

IS

Old
City Hall

DALLAS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
NOMINATION REPORT
CITY of DALLAS



Cultural Significance

In May 1910, the City fathers decided their current City Hall, located at the north-west corner of Commerce and Akard, was too small and elected to advertise the property for sale. Within a month, Adolphus Busch paid \$240,000 for the site and started construction on what was to be the Adolphus Hotel.

The City rented temporary quarters at 441/3 Commerce on August 13, 1910, and on the 29th, the citizens presented a petition for a new City Hall to be built at Commerce and Austin Streets. The Commissioners were also considering a site at Browder and Young Streets. For a year, the Commissioners discussed various possible sites. Finally, Colonel C.C. Slaughter, cattleman and real estate promoter, offered a new site for consideration: two lots measuring 100' by 100' on Main Street adjoining the then Central Fire Station for the sum of \$100,000 - the most expensive offer to date, yet somehow irresistible to the Commissioners. This land was once part of the original Grigsby Survey: John Grigsby, a Texas Revolution veteran, came to the Dallas area in 1834. The Commissioners felt that this area, which was on a rise above the main part of town, would overlook the entire city and that sufficient land could be purchased to build a City Hall to meet their needs for all time.

Negotiations with the owners of the block began and in the fall of 1911, the City paid over \$1,000 per front foot for the future site. At this time in Dallas, there were no paved streets, no sewage system, no city hospital, no street lights and an inadequate water supply. Colonel Slaughter more than doubled his investment in a little over three years; this was a residential section and similar footage was available to the west in the commercial area for much less.

The City had owned and erected three city halls without issuing bonds or incurring indebtedness. April 5, 1912, a bond was issued for the amount of \$475,000 was put before the voters. Of course, this bond passed easily. Mayor at this time was W.M. Holland and Commissioners were J.E. Lee, F.W. Bartlett, S.B. Scott and L. Blaylock. They assumed total responsibility for the building project and its successful completion. The Houston Street Viaduct, the First Presbyterian Church and the Adolphus Hotel were all being constructed around this time. [IMP]

C.D. Hill, a locally well known architect, was commissioned on May 13, 1912, to make plans and specifications for the new city hall which was to include an auditorium and two public comfort stations. Hill would be paid three percent of the construction costs. Barnett, Hayes and Barnett of St. Louis who had recently worked on the Adolphus Hotel and the Busch Building were named as consultants. Two months later, Mauran, Russell and Crowell of St. Louis were named consulting architects and their services were to be paid for by Hill's firm.

Charles D. Hill was born in Madison County, Illinois in 1873. He moved to Dallas in 1902. In 1907, he organized his firm in Dallas. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and active in the Dallas Architectural Club. Besides the City Hall, Hill's works include the First Presbyterian Church, Oak Lawn Methodist Church, Dallas Country Club, Austin College in Sherman, and Bender Hotel in Houston.

Hill's plans were ultimately adopted with the reservation by Commissioners that if bond money available was not sufficient to cover the cost of the building, the plans would be altered to fit the budget. The city advertised for bids on the basis of

Hill's plans in January, 1913. Fred A. Jones Building Company was awarded the contract for the sum of \$414,000 and a promised completing of three hundred days from February, 1913. A penalty clause of \$88.00 per day was added if Jones failed to complete the building in the allotted time. Construction was begun on May 15, 1913. Jones declared he was insolvent in November 1913. The Commissioners then took charge of the building project. C.D. Hill was hired again, this time to supervise the building of the City Hall at a fee of one percent of the building cost. Mr. R. R. Stapler was hired at \$400 per month as superintendent of construction.

Occupancy was gradual culminated by the official opening on October 17, 1914, a date picked to coincide with the opening of the State Fair. Consequently, Governor Colquitt was on hand with Mayor Holland for the festivities which accompanied the opening ceremonies. Mr. Stapler and Mr. Henry J. Emmins, Building Inspector, were commended by the Mayor and the public for an excellent job. In all, the cost of the building was \$700,000.

The Dallas City Hall has been in constant use by the City since its opening. There were two additions to the building: the first, in 1924, was the Colonel E.H.R. Green mansion that adjoined City Hall on the east side and was used to house the City Health Department, the second addition, in 1954, was the property where the Green house had stood and an equal amount of property on the Main street side on which an additional office building was constructed.

On November 24, 1963, as police were transferring Lee Harvey Oswald from the fifth floor of the City Jail in the City Hall to the County Jail, Lee Harvey Oswald, alleged assassin of President Kennedy, was shot in the basement by Jack Ruby.

The old City Hall is still being used to house the police operations, personal and health services department, fire administration and the fire marshall as well as the court facilities and the city jail.

This building which has a Texas Historical marker is an outstanding example of the public buildings constructed in the early 1900's across the United States. Unfortunately, many of these buildings have been torn down. Dallas, fortunately, has kept this historically and architecturally significant building through continuing use. This building stands as a monument to the early municipal government and civic pride in Dallas.

Architectural Significance

VHP
The old Dallas City Hall has impressive architectural adornment making it an excellent example of the Beaux Arts architectural style that epitomized the common man's idea of what a public building should look like. The structure was built from Texas Grey Granite with Indian Limestone trim and is adorned with Corinthian columns and topped with a mansard roof. Completed in 1914 at a cost of \$700,000, the Dallas City Hall represented the taxpayer's dreams of prairie grandeur.

On May 13, 1912, architect C.D. Hill was commissioned to draw up plans for the new city hall. C.D. Hill came to Texas in 1903 from Chicago, where he had studied at the Chicago Art Institute. He worked in Fort Worth as a draftsman for the prominent firm of Sanguinet and Staats until 1907. At this time he formed his own firm in Dallas, C.D. Hill and Company, which quickly rose to prominence. His other works include First Presbyterian Church, the second Dallas Country Club, the home of Edward Tennison and Edgar Flipper's Mount Vernon. Barnett, Hayes and Barnett who had recently worked on the Adolphus Hotel and Busch Building, were named as consultants to the city hall project. Two months later, Mauran, Russel and Crowell of St. Louis were named as consulting architects and their services were to be paid for by the Hill company.

The Beaux Arts style of architecture is characterized by several features: monumental flights of steps, coupled columns, arched and linteled openings that are set between the columns, planes that advance and recede, a roof that climaxes the composition and a climactic central mass that dominates the side wings and terminal features. The Municipal Building exemplifies many of these characteristics. There is a large expanse of stairs in front of the Harwood Street entrance. There are ten Corinthian columns across this entrance with the three main entrance doors between them. These doors are flanked by windows which alternate triangular pediments and segmental pediments. There are two rows with ten windows above the doors.

The wings on either side of the main entry way have an arch window that is divided by a spandrel that bears an elaborate modillion. The window has Doric columns and the arch has a radiating voussoir. The cornice line above the columns displays some distinct features. The architrave directly above the columns has the words Municipal Building carved in it above the doors on Harwood, Main Street and Commerce Street. Above this are two bands of detailing, one small and the other of a larger pattern. A balustrade occurs above the two rows of detailing on the Harwood side.

Projecting facades create wings on either side of the main entrance on Harwood. Each of these wings has sash and transom windows with mullions and sidelights. Above each of the uppermost windows is an ornate cartouche.

This motif is repeated on the north and south facades of the Municipal Building with the exception of entrances. The entrances on Main and Jackson Streets are smaller versions of the Harwood Street entrance and each is topped with the same ornamental cartouche. The windows on either side of these entrances are the same arched windows with a spandrel in the middle containing a modillion and radiating voussoirs around the arch. The mansard roof which climaxes the composition, has an egg and dart detailing at the top.

The building is five stories tall with a basement and a subbasement. Originally, the first floor housed offices for tax assessment and other city departments such as building inspection. The second story was the office of the Mayor and the City Commissioners. The Council Chamber, said to be one of the finest in the state, was located on this floor. All the administrative offices were on this floor as well as the offices for the Park Board, the City Secretary and the Legal Department. The south half of the third floor was the auditorium, with a seating capacity, together with the balcony, which rose to the fourth floor, of 1,204. The north half of this floor was the office for the City Engineer. The rest of the fourth floor not taken up by the balcony of the auditorium was occupied by the City Chemist and the Board of Education. On the fifth floor was the City Jail, locally called "High Five". There were two public comfort stations in the lobby and in the basement was the emergency hospital and the police department. The subbasement contained a heating plant, storage space and a pistol range.

In 1933 and 1934, City Hall was "cleaned up" as part of a WPA project. Office areas were enlarged, a fresh coat of paint was applied in many areas, and the floors were reworked. Most notably, the second floor lobby became an artistic showcase with murals depicting the history of Dallas. These were done by two well known Dallas artists, Alexander Hogue and Jerry Bywaters.

In 1954, extensive renovation of the City Hall took place. Additional office space was built behind the City Hall as part of this 1954 remodeling. Local Dallas architects, Tatum and Quade were hired to make drawings of the changes. On the first floor, the large marble staircase was removed and the restrooms were closed for storage. The murals on the second floor were destroyed to expand the offices and make necessary repairs. The former Council Chamber has not been substantially changed. There have been other interior changes to the building such as the auditorium and balcony on the third and fourth floors were changed into office areas. The fifth floor remains the city jail.

Despite the extensive interior changes, the exterior has remained virtually unchanged. The water fountains that once stood out front were removed in 1956. Seasonal plantings have been added to soften the lines of the building. This building, designated a Dallas Landmark by the Texas Historical Commission, will continue to be functional and versatile as exhibited by the many changes made to the interior to accomodate the changing needs of the City. As a former City Hall for the City of Dallas this building is worthy of Landmark Designation by the City.

Designation Merit

- A. Character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City of Dallas, State of Texas, or the United States.
- B. Location as the site of a significant historical event.
- C. Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city.
- D. Exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historical heritage of the city.
- E. Portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
- F. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.
- G. Identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city.
- H. Embodiments of elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.
- I. Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites, or areas which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on historic, cultural, or architectural motif.
- J. Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the city.
- K. Archeological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric value.
- L. Value as an aspect of community sentiment or public pride.

Recommendation

The Landmark Survey Task Force requests the Historic Landmark Preservation Committee to deem this proposed landmark meritorious of historic recognition as outlined in city ordinance 19-A.

Further, this task force endorses the preservation criteria, policy recommendations, and landmark boundary as presented by the Dept. of Urban Planning staff.

Date:

Chairman, Landmark Survey Task Force

Preservation Analysis

STRUCTURE	SITE	
1. Surface Materials	X	1. Prohibited Structure Areas
2. Fenestration and Portals		a. approach
a. style,type	X	b. view corridors
b. o/w ratio	X	c. site feature protection
c. rhythms	X	d. vertical additions
d. placement	X	
3. Trim and Detailing		2. Access/Egress
a. style	X	3. Adjacent R.O.W.'s
b. unique trim or detailing	X	a. existing treatment
c. structural members		b. proposed changes
4. Roof		4. Landscaping
a. style,form	X	a. existing plant removal
b. slope	X	b. new plant selection
c. materials	X	c. site design
5. Design Concepts		5. Site Fixtures
a. stylistic demands	X	a. furniture
b. functional concepts		b. sculpture,art
6. Utilities		c. paths
a. design	X	d. utility units
b. placement	X	e. signs
7. Signs		6. Lighting
a. style,design	X	a. exteriors
b. placement	X	b. grounds
8. Exterior Connections		COLOR
a. design		
b. penetration points	X	1. Surface Materials
		2. Trim and Details
		3. Roof
		4. Utilities
		5. Signs
		6. Site Fixtures
		7. Accent Color

Land Use Analysis

Proposed zoning change:

from: CA-1

Recommended use variances:

None

to: No Change

PRESERVATION CRITERIA

While the existing structure will continue to be used as a City municipal building and no alternate use is being considered, the staff recommends that all existing elements should be preserved as is. No new construction or remodeling is anticipated at this time, but repairs and replacements due to maintenance and/or accidental damage should meet the following guidelines.

STRUCTURE

1. Surface Materials

Reconstruction, renovation or repair of the opaque elements of each facade shall employ only Texas Grey Granite with Indian limestone trim of equal texture, grain, color and module size of the existing main structure as practicable. The fourteen columns, composed of Texas Grey Granite, shall be preserved and maintained as is; any repair or replacement of these elements shall employ only granite of equal texture, grain, color, and module size of the existing columns as practicable.

2. Fenestrations and Openings

Existing openings in the protected facades shall remain intact and new openings shall not be permitted. The existing window frames are required to remain in the present configuration. The HLPC shall review the color of new window frames. All window panes must remain transparent and may not be reflective or opaque. The relationship existing between the granite, columns, arched windows and door openings shall be maintained.

3. Roof

The slope, configuration, surface pattern and detailing of the existing mansard roof shall be maintained. No new vertical or horizontal extensions shall be allowed. All replacements or repairs to the roof shall employ materials comparable with the existing roof in texture, design and color.

4. Embellishments and Detailing

All ornamental detailing enumerated below shall remain intact and be preserved as is. Any reconstruction, renovation or replacement of the listed items shall be identical in composition, texture, color and size as practicable.

- A. Cornices and Molding: the cornice lines and the detailed molding under them.
- B. Architraves: the architraves above each entrance and lettering contained in them.
- C. Cartouches and Modillions: the ornate cartouches above the uppermost windows and the elaborate modillions situated on spandrels between first and second floor windows.
- D. Lintel and Arches: the lintel above first floor windows and the arches and radiating voussoirs above second floor windows.
- E. Columns: the fourteen granite Corinthian columns with richly carved capital.
- F. Balustrade: the granite railing occurring on the Harwood Street upper facade.
- G. Roof: the slate roof and egg and dart detailing.

5. Color

The coloring of the existing facade, including additions, extensions, alterations and repairs, shall comply with the hue, value and chroma content of the existing structure as defined by the Munsell Color System as outlined in the Munsell Book of Color, Neighboring Hues Collection, 1973:

- A. Predominate Facade Material: The existing color of the granite shall be preserved and remain unpainted. There will be no alterations with the exception of maintenance cleaning as necessary. The color of any additions or alterations shall coincide as nearly as practicable to the existing structure's color as defined by the Munsell Color System rating.
- B. Roof Material: the existing color of the slate roof shall be preserved and remain unpainted. There will be no alterations with the exception of maintenance cleaning as necessary. The color of any repairs to the roof shall coincide as nearly as practicable to the existing roof's color as defined by the Munsell Color System rating.
- C. Trim and Detailing: The existing color of all trim, detailing, and embellishment shall be preserved and coincide as nearly as practicable to the existing color ranges as defined by the Munsell Color System rating.

SITE

6. Lighting and Landscaping

Exterior lighting and the placement and removal of trees and shrubs shall be approved by the Historic Landmark Preservation Committee prior to commencement of work.

7. Public Improvements

All proposed public improvements of streets and associated R.O.W. abutting the structure shall be approved by the Historic Landmark Preservation Committee prior to commencement of work.

8. Signs

All new signs shall be designed to be compatible with the architectural qualities of the existing main structure. All new signs shall be approved by the Historic Landmark Preservation Committee prior to the issuance of a sign permit.

