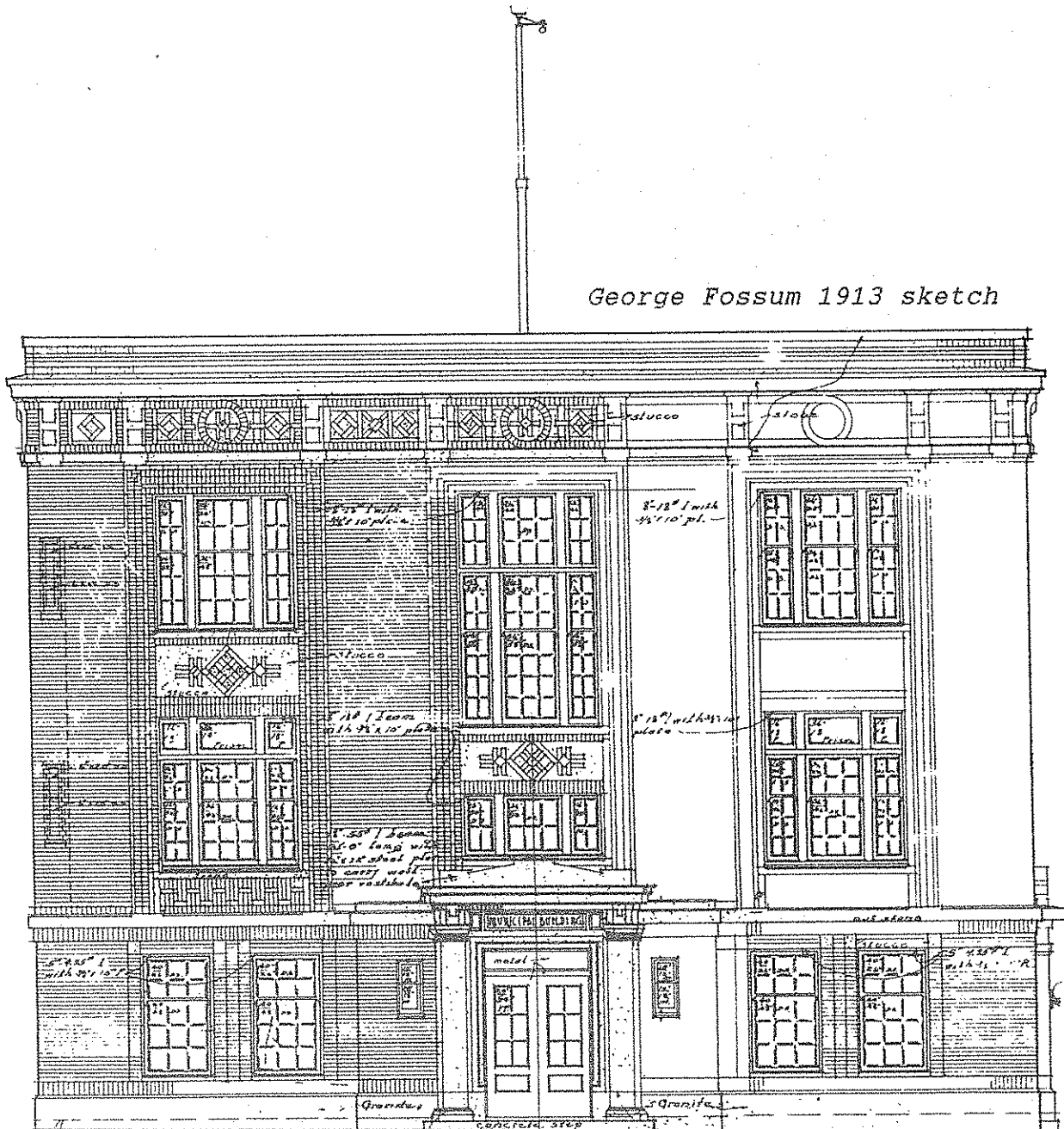


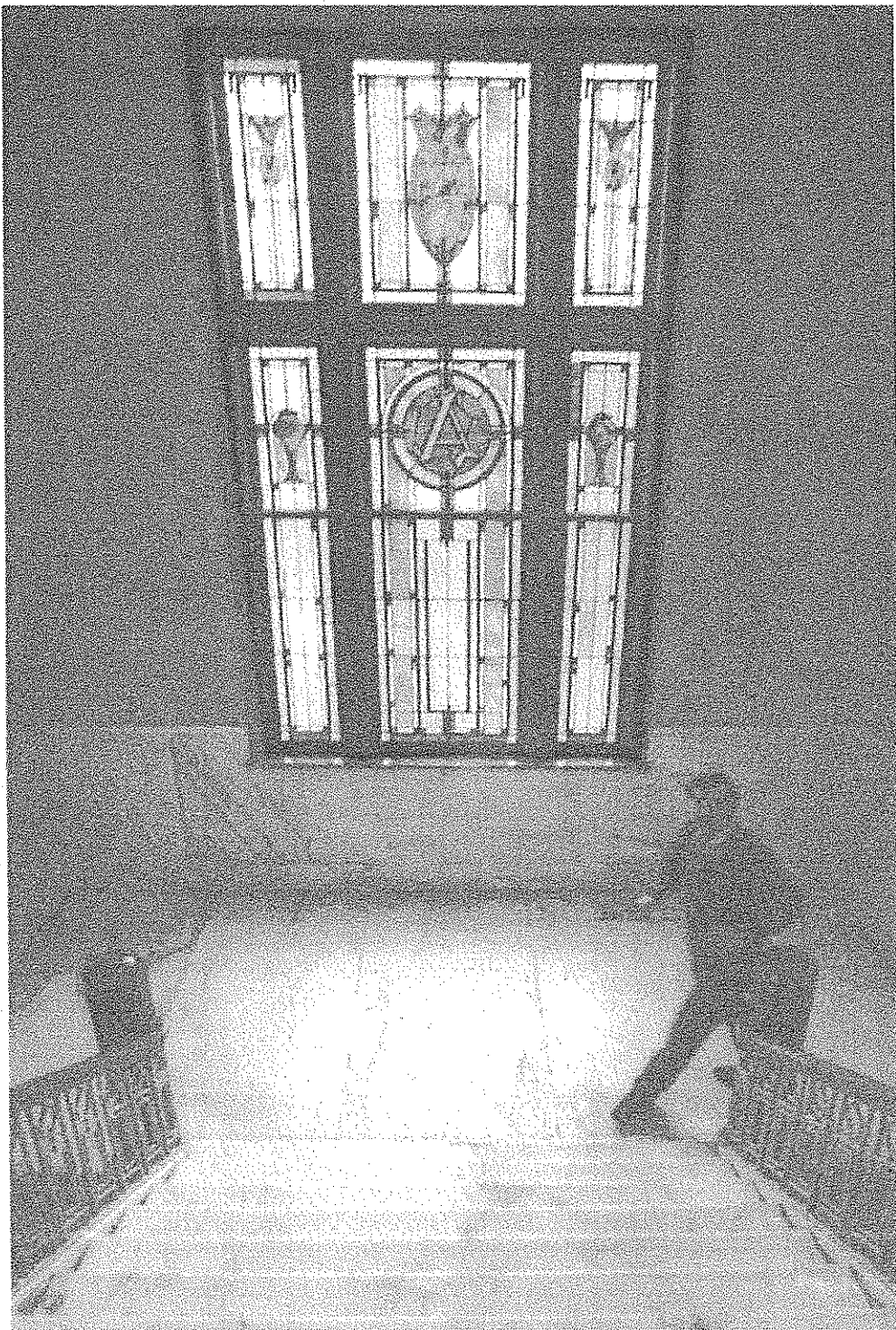
MUNICIPAL BUILDING: ABERDEEN, SD

SPACE QUEST & PUBLIC SERVICE, 1911-1996

George Fossum 1913 sketch



LINCOLN STREET ENTRANCE



American News Photo by Frank Robertson

**STAINED GLASS & STAIRWAYS 1913-1996
PERMANENCE AMIDST CHANGE**

**"OLD BUILDINGS HAVE LOTS OF ENEMIES - FIRE, WATER, TIME AND
TERMITES, TO NAME A FEW. BUT THERE IS NO ENEMY WORSE THAN AN
OWNER WHO DOESN'T CARE"**

**Dwight Young - October 1995
Sr. Communications Associate for the
National Historic Preservation Trust**

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THOUGHTS ON RENOVATION RECYCLING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

SENSITIVITY IS THE KEY WORD IN WORKING ON OLDER BUILDINGS. IN THE ATTEMPT TO BALANCE TWO COMPETING VALUES—CONTEMPORARY NEEDS AND TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL VALUES—MAINTAIN A RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORK OF PREVIOUS BUILDERS.

RENOVATION suggests to the experienced preservationist that new materials are used in greater proportion than older elements.

The term REHABILITATION suggests respecting a building's original architectural elements and retaining them whenever possible. Sec. of Interior guidelines define rehabilitation as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values."

REMODELING, often equated with modernizing, suggests changing the appearance and style of a structure, exterior or interior, by removing or concealing original details and substituting new materials and forms.

This narrative has used all three terms but asserts that rehabilitation balanced with remodeling is the best description of the changes that have taken place in Aberdeen's Municipal Building over many decades. Architectural plans reveal instructions to save original materials where removed for appropriate use in the same location or elsewhere. However, in replacing wooden window frames with metal frames as an energy efficient measure contractors practiced remodeling or renovation.

The Department of Interior suggests some general rules for renovators. We hope citizens of Brown County will take note if they plan building changes. Standard #4 for rehabilitation recognizes that change is acceptable as well as continuity: "Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected." Other guidelines are:

"A building is a collection of individual details. Everytime you replace a detail, it changes the character of the building. It is better to repair, rather than replace, original elements and material whenever possible. And when replacement is called for the replacement should resemble the original as closely as practical with respect to proportion, texture and material."

"After a series of seemingly minor replacements, significant changes in the building's appearance can result...Windows & doors are special danger areas."

"A building represents a specific architectural style. Be proud of it. Learn everything you can about that particular style and then let your rehabilitation or restoration bring out the character and plan of that style. Work should enhance and clarify original design concept. Or, at the very least, it should not detract from it."

*MUNICIPAL BUILDING: ABERDEEN, SD
SPACE QUEST AND PUBLIC SERVICE, 1911-1996*

INTRODUCTION: ARCHITECT'S DREAM & POLITICIAN'S DILEMMA

1920'S PHOTO



Eighty three years ago the three story Municipal Building first dominated the corner of Lincoln Street and Second Avenue SE. A historian's perspective concerns continuity and change. The former is most noted in the exterior of the Municipal Building. However, there are continuities as well as major changes within the structure which will be addressed later. Its exterior has not changed drastically since construction. Some window and door alterations have occurred. Adjoining buildings to the east have disappeared—Central Lumber Co.—and new ones added, most recently the fire station of 1982. What one views in 1996 is much what citizens of 1914 saw. Architectural appreciation and analysis demands looking up beyond the foundations and first floor of a three story building to its other components. An architectural perspective includes awareness of roof lines, the pattern of decorative designs, window placement, building materials, & entryways.

The Municipal Building's architect George Fossum was born at Red Wing, Minnesota. He moved at the age of three with his homesteading parents to the Aberdeen area in 1883. Influenced by his father who was a building contractor, George pursued an architectural career at Dakota Wesleyan in Mitchell, SD and Armour Tech in Chicago, Illinois. He returned to practice in Aberdeen, SD and earned a reputation as one of the state's leading architects. He practiced his craft through the 1930s. In 1917 he designed Lincoln Hall on the present campus of Northern State University and in 1913, at the age of 33, Aberdeen's municipal building. Reflecting the Chicago School architectural style which flourished 1890-1920, the Municipal Building features flat roof, rectangular form, strong vertical lines separating windows in order to emphasize height balanced by horizontal course belts and windows with a large centerpane and narrower flanking panes, bold cornice, entryway ornamentation, interweaving decorative motifs. The Chicago Style was used more on taller buildings. There are some Second Renaissance (1890-1920) revival features in use of pediments and pilaster type columns at entryways in a three storied structure with distinct horizontal divisions by belts or string courses designating floor levels.

City officials and others presented their needs to architect Fossum. The drawings of 1913 represent his vision of a city hall with 3 components: western corridors housing several commissioners and their service departments; an eastern half with a north wing which housed agencies of law enforcement and fire protection. In the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s other architects presented their visions of city hall when commissioned to implement change by city government seeking more space. These architectural plans and associated discussions with city commissioners and their representatives reveal the rehabilitation problems involved in keeping an older building functional. City commissioners often faced policy choices as they encountered the dilemma of space needs, funding, other project priorities and the question of whether to build anew or to modernize the old. Rehabilitation involved electrical and mechanical alterations as well as the more visible wall and window, counter and corridor, accessibility features, room sizes, location shifts and functions. Renovation also caused temporary inconvenience and relocation for those who occupied altered spaces and for the public who visited those locations.

PART I AN EXTERIOR VIEW OF CITY HALL 1996

SECOND AVENUE FACADE

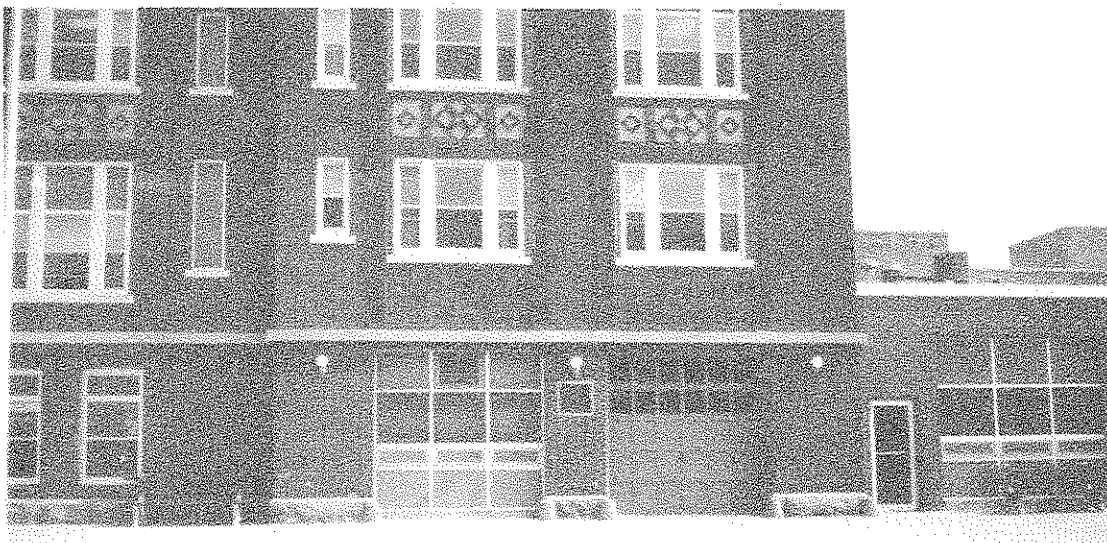


A major feature of the Second Avenue facade is its geometric, rectangular, three-storied form which seemingly occupies a lengthy swath of land but in reality the axial facade is only 134 feet. The brick exterior creates an impression of solidity. The numerous window bays of the 2nd and 3rd floors, the decorative concrete belt courses between 1st and 2nd floors and below the roof line add to the horizontal effect. The upper belt course protrudes out over the design bands and is supported by concrete corbels or brackets. Above the larger belt course is a foot-long brick wall on top of which is a thinner belt course. A short brick strip points upward from the stone foundation to below the first floor windows and stretches west-to-east across the entire structure. This contributes, along with the stone foundation, to the horizontal image. Upon closer examination that facade has a recessed central section joined by a projecting west end and east end. The central section is recessed 2 feet from surrounding segments. As window dividers, 9 vertical brick strips of varied widths stretch upward to the belt courses adding a vertical dimension.

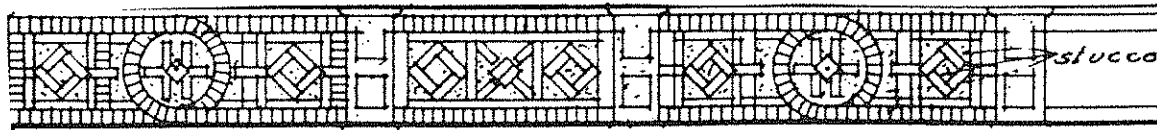


The central pedestrian entryway, marked Police Station, has a concrete triangular pediment above the door. On each side of the entry on the upper brick background is a concrete design--an abbreviated column about 1 foot long in the form of a "T". This pediment and column is suggestive of neo classical revival architectural style except its columns are not as large and impressive as those associated with the ancient Greeks. There is an element of Renaissance Revival and Chicago Commercial Style in the building's formalism, symmetrical shape, belt and string courses, flat roof, and pedimented doors on both 2nd avenue and Lincoln street. Evidence of window alterations appear immediately above the central entryway with one window bay completely paneled and the upper panes on all windows also paneled. This suggests that the original windows of 1913 were longer and shorter windows replaced them. Lower interior ceilings may be a factor in window alterations.

On the east side of the Police Station door are 2 windows with 2 concrete squares on their upper corners. Further east is the fire station segment with its 2 large doors on the 1st floor. Light globes adorn the brick columns on each side of the doors. The door on the extreme east-end opens for automobile usage, but the renovated door to the west now conceals police office space. Fire engines since 1982 have used the garages further east of the municipal building.



The design pattern between windows of the 2nd and 3rd floors and in the belt course just below the roof add variety and attract the eye. Above the 2nd floor windows are 7 groupings of design units each with 3 geometric designs. Two design units are in the projected segments at both the west and east ends of the building and 3 are visible in the central recessed segment. The common geometric form used on the 2nd avenue facade was an X or a cross encased within a diamond which is sandwiched in between two plain diamond shapes.



On the belt course above the 3rd floor windows and below the roof stretch 17 design units, 7 of which are located on the central recessed section of the building. The east-end design and the one between east-end windows is a single diamond surrounded by 2 brackets with recessed squares at the lower end of the corbel. Above the 2 window bays is a design of 2 single diamonds surrounding a central circle containing a cross with a small diamond at the intersections of the cross lines. In the central recessed segment 3 X's and 4 crosses alternate as the circle's centerpiece. Over the Fire Department segment's are 5 design units. Single diamonds adorn each end. One diamond in the center separates 2 units containing 3 geometric forms, which are crosses surrounded by single diamonds. The red brick symbols rest on a stucco background.

WASHINGTON STREET FACADE

Since 1982 the 1st floor exterior cannot be viewed from afar due to blockage by new fire department buildings. Some windows of the upper level are visible as is the concrete, upper belt course which continues on from the 2nd Avenue side until it reaches the end of the 1st window bay on the 3rd floor.

LINCOLN STREET FACADE



The Lincoln Street facade focuses on the central entryway with 2 sidelight windows immediately astride that doorway and 2 stained glass windows looming up above that entry toward the roof line. Above the entryway pediment a 3 paned, stained glass window stretches north to south. Further up looms a larger stained glass window with 9 dimensions or lights. A giant "A" for Aberdeen draws attention to the middle pane. Immediately below the pediment concrete columns containing globes for night lighting frame the entryway. A triangular pediment rests above the doorway with date of construction embossed below. Above the entryway and below the pediment appear the words: Municipal Building. Two double sash windows rest north of the central entry and another 2 windows south of the doorway provide balance to that facade. Panels block the upper portion of the windows indicating a past window change to shorter windows. Two design patterns emerge above the 2nd story window opposite the central stained glass windows. Two single diamonds surround a circle with an X in the center.



Between the 1st and 2nd floors a concrete belt course runs along the entire facade and continues on the north or 1st avenue facade until it comes to the recessed section of the building. One single window with 2 side panels opens on the 2nd floor facade. Above the course belt and window there are no pattern designs in the center until the upper belt course. Six inch vertical brick strips along each of the windows match the verticle effect of the windows and reach upward as far as the upper belt course. Above the 3rd floor windows is an upper belt course through all 7 sections of the facade. The 2 end geometric forms are single diamonds. Five other geometric units have 3 designs within. Between designs are scrolled concrete brackets. Above this wider belt course are 4 to 5 layers of brick on top of which is a thinner concrete belt course similar in width to the one between the 1st and 2nd floors. In 1996 a flag pole stands at ground level displaying the state and national flag. The roof flag pole of the past still looms skyward on the Lincoln Street facade but has no flags. Two small trees are rooted in the Lincoln Street boulevard astride the central entryway.

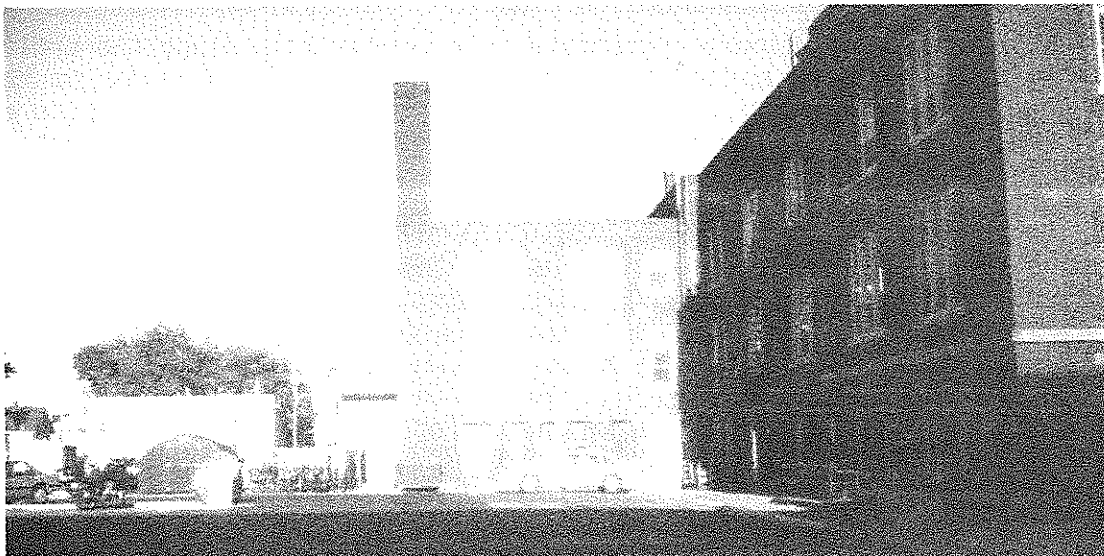
NORTH OR FIRST AVENUE FACADE



From the north corner of the Lincoln Street facade a belt course continues eastward to separate the 1st and 2nd floors to the point where the recessed section begins. Below this concrete belt are 4 elongated rectangular windows with 6 glass panes and one upper section of 3 panes blocked with panels. The central section recesses about 2 feet from the western section.

Two windows lighten the finance offices. West of the rear exit door is an elongated block glass window providing privacy for the north wall men's bathroom. The parking lot door or rear exit to the police station north-south corridor is the next opening on the First Avenue facade. East of that door is the rear of the police station section and two windows. A fire escape begins its upward, angular journey toward the 3rd floor of the central, recessed section. The 2nd floor displays 2 window bays each containing three 9 dimensional windows with upper dimension paneled as elsewhere in the building. A single rectangular window with three dimensions or panes occupies a spot at the west end of the recessed section. The 3rd floor has the same window spacing & sizes as the 2nd floor with the exception of the most westerly single window of the 2nd floor recessed area.

NORTH WING FACADE



From the parking lot a west side door permits entry to interior offices of the North Wing. Along the west side of the North Wing three small 2' x 1' windows and one large window help light up the interior. On that wing's 2nd floor are two window groupings each containing 3 rectangular, 6 dimensional windows. The 2 upper panes in each window are blocked by panels. A narrower 3 dimensional window is located above the 1st floor door and the concrete belt course that separates the 2 floors. The 3rd floor repeats the 2nd floor window spacing except that 3rd floor windows are completely intact with no panel blocks on the upper panes. Darker brick strips frame the 2nd and 3rd floor windows and thus focus attention to those window areas. Two design units emerge between the 2nd and 3rd floors over all wing windows. There are no visible concrete belt courses between the 2nd and 3rd floors and from the 3rd floor to the roof. A tall chimney looms in the vicinity of the corner where west and north sides of this wing meet. The north end of that wing is windowless. Its roof is several feet below that of the main Lincoln street building. The X design, rather than the H design, is used within the central circle. Antenna wires streak skyward at the intersection of the North Wing and the east end of the Lincoln Street building. On the Washington Street side of the North Wing only 3rd floor windows and a few 2nd floor windows can be seen because the adjoining fire department addition of 1982 blocks the view.

Now that the exterior has been thoroughly described, a review of the circumstances leading to the construction of Aberdeen's City Hall in 1913 can now be detailed in Part Two.

PART II "LET'S HAVE A CITY HALL"

With the completion of a new Brown County court house in 1904, Aberdeen city officials leased office space in that court house for a 10 year period. Two years before that lease expired voices arose demanding a municipal building to house city government rather than asking for a 10 year renewal of court house space. In 1911 the city adopted a mayor/commission form of government. Also in place of the previous justice of the peace system, legislation authorized a municipal court which in Aberdeen heard 297 state cases and 729 city cases during its 1st year. It seemed fitting that they have a home of their own--a municipal building.

JUSTIFICATION FOR A FAVORABLE VOTE

On March 20, 1912 the Daily American editorialized that city growth had warranted separate housing for its governing body. The Hub City, 2nd largest city in the state, should no longer be handicapped by having "no place it can call home". The city deserved to be an owner rather than a renter. The city commission approved a resolution for issuance of \$75,000 in 20 year bonds bearing maximum 5% interest to be approved by the voters on Tuesday, April 16. Speculation on the location of the new structure initially placed the site on city lots at 1st Avenue and Lincoln across the street from the court house and west of the Commercial Club. A jail and fire hall were included in the city hall complex. On April 10 the Daily American further justified the need by citing the reappearance of prosperity which enabled the city to afford to build a city hall.

The Daily News reported on April 11 the lawyers' perspective on the need for such a structure. The municipal court deserved dignified quarters to serve a growing court calendar. They urged a meeting of bench and bar for suggestions. Currently Judge George Crane heard cases in his private office crowded with

subpoened witnesses. The judge had little room to consult law books, read briefs and do other administrative work. Presently auditor Raymond had to traverse two flights of stairs to go from his office to the court room. Perhaps, in the new structure he could be located closer to the court chambers.

The Aberdeen Daily American on election day focused on the need for a new city jail and fire hall citing a Monday morning fire which was extinguished at the city jail. Fire in a wooden jail raised the specter of men burning to death in a future fire and charges of negligence levied against the city.

The bond election of April 16 which also included a vote on an electric franchise rate increase and a commissioner vacancy, gave a majority vote in favor of the building and rejected the electric franchise request. Controversy followed over the interpretation of majority--those who voted as indicated on poll books or those on the registration list. The city commissioners ruled that the pole books showing who voted should be the guide, not the larger registration list. Voting against a new city hall were 616; 898 voted for the bonds. However, because it was a small majority no buyers for city hall bonds could be found. Thus, at its meeting of Oct. 14, 1912 the city commission passed a resolution announcing a special election for city hall, police station/jail and firehall for voters to decide on Nov. 5 whether to approve \$100,000 in 20 year bonds at maximum 5% interest to be paid semi-annually. Mayor Hall hoped for a 2\3 vote as solid evidence to potential bond buyers that taxpayers supported the project.

Before that election, suggestions surfaced as to what features such a structure should have. The Daily News advocated a public comfort station. Hotels should not have their facilities burdened by the general public. The county had set an example with its special farmers' room for farm wives and other shoppers. Arguments continued to be advanced in the newspapers on the need for a municipal complex. Mayor Hall focused on saving money currently expended for rent by the treasurer, engineer, auditors, municipal court etc. A new lease of the courthouse basement room used by the city commissioners would cost about \$850 a year. The Daily News of Oct. 19, 1912 referred to a savings of over \$1,000 dollars a year by concentrating varied departments in one building.

On Oct. 30, 1912 the Daily News cited the scattered locations of offices: Citizens Bank building, Wells Block, court house and "the ramshackle structure that now does duty as a city building" and highlighted the inefficiency of such an arrangement. An adequate available site already owned by the city would lessen land acquisition costs. Testimonials promoted the project. Hardware owner A.C. Witte focused on the need for substantial fireproof buildings in the business district. He felt the city should provide the example and replace the disgraceful city jail and fire hall. City records deserved protection from potential fires in present buildings. Witte agreed that with scattered government it was difficult for citizens to find officials as well as for officials to keep in touch with each other. W.D. Swain recommended a large auditorium be included in the proposed municipal building: "it's a disgrace to the city every time a public speaker or large convention comes here to pack them off into a small, rented hall". C.A. Russell, Commercial Club's Industrial Bureau chair, declared "when it comes to civic matters he was always ashamed when asked where the city hall was." He branded the jail as an "eyesore" and a "disgrace" to the city. The city's size and commercial importance and reputation for progress demanded a favorable vote.

Out of 2173 voters, 1557 voted in favor and 616 opposed making a majority of 941. Officials anticipated a speedy sale of the bonds. Sharp bidding followed. Bolger, Mosse & Willaman Co. of Chicago purchased the bonds at 4 3/4 %.

SITE SELECTION

With sale of bonds completed, questions arose as to the best location for the new municipal building. Commissioners at first sought the McCaughey property at the corner of Lincoln and Second Avenue but could not reach a satisfactory purchase price. They next considered the site of the Gottschalk Opera house which had burned down in 1910. Owned by Melvin C. Lamont, it was located on the NW quarter of the block between Lincoln and Washington streets, Third and Fourth avenues. However, 10 days later the Daily American reported the problem had been resolved with purchase of the McCaughey corner at Lincoln and Second Avenue: "the city now owns the entire block of frontage on Lincoln street between First and Second avenue". The paper suggested that perhaps a civic center of community buildings might emerge with court house, city hall and Commercial Club building as a nucleus. A spring building boom loomed ahead with the new city hall as the largest structure.

At its Saturday March 22, 1913 meeting the city commission received architect George F. Fossum's plans for the 3 story new city hall at the corner of Second avenue and Lincoln street. At a commission meeting March 24 mayor and city auditor were authorized to issue a warrant for \$17,000 to be paid from proceeds of \$100,000 bond sale. This was the purchase price of lots 7 and 8 of block 2 of the original plat of Aberdeen to be finalized upon receipt of a warranty deed conveying to the city a free and clear title.

The idea of adding an auditorium room on the top floor of the new city hall surfaced again when on May 29 representatives of the Commercial Club submitted plans to the city commissioners who were divided on the issue. The Daily American on June 3 supported an auditorium capable of handling large gatherings by citing the huge crowd attending the new Aberdeen Theatre's opening.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

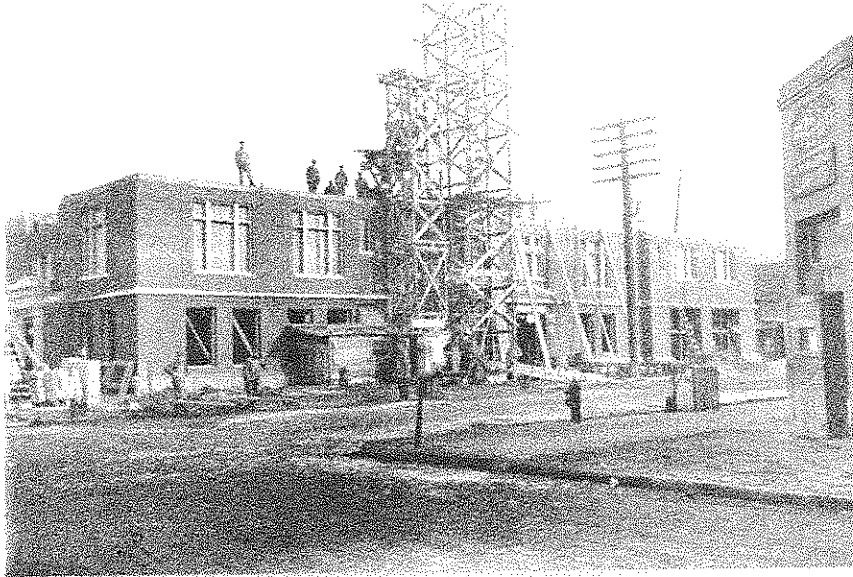
At its meeting of June 7, 1913 the city commission opened bids for excavation of the city hall's basement. The Schile Bros. secured the bid at 65 cents per yard, 5 cents cheaper than that of the Kruger Bros. Commission modifications to the bid were: "That all dirt hauled over 14 blocks shall be paid for at the rate of 70 cents per yard and that all dirt hauled less than 14 blocks shall be paid for at the rate of 65 cents per yard, and that no dirt be hauled over 16 blocks."

The Daily American headlines for June 29, 1913 read: "New City Hall to be Finest in Northwest". Excavation work neared completion. Contrast with the previous wooden structures used by police and fire departments and the new brick building highlighted fire safety in the brick structure. Architect Fossum described the future 3 story building with its full basement. He stressed quality building materials: the "finest pressed brick, trimmed in stone", reinforced concrete floors, fireproof partitions, maple office doors, corridor and hall tile floors. City Hall boasted a 56' frontage on Lincoln Street and 134' frontage on Second Avenue. The jail wing on the north side was 30'x40'. On this North Wing ground floor (in the rear of the fire department) was space for temporary cells, a large room for overnight lodging of tramps & a room for prisoner fumigation.

Second floor space was mainly allotted to the mayor, city auditor, city treasurer, city attorney and a meeting room for the commissioners. Above the east end fire station were rooms to be used as a gymnasium, dormitory for firemen and the fire chief's office.

Third floor space included an assembly room which would hold 400-500 but no stage. At the building's east end the municipal court room, jury room and judge's office occupied the remaining space.

"Nothing has been spent for domes or towers or marble columns. It is the modern ideal of efficiency carried out in brick and stone". Weekly American News in October 1914



BRICKING THE HALL

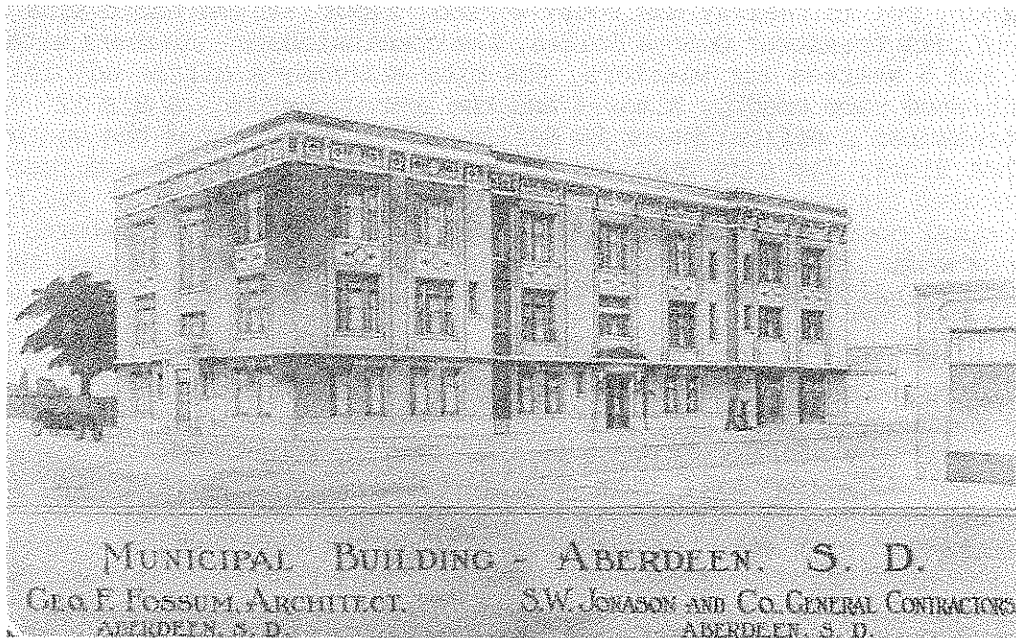
Procurement of building brick emerged as an issue--whether the city should secure brick made locally or from afar. A rough cast brick contributed to the esthetic beauty of the exterior. Quality and durability of local brick was questioned also. Defenders of local brick stressed lesser costs than imported brick. The Commissioners instructed the Commercial Club to form a committee to test the brick. Their August report asserted that local Mina brick was "first class"; physical and chemical tests had revealed it to be "excellent building material". However, Mina brick was smooth pressed brick while designs called for "matt faced brick, rough surface brick."

One Allan MacMaster in a letter to the editor of the Daily American commented on the importance of art principles and aesthetic effect. Of the 2 types of rough surface brick--rock faced and rough moulded brick--the latter was "ugly..an outrage..a horror" and if used would add to other structures whose architecture had outraged community taste. He favored rock faced brick in which the "natural surface of the brick is broken off leaving it with as near an approach to a genuine rock surface as has yet been devised."

At the city commission meeting of September 23, 1913 commissioners accepted W. Madsen's bid of \$4,061 for painting and decorating the municipal building. The last load of cut stone arrived November 3, 1913. Builders promised laying of the belt course immediately followed by masons bricking the 2nd story. S. W. Jonason company of Aberdeen served as general contractors.

By November 14, 1913 the Daily American reported that bricklayers had reached the lower level of the municipal building's 2nd story. The Lincoln Street, white stone entryway had been completed and the words "Municipal Building" carved into the entrance top.

AN INTERIOR TOUR OF CITY HALL: OPEN HOUSE 1914



By late August 1914 Aberdonians looked forward to the completion of their new city hall. Newspapers described each floor and asked residents to be patient for the open house which would allow visitation after city officials had occupied their new offices and records had been deposited in the proper vaults. The main Lincoln street vestibule with its marble wainscoting and tile flooring allowed entry through double doors into the main west-to-east corridor. An art glass window was on order to be placed over the main Lincoln Street entrance. Nearby 2 concealed stairways gave access to the unfinished basement. On the north side of this entryway the private office of the streets and alleys commissioner, A.C. Fossum, was first to catch the eye. Southward across the tile floored corridor the department of water and sewer awaited occupancy. Further eastward along this main corridor's south side signs advertised the private office of water and sewer commissioner, C.C. Fletcher. A vault 6'6"x10'6" connected the offices of that department. Across the hall on the north side were the street department's office, the milk inspector with his milk and cream testing lab, the meter room for storage and testing of water meters and the men's toilet room.

At the SE end of the corridor lay the 2nd avenue entrance. Accessibility to the police station demanded this single door entry remain open night and day. Its separate vestibule and north-south hall connected with the main east-to-west corridor. A woman's toilet room occupied the west side of this hall and a janitor's room the east side. Police headquarters occupied a space 29' long x 8 1/2' wide. A sergeant's counter and a vault, 11'x4', for records and prisoners effects occupied a portion of that space. A waiting room with chairs utilized the remaining space. Westward a locker room adjoined a toilet room and shower. South of the desk sergeant were the offices of the chief of police and S.H. Lynch, commissioner of police and fire. Other jail facilities were to be found on the floors above accessible by an iron stairway with slate treads. On the next floor were 3 women's cells and a men's cell room capable of holding 8 prisoners. On the top floor of the North Wing were facilities for prisoners awaiting trial in the nearby courtroom.

A marble stairway led from the Lincoln street entry to what was then called the "1st" floor, but in reality was today's "2nd" floor. On the north side were the offices of city treasurer George Bolles, the commissioners' chambers with its large table and 5 settees for visitors, the city attorney's office adjoining a private conference room used by himself and the commissioners. A 8'x 12' vault served the treasurer's office. Mayor Ed Hall's office highlighted the southwest corner of that floor. The city auditor, city assessor and finance commissioner were also located on the south side of the corridor. A small 6'x 7' vault for storing municipal court records and a larger vault 14'x15' for city records were located in the auditor's office. At the east end of the corridor a broad marble stairway led to the "2nd" (actually 3rd) floor municipal court room and the assembly hall.

At the northwest end of this upper story corridor was a general meeting room 34'6"x17'6" for commissioners and boards of education, health and parks. Adjacent was the city engineering department with a vault 8'x11' for map and plat storage. Astride the corridor's south side was a 19'x34' meeting room which was connected with a 50'x 55' assembly hall with 400 moveable chairs and lighted by 6 chandeliers and side lights. At the eastern end of this assembly room were two jury rooms connected with both the assembly hall on the west and the court room corridor on the east. This courtroom corridor extended from the jail section on the north to the judge's chambers on the south. Municipal Judge George Crane occupied a private office which was attached to an outer office used by attorneys. Both rooms were connected with the maple floored court room which was 28' wide and 39' long. Enclosed by a railing were the judge's bench, jury box, tables for attorneys, court reporters and newspaper representatives.

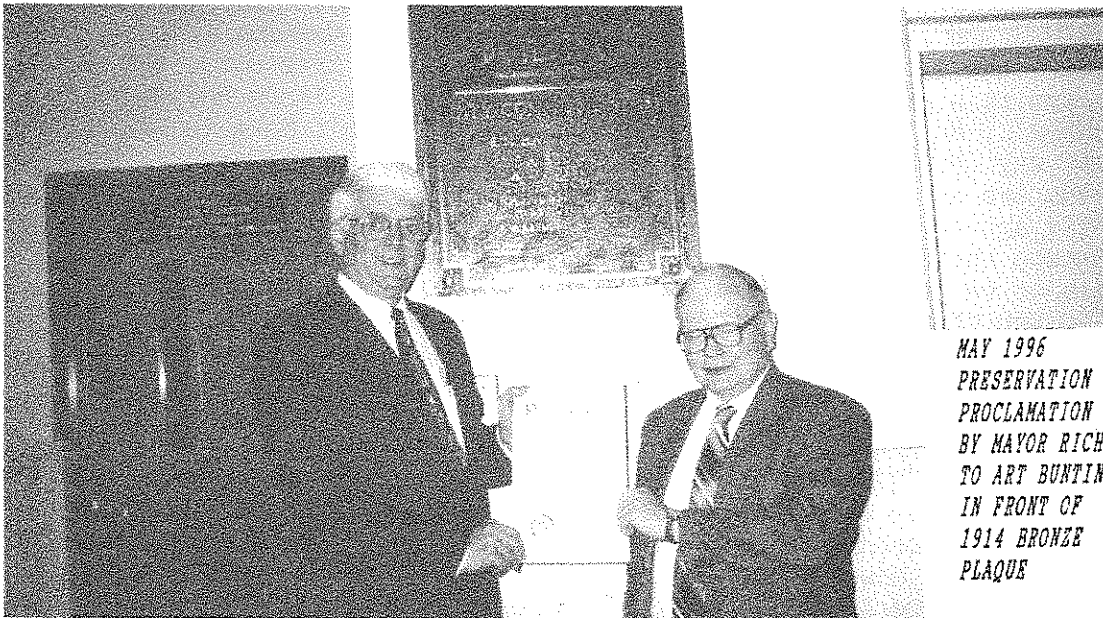
At the east end of the municipal building was the fire station. The 22'x56' engine room, its interior faced with enameled brick, occupied the ground floor. Two folding doors, 10'x10' opened on 2nd avenue. In the rear was another large folding door. A single door on the east end provided entry to the station. An iron stairway with slate treads led from the engine room to the basement below and to the 24'x34' dormitory above. In an emergency 2 brass poles in this "first" (actually 2nd) floor dormitory enabled firemen to slide down to the engine room in a speedier manner than taking the stairs. Adjoining the dorm was the private office of the fire department chief, K. J. Kingsley and a lavatory and bathing alcove for the firemen. North of the dorm was a 17'x23' gymnasium which connected to the locker room and shower bath.

Beneath the fire hall the basement area with its cement floor was fitted as a repair shop. On the north side of the fire hall's basement was a wagon chute to transport wagons in need of repair. Underneath the jail section was the heating department. The basement under the municipal hall to the west was not yet finished.

All offices were serviced by telephones. An art glass window would be placed over the main entrance on Lincoln street at a later date. Maple floors graced all offices, the assembly hall and the court room. Oak interior woodwork predominated in the main section and birch woodwork in the jail wing and fire hall.

On Wednesday, September 23, 1914 scattered offices located in the county court house and elsewhere moved to the new city hall. Judge William Wallace held the first session of Municipal Court in the new building on the morning of September 23. The police also moved into their wing that day at 2:00 p.m. Police records as well as prisoners had been moved and the night sergeant occupied his office on September 24 at the new headquarters.

In October 1914 workmen placed a bronze plate in the new city hall on the left or north side of the first floor hall inside the Lincoln street entrance. The words "Aberdeen Municipal Building" were engraved along with date of erection, names of the commissioners, architect and contractor.



MAY 1996
PRESERVATION
PROCLAMATION
BY MAYOR RICH
TO ART BUNTIN
IN FRONT OF
1914 BRONZE
PLAQUE

On Friday night, October 9, 1914 city officials held open house at the new Municipal Building. On the previous day the Weekly American News commented on the practical, simple appearance of the structure: "Nothing has been spent for domes or towers or marble columns. It is the modern ideal of efficiency carried out in brick and stone." Site purchase was \$17,000. Building costs were \$92,544.19. Furnishings amounted to \$9102.15 along with miscellaneous expenses of \$692.49. The editor emphasized that those traversing Lincoln or Second should be "proud of our town every time we look at it."

LANDSCAPING



Municipal Building 1950's

Landscaping city hall began in spring 1915 when in a small, nearby plot sod was spaded and smoothed followed by sowing of grass seed. Several trees were planted around the building between sidewalk and edge of curb. Photographs of the 1920s, 1931 & 1950's reveal that shrubbery covered a strip along Second Avenue foundations of city hall. Over time such landscaping disappeared. In July, 1982 when the police and fire department remodeling occurred an Aberdonian wrote to the American News these remarks about Aberdeen's image as a tree city:

"I find it a shame not one tree is included in the landscaping scheme... No Trees-nothing but concrete! It doesn't have to be that way. Proof is only a block south. (Federal Building). Trees are an important resource that some people apparently don't fully appreciate. Oh they always have a real fine excuse for not wanting them, like nobody will care for them or the leaves are a mess or we just don't want any. These are pretty shallow excuses when you think about the beauty and life trees give in return. With all the wisdom of our city government planning for the future of Aberdeen it seems they've definitely overlooked or thrown aside the worth of a tree."

Nearby parking and paving received more attention than trees and grass. On Monday July 2, 1915 east of the Municipal Building Aberdeen's first concrete paving was laid in the east to west alley between First and Second Avenues S.E. Three sections, composed of different materials, tested formulas for the city's future paving needs. However, in the 1990s two small trees, rooted in the narrow boulevard area, at the Lincoln Street entrance provide the sole landscaping for city hall.

PART III: CITY HALL AS POWER AND SERVICE CENTER

COMMISSIONERS: NEW STYLE OF GOVERNING 1911

In 1911 the South Dakota Legislature provided for the incorporation of cities under the commission form of government. The Daily American and others in Aberdeen favored the new form over the previous mayor/alderman style. They thought the commission plan with its "concentration of power and responsibility in the hands of a few good, competent and well paid men" was the best way to escape the evils of "bossism, graft and incompetency." The hope was that officials would be elected for ability, not political pull or influence and that the mayor and 4 commissioners would develop pride in a job well done.

To the argument of opponents who asked voters to wait until the new plan had been improved, proponents of the new style of government declared that it placed departments in the public eye, divided labors and encouraged efficiency and honesty. Commissioners were responsible to all the people, not to those in one ward as under the old alderman system.

In an election February 28, 1911 Aberdonians approved the commission plan of municipal government by a majority of 721. Out of a total of 1433 voters, 1127 favored the plan and 406 were against. On Tuesday April 25, 1911 Ed Hall defeated John Wade for mayor by 144 votes out of a total of 2478 votes. Those elected to serve with the mayor as commissioners were A.E. Boyd, C.C. Fletcher, A.C. Fossum and E.D. Rasmussen. They met officially for the first time Monday May 8, 1911. Former Mayor Rock who had served 1 year when Mayor Aldrich stepped down, gave a Farewell Address.

Rock believed the new officials were "men of parts, of honor, of ability & men who can well be trusted"... He recognized there were many "wiseacres" in Aberdeen who had predicted his and the council's opposition to the new form of

government. However, they were wrong: "We will all join hands in setting on every crank and kicker that desires to criticize it until it has a fair & goodly test."

He advised the commissioners to ignore party alliances and be the people's representatives--protect their property, guard their health, advance their morals and safeguard their earnings.

THE POLITICALIZATION OF CITY HALL 1915-16

During the five years (1911-16) of Ed Hall's administration, inaugurating Aberdeen's mayor/commission governmental style, varied projects reflected an expansive city. Services for a growing city required money and by the 1916 mayoralty election the Hall administration was open to charges of wasteful spending and usurpation of power. One such expensive project was the new city hall. In his annual report at a city commission meeting May 27, 1912, Mayor Hall looked forward to a new city hall: "once we have our own city building each commissioner will have an office for the transaction of official business and the building of the city hall can not come too soon for the good of the city."

The 1916 mayoralty campaign began to heat up as early as April 1915 prior to the annual spring election for a city commissioner. Commissioners supervised four departments: Police and fire; Streets and Public Property; Water and Sewer; Finance and Revenue. How well these commissioners cooperated with each other and the mayor determined, in part, public perceptions as to effectiveness of city government. The Daily News challenged the campaign argument that the commission had been operating "as smooth as grease". In reality, the present commission contained a minority which "must look and talk pleasantly, or they will get nothing for their departments." Force exercised by a bare majority had produced imaginary unity. The paper charged that C.C. Fletcher, the sewer and water commissioner, had limited control over his department but had accomplished much despite the mayor's dominance and usurpation of power.

The year 1915 was a crucial year in creating dissatisfaction with the Hall administration. Nature intervened with 3 heavy rains that summer which flooded the basements of Main Street merchants. An editorial of August 20, 1915 characterized Hall as "a real nice man", "a fairish actor" and "one of the best barbers Aberdeen ever had" but he had proven he was not a "sanitary expert". His tinkering with the sewer system had increased the flooding propensity at times of "excessive rain". Hall was portrayed as a "know it all" who ignored the advice of the civil engineer in August 1914 and in March 1915 that 14 inch outlet mains were inadequate to carry off surplus water during heavy rain periods.

The press recognized the mayoralty election campaign of April 1916 as "the most strenuous" in the city's history. The City Hall issue surfaced as an example of Hall's spendthrift ways. At the Orpheum Theater Wednesday April 5, 1916 Hall spoke to a capacity crowd. He defended his choice of the more expensive city hall corner lots which cost \$17,000 instead of less expensive interior lots. That corner lot was a better site, more prominent and less apt to be surrounded by inappropriate construction. This purchase he insisted "was discussed for weeks, approved by citizens and bought with the idea of the commission that it would be used some day for an auditorium...The people today are satisfied that the right course was pursued."

Controversy arose over City Hall use of foreign versus local brick during the secondary mayoral election of April 1916. Opponents criticized Hall for buying brick from out of town instead of using local Mina bricks despite the report of the Commercial Club committee that foreign brick cost \$1,222 more than local brick.

The Aberdeen American News of April 23, 1916 defended Hall on the Municipal Building issue and the charge of general usurpation of power as a one-man government: "If Mayor Hall must assume the responsibility for all matters pertaining to the new city building that are criticized, including the selection of brick, the bronze tablet, the purchase of the lots, then he must be given credit for having the building at all, the securing of it entirely, and its provisions for court, jail, assembly hall, fire department quarters, and all. If he did not usurp this responsibility for the building, what it was built of, how it was built, furnished and embellished, and is not entitled to the credit, then he cannot be blamed for those things which are criticized. As a matter of fact these things are all matters of record as having been passed upon by the entire commission."

Furthermore, the Aberdeen American News editorialized on April 23, 1916 about Civic Pride by asking readers to imagine Aberdeen in 1918 when an Aberdonian is visited by an out-of-town friend. In their stroll through the city, the visitor takes note of the city resulting from a Hall or Aldrich administration. "And you look at the city hall. You tell the visitor of the former habitation of the city government on First Avenue, and point with pride at the municipal building. How would your civic pride assert itself in admitting that the mayor who presided when this building was built—who fostered the voting of bonds, stood the criticisms of the expenditures of money—had been defeated and the mayor who presided for six years prior to that had been returned?" The American News philosophized "In everything that is worth having someone has to take the responsibility of action. Public officials can escape criticism by doing nothing. Every positive act brings censure from some source." Over the decades the Commission form of government survived numerous assaults when critics demanded a city manager. Only in 1946-49 did Aberdonians experiment with the city manager.

CITY HALL AS SERVICE CENTER

Since that 1916 election many mayors and commissioners, municipal judges and magistrates, police and fire chiefs have built a power center which impacted the lives of citizens from all walks of life. Housed on 3 floors varied departments contributed to the image of the municipal building as a service center. Public safety—court, police and fire department occupied the eastern half of Municipal Hall while other governmental departments occupied the western half.



3RD FLOOR COURTROOM

Between 1914 and 1975 numerous jury panels have been called to the Municipal Court and after 1975 the Magistrates Court to render judgment on those who came to trial in that 3rd floor courtroom. Between Nov. 1, 1971 and Oct. 31, 1972 that court handled 3777 cases collecting a total of \$160,323.43. There were 1934 violators of city ordinances who paid fines of \$59,933.50. Parking violations brought income of \$58,637.97. The court also heard 1222 state cases where state laws had been violated. The municipal judge heard 602 small claims cases and 19 civil cases also. A clerk of the courts assisted in record keeping and formulating minutes of court proceedings, reading complaints in court and collecting fines. After January 7, 1975 when the municipal court system ended, Magistrates Court continued to hear cases--small claims, misdemeanors, bond for felony arrests but not hearing such cases. Police department personnel assumed a protector role of rights, life and property in the community. Using city ordinances to maintain law and order, the police department investigated crimes against property and assaults against people. They monitored parking space and worked to improve traffic safety. That department exemplified both the power and service of City Hall.

1973 PHOTO



The Fire Department played a positive role also in fire prevention education and in monitoring potential fire hazards. Fire personnel saved lives and property through fire fighting. They managed ambulance service in cooperation with Brown County. This aspect of public safety also contributed to Municipal Building's service image.

Many public groups used the 3rd floor assembly hall between 1914 and 1972. In 1933 the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary met on a Thursday evening in May and elected delegates to their July Watertown Encampment. On Thursday June 15 varied civic organizations met in the auditorium to boost for a better Aberdeen. The next evening Friday June 16, 1933 the W.B.A. conducted a special meeting in the auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Community sing-alongs also occurred in that room during the 1930s. During World War II Red Cross ladies from all over Brown County gathered here to prepare surgical bandages as their part of the war effort. Mrs. Fred Hatterscheidt, Mrs. J.E. Thompson and Mrs. R.G. Mayer directed an assembly line in the auditorium which in reality became a red cross work room. National Red Cross headquarters sent materials to be made into garments. Over 800,000 surgical dressings were made, packed, boxed and shipped. Farmers Union people met there in November 1952. City and town assessors met on March 18 1953. During his tenure as city band director Orville Evenson stored municipal city band uniforms there and also conducted band practice sessions preparing for city park concerts.

Girl Scouts used that space for pageants and other activities. Due to the influence of Jeanette Biegler's father the girl scouts were allocated a small office space on the third floor which they occupied from at least 1950. With the 1972 renovation of that floor their office was moved to the 2nd floor where they remained until 1978. About that time the Girl Scouts office moved to the Monroe School (ARK).



The American Legion headquartered in the basement during the 1930s and the school patrol boys met Saturdays in the basement about 1939-40 at 1 p.m. with a police officer. From that base they practiced traffic control on Main Street and were rewarded with free tickets to the Pix theater. At one time boy scouts met in the basement. Each of the Municipal building's 3 floors and their departments helped to build an image of influence and service. Even as early as July 1915 the city commission, at the request of Captain Swain, permitted Company L to utilize the SW corner of the 3rd floor as a storage and study room. Even basement space became a place of refuge for civil defence and tornado warnings and the roof eventually harbored a warning siren. Since 1940 the Fire Department's basement work room became the site for toy repair and renovation for underprivileged children at Christmas. City commissioners impacted the lives of thousands through regulatory resolutions and ordinances. Their decisions ranged widely over license approvals; street, sewer, and housing construction; securing and maintaining a water supply; funding recreational facilities; establishing zoning standards; annexing land and tax assessment. With annexation city services and staff expanded and accelerated the quest for space at the Municipal Building.

PART IV GROWING SPACE NEEDS OF CITY HALL

In 1996 the Municipal Building is sandwiched in between several governmental structures: the Brown County court house complex one block north, since 1939 the U.S. Post Office and since 1973 the Federal Building one block south. Perhaps, not as imposing as these structures or covering such a wide jurisdiction, Aberdeen's municipal building has often been underrated as an architectural structure and as a influential public service center. Expanding services for an expanding city necessitated a quest for space within the Municipal building and eventually at other city locations.

TO REMODEL OR REBUILD?

THE LEO DALY SOLUTION

The Leo Daly Community Facilities Plan of the late 1960s evaluated Aberdeen's city government buildings and asserted:

"Although the City Hall is well located in relation to the other governmental uses, it is neither modern nor attractive, and there is no room for expansion unless the much needed parking space adjoining the building site is eliminated in part. In general, the City Hall is outdated, offering inadequate accommodations for the separate City functions contained therein."

The Daly report recommended co-operative effort with the county to co-ordinate and consolidate government services, especially law enforcement, and share off-street parking:

"at such time as it becomes economically feasible, a larger, more modern City Municipal Building should be constructed to serve the growing community. Site expansion into the adjacent parking lot offers an excellent possibility for new construction, thus permitting the City Hall to be more closely unified with the total complex recommended herein."

The Daily report also stated that the Second Street fire station adjoining city hall provided "excellent protection" to the central business district. However, there was no room for structural expansion without intruding on adjacent parking space. Enlargement of the fire station should follow any construction of a new Municipal Building.

COMMISSIONER'S SOLUTION 1970s

A new one cent sales tax and the era of Federal Revenue Sharing in the 1970s made possible competing city projects in street, sewer and airport improvements. Revenue sharing increased the power and the responsibility of local government to solve its problems through allocation of federal money. A portion of these funds were used to gradually remodel rather than to rebuild city hall during the first half of the 1970s. Not until 1982 was a new downtown fire station constructed adjoining the Municipal Building.



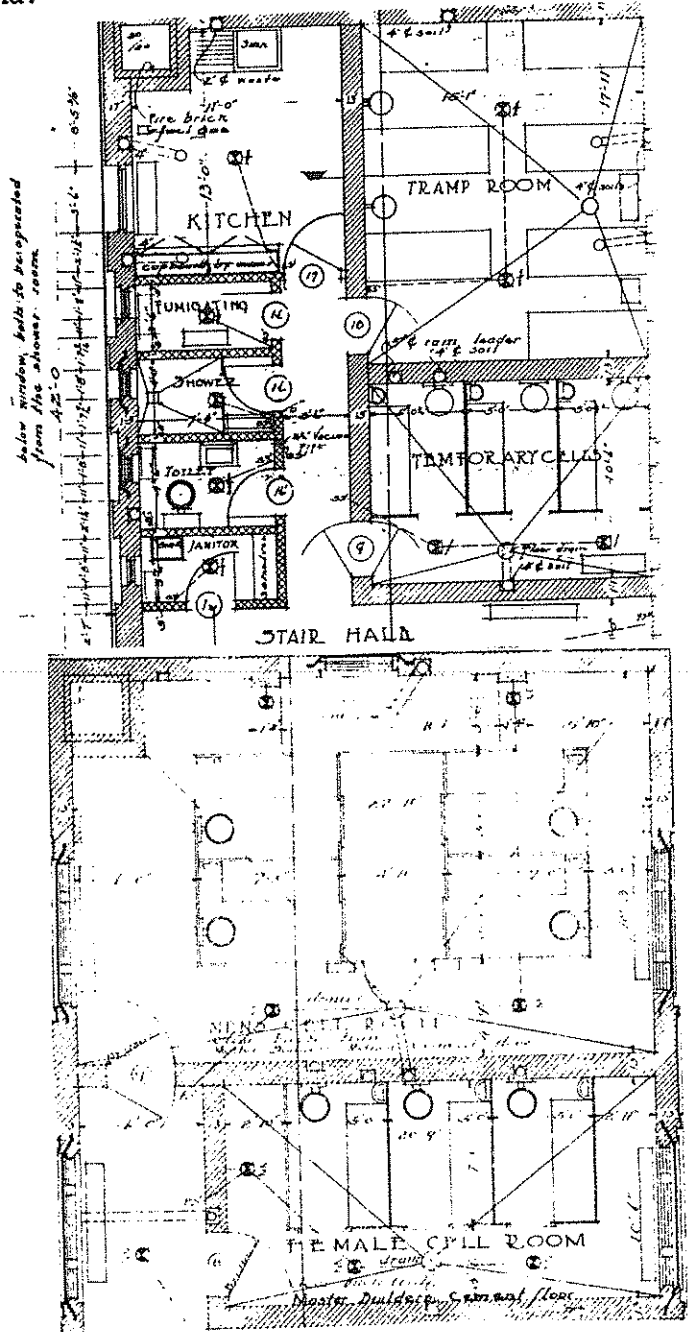
2ND AVE 1982-96
FIRE STATION
GARAGES NOW
POLICE TRAIN-
ING ROOM

MUNICIPAL HALL: THE NORTH EXTENSION

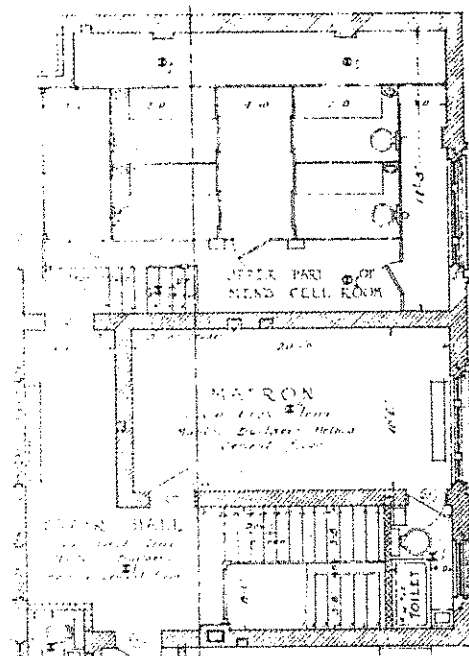
Most photos of Aberdeen's Municipal Building focus on the frontal view from Lincoln Street or an angular view showing both the Lincoln Street and Second Avenue perspective. However, from the Brown County Court House on First Avenue one notes the 40' long X 30' wide north extension of the rectangular city hall which faces Lincoln Street and Second Avenue. As a result the Municipal building takes on an L shaped appearance from the First Street perspective. Most of the 40' long North Wing is at the rear of the original fire station portion of Municipal Hall. Architect George Fossum's 1913 plans reveal the space usage for this north extension. Renovation plans of the early 1970s demonstrate further changes in space usage. The basement level housed the boiler room and heating apparatus as well as storage space. The ground floor of the North Extension provided detention facilities for the police department which maintained headquarters in the main building's east-end.

Cement flooring characterized all floors of the North Wing. The North Extension's ground floor space was used initially in 1914 and until about 1970-1972 as a jail with temporary cells, an overnight lodging room for transients and a large prisoner fumigation room. In the stair hall outside the main detention rooms was a door opening to the janitor's room. Entering the holding area from the south end by way of the stair hall, one viewed on the left side of the corridor a toilet room 4'6" wide, and a shower room 4' wide & finally a fumigating room. At the corridor's end with its own door was a kitchen 11' x 13'. On the right side of the corridor were 2 rooms. On the north was the Tramp Room 15'1" x 17'11". At the south end closest to the stair hallway were 3 temporary cells each 5' x 10'6".

Accessible by stairs leading up from the lower level and down to the ground floor below, the northern wing's 2nd floor housed segregated cells; the female cell room was 20' x 10'6", was closest to the stair hall and held 3 cells. Down a 6' wide corridor from the stair hall, past the female cell room was a door to the Men's Cell Room, 18'3" long, at the north end of that wing. Six cells with capability of handling 8 men awaited prisoners. On Thurs. Sept. 24, 1914 ten prisoners were transferred from the old city jail to the new building. Escorted by Chief G.W. Hurst, Jim Limboe of Aberdeen was the first man to be confined in the new jail. One prisoner told a reporter: "This certainly is swell doin's, but, do you know, I'd rather be outside."



The top floor of the North Wing held facilities for prisoners awaiting trial in the nearby 3rd floor courtroom. North of the stairs and the main building's courtroom was a police matron's room with toilet and bathroom as well as 4 men's cells accomodating 8 men who could be brought to the nearby courtroom through the hallway. The floor plan was much like that of the second floor. Upon entering the stair hall one entered the Matron's room, 10'6" long and 20'9" wide. Further northward down the corridor an iron stairs led to the roof. Nearby at the northern most part of that wing the men's cell room stretched northward 18'3" and west to east about 26'. The room contained 4 cells each 7' wide.



The Leo Daly report of the late 1960s assessed the space situation at city hall with special attention to the police department section which occupied "only 1500 square feet of usable space" and was "totally inadequate for the enforcement needs of Aberdeen". By the late 1960s Brown County built a new county jail and the city of Aberdeen signed an agreement on Jan. 13, 1967 and later on May 13, 1971 and in 1972 providing that city prisoners who had violated city ordinances or were pending trial on other charges be housed in the county facility rather than in the Municipal jail. This action focused attention on usage of that former city jail space. The Daly report had recommended co-operative effort with the county to co-ordinate and consolidate government services, especially law enforcement, and share off-street parking: "The new County Jail, for example, could be used by the City Police Department to help relieve some of its space problems in the City Hall."

1972 RENOVATIONS TO NORTH WING

Renovations of the early 1970s began with phased in construction on City Hall's police department which since 1914 had a ground floor headquarters at the Second Avenue entrance and space in the North extensions' 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors. Phase I with a base bid of \$17,207 in June 1967 and Phase II with its base bid of \$22,635 in April 1970 began alterations which continued throughout Phase III remodeling in 1972-1973. At its meeting of February 9, 1970 city commissioners authorized hiring of Herges, Kirchgassler and Associates to prepare plans for remodeling the police department. Commissioners awarded Hughes-Johnson Construction a police department remodeling contract for \$11,585 plus 8 alternates at its April 27, 1970 meeting. Change orders were occasionally issued to meet additional expenses.

Based on the architectural plans of Herges, Kirchgassler and Associates of 1972, the police department lost all 3rd floor space in the North Extension. Contractors installed a new floor system. Windows on both west and east sides were replaced. In that North Wing the Municipal Court gained former jail cell space to provide room for a jury/meeting room, a waiting room and a room for court clerks. The former Matron's room became a jury/meeting room 10'4"x20'6". Northward along a corridor and behind the jury room the former men's cell area

was converted into a 8'x10' waiting room located near the hall doorway, and a 16'x18' general office for the Municipal Court which occupied most of the space east and north of the waiting room. Behind the waiting room and west of the general office space was an area 8'x11'6" reserved for court clerks. Nordling Construction Company secured the contract for its bid of \$31,650 in March, 1973 which also included remodeling for offices the former restroom building east of the Municipal Building. Since termination of the Municipal Court system in 1975, the former clerk of the court space on the 3rd floor was empty for some time but eventually made way for an employees' lounge.

On the 2nd floor of the North Wing, which had held cells for males and females, the police department lost half its former space. The Dairy and Food Department gained a 10'6"x20'6" space formerly occupied by women's cells. The police department retained the remodeled former men's cell area for an evidence, storage space 18'x27'. New windows were installed and old bars removed from three west side and three east side windows of the former cell area.

On the 1st floor North extension behind the east-end fire station a door connected the main police headquarters. Renovation of the 1970s provided new uses for the former temporary cells, the overnight transient lodging room and the prisoner fumigation room. On the west side of the North wing's first floor were three rooms: one 7'x8' for the traffic Sgt., an interrogation room 7'x8' and a squad room 11'x3. On the east side were 3 rooms: one 10'6"x15' for the B.I.A.; a detective's room 10'6"x15' and a 3rd room with split functions --a 7'x9' dark room and an evidence storage room 5'6"x6'.

EAST END REMODELING 1981-1982 POLICE DEPARTMENT EXPANSION

In 1981 and 1982 (Remodeling Phase 12 & 13) the police department gained space which made up some losses from the renovations of the early 1970s. The city commission approved a budget supplement of \$232,000 in September 1980 to help finance remodeling of the existing downtown fire station and to build a new one. Previously they transferred \$92,997 from the contingency fund to the fire department building and equipment fund. Construction of a new 13,688 square foot fire station adjoining the east end of the Municipal Building made possible remodeling for police use 3532 square feet on the 1st and 2nd floors of Municipal Hall's old fire station.

At the open house for the fire station September 12, 1982 the remodeled area for the police department offered these accommodations: A new communications center for the Municipal Building occupied the former 29' long and 18.5 feet wide police department headquarters which had housed the police chief and his assistant as well as the safety commissioner. TV monitors enabled dispatchers to watch corridor activity in the halls of the Municipal Building. In August 1982 the Aberdeen American News alerted Aberdonians to a new telephone system with new numbers for each city department.

In the former fire department ground floor engine room with its 2 wide doors opening on Second Avenue, construction workers carved out several rooms. From general office in the former Police Department headquarters a corridor led into the remodeled Fire Department and turned both north and south to provide access to these varied offices. The Chief of Police occupied a 15'1"x12'x10" office in the most westerly room of that remodeled area whereas the Public Safety Commissioner, headquartered in the adjoining room to the east, moved to an office in the NW corner of the main building's second floor. His former office functioned as a storage/garage area with the overhead 2d Avenue door serving as an operative exit. To the rear or north of the police chief's office the

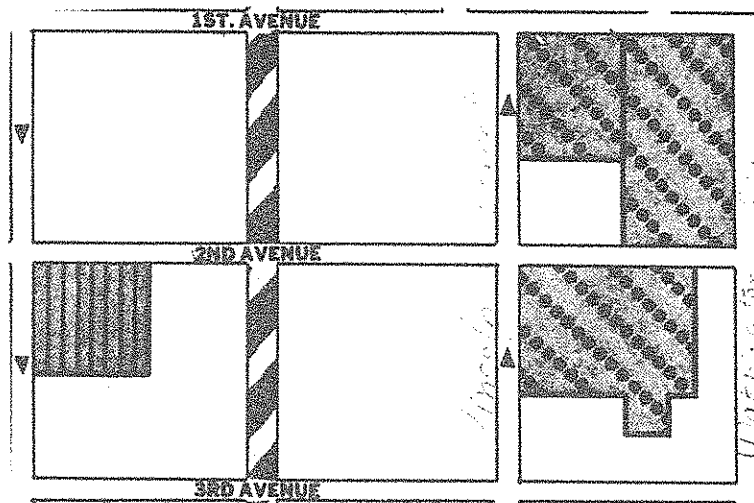
Assistant Police Chief occupied an office with 11'8"x13'3" dimensions. A hall corridor separated these administrative offices from a large squad room 19'10" x 16'. The supervisor's room, 12'7" x 13', was located at the end of this west to east corridor. In the extreme NE corner along the southern edge of a corridor which connected with adjoining Municipal Building halls were toilets. To the east of the men's toilet stood a locker room 6' wide. The 2nd floor dorm area, which previously housed the fire chief's office, bed space for firemen, a gymnasium and lockers, was converted to police usage. Two offices fronted the Second Avenue side of the old fire department. They were a detective captain's quarters and a Juvenile Office to the east with a storage space east of that. Two inch insulation to the exterior walls of these 2 street front offices served as sound and cold barriers. In the westerly office remodelers covered up a floor fire pole exit to the 1st floor, one of 2 such exits on this floor. To the rear of these frontal rooms was a large interior space designated as a detective office area. Removal of another fire pole, used formerly for speedy passage to the fire engine room below, the rail and cover along with closure of the fire pole opening made a major change in the appearance of the floor. Also concrete topping contributed to the new floor look as it replaced the wood floor and sleepers. Wall removal opened space to rear rooms. On the east side were two interrogation rooms with a special viewing window for each room. To the west of these was a polygraph room and west of that a storage room.

Thus the Municipal Building's North Wing along with the Second Avenue 1st floor facilities, and later the 2nd floor rooms, provided a base from which law and order, so basic to any functioning and successful civilization, was administered. The public safety role of Aberdeen's police department and North Wing's 3rd floor Municipal Court (Magistrate's Court after Jan. 7, 1975 contributed to the image of City Hall as a power and service center.

ACCESSIBILITY OF MUNICIPAL BUILDING 1970s to 1990s

PARKING

Paved parking lots and street parking permit motorists to be within reasonable walking distance to the municipal building. Between First Avenue SE to the north and the city hall corner is one sizeable lot shared with Brown County and across 2d Avenue to the south is another large lot in addition to street parking along Second Avenue & Lincoln Streets. In 1978 when Main Street was under construction, parking lots on Lincoln Street around City Hall were improved. Until 1981-82 the space now occupied by the fire department was used for parking as illustrated in the sketch below.



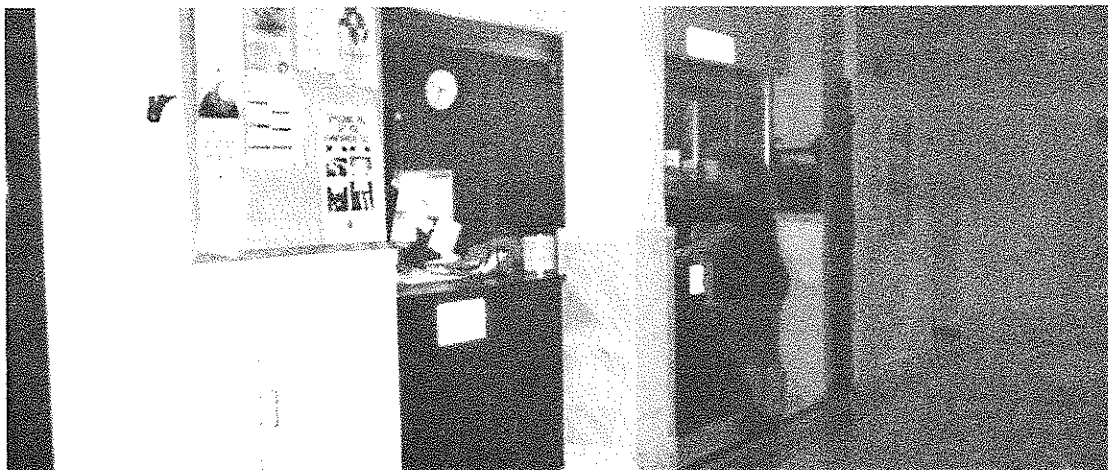
CORRIDORS AND COUNTERS

The Lincoln Street ground level entryway with its double doors allow passage into a vestibule or foyer which leads to the stair hall and a central west-east corridor. Flanked by varied service areas this corridor meets with a north-south corridor leading from the Second Avenue entrance past the police department to the parking lot exit creating a T shaped pattern.

LINCOLN
STREET
ENTRYWAY



Until recent renovations the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floor west-east corridors were centrally located with offices and service counters flanking the north and south sides of each corridor. Today there are 3 public service counters along the 1st floor—a finance dept. counter to pay water bills and 2 counters inside office doors—1 in the finance office near the Lincoln Street entrance and 1 in the auditor's office at the corridor's east-end. Before 1990s renovations the auditor's service counter opened on the south side of 2nd floor. After a 1978 remodeling of the 2nd floor the former Girl Scout Room provided a corridor leading to the 2nd floor north wing. In 1996 the door to this corridor reads: Detectives, Records. Photo below of 1st floor Finance Dept. service counter.



The renovations of 1990s altered the 3rd floor traffic pattern most drastically in that the central corridor was eliminated and a west-to-east corridor was placed along the north wall leading to the courtroom corridor at the east end. On this 3rd floor a short north-to-south corridor led from the front stairs hall past the northwest conference room to join with the north wall, west-east corridor. The 3rd floor has an enlarged space with interior service counter for its varied offices--engineering, building, planning, zoning, water, public works. The traffic patterns enabled by these corridors and counters contribute to the service image of Aberdeen's municipal building.



STAIRWAYS

Until the renovations of the early 1970s stairs were the only way to reach the basement and the 2 upper floors. A door to the south conceals the basement stairs as one enters the Lincoln Street foyer. At the Lincoln Street stair hall 2 narrow, split stairways, one on the north side of the corridor and the other on the south side lead to the 2nd floor and its central corridor. The 11 step, split stairway continues from the 2nd floor west end to a landing where a wider, 10 step single stairway leads to the 3rd floor. At the east-end of the 2nd floor is a stairs leading to the 3rd floor courtroom corridor. These stairs begin with a wide 6 steps leading to a landing at which point the stairway turns northward and moves upward by means of 15 steps to the 3rd floor.

Stairs are not immediately available to those using the parking lot or Second Avenue entrances. However, within the police department east-end a stairway leads from the 1st floor to the basement and at the rear of the police/fire station a stairs leads to the 2nd floor north extension. This stairway continues to the 3rd floor and is accessible from the 2nd floor police spaces. Upon entering the 1st floor door on the west side parking lot entrance of the North Wing, a 4 step stairway leads to the police department area. The 2nd floor north corridor office door labeled detectives and records section leads to a 6 step stairway which connects with the police department sections at the east end of city hall and its north wing 2nd floor.



WEST-END STAIRS TO 3RD FLOOR

ELEVATOR SPACE

George Fossum's architectural plan of 1913 provided for a future elevator area on all floors. Not until the 3rd phase renovation of 1972-73 did the elevator take its place as a means of making the building more accessible to employees and to the public, especially the handicapped. On Sept. 12, 1972 Mayor Solem and Commissioners Gates, Nikolas and Donahue met in special session to approve plans and specifications for Phase Three renovation which included an elevator as well as remodeling the treasurer's office. They set a bid-letting date for Oct. 3, 1972. Frobschle & Sons Inc. of Bismarck, N.D. submitted the lowest base bid of \$66,500 compared to Aberdeen's Nordling Construction Company bid of \$67,486. On Oct. 10, 1972 architects Herges, Kirchgasler & Commissioners Nikolas and Zemlicka recommended to the commission acceptance of the lowest bid with an addition of alternate No. 1, new electrical service, for \$7,400 and rejection of 8 other alternates. At their Nov. 28, 1972 meeting the city commission approved \$6,920 to be transferred from the unexpended balance fund to pay remodeling costs by means of Ordinance 1327 supplementing the annual appropriation for 1972. It passed a second reading and was adopted Dec. 5, 1972.



3RD FLOOR ELEVATOR ENCLOSURE 1995



Installation of an elevator in the shaft area provided in 1913 construction plans was the most expensive remodeling task and impacted all floors. Herges and Kirchgasler had estimated costs to be \$25,000 in their space analysis of April 5, 1972. In the basement level new footings for elevator pit foundations were placed and a 12' concrete wall was placed on the east end of the pit. Contractors closed an opening 2'10"x6.4" on the east end of the elevator shaft. They removed tile wall on the south end of that shaft and a stud wall on the southwest in front of the elevator equipment room.

To provide 1 door opening to the elevator shaft on the south end of the shaft the existing pyrobar wall was removed. On the 1st floor an elevator car entrance was created facing the hall corridor not far from the front hall stairs. The south wall had to be removed to secure access to the elevator cage. On the 3rd or top floor by the Lincoln Street stairs an elevator lobby 13'4"x17'8" was created, much wider than the narrower corridor stretching eastward. Removal of an existing wall on the east side of the shaft and a vault wall in the center of the shaft were necessary. A 12" block wall was removed between the elevator and the Health Office to the north. In the 1995 2nd and 3rd floor remodeling the elevator hatchway was segregated from the hall and corridor area by a walled enclosure with a door to access the elevator.

PART V CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN SPACE USAGE

This history focuses on changes and continuities in physical space and omits many of the important electrical and mechanical changes involving lighting fixtures and outlets, ceiling replacement, electric wiring both visible and hidden and some other technical changes. Roof repair receives little attention. The spotlight is on the more visible changes and continuities of corridors and room spaces on varied floors. With the construction of other auditoriums and large group meeting places the need for a city hall auditorium diminished. City Hall as a public gathering place continued to have some space which might be used for public forums. In 1996 the 2nd floor has 2 conference rooms, 1 on each side of the central corridor and the 3rd floor has 1 small conference room in the NW corner. The 3rd floor North Wing features an employee lounge and a jury room and the main building courtroom which may also be considered meeting places to substitute for the large 3rd floor assembly hall which, in 1972, was converted into work space. In the past even basement space had served as a meeting place for groups such as the Boy Scouts or for people seeking safety from severe weather.

ALL LEVEL FIRE DETECTION SYSTEMS

In 1986 \$200,000 renovation in heating and air conditioning work had taken place in Municipal Hall. However, not until the 1990s was improved fire protection implemented. In December 1994 Aberdeen Fire Marshall Mike Thompson described the Municipal Hall as "not even equipped with a fire alarm or sprinkler system. Open stairways and lack of fire-resistant doors would allow fire to spread quickly and make escape from the building difficult especially during Magistrate Court days of Monday, Wednesday and Friday." To be fully modernized and to fulfill safety standards fire detection systems were installed on all floors in the 1995 rehabilitation. Technicians placed fixed temperature thermal fire alarm detectors in all offices of the 1st floor and in the east-end bathroom. Also, they were placed in the 2nd floor elevator and all offices of that floor and on the 3rd floor elevator and offices. Two 3rd floor offices did

not have them because of the low partitions opening on larger center spaces. Ionization fire detection systems were reserved for 2nd and 3rd floor elevator enclosures, halls, stair landings, and corridors. Fire alarm horns were scattered throughout the building. Architectural plans of 1995 designated 10 horns for the basement, 11 for the first floor, 10 for the 2nd floor and 8 for the 3rd floor. Corridor fire doors have been installed to check spread of fire.

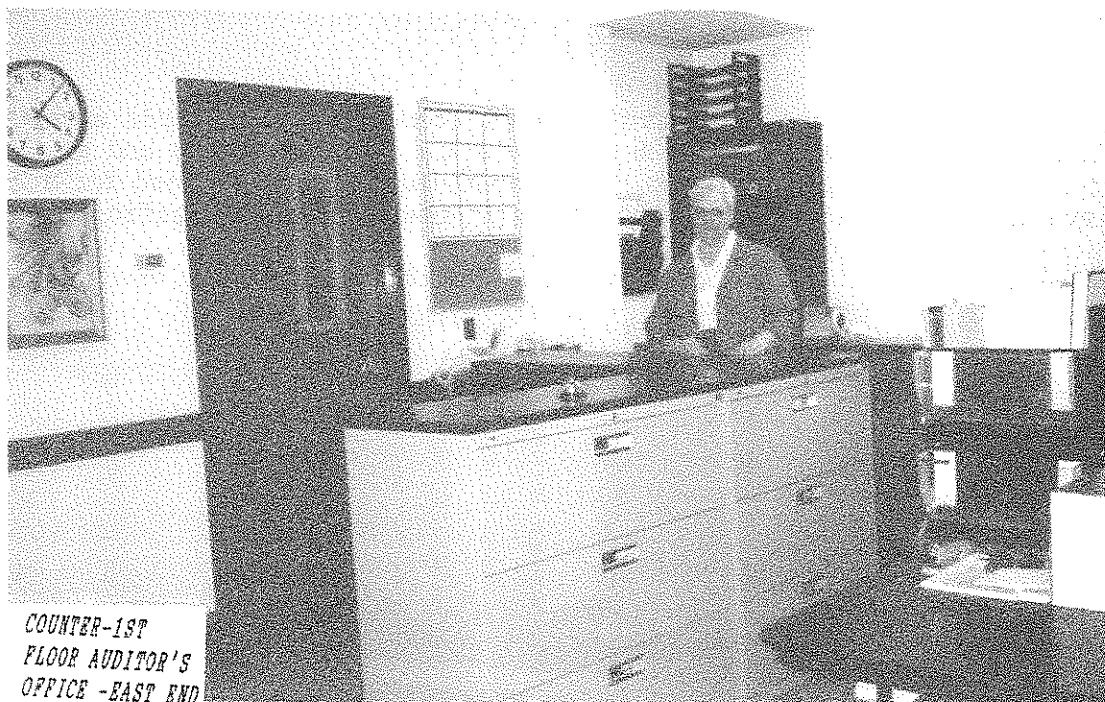
BASEMENT LEVEL

The architect's plans for 1972 renovation place the water meter room at the NW end providing space 15'4"x 24'4" for that equipment. To the east 2 small vaults are available. A storage space takes up the SW corner. At the SE end planners designated space 18'2"x 56'5" for a police department meeting room. At the center of the east-end is a police locker room 10'x 32' with a door at the east end. At the NE end are 2 vaults, 14'3"x19'10" and 14'9"x 26'6". A central corridor gives access to all of these spaces and works its way around the elevator area. The Fire Station Work Room is 33'x53' where many children's toys were repaired prior to the Christmas season. The basement of the North Wing contained a boiler room 18'x 27' at the north end and a storage room, 15'4"x20'x10", at the south end of the wing. This more invisible portion of Municipal Hall provided storage and work space for overcrowded areas above. It heated the many offices and corridors and provided refuge for the general public in case of severe weather.

GROUND FLOOR SPACE AND SERVICES

During the early 1970s, in 1981 and also in the mid 1990s remodeling called for shifting offices from one floor to another or to new spaces on the same floor. Between 1972 and 1995 three offices shifted location from the 2nd floor to the 1st floor. The 930 square foot treasurer's office, located since 1913 on the north side of the 2nd floor corridor near the future elevator area, moved to the 1st floor as a part of Phase Three remodeling 1972-73. That office extended its operations the full length of the corridor's north side as far as the east-end north-south corridor. A wall between rooms was removed to make this possible. Access to the vault, previously from the most eastern space, was now possible from the more westerly room. The Finance Officer located in the extreme NW corner of the 1st floor retained his office space, 9'6"x17'2", which was not involved in Phase III changes. In 1981 the assessor moved from the NW corner of the second floor to combine with the 1st floor finance department. The treasurer's quarters retained their location in the 1995 renovation which did provide a 4' wide exit door on the east end between the bathrooms and to the police department north-south corridor. A 1st floor treasurer's office meant no stairs or elevator use for customers who wished to pay bills in person.

In 1995 remodeling the 2nd floor auditor's office relocated to the south side of the 1st floor corridor opposite the treasurer's rooms. In contrast to the treasurer's corridor service counter, the auditor's service counter was enclosed by a wall with a corridor door entry. Thus, previously separated financial services achieved a more efficient proximity, the auditor's quarters became more accessible to the public and interaction between employees of both offices became easier and speedier.



Changes in location from within the 1st floor include movement in 1982 of the telephone switchboard from the SW end to the east-end original police department headquarters. The Street Commissioner moved his office from the Northwest corner of the 1st floor across the hall to the corridor's south side in the early 1970s. Moves from the 1st floor to other floors also occurred. In 1995 the Public Works Commissioner, formerly in the 1st floor's SE corner, quartered on the 3rd floor. The Meter Room on the north side of the 1st floor corridor found space in the basement. To prevent spread of fire 2 fire doors were placed on the 1st floor at the central corridor's west end and a folding iron grate is used for nighttime closing of the corridor's east-end as the north-south police department corridor is open to the public at all times. In 1995 the bathroom at the second avenue entrance on the west side of the north-south corridor was removed to make room for the auditor's files. At the east end of the central corridor a TV camera monitors those who use that hallway.

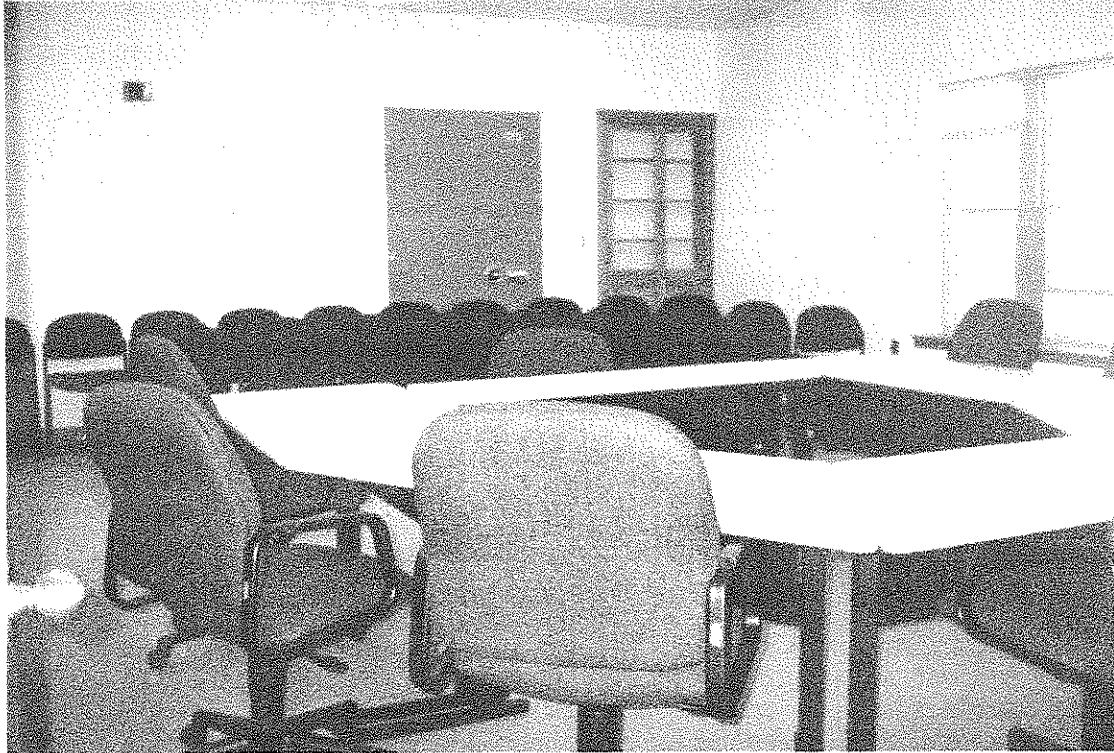
SECOND FLOOR SPACE AND SERVICES

Phase III floor plans of 1972 provided for remodeling the former treasurer's office at a cost of \$16,740 according to the long range space analysis of architectural firm Herges, Kirchgasler and Associates. The health nurse was assigned this 17'6"x34' space but the assessor moved in until 1981 when he transferred to the first floor NW corner combining with the finance department. By 1991 the city assessor's position was terminated. The 2nd floor elevator addition of 1972 has been previously noted as increasing city hall's accessibility. The east-end space, formerly the assessors office before 1973, was used for filing purposes until 1977 when it became the computer room initiating an entirely new service in data storage and retrieval.

The Girl Scouts moved from their 3rd floor office to a 2nd floor office 9'x19'8" east of the Commission Chambers. With a bid of \$34,750 Nordling Construction implemented Phase 6 renovation in 1974 by remodeling the 2nd floor auditor's office as well as working on the 2nd floor of the old city jail in the North Wing and completing some roof repair. Remodeling of the auditor's space included construction of a public service counter open to the 2nd floor corridor. On April

8, 1975 the city commission, considering most remodeling completed, accepted Milbrandt and Grote's bid for \$44,926 to update the heating system and provide for air conditioning of the 2nd floor. The remodeling of 1995 provided for a 2nd floor elevator enclosure isolating the elevator area from hall traffic.

2ND FLOOR COMMISSION CHAMBERS 1995



The floor plans of 1995 provided 2 meeting rooms where only 1 previously existed north of the corridor. By transferring the auditor's office to the 1st floor from its location south of the central corridor that space was remodelled for use as city commission chambers. A new wall closed off the former auditor's counter which had been open to the corridor. The former commission chambers on the corridor's north side was split into 2 parts by a new wall leaving a 9' office for the Risk manager with a corridor leading into the Personnel Office and eastward a small meeting area 18'3" wide. The girl scout area vacated about 1978 now provides a corridor to the 2nd floor North Wing and the police department offices. The Mayor's offices in the SW corner and in the SE corner the computer room (established in 1977) remained in their previous locations. The 2nd floor elevator addition was previously noted when describing accessibility of city hall.

THIRD FLOOR SPACE AND SERVICES

During the early 1970s a major change on the 3rd floor of the main building was the partitioning of the large assembly auditorium room which had seen much service over the past decades as a public meeting place. Much of the old assembly room was carved up into sections separated by a central corridor. On the north

side of the 3rd floor's east-end corridor contractors built 3 rooms---a mechanical equipment and pipe space room, 6'x16', sandwiched between bathroom's. On the south side of that east-end corridor was a room 20'4"x 21'8", for future office expansion. A drafting room, 2'14"x40', took shape on the south side of the 3rd floor corridor and a Park Department room, 28'4"x 21'8", on the north side of that corridor. The Park department vacated that space in January 1993 for new quarters at 612 10th Avenue SE. They needed "breathing space" because city hall had become "a bit crowded". Ironically this initiated a potential return to the situation before 1913 when city government units were scattered about the city. The Girl Scouts lost their space on 3rd floor and transferred to a new office on the 2nd floor. A major change already noted was installation of a 3rd floor elevator. In 1995 an enclosure made the elevator area more private.

In the 1995 renovation the 3rd floor central corridor was abolished in favor of a north wall corridor---a change previously noted in describing the building's accessibility features. A large conference room 17'6" wide occupied the NW corner of that floor. That space had previously quartered the housing authority and city planner, the county health nurse after vacating the 2nd floor's NW corner and before moving to the county court house basement, and for a time the clerk of the court before moving in 1973 to the rear of the North Wing. A huge room took the place of that former central corridor and adjoining offices. Entering a door east of the elevator enclosure, a waiting room with a public service counter awaits visitors. Behind that counter is a 15' long sideroom on the north for the building inspector and one 12' wide for the planning office. New walls had to be constructed on the north side of these rooms to segregate them from the new north hall traffic. In the SE corner with windows facing 2nd avenue were the offices of the Public Works Director, City Engineer and Assistant Engineer. To privatize the city engineer's office carpenters installed a new wall. In the area that had formerly housed the drafting room and another room designated in 1972 for future office expansion, the planning technician occupied a sideroom, 16'5"x11'9", and the Engineer Technician quartered in an adjoining sideroom, 16'5"x12'9". These rooms have low partitions facing the large center spaces. At the end of this south space was a records room, 8'9" wide. At the east end of the central room a door exits to the Magistrate Court north-south corridor.

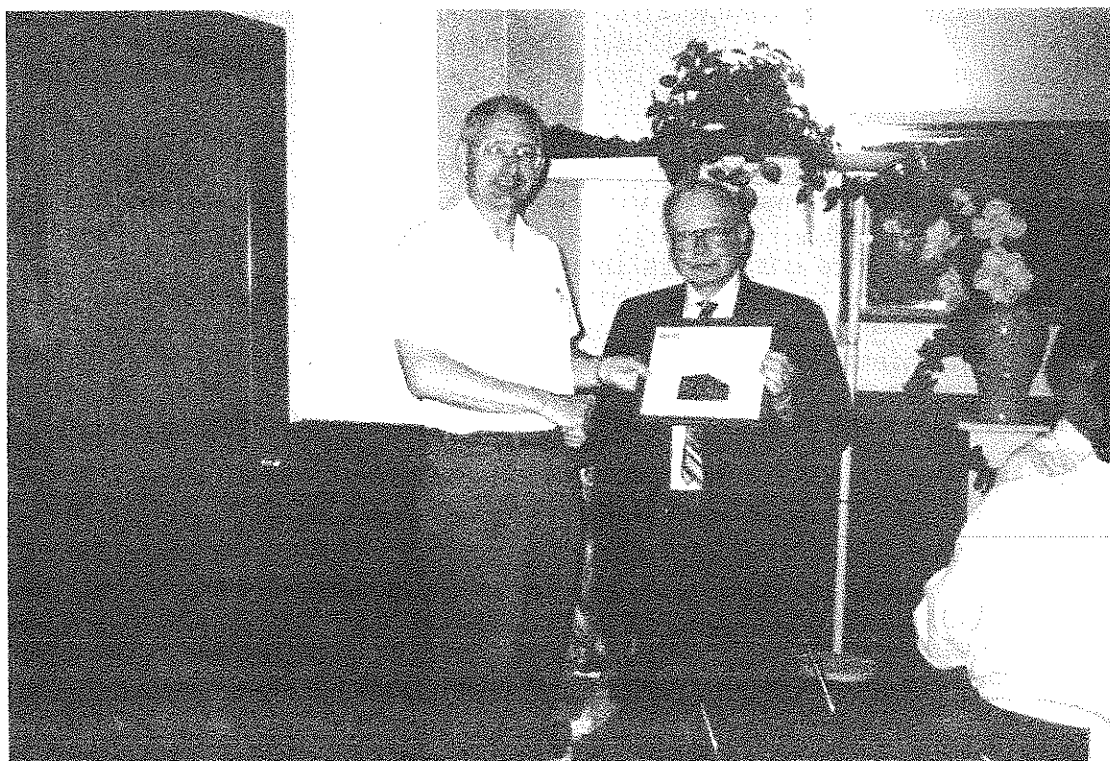
In May 1995 Zeller Brothers Construction of Aberdeen received payment of \$64,200 for over half the 3rd floor remodeling then completed and for bringing 1st floor bathrooms into compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. The architectural firm of Herges, Kirchgasler, Geisler and Associates received \$14,864 for their services. Commissioners opened tuck pointing bids in May 1995 to clean the building surfaces, to chip out deteriorated mortar and to seal cracks. The city commission had approved a \$268,000 project. They took pride in reducing that amount by \$6,204 through reusing ceiling tile in 2 rooms, light fixtures in 6 rooms, and changing wire moldings to surface mounted conduits instead of recessed conduits.

CONCLUSION

Faced with the dilemma of competing projects and limited funds thrifty-minded commissioners over the decades had decided that piecemeal remodeling in the quest for space was the responsible way to improve public service and the work environment at a time of expanding services. They and Aberdeen architects envisioned modernization. Construction contractors carried out those dreams. Despite the altered symmetry of the interior 3rd floor by replacement of a central corridor with a north wall corridor, the Municipal Building today retains

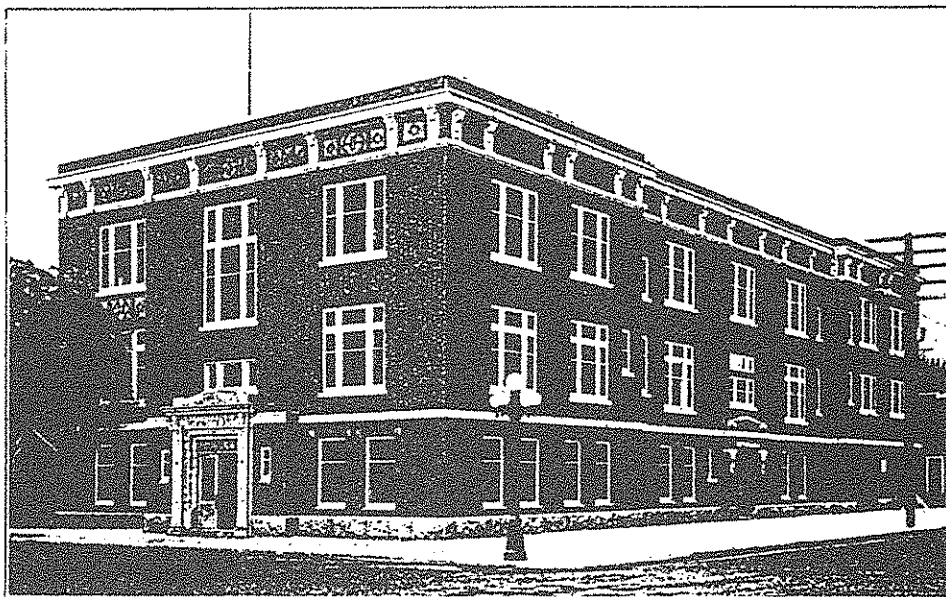
marbled stairs and wainscot, tiled hallways, stained glass windows, numerous vaults and other historic features. Commissioners had heeded the American News editorial of September 19, 1993 to proceed with caution in dismantling features that gave historic identity to that landmark. In March 1990 Mayor Rich asserted that if the city had \$1 million available, funds might be better spent erecting a new facility to replace the 1913 structure. However, the general fund lacked that amount. Thus lack of funds as well as preservationist attitudes and pressures resulted in a historic Aberdeen building saved for future generations by making it functional with changing times.

Historic Preservation Week in May 1996 focused on the theme of partnership between past and present, preserving community and saving special places. At a special luncheon the Aberdeen/Brown County Landmarks Commission recognized the Aberdeen City Commission as "Heroes of Preservation". The framed certificate commended them for transforming the Municipal Building during 1995-96 into a more productive and accessible work place with the potential of a higher level of public service while attempting to preserve architecturally significant elements.



Hollis Hurlbert accepted the "Heroes of Preservation" certificate for the Aberdeen City Commission in May, 1996

"Old is not necessarily out-of-date, our society has belatedly discovered. Nor is "Modern" always synonymous with charm and elegance". The Aberdeen American News, September 19, 1993.



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SENSE OF SPACE

Prior to 1913 the Central Lumber Company's complex located (until 1949) eastward on 2d Ave SE forced construction in 1913 of an extension 40' northward on city-owned property rather than extending the Municipal Building further along 2d Ave. The main building's north-south wall separating the first and second floor public service corridors on the west-end from the police and fire departments on the east-end shortens those corridors and creates the impression of interior spaces not as imposing in length as the exterior 2d Ave. facade of 154' suggests.

LANDMARKS COMMISSION
ABERDEEN/BROWN COUNTY

The current Landmarks Commission originated May 11, 1978. Both the county & city commissions endorsed a comprehensive program for historical preservation. S.D. Compiled Laws--Chapter 1-19B--County and Historical Activities, authorized the "Landmarks Commission" to act officially, according to approved statutes.

Originally formed to promote a comprehensive program of historic preservation in Brown County and Aberdeen, the Landmarks Commission functions to promote adaptive use and conservation of historic parks and properties--business and residential, urban and rural--through an educational and inspirational program aimed at enriching the lives of area citizens, encouraging tourism and promoting economic development. One objective is to help people nominate eligible properties to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Initially a subsidiary of the Brown County Historical Society, the Landmarks Commission joined the new Certified Local Government Program (C.L.G.) in 1985. The Brown County and Aberdeen Commissioners adopted South Dakota Certified Law 1-198 again as they did in 1978. CLG status qualifies it to apply for federal funds matched locally in cash and services.

The Landmarks Commission has conducted educational programs, made grant applications, promoted National Preservation Week in May of each year, attended state meetings, assisted in Open Houses at renovated structures, promoted improvement of Wylie Park Pavilion, established 3 historic districts, and conducted tours. They have published several booklets, the most recent of which are "Aberdeen's Parkland Heritage 1882-1931", an updated Centennial Village Brochure, and the present Municipal Hall booklet. It has also ventured into the film making arena with a Kaleidoscope Production VCR film "Exploring Brown County Heritage" available at the Dacotah Prairie Museum. A pictorial narrative on small town Brown County parks and a Brown County calendar with black and white drawings of historic structures is forthcoming. The Landmarks Commission may be contacted by writing Box 1420 Municipal Building, 123 South Lincoln, Aberdeen, SD 57402-1420.

LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING
1995 REMODELED CONFERENCE ROOM: NW CORNER, 3RD FLOOR
MUNICIPAL BUILDING



RECOGNITIONS

The publication of this booklet has been financed with Federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior through the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Center. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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Funding and in-kind support from the city of Aberdeen and Brown County has also contributed to the research, photo reproductions and publication of this booklet. City Commission minutes on file at the Alexander Mitchell Library and Aberdeen newspapers 1911-1996 also on microfilm there have been most helpful in researching the early years of City Hall as well as later episodes in its renovation. Recognition is extended to Dacotah Prairie Museum for reproductions from their photo files and to the Aberdeen American News for a file photo. The landmark commission thanks Stuart Nelson in the City Engineer's office for access to the original floor plans and the remodeling plans of the 1970s and 1980s. The auditor's office provided 1995 demolition and remodeling plans. Useful too were the files provided by the architectural firm Herges, Kirchgslers and Associates and their "Long Range Space Analysis of the Municipal Building" formulated in 1972. Mary Cross shared information on Girl Scout offices in the Municipal Building and Peg Lamont shared knowledge of the Red Cross work in the Assembly Hall during the 1940s. Gene Aisenbrey shared stories of the boy scout patrol and use of the city hall basement. Candy Lindskov in the Auditor's office provided data on office moves and functions. Orville Evenson, former city band director, revealed usage of the third floor assembly hall for city band purposes. Robert Patterson recalled community sing-a-longs in that third floor assembly room. The Landmark Commission files also had some photos and pertinent information. Most helpful was police chief Al Aden who conducted a tour of police headquarters in order to confirm the current placement of offices and services as compared with the remodeling plans of 1982.

Dr. Art Buntin, chair of the Aberdeen/Brown County Landmarks Commission, takes full responsibility for the narrative, interpretations and format of this booklet along with any inaccuracies that might surface in a work of this complexity. Readers who have corrections or additional stories and pictures of Municipal Hall, its interior or exterior, please notify the Aberdeen/Brown County Landmarks Commission, Box 1420, Aberdeen, SD 57402-1420.

ABERDEEN'S POLICE STATION



2ND AVENUE SE ENTRANCE