

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 15 1987

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received **JAN 18 1988**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Hiram B. Austin House

and or common

2. Location

street & number E side of AL state Hwy 163 at 12 mile marker NA not for publication

city, town Mon Louis Island vicinity of Congressional District 1

state Alabama code 01 county Mobile code 097

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Philip G. Austin

street & number 317 Park Ave.

city, town Mobile NA vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mobile County Courthouse

street & number 109 Government Street

city, town Mobile state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Alabama Inventory X
title Mobile County Architectural Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
1970-present X
date 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved

date 1980

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hiram B. Austin house is a one and a half story, frame building exhibiting early peg construction. The house faces East toward Mobile Bay with its gable roof oriented to the sides. Raised on concrete block piers, the front and side walls of the main block are of lapped siding while the rear and attached wing are board and batten.

In plan, the house was originally four rooms with a central hall and a small rear porch room on each side. A full-length facade porch wrapped around the sides as far as the porch rooms. All this was included under the main gable creating a symmetrical plan and facade. Three gabled dormers were located above the front recessed porch, and there were three matching dormers on the rear. These lit the two large end rooms, the rear stair hall and the small, front, centered room on the four room second floor. Following severe damage caused by Hurricane Frederick in 1979, the one-story rear kitchen wing was moved to the south side to visually balance the house after the side inset porch, porch room, and corresponding section of the second floor (including a front dormer) were destroyed. At the same time the house was moved back about one hundred yards from the eroding bluff to keep it from collapsing into the Bay.

The first-story facade is divided into five bays behind the simple boxed columns of the porch. The double, central door has a nine-light full transom and is flanked by two, shuttered, 6/1 windows to either side. The sides are three bays with two windows in their gable ends. The rear is asymmetrically pierced by windows and doors. The only door without a transom is the rear double door to the central hall. This, along with most of the rear of the house, is reached by a contemporary deck partially covered by a shed roof.

The rear portion of the central hall is wider than the front section. They are separated by a partition wall with a large throughway and six light transom. The widening of the rear hall allows the placement of the steep, double flight, enclosed stair to the second floor.

While the house was being moved following the hurricane, the two interior, double chimneys collapsed. However, their outlines have been retained to allow an accurate reconstruction in the future. Interestingly, the chimney of the kitchen wing remains intact.

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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates C. 1837 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hiram B. Austin House is the earliest and best example of the "Bay House" known in Mobile County. It is the only identified ante-bellum house on the western shoreline of Mobile Bay. Typical of the structures built on the waterways of Mobile and Baldwin Counties, the house maintains its full-length front porch and large windows and doors developed in response to the environment, i.e., climate, area and site. The Austin house is an excellent example of the Gulf Coast Cottage as typified by its full-length central hall with interconnected rooms and early Greek Revival influence seen in the simple boxed columns and formal facade arrangement. Finally of note is the peg construction indicative of its early building period.

Integrity: The Austin house retains its essential integrity. Its plan and form are basically intact. Approximately ten feet of the south side of the house and a front dormer were destroyed in the 1979 hurricane. After the storm the house was moved back from the encroaching bay. During the move the interior chimneys collapsed; the current owners have retained mantels and hearths to allow their reconstruction. At the time of the move the rear kitchen wing with its intact chimney was moved to the south side of the house to visually balance the now asymmetrical structure. The one story kitchen wing was aligned with the rear of the house which allows a visual break between the two, yet creates an impression of a balanced structure. Original materials were used wherever possible. The form of the house is still evident and the interior plan has been retained. The four rooms remain on either side of the eccentric central hall and the porch room on the north is extant. The orientation and siting of the house is virtually identical to that of its original position.

* * * * *

The Hiram B. Austin house is the fourth house built on the property by the Boudine-Austin family. Nicholas Boudine held the original royal land grant to Mon Louis Island from the King of France and built the first house on the property in 1710. The island was named for the son of Nicholas, his "Mon Louis". Though Nicholas was a trader, the builder of the present house, Hiram Austin, inherited the vast orange groves on the property and shipped them commercially. Built around 1837, the present structure replaced the last of the three earlier ones which fell into the bay as the bluff beneath collapsed from the erosion of the shore line. The moving and restoration of the house has been the work of Philip G. Austin the great grandson of Hiram, and was done from 1980 through 1985. The settlement of the island was by the family of the builder and present owners of the house, and as such, it represents a continuous line to the earliest history of Mobile County.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Mr. and Mrs. Philip G. Austin, owners

Tax Records and Deed Books of the Mobile County Courthouse

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.35

Quadrangle name Bellefontaine

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	3	9	3	9	6	0	3	3	6	5	6	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

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D

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

* * * See Attached * * *

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

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Devereaux Bemis, Architectural Historian

organization Mobile Historic Development Commission date May 20, 1987

street & number P. O. Box 1827 telephone (205) 438-7281

city or town Mobile state Alabama 36633

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 National Park Service.

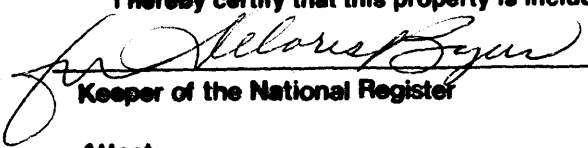
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-5-88

For NPS use only

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

 entered in the National Register

date 2-11-88

Keeper of the National Register

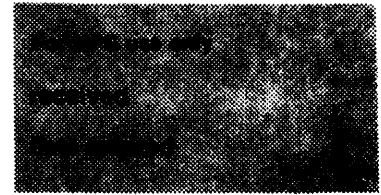
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

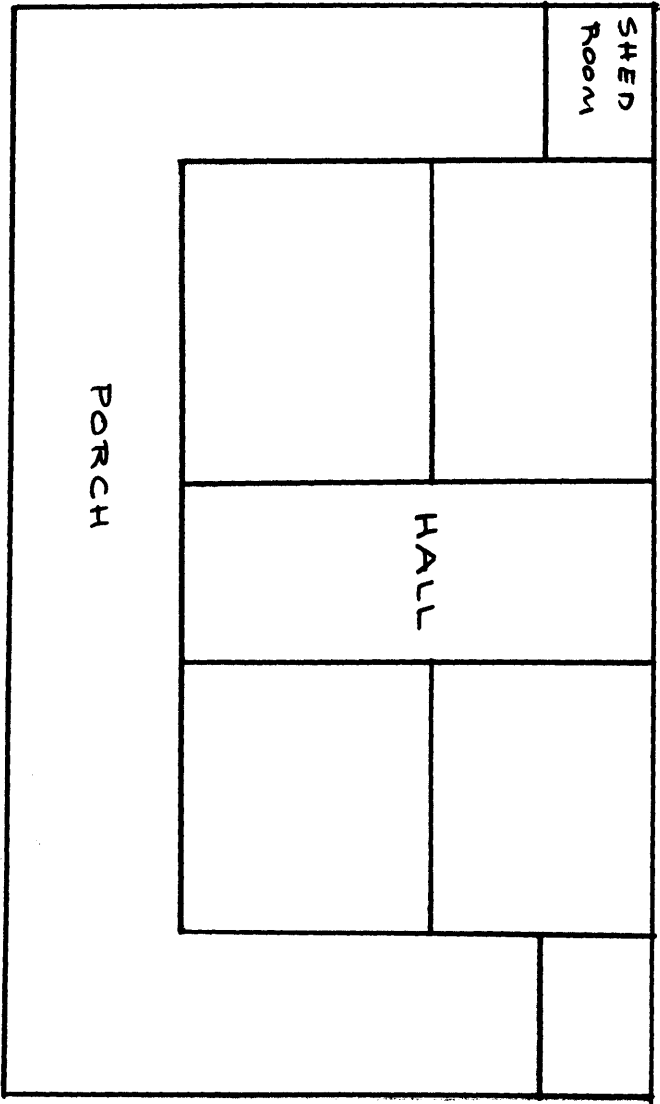
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



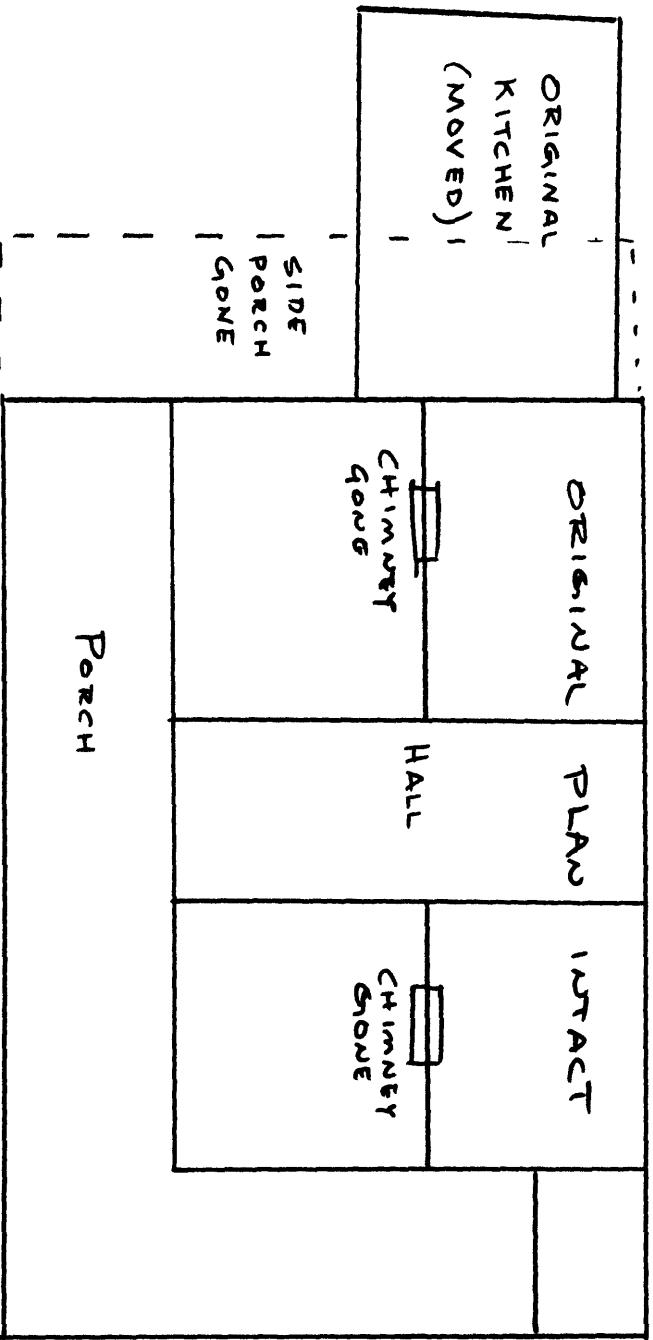
Continuation sheet Hiram B. Austin House Item number 10. Geographical Page 1.

A piece of property being back from the line of Mobile Bay about 425', more or less, being a part of the tract commencing at a point where the south line of section 20, township 7 south, range 1 west intersects the right of way line of Dauphin Island Parkway; run thence north 04 degrees 22 minutes, east along the side right of way line 2234.63 feet to an iron marker for the POINT OF BEGINNING of the herein described property; thence continue north 04 degrees 22 minutes east along the side right of way line 136.9 feet to a point; thence north 89 degrees 55 minutes east 762 feet, more or less, to a point; thence south 89 degrees 55 minutes west 767 feet, more or less, to the POINT OF BEGINNING, containing 2.39 acres, more or less, of which the east 1.35 acres, more or less, are being nominated, containing the house and surrounding yard but not containing the uncleared wooded area between the house and Dauphin Island Parkway.



AUSTIN HOUSE
ORIGINAL PLAN

N →



Austin House PLAN

N →