United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Exchange Building in Fairmont

Other names/site number Fairmont Village Hall, NeHBS #FM04-014

2. Location

Street & number 635 6th Avenue Not for publication [ ]

City or town Fairmont Vicinity [ ]

State Nebraska Code NE County Fillmore Code 059 Zip code 68354

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [x] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

/s/ Bob Puschendorf — 1/17/06
Signature of certifying official — Date

Deputy SHPO, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] see continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] see continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain):

Signature of Keeper — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

	Private
X	Public-local
	Public-state
	Public-federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

X	Building(s)
	District
	Site
	Structure
	Object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	Buildings
0	0	Sites
0	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:
communications facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: city hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Spanish Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation BRICK
Walls STUCCO
Roof ASPHALT
Other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X **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 values, 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
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

___ **A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

___ **B** Removed from its original location.

___ **C** A birthplace or a grave.

___ **D** A cemetery.

___ **E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.

___ **F** A commemorative property.

___ **G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
COMMUNICATIONS

Period of Significance
1929-1955

Significant Dates
1929

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ 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 for additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	619642	4498966	**3.**			
2.				**4.**			

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historian
organization Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office date November 2005
street & number 1500 "R" Street telephone (402) 471-4787
city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Village of Fairmont
street & number 635 6th Avenue telephone 402/ 268-3341
city or town Fairmont state NE zip code 68354

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Located about sixty miles from Lincoln, Fairmont is a small community (pop. 691, 2000) in Fillmore County in southeast Nebraska. The Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Exchange Building in Fairmont, currently the Village Hall, is located at the southern end of the town's commercial district.

The Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Exchange Building in Fairmont is designed in the Spanish Revival style. This style was popular during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The rectangular-shaped one-story stucco building measures approximately 27 by 37 feet. The roof of the building is a false-hipped red ceramic tile front that hides a flat asphalt roof. The foundation is made of red brick. Located on the main (east) façade is a projected entry. It has a brick relieving arch leading to a recessed doorway. Three decorative tiles are placed within the archway. Two symmetrical roundels are located on either side of the archway near the roofline. Two recessed arched windows are also on the main façade, one on each side of the entry. Both windows have a decorative diamond shaped tile above the window.

The south façade has two recessed arched windows. These also have diamond shaped tiles above the windows. The north façade is similar except there are three windows of the same design, and a door located near the rear of the façade.

On the rear, or west, façade is a recessed rectangular window next to an attached garage. Two smaller rectangular windows are located above the garage. The garage is original to the building and provided space for telephone repair trucks. On the west side of the garage are two rectangular windows, with an additional window on the west side. The two bay entries are located on the north façade. One of the original bays has been filled in and is now used as a pedestrian entrance, the other has a non-historic wooden garage door.

The main entrance leads into a small vestibule that contained a pay telephone. The original telephone has since been replaced with an historical replica. Beyond the vestibule is a large open room. A wall once dividing this space into a lobby, business office, and terminal room that housed some of the telephone equipment has been removed. The room is currently used as the village meeting hall.

To the left of the open space is an office once used as the switchboard room. A small sliding window once used to pay phone bills is located next to the door to this room. Behind this office is the old operator's break room. This area now serves as the Village Marshall's office. At the rear of the building is a restroom. To the north of the restroom is a door leading to the garage, which retains its original open space design.

The removal of the interior walls has compromised the integrity of the interior space resulting in the loss of the ability to recognize it as a telephone exchange building. However, the exterior retains sufficient integrity to identify it as a public building which it continues to function as today.

The Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Exchange Building in Fairmont is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of communications. The period of significance for the Exchange Building is 1929 when the building was constructed to 1955 which meets the fifty-year criterion. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

The Telephone Comes to Fairmont

Fairmont is located in Fillmore County in southeast Nebraska. Established in 1872 the community grew rapidly to a peak population of 1,029 by 1890. As an example of the town's growth and prosperity the Nebraska Telephone Company established an exchange office in Fairmont in 1882. This was a mere six years after Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.

By 1884 thirty telephones were in use in Fairmont with the exchange office handling about 300 calls per day. The independent Telephone Company also had an office in town creating a rivalry between the two businesses. Cedar Hill Telephone Company and Scott Telephone Company were also competing for a part of the telephone service in the area.

Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph

While independent telephone companies were springing up throughout Nebraska and the rest of the country, attempts were being made to consolidate these divergent interests. In Nebraska a small group led by Frank H. Woods spearheaded the consolidation effort. Under his direction the Western Union Independent Telephone Company began operations on March 7, 1903. The firm became Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph in June 1904.

Woods' ultimate goal was to bring together the numerous independent companies in Nebraska. Under his guidance many of the independent companies banded together first in state associations and then in a national association. As recognition of his leadership role in this endeavor Frank Woods became the first president of the United States Independent Telephone Association in 1910. As a result of his work an agreement was reached eliminating competition between exchanges and furnishing national toll service to all exchanges. One of the consequences was that Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph was the first large company to use this system and the first successful dial telephone company in Nebraska.

Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph in Fairmont

In January 1912 the Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Company bought the Nebraska Telephone Company, including its office in Fairmont. The Independent Telephone Company along with other telephone companies in Fillmore County were also purchased by Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph at about the same time. However, these acquisitions did not result in the relocation of the exchange offices to new sites.

For example, one of the first Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Company exchange offices in Fairmont was located on the south side of Jefferson Street on the second floor of a commercial building. That building is no longer extant. The next home to the Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph exchange office in Fairmont is the nominated building. Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph constructed this building in 1929. Originally, the building housed the terminal room that contained the central office equipment, a switchboard room, a rest area for the operators, and a pay phone booth inside the front door. An attached garage at the rear of the building was used for the telephone repair trucks.

The function and the equipment in the building remained unchanged for the next twenty years. In 1950, however new automated equipment was installed that eliminated the need for operators. Even so Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph continued to utilize the facility as an office and space for their repair trucks. In 1964 the Village of Fairmont purchased the building from Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph, but leased it to the company until 1967, at which time the building became the village hall.

In communities throughout Nebraska the telephone, by the early 1900s, soon went from novelty to necessity. Phone lines linked one town to another and rural residents to urban centers. The Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Exchange Building in Fairmont is an excellent example of a resource that facilitated this phenomenon. It is the only known building in the community that is still identified with the telephone service provided to Fairmont and the surrounding area. The telephone operations emanating from this building, including local, national, and international communications provided an invaluable service to the community. Although alterations have compromised the historic interior space the exterior retains a high degree of integrity. For this reason the property is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with communication.

Bibliography

Fairmont: 1873-1998.

Fairmont, Nebraska: 1873-1973.

The Fillmore Chronicle.

Graff, E. Jane. Fillmore County Nebraska: A Pictorial History. Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 1999.

York News-Times.

Boundary Description

Lot 595, Original Town, Fairmont, Fillmore County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all land historically associated with the property.

Photo 1 of 4
View W
Photo by Stacy Stupka-Burda, 27 Oct 2005, NSHS

Photo 2 of 4
View southwest
Photo by Stacy Stupka-Burda, 27 Oct 2005, NSHS

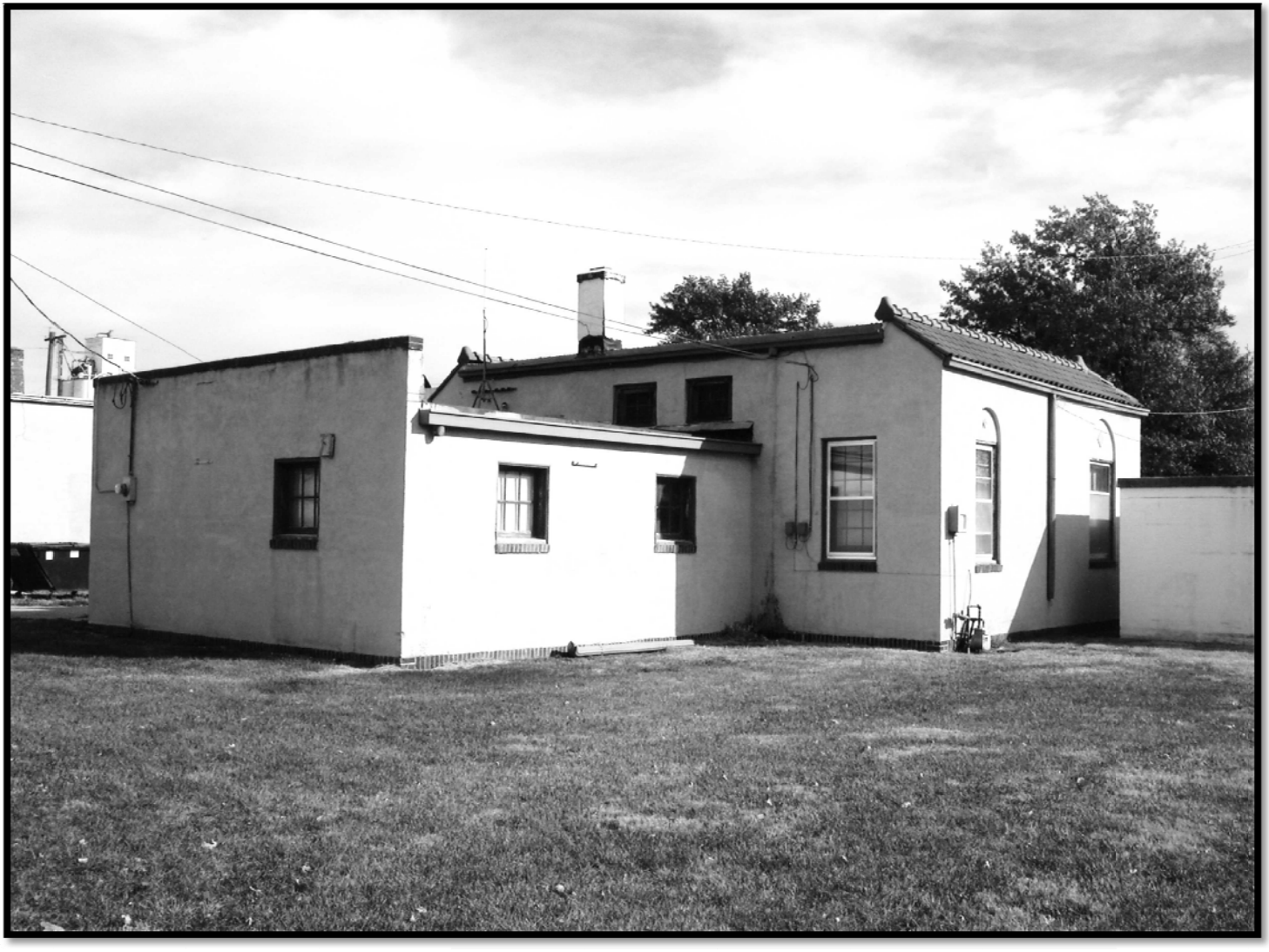

Photo 3 of 4
View northeast
Photo by Stacy Stupka-Burda, 27 Oct 2005, NSHS

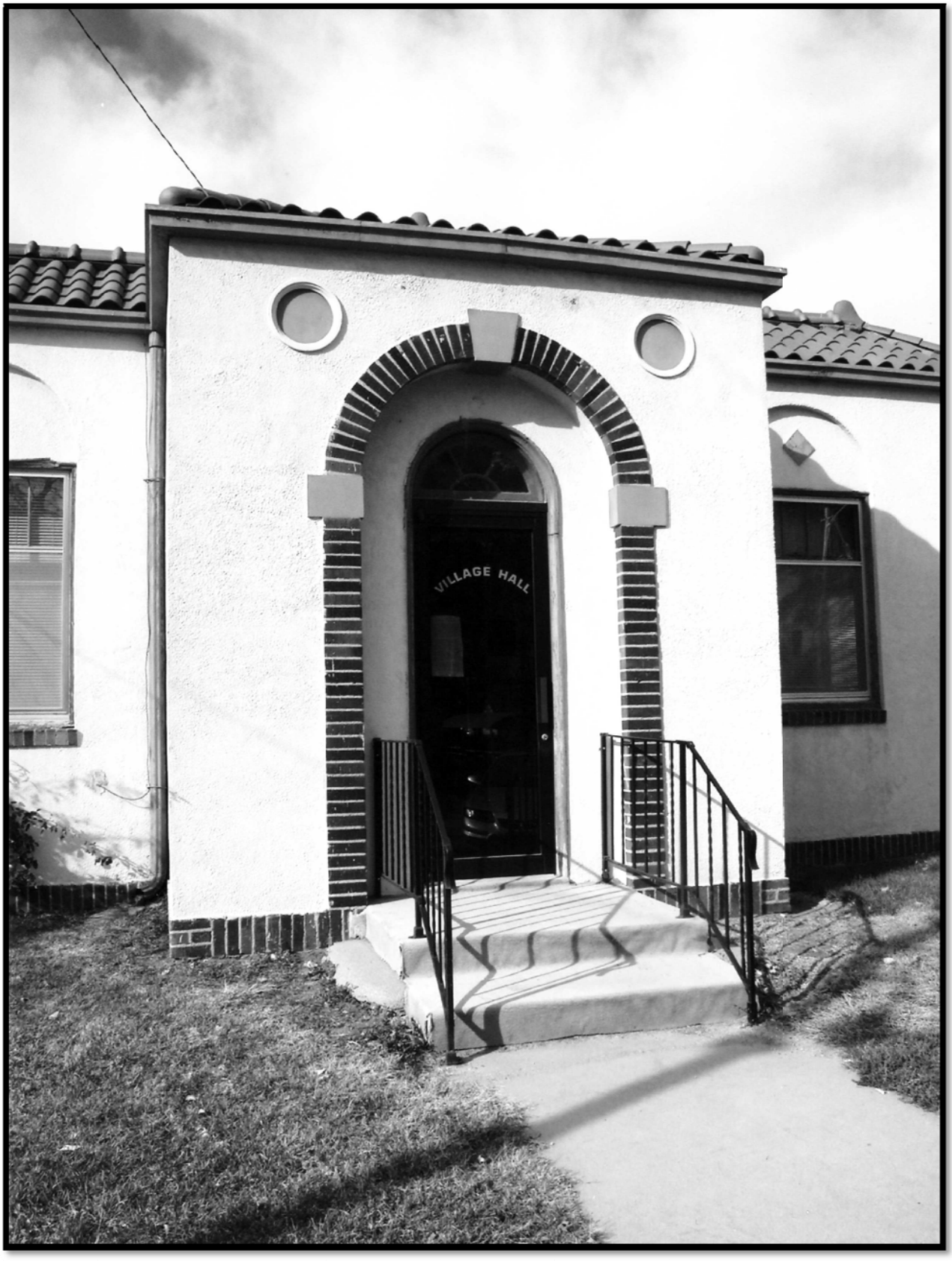

Photo 4 of 4
View west
Photo by Stacy Stupka-Burda, 27 Oct 2005, NSHS