

A visual interpretation of the history of the West Carson engine yard: 1869-present

Presented at the 2025 Virginia and Truckee Railroad History Conference

By Curtis Reid

Introduction

This is a graphical depiction of the changes to the West Carson City engine yard from 1869 to the present. It is largely based on research by Michael Collins, Stephen Drew, Charlie Siebenthal, and Tom Smith.

Where are we talking about?

Located on the west end
of Carson City



map image provided by Bing maps

In the beginning:



Sep 14, 18 - (most of) the Right of Way is obtained toward Ash Canyon

October 5th 1869:



Rails reach Ash Canyon

February 15th 1870:



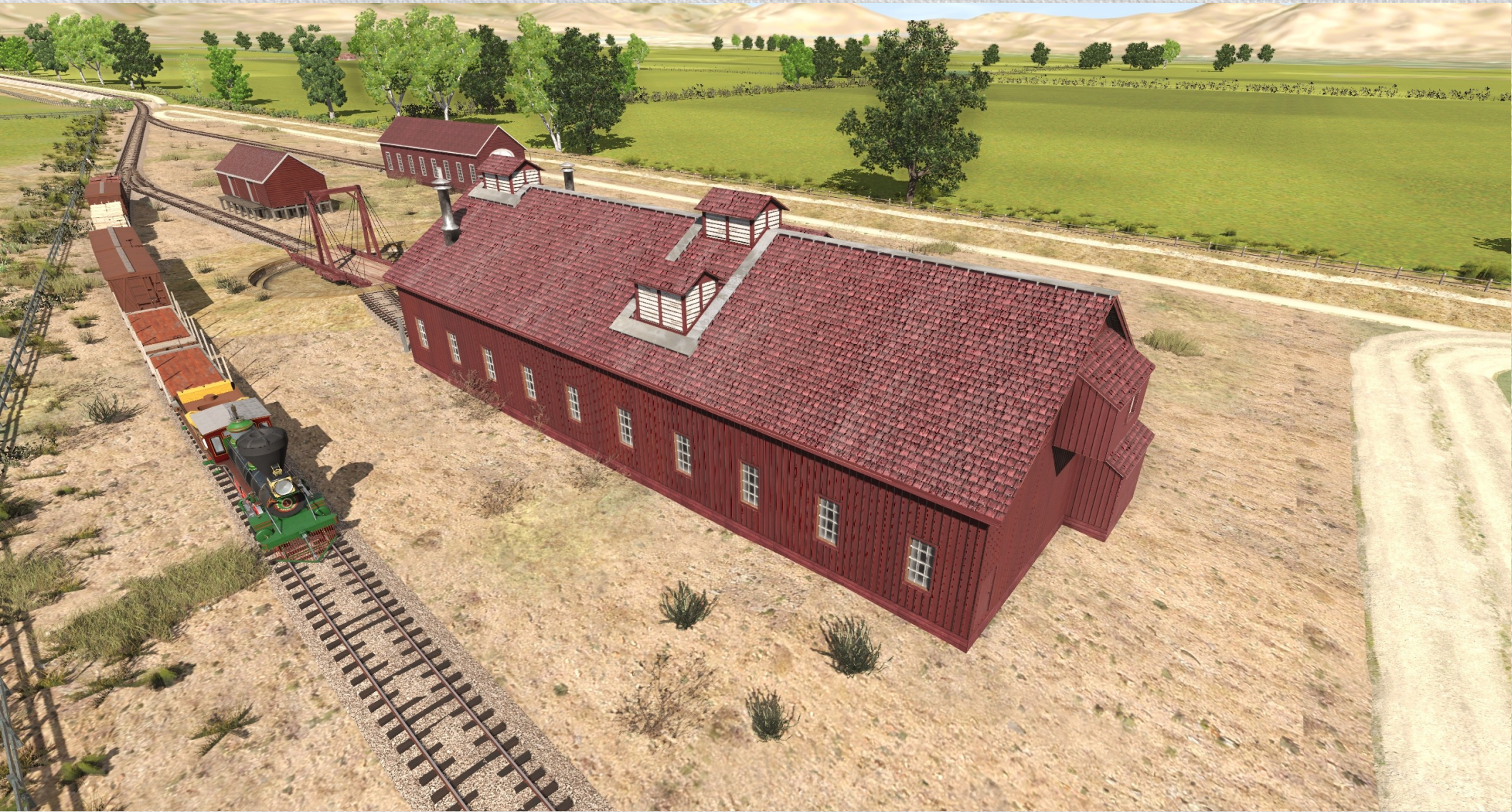
Jan 27: - property condemned from Hanna Klapp
Feb 15: Engine House and turntable completed by now

Late 1870 / early 1871:



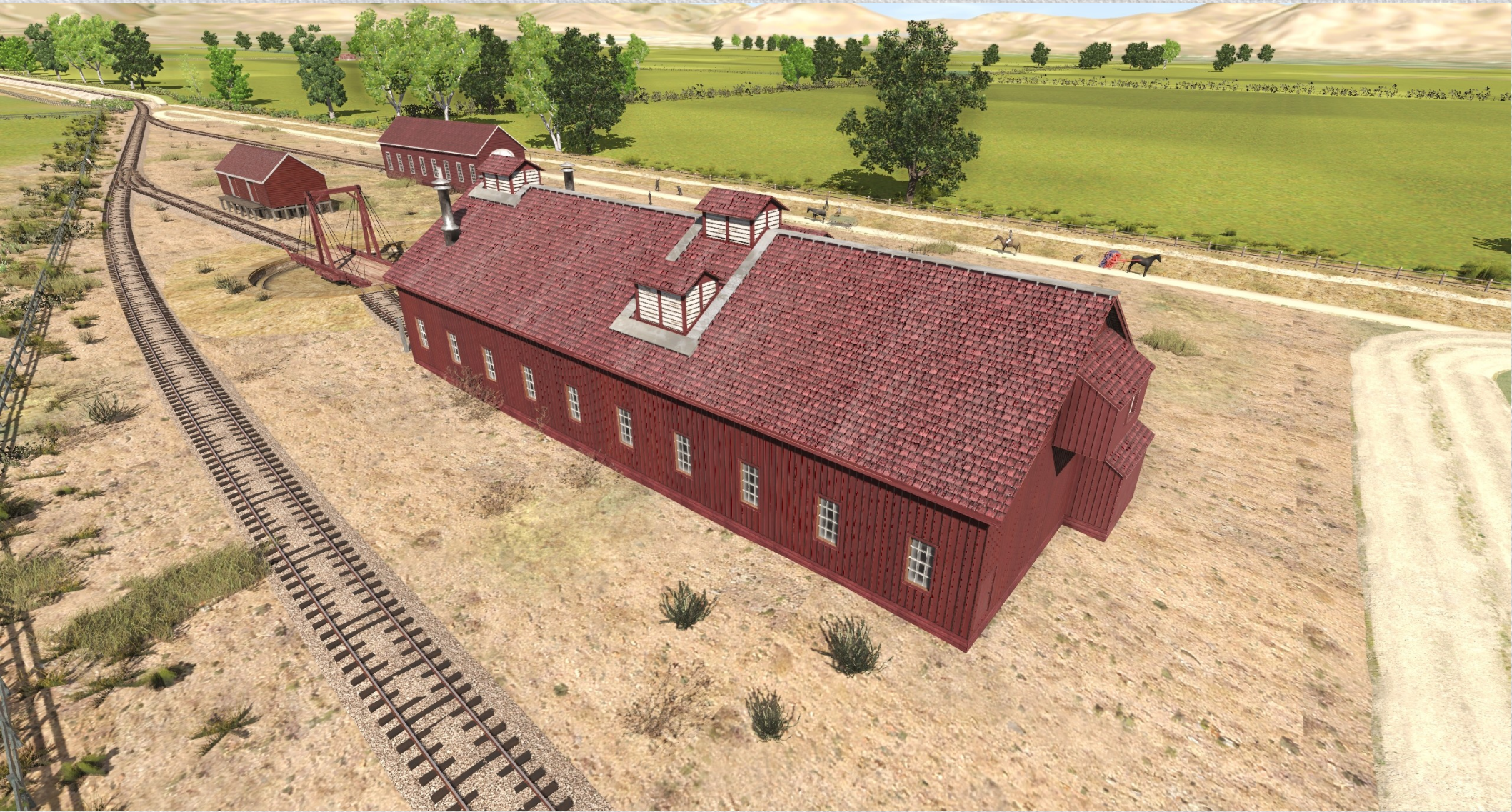
Engine house extended to 120' by now
Coal / sand house built by now

August 24th 1872:



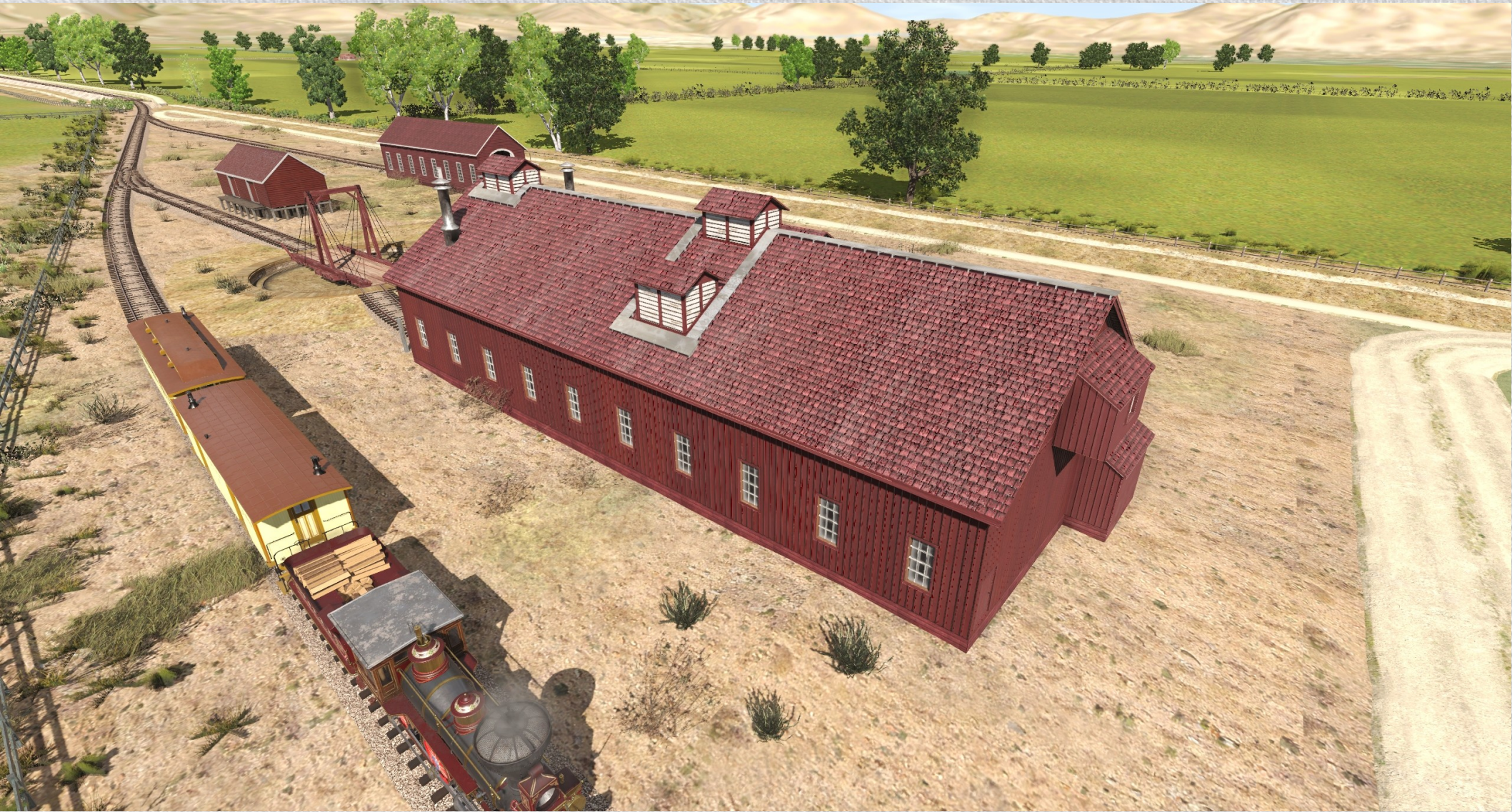
Aug 5 - easement granted along Washington St.
Aug 24 - rails connect to Reno; first train into Carson
? - Carpenter shop likely built by now.

August 31st 1872:



Grading started down Washington St.

September 1st 1872:



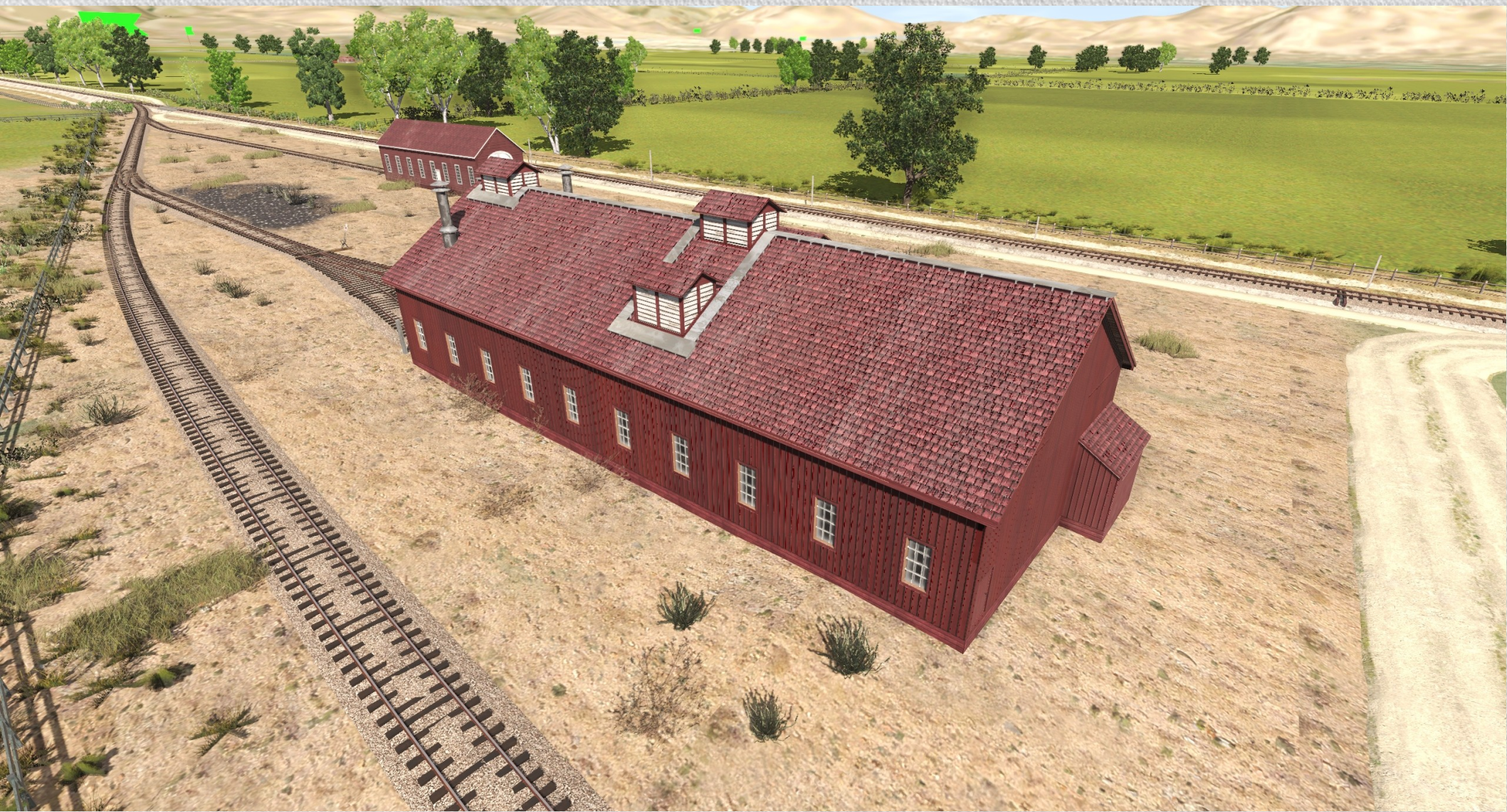
First train through train from Reno to Virginia City.
Locomotive 11 ('Reno'), a baggage car, and a coach.

October 1st 1872:



Sept 18 - rails cross Carson St
Oct 1 - regular train service begins

March 24th 1875:



Sand and coal house destroyed by fire.
Cantilevered 'Snead's Room' removed by now.
Turntable replaced by now?

April 1875:



Carpenter shop moved to main Carson yards to become new Paint Shop

By March 1880:



Engine house tracks lengthened to 350'
Spur 'B' (ex-Carpenter Shop; 'iron spur') is now 770' long

1880s:



Rear shed and smoke jacks gone by now.
Windows boarded up.

By 1897:



Spur 'B' is shortened to 598'. Now a passing siding?
ca 1890s – bracing on the side walls

By 1907:



Front cupola removed.

April, 1914:



Exterior repainted red with white trim and olive green roof.
Likely rebuild / repairs, and removal of remaining cupolas.

1916:



Spur 'B' shortened again (490')
Turnout moved 26' West?

1923:



Spur 'B' shortened by another 48' (442' long now).

1929:



Spur 'B' retired.

June 18 1934:



Roof repainted with graphite.

1947:



Caroline St. trackage retired.

1949:



Proposal to replace engine house with metal building.

1950:



Railroad abandoned.

1954:



The land is sold and the engine house torn down.

Now:



1916 trackage superimposed over current satellite imagery