

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED DEC 6 1976  
DATE ENTERED NOV 23 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**NAME \*\***

HISTORIC The Castle (of Billings)

AND/OR COMMON

North, Austin House *use this*

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

622 North 29th Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Billings

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

2

STATE

Montana

CODE

30

COUNTY

Yellowstone

CODE

111

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

**PRESENT USE**

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Senia Hart

STREET & NUMBER

Stapleton Building, Level IV

CITY, TOWN

Billings

VICINITY OF

STATE

Montana

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Yellowstone County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

215 North 27th Street

CITY, TOWN

Billings

STATE

Montana

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

1975 Survey of Historic Architecture in Montana; John N. DeHaas, Jr

DATE

June 17, 1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Recreation and Parks Division  
Department of Fish and Game, 1420 E. 6th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Helena

STATE

Montana

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

To the north and just west of the city of Billings' Central Business District stands a unique two and one half story medieval-appearing structure nicknamed "The Castle." Early photographs indicate that the house was built on the very edge of the growing town with open land to the west and north to the rimrocks. The city has long since grown up to and beyond the structure however.

The building was constructed in 1902-03 for Austin North, an early real estate man of Billings. It is believed the handsome building may well have been built to attract prospective builders to this (then) outlying district.

The brick and light-colored sandstone structure has a large three-story turret on the southeast corner. The turret terminates in a pronounced battlement of brick with sandstone cappings giving the building its medieval character.

The double hung square-headed windows in the turret are set in flattened masonry arches on the first and third stories. The first and second floor windows are quite large while the windows on the third floor are much smaller and more numerous.

The building is raised a half-story above grade. The foundation of rusticated native stone was quarried from the nearby rimrocks and extends above grade to the sills of the first floor windows. The front entry steps lead to a porch of semi-circular arches, two of which are on the front of the projecting porch and single similar arches outline each side of the porch. The upper part of the porch terminates in a battlement that has sandstone capping stones.

Above the flat-roofed porch on the second level there is a large curved opening with a pronounced keystone above it. Originally there were two large double hung windows having a divided transom light above them in this space. Today two French doors divided into small panes of glass open onto the area; there are small windows on each side of the French doors as well. An awning now obscures the arch.

Above this on the third floor, set within a brick stepped-gable dormer with sandstone caps, there is a single double hung window that today also has an awning. Similar stepped gable dormers are featured on the north and south sides as well as on the back of the building.

On the southwest corner a solarium or greenhouse is attached to the building. It apparently was part of the original design, as verified by a photograph of the home published just a year or two after it was built. The solarium is now used as a frame shop.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2 of 2

Some changes have been made on the interior. The paired arched doors, with transom lights, that opened into the turret space and into the parlor on the northeast corner of the building have been removed and stored. The entry door appears new but the hardware is original. What had been the kitchen on the northwest corner is now an antique shop. An entrance has been put on the northwest corner of the building. The main staircase from the first floor to the second floor is now closed off but the stairs down to the basement are still in use. The second and third floors have been remodeled into apartments.

The decorative woodwork on the first floor is of pine which has been painted beige and given an antique finish. The walls and ceilings are plastered and new wall paper covers many of the walls. The lighting fixtures appear to be original. The hardwood floors are covered with carpets. The original steam heating system is still in use today. Of interest is the building's early form of humidifiers, metal reservoirs attached to the top of the steam radiators. Behind the building stands a red brick one story garage that has an arched door opening.

Today, the upper floors are used for apartments, while small shops occupy the first floor.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1902-03

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Link & Haire, Architects

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Castle of Billings was the home of one of the most prominent early developers of this important commercial crossroad. It was built in 1902-03 by Austin North as his family home. It was designed by the architectural firm of Link and Haire, one of the major architectural firms of the state during the first half of the twentieth century. It is believed to have been patterned after the famed Potter Palmer mansion of Chicago, which was destroyed in 1950; although there are significant differences. North sold The Castle a few years after it was built.

Austin North was born in Iowa in 1869 and arrived in Billings in 1883, seven years after its founding by the Northern Pacific Railroad. By 1892, he had successfully launched his own real estate company and within the next few years he was instrumental in developing several subdivisions, a country club and city athletic field. He organized the Billings Commercial Exchange and the Billings Chamber of Commerce. He was also part-owner of the Billings Daily Gazette, one of the state's leading newspapers. In addition he was vice-president for Montana of the Custer Battlefield Association and president of the Glacier-to-Gulf national highway group, envisioning a route from San Antonio, Texas to Calgary, Alberta. His activities in real estate and commercial promotion reflect the general economic development of the western frontier.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Tom Stout, Montana, Its Story & Biography, Chicago, 1921, pp. 1137-38  
Billings Gazette (newspaper), Billings, Montana, August 29, 1928, p. 7  
Lost Chicago, David Lowe, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1975, p. 35

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than .5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	2	6	9	3	4	4	0	5	0	7	3	1	1	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

C 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

D 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Susan W. Curtis, Historian; John N. DeHaas, Jr., Architect;  
 Fredric L. Quie, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Recreation & Parks Division  
 Department of Fish and Game

DATE  
 May 5, 1976

STREET & NUMBER 1420 E. 6th Avenue

TELEPHONE  
 (406) 449-3750

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

# 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

*Paul Holliday*

TITLE Montana State Historic Preservation Officer DATE July 23, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Robert B. Kettig*

DATE 11/23/77

ATTEST:

*Charles Albright*

*John* DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11-19-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER