

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Confidence Hall

and/or common Placerville City Hall

**2. Location**

street & number 487 Main Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Placerville \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 14

state California, 95667 code 06 county El Dorado code 017

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Placerville

street & number 487 Main Street

city, town Placerville \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state California, 95667

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Placerville City Hall

street & number 487 Main Street

city, town Placerville \_\_\_\_\_ state California 95667

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Confidence Hall is a building made of unreinforced red brick with a fire-retardant asphalt roof. Construction of the building was begun in October, 1860, and completed in January, 1861. Originally used as a fire station and library, the building now houses the Placerville City Offices. A two-story, row structure, Confidence Hall is of simple Victorian Italianate design with a narrow arched window.

The first story is 13 feet high and characterized by an arched doorway on the right counterbalanced by an arched window of similar proportions on the left. The focal point of the first floor is the large, segmented-arched window in the center. Plain pilasters separate these three openings. The first floor is detailed with small, recessed port-holes above the doorway and the windows which assist in the balance of the apertures. A slightly projecting eave separates the first and second floors, and is supported by 14 brackets.

The second story is 15 feet high and features the narrow arched window, which is the main focal point of the structure. The three-part window is flanked by two similar side windows, which are double-hung. The large, center arched portion of the narrow arched window is four over four, and the adjacent windows are one over one. The narrow arched window is further emphasized by the slight projection of the facade surrounding the window and by the recession of the actual window within the projection. The projecting facade of the second floor enhances the structure's vertical lines, as it is an extension of the first floor pilasters. Further balance of the upper story is achieved with recessed classical motifs above each of the four smaller windows. In addition, there is an Italianate oeil de boeuf (bull's eye) window above the central portion of the narrow arched window.

The true roofline of Confidence Hall is a "store-front" type, but the visible roofline of the building is created by a bracketed eave of considerable projection. The horizontal eave is broken, giving prominence to the pediment. The pediment tops the slightly projecting portion of the second floor, giving further emphasis to the vertical appearance of the structure.

The floor, ceiling, and stairways of Confidence Hall are all wood framed, and the walls are plaster. The first and second floors each have an area of 3,390 square feet, for a total of 6,780 square feet in the building. Exterior alterations to the building consist of a stairway added to the east of the building and a heating and air conditioning system. On the interior, there has been major remodeling downstairs to adapt the structure for office use. The west side of the building is a two-story brick structure with 3 windows (two downstairs and one upstairs). Other than the windows, the west side is void of architectural features. The north elevation, or rear, of the structure is brick, having one window on the second floor and a double door on the ground floor. The second floor window was once a narrow arched window; however, the top of the arch has been bricked-in (date unknown). The top edge reflects a store front, striped design. A fire escape has been added in recent years.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1860 **Builder/Architect** Booth and DeVoe

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In addition to the architectural and aesthetic value of Confidence Hall as has been described, the building also has a significant political background. When the Hall was a fire station, it was the home of the famous Confidence Engine Company Number One. Members such as John Studebaker, Stephen Gage (Vice President of the Central Pacific Railroad), and Charles H. Townsend, made the Company famous for its excellent fire-fighting ability. Confidence Hall was built after a fire had partially destroyed the Company's firehouse on the south side of Main Street. In addition to housing the fire company, early County Fairs were held in the building in a large wooden hall at the rear.

Besides serving as the home of the Confidence Engine Company Number One, Confidence Hall also symbolizes the transition of Placerville from a rowdy Gold Rush town of the "Wild West" to a modern, progressive city. The area was first settled in 1848 by prospectors attracted by the discovery of gold. The town gained wide notoriety early in 1849, when an impromptu citizens' jury carried out the hanging of three men accused of stealing gold. This was the first known hanging in the Mother Lode, and the town became commonly known as "Hangtown" thereafter.

By 1854, Hangtown had become the third largest town in California, surpassed only by San Francisco and Sacramento. With the increasing population came a temperance league, a Methodist Episcopal Church, and agitation for a less morbid name. The name "Placerville" was chosen, and it became official when the City was incorporated in 1854.

It can thus be seen that in 1860, when Confidence Hall was built, Placerville was quieting-down and transforming into a refined city. Its gangs and its impromptu hangings had long been abolished, and in 1857 the El Dorado County Seat was moved to Placerville. The construction of a formal, permanent home for the Confidence Engine Company Number One further evidences the City's shift into its modern era. When the City Council began to meet in Confidence Hall in the 1860's, it was therefore free to occupy itself with such progressive issues as promoting a bond issue to extend the railroad into the City and castigating two new restauranters who had been "gouging" tourists. Confidence Hall is an apt memorial both to the famous Confidence Engine Company and to Hangtown/Placerville's transition from a town of the "Wild West" to a modern, progressive city.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Confidence Hall", Heritage Association of El Dorado County, 1975.  
 Mountain Democrat, October 17, 1860.  
 Mountain Democrat, January 12, 1861.

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

# 10. Geographical Data

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreeage of nominated property .16 acre

Quadrangle name Placerville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A 10 691380 4288900  
 Zone Easting Northing

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

**Verbal boundary description and justification**

The nominated property is located on City Lot No. 7 in Block No. 33 and is approximately 24' X 57' in size.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code
N/A			

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Conrad Montgomery, City Planner  
 organization City of Placerville date February 12, 1981  
 street & number 487 Main Street telephone (916) 622-9353  
 city or town Placerville state California 95667

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature K. M. Ellis

title SHPO date November 24, 1981

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Entered in the National Register

date 1/4/82

John A. Nelson  
 Keeper of the National Register

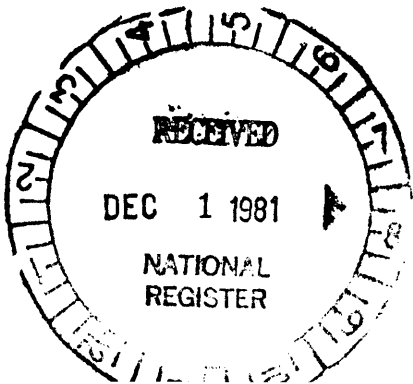
Attest:

Chief of Registration

CONFIDENCE HALL  
PLACERVILLE, EL DORADO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

67'  
CONFIDENCE  
HALL

24'



MAIN STREET

JAN 4 1982

SCALE 1:106  
(1" = 8')