

City Hall Local Historic Designation – Statement Describing how the Property Meets at Least 1 Criteria for Designation

The City Hall building, located at 105 N. Dickason Blvd. meets three of the criteria for designation. It meets (2)(a), (2)(c), and (2)(e) under Sec. 114-176. Historic structures, sites, neighborhoods and districts designation criteria of the City code.

The property meets (2)(a) that states “exemplify, reflect, or hold significant value as part of the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state or city”. The offices of city government, the police and fire departments, the jail and firefighting equipment, and the city library were located in the building when it opened. On the second floor of the building is a large public auditorium. This was the location of most of the cultural and educational events in the community. In addition to class plays and graduation exercises, the auditorium hosted traveling theater troupes and served as a motion picture theater until the local Rudalt Theater was built in 1917.

The property meets 2(c) that states “embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period, style, method of construction, or of indigenous materials or craftsmanship”. The building is composed of local materials consisting of Watertown cream brick, Doylestown red sandstone, and rock-faced Waukesha limestone. About half of T.D.Allen’s works remain and are included in the National Historic Register. The City Hall is the best local example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The style was commonly used for government buildings, where it expressed the stability and permanence of democratic institutions. Here it is characterized by the general massive and heavy appearance of the building, the large arched openings framed in red sandstone, and the contrasting stonework of the lintels, foundation and arches.

The property meets 2(e) that states “are identifiable as established and familiar visual features in the community owing to their unique location or physical characteristics”. Residents in the city instantly identify the building with its iconic clock tower. City government has adopted the clock tower portion of City Hall into its branding and prominently features it in the City’s logo. By the late nineteenth century, Columbus had developed into a prosperous rural trading center, its economic wellbeing depending on the success of the surrounding agricultural community. Columbus’ economic boom of the 1880s and 1890s necessitated additional city services to support the expanding downtown and new residential neighborhoods. The city responded by building a new Columbus City Hall, which opened to the public in 1892.