

Louisville City Hall
601 W. Jefferson St.,
at the intersection of Sixth St.
Louisville
Jefferson County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-143

HABS,
KY,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LOUISVILLE CITY HALL

HABS No.KY-143

Location: 601 W. Jefferson Street, at the intersection of Sixth Street, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky.

USGS New Albany, Indiana - Kentucky Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16/608430/4234580

Present Owner: City of Louisville.

Present Use: City Hall.

Significance: The seat of Louisville's municipal government, City Hall is a monumental example of Italianate architecture with a fine Mansard clock tower.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: August 8, 1870-June 31, 1873. In 1866 Messrs. Mergell and Andrewartha won an architectural competition for City Hall. On September 2, 1868 final plans were submitted by Andrewartha in conjunction with the firm of Stancliff and Company. Construction began two years later and the building formally opened on July 2, 1873.
2. Architect: John Andrewartha. Little is known about Andrewartha except that he arrived in Louisville on July 4, 1865 "without money and without friends or acquaintances" and claimed to have executed a "large amount of work" by 1873. This work is known to have included the State Capitol Annex in Frankfort and a store on the northwest corner of Eighth and Main Streets in Louisville, later burned. It is highly likely that he designed the Courier-Journal Building at the southeast corner of Fourth and Liberty Streets, Central Colored School at the southeast corner of Sixth and Kentucky Streets, and the Nicholas Finzer School at 730 East Broadway, all in Louisville and all built in the late 1860s and early 1870s.
3. Original and subsequent owners: By Act of Virginia, dated May 1, 1780, land was designated for the purpose of county government. This land took the form of a public square consisting of two single acre lots, each on either side of Sixth Street with Jefferson Street to the south and Congress Alley to the north.

In the erection of the County Courthouse the city and the county agreed to share construction costs. By agreement, recorded in Jefferson County Minute Orders Book 17, page 111, dated September 19, 1835, the county agreed to give the city lots no. 225 and 226, west of Sixth Street, plus \$30,000 as its share of construction costs. The land is presently recorded as lot 73 of block 14-D in the city of Louisville.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The following people who took part in the construction of the building:

James Nevin.....excavation
B. Pfeiffer.....flagging, etc.
Urban Stengel.....masonry
J.D. Fowler.....bricklayer
Sol. McCollum.....brickmaker
Utica Lime Company.....cement
Owen McDonald and Company and
Muldoon, Belknap and Company.....cut stone work
Snead, Sayre, and Company.....ironwork
F.W. Merz.....iron cornice
Speed and Company.....iron stairs and beams
Jacob Rupp.....sand
Barney Campbell.....plastering
Pat Hannon.....terra cotta pipes
M. Muldoon & Co.....marble work
Robert Biggs....plumbing, steam-fitting, & gas fixtures
Emile Bourlier.....tin and galvanized iron
Holt & Frisby.....painters and stainers
Petro Laeber.....frescoes
New Albany Glass Works.....plate glass
George B. Bahr.....locks and hardware
Wrampelmair, Ketzker & Co.,
M. Kirich, J.W. Davis & Co., Gustav Bitter...
...furniture
Mathers, Taylor & Co.....carpets
E. Howard & Co., Boston, Massachusetts.....clocks
George W. Creighton.....water-coolers, spittoons, etc
Jenney & Perry.....rubber goods

5. Original plans and construction: A virtually complete set of original ink and watercolor drawings is in the City Planner's Office in the City Hall. Included are complete plans, elevations, sections, and numerous details, especially of the stonework. Excluded are all drawings of the original tower except for one partial elevation.

An architectural description at its opening is found in the Courier-Journal, July 3, 1873, page 5, columns 2-4.

6. Alterations and additions:

- 1873 Repair of pavement after gas explosion on October 16, 1873.
- 1875-1876 Repair and reconstruction of tower by Henry Whitestone after a fire which totally destroyed it on November 17, 1875. Total cost was \$6,987.75.
- 1906 Annex built on adjoining lot facing Jefferson Street.
- 1926 Steam cleaning of exterior.
- 1952 Steam cleaning of exterior.
- 1956-1960 Complete renovation of building by Thomas D. Lockett of Lockett & Farley. Included in the renovation were a new roof, air-conditioning installation, installation of acoustical ceilings, fluorescent lighting, new flooring, two new elevators in the place of a central open stairwell, an enclosed fire stair, rewiring, replastering, refinishing of woodwork, sandblasting of exterior, repainting of exterior woodwork, installation of aluminum front entry, floodlighting, and new venetian blinds. The exterior remained basically unchanged. Original elements remaining in the interior were some hardware, some woodwork, and much of the mayor's office. Total cost was \$936,500. General contractors were Ale Bornstein and C.W. Melvin Co. of Louisville.
- 1964 Cypress clock hands replaced with aluminum hands.
- 1966 Civil defense emergency operating center was built in interior courtyard by the firm of Tafel and Schickli. Otho Tapp and Sons were the general contractors with a bid of \$209,301.
- 1970 New gutters added and repairs to roof made.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

General description:

The Italianate building is protected on the exterior with stone walls, with rusticated style at the first floor. In the center of the front facade is a handsome projecting pedimented pavilion reminiscent of Renaissance Revival architecture. The pavilion includes a portico at either the first or second floor, with columns, and a balustrated balcony at the third floor, with pilasters adorning the wall. In the tympanum of the pediment is an interesting locomotive design.

This three-story building is further highlighted by an imposing clock tower on the southeastern corner. The clock tower, five stories high, is punctuated with narrow arched windows at the fourth floor, and is sheltered by a crested mansard roof. Each of the four walls of the roof contains the clock. The cornices project out and are supported by brackets.

The windows on the main part of the building are of different types: segmental-arched windows at the first floor; twin windows in single openings with arched tympana containing animal heads at the second floor, and narrow arched windows with columns at the third floor. The bracketed cornice marking the second floor is embellished with metopes and guttae. All other cornices are simple.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings: Plans are located in the City Planner's Office, City Hall, Louisville.

B. Early views:

Louisville City Directories for 1873, 1874, and 1886.

"The Daily Graphic," New York, October 21, 1873, p. 784.

Louisville Pictorial Souvenir, 1890's, Louisville Pictorial Souvenir Company, Louisville, Kentucky.

Photograph made by Doerr, 1898, The Filson Club, Louisville.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and Unpublished sources:

Minute Order Books of the Jefferson Circuit Court, located in the Jefferson County Archives and Records Service, 602 Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Johnston, J. Stoddard. Memorial History of Louisville from its First Settlement to the Year 1896. Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1896, vol. 1, p. 107, vol. 2, p. 337.

Newspaper articles:

"Moving Into City Hall," Louisville Evening Ledger, June 30, 1873.

"The City Buildings," Louisville Evening Ledger, July 2, 1873.

"The New City Hall," Louisville Commercial, July 2, 1873.

"The New City Hall," Courier-Journal, July 2, 1873.

"A Splendid Building," Courier-Journal, July 2, 1873.

Article on gas explosion, Louisville Commercial, October 17, 1873.

- "A Terrible Explosion," Louisville Evening Ledger, October 17, 1873.
- "Gaseous Explosion," Courier-Journal, October 17, 1873.
- "The City Hall Explosion," Louisville Commercial, October 17, 1873.
- "Yesterday's Sensation," Louisville Commercial, October 18, 1873.
- "The City Hall On Fire," Courier-Journal, November 18, 1875.
- "Law Offices Moved to City Hall's Second Floor," Courier-Journal, June 7, 1942.
- "City Hall Overhaul Hits Snag; After All, New One Likely Later," Courier-Journal, June 10, 1943.
- "Last of City Hall Bonds Burned by Commission," Courier-Journal, July 15, 1943.
- "Look Under City Hall and You're Likely to Find Anything - Including Abandoned Catacombs," Louisville Times, October 20, 1950.
- "Bird-Beloved City Hall To Get First Face Cleaning Since 1926," Courier-Journal, May 20, 1952.
- "This two-year Screen Job Was Really Full of Bugs," Courier-Journal, July 1, 1952.
- Photograph of steamcleaning of City Hall, Courier-Journal, July 1, 1952.
- "New Fall Coat," Louisville Times, September 19, 1952.
- "City Hall Still Strong and Healthy at 80," Louisville Times, July 21, 1953.
- "Broadus Plans Remodeling of City Hall," Louisville Times, February 24, 1954.
- "Mayor Planning to Modernize City Hall in 1955 - Program Would Be Started After Police Vacate Building," Courier-Journal, February 24, 1954.
- "The Belle of 1873 Needs a Face-Lifting," Louisville Times, February 27, 1954.

"Jefferson County Landmarks-No. 7," Courier-Journal, September 6, 1954.

"Jefferson County Landmark - No. 34," Courier-Journal, March 14, 1955.

"City Hall Renovation Priced at \$500,000," Courier-Journal, May 11, 1955.

Plan to Renovate City Hall is Pushed," Louisville Times, May 11, 1955.

"City Project Likely to Crowd Out Building," Courier-Journal, May 14, 1955.

"500 Gas Jets Blazed in Louisville's New City Hall," by Melville O. Briney, Louisville Times, May 19, 1955.

"Jefferson County Landmarks - No. 52," Courier-Journal, July 25, 1955.

"City Hall and Annex Grime to Go - Mayor Predicts Work to Start by Spring," Courier-Journal, January 19, 1956.

"Remodeling of City Hall Is Planned," Louisville Times, January 19, 1956.

"There's Plenty of Life in the Old City Hall," Courier-Journal, January 20, 1956.

"Renovation at City Hall Not Far Off," Courier-Journal, April 15, 1956.

Article, The Courier-Journal Magazine, May 6, 1956.

"Work on Remodeling City Hall Expected to Start Next Week," Louisville Times, June 6, 1956.

"City Hall's Face Cleaning to Start Soon - Pigeon Guards to be Installed," Courier-Journal, June 7, 1956.

"Before and After," Courier-Journal, August 9, 1956.

"City Hall Spruces Up - Antique Flavor Favored," Courier-Journal, September 20, 1956.

"Mayor Gives Tips on Hall Decorations," Louisville Times, September 20, 1956.

"Face Lifting is Making City Hall Lighter, Brighter, Safer," Courier-Journal, December 14, 1956.

"City Hall Bid on Renovations to be Opened - Contracts to Cover Third Floor Restoration," Courier-Journal, January 27, 1957.

"City Hall May Be Floodlit," Courier-Journal, February 1, 1957.

"Plan to Floodlight Courthouse, City Hall Studied," Louisville Times, February 1, 1957.

"City Hall Tower, Built in 1876, Was Bargain, 1957 Comparison Shows," Courier-Journal, March 3, 1957.

"Murals Are Suggested for City Hall," Louisville Times, June 7, 1957.

"Bright As a New Penny - New Ceilings, Modern Lighting and Fresh Paint Adorn the City Hall," Courier-Journal Magazine, August 11, 1957.

"Ceiling Zero: Part of 'New Roof' Falls In at Office of Mayor's Secretary," Courier-Journal, August 13, 1957.

"City Proposes New Projects for \$897,000-More City Hall Renovating, Parking Lot, Fire Station, Street Resurfacing Included," Courier-Journal, August 14, 1957.

"Pst! Don't Look Now, But Our Acroteria are...Er...Naked - Judge Would Like Statues on Pedestals Atop City Hall," Courier-Journal, by Simpson Lawson, May 10, 1965.

"Bid on City Hall Work \$54,000 Over Estimate," Louisville Times, November 18, 1965.

"Schmied to Reopen City Hall Press Room", Louisville Times, December 14, 1965.

"Clock Above City Hall Gets Its Voice Back," by Vincent Crowds, Courier-Journal, September 26, 1968.

"Time Tolls at City Hall," Courier-Journal, September 28, 1968.

"Happy Birthday! Louisville City Hall to Celebrate its 100th on Saturday," "City Hall Tower's List is Causing no Concern," Courier-Journal, August 6, 1970.

"City's Past May Have A Future," Louisville Times, February 1, 1972.

"City Hall Basement That Once Held Prisoners Now Holds Print Shop," Courier-Journal, August 26, 1972.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance of Louisville and Jefferson County, Inc. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1974 at the HABS Field Office in Louisville by Prof. John Haggard, (Syracuse University), Project Supervisor; David Arbogast (Columbia University), Project Historian; Mary Oehrlein, Project Foreman; Bayer Lee (City College of New York), Architect; and Mary M. Herd (University of Tennessee) and Charles Raith (University of Cincinnati), student assistant architects. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written descriptive data in the spring of 1981, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher took the photographs of the structures in 1979.

ADDENDUM TO
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