a meeting room for the school board. Administrative offices occupied the remainder of the building. The gymnasium continued to be used until the early twenty-first century when safety concerns required an end to activities in the building.

In 1991 Chaffee County erected a new county shop south of Buena Vista, and the Town purchased the old shop building at the north end of the property for use as its public works shop. A small addition constructed in 1992 at the southwest corner of the building provided additional storage space.⁷¹ Ownership changed once again in 1999, when the Town sold the building and associated property to the school district, which employed it as a bus barn and maintenance shop.⁷² After a new bus facility opened in 2009, bus storage ended, but the building continued as the district maintenance shop, with one bay converted to house computer servers.⁷³

Conclusion

The Chaffee County courthouse complex has played a variety of significant roles since its initial construction in 1883. The buildings have been a focal point of community activities for one-hundred forty years, including such uses as county administration, judicial proceedings, school classes, athletic competitions, social activities, and a local history museum and archive. As old roles ended, new ones developed, accompanied by shifts in ownership among Chaffee County, the local school district, the Town of Buena Vista, and local nonprofit groups. In September 2022 the school district sold the gymnasium and jail building to Watershed NP Inc., a nonprofit corporation, which will obtain grants and receive tax credits to rehabilitate the gymnasium and jail to new community uses.⁷⁴ The Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail complex will continue to hold an important place in the lives of Buena Vista residents.⁷⁵

9. Major Bibliographical Resources

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⁶⁸ Kelly, *Buena Vista Tales from the Past*, 14-15.

⁶⁹ Town of Buena Vista to Buena Vista Heritage, deed, reception number 341376, January 26, 2004.

⁷⁰ *Chaffee County Times* (Buena Vista, Colorado), August 15, 1985.

⁷¹ Chaffee County School District R-31 to Watershed NP, Inc., special warranty deed, reception number 482978, filed September 1, 2022.

⁷² Town of Buena Vista to Chaffee County School District R-31, special warranty deed, reception number 305849, filed August 17, 1999.

⁷³ Mueller, email, September 14, 2022.

⁷⁴ Town of Buena Vista, Chaffe County Building Permit Application, February 14, 1992, on file school District R-31, Buena Vista, Colorado.

⁷⁵ “BV Board of Education Hears Amended Budget, Finalizes Admin Building and Gym Purchase Agreement,” *Ark Valley Voice*, January 25, 2022. The property will be leased back to the school district, which eventually will regain ownership.

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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 # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
Name of Property

Chaffee, CO
County and State

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5CF140

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1.53

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (this is the bounding polygon)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places) (this is the bounding polygon)

1. Latitude: 38.844085

Longitude: -106.127794

UTM Coordinates (this is the bounding polygon)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____ (this is the bounding polygon)

1. Zone: 13

Easting: 402127

Northing: 4300079

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated area consists of the following tracts of land as shown on the Legal Boundary Map included as part of this nomination:

An unplatted portion of the Town of Buena Vista (known as Courthouse Square) described as follows: beginning at the intersection of the northerly boundary of Main Street and the easterly boundary of Court Street in the Town of Buena Vista; thence North 20 degrees 35'00" West 129.72 feet along the easterly boundary of Court Street; thence North 69 degrees 29'24" East 117.05 feet; thence South 20 degrees 35'00" East 129.57 feet to a point on the northerly boundary of Main Street; thence South 69 degrees 25'00" West 117.05 feet along said boundary to the point of beginning (Chaffee County assessor parcel number 327109322006);

The southwest corner of Lot 1, containing the courthouse elevator and driveway and a 16' x 129.27' easement to Buena Vista Heritage, in the Buena Vista School District R-31 Minor Subdivision (part of Chaffee County assessor parcel number 327109300323);

All of Lot 2 in the Buena Vista School District R-31 Minor Subdivision (Chaffee County assessor parcel number 327108400479); and

The southern part of Lot 3 (including the vacated alley and the land lying south of said alley to the boundary with Lot 2) in the Buena Vista School District R-31 Minor Subdivision (part of Chaffee County assessor parcel number 327108400480).⁷⁶

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary contains the area historically associated with the governmental, legal, educational, and social functions served by the component buildings of the Chaffee County Courthouse complex. This represents an expansion of the existing National Register boundary for resource NRIS.79000575.

⁷⁶ As described in the following documents: Town of Buena Vista to Buena Vista Heritage, quitclaim deed, reception number 341376, filed January 26, 2004 and in Buena Vista School District R-31 Minor Subdivision, plat, reception number 482774, filed August 24, 2022.

Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, Architectural Historians (for the property owners)
organization: Front Range Research Associates, Inc.
street & number: 3635 West 46th Avenue
city or town: Denver state: CO zip code: 80211
e-mail: frraden@msn.com www.frhistory.com
telephone: 303-477-7597
date: February 2, 2023 (revised)

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and does not need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
City or Vicinity: Buena Vista
County: Chaffee
State: Colorado
Name of Photographer: Thomas H. Simmons (unless otherwise specified)

Overview

- 1 of 45, Overview of complex from East Main and North Court Streets, with the courthouse at right, jail left of center, and the shop in the distance at left. View north-northeast. Date: July 2022.
- 2 of 45, Overview from East Main Street along the east side of the nominated area, with the courthouse, gymnasium addition, and shop. View west-northwest. Date: August 2022.
- 3 of 45, Overview from North Court Street from the shop toward the gym and courthouse (left) and jail (right). View southeast. Date: July 2022.
- 4 of 45, Overview from the parking area toward the gym and courthouse (left) and jail (right). View south-southeast. Date: August 2022.
- 5 of 45, Display of mining equipment on the west courthouse lawn. View north-northeast. Date: July 2022.

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Courthouse

6 of 45, Overview of the courthouse and the courthouse lawn. View north. Date: July 2022.

7 of 45, The cupola, windvane, and roof cresting. View north. Date: July 2022.

8 of 45, Windvane detail. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

9 of 45, First story window detail, east wall, southmost window. View west-southwest. Date: July 2022.

10 of 45, Front of the courthouse. View north-northwest. Date: July 2022.

11 of 45, Front entrance detail. View north-northwest. Date: July 2022.

12 of 45, Cornerstone and foundation at the southwest corner. View north-northeast. Date: July 2022.

13 of 45, West wall and part of the front. View north-northeast. Date: July 2022.

14 of 45, West wall and part of the north (rear) wall with the gymnasium addition to the left. View east. Date: July 2022.

15 of 45, East wall and part of the north (rear) wall with the gymnasium addition to the right. View southwest. Date: July 2022.

16 of 45, East wall with elevator tower; gymnasium to right. View west-southwest. Date: July 2022.

17 of 45, Front and east wall with the gymnasium to the right. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

18 of 45, Interior of courthouse, first story southwest room. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

19 of 45, Interior of courthouse, stairs to the second story. View north-northwest. Date: July 2022.

20 of 45, Interior of courthouse, second story stair hall. View south-southeast. Date: July 2022.

21 of 45, Interior of courthouse, second story, former district court courtroom. View south-southwest. Date: July 2022.

Gymnasium Addition

22 of 45, Front (west wall) of the gymnasium addition. View north-northeast. Date: July 2022.

23 of 45, South wall of the locker room addition to the gymnasium. View north-northwest. Date: July 2022.

24 of 45, West and part of the north walls of the gymnasium; locker room addition in foreground. View east-southeast. Date: July 2022.

25 of 45, Rear (north) wall and west wall of the gymnasium. View east-southeast. Date: July 2022.

26 of 45, Rear (north) wall and east wall of the gymnasium with courthouse to the left. View south-southwest. Date: July 2022.

27 of 45, East wall of the gymnasium with courthouse to the left. View west. Date: July 2022.

28 of 45, Interior of the gymnasium looking toward the stage. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

29 of 45, Interior of the gymnasium looking toward the east wall; note ceiling cladding. View northeast. Date: July 2022.

Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
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30 of 45, Interior of the gymnasium showing the stairs leading to the courthouse with restroom to the right. View south-southwest. Date: July 2022.

Jail and Sheriff's Residence

31 of 45, Front (south) and part of the west wall of the jail. View north. Date: July 2022.

32 of 45, Front and west wall of the jail. View north-northeast. Date: July 2022.

33 of 45, West wall of the jail. View east-northeast. Date: July 2022.

34 of 45, North and west walls of the jail. View east-southeast. Date: July 2022.

35 of 45, North and east walls of the jail. View south-southwest. Date: July 2022.

36 of 45, Front and east walls of the jail. View northwest. Date: July 2022.

37 of 45, Interior of the jail, cellblock doors. View north-northeast. Date: July 2022.

38 of 45, Interior of jail, former cellblock area. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

39 of 45, Interior of jail, stairs to second story. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

County Shop Building

40 of 45, Front of the shop building. View north-northwest. Date: July 2022.

41 of 45, Front and west walls of the shop building. View north-northeast. Date: August 2022.

42 of 45, West wall and rear of the shop building. View east-southeast. Date: July 2022.

43 of 45, Rear of the shop building. View southeast. Date: July 2022.

44 of 45, East wall of the shop building. View west-northwest. Date: July 2022.

Courthouse Privy Vault

45 of 45, Underground brick vault associated with the courthouse privy. View east-southeast.

Photographer: Rick Bieterman. Date: October 2022

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
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List of Maps and Historic Figures

Location Map

Sketch Map

Legal Boundary Map

Historic Figures

1 of 21, Courthouse, First Story Floorplan, Scheuber + Darden, *Courthouse Historic Structure Assessment* (2018).

2 of 21, Courthouse, Second Story Floorplan, Scheuber + Darden, *Courthouse Historic Structure Assessment* (2018).

3 of 21, Courthouse, Basement Floorplan, Scheuber + Darden, *Historic Structure Assessment* (2018).

4 of 21, McGinnis Gymnasium, Floorplan, Form + Work, *McGinnis Gymnasium Historic Structure Assessment* (2022). North is to the bottom of the drawing.

5 of 21, Jail and Sheriff's Residence, First Story Floorplan, Form + Work, *Jail Historic Structure Assessment* (2022). North is to the top of the drawing.

6 of 21, Jail and Sheriff's Residence, Second Story Floorplan, Form + Work, *Jail Historic Structure Assessment* (2022). North is to the top of the drawing.

7 of 21, British born architect George E. King prepared plans for the Chaffee County Courthouse and jail. He also designed the Lake County Courthouse in Leadville. Standing between the courthouse (right) and the jail (left) was a one-story brick privy (no longer extant). SOURCE: drawing, item number 147, Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado.

8 of 21, The completed courthouse and jail appear in this 1884 view north-northwest. SOURCE: item number 787, Dorothy Chisholm collection, Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado.

9 of 21, The hanging of Italian immigrant Nicolo Feminella in the jailyard in August 1888 was the only legally authorized execution to occur in Chaffee County. SOURCE: C.W. Erdlen, photographer, August 23, 1888, Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado.

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12 of 21, The county property tax staff posed in their first-story office in the courthouse for this November 1925 photograph. Note the spittoon. SOURCE: photograph November 1925, item number 231, Anna Marie Pendleton collection, Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado.

13 of 21, This 1941 photograph shows the front of the courthouse, then used as a school by Chaffee County School District Number 9. SOURCE: Muriel Sibell Wolle, photographer, 1941, image number X-5500, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver, Colorado.

14 of 21, The former jail is pictured in this 1942 image, when the building was used by Chaffee County School District Number 9 as a lunchroom and later to house classes. The building then had a shed roof porch on the west wall. SOURCE: Muriel Sibell Wolle, photographer, 1941, image number

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X-5492, Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver, Colorado.

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17 of 21, This 1958 photograph (view southwest) shows a football game underway on the athletic fields east of the former courthouse. SOURCE: photograph, 1958, item number 2.883, Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado.

18 of 21, This ca. 1959-60 image shows a class in session inside the former courthouse. SOURCE: Buena Vista High School, *The Demon*, yearbook, Buena Vista, Colorado, 1960.

19 of 21, Chaffee County erected this building circa 1960 as a shop for the road and bridge department. SOURCE: undated (circa 1986) photograph, in Arkansas Valley Realty, "205 North Court Street Appraisal" (1986), on file Buena Vista Schools, Buena Vista, Colorado.

20 of 21, Action in a basketball game in the McGinnis Gymnasium is shown in this circa 1963-64 photograph. SOURCE: Buena Vista High School, *The Demon*, yearbook, 1964, Buena Vista, Colorado.

21 of 21, This photograph shows a class posing on the courthouse steps in 1972. The school district stopped using the courthouse for classes that year. SOURCE: photograph, item number 783, Mae Stauffer collection, Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado.

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Location Map

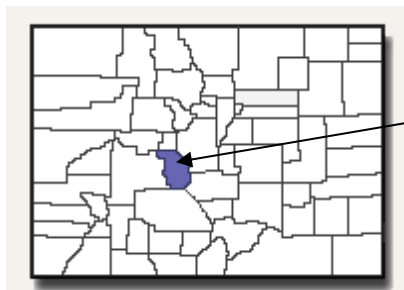


The white solid line is the boundary of the nominated area.

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Longitude: -106.127794

Image Date: October 14, 2017

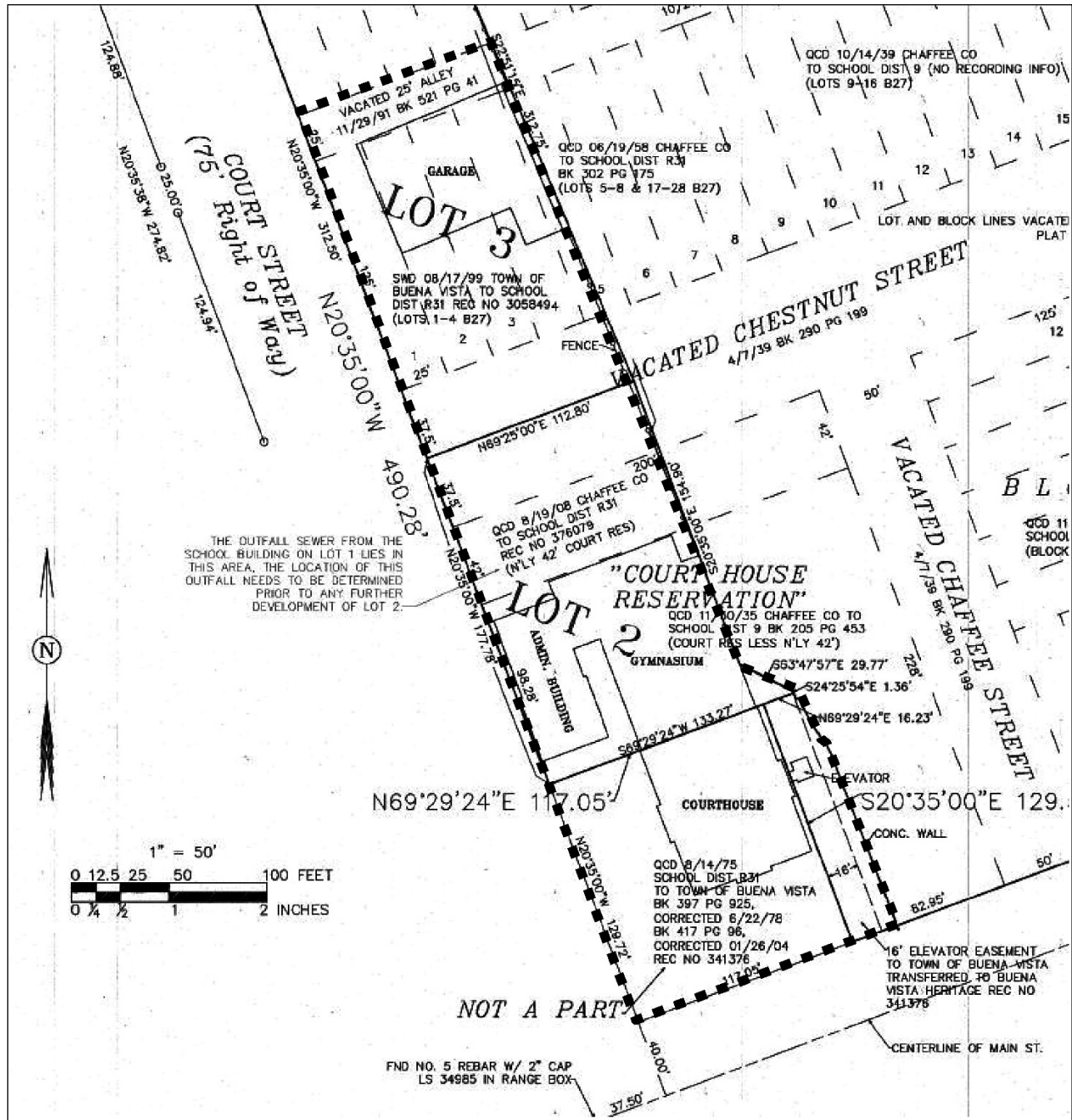


State Perspective:
Chaffee County
Courthouse Buildings

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Legal Boundary Map



Annotated extract of the Buena Vista School District R-31 Minor Subdivision, Plat, August 23, 2022, on file Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder, Salida, Colorado. The black dashed line is the boundary of the nominated area.

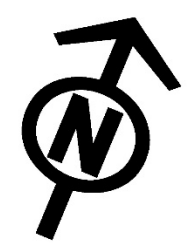
Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
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SKETCH MAP

CHAFFEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL BUILDINGS



0 70
Feet

Dashed line is National Register district boundary.

Numbers in circles are photo locations and camera directions.

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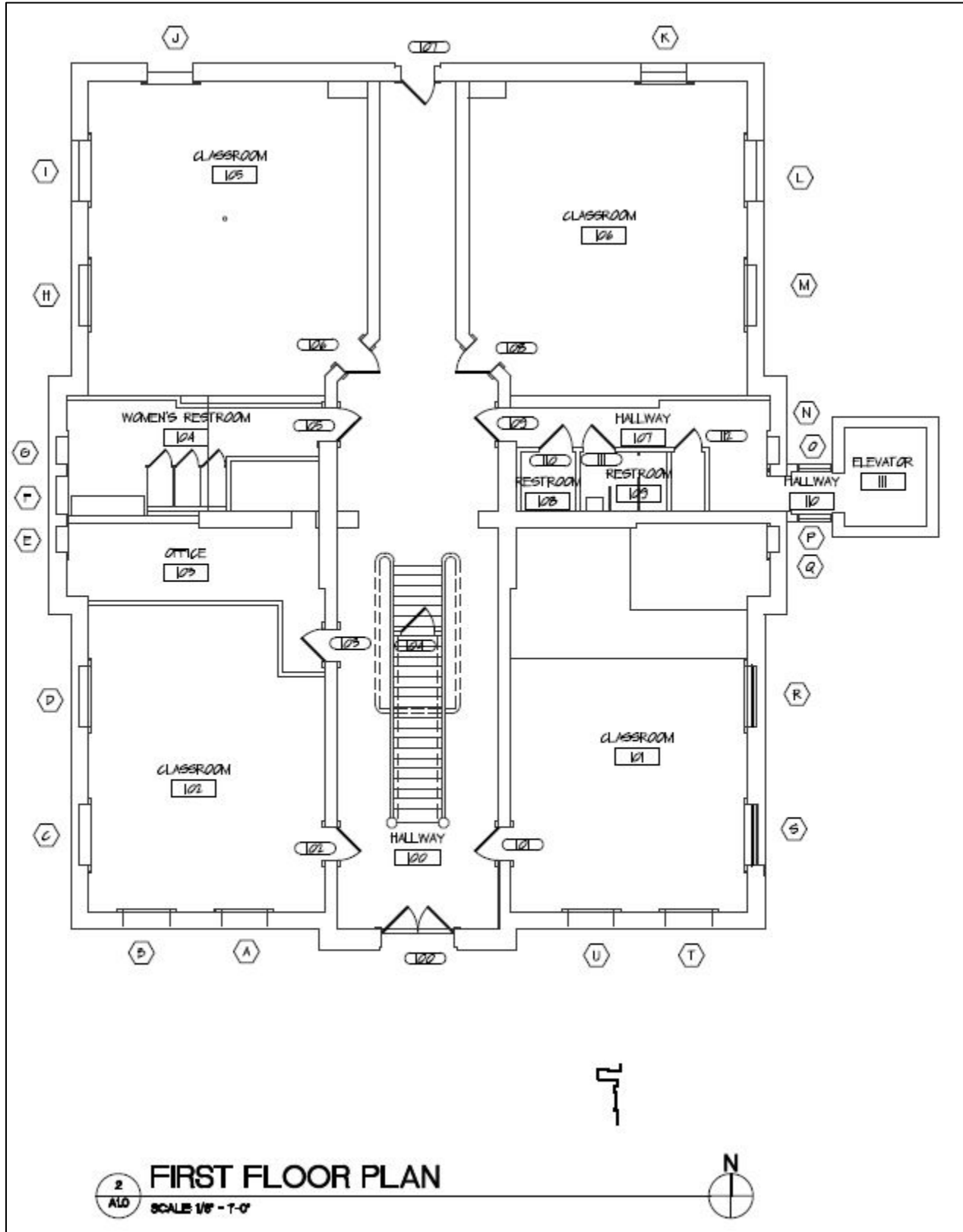


Figure 1. Courthouse, First Story Floorplan, Scheuber + Darden, *Courthouse Historic Structure Assessment* (2018).

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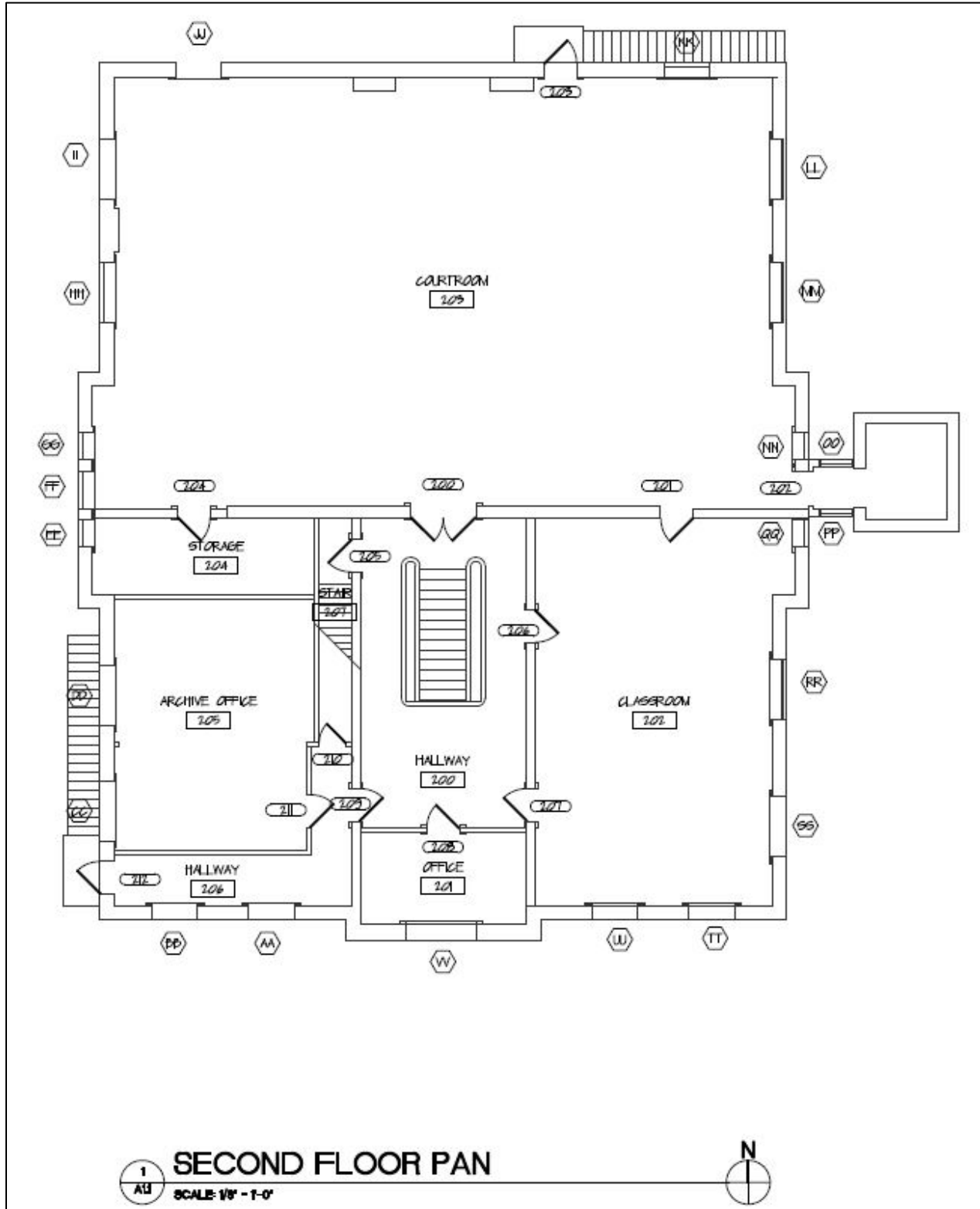


Figure 2. Courthouse, Second Story Floorplan, Scheuber + Darden, *Courthouse Historic Structure Assessment* (2018).

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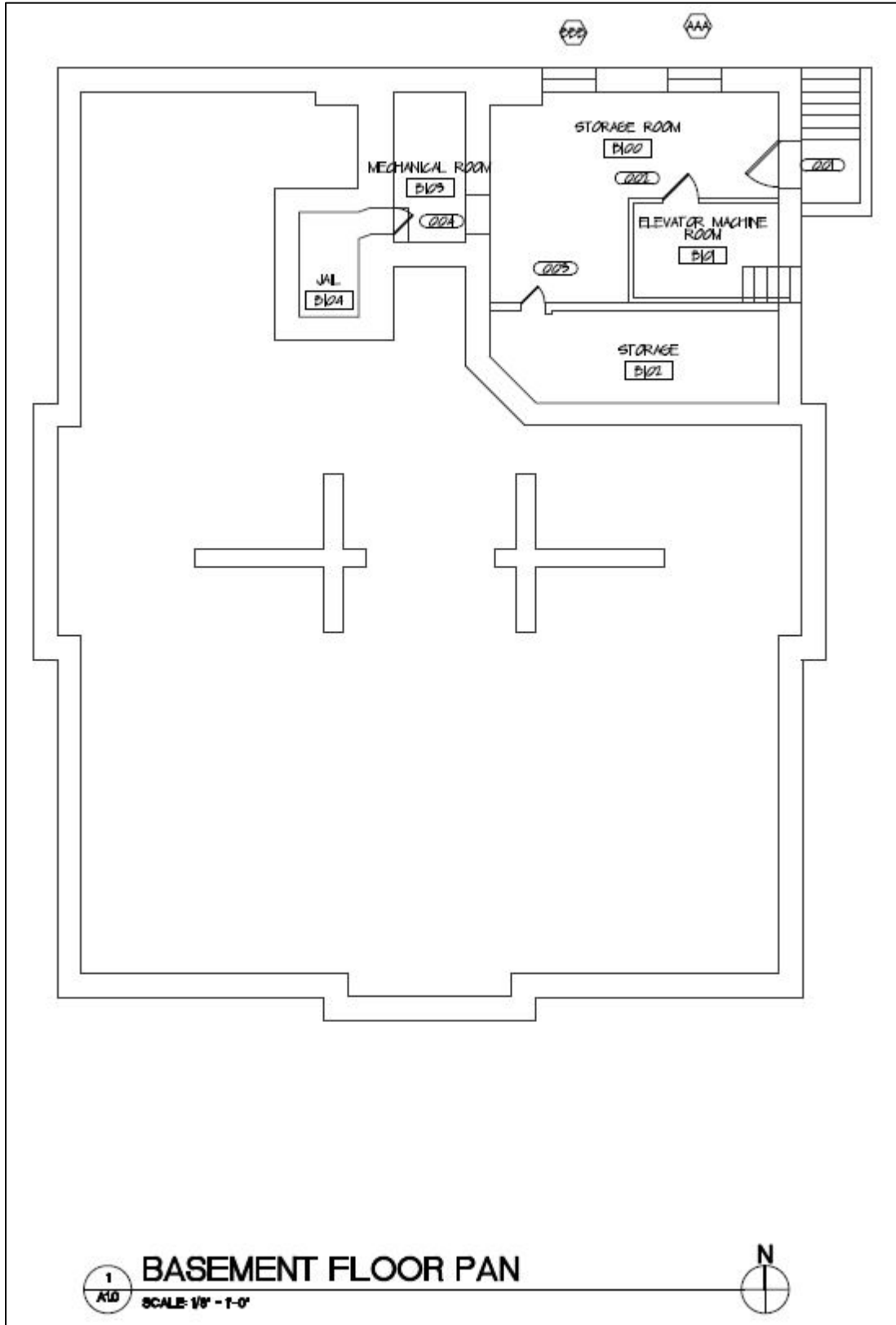


Figure 3. Courthouse, Basement Floorplan, Scheuber + Darden, *Courthouse Historic Structure Assessment* (2018).

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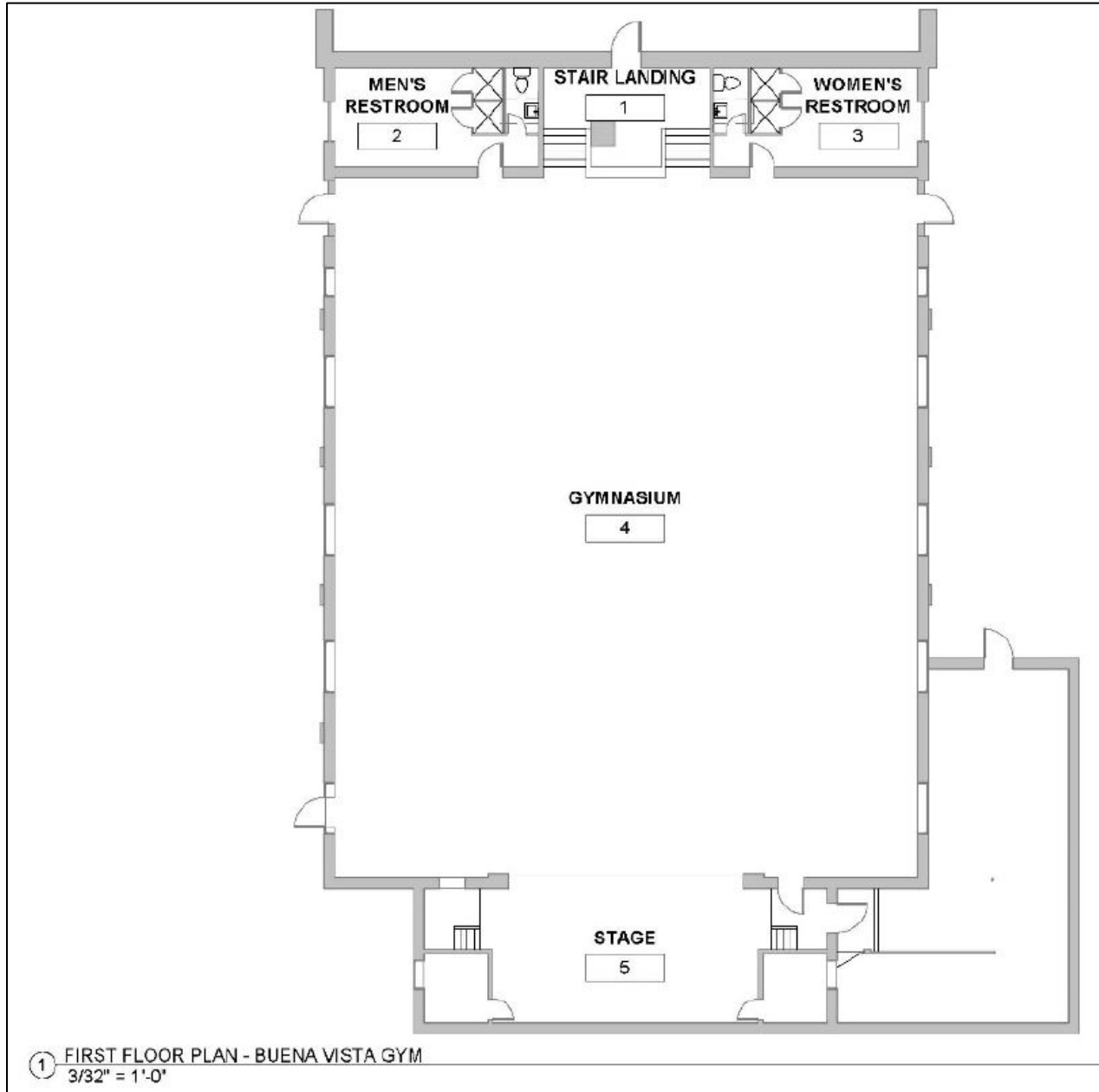


Figure 4. McGinnis Gymnasium, Floorplan, Form+Works, *McGinnis Gymnasium Historic Structure Assessment* (2022). The courthouse is shown at the top of the drawing, and north is to the bottom of the drawing.

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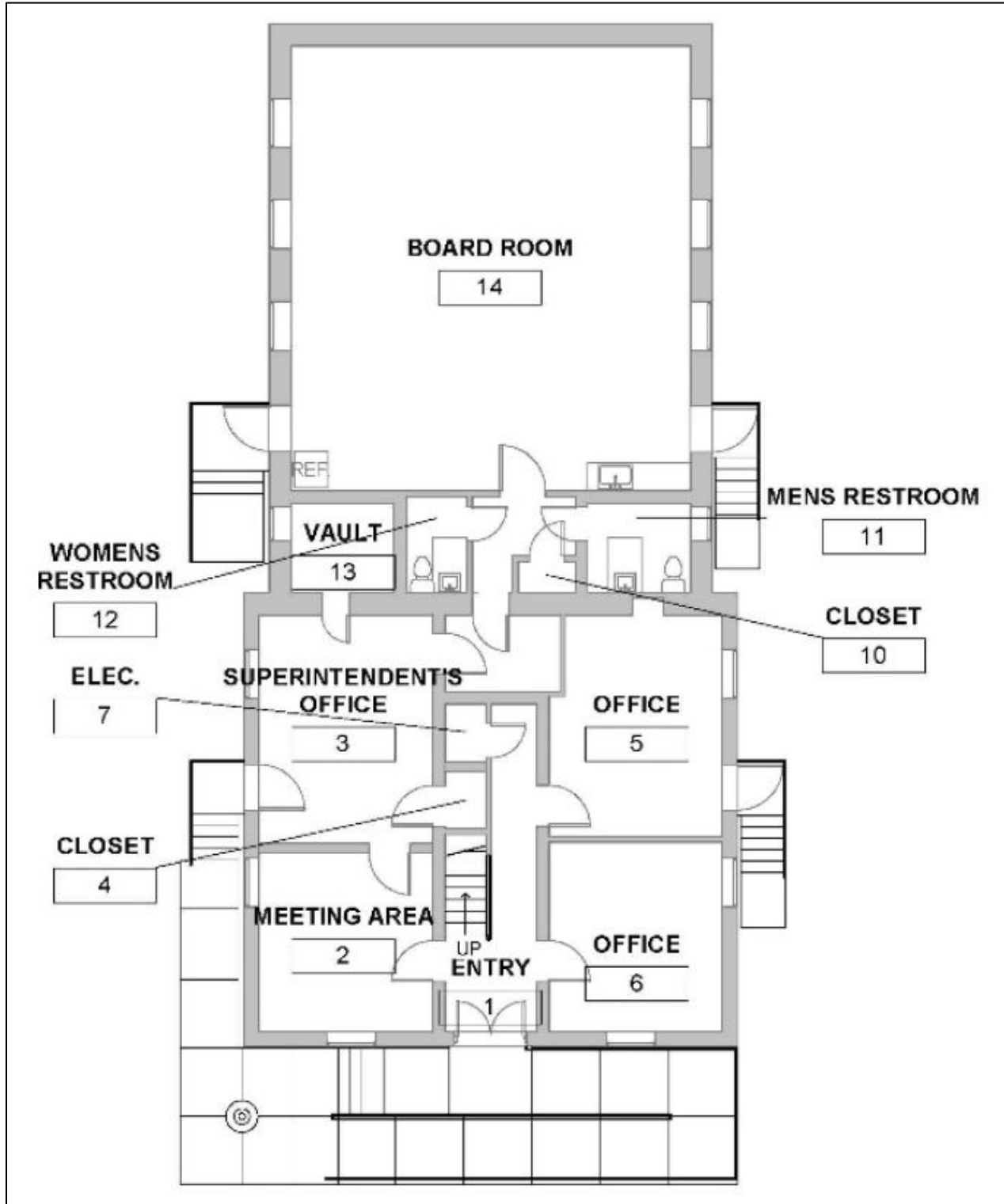


Figure 5. Jail and Sheriff's Residence, First Story Floorplan, Form+Works, *Jail Historic Structure Assessment* (2022). North is to the top of the drawing.

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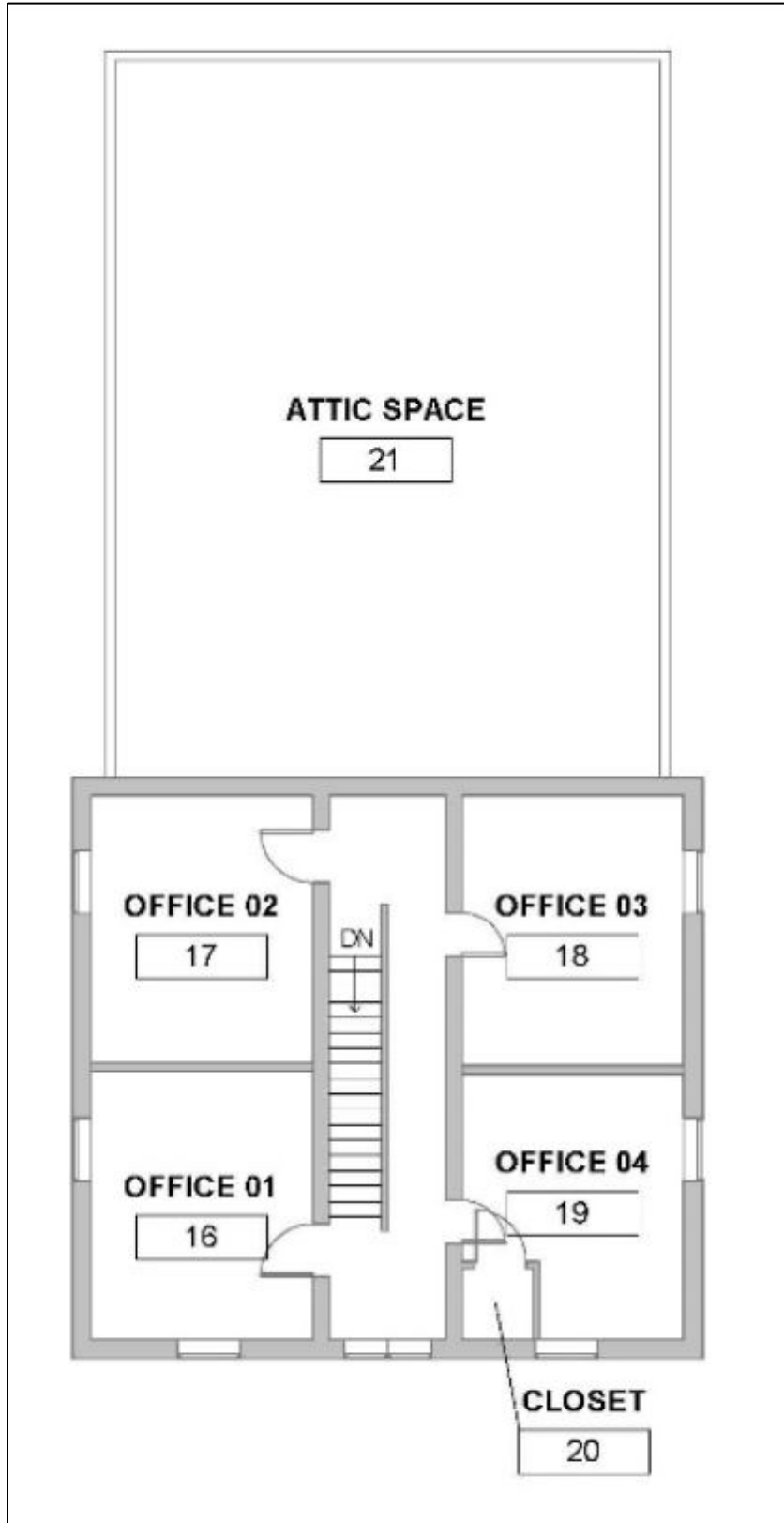


Figure 6. Jail and Sheriff's Residence, Second Story Floorplan, Form+Works, *Jail Historic Structure Assessment* (2022). North is to the top of the drawing.

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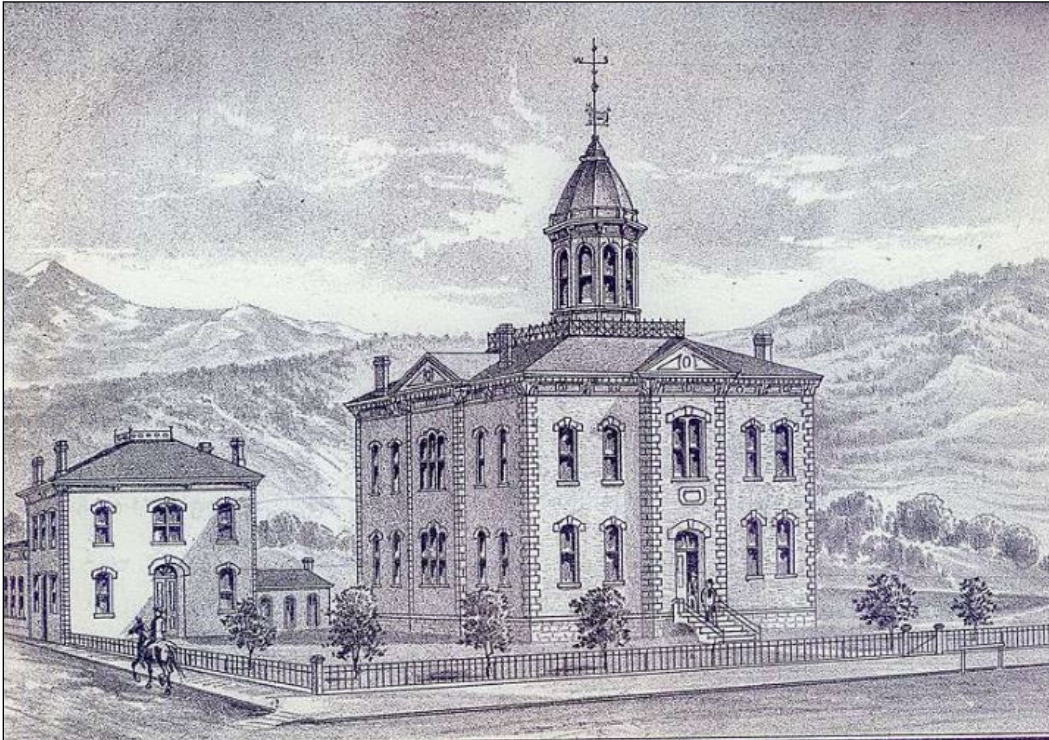


Figure 7. British born architect George E. King prepared plans for the Chaffee County Courthouse and jail. He also designed the Lake County Courthouse in Leadville. Standing between the courthouse (right) and the jail (left) was a one-story brick privy (no longer extant). SOURCE: drawing, item number 147, Buena Vista Heritage, Buena Vista, Colorado.



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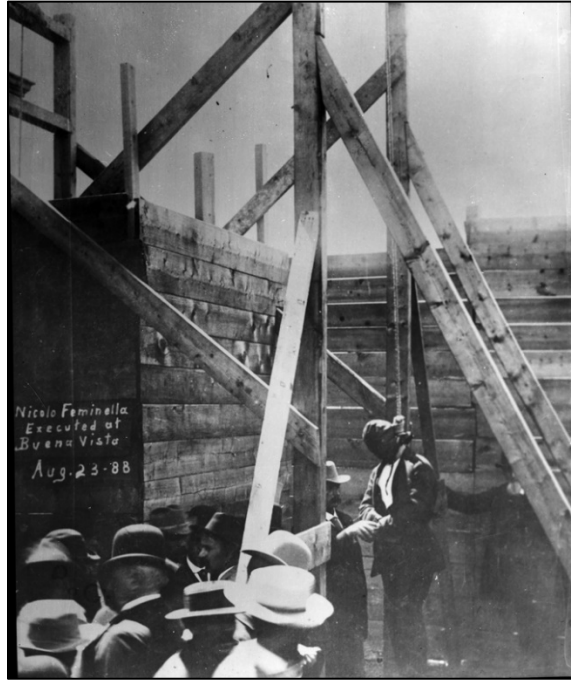


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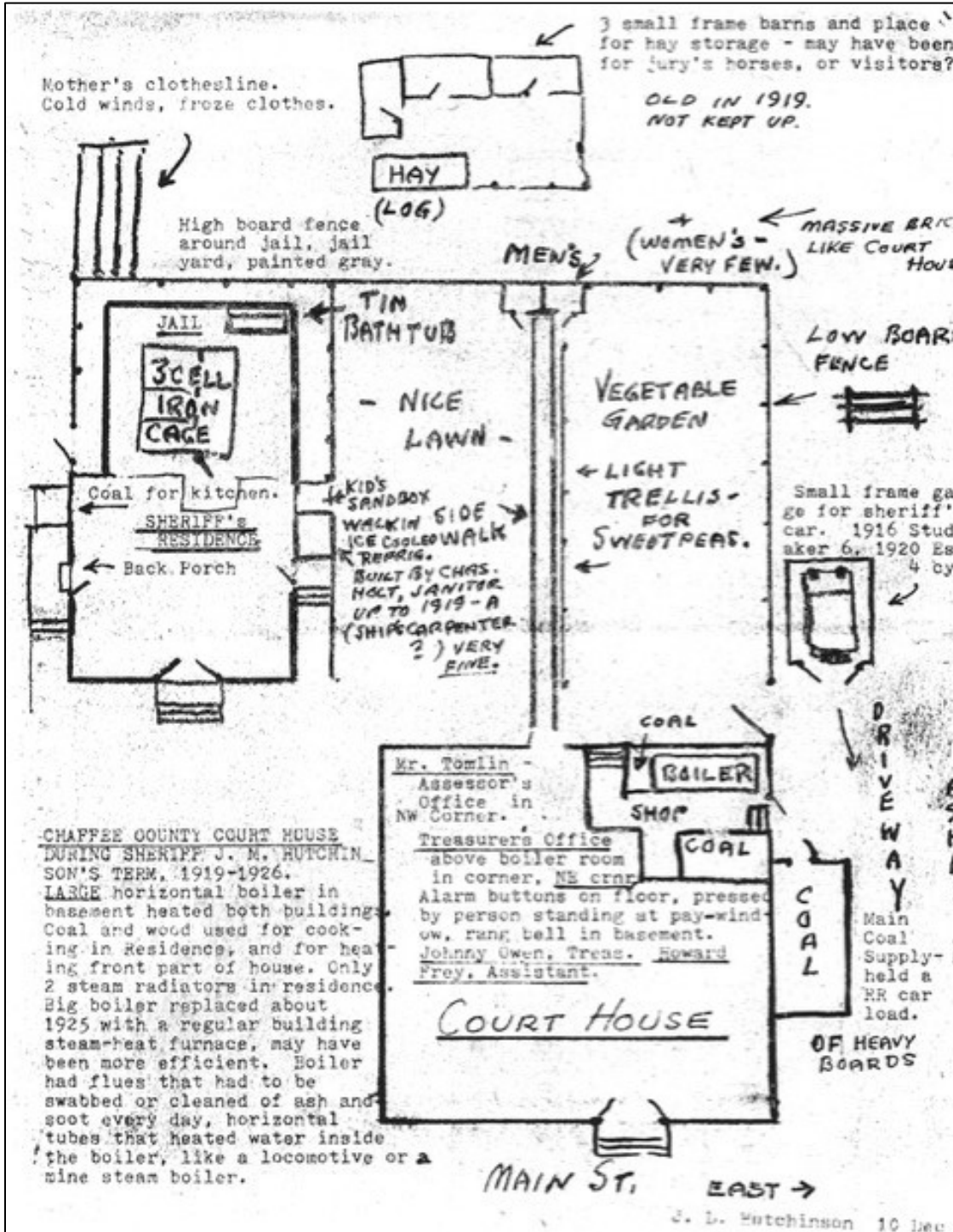


Figure 11. Joseph D. Hutchinson, son of Chaffee County Sheriff Joseph M. Hutchinson, created this hand-drawn map of the courthouse and jail during his father's 1919-26 term as sheriff. SOURCE: Buena Vista Heritage Museum, Buena Vista, Colorado.

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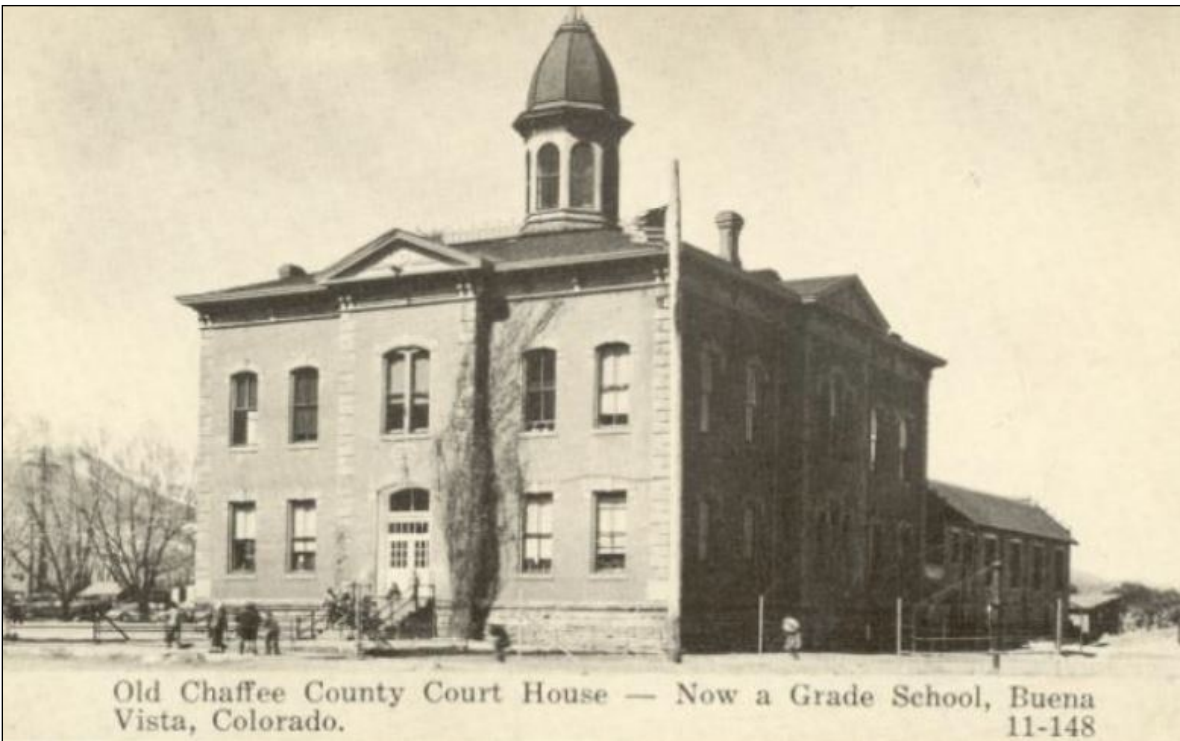


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Figure 18. This ca. 1959-60 image shows a class in session inside the former courthouse. SOURCE: Buena Vista High School, *The Demon*, yearbook, Buena Vista, Colorado, 1960.

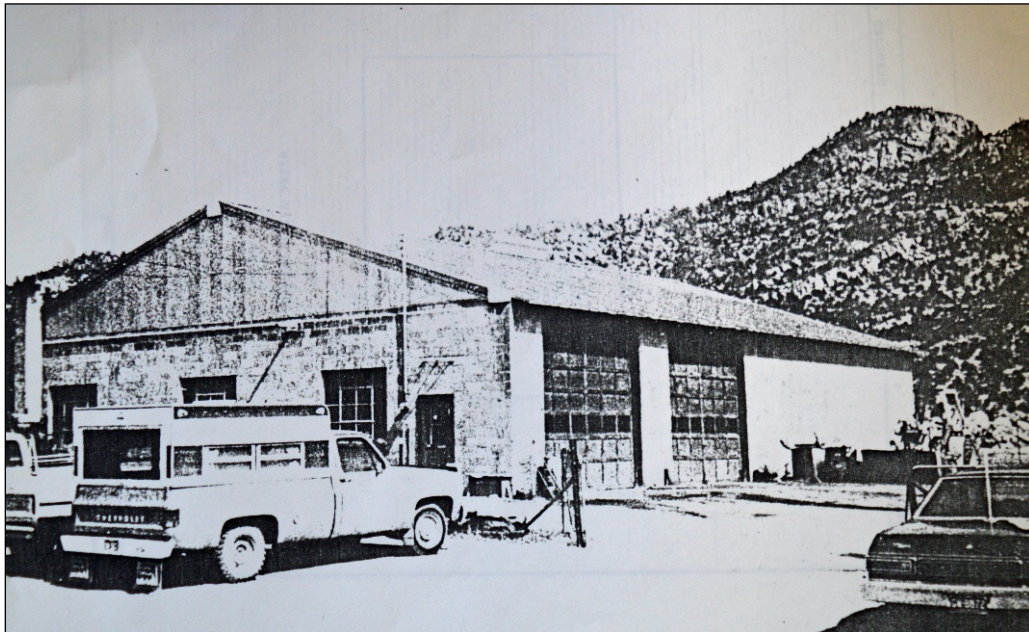


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Chaffee County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
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