

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

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

For HCRS use only

received MAY 9 1983

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Ophir Town Hall

and/or common Ophir City Hall

2. Location

street & number 43 South Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town Ophir _____ vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Utah code 049 county Tooele code 045

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Ophir

street & number 43 Main Street

city, town Ophir _____ vicinity of _____ state Utah

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tooele County Courthouse

street & number 47 South Main

city, town Tooele _____ state Utah

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey/

Utah State Register

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1967/1970

federal state county local

depository for survey records Utah Heritage Foundation/Utah State Historical Society

city, town Salt Lake City

state Utah

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ophir Town Hall is a two story rectangular structure 26 feet 5 inches by 24 feet 6 inches, and forms a combination town office, fire station, and jail. The false fronted frame structure is constructed of horizontal clapboard siding, 6 inches wide, with a belfry situated on the gable ridge of the roof near the front of the building. The main level is divided into three rooms which include a meeting hall, fire department, and storage room for fire fighting equipment. The lower level, or basement, is constructed of concrete and formed the foundation and jail, with each of two cells having one window.

The wood shingle roof was covered with galvanized corrugated sheet steel in the 1970s, and the clapboard siding treated with an oil coating. The building remains basically sound, and in much the same appearance as it did originally.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Mining Towns
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1870 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ophir Town Hall, constructed in the early 1870s, is significant architecturally and historically as one of only three remaining nineteenth century mining town city halls in Utah. Mining proved of signal importance in the transition of Utah's economy from an agrarian base to one more diversified, attracting numerous non-Mormon entrepreneurs and laborers. This transition began to occur in the late 1860s when the transcontinental railroad (1869) made commercial mining in Utah a profitable enterprise. Ophir, located some fifty miles southwest of Salt Lake City, numbered among the first mining districts established, and its Town Hall is the oldest remaining of its type in Utah. Other extant city halls from this initial period of mining activity are the Park City City Hall, 1884 (Park City Main Street Historic District, Summit Co. Utah - National Register), and the Eureka City Hall, 1899 (Eureka Historic District, Tintic Mining District, MRA, Juab County, Utah - National Register). The Ophir structure, however, remains architecturally unique as a type because in comparison it is a frame false-fronted building, whereas the other two are more substantial brick structures, reflecting the continued prosperity and growth of Park City and Eureka after the initial boom years of the 1870s and 1880s. The site was documented in 1967 as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

Mining for precious metals began in Utah with the arrival of the U.S. Military in 1862. Under Colonel Patrick E. Connor, known as the "father" of mining in Utah, the California Volunteers, stationed at Ft. Douglas in Salt Lake City, prospected the mountain ranges of the Salt Lake Valley. These men were experienced miners from the California gold fields, and under their guidance mining districts were opened in the Utah Territory in the 1860s. However, the effective commercial mining of minerals waited until 1869 when the Transcontinental Railroad joined at Promontory, Utah to make transportation of ores more economical and profitable.¹

In June, 1864 soldiers from Ft. Douglas organized the Rush Valley Mining District, some forty miles southwest of Salt Lake City; and in 1870, the Ophir District was separated and organized under its own right.² The Ophir District numbered among the initial incorporated mining areas in the Utah Territory. In fact, East Canyon, or Ophir Canyon, proved to be the first "significant" find of silver-lead ore made by Connor's soldiers.³

During the summer of 1870, A. N. Moore laid-out the townsite of Ophir, which is nestled in a canyon on the western slope of the Oquirrh Mountains -- southwest of Salt Lake City in Tooele County. Here, mining activity burgeoned, primarily after horn silver was found on Silverado Hill in 1870, and excitement extended until 1874. By April, 1871, the town was referred to as Ophir City, and touted as "flourishing and rapidly increasing."⁴ In May, 1871 "plats, statements and necessary papers" had been filed at the Tooele

9. Major Bibliographical References

Arrington, Leonard J. "Abundance from the Earth: The Beginnings of Commercial Mining in Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly 31 (Summer 1963): 192-219.

Gilluly, James, Geology and Ore Deposits of the Stockton and Fairfield Quadrangles, Utah. Professional Paper 173, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Ophir, Utah

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	2	3	9	3	6	3	0	4	4	6	9	3	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 2, Block E, Plat A, Ophir City Survey

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

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Phil Notarianni, Historian

organization Utah State Historical Society date January 1982

street & number 300 Rio Grande telephone 801-533-6017

city or town Salt Lake City state Utah

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 Melvin T. Smith

title Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/15/83

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

Beth Grosvenor date 6/9/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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County Recorder's office, "so as to comply with the law of Congress of 1864-5, to locate the town for the benefit of lot holders and owners."⁵ Thus, the Ophir Town Hall was probably constructed sometime between 1870 and 1872; and by 1874, the hall was listed in the Sloan, Gazeteer of Utah and Salt Lake City.⁶

The Ophir Town Hall fits into a general pattern of mining town development. By 1870 the area had passed from a mining settlement to a camp, where the population grew and mineral strikes became more significant.⁷ As such, the town hall was constructed of wood, and served as offices, a meeting place, fire station, and jail. The false-fronted facade was unadorned, reflecting the utility of construction. A belfry, perched on the ridge of the gable roof near the front of the building, rang with the sound of fire. A lower level was constructed as the jail, with concrete walls and floors adding to security.

Ophir developed, with peak activity in 1872, 1873, and 1874, but then gradually began to decline.⁸ The city was moving to the "town" phase of development, but dwindling mining activity cut short its rise to a regional center as had occurred in the towns of Park City and Eureka. Thus, the frame town hall remains a symbol of the transition from settlement to camp, but not to the more substantial town phase.

Despite Ophir's lack of growth to a district economic center, the town remains. Labeled as a "ghost town," its various residents today dispute that observation. The Town Hall remains --the only one of its type in Utah-- as a most visible symbol of Ophir's past, and recent restoration activities during the 1970s have illustrated the community's commitment in keeping its Town Hall the center of activity and pride.

NOTES

¹For a good background of mining in Utah, see Leonard J. Arrington, "Abundance from the Earth: The Beginnings of Commercial Mining in Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly 31(Summer 1963): 192-219.

²See, U.S. Department of the Interior, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, vol. 13 Precious Metals (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885) - Report of D. B. Huntley.

³Arrington, Abundance from the Earth, p. 203.

⁴Salt Lake Tribune and Utah Mining Gazette, April 15, 1871, p. 2.

⁵Salt Lake Tribune and Utah Mining Gazette, May 17, 1871, p. 2.

⁶Edward L. Sloan, comp. Gazeteer of Utah and Salt Lake City (Salt Lake City, 1874), p. 94.

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⁷C. Eric Stoehr, Bonanza Victorian: Architecture and Society in Colorado Mining Towns (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), pp. 10, 12, points to three distinct general phases of mining town development: settlement, camp, and town. Architecture reflects these stages with the town phase characterized by more elaborate and permanent structures of wood, and especially stone and brick.

⁸James Gilluly, Geology and Ore Deposits of the Stockton and Fairfield Quadrangles, Utah. Professional Paper 173, U.S. Department of the Interior (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932), p. 120.

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Salt Lake Tribune and Utah Mining Gazette, 1870-71.

Sloan, Edward L., comp. Gazetteer of Utah and Salt Lake City. Salt Lake City, 1874.

Tooele County Records, Tooele County Courthouse, Tooele, Utah.