

5/22/02

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**5. CLASSIFICATION**

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**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Public-local

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** Building

<b>NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTING</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING</b>
	1	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	2	1 STRUCTURES
	2	2 OBJECTS
	5	3 TOTAL

**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 0

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** N/A

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** GOVERNMENT: city hall, RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** GOVERNMENT: city hall, RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Mission

**MATERIALS:** FOUNDATION BRICK  
WALLS BRICK  
ROOF ASPHALT  
OTHER WOOD

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-8).



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Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

Kyle City Hall occupies a prominent position at the heart of the small, Central Texas town of Kyle, in eastern Hays County. Kyle straddles Interstate Highway 35, but the original townsite, including the public square (Block 9), lies entirely to the west of the highway, about ten miles north of the county seat at San Marcos and about 20 miles south of Austin. The square is located one block west of the north-south running International & Great Northern Railroad Company tracks, which parallel IH-35. Block 9 is defined by Main and Burleson streets, on the east and west, and Center and Hays streets, on the north and south. Kyle City Hall is located in the town's only dedicated public square, near the center of Kyle's original 18-block townsite. Prior to its construction, the block (Block 9) was a largely vacant lot where Kyle residents gathered for organized public events. A very small frame building identified as an "office" on early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sanborn Fire Insurance maps once occupied part of the space now covered by the current city hall (Sanborn Fire Insurance Co., Map of Kyle, Tx, 1902 and 1907 series).

Designed in 1912 by Austin architect Roy L. Thomas and erected by local builders, brothers Fred and Tom Millhollon, the buff-colored brick, hipped-roof civic building employs a mixture of stylistic motifs. Pavilions with Mission style parapets frame the front and rear entrances. Its Classically influenced secondary facades feature a Palladian fenestration pattern. Decorative wood braces are visible under wide eaves. As designed, the building faced Main Street, historically the town's principal north-south thoroughfare. Visitors approached the building's entrance from Main Street across a broad, stately lawn. By the 1930s, a long concrete walkway led from Main Street to the concrete steps on the east side. Today, most people enter from Burleson Street, on the west side of the square, because it is closer to the street and has adequate parking and accessibility. Surrounding streets are paved and lined with a mix of small scale 1-story commercial and residential buildings, most of which date to the early 20th century and front onto the square.

### *Site Description*

Block 9, located near the geographic center of the original Kyle townsite plat, has always been reserved for use as a Public Square. From 1880, when the town was laid out, until at least 1896, the square was entirely vacant (Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. 1896 Map of Kyle, TX). It is not known whether it was simply a dirt lot or if it contained any grass or trees. However, it functioned as a public gathering place where traveling theater groups, tent shows and Medicine shows entertained the town's citizens. By 1902, and at least through 1907, a tiny frame building identified as an "office" occupied a small space near the center of the square (Sanborn Fire Insurance Co 1902 and 1907 series maps of Kyle, TX). Nothing more is known about this building's use but it may have served as a concession stand or ticket booth or possibly a meeting place for small groups (Strom personal communication October 19, 2001). The entire square may have been enclosed by a short cedar post and wire fence and planted with some small trees and grass by the time construction commenced on the City Hall, about 1912. Sanborn maps drawn in 1922 clearly depict the completed "Town Hall" on the Public Square.

Sited in the rear (western) half of the Public Square, Kyle City Hall dominates Block 9, a nearly square site measuring about 240' x 260'. Although Block 9 and the surrounding streets appear relatively flat, the square actually slopes gently downward from the west side of the site to the east. The original approach to the building required a slightly uphill trek across a broad yard extending from Main Street, on the east side of the square. The visitors' eyes were naturally drawn upward to the main entrance doors at the top of a short flight of concrete steps. The effect lent the building a degree of stature in the midst of an otherwise modest commercial district consisting primarily of 1-story frame storefronts facing onto the square. The building appears less imposing from the now-principal, level approach off Burleson Street on the west side of the square. Although City Hall is the only building in the block, several auxiliary structures and landscaping features located on the grounds serve to enhance the building itself or its function as a public park/gathering place. The block is covered in grass and contains about two dozen trees, many of which were planted



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Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

within circular concrete tree wells in the early 1950s. The square is not fenced but has sidewalks along Main and Center streets. No sidewalks or curbing line Burleson or Hays (aka Miller) streets but a shallow paved parking area along Burleson extends into the square in front of the west entrance to the building (Map 2 – Site Plan).

## *Building Description*

Kyle City Hall is a one-story cubical building rendered in buff-colored brick with pink-tinged mortar and covered by a massive hipped roof of composition shingle (Photo 1/Digital Photo 1). Measuring approximately 50'x 60', the building rests on a brick foundation with a three-course projecting brick water table that circumscribes the entire perimeter. Kyle City Hall features two pairs of symmetrical facades with Mission Revival style entrance pavilions centered on the east and west (primary) sides, and multi-light Palladian windows beneath centered gables on the north and south sides (Photo 2/Digital Photo 2). Slightly projecting brick pilasters topped with carved wooden braces frame the corners and simple decorative wood braces support wide boxed eaves on all sides.

Several popular early 20<sup>th</sup> century stylistic trends are displayed in the building's form and embellishment. The east and west elevations display distinctive Mission Revival characteristics with entrances opening beneath arched pavilions with swept parapets, a hallmark of the style. The north and south sides employ Classical Revival stylistic motifs including Palladian windows in their central bays and dentils in the pediments. Carved wooden braces supporting wide boxed eaves, decorative gable vents, and exposed rafter tails lend an Arts and Crafts element to the building's design.

The building occupies the upper (west) half of a whole city block. The original entrance faces east, toward Main Street, across a grass-covered lawn dotted with trees and crossed by concrete walkways (Digital Photo 3). Primary access has shifted to the west entrance which fronts onto a narrow, head-in parking strip off Burleson Street (Photo 1/Digital Photo 1).

## *East and West Elevations*

The east and west elevations are nearly identical. Pavilions fronted by Mission Revival style parapets project from the front (east) (Digital Photo 3) and rear (west) entrances. The parapets are accentuated with geometric designs rendered in stucco and brick. The Mission pavilions are further defined by open archways on their narrower sides. Due to the site's west-to-east slope, the east (original) entrance is elevated about three and a half feet above grade with four concrete steps leading to the pavilion (Digital Photo 3). The west side is on grade and no steps are required to access the entry (Photo/Digital Photo 1). Both pavilions have concrete floors.

Both entrances are accessed by double doors topped with transoms and flanked by sidelights with vertical channels. Banks of multi-light windows lie on either side of the entrances on both sides of the building. The fenestration pattern is composed of three sets of 9/6 light double-hung sash with 6-light transoms capping the panels. Some of the wood windows on the main (east) entry have been replaced with metal frames but the size and pattern are unchanged. As built, both sides featured two sets of paired double-hung windows, each with 20/16 lights. These windows were replaced after 1976.

## *North and South Elevations*

Like the east and west elevations, the north and south sides of the building are almost identical to one another. The elevations are composed of three bays distinguished from the primary facades by their Classically influenced pediments and Palladian window motif. Each side features a central pavilion projecting from the overarching hipped roof.



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Kyle City Hall  
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Pavilions are crowned with pediments highlighted with dentils, boxed cornice returns, and louvered wood gable vents. An arrangement of multi-light windows beneath the pediments is configured in a Palladian-influenced pattern consisting of a central arched 28/12 light window rising above flanking 20/12 light double hung windows. On each of the surrounding bays are tripartite windows consisting of three sets of 9/6 light double-hung sash with 6-light transoms capping the panels. Like the windows on the east and west facades, these tripartite windows replaced pairs of multi-light double hung windows define each of the side bays.

### *Alterations and Renovation Plans*

Although it had suffered from poor maintenance, Kyle City Hall remained almost unchanged since its construction until 1976 when a local historical society launched a bicentennial project to repair and renovate the building. The building's most significant exterior alterations occurred at that time. Its original pressed tin shingles were removed and replaced with a composition roof. Paired multi-light double hung windows on the primary (east and west) elevations were replaced with three sets of 9/6 windows capped by a 6-light transom after 1976. The buildings brick chimneys were removed in that renovation effort. About 1980, the city removed the original double doors and replaced them with double metal framed glass doors on the west and solid wood panel doors on the east. The city has saved the original doors and there has been discussion about returning them to the building. Interior changes made in 1976 included leveling the floor, converting the dressing room to a kitchen and adding air conditioning.

Interior changes occurred with the 1976 renovation campaign, as well. A new office and kitchen were built in the upper floor and the original offices of Mayor and Justice of the Peace were removed. The stage was removed and the sloping auditorium floor was leveled to create an open meeting space. Restrooms were added in the Northeast corner of the building.

By the 1930s, concrete sidewalks led from the four corners of the square to the primary entrance, then the east side of the city hall. In 1950, the grounds of the public square were landscaped with commemorative concrete tree wells and benches bearing the names of certain Kyle citizens. Trees planted in the tree wells are now mature and provide shade along the north side of the square. A large concrete slab bearing a flagpole lies on the east side of the building, at the base of the original entrance. The four sidewalks now appear to radiate from the slab to the four corners of the square. A large circular planter made of native limestone lies in front of the slab, immediately to the east. These landscaping features were built in 1950-1951, and are considered Contributing elements of the site (Map 2 - Site Plan).

Since then, several monuments, historical markers, a free-standing brick marquee and a gazebo have been erected on the site. Built near the southwest corner of the square about 1998, the gazebo was declared structurally unsound soon after it was completed. It was recently replaced by a new gazebo on the same location and is considered Noncontributing. Perhaps the most oldest and most significant of the square's auxiliary features is the church bell, that once graced an Episcopal Church in Kyle built in the 1880s. When the church left Kyle, it is thought that its members gave the bell to the City (Strom, personal communication October 19, 2001). It was mounted on a small, 4-post stand resembling a miniature oil derrick. The bell was rung every day at noon and in the event of a fire. In 1976 as part of the City's Bicentennial effort, Laura and Ashley Bunton, offered to build a sturdier, more attractive stand for the bell. Mr. Bunton funded much of the cost and his crew provided the labor involved in the construction of the new brick bell tower. The Buntons are descendants of one of Kyle's illustrious early pioneers, John Wheeler Bunton and the new structure was dedicated as "The Bunton Bell Tower", in his honor. The bell, which has been on the site since the 1910s, is considered a Contributing object. The more recent brick tower is a Noncontributing structure (Map 2 - Site Plan).



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Continuation SheetSection 7 Page 8Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

Kyle City Hall has retained its defining form, decorative features and historic materials to a large extent. While the loss of its tin shingles is unfortunate, the building's roof pitch and form convey the intent of the original design. Likewise, although original windows and doors have been replaced, the openings, arrangement and multi-light effect remain intact. The building possesses integrity of location, setting, design, association, workmanship, materials and feeling and remains a source of pride and the focus of civic activity in this community. There are no current plans for exterior alteration but the city intends to continue renovating the interior for further civic use. The building is occupied by city offices and used as a senior citizens activity center, meeting space and community events. The exterior is in good condition with the exception of some wood rot in the west windows. The grounds are neat and well-maintained.

*Inventory of Properties*

Individual properties are identified by number on a site map (Map 2 - Site Plan) based on a plan drawn by Scott Jordan for a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark nomination prepared in 2000, as part of a project of the Public History Program, Department of History, Southwest Texas State University, Cynthia Brandimarte, Ph. D, Director.

1. Kyle City Hall, 1912	Building	Contributing
2. Concrete Walkways, ca. 1933	Structure	Contributing
3. Limestone Planter, ca. 1950	Object	Contributing
4. Concrete memorial tables and benches	Object	Contributing
5. Church Bell, ca. 1885, placed on square ca. 1915	Object	Contributing
6. Bunton Bell Tower, ca. 1978	Structure	Noncontributing
7. Marquee/Sign, ca. 1978	Object	Noncontributing
8. Gazebo, 2001	Structure	Noncontributing

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## 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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### APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- ☒ **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.
- ☒ **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 VALUE, 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:** N/A

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:** Architecture, Politics/Government

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1912-1952

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1912

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** Thomas, Roy L. (architect); Fred and Tom Millhollon (builders)

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-13).

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## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY** (see continuation sheets 9-14 and 9-15).

**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):** N/A

- ☐ 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 #

**PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:**

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government (*Kyle City Council Minutes, Kyle, Texas*)
- ☒ University (*Alexander Architectural Archives, University of Texas at Austin*)
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: (*Personal collection of Ann Miller Strom, Austin, Texas*)



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

## Statement of Significance

Kyle City Hall displays an eclectic combination of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Mission Revival, Classical Revival and Arts and Crafts stylistic expression in a small scale civic building built for the rural town of Kyle, in Hays County, Texas. Built in 1912 by forward-thinking citizens and community boosters, Kyle City Hall reflects the optimistic tone of the Progressive Era that reached even the small rural trading centers of Central Texas in the early years of the 20th century. It was, and remains, the most prominent building in the city of Kyle and has historically been the focus of its civic and social life. The building and grounds occupy an entire city block at the heart of the small agricultural center. The hall was a symbol of Kyle's ambitions for growth, prosperity and increasing cultural and social development after the turn of the century when the local agricultural economy -- largely based on cotton -- promised a bright future for the community and its citizens. In accordance with those ambitions, Kyle's civic leaders hired Austin architect Roy L. Thomas to design a civic center worthy of their plans for the city's future growth and cultural development. It is one of the few known architect-designed buildings in rural Hays County. Kyle City Hall is associated with the Multiple Property Historic Context, Rural Properties of Hays County and is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for its historical associations with Kyle's early 20th century development. Designed by prominent Austin architect Roy L. Thomas, and built by local craftsmen, brothers Fred and Tom Millhollon, the building is also nominated under Criterion C as an outstanding early example of his work and as a rare expression of fashionable Revival style architecture applied to a small scale civic building in a rural setting.

## Historic Background

Identified as a governmental building in the 1994 Historic Resources Survey of the City of Kyle, Texas (Hardy Heck Moore & Associates), the Kyle City Hall occupies the central position in the city plat often reserved for a governmental building such as a county courthouse. Despite its location, the building was not originally intended to serve the mundane, day-to-day municipal business but rather to be a venue for social and civic events such as plays, musicales and Chautauquas. It was first and foremost a meeting hall for the people of Kyle. In that regard, it could more accurately be analyzed as a social hall than a governmental building. Over time, however, the building came to house municipal offices as well as a senior center and other civic uses but it has continued to be central to the town's identity.

The City of Kyle was created with the arrival of the International and Great Northern Railroad (I. & G.N.) which pushed through Hays County in 1880. The railroad connected the Texas capital of Austin with the city of San Antonio, about 70 miles to the south, and spawned new communities like Buda and Kyle along its route through previously unsettled land in eastern Hays County. An 18-block townsite was platted on the west side of the railroad line with narrow commercial lots fronting the tracks. Two blocks were set back from the tracks and dedicated for public use. Block 11 was reserved for "School Purposes" and Block 9 was designated as a "Public Square." Although a school was built almost immediately, the public square remained essentially vacant, except for a tiny frame structure, for more than 30 years after the town's founding. In fact, even before the City Hall was built, the block functioned as intended in the original plat, that is, as a public square. Traveling tent shows, including Medicine Shows and other entertainments, and community gatherings, such as group picnics and Chautauquas, were held on the open square.

When the railroad bypassed other rural communities, many of their residents moved to Kyle, Buda and San Marcos, which promised greater prospects for economic development due to their rail access. While the existing town and county seat of San Marcos developed into a small city, Kyle and Buda remained small, rural hubs for the surrounding ranches and farms. Commercial development was limited to a few blocks along the railroad tracks and, in Kyle's case,



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Kyle City Hall  
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fronting the public square. Kyle incorporated twice; once in 1895 for a short period of time, and again in 1906 (Simon 1986: 264).

Since its founding with the arrival of the International & Great Northern Railroad in 1881, Kyle had been considered a rough, even wild town but in 1898, the citizens voted to ban saloons and became a "dry" town. It remained so until 1973. The town experienced some decline in business with the removal of its saloons but at the turn of the century, Kyle began a new era as cotton played a greater role in the county's agricultural economy. Kyle increased its position as a railroad center for local cotton farmers to ship their crops to market and for farmers and ranchers to buy supplies. By 1900, the town boasted three cotton gins -- Sion's Gin, Round Bale Gin, and Kyle Oil and Gin Co. -- which ginned cotton and milled cottonseed (Simon 1986: 255).

Kyle merchant J.W. Tompkins may have been instrumental in the construction of both the City Hall (1912) and Kyle School (1911, demolished 1937). He was elected mayor when the town incorporated for the second time in 1906. Once incorporated, the city undertook a number of public works including rebuilding the road that passed between Buda, Mountain City and Kyle. In February 1907, the City Council appointed a committee from among its members to consider building a City Hall (Simon 1986: 264). Committee members chose the site designated as a public square in the original townsite map. Bounded by Burleson Street on the west, Main Street on the east, Center Street on the north, and Hays Street on the south, Block 9 offered an ideal location near the center of town. Furthermore, though it remained essentially vacant since the town was platted 1880, the site had always served as a public square in which Kyle citizens were accustomed to gather. Thus it was logical and appropriate that the newly incorporated city selected Block 9, a dedicated "Public Square", as the site for its community hall.

Early in 1912, the city council hired Austin architect Roy L. Thomas to design the building. Thomas was only twenty-five years old and had only recently established his practice when he designed Kyle City Hall. At the time, his work had been limited primarily to residential design and the city hall was probably his largest and most important commission. On March 25, 1912, the council awarded a \$6,100 construction contract to local builders Fred and Tom Millhollon (Strom, 1981: 44). A rare early photo of the Kyle City Hall shows the Millhollon brothers working on the building before the roof was erected. The Millhollon Brothers built other notable buildings in Kyle during this period, notably the Kyle School (1911) and the R.J. Sledge House (1912) (Hardy Heck Moore & Associates 1994). Hays County contributed \$500 to the building fund but private donations made up the balance of the construction fund (Simon 1986: 268).<sup>1</sup>

Almost immediately citizens expressed divergent opinions about the use for the building. One group wanted a flat floor so the seats could be removed for dancing while the other group, largely Baptists and Methodists who opposed dancing, wanted a sloping floor. Although their views on dancing were well-known, this second group said they wanted a slanted floor to give all audience members a better view of the stage. The "slopers" won the debate and the floor was slanted toward the stage until 1976 when it was leveled in a renovation campaign (Simon 1986: 268). When completed, the building opened directly into an open hall filled with folding chairs on a slightly angled floor that sloped to a stage at the end of the large room. A curtain covered the stage when not in use and featured the names of local merchants as an advertisement for local businesses (Simon 1986: 268).

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<sup>1</sup> Although the design construction contracts were let in 1912 and construction probably began shortly thereafter, the project's completion date is unknown. A photograph of the building under construction was dated by Risa Lane Millhollon, Tom Millhollon's daughter-in-law, as about 1915 (Figure 4 --Millhollon Brothers). However, in a segment of Ann Strom's book on Kyle, Mrs. Millhollon noted that the City Hall was built in 1912 (Millhollon in Strom, 1981: 303).



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Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

From the outset, Kyle City Hall was used for many different purposes including public meetings, plays, musicales, and the "Chautauquas" popular in that era. Local civic groups including The Pennybacker, a women's club, met at the hall. Until 1937 when a combined Auditorium/Gymnasium was built for the Kyle High School, the building served as a venue for school programs and assemblies. Outside, the grounds of the public square were planted in grass and oak trees and concrete walkways radiated in spokes from the entrances on the east and west. When it was designed in 1912, few of Kyle's citizens owned automobiles and the intended entrance to the building was from the south side where the approach from Main Street was set back further than from Burleson Street. A sort of promenade flanked by a canopy of trees made for a stately, unhurried entrance to the hall from Main Street. Spring festivals and carnivals took place on the grounds and exhibits for the Kyle Fair were erected on the lawn. Parades of buggies and wagons passed by the grounds on Main Street (Simon 1986: 269).

As time passed, the building fell into moderate disrepair and in 1976, the local heritage group took on its renovation as a bicentennial project. Because the roof was leaking, the decision was made to replace the pressed tin shingles with a composition roof. The shingles were removed and sold for \$1.00 apiece to raise money for the building's repair. Air conditioning was added and the electrical system upgraded. Once it was renovated, the City of Kyle moved some of its city offices into the building and replaced the original doors with metal ones that adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. It is unclear when the windows were changed but it was probably after the 1976 renovation project since they appear intact in a photograph from that effort. Recently, the city moved its offices to the old post office and the City Hall will be available for increased greater civic uses. Currently, the building serves as a Senior Center where seniors gather for meals and fellowship (Strom personal communication 2000). The group has plans to further improve the interior of the building to serve future civic roles.

### Historic and Architectural Significance

Kyle City Hall is noteworthy as one of the few architect-designed buildings in rural Hays County. It is also one of the only resources built specifically for social and governmental purposes outside the county seat of San Marcos. Designed in 1912 by Austin architect Roy L. Thomas and built by local contractors, the Millhollon Brothers, Kyle City Hall combines a variety of stylistic influences from the Mission Revival, Classical Revival and Arts and Crafts genres that enjoyed popularity in the first decades of the 20th century. The combination of multiple styles resulted a distinctive civic edifice that is at once impressive and charming. Although its symmetrical facades suggest a formality befitting its community role, the building's overall effect is softened by its curved elements expressed by the Mission parapets, arched porticos, Palladian windows and decorative gable vents. Furthermore, the civic building's relatively small size, sheltering hipped roof, carved Craftsman-like brackets, multi-light window treatment and doorways enframed by transoms and sidelights, lend it a domestic feeling.

Kyle City Hall has retained its defining form, decorative features and historic materials to a large extent. While the loss of its tin shingles is unfortunate, the building's roof pitch and form convey the intent of the original design. Likewise, although original windows and doors have been replaced, the openings, arrangement and multi-light effect remain intact. The building possesses integrity of location, setting, design, association, workmanship, materials and feeling and remains a source of pride and the focus of civic activity in this community.

### *Historic Significance*

Kyle City Hall represents a significant achievement for the small rural town and reflects the optimism of its citizens that the town would continue to grow and prosper in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bolstered by a booming cotton economy at the turn of the century, Kyle's progressive citizens looked forward to the town's cultural development by



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Kyle City Hall  
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providing a venue for social and civic events including plays and lectures. The building's size, scale and fashionable design expressed the community's ambitions for the future. The commission of an architect to design the building, a rare occurrence in rural communities, emphasizing Kyle's commitment to the undertaking. Although the cotton industry failed to sustain the community's hopes for economic growth in the decades following the building's construction, Kyle City Hall continued in its designated role as the town's social and civic focal point. Historically, the block has always served the community as a focal point for Kyle's citizens. Identified specifically as a public square in the original 1880 town plat, the site hosted traveling shows, musicales and Chautauquas (scholarly lectures). Parades passed around the public square before and after the city hall was built. In addition to civic and governmental duties, the hall has served a variety of community purposes and until 1937, doubled as the high school auditorium. When the Baptist Church burned, its congregation was granted use of the hall for Sunday services. Later, when the Methodists needed a sanctuary, the two churches held services in the city hall on a rotating basis (Strom personal communication, October 19, 2001). Today, the building continues to serve the city of Kyle as a senior social center, community meeting place and municipal offices.

## *Architectural Significance*

Kyle City Hall combines elements of two major architectural aesthetics that reached popularity in the early 20th century: Classical Revival and Mission Revival and incorporates the Arts and Crafts influences to a notable degree throughout. Classical Revival elements include the symmetrical design, pediments with boxed cornice returns and Palladian-influenced windows. The Mission Revival style is evident in the parapets with their distinctive Alamo-esque espadaña and patterned ornamentation. Decorative gable vents, carved cornice brackets and the overall effect of the dominant hipped roof and deep overhang give the impression of a large Craftsman inspired bungalow. These different features, rather than conflicting, are artfully combined to create a civic building that is both elegant and charming. Its position, size and use are civic in nature while the details give an almost residential feel to the building that seems appropriate in a town of Kyle's size.

The building's domestic appearance reflects the architect's experience as a residential designer. In fact, the Kyle City Hall was one of the first buildings Roy L. Thomas designed on his own. A Hays County native, Thomas was a natural choice for the job. Born in San Marcos in 1887, Thomas attended public schools and worked part-time as a carpenter for local contractors. He first attended Southwestern University in Georgetown (1905-1906) before entering the school of engineering at the University of Texas in 1906. In 1908, he left the university and worked as a construction superintendent in San Marcos and later as a draftsman with the Austin firm of Endress and Walsh. In 1911, Thomas opened his own practice in Austin where he specialized in residential construction (Long 1996). Kyle City Hall was an exception at that point in his career and the large commission was an opportunity for the twenty-five year old designer to showcase his talent.

When World War I interrupted his career, Thomas served as an architectural draftsman for the Navy. After the war, Thomas returned to Austin where he worked with Stacy Realty Company to design and build more than thirty houses in the city's Travis Heights neighborhood. Thomas also designed and built residences in the Hyde Park and Tarrytown subdivisions and expanded his practice to other Central Texas communities. In the 1920s Thomas designed or supervised construction for a number of Austin's notable churches and institutional buildings as an associate architect with Sanguinet, Staats, and Hedrick. His projects included the First Methodist Church, University Baptist Church, Hyde Park Methodist Church, Swedish Evangelical Free Church, Kirby Hall and an addition to Pease School. Throughout the 1930s, Thomas continued to design and build residences, including the Streamline Moderne Herbert Bohn House (1938) but began to change his focus to churches, schools and offices in the late 1930s. During World War II Thomas again contributed to the war effort by supervising the construction of a chemical defense plant. In partnership with his son,



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Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

William Thomas, he continued to work throughout the 1950s. Noteworthy projects from his later career include Austin's Tarrytown Methodist Church and Ebenezer Baptist Church. Thomas died in 1968.

Kyle City Hall is significant as one of Roy L. Thomas's earliest independent designs. A departure from his residential focus, the public hall presaged his later achievements as one of Austin's premier church architects. The hall is also noteworthy in the context of rural settings where traditional styles generally prevail long after their popularity has waned in more cosmopolitan areas. Thomas's design for Kyle City Hall brought fashionable trends associated with larger communities and more sophisticated clients to a prominent building in this rural community. The city hall's design reflects the ambitions of Kyle's citizens to grow beyond its historic role as a small agricultural hub as much as it highlights the architect's expertise..

The one-story brick building has changed little since its construction in 1912. The only significant alterations to the exterior of the building have been the replacement of entry doors and windows on the east and west sides and the removal of original tin roof shingles. The primary entrance has shifted from the east side to the west side of the building probably because there is adequate and accessible parking along Burleson Street close to the east entrance. A gazebo, marquee and memorial bell tower, and several historical markers, have been added to the grounds since 1976. Otherwise, the building and site retain their historic appearance to a remarkable extent.

Kyle City Hall is significant both for its architecture and for its role as a social and recreational center for its citizens. An ambitious civic building for a rural community, the city hall was built at a time of relative prosperity and optimism fostered by the success and prospects of the local cotton industry at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Today the building houses offices of the City of Kyle but continues its social and civic role as the Kyle Senior Center a meeting place for local organizations. Designed by noted Austin architect, Roy L. Thomas, the city hall is one of the few architect-designed buildings in rural Hays County. Kyle City Hall remains the city's largest and most impressive buildings and the focus of its civic life. It retains integrity of design, location, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting and association to a large degree and is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historic associations with the social history of Kyle and under Criterion C for architectural merit.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 14

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 15

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

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Withers, Martha George. Floor Plan, Kyle City Hall in *Kyle City Hall, Hays County, Texas. Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Nomination*. A project of the Public History program Department of History Southwest Texas State University, under the direction of Cynthia Brandimarte, Ph.D, December 2000.

Wyatt, Tula Townsend Collection. San Marcos Public Library, San Marcos, Texas.



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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** Approximately one acre

**UTM REFERENCES:**      Zone    Easting      Northing  
                                 14      608340      3218840

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:** Block 9, City of Kyle Original Townsite

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:** The nomination includes all property historically associated with the building

---

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

---

**NAME/TITLE:** Terri Myers, Historian

**ORGANIZATION:** Hardy Heck Moore & Myers, Inc.

**DATE:** July 30, 2000

**STREET & NUMBER:** 1414 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street

**TELEPHONE:** (512) 478-8014

**CITY OR TOWN:** Austin

**STATE:** Texas

**ZIP CODE:** 78703

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**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

---

**CONTINUATION SHEETS**

**MAPS** (see continuation sheets Map-16 through Map-18)

**PHOTOGRAPHS** (see continuation sheet Photo-26)

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS** (see continuation sheets Figure 19 through Figure-25)

---

**PROPERTY OWNER**

---

**NAME:** City of Kyle

**STREET & NUMBER:** 109 S. Burleson Street

**TELEPHONE:** (512) 268-5341

**CITY OR TOWN:** Kyle

**STATE:** Texas

**ZIP CODE:** 78640



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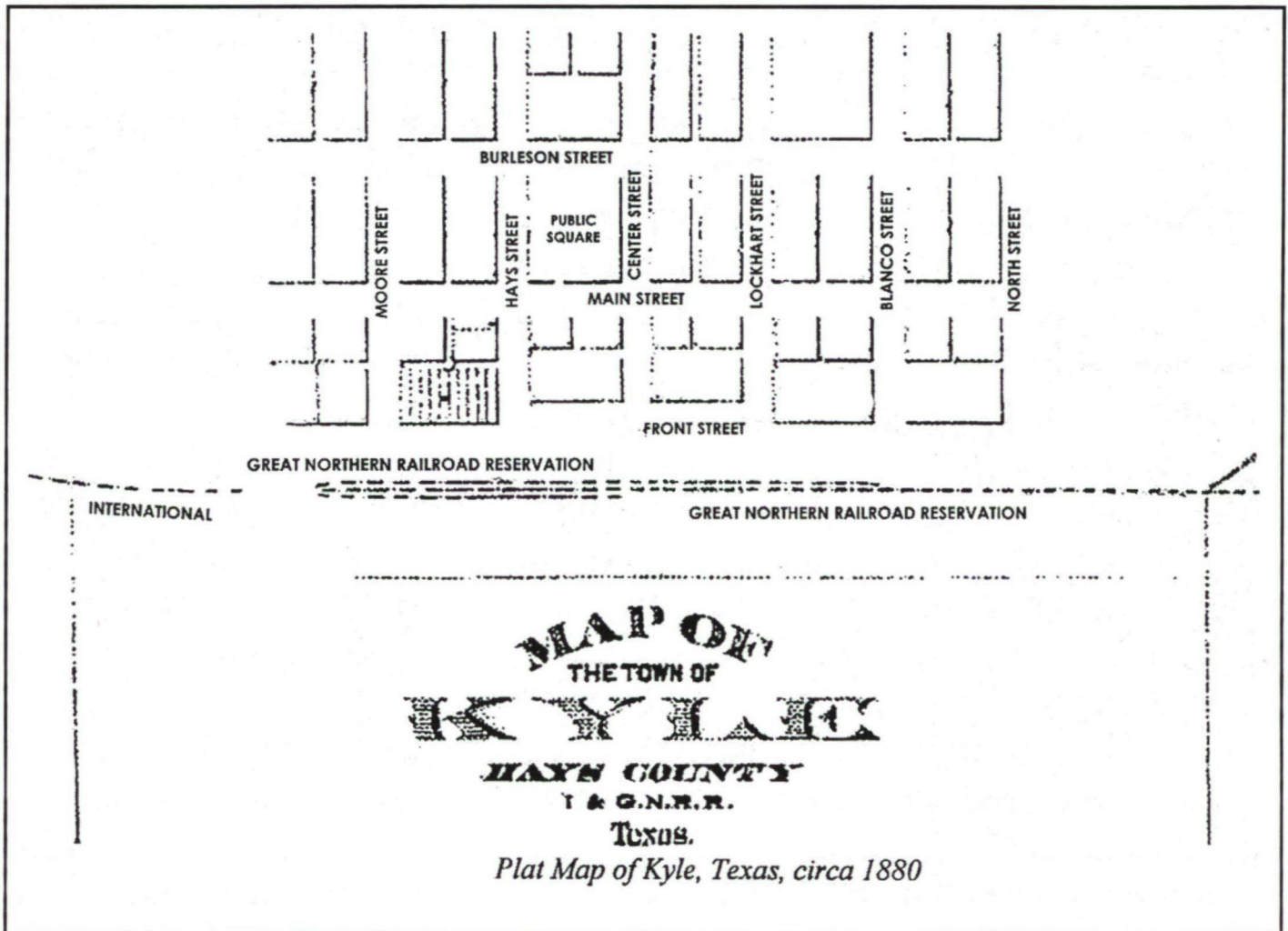
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 16

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Map 1:** Plat Map of Kyle, circa 1880

Source: Stovall et al, *Clear Springs and Limestone Ledges, A History of San Marcos and Hays County* 1986





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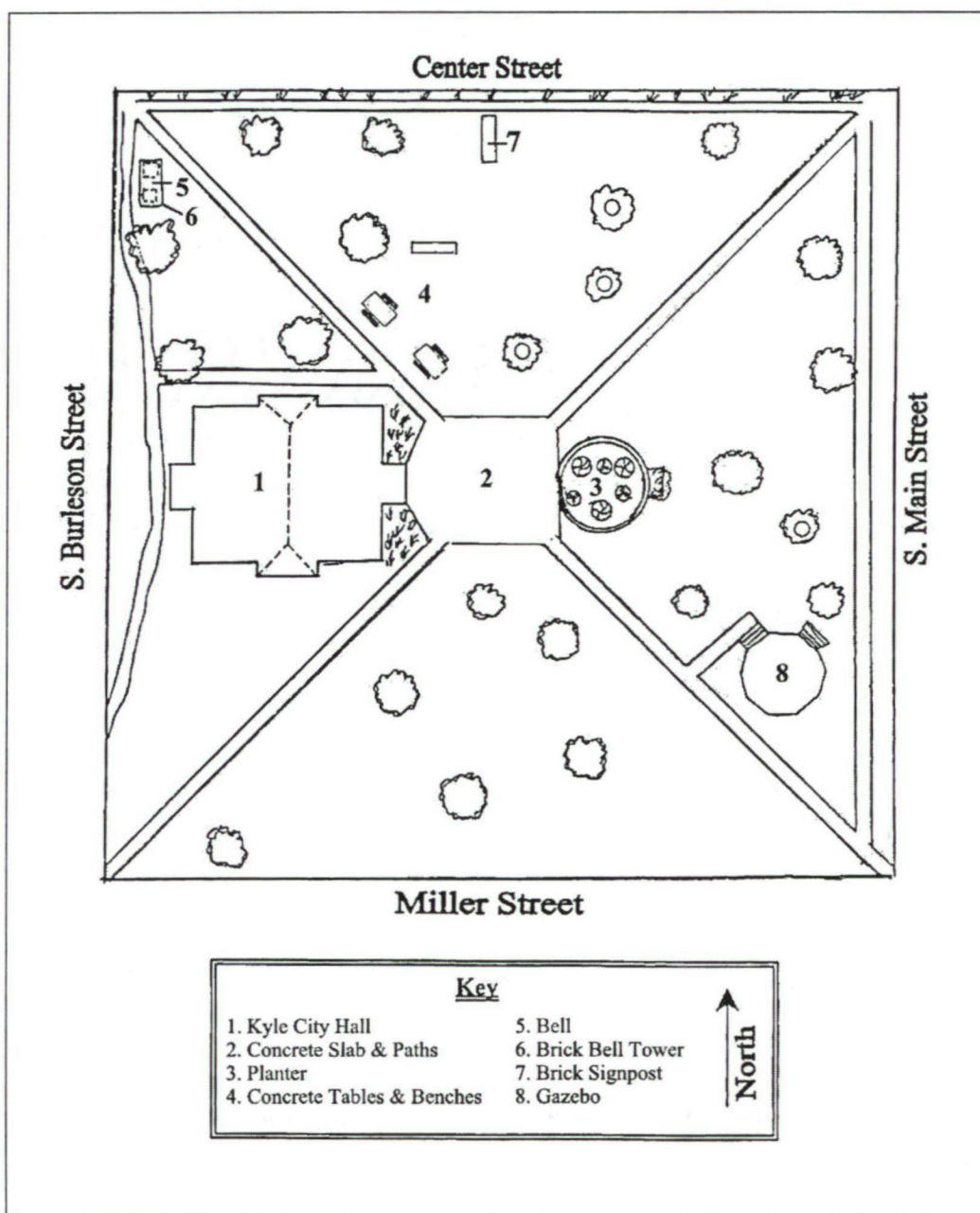
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 17

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Map 2:** Site Plan of Kyle Public Square, 2000, drawn by Scott Jordan

*Source:* Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Nomination, The Public History Program, Department of History, Southwest Texas State University, December 2000





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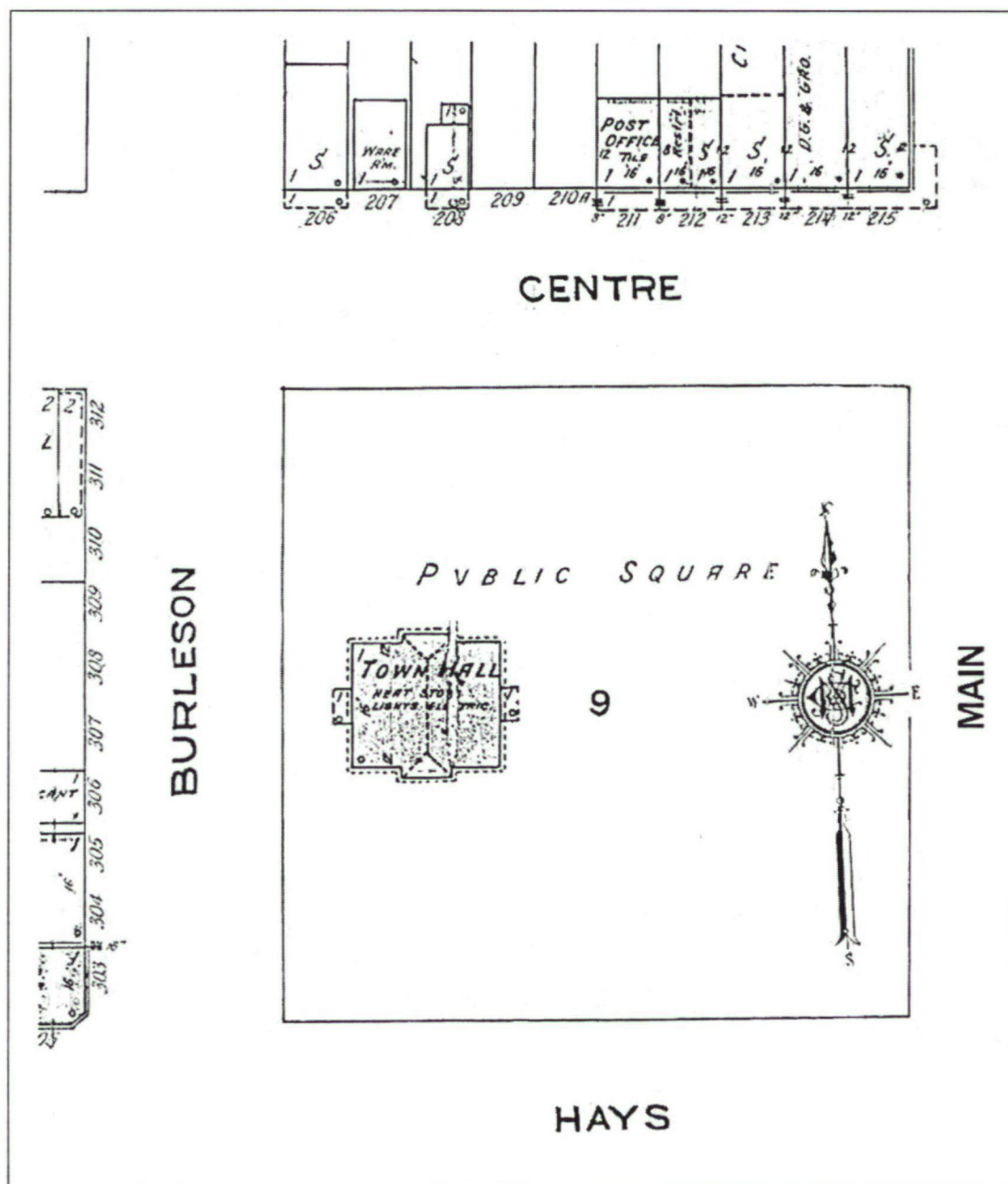
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 18

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Map 3:** Kyle City Hall and Public Square depicted in 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

Source: Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin





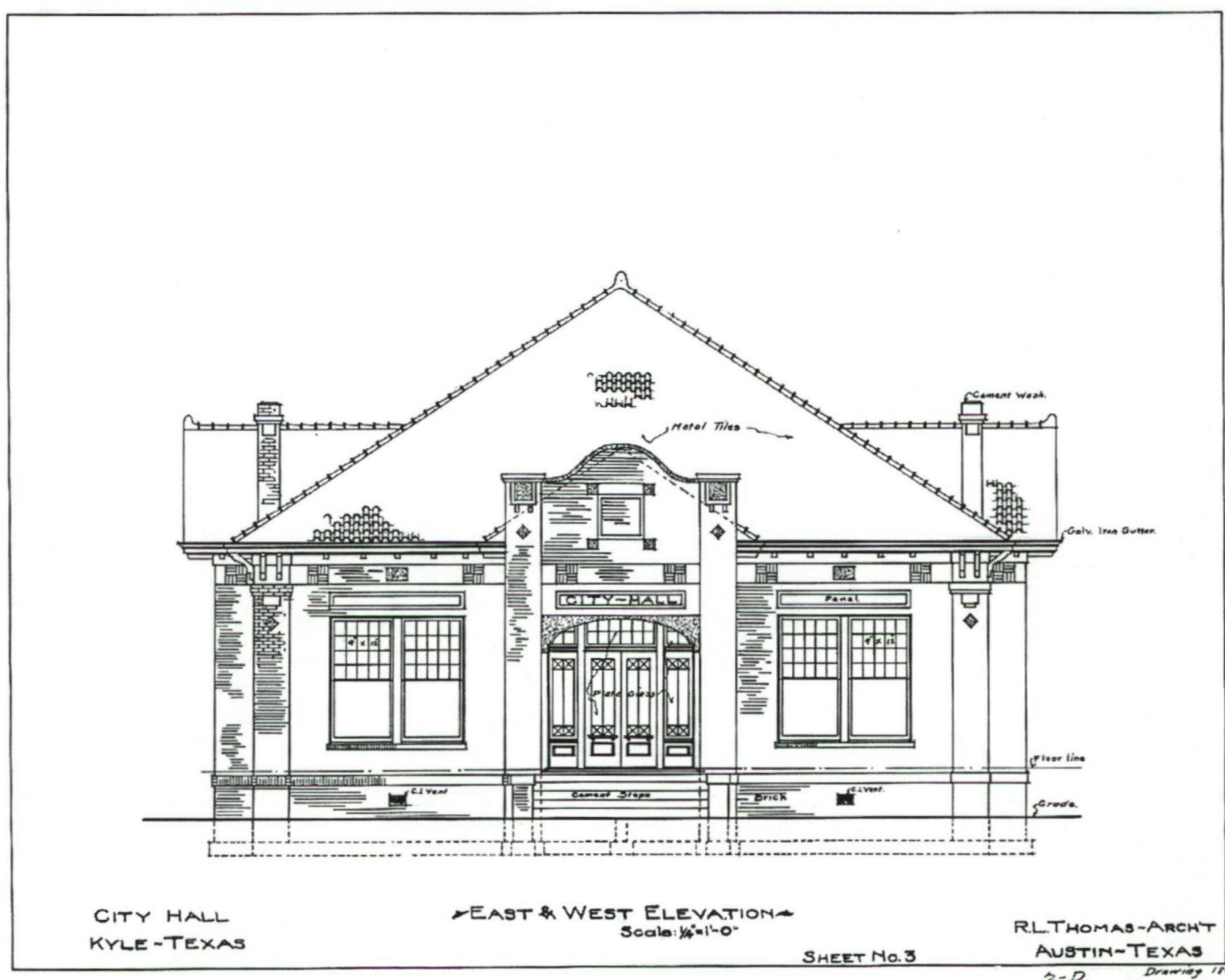
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 19

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Figure 1:** East and West Elevations, Kyle City Hall, R. L. Thomas Architect, 1912  
*Source:* Alexander Architectural Drawings Collection, University of Texas at Austin





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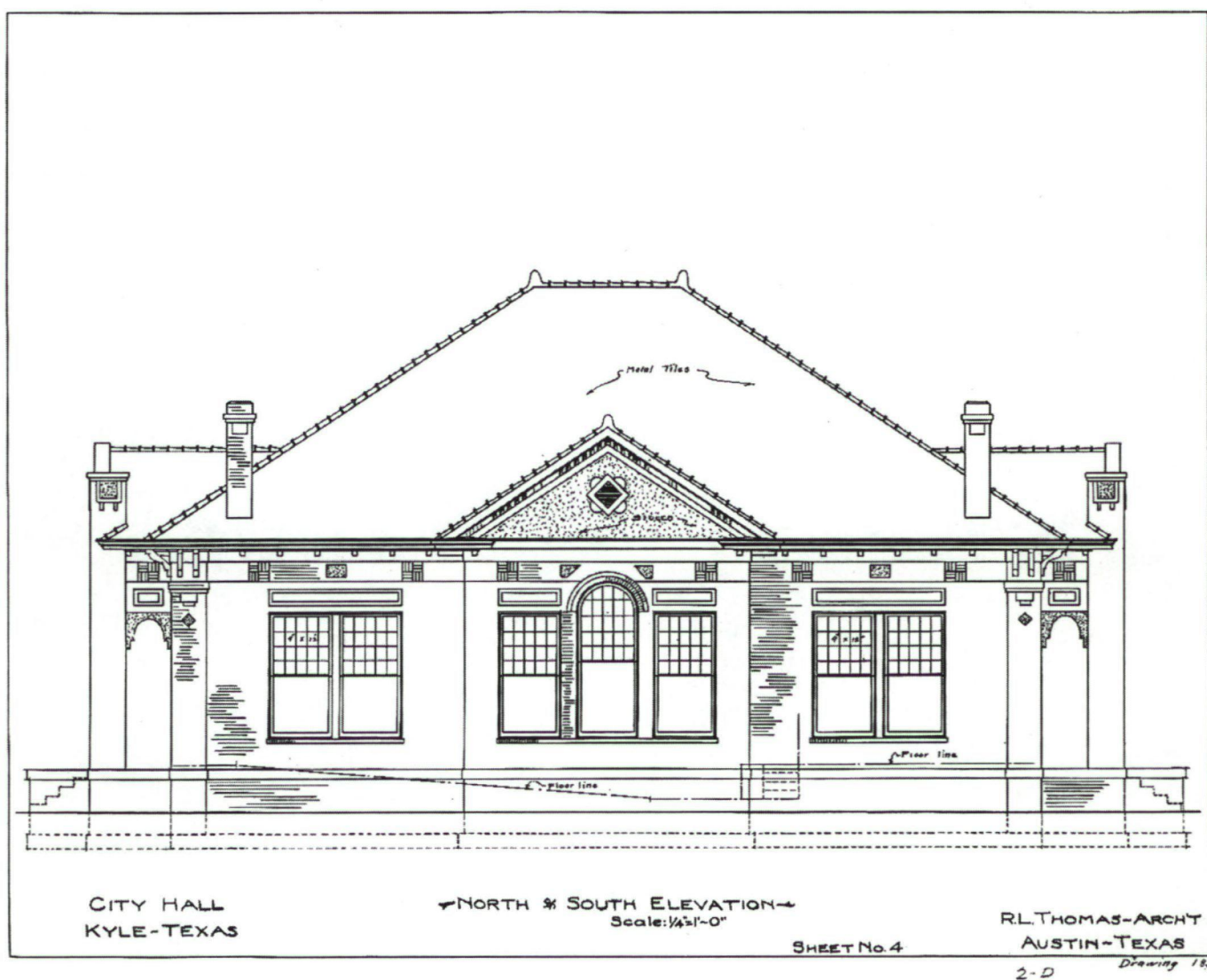
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 20

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Figure 2:** North and South Elevations, Kyle City Hall, R. L. Thomas Architect, 1912

Source: Alexander Architectural Drawings Collection, University of Texas at Austin





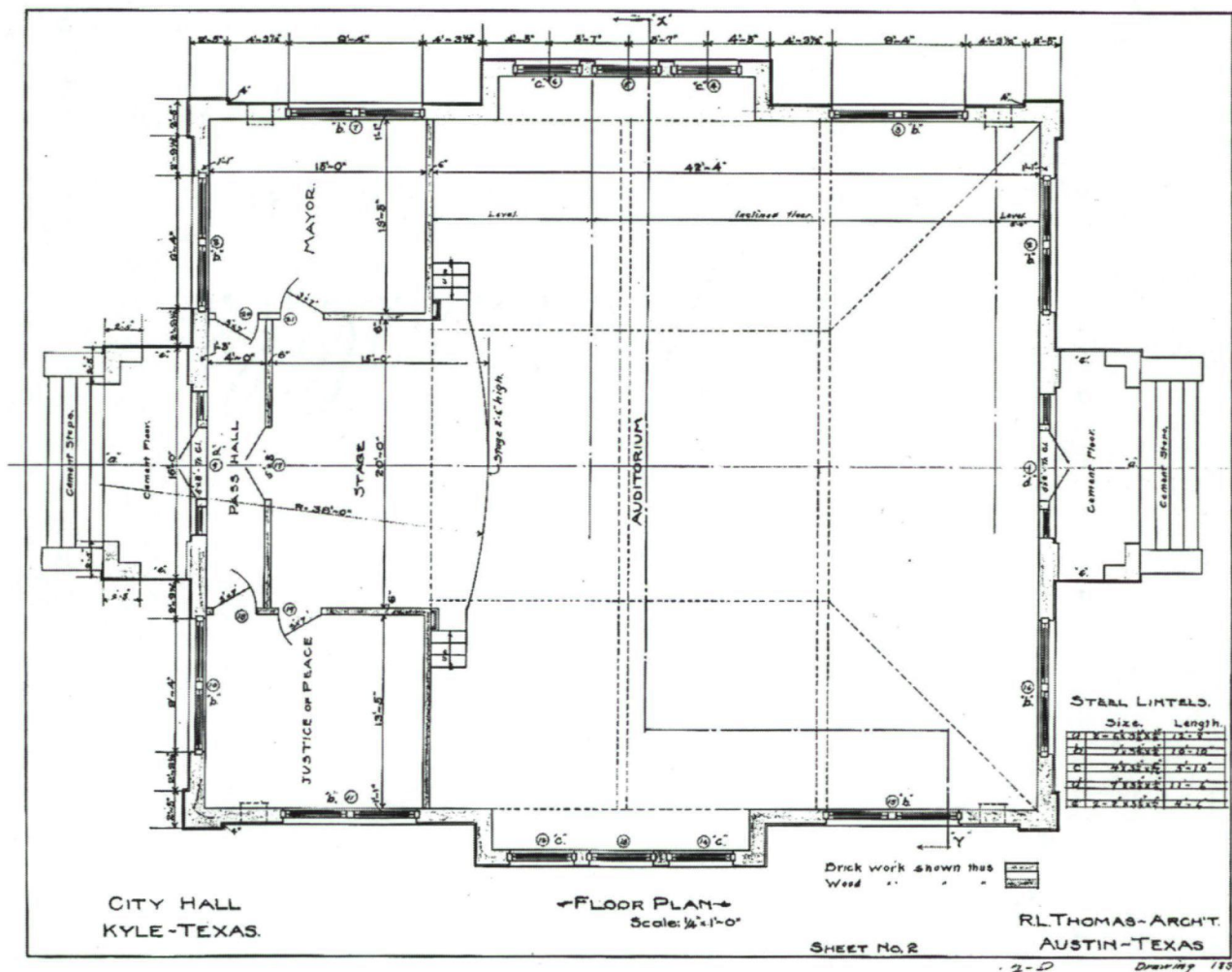
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 21

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Figure 3:** Floor Plan, Kyle City Hall, R. L. Thomas Architect, 1912  
*Source:* Alexander Architectural Drawings Collection, University of Texas at Austin





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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 22

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Figure 4:** Kyle City Hall under construction, c. 1912, photographer unknown  
*Source:* Risa Mulholland, Kyle, Texas provided by Ann Miller Strom, Kyle, Texas





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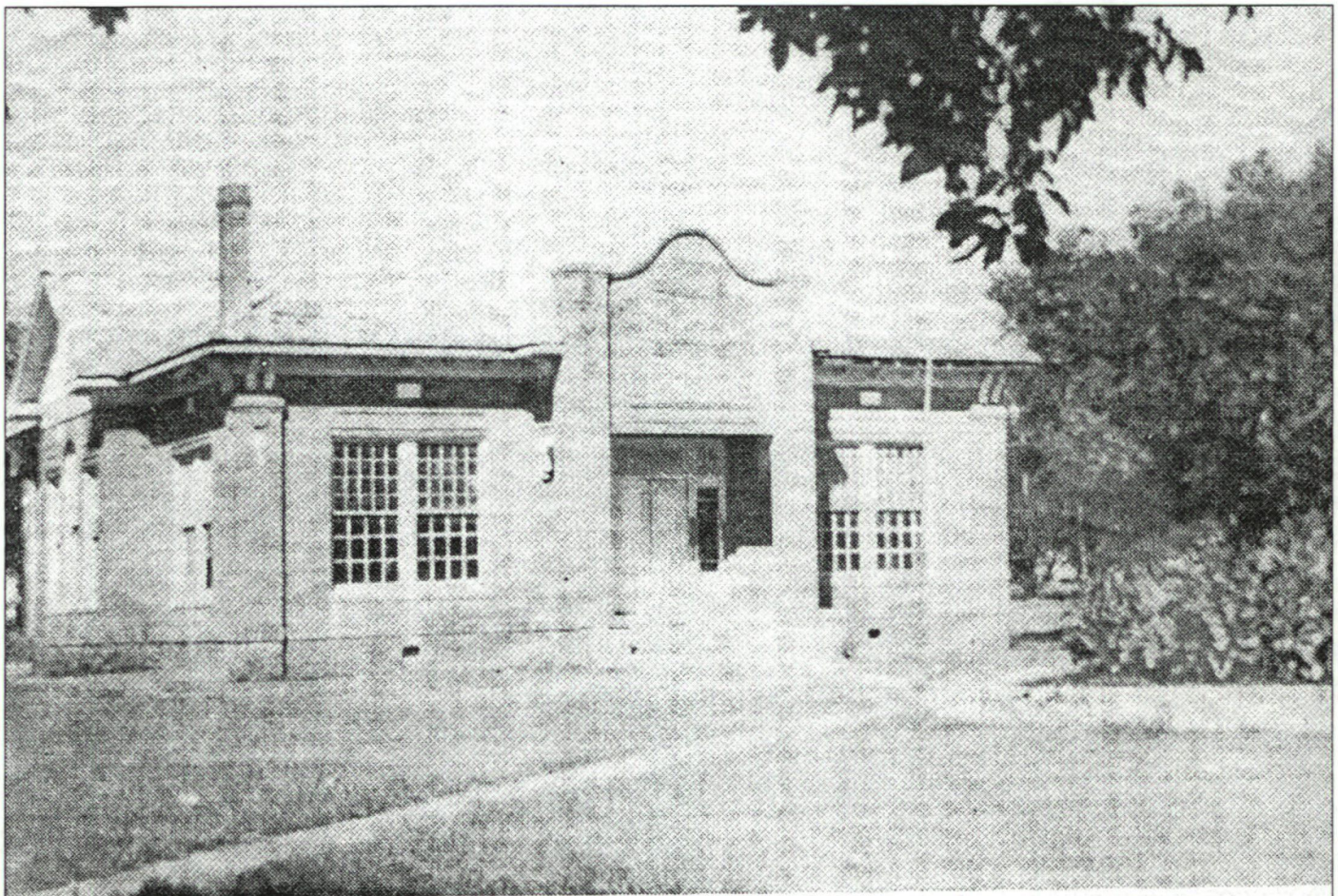
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 23

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Figure 5:** Kyle City Hall, c. 1976, Cindy McCoy, Photographer

Source: Stovall et al, *Clear Springs and Limestone Ledges, A History of San Marcos and Hays County* 1986



*KYLE CITY HALL, built in 1912. Renovated for the nation's Bicentennial in 1976. [Photography by Cindy McCoy.]*



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 24

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Figure 6:** Center and Main Streets, Kyle, Texas, City Hall at left, c. 1915, Cindy McCoy, Photographer unknown, Photocopy by Cindy McCoy

Source: Stovall et al, *Clear Springs and Limestone Ledges, A History of San Marcos and Hays County* 1986



*BILLY ALLEN and T. F. HARWELL lead one of Kyle's many parades. The City Hall is on the square to the left. Millhollon home and Wetzel's Hotel in the background. [Photo copy by Cindy McCoy.]*



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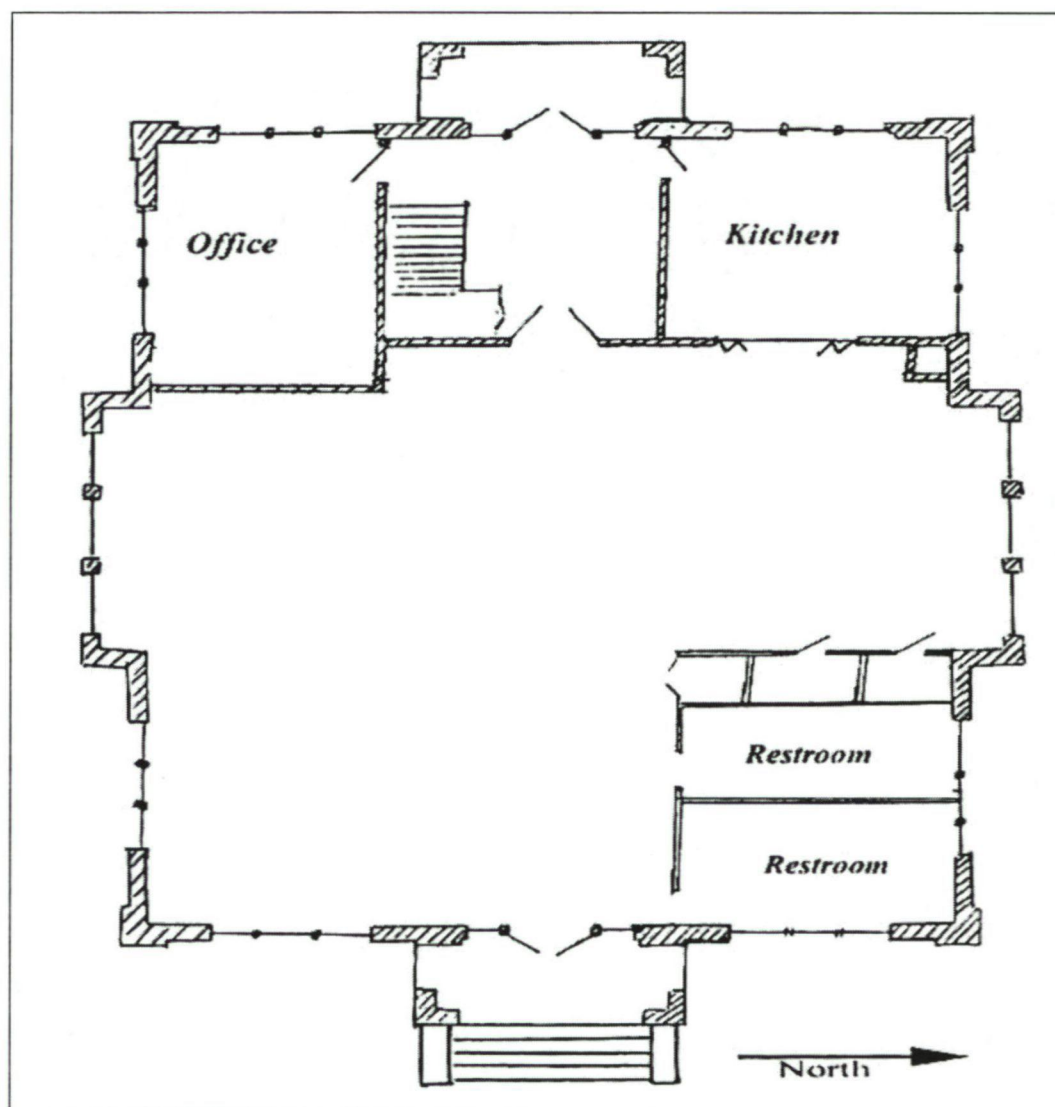
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 25

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

**Figure 7:** Floor Plan, Kyle City Hall, 2000, drawn by Martha George Withers

*Source:* Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Nomination, The Public History Program, Department of History, Southwest Texas State University, December 2000



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 26

Kyle City Hall  
Kyle, Hays County, Texas

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### Photo Log

Kyle City Hall  
109 Burleson Road, Kyle, Texas  
Terri Myers, photographer  
Negatives: Hays County Historical Commission

#### Photograph 1

West Elevation  
Camera facing east  
January 2001

#### Photograph 2

Oblique, West and South Elevations  
Camera Facing Southeast  
January 2001



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Kyle City Hall

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Hays

DATE RECEIVED: 4/08/02  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/10/02  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/24/02  
DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/23/02

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02000528

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 5/23/02 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA\_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER\_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE\_\_\_\_\_ DATE\_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N





KYLE CITY HALL  
109 BURLESON ROAD  
KYLE, HAYS CO., TEXAS

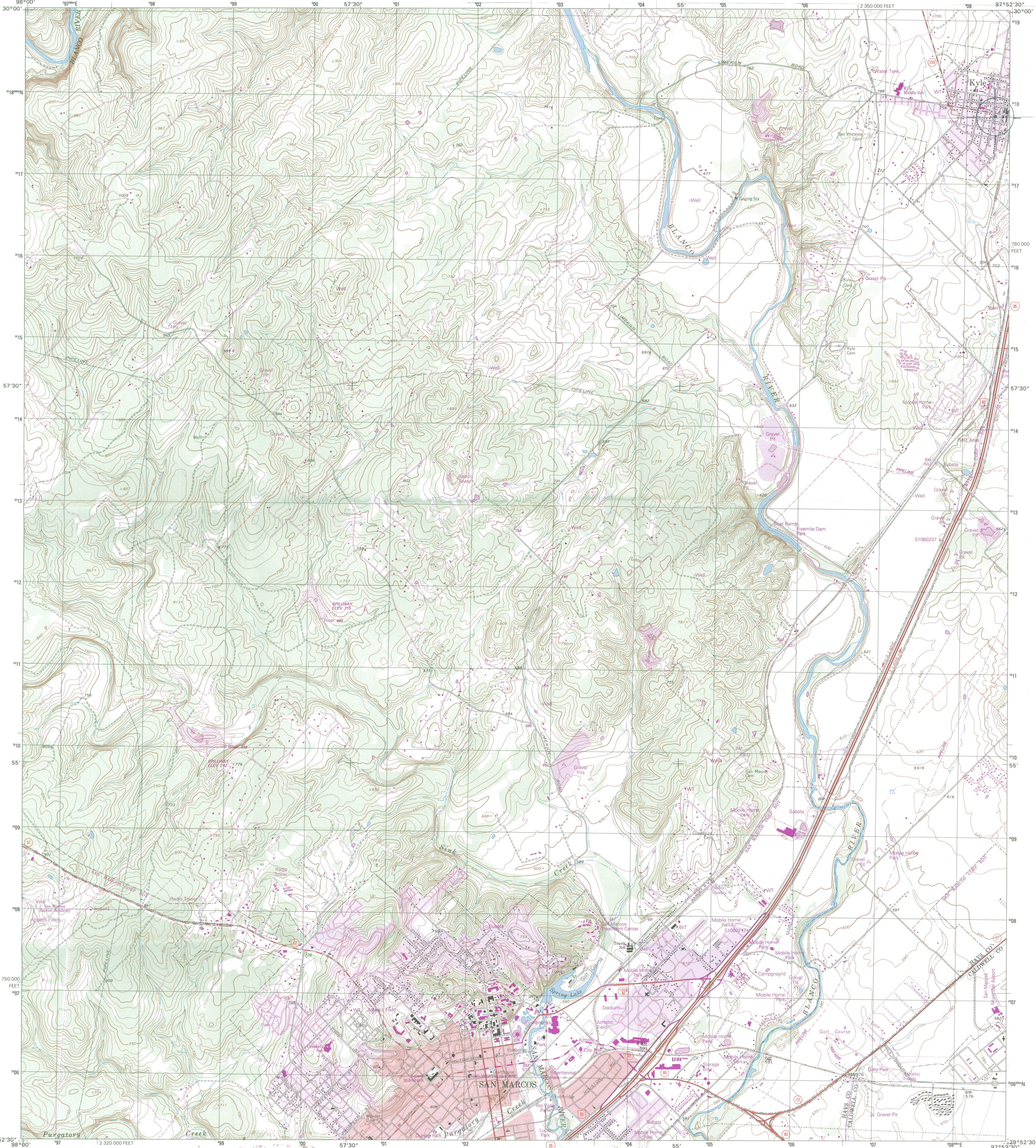
PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 2





KYLE CITY HALL  
109 BURLESON ROAD  
KYLE, HAYS CO., TEXAS  
PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 2





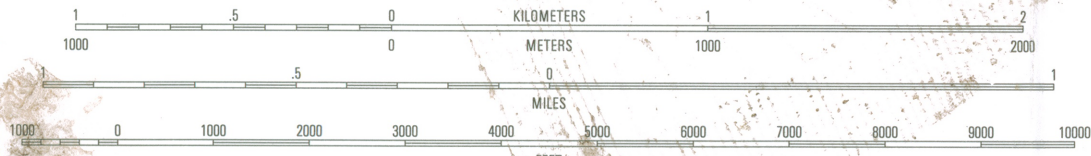
Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Topography compiled 1958. Planimetry derived from imagery dated 1986 and other sources. Photosinspected using imagery dated 1995; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1986. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1995.

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 14 10 000-foot ticks: Texas Coordinate System of 1927 (south central zone).

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software. Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation.

UTM GRID AND 1998 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



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QUADRANGLE LOCATION  
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			2 Mountain City
			3 Buda
4		5	4 Wimberley
			5 Umland
			6 Hunter
6	7	8	7 San Marcos
			8 Maricopa

SAN MARCOS NORTH, TX

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