



Stockton City Hall: A History

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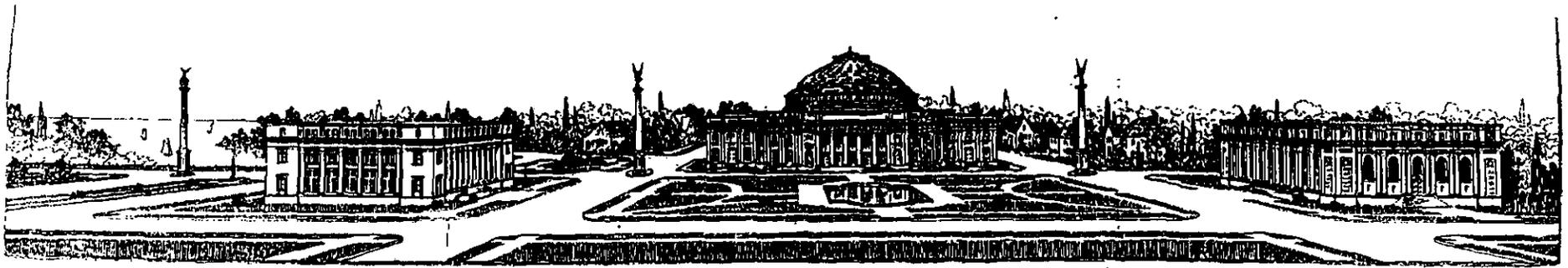
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STOCKTON CIVIC CENTER CONCEPTUAL DESIGN BY THE CITY ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION

Glenn Allen, William J. Wright, Louis S. Stone, Franklyn E. Warner, Ivan C. Satterlee, J. M. Burke



CITY HALL

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STOCKTON CITY HALL CHRONOLOGY

YEAR	DATE	CITATION	EVENT
1844	Jan 13		Rancho del Campo de los Franceses ceded to William Guinac by the Mexican government
1844			Thomas Lindsay and John Williams settled on site of today's City Hall, called Lindsay Point
1847	Aug		Charles Weber takes up residence on Weber Point
1848	Jan		Gold discovered at Sutter's Mill by John Marshall
1848			Stockton surveyed by Major Hammond; laid out in one square mile centered on San Joaquin river channel
1850	July 23		City of Stockton Incorporated
1850	Apr		State Legislature passed a resolution requiring San Joaquin County Court of Sessions to be in a permanent building
1853	Aug 6		Cornerstone of first courthouse building placed
1850	Aug		First meeting of the Common Council held in the McNish building, Northwest corner Hunter & Channel Sts.
1853			Charles Weber asked to donate land for a courthouse to be shared with the City of Stockton
1854	Apr 3		First meeting of the Common Council in the new courthouse shared with San Joaquin County
1854	Apr 17		Dedication of the new courthouse building and City Hall
1857			Mr. I. V. Lefler awarded a contract to grade Hunter Plaza next to courthouse
1860			Mayor Erastus Holden solicited subscriptions to landscape courthouse block; gardener hired
1880			Courthouse building noted to be deteriorating
1884			Voters approved a measure to build a new courthouse and County abandoned the structure; City remained
1885			Courthouse vacated by County and trials held in Masonic Temple building; City offices remain
1886	Aug 17		Demolition of old courthouse had begun
1887	Apr 13		Bonds sold in the amount of \$250,000 for the new courthouse to be built in the same spot as the old courthouse
1888	Feb 22		Cornerstone laid for the second San Joaquin County courthouse
1890	Dec 3		Second courthouse structure completed
1891	Jan 1		City and County occupied the new courthouse, with the City agreeing to a 15 year lease ending Feb. 1906
1901	Oct		Board of Supervisors notified the City Council that in Feb. 1906, they must vacate the courthouse
1904			Discussions underway to build a new City Hall, maybe on Washington Square or on the corner of Channel & Sutter
1905	Jan		Bonds to acquire land for a City Hall and its construction failed to pass
1905	Dec		City Hall Committee reports that a new City Hall should be built and should cost about \$125,000
1908	Apr		Meeting held at Lafayette school with the idea to convert it into City Hall & build a new school elsewhere
1910	Jan		Idea explored to build a new City Hall as an addition to the County courthouse
1910			City of Stockton leases space from the newly opened Hotel Stockton to serve as City Hall
1912			Local architect, Ralph P. Morrell, designed a new City Hall/Auditorium facility supported by Mayor
1913			Call for municipal auditorium by W. H. MacKay
1920	Oct		Bonds in the amount of \$1,760,000 were placed on the ballot for a new City Hall, Auditorium, sewers & bridge
1920	Oct 7	City Council Minutes	Returns of the General Municipal Election held Oct. 5, 1920, approving bonds for City Hall
1921	Nov 22		Compton proposal to locate City Hall next to McLeod Lake gains acceptance
1922	Mar 31	Resolution No. 5233	Vote to locate the City Hall upon block 85 1/2 East of Center Street failed 2-3
1922	Apr 22	Resolution No. 5267	Attorney D. V. Marceau to render opinion on proposed site for City Hall on courthouse block
1922	May 23	Resolution No. 5331	Rescinded Resolutions 5267 and 5278 abandoning proposal to build City Hall on the courthouse block
1922	May 31	Resolution No. 5348	Resolution adopted to build City Hall on west one-half block of Block 68 East of Center Street
1922	June 13	Resolution No. 5381	Resolution No. 5348 Rescinded
1922	July 11	Resolution No. 5436	City Hall on Block 85 1/2 East of Center St.:(Lindsay, El Dorado, Center & Fremont Sts.)
1922	July 14	Ordinance No. 786	Authorization to purchase property for City Hall failed by 2-2 vote, one Councilman absent
1922	July 14	Ordinance No. 786	Ordinance again offered for passage, this time receiving 4 votes in the affirmative, one absent
1922	July 18	Ordinance No. 788	Ordinance Authorizing the purchase of property for the City Hall for \$158,700 Final Adoption, 5-0
1922	Sept 1	Resolution No. 5501	Preliminary draft of plans for new City Hall submitted by architects and approved

1922	Oct 24	Resolution No. 5585	Davis-Heller-Pearce Company employed to do the structural engineering on the City Hall building
1922	Mar 16	Resolution No. 5857	Plans and Specs. approved for the City Hall
1922	Mar 16	Resolution No. 5558	Custody of Plans for City Hall placed with architects until acceptance of the work
1923	Mar 23	Resolution No. 5879	Davis-Heller-Pearce Co., Peter L. Sala and Losekann & Cloudsley to design City Hall
1923	Apr 24	Resolution No. 5935	Revised plans and specs. adopted for City Hall
1923	Apr 24	Resolution No. 5938	Sealed Bid Proposals for City Hall solicited
1923	May 4	Resolution No. 5959	Accepting Plans and Specs. for equipment for City Hall
1923	May 18	Resolution No. 6009	Rescinded call for bids for City Hall
1923	May 23	Resolution No. 6021	Resolutions No. 5857 and 5935 approving Plans and Specs. for City Hall rescinded
1923	May 23	Resolution No. 6022	Plans and Specs. submitted May 23, 1923 for City Hall adopted
1923	May 29	Resolution No. 6031	Sealed proposals for City Hall sought
1923	June 12		Bids for City Hall opened and taken under advisement until June 15
1923	June 22	Resolution No. 6069	Contract awarded to Howard S. Williams for the general construction of City Hall
1923	June 22	Resolution No. 6070	Contract awarded to Edward L. Gnekow for heating, ventilating, plumbing and electrical work in City Hall
1923	June 22	Resolution No. 6071	Contract awarded to Pauly Jail Building Company for jail equipment for City Hall
1923	July 2	Resolution No. 6153	All bids previously accepted for City Hall building rejected
1925	May 18	Resolution No. 7081	City Attn'y authorized to stipulate that contracts with contractors valid and directed Mayor to sign
1925	Aug 31	Resolution No. 7298	Policy established relative to plaques at City Hall: May not bear name of official, civilian or living person
1925	Sept 14	Resolution No. 7336	Alternate "K" approved: Critical steel sash to be installed in new City Hall
1925	Sept 14	Resolution No. 7338	City Hall architects allowed \$388.12 for revisions to plan of third floor
1925	Oct 5	Resolution No. 7394	Substitution of vault doors approved at an additional \$2,486
1925	Oct 26	Resolution No. 7413	Authorized changes in basement of City Hall police quarters
1925	Oct 26	Resolution No. 7414	Authorized changes in basement of City Hall; new PBX phones, lavatory, radiator, moving call board, etc.
1925	Oct 26	Resolution No. 7415	Authorized installation of reinforcement of floor foundation in City Hall for additional \$400
1925	Oct 26	Resolution No. 7416	Authorized installation of Nash Vacuum return pump in City Hall at an additional \$250
1925	Nov 9	Resolution No. 7445	Authorized change order to provide one more fire-proof vault door at an additional \$525
1925	Nov 30	Resolution No. 7485	Specs. for plaster at City Hall amended: Scratch Coat, Brown Coat, Finish Coat
1925	Nov 30	Resolution No. 7486	Specs. for interior trim: Philippine mahogany, Bataan or Lamao, may be substituted for Cenizero
1926	Jan 25	Resolution No. 7574	15 extra electrical fixtures in third floor at no more than \$15 each
1926	Feb 15	Resolution No. 7599	Electric pump installed for drainage of boilers for \$147
1926	Feb 23	Resolution No. 7617	Authorized Alaskan marble in lavatories where Columbia marble specified at no additional cost
1926	Mar 22	Resolution No. 7635	Resolution No. 7635 Rescinded
1926	Mar 22	Resolution No. 7636	Approved lowering of ceilings in alcoves of Council Chambers at a cost of \$115
1926	Mar 22	Resolution No. 7637	Approved relocation of accountant's offices from inside offices to outside rooms for additional \$439
1926	Mar 22	Resolution No. 7641	City Manager directed to have plans for furnishings & fixtures for City Hall drawn up by city employees
1926	Apr 5	Resolution No. 7658	Marble steps for City Hall to be 1-1/4 inch thick, with marble nosing
1926	Apr 5	Resolution No. 7659	Panel door instead of elevator door in Clerk's office for an additional \$50
1926	Apr 5	Resolution No. 7681	MacBeth-Evans No. 3481 lighting fixtures in place of Holophane No. 03362 in City Hall: no add'l cost
1926	Apr 12	Resolution No. 7688	Adopted plans and specs. for furnishings at City Hall
1926	Apr 12	Resolution No. 7669	Bids for furnishings in City Hall invited
1926	Apr 12	Resolution No. 7671	Two closet lights in the City Manager's office added at additional cost of \$13.50 each
1926	Apr 19	Resolution No. 7681	Plans & Specs. for furnishing for City Hall amended
1926	Apr 19	Resolution No. 7682	Permits the use of local washable paint in City Hall
1926	May 3	Resolution No. 7701	Provides for gold bronze lettering on the inscriptions on City Hall at an additional \$150
1926	May 3	Resolution No. 7706	Provides for lining vault and increasing thickness of vault door in Treasurer's office at \$2,873
1926	May 17	Resolution No. 7723	\$250 appropriated for preparing plans and specs. for City Hall furnishings
1926	June 1	Resolution No. 7755	Rejected bids for City Hall furnishings on Propositions I, II and III; City Manager to purchase for \$22,000
1926	June 1	Resolution No. 7739	Union Planing Mill awarded contract on furnishings Proposition IV

1928	June 1	Resolution No. 7758	\$745.90 for additional excavation and concrete in foundation of City Hall approved
1928	June 21	Resolution No. 7783	Approved additional lighting fixtures in City Hall at an additional \$136
1926	June 21	Resolution No. 7784	4" Rain water drains substituted for 6" drains at a reduction in cost of \$28
1926	June 28	Resolution No. 7793	Additional linoleum at City Hall in two rooms added not to exceed \$210
1926	June 28	Resolution No. 7794	Curb added on the building side of the sidewalk around the new City hall at \$1,261
1926	June 28	Resolution No. 7795	Authorized the installation of a burglar alarm for offices of Auditor, Treasurer and City Clerk for \$2,150
1926	June 28	Resolution No. 7798	Approval to build Porte-Cochere over entrance to Police Dept. at cost of \$4,200, plus \$100 to cut into wall
1926	June 28	Resolution No. 7799	Approval for extra electrical and plumbing in connection with Porte-Cochere at \$260
1926	July 6	Resolution No. 7806	\$495 added to decorations in City Hall
1926	July 6	Resolution No. 7807	Additions to woodwork contract to provide wooden counters in place of metal counters
1926	July 19	Resolution No. 7825	Purchase of door checks for City Hall: up to 20 @\$8.50
1926	July 19	Resolution No. 7829	Purchase of Acme 15-2 unit cabinet stands for Auditor's office for \$540
1926	July 26	Resolution No. 7835	Authorized the installation of Insulite covering on basement floors, halls, lobbies, etc. costing \$1,133.35
1926	Aug 9	Resolution No. 7845	Authorized installation of better locks on Police lockers at City Hall for \$48
1926	Aug 9	Resolution No. 7849	Request for report on workmanship & materials on City Hall
1926	Sept 7	Resolution No. 7891	Special committee of the Council and the City Manager appointed to review acceptance of City Hall
1926	Sept 10	Resolution No. 7892	Report filed to recommend acceptance of the City Hall & approve issuance of certificates of completion
1923	Sept 13	Resolution No. 7897	\$1,500 appropriated to plant trees, shrubs and lawn around City Hall & install sprinklers
1926	Sept 20	Resolution No. 7907	Plans & Specs. adopted for street improvements around City Hall
1926	Sept 20	Resolution No. 7908	Bids for improvements of streets around City Hall invited
1926	Sept 20	Resolution No. 7911	Authorized the installation of a ventilator in Treasurer's vault at new City Hall
1926	Sept 27	Resolution No. 7918	Allowed Union Planing Mill additional time (60 days) to equip City Hall
1926	Sept 27	Resolution No. 7920	Instructed City Manager to terminate tenancy at Hotel Stockton for City offices
1926	Oct 4		Bids for street improvements around City Hall opened and referred to City Manager
1926	Oct 18	Resolution No. 7946	Awarded contract to J. E. Johnston for street improvements of El Dorado, Lindsay St. & Lindsay Levee
1926	Oct 18	Resolution No. 7957	Appropriated \$694 for additional equipment for new City Hall: Police Dept., Engineering Dept. & Jury Rm.
1926	Oct 18	City Council Minutes	Last City Council meeting held in chambers at the Hotel Stockton
1926	Oct 25	City Council Minutes	First meeting of the City Council at the new City Hall
1926	Nov 1	Resolution No. 7973	Appropriated \$578.25: opera chairs in Police Court, Map & Bk. stands in Auditor's office, Law Lib. shelving
1926	Nov 22	Resolution No. 8007	Appropriated \$300 to equip office for the Chief of Fire Dept. in new City Hall
1926	Nov 22	Resolution No. 8008	Appropriated \$300 to furnish equipment for fire alarm system in Fire Chief's office
1926	Dec 3		New City Hall dedicated, presided over by the Native Sons of the Golden West
1926	Dec 20	Resolution No. 8042	Appropriated \$1,983.03 to pay for insurance premiums for City Hall boiler, elevator & building
1927	Jan 24	Resolution No. 8080	Appropriated \$500 for equipping the office of the Fire Department at City Hall
1927	Apr 11	Resolution No. 8154	Appropriated \$467 to purchase additional venetian blinds for City Hall
1938	Apr		New handrails added to exterior stairways of City Hall at suggestion of Rev. Carl F. Bauer to assist the aged
1948			Filming of climactic scene of "All the King's Men" on South steps of City Hall; film wins Best Picture Oscar 1949
1956			City Clerk's office moved to second floor, Room 223; Accounting & Purchasing moved into old Clerk's office
1958			Fire Department and building inspectors moved into old Accounting department offices
1958	Feb		Third floor remodelled; first major work since City Hall was constructed
1960	Dec 1		Final payment on bond financing the City Hall/Civic Auditorium was made
1963			Flood lights installed on exterior of City Hall; Mayor Elmer Boss flips the switch lighting the building
1968			Remodeling completed on third floor of City Hall for Parks & Recreation Director's office
1968			City Council objected to spending \$35,000 to convert the freight elevator into a second passenger elevator
1970	July		Bomb device discovered outside City Hall by Police and safely detonated
1971	Jan		Contract awarded to install air conditioning in the office of the City Clerk, Mayor and City Council conference room
1974			Local artist Greg Custodio commissioned to paint two murals in the City Hall lobby
1975			Community Development Dept. moved into space in a building at Southeast corner of Lindsay & Center Sts.

1976			Time Capsule located in the lobby of City Hall to be opened in 2076 as part of Bicentennial Celebration
1980			City Councilman Ralph Lee White called for the construction of a new City Hall at Banner Island site
1983	Mar 14	Resolution No. 39,656	City Hall and Civic Court designated local landmarks
1990			New Mayor, Joan Darrah, criticized when she remodeled the Mayor's office
1999			City of Stockton named an "All America City"
2000	July 23		City of Stockton marked its 150th anniversary

STOCKTON CITY HALL: A HISTORY

By

Leslie Crow

The City of Stockton was incorporated on July 23, 1850, even before California joined the Union as the thirty-first state on September 9th of that year. The City was first laid out by surveyor Jasper O'Farrell on land owned by Charles M. Weber, a German immigrant who held the rights to a substantial grant known as the Rancho del Campo de los Franceses. Without Mexican citizenship, Weber had not been eligible to request this real estate. So, Weber had prevailed upon his business partner, William Gulnac, to make the application. Gulnac was a blacksmith from New York who had become a naturalized Mexican citizen through marriage. Gulnac was successful in his petition and the land Weber had sought was conveyed to Gulnac on January 13, 1844. (Tinkham, 65) When Weber and Gulnac dissolved their business relationship, Weber became the sole landowner, buying out all rights to the grant in exchange for Gulnac's grocery bill and some additional considerations.

The very first European settlers in what is now Stockton were Thomas Lindsay and John Williams who established a dwelling in 1844 on the site of today's City Hall building. They had originally come to Southern California with the Workman-Rowland Party, later moving into the San Joaquin Valley. The two men constructed a rudimentary shelter with tules (reeds which grew profusely along the many sloughs and waterways bisecting the area). They enclosed a corral for their livestock on land which came to be known as Lindsay Point. Sadly, Lindsay was murdered by a group of natives belonging to the Loc-Lum-na tribe who drove off the cattle and set the homesite structure ablaze, with Lindsay's body still inside. Today, the location of Lindsay and Williams' dwelling has been commemorated with State Landmark No. 178. The historic site designation is memorialized in a plaque installed on the North side of the City Hall building.

Needless to say, Lindsay's murder did not help the cause of enticing permanent settlers to come to the Rancho del Campo de los Franceses, which was a significant task required to perfect title to the land. Nevertheless, in 1847, Weber himself took up residence on his Rancho on the site now called Weber Point and began construction of a handsome adobe and redwood residence. He brought his bride, Helen Murphy, to this dwelling after their marriage in November of 1850. Here the couple served as Stockton's "first family," raising two sons and a daughter. They lived in the adobe house for the next thirty-one years, until Weber's death.

After the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, the fact that Stockton was accessible by water from San Francisco guaranteed that the economic development of Stockton would far exceed Weber's wildest dreams. Stockton was geographically positioned to serve as a supply center for all of the Southern Mines located in the Sierra Nevada foothills just East of Stockton. Weber purchased the "Maria," a whale boat, to transport goods from San Francisco to the Stockton harbor through the three mile channel which connects the city's center (and Weber's homesite) to the main channel of the San Joaquin river.

The townsite was resurveyed in 1848 by Major Hammond in anticipation of expanded commercial development. The new city was laid out within one square mile centered on the head of navigation along the San Joaquin river channel. A regular grid system of streets was laid out, with each block being 303 feet square. Weber insisted on designating various blocks to serve as public squares. These were conveyed to the City in August of 1851. Stockton was the first planned settlement in all of California.

In 1855, the head of navigation was designated at El Dorado Street. The City built a bridge here at a cost of \$60,000, replacing a foot bridge about where the Hotel Stockton is now located which had been used by pedestrians as a short-cut to Weber Point across one of the many sloughs downtown.

The first municipal office space leased by the City was in the McNish building, located on the Northwest corner of Hunter and Channel streets. The City shared this space with San Joaquin County for the sum of \$7,900 per year. The McNish building was a two-story, wooden structure where the very first meeting of the City's Common Council was held in August of 1850. The County courthouse and jail were located in the basement and it was here that the Court of Sessions was convened.

The State Legislature passed a resolution in April, 1850, requiring San Joaquin County's Court of Sessions to be located in a permanent building as soon as possible. This was ignored at the time during the accelerated activities centered on the arrival of thousands of people making their way to the Southern Mines after the discovery of gold. It was not until 1853, when Stockton's Mayor, M. B. Kenney, called for the construction of a public building to house both the City and County offices that action was ultimately taken. In a speech to the Common Council, Mayor Kenney stated:

The city is altogether deficient in public building...It will be seen that the valuable and unimproved square known upon the city plat as block three, east of Centre street, is intended by the grant as the location of the county court house and for the erection of such other buildings as may be advisable by the proper authorities. It will at once occur that it will be proper to co-operate with the Court of Sessions of the county in the improvement of the square...I can see no more proper course to pursue than to suggest the erection of an edifice which will contain rooms and apartments proper and commodious for the town hall, council chambers, city and county offices, court rooms and such other apartments as are usually contingent in such cases. (192-3)

The Common Council appointed P. E. Jordan and B. W. Owens to confer with Judge A. G. Stakes to recommend a plan for the construction of a courthouse facility. The committee decided that the City and County should equally fund the new building by bonds bearing a ten per cent interest rate.

Charles M. Weber was prevailed upon to donate the land for the construction of the first courthouse. Weber himself preferred a site on the block bounded by Washington, Center, Lafayette and Commerce streets. He felt that the location recommended by the committee was less desirable because it was between Branch Slough and Main Street Slough. When it was pointed out that the block between Weber, San Joaquin, Main and Hunter streets was more centrally located, Weber agreed to donate the vacant block for the courthouse. However, he was firm in his belief that an open plaza should be included in the public improvements to be made on the site. Therefore, the slough on the West side of the block was filled in to create Hunter Plaza.

The contract for the new courthouse was awarded to Theodore Winters in the amount of \$83,920. F. C. Corcoran designed the building in the Roman Doric style. A Neo-Classical portico was included on each of the four facades of the sixty by eighty-foot, two story building. The structure included twelve rooms on the first floor, including two courtrooms and two jury rooms. The second story contained the City Council chambers. Initially, the committee planned to build a jail in connection with the new courthouse facility, but the jail was eventually built on a separate lot on Market Street.

The cornerstone was laid on August 6, 1853, presided over by the Stockton's two Independent Order of Odd Fellows lodges. Ceremonies were held as the foundation stone was laid. Coins, newspapers of the day and other momentos were sealed in a glass vessel which was hermetically sealed and deposited in the foundation. (*San Joaquin Republican*, 8/6/1853, 2:7)

The Common Council held their first meeting here on April 3, 1854, preceding the dedication of the new building which occurred on April 17 at 7 o'clock in the evening. Prayers were offered by the Reverend Mr. Saxton, along with an address by Reverend Mr. Phillips and a Benediction by Reverend Mr. Crouch. (*San Joaquin Republican*, 8/17/1854, 2:2) The City moved into the South part of the building, while the County occupied the North part. The courthouse construction costs came in at the \$83,920 allocation. (Tinkham, 195)

Hunter Plaza had been left incomplete in deference to the completion of the courthouse building. In August, 1857, Mr. I. V. Lefler was awarded a contract to grade the site at a cost of \$3,500. No further improvements were undertaken until Mayor Erastus S. Holden, in a speech of 1859, stated:

I call your attention, gentlemen, to the court house square. With an expense of about \$4,000, equally divided between the city and county, an ornamental fence can be built enclosing the square, together with a fountain supplied from the artesian well, thus beautifying and ornamenting what is now a disgrace to the city...(Tinkham, 196)

The next year, Mayor Holden and George West (founder of the El Pinal Winery) personally undertook to solicit subscriptions to fund landscaping improvements for the courthouse block. A chain fence was added at the perimeter, a San Jose landscaper was hired to design gardens and pathways. Citizens, notably Charles Weber, George West (founder of the El Pinal winery) and Mayor Holden, donated plants, trees and shrubs. A gardener was hired to maintain these improvements.

Even with all of this attention to the site, by the 1870s, the courthouse was already noticeably deteriorating and discussions about its replacement had begun. In 1880, Stockton historian, George Tinkham, stated:

It is natural to venerate and respect those things which by age and use have become dear to us, and no doubt in future ages the tourist will admire in reverential awe the crumbling walls of the court house of San Joaquin. (196)

In 1884, voters approved a measure to build a new courthouse. The business of the County Court was moved into the Masonic Temple on El Dorado Street and Bridge Place

FIRST SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE COMPLETED 1854
SHARED WITH CITY OF STOCKTON



Pioneer Gallery,

198 Main Street, Stockton.

during a trial in 1885 when large crowds attending a sensational murder trial seemed to be accelerating the cracking visible in the courthouse walls.

The *Stockton Daily Independent* reported that the County had abandoned the "condemned courthouse." However, City of Stockton officers stayed in the building deemed unsafe for the County to occupy. The police court occupied the Eastern end of the room in the old courthouse, while City Justice Baggs occupied the Western end of the room. However, since the circumstances were less than ideal, most cases were creatively diverted from the Justice Court, leaving the City treasury rather empty and Justice Baggs eager to "transact all business possible" to boost revenues. (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 5/2/1885, 3:3)

On August 17, 1886, the demolition of the old courthouse, which had been serving as the City Hall, finally commenced. In fact, the search was on for the cornerstone which was some supposed to still hold some interesting relics dating from the August 6, 1853 dedication ceremony. The cornerstone had subsequently been filled with concrete into which had been embedded a glass jar whose contents were eagerly sought.

Previous to the disclosure of the cornerstone, an old timer created some excitement by assuring his hearers 'upon his honor' that he had seen, with his 'own blessed eyes' at least one fifty-dollar slug and a number of five-dollar and ten-dollar gold pieces put into the jar. The old pioneers' reputation for veracity suffered considerably when it was ascertained (sic.) that the sole contents of the jar was a number of papers thoroughly soaked with water. No coin of any description was found in the jar. (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 8/17/1886, 3:1)

These findings certainly belied the contemporary news reports of 1853, in addition to besmirching the reputation of one unidentified "old timer."

Bonds in the amount of \$250,000 were sold to the Stockton Savings and Loan Society (now known as the Bank of Stockton) on April 13, 1887 to underwrite the construction of the new courthouse, to be located on the exact same site as the first structure. After considerable acrimonious debate, the construction contract was awarded to J. A. Maross and Son of Detroit, Michigan. The cornerstone was laid on February 22, 1888. The entire structure was completed on December 3, 1890. By January 1, 1891, the new courthouse was occupied by the City and County, with the County Court removed from the Masonic Temple. Everyone enjoyed the expanded facilities and the enhanced image the community basked in as a result of the new and impressive edifice.

The City had agreed to an arrangement with the County for, in effect, a fifteen-year lease on space in the new courthouse, to expire in 1906. In 1901, the County notified the City that they anticipated needing the space being utilized by the City and that they would have to vacate the premises in accordance with this agreement.

Not surprisingly, then, in 1904, discussions were reported in the local press concerning the acquisition of property to construct a new City Hall.

In regard to the location of the new city hall now being freely discussed by the citizens and the common council, at its meeting last evening a proposition to kill two birds with one stone was submitted by Attorney Arthur L. Levinsky. He stated

that he had been authorized to offer two sites, and in accepting either of them the city would have a good hall location and would abolish at least a part of the red-light district. The property comprised two separate lots, each 100 X 150 feet, at the corner of El Dorado and Market Streets. Either lot could be bought for less than \$15,000. Councilman Aubry insisted that the council should erect a city hall on the Hunter street engine-house lot or on Washington Square, although he had been informed by the city attorney that the square could not be used for that purpose. Some of the council men were ready to vote for the Dietz lot, corner of Channel and Sutter Streets. (*Stockton Record*, 3/31/1904)

A petition of demurrer was submitted to Judge Nutter of the Superior Court in January, 1905 to determine whether the Weber heirs had the right to demand compensation for Washington Square should it be condemned by the City for a City Hall site. Once that question was settled, the next question was to how much money were they entitled? (*Stockton Mail*, 1/13/1905, 8:3)

The Washington Square site was favored by the Chamber of Commerce. [Washington Square was directly South of St. Mary's Catholic Church, and had been the site of a large pavilion designed by Charles Beasley which had burned to the ground in a spectacular blaze in September of 1902. Today, this block is occupied by the Crosstown Freeway.] A committee consisting of Samuel Frankenheimer, George E. Catts and Leroy S. Atwood, conveyed their findings to the members of the Chamber at their meeting of January 16. Their report follows:

We find that in October, 1901, the Board of Supervisors notified the Council that in February, 1906, the county would require the city officials to vacate the Courthouse. This notice was pursuant to an agreement entered into by the city and county, whereby the city might occupy its present quarters in the Courthouse for fifteen years from February, 1891, to February, 1906, and at the end of that time, the county might, if it chose, grant an extension of five years. The Supervisors take the stand that the city is occupying rooms in the Courthouse that the county must soon require. There is some diversity of opinion among the officials as to the present needs; some say that the present arrangements would be sufficient for a few years; others say that important offices of both city and county are cramped now in their present quarters; all agree that at the present rate of increase in county business, the joint occupancy of the courthouse will be impracticable in five years. What is most to the point is that the Supervisors have the power to terminate the tenancy, and they have given notice to move—not a merely normal notice, but actual notice to vacate. They say that they have neither desire nor intent to drive the city officials into the street in a year, but if the city has not its own quarters in a few years, it will be no fault of the Supervisors.

Your committee believes that when the city officials move out of the Courthouse, it should be into a City Hall, and your committee believes further, that it is the will of the majority of the people of the city of Stockton that such City Hall be built upon Washington square.

Therefore, in view of the above, which we believe to be the facts, your committee favors the issuance of the bonds for \$150,000 for the erection of a City Hall; it opposes the issuance of \$20,000 bonds for the purchase of a site. A City Hall will be a necessity; the people want to see it built on Washington square. (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/16/1905, 8:3)

The Chamber of Commerce then passed a resolution which stated:

Resolved, That this Chamber of Commerce favors the proposition of the issue of bonds for \$150,000 for the erection of a City Hall, and believing that such a building should be erected on Washington square does not favor the issuance of bonds for the purchase of a site. (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/17/1905, 3:1)

There was a difference of opinion about support for the bond in the amount of \$20,000 for land acquisition. Councilmen Keagle, Coates and Dawson felt the Chamber should endorse this bond as well, since it did not have to be used if Washington square was chosen. On the other hand, if the courts found that the site could not be used, the money would still be available to acquire a different site. The feeling was that the County had "fired the city out of the county building" and that the citizens should be urged to vote for the bond election. Alex Oullahan made a motion to retain the services of a committee of volunteers to get out the vote and to hire two carriages to be used on election day to transport voters to the polls. (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/17/1905, 3:1)

In what was described as "the quietest municipal election conducted here in years," voters were asked to decide the question of whether to issue bonds for the construction of the new City Hall, and an additional \$20,000 bond for the acquisition of land. A two-thirds vote was required for passage. Arrangements were made for a whistle to be blown at the city pumping station to announce the results. The code was published in the local paper: one blast of the whistle meant that the City Hall bond had passed, two blasts meant that both bonds passed and three blasts meant that both bonds had been defeated. (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/26/1905, 5:2)

Three whistles were heard that day: both bonds were defeated. The election results looked like this:

	<u>For City Hall</u>	<u>Against City Hall</u>	<u>For Site</u>	<u>Against Site</u>
First Ward	175	84	111	139
Second Ward	229	140	139	220
Third Ward	158	59	92	120
Fourth Ward	192	117	127	172
=====				
Total	754	400	469	651

City Hall Total Votes, 1,154, lost by 16 votes

City Hall Site Total Votes, 1,120, lost by 278

(*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/27/1905, 2:3)

The following day, the local press took the opportunity to amuse the readers of the evening paper with a story headlined: "County Boot Will Come In Contact With Seat of City's Official Pants." With the defeat of the bond measures, the *Stockton Evening Mail* opined that the city officials would have to run ads in the classified along these lines:

FOR RENT-Sunny front room, with ante-room; use of roller-up desk free; located near Courthouse and suitable for City Clerk. Address or call, etc.

Or this:

FOR RENT—Two rooms near the County Courthouse; suitable for Street Superintendent; very quiet; lounge in each room; janitor cleans spittoons.

(*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/27/1905, 5:2)

The City Clerk, Mr. Wheatley, was not sure he was in favor of setting up an office "under the shade of the sheltering palms of the Courthouse lawn, where he would take chances on being kicked off by the County Gardener...He might secure a portion of Little Egypt's tent at the next street fair." Would anyone be enticed to run for Mayor at a "paltry \$2,500 a year when there will be no headquarters for him?" It was deemed disgraceful that a city of 20,000 citizens had no official offices and no immediate prospect of building a new facility to provide the space dignity and civility demanded. "The defeat of the City hall bonds is indeed a calamity." (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/27/1905, 5:2)

Despite the results of the bond election, Washington square remained the focus of attention due to the pending litigation before the court. The writ of demurrer had yet to be decided and it was felt that the location should still be considered an appropriate site for a new City Hall. The argument was made that the use of Washington square for civic purposes would not

divert the block from the use for which it was intended—that is, as a breathing spot for the public—but rather to increase its attractiveness in that line. The construction of a City Hall there, which is a probability of the future, would make Washington square much more popular as a park than it is now. At the present time few, if any, people go there. It is in strong contrast to the Courthouse grounds, which are more frequented by pleasure-seekers than any other park in Stockton. (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/27/1905, 8:1)

Late in 1905, the City Hall Committee published their report, once more recommending that bonds be sought to finance the construction of a new facility on an unspecified site which would have to be acquired by the City of Stockton.

To the Officers and members of the Bond Commission: Gentlemen—

Your committee on city hall has given the subject of the necessity of a suitable building in which to transact the business of the city careful consideration and to explain the need of such a structure desires to go back a few years in the city's history.

In looking to the minutes of the County Clerk an agreement was entered into between the county of San Joaquin and the city of Stockton on October 17, 1885, whereby the city was to use certain rooms in the proposed new courthouse for fifteen years free of rent, with the understanding that an extension of not more than five years could be granted at the expiration of that time.

On December 3, 1890, the courthouse was accepted and the contractor released. Shortly after this date the city took possession of its assigned quarters in the courthouse, which was fifteen years ago this month.

Last year former Councilman Keagle asked the Supervisors whether the city could longer retain its rooms in the courthouse. His query was presented in the form of a request, which was denied by a unanimous vote of the County Supervisors. This bit of city history certainly shows the necessity of a city hall in the near future.

COUNTY BOOT WILL COME IN CONTACT WITH SEAT OF CITY'S OFFICIAL PANTS

Ousted From the Courthouse by the Supervisors
the City Officials Will Be Minus a Place to
Lay Their Official Heads



OFFICES IN THE COURTHOUSE

At the present time the offices of the Mayor, City Clerk, Auditor, Assessor, Superintendent of Streets, Surveyor, Justice of Peace and the Council chambers are located in the courthouse. The Mayor, City Clerk and the Auditor transact their part of the city business in the same room, while the Council chambers are located in the Justice's courtroom. The business of the city is today being done in rather close quarters. Valuable documents belonging to the city, but of such nature that they are seldom referred to, are stored in the dome of the courthouse for lack of storage vaults on the ground floor. The same is true of county documents.

THE NEW CITY HALL SITE

It is the opinion of your committee that the proposed city hall should be located on a site to be selected hereafter a few blocks from the present center of the city, for the reason that such a site could be purchased for one half or less money than a site desirable for business purposes could be had. Such a building site should be at least one hundred feet square and corner lots would be preferable. There are several desirable locations, any one of which could be purchased for \$15,000.

THE CITY HALL BUILDING

Your committee believes that the city hall should be a modern, up-to-date building, so constructed that all the business of the city could be handled within its walls satisfactorily for the next fifty years or longer. With the growth of the city and its business it is thought poor economy to erect a small, cheap structure. A few years ago Fresno expended \$10,000 or thereabouts on a city hall and within the past two months voted bonds for \$75,000 for a new building alone, owning the site at the time.

THE COST

After consulting a prominent Stockton architect, your committee thinks a suitable city hall could be built for \$125,000. This sum would pay for a building on a corner site, with two fronts presenting an imposing and modern appearance, and would also include an up-to-date heating plant, furnishings, equipment, and other necessities in a properly kept public building. Therefore your committee recommends that in the bond issue the sum of \$125,000 be allowed for a city hall and the sum of \$15,000 for a city hall site. Respectfully submitted,

Fred M. West,
W. H. Lyons
D. J. Matthews

Stockton, Cal., December 13, 1905

(*Stockton Independent*, 12/14/1905, 5:1-3)

Councilman David Matthews forwarded the opinion that \$140,000 should be enough to buy a lot and construct a new City Hall as well as all the fixtures and

furnishings. The plan called for a building 80 or 90 feet square located anywhere convenient to the central business district. "For obvious reasons the committee could not at this time designate a particular site, for property values expanded at a moment's warning beyond all reason when purchase by the city is broached." (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 12/14/1905, 5:1-3)

An important meeting was held at the Lafayette school building on the northeast corner of Market and San Joaquin streets in April of 1908. Mayor George F. Hudson and the City Council, together with the Board of Education, gathered to discuss the need for a new City Hall. The Council recognized the urgent need for a new City Hall facility, while the Board of Education felt that the Lafayette school was no longer desirable for use as a school. Since the school was located in the heart of the business district, it was felt unsuitable for young scholars. The desire was for a new school building to be built in a residential neighborhood, with the City taking over the existing school facility for use as the City Hall once construction was complete. The rumors were flying that the deal would be struck. (*Stockton Independent*, 4/17/1908, 8:1)

The following day, the *Stockton Daily Independent* reported that "the Board of Education and the City Council are of one mind in the matter of converting the Lafayette school into a city hall." They began to plan for a bond measure in the amount of \$125,000 to build a new school with six classrooms in a more residential neighborhood. When the new facility became ready to occupy, the city would remodel the Lafayette building to serve as a City Hall. Seven rooms in the building were thought to be well suited for public use, and another room was to be fitted out to serve as the Mayor's office. The Third Ward voiced concern about choosing the location of the new school to provide a site that would not require students to travel over a mile to class. (*Stockton Independent*, 4/18/1908, 8:3)

By 1910, another idea was surfacing. As projections of what kind of financing was necessary to construct a new City Hall reached up into the upper six-figures, an idea was formed to look at the possibility of building an addition to the existing county courthouse. By building on the courthouse square, around the perimeter, near the sidewalk on all four sides, office space could be added in addition to a public auditorium and storage space which could be rented. Estimates were that the new construction could be accomplished for \$260,000. (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 1/20/1910, 8:1)

Supporters of this new plan pointed out the advantage of having both City and County governments located in the same place and that the proceeds from a bond issue for a new City Hall would go directly into the building fund. An auditorium would also be a benefit for the community that could hardly be ignored. Of course, this plan did not take into consideration any legal barriers to its execution, since the land in question belonged to San Joaquin County.

The proposal of building on the existing courthouse square did not bear fruit and the City vacated the courthouse and occupied leased space in the western portion of the newly-completed Hotel Stockton in 1910. The city Police station and Court were moved back into the first floor of the Masonic Temple, facing Bridge Place, just behind the Hotel.

Architect Ralph P. Morrell completed a conceptual design for a new City Hall building in 1912. The local press pronounced the design "Magnificent." (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 10/5/1912, 1:6) The massive structure was 303 feet square, two stories in

height and surmounted by a tower over 100 feet high. This immense structure was to be constructed of stone, brick, iron and steel with very little woodwork, thus making it entirely fireproof. Each side of the building contained separate entrances, with the main façade including a balcony of 40 X 40 feet. A glass roof over an auditorium which was described as "one great diamond sparkling under a radiant sun." This auditorium would be capable of seating 15,000 people in a hall space of 180 X 200 feet, soaring to a height of 50 feet.

The first floor would be occupied by twenty-seven retail stores which would not only create foot traffic to the building, but also generate rental income for the city. A free market of 40 X 156 feet would be at the rear of the building adjoined by a fire house.

The second floor would hold the city attorney's offices, the mayor's offices (a two-room suite), the council chambers adjoined by a small hall of 48 X 95 feet to hold public gatherings. The city clerk's department, storerooms, the city treasurer's offices, building inspector's office, city engineer's rooms, tax collector, health officer and the justice court and judge's chambers, the city electrician, superintendent of streets and the police department would all be housed on the second floor.

Mayor R. R. Reibenstein estimated that the cost for the building would be about \$250,000. "That is not a large sum of money when you consider the importance of Stockton," said the Mayor. He continued:

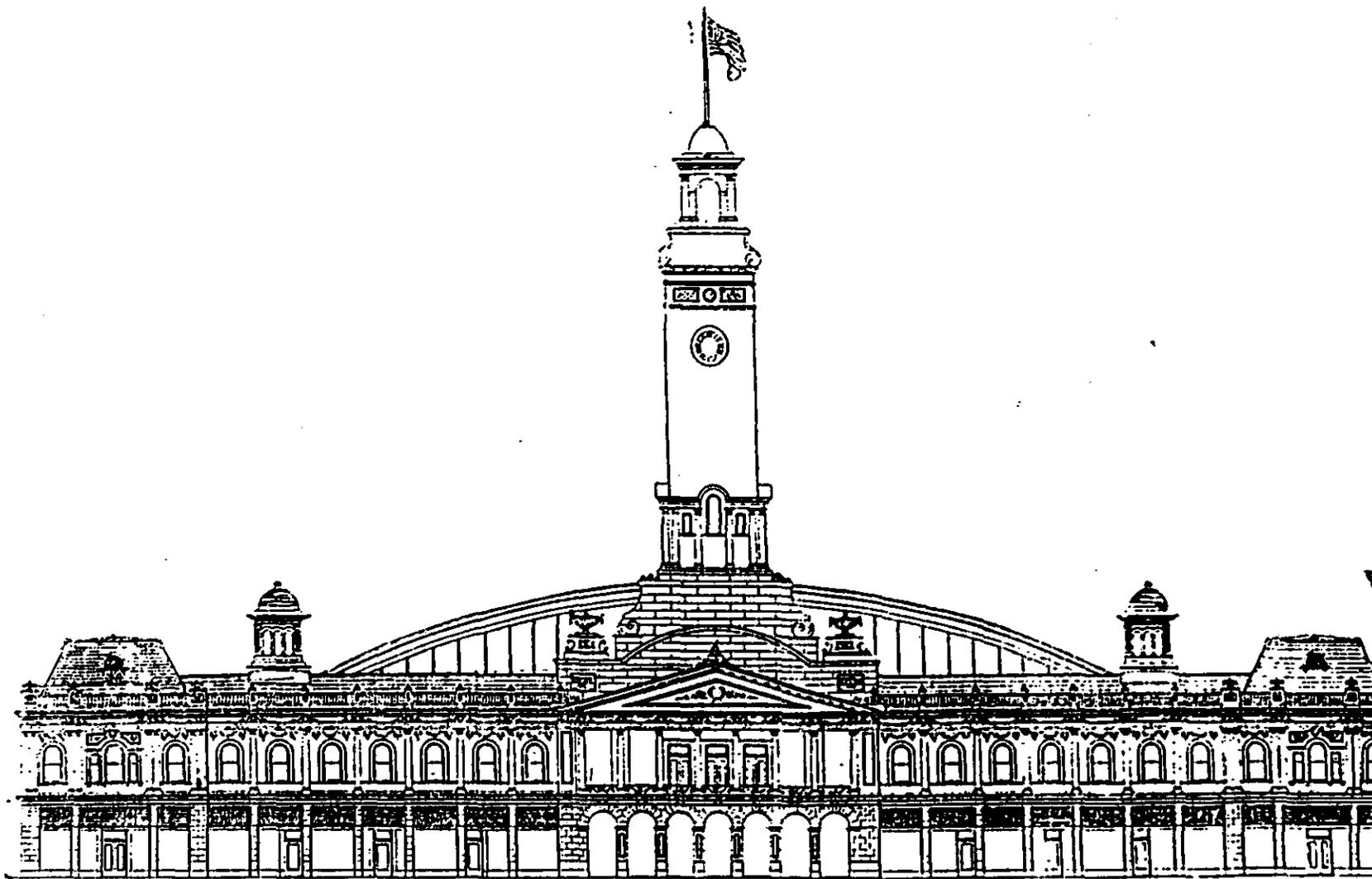
Let us look at Stockton today and then go forward a few years. Stockton today is one of the best cities in the state. It is a young town in many respects. Its great wealth is just beginning to become known throughout the country. The county surrounding this city contains untold wealth, as this country is developed and new people continue to arrive, Stockton will continue to grow. It has outgrown its swaddling clothes. We are no longer living in a village. Stockton's importance is now a recognized fact. Municipal improvements must keep abreast with the times, and such a building as the one proposed will place Stockton at the very top of the list when it comes to being a convention city.

Why, if we had such a building here now, we would be entertaining people all the time. Delegations and conventions would pick Stockton first, because they would know that the accommodations were here. Our climate is attracting thousands and the Stockton people are known throughout the state for their hospitality, so we need the building and the larger and grander it is the better Stockton will be advertised and every word spoken in praise of the city and every work appearing in a newspaper that reflects credit to the city and its people is worth that much money. It brings people and when they once arrive, they will stay, for there is no better place on earth than Stockton and I have been here long enough to know. (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 10/5/1912,7:1)

Despite the political "spin" delivered by Mayor Reibenstein in support of this conceptual design, Mr. Morrell's City Hall never materialized.

R. R. Reibenstein was elected Mayor of Stockton on the campaign promise that before the end of his four-year administration, a new City Hall would at last be realized. "Of course, we will not attempt to build the new city hall at once, probably not this year, perhaps not the next, but we plan to build one, and a good one," Reibenstein stated. (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 1/2/1913, 2:4)

**RALPH P. MORRELL'S DESIGN FOR A NEW AUDITORIUM & CITY HALL FOR STOCKTON
AS IT APPEARED IN THE STOCKTON EVENING MAIL, 10/5/1912**



∴

Proposed New Auditorium and City Hall for Stockton

∴

A call for a municipal auditorium was also renewed in 1913, at which time, local businessman W. H. MacKay stated: "We need an auditorium worse than anything else and such an addition to the city would be the biggest advertisement the city could possibly receive." (*Stockton Evening Mail*, 1/13/1913)

In 1920, the Stockton Advertising Club urged voters to approve two bond measures to finance the construction of a new City Hall and Auditorium. They framed the debate by contrasting a Yes vote for Progress and a No vote for the death of Progress.

BORN, IN STOCKTON—October 5, 1920: a new spirit of Progressiveness. The new arrival has been named 'Progress' and will be a blessing and a help to the city of Stockton.

OR

DIED, IN STOCKTON—October 5, 1920; Progress, the spirit of Progressiveness; Progress was stabbed to death by voters at the polls in Stockton. The death of Progress will be looked upon favorably by other California cities whose citizens wish to overcome the lead held by Stockton as a future metropolitan city. (*Stockton Record*, 10/4/1920, 2:1)

Following the municipal election, birth announcements for "Progress" were proudly sent out. \$1,760,000 had been approved by voters to finance a new City Hall (\$600,000), a new "auditorium and memorial hall to the San Joaquin county soldiers and sailors who served in the World war" (\$600,000), sanitary sewers (\$135,000), storm water sewers (\$325,000) and a new lift bridge across Mormon channel to connect with the Borden Highway (\$100,000). (*Stockton Record*, 10/6/1920, 1:7) There were 5,271 affirmative votes for the City Hall measure, 2,288 against and 5,239 votes for the Auditorium measure, with 2,342 in opposition. (*Stockton Record*, 10/6/1920, 9:4; See also Stockton City Council Minutes, 10/7/1920)

A plan was developed from four different proposals forwarded in 1921. Local architect Ralph P. Morrell once again resurrected his idea for a single, massive building to house the courthouse, City Hall and memorial auditorium to be located on the present site of the county courthouse and part of Hunter Plaza. Frank V. Mayo, another Stockton architect, advocated a civic center at the head of McLeod Lake and W. J. Wright proposed a civic center occupying all of Weber Point. The firm of Losekann & Clowdsley recommended a civic center complex surrounding Fremont Square. Mayo quickly endorsed the Weber Point location, leaving three locations from which to chose.

Stockton's Planning Commission visited a total of eighteen potential sites during their deliberations and eliminated fifteen, leaving Fremont Square, McLeod Lake and Weber Point in contention. Local citizens seemed to back the idea of a Civic Center by a margin of 9 to 1. In support of this concept, the local Lions Club sent the following statement to the City Council members:

We believe that the majority of our citizens whose opinions really count are opposed to scattering our public building[s]. We are assured that many will unequivocally condemn any action which would interfere with the establishing of a civic center. (*Stockton Record*, 11/5/1921)

A meeting of the Stockton Planning Commission was held on November 21, 1921 to recommend a site for the proposed municipal auditorium as the first part of the civic center complex being discussed. A straw vote was taken in order to determine the will of the Commission. Three Commissioners voted for placing an auditorium on the block West of Fremont Square, another three members favored other sites and another wanted to consider an entirely different location from any so far proposed.

A former engineer for the city of Stockton by the name of Harry T. Compton came forward with another idea. His plan called for an extensive change of the entire waterfront along McLeod Lake and the Stockton Channel. This plan included land filled with soil dredged from the channel, making a wider commercial channel and eliminating the majority of Banner Island, which was privately owned.

Action taken by the City Council on November 22, 1921 supported Compton's proposal which included dredging at Banner Island, filling in a "large portion of McLeod's lake and Miner channel." The new harbor configuration would offer the City of Stockton control of much of the north side of the channel. The resolution which was adopted stated, in part:

In the opinion of this council, centrally located sites for the proposed city hall and auditorium, forming a civic center, can be obtained by dredging out certain land areas and filling in certain water areas, in conformity with the proposed new waterfront lines herein above described, at a less cost than by other proposed plans, the cost of land and dredging necessary shall be chargeable to the funds of the city hall and auditorium. (*Stockton Record*, 11/23/1921, 1:4-5)

Mayor D. P. Eicke felt that the plan to combine the renovation of the waterfront with the creation of a civic center would save money and open up more waterfront property for redevelopment. Mr. Compton's plan called for the inclusion of an auditorium on the north bank of McLeod Lake; in fact, part of the building would be sited over what was then water. This small portion of landfill, it seemed, would not interfere with the immediate construction of the auditorium, although the rest of the dredging and land fill project would take much longer to complete. In addition to the siting of the auditorium, a City Hall and a library site were included as part of the overall vision of the municipal facilities to be constructed.

On March 31, 1922, Resolution No. 5232, locating the auditorium on Block 28 West of Center Street lost on a vote of 2-3. Resolution No. 5233, locating the City Hall on block 85 ½ East of Center Street was also lost by the same vote. Councilmen Smith and Mayor Eicke voted in the affirmative, with Councilmen Kenyon, Littleton and Matthews voting in the negative. (*City Council Minutes*, Vol. 38, p. 42) In April 1922, Attorney D. V. Marceau was engaged by the City of Stockton to render a legal opinion about securing part of the property known as the courthouse block for use as a site for a City Hall. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 38, p. 74)

In a unanimous vote on May 23, 1922, the following Resolution was passed abandoning once and for all the concept of locating the new City Hall on the Courthouse block:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STOCKTON, AS FOLLOWS:-

That Whereas, the Council of the City of Stockton have made an investigation as to the possibility and feasibility of combining the City Hall and Court House upon the property now occupied by the Court House in the City of Stockton, and,

Whereas, a meeting was held with the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Joaquin, relative to such consolidations, and,

Whereas, there appear to be certain legal obstacles in the way of such consolidation, and, to such consolidation and have received no support or co-operation whatsoever, and,

Whereas, the Council on April 22nd, 1922 adopted a Resolution to employ an attorney for the purpose of determining the title to the property above mentioned and the questions of consolidation and the location of the City Hall upon the said property, and,

Whereas, it is the opinion of the Council that such consolidation cannot be made within a reasonable time or to any advantage to the City of Stockton;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STOCKTON, AS FOLLOWS:

That Resolution No. 5267 and Resolution No. 5276 and each of them be, and the same hereby rescinded and the City Council abandon the proposed consolidation of the City Hall and the County Court House upon the property now occupied by the County Court House of the County of San Joaquin.
(Stockton City Council Minutes, Vol. 38, p. 117)

At their meeting of May 31, 1922, the City Council approved a resolution to authorize the Clerk to give notice of the sale of bonds in the amount of \$1,760,000.00 approved by the voters on December 1, 1920. The first sale of these bonds was for \$600,000 at 5 ½% annual interest. At the same meeting, Resolution No. 5348 locating the City Hall on the West one-half block 68, East of Center Street passed by a 5-0 vote.
(Stockton City Council Minutes, Vol. 38, p. 129) This Resolution was rescinded on June 13.
(Stockton City Council Minutes, Vol. 38, p. 153)

On July 11, 1922, Block 85 ½ East of Center Street, bounded by Lindsay, El Dorado, Center and Fremont streets was determined to be "the best and most satisfactory site for the City Hall as provided for by a bond issue, and that it is the intention of the City Council to select said block as the site for the City Hall." The vote was 3-2, with Councilmen Matthews, Smith and Mayor Eicke in favor; Kenyon and Littleton opposed.
(Stockton City Council Minutes, Vol. 38, p. 185)

The Civic Memorial Auditorium was located on the block bounded by Oak, Commerce, Center and Fremont streets. In fact, several properties, including the former home of Judge David S. Terry (the famous Dueling Judge of Terry's Texas Rangers fame), were acquired and a few homes actually moved in order to accommodate construction. Bids for the project designed by Glenn Allen and the architectural firm of Wright & Satterlee were opened on June 23, 1924 with construction commencing about thirty days later. The project was completed and dedication ceremonies held on November 3, 1926.

This marked the completion of the first part of the current configuration of the Civic Center. The City Hall's dedication would follow in a month's time; on December 3, 1926, exactly thirty-six years to the day after the completion of the second San Joaquin County courthouse.

Ordinance No. 786 was passed by the City Council on July 18, 1922 which authorized the acquisition of the real property on block 85 ½ East of Center Street from the following property owners:

E. H. Jarvis and Katherine L. Jarvis
 Edward F. Haas, Robert M. Haas, Edward F. Haas and Robert M. Haas, Trustee for Herman O. Haas
 Amelia E. Gremaus, Lillie Bender, Nellie Thurstin, Fannie Wright
 George W. Scott
 Charles Tobson
 William P. Quinn
 Henry Eshback
 Edward Haas
 Katharine Irving
 F. W. Viebrock

The combined sales price for the above listed properties was \$156,700. (Stockton City Council Minutes, Volume 38, p. 187 and 189)

The architectural firm of Davis, Heller, Pearce & Company entered into a contract with the city to design the new City Hall on June 28, 1922. Joseph Losekann & John Upton Cloudsley acted as associate architects. Davis, Heller, Pearce & Co. was housed in the Delta building on the Northwest corner of Weber Avenue and California Street. J. W. Pearce, the partner principally involved in the City Hall design, had joined the firm in 1919. Davis, Heller, Pearce & Co. went on to design many buildings on the new campus of the College of the Pacific. (*Stockton Record*, 8/15/1925)

Joseph Losekann was a native of San Francisco who had come to Stockton in 1908 with this wife and their daughter, Dorothy Frances. He was in practice with John Upton Cloudsley and the two mainly specialized in residential design. Other projects he designed were the City of Stockton Silver Lake lodge, considered a gem of log construction, as well as the Eden Apartments and the Cunningham Hotel, both for Senator Frank Boggs. (*Stockton Record*, 6/9/1923, 3:3)

Taking inspiration from field trips to San Francisco's City Hall, the design ultimately accepted for Stockton's City Hall was described as Roman-Ionic in style, with fluted columns running from the first to the third floor on the North and South facades. In 1922, the "handsome design" was described in a detailed article in the *Stockton Record*:

Involving an expenditure not exceeding \$450,000, construction on Stockton's proposed new city hall will be started after the first of the year and will be completed in about one year after actual work has been started. This building will be the last word in efficiency in arrangement and accommodations relative to buildings of municipal character.

This beautiful edifice is to occupy the block of land just south of McLeod's lake, bounded by El Dorado, Fremont, Lindsay and Center streets. The main entrance is to face north onto the park made by filling in McLeod's lake; opposite

the main entrance on the southern façade of the building is another entrance facing on Lindsay street, to accommodate the people coming from the main part of town. When completed this building will be an integral part of our new civic center, of which the memorial auditorium is a unit.

The city hall, which is 100X170 feet in ground area, is to be placed on a block of land sufficiently large to allow grass and planting about it, and across the street from the main entrance will be a park approximately a city block in area. Thus fine vistas of the building may be obtained from all sides.

The design of the exterior is in the classic Roman-Ionic type with columns running through two stories in height. The third story above the main cornice line is crowned with a classic cheneau. The facing of the building is to be granite-faced terra cotta, and a red tile roof of a Cordova pattern will cover the buildings. The basement will be rusticated to convey a sense of strength and massiveness. The main entrance is approached by broad monumental steps flanked by cast bronze electroliers. At night flood lighting will be employed to illuminate the exterior.

On the first floor will be the main vestibules and lobby in which will be located the stairway and two passenger elevators. This main lobby will be very impressive, being constructed in stone and marble with richly coffered ceilings. A feature of the main lobby will be a booth for a telephone central and information bureau.

Leading from the main lobby on the east side is to be the tax collector's office, well lighted by large windows, with a skylight over the central public space. The arrangement of these offices was studied from the highly successful San Francisco city hall by the architects and the city council, who went in a body to the bay cities to investigate the best arrangements for efficient, businesslike offices. Taxpayers will be able to enter by one door, pass to the assessor's counter for payment of taxes, thence out another door. Thus a huge crowd can be handled at tax paying time in an orderly and efficient manner. Across the main lobby on the west side of the building will be the offices of the city clerk, auditor, etc. There will be private offices for the heads of departments, large vaults for storage and important documents and books (sic.), and all the accessories of a modern office plant.

In the basement will be found the mechanical equipment, office of the fire department, public and private lavatories, store rooms and the police department offices. The latter will consist of a desk sergeant's office, waiting room, secretary's room, detectives' room, detention room and office of the chief of police. Adjoining these offices will be a pistol range, police locker room, shower room, steam room, gymnasium and lecture hall where the personnel of the police and fire department may be instructed. All devices necessary to add to the health and efficiency of these very important departments is to be installed. From the police department an elevator will convey prisoners to the jail in the third story.

The second floor contains the offices of the building inspection department, health department and clinic, health offices, commission of immigrations and housing, poundmaster, office of the commission of public health and safety, mayor's suite, council chambers with offices of city attorney, waiting rooms, etc. Two large, light courts will light the stair lobby, halls and a few interior offices, also the public space in the auditor's and tax collector's offices on the main floor. The council chambers and mayor's suite will be designed in a dignified and architectural character, while all other offices will be straightforward and businesslike.

In the third floor will be accommodations for the playground and planning commission, superintendent of parks, harbor master, superintendent of streets and street and sewer assessments. The city engineering department will have considerable space on this floor, with large drafting room and offices for the city engineer and his assistants. The justice court with jury room, judge's chambers and offices for the city prosecuting attorney will occupy part of the south side of the floor.

The west side of the third floor will house the city jail and its adjuncts. This department will be very complete and up-to-date. Steel cells of the most approved type will be installed for men and women prisoners, a kitchen for preparation of prisoners' meals, room for a matron with private bath, room for police sergeant identification bureau, work room for officers in this department, and a photographic studio and dark room for photography of criminals will comprise the remainder of the floor space. These rooms are all so related to the justice court as to obtain the greatest efficiency and convenience in handling the civil and criminal cases of the city.

A loft space over the elevators and stairway will be available for storage or expansion of any department.

The building is to be reinforced concrete throughout, faced with terra cotta. The floors of all offices and hallways will be covered with battleship linoleum which possesses great wearing qualities and will be a medium affording the utmost comfort to the occupants of the buildings.

The plans for this important addition to Stockton's proposed civic center are being completed by Davis-Heller-Pearce company, Peter L. Sala and Losekann & Clowdsley, associate architects. (*Stockton Record*, 11/25/1922, Real Estate Section:1)

Preliminary draft plans were submitted by the architects on September 1, 1922. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 38, p. 248) The Council voted to employ Davis-Heller-Pearce Company to be responsible for the reinforced concrete frame, floors, foundations, walls and excavations at a fee not to exceed 2 ½% of costs for the project. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 38, p. 319) Final plans and specifications were formally accepted on March 16, 1923 by unanimous vote of the City Council. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 38, p. 487-488)

On April 24, 1923, Resolution No. 5936 was adopted to invite sealed proposals for furnishing the labor and materials for the construction of a City Hall building to be located on Block 85 ½ East of Center Street. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, p. 558)

Resolution No. 6009 rescinded the call for bids for the City Hall on May 18, 1923. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, p. 601) At the same meeting, Approvals for the specification for the City Hall embodied in Resolutions No. 5857 and 5935 were also rescinded and a new Resolution, No. 6022, adopted specifications for the three story and basement City Hall as presented by the Architects was adopted and the City Attorney directed to prepare a Resolution calling for bids on the project. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, p. 613) This Resolution was passed on May 29 and invited bids to be submitted no later than June 12 at 11:00 a.m.

On the 12th of June, 1923 the bids for work on the Class A City Hall were opened at the morning session of the City Council. The contents of the bid proposals were read by City Clerk A. L. Banks. General contractors John W. Howard of Cheyenne, Wyoming,

Riley & Nemitz, Goold & Johns of Stockton, R. W. Moller of San Francisco, R. W. Trost of San Francisco, J. E. Shepherd of Stockton, Lange & Bergstrom of San Francisco and Howard S. Williams each submitted bids. Plumbing work was bid on by the Stockton Plumbing and Supply Company. Heating and ventilating bids were received by Stockton Plumbing and Supply Co., J. W. Plecard and F. P. Sexton. Electrical work was bid by F. E. Newbury Electrical Company, Commercial Electric Company and Battlefinger Brothers of San Francisco. A mechanical equipment bid was submitted by F. P. Sexton. Plumbing, heating and ventilating had bids from Miller-Hays Company, Latourette & Ficol, Brandt Bros. for heating and Edward L. Gnekow for plumbing. Bids for jail equipment were received from the Pauly Jail Building Co. of San Francisco and the Van Dorn Iron Works of San Francisco. All bids were within the budget estimate of the architects and were referred to City Engineer Walter B. Hogan and the City Attorney. All bids were taken under advisement until June 15. (*Stockton Record*, 6/12/1923, 1:1; *Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, pp. 645-647)

At a public meeting held on June 16, 1923, the following alternatives were agreed to prior to the adoption of Resolution No. 6069, awarding the contract for the general construction of the City Hall to Howard S. Williams:

...Granite work as shown on the plans and called for in the specification be left out, the base being cement plaster and steps being finished in cement [reducing the bid by \$24,342]

...Cement plaster ...substituted for Terra Cotta as shown on Page 6A of the drawings [reducing the bid by \$35,645]

Entrance to the Police Department be covered as shown on the plans [an addition of \$4,200]

Insulite floors as called for in the specifications...are put in [adding \$9,100]

Vault doors as specified and shown on plans be included [adding \$1,450]

Vault door in Treasurer's Room be changed to No. 25 Special 1 1/2" solid door as specified on page 142 in place of door specified [adding \$900]

...the building be raised 20" to fill on property being increased the same amount and not less than two additional steps being put in at entrances [adding \$7234] (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, pp. 664-665)

In addition, the contract for the heating, ventilating, plumbing and electrical work was awarded to Edward L. Gnekow in the amount of \$60,869 by Resolution No. 6070. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, p. 665) The Pauly Jail Building Company was awarded the contract for supplying the jail equipment for \$35,465 by the adoption of Resolution No. 6071. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, p. 666)

On July 2, 1923, the City Council met and rejected all of the bids that had been submitted. The previous Council had accepted the bids of Howard S. Williams, Edward L. Gnekow and the Pauly Jail Building Company as being the lowest responsible bids and authorized the City Attorney to draft contracts. However, it was learned that funds available for the City Hall project amounted to a maximum of \$654,702.25 composed of \$600,000 in bond revenue, \$50,556 premium and other revenues totaling \$4,146.25. Of this amount, \$184,247.77 had been paid for the land, the building contract amounted to \$360,897; heating, electrical, plumbing and ventilation added up to \$60,869 and jail equipment was another \$36,165. Outstanding architectural fees were \$10,000. When added together, this arrangement meant that only \$1,200 was left to pay for all furnishings for the building. The new City Council refused to approve the arrangement made by their predecessors on the grounds that this remainder was insufficient to furnish

and equip the new building. (*Stockton Record*, 7/3/1923, 5:1; *Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 39, p. 695-696)

At the next regular meeting of the City Council on July 9, attorneys representing Howard S. Williams and Edward L. Gnekow appeared and demanded that the contracts approved by the previous Council be honored. Attorney William P. Hubbard, representing Williams submitted the following letter:

To the Mayor and city council, City Hall,
Stockton, California

Gentlemen: Demand is hereby made upon you as mayor and members of the city council of Stockton, a municipal corporation of San Joaquin county, California, to execute in behalf of the city of Stockton that certain agreement made between Howard S. Williams of San Francisco, California, called the contractor, and the city of Stockton, a municipal corporation of San Joaquin county, called the owner, for the furnishing of all materials and the performance of all work, pursuant to the drawings and described in the specifications and entitled general contract, including general bid, prepared by Davis-Heller-Pearce company, Peter L. Sala and Losekann & Clowdsley, associate architects and engineers, under which contract the said contractor was to receive the sum of three hundred and sixty thousand, eight hundred and ninety-seven dollars (\$360,897) in current funds for the performance of his contract; and to secure the performance of which said contract a good and sufficient bond has been duly filed with the proper city authorities of said city of Stockton.

Your failure to so execute said contract will compel the contractor to institute proceedings therefore. (*Stockton Record*, 7/10/1923, 6:1)

Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Arthur Levinsky, representing Edward Gnekow, argued that a jail facility was never contemplated as part of the City Hall bond measure and should be omitted from the project to leave sufficient funds to secure furnishings while at the same time honoring the contracts held by their clients. Hubbard pointed out in his arguments that the bond was meant to provide for the land acquisition, building, equipment, furnishing, appliances and necessary appurtenances. It was his view that a jail was not a necessary part of a City Hall building, nor land, nor furnishings, nor appliances. "[C]ity employees do not go to jail very often if they can possibly avoid it," was the view he stated. (*Stockton Record*, 7/10/1923, 6:7)

Mr. Levinsky, on behalf of his client, Mr. Gnekow, stated that "[w]hile we like to make a fee, we like to make it in some other way than in a litigation with the city." Acting Mayor Lewis did not call for action on the motion, but promised the council would meet in executive session and discuss the matter. (*Stockton Record*, 7/10/1923, 6:7)

The matter of honoring the contracts with Williams and Gnekow were not ironed out until the City Council meeting of May 18, 1925 and the jail cells had been removed from the building's specifications. (*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 40, p. 311) The Pauly Jail Building Company released the City from their contract, resulting in nearly \$36,000 in savings.

Nevertheless, on January 1, 1925, work began on the foundation of the new City Hall. A total of 142 tons of crushed rock was used. The base required approximately 703 tons of asphalt concrete and an additional 110 tons of "screenings." 47,971 square feet

of girding was used. 2,435 square feet of sidewalk was installed around the block on which the new building was located. (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 12/3/1926, 4:3)

By 1925, the exterior finish called for was a Gunite material rather than the terra cotta described three years previously and the impression of "massiveness and strength" was to be conveyed by a rusticated pattern used on the basement level. Flood lights were planned to illuminate the building after dark. (*Stockton Record*, 4/11/1925, 1:1 Real Estate section)

Broad monumental steps flanked by cast bronze electroliers are to be placed at the entrance. On the first floor will be the main vestibules and lobby. A stairway to the second floor and two elevator shafts will be located in the lobby as well as a telephone booth and information bureau. The lobby will be impressive with its finishing of stone and marble with richly coffered ceilings.

To the east of the main lobby will be the tax collector's offices, well lighted by east widows and a skylight over the main part of this section of the building. The offices will have an entrance for those transacting business and will make their exit through another door. A large crowd of taxpayers can thus be handled more efficiently.

On the west of the lobby will be located the city clerk's office and auditor's office. On the same floor departments, large vaults for storage and all the accessories of a modern office plant.

Offices of the fire and police departments, mechanical equipment, lavatories and store rooms will be found in the basement. The quarters of the police department will consist of a desk sergeant's office, waiting room, detectives' room, detention room, chief's office and secretary's office. Adjoining the offices will be a pistol range, locker room, shower room, steam room, gymnasium and lecture hall, where the police and fire department personnel will be instructed. There will be a separate elevator from the police department to the third floor where a few cells will be installed.

Offices of the city manager, building inspector, poundmaster, city attorney and the council chambers will be located on the second floor. The council chambers and offices on this floor will be designed in a dignified character, while other offices on this floor will be more of a business-like character.

The third floor will contain offices of the harbormaster, the playground department, superintendent of parks, superintendent of the streets, and the engineering department will have considerable space on this floor. Drafting rooms will be unusually well lighted. On the south side of the floor the justice court, judge's chambers and prosecuting attorney's office will be located. Any jail equipment to be installed will be done on the west side of the third floor. (*Stockton Record*, 4/11/1925, 1:1 Real Estate section)

In addition to Howard S. Williams of San Francisco serving as the general contractor on the City Hall project, J. J. Scanlon was the lathing contractor responsible for the steel partitions, free standing columns and exterior cornice. D. E. Burgess was the painting contractor, using the Terminal Paint Manufacturing Company's products.

The decorative plaster work installed at the new City Hall was the responsibility of the Armand Michelotte of Stockton, using United States Gypsum plaster supplied by F. E. Ferrell & Company. In addition to the value of gypsum as a fire-resistive material, it was also used because of its insulating qualities. The three coats of gypsum plaster were

applied which had the capacity to set rapidly. Some of the ornamental work was executed by using a special gypsum moulding plaster which was poured into gelatine moulds then applied to the wall. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 2:3)

Curiously, in 1925, a policy was established regarding the installation of plaques at the new City Hall building.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STOCKTON, AS FOLLOWS:

That there shall not be installed at the City hall any tablet or plaque bearing the name or names of any official or civilian or any living person.

August 31, 1925

[Approved by a vote of 7-0, with 2 Councilmen absent]

(*Stockton City Council Minutes*, Vol. 40, p. 424)

A contest was sponsored by the *Stockton Record* to determine inscriptions to be included on the facades of the new City Hall building. It was felt that a public contest would result in suitable mottoes for the community. The winner of the first prize of \$10 was F. C. Cloudsley. His sentiment was chosen by the jury of Peter L. Sala, one of the associate architects on the project, Charles E. Ashburner, the City Manager, and G. E. Reynolds. The winning phrase was "To inspire a nobler civic life; to fulfill justice; to serve the people." This motto was ultimately added to the North façade of the City Hall. The second inscription was penned by city officials who were guided in their work by about 100 contest entries. It stated: "Let that which the fathers have builded inspire their sons to civic patriotism." (*Stockton Record*, 4/26/1926, 9:2) This motto appears on the building's Southern façade.

The second prize went to Mable Hillman Hibbard of 613 East Hazelton avenue. Her entry read "Built by citizens; upheld by principle; lighted by intelligence; dedicated to civic advancement." Her prize: a one year subscription to the *Stockton Record*. The third prize went to Mrs. E. S. Mockerman of 835 North Lincoln street. "Dedicated to Service—honorable, trustworthy, noble: an exemplification of the spirit of progress." Mrs. Mockerman won \$5. Honorable mention went to L. Diamond for "Dedicated to a municipal government of justice, efficiency and progress." And Mrs. C. C. Geddes proposed "dedicated to the uplifting of humanity as exemplified in civic service." (*Stockton Record*, 4/26/1926, 9:2)

Work was being done by a crew of 65 men to erect the reenforced concrete structure, with exterior brick covered by California stucco. It was estimated that the work would not be completed for another ten to twelve months. (*Stockton Independent*, 8/23/1925, 1:1) In fact, the building was delivered on September 7, 1926. (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 12/3/1926, 4:3)

At the same time, a new fire alarm system was being installed with a central headquarters for the equipment located southwest of the new Civic Memorial Auditorium near McLeod Lake. Local contractor J. F. Shepherd was handling the construction of the brick building which cost \$25,000. The Gamewell company held the contract to install the new fire alarm equipment at a cost of \$133,492. Additional fire alarm conduit was included at for \$11,084.80 by the Clark and Henery Company. (*Stockton Independent*, 8/23/1925, 1:1)

As work was completed on the City Hall building and the surrounding roadways, it was noted that the project, together with the Memorial Auditorium, culminated a decade of work by civic leaders "and, after numerous legal battles by so-called obstructionists, ha[d] been consummated." (*Stockton Daily Independent*, 12/3/1926, 4:1)

The last meeting of the City Council held at the chambers fashioned out of rooms at the Hotel Stockton was on October 18, 1926. While the City Hall building had been delivered in early September, the installation of the opera chairs in the new Council chambers had been delayed and a sixty-day extension approved. (*Stockton Record*, 10/15/1926, 18:6)

The new City Council chambers were first used on October 25, 1926 when the City Council convened their meeting at 8:00 p.m., presided over by Mayor Raymond Wheeler. (*City Clerk's Minutes, Stockton City Council Meeting*, 10/25/1926)

The dedication of the new City Hall took place on December 3, 1926, beginning at 8 p.m. That night, the entire edifice glowed with flood lights. The ceremonies took place on the North side of the structure, followed by public inspection of the facility. City Manager Charles E. Ashburner announced that the entire program would be broadcast on KWG radio through the courtesy of the station's owner, George A. Turner. The Stockton City Band, conducted by E. B. Condy, played a concert in the main lobby. Members of the Stockton Fire Department served as official guides through the new building. (*Stockton Record*, 12/3/1926, 20:4)

Several hundred citizens attended the formal dedication of the City's new \$650,000 home. The crowds stayed until nearly midnight, taking in the splendor of the impressive civic structure following the speeches by dignitaries. A dance held at the Native Sons hall was part of the festivities.

Mayor Raymond J. Wheeler opened the program with an address in which he declared the completion and dedication of the building was but another manifestation of the enterprise, spirit and unity of the people of Stockton in recent years. To the contractors and architects and officials of the city who supervised construction of the building, he extended the city's appreciation, declaring that the beauty and utility of the building stand as an expression of their sincerity of purpose. (*Stockton Record*, 12/4/1926, 4:1-2)

Hillard E. Welch, grand president of the Native Sons of the Golden West, presided over a symbolic ritual at the formal dedication of the building. This was the laying of a bronze tablet at the top of the steps at the main entrance of the new City Hall's North side. The tablet was inscribed:

This building dedicated to Truth, Liberty, Toleration, by the Native Sons of the Golden West. December 3, 1926. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 1:1)

The concrete used to affix the tablet in place was meant to symbolize the unity of California. This concrete was comprised of sands from various historic California sites: cement was included from every mill in the state, rocks (aggregate) from the mountains and water from the state's historic missions. The ceremony consisted of mixing these elements into the concrete with which the commemorative plaque was installed onto the new building. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 1:1)

George F. McNoble spoke of the founding and growth of Stockton through its history. Charles E. Ashburner, the City Manager, delivered the closing speech:

Stockton will be a large and prosperous inland port with ships sailing to all parts of the world. Stockton will be the greatest cotton handling port on the west coast and there is no reason why cotton mills, woolen mills, woodworking plants, canneries and in fact, almost every kind of manufacturing plant, cannot be successfully established here as soon as our world-wide transportation is accomplished by the deepening of the San Joaquin river. (*Stockton Record*, 12/4/1926, 4:1-2)

The structure was described as having "the appearance of a building much larger than it actually is." The finished surface was a white Gunitite material, similar to the finish at the Civic Memorial Auditorium. The first floor lobby was finished with marble surfaces and included huge and ornate electroliers shining light up to the ornate ceiling decorated with a hand painted design. The flooring was covered with multi-colored marble. An information booth and telephone system was located in a recess near the main entrance.

Two elevators opened onto the lobby, one for public use and a second for use as a service elevator. A third elevator at the West end of the building was dedicated primarily for use by the police department. The offices of the clerk, city auditor, tax collector and city treasurer were provided on the first floor, with each having a separate vault connected with the police department in the basement by a burglar alarm system. The Tax collector's office was equipped with counters spacious enough for six people to work at once time. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 1:2)

The second floor held the offices of the city manager and the council chambers. A "beautiful room with mahogany panels facing the walls and ceiling and with windows looking out over McLeod's Lake to the northern sections of the city" was dedicated to the city manager's private office. In addition, the city manager had two other rooms; the first serving as a waiting room and the second as his secretary's office. Other offices on the second floor were for the building, plumbing and electrical inspectors, the mayor, the city attorney and the purchasing agents in addition to the chief of the fire department. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 3:3)

The council chambers on the second floor held a large table which held a drawer for each council member. Opera chairs were arranged for the public's use during council meetings.

The third floor housed the engineering department in most of the Northern half of the building. Drafting rooms, maps and the offices of the superintendent of streets, superintendent of parks and the recreation director were also located on the third floor.

In the basement was the police department which held the Gamewell alarm board, allowing the police to communicate to officers in the field using boxes installed at various points throughout the city. The police also had a large auditorium space in the basement which served as a meeting room for training. A locker room and showers as well as a pistol range were available 24-hours a day. At the West end of the building was a sheltering Porte-Cochere to protect police equipment and patrol wagons. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 3:3)

Each council member expressed his support and unanimous assessment that the City Hall was "one of the most enterprising civic projects ever undertaken in Stockton." Mayor Raymond J. Wheeler stated, "No question but what the city hall is one of the city's greatest assets as a public utility and from an architectural standpoint. But greater, even than this to me, is the symbolization of the splendid co-operative spirit of our citizens which made the building possible." (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 1:6)

City Manager, Charles E. Ashburner, told of the benefits of the new City Hall:

The City Hall makes it possible for the various departments of the city administration to properly function. The offices now are segregated under one roof, with close intercommunication and time is not wasted going from one building to another. The offices are properly equipped with furnishings, vaults and proper filing cabinets. Records are properly housed; are easily obtained and are filed in sequence instead of being 'stored' as heretofore. The saving of time lost between the engineering, police, fire, building, plumbing and electrical inspection department, which departments were housed in separate buildings, will, in the course of years amount to a very large sum of money.

There is another important feature, leaving out the practical workings of the civic administration, namely, that the city hall stands for civic pride. A city is judged by its municipal building as much as a private concern is judged by its factory or office, and no community with proper self respect and proper pride can afford to be without a building which is symbolic of the community spirit. Stockton has both the community spirit and the city hall which typifies it. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 1:8)

In 1936, handrails were added to the exterior stairways at the suggestion of Reverend Carl F. Bauer to assist the aged. (*Stockton Record*, 4/28/1936, Section 2, 1:5-6)

In 1948, filming of the Hollywood production of "All the King's Men" took place on the South stairs of City Hall. Many locations in and around Stockton were used, including the City Hall's South entrance for a scene representing the climactic moment in the movie. This tale of political intrigue starred John Ireland as an intrepid and somewhat naïve reporter, and Broderick Crawford as a Huey Long-type politician seeking re-election. The film went on to win the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1949.

The city clerk's office was moved from the first to the second floor in 1956. City Clerk Bessie Lee Trahern and her staff took up occupancy in Room 223. The first floor space vacated by the Clerk was put to use by the accounting and purchasing department. They would move from across the lobby into these new offices. The building inspectors and the fire department moved into the quarters vacated by accounting and purchasing, allowing a consolidation of planning and inspection functions into one area. (*Stockton Record*, 11/20/1956, 2:3)

The following year, the City Manager, John Lilly, asked the City Council to approve \$15,000 to finance the remodeling of the third floor of the City Hall to accommodate the engineering department. Most of the plans would consist of removing partitions and walls to expand space for the drafting room. Councilmember Robert Schmidt felt that the City Hall had reached its limit for expansion and remodeling and felt that the police department should be transferred out of the basement and into separate quarters to relieve the pressure. Lilly agreed with the assessment and indicated

that other departments would be requiring additional space in the years to come. (*Stockton Record*, 11/26/1957, 15:4)

The City Council awarded a contract to T. E. Williamson Inc. for remodeling on the on February 10, 1958 at a cost of \$14,059. Two air conditioning units were included in the bid. This was noted as the first major work undertaken within the City Hall since its construction in 1926. (*Stockton Record*, 2/11/1958, 12:5)

On December 1, 1960, the bonds which had financed the City Hall/Civic Auditorium project were paid in full. Mayor Thomas Marnoch and City Manger John Lilly staged a symbolic mortgage burning in the plaza in front of the Auditorium. (*Stockton Record*, 12/2/1960, 1:2) A *Stockton Record* editorial pointed out:

Even today, when bonding is more commonplace, it is awesome to conceive of the voters giving approval to bonds for a 40-year term in a market that demanded a 5 ½ per cent interest rate. Any official who suggested such a deal today would be wrapped in a straitjacket. (*Stockton Record*, 12/6/1960)

In 1963 flood lights on the exterior of the City Hall building were again put into working order. Mayor Elmer Boss switched on the 48 lights on the North façade to illuminate the Greek columns and pediment. "Through the years Civic Center has slowly developed as a beauty spot in the heart of municipal government. For several years, it has been evident that the true beauty of historic City Hall could not be adequately seen at night," noted Mayor Boss. Bids were scheduled to be opened and contracts let for painting the outside of the City Hall's exterior, interior hallways and lobbies except for the basement, as well as the Central Alarm Station. (*Stockton Record*, 8/19/1963, 17:7)

A \$33,000 remodeling job was completed on the third floor of the City Hall in 1968. The Parks and Recreation Department gained a small conference room along with a lunch room for employees. Emil Seifert, the Director of Parks and Recreation, moved into a remodeled office. (*Stockton Record*, 2/3/1968, 21:4)

Later in 1968, the City Council objected to spending \$35,000 to convert the freight elevator into a second passenger elevator to transport people to the third floor improvements. City Manager, Frank Fargo, noted that the freight elevator was a "relic of an earlier era and look[ed] out of place next to the existing passenger elevator." Councilman Luis Arismendi was of a different opinion. "I can't imagine the need for another passenger elevator," and prescribed using the stairs as a healthy alternative. Councilman Charles Bott felt that installing a fancy door on the freight elevator complete with a sign that read Please Use Other Elevator would solve the problem. After the discussion concluded, the appropriation for a new elevator had been omitted from the budget of \$116,067. (*Stockton Record*, 6/7/1968, 26:3)

A device discovered in City Hall in July of 1970 was determined to have been a bomb. Police officer Lieutenant Wallace Ayers detonated the bomb found near the North entrance by a police officer reporting to work. The device was described as having a fuse, and was made from two fired shotgun shells and filled with black powder. The fuse was unlit. After the explosive was detonated, it was determined that it would have been dangerous to anyone within 30 feet of it had it gone off. No connection was confirmed with the bomb and two calls to the police which reported that a bomb was "going to go off." Previous calls of a similar nature had been received that had proven to be unsubstantiated. (*Stockton Record*, 7/20/1970, 11:6)

A contract was awarded with the Modern Engineering and Construction Company of Stockton to install air conditioning in the offices of the city clerk, mayor and the City Council conference room. Previous renovation work over the span of four years had involved remodeling the City Council chambers and offices of the city manager, city attorney and other administrative personnel. This contract anticipated the completion of these up-grades. (*Stockton Record*, 1/12/1971, 12:8)

Local artist Greg Custodio was commissioned to paint two murals in the City Hall lobby in 1974. Entitled "Stockton in the Past" and "Stockton in 1974," the murals represent area pioneers and industries. The Yokuts and Miwoks, Jose Moraga, the first explorer of the San Joaquin Valley, French trappers of the Hudson's Bay Company, the early American settlers, the first San Joaquin County courthouse, Captain Weber's home, the Port of Stockton in the 1870s, a Chinese settler, a Native American, a Mexican settler, an American sailor, a gold miner, Captain Charles M. Weber, a female American settler, an early farmer and an early Stockton drug store represented Stockton's past. Stockton's present was represented by the tomato industry, the Port of Stockton grain elevator, the Stockton channel, the Crosstown freeway, the airport, the City Hall, the San Joaquin County courthouse, movie making in Stockton, Burns Tower, the Haggin Museum, the library, students, an asparagus picker, a grape picker, Weberstown Mall and citizens of Stockton. (Personal correspondence with Greg Custodio, 9/6/1993)

Federal funds were secured by the City in 1975 for the acquisition and conversion of the building at Lindsay and Center streets to be used to house the Community Development Department. An allocation of \$160,000 from the U. S. Commerce Department was to be matched with \$140,000 to complete the project. The City had been leasing the space from Gene Gabbard, Inc. (*Stockton Record*, 6/17/1975, 15:4)

During the nation's bicentennial celebration in 1976, local historian R. Coke Wood, was appointed to head up a local committee to co-ordinate County-wide commemorations. As part of these efforts, a time capsule was put together and sealed to be opened in 2076. The time capsule was located in the lobby of the City Hall, where it remains today.

City Councilman Ralph Lee White called for the construction of a new City Hall in 1980, calling the existing structure "an antique." It was his opinion that

[W]e have outgrown this raggedy building. We should build something real nice across the street. Stockton is supposed to be 'someplace special.' The onlyest new thing we got is the police facility. We're scattered all over town. You cannot go to a City Hall where everything is. And we spent so much money on this junky building. We could rent this out and get our money back.

While not specifically proposing a new site for City Hall, he indicated that Banner Island might be an appropriate site. The location was owned by the City, but was in litigation with Guntert & Zimmerman over toxic issues. None of the other Council members responded to Mr. White's proposal. (*Stockton Record*, 4/8/1980, 10:1)

City Council members finally "spoke" during a vote held in October, 1980 on a motion by Council member White and Mayor Daniel O'Brien to call for a review of the feasibility of including a new City Hall and convention center into the next five-year

capital improvement budget. The tally was 5-4 in favor of sending the matter to the municipal development committee for study. (*Stockton Record*, 10/9/1980, 19:1)

On March 14, 1983, City Hall and Civic Court were designated local landmarks when Resolution No. 39,656 was adopted by the City Council.

In-coming Mayor, Joan Darrah, received some stinging criticism when she replaced carpeting and added wood paneling and re-painted the Mayor's office at City Hall in 1990. "I'm not keen on seeing the taxpayers' money spent in this manner. I don't think it was necessary," huffed Councilman Mel Panizza. Councilwoman Sylvia Minnick added that she was "very disappointed it's so expensive. I'm also appalled and embarrassed." The costs for the redecorating amounted to \$23,889, divided between two projects; \$7,127 for the Mayor and secretary's offices and \$16,762 for the City Council's office. (*Stockton Record*, 5/23/1990, A1:1)

Darrah justified the expense by countering that "I think the mayor's office is very important to the city of Stockton. The office should reflect the commitment the city has to its government." (*Stockton Record*, 5/23/1990, A18:3) Nevertheless, the City Council acted to change city policy that allowed the two projects, each of which totaled less than \$20,000 to be approved without presenting it to the City Council. Councilman Panizza initiated a policy change requiring that the City Council be informed of any remodeling plans for the council and mayoral offices, other than routine maintenance. (*Stockton Record*, 8/8/1990, B2:1)

In 2000, the City of Stockton contracted with A. C. Martin Partners, Inc. to undertake a study of the City Hall in order to develop a plan for much-needed deferred maintenance and structural improvements. In addition, an analysis of the use of the space in the building was to be carried out. This came at a time when a new essential services building was under construction for use by the City on Weber Avenue and office space anticipated at the Hotel Stockton was under contract with developers Civic Partners. Plans were being formulated to make use of these facilities in order to allow work to begin on the City Hall.

Thus, on the eve of Stockton City Hall's 75th year, the building is being studied for a major renovation. The year 2000 was also the City's Sesquicentennial anniversary and a fitting time to take stock of the municipal edifices which serve as home for our local government. A new chapter in the history of the building is left to be written as the improvement plan is formulated and work commences to restore the venerable City Hall.

As Stockton's first City Manager, Charles E. Ashburner directed the construction of the City's first City Hall. His assessment, originally spoken in 1926, still rings true three-quarters of a century later:

[A] city hall stands for civic pride. A city is judged by its municipal building as much as a private concern is judged by its factory or office, and no community with proper self respect and proper pride can afford to be without a building which is symbolic of the community spirit. Stockton has both the community spirit and the city hall which typifies it. (*Stockton Independent*, 12/3/1926, 1:8)

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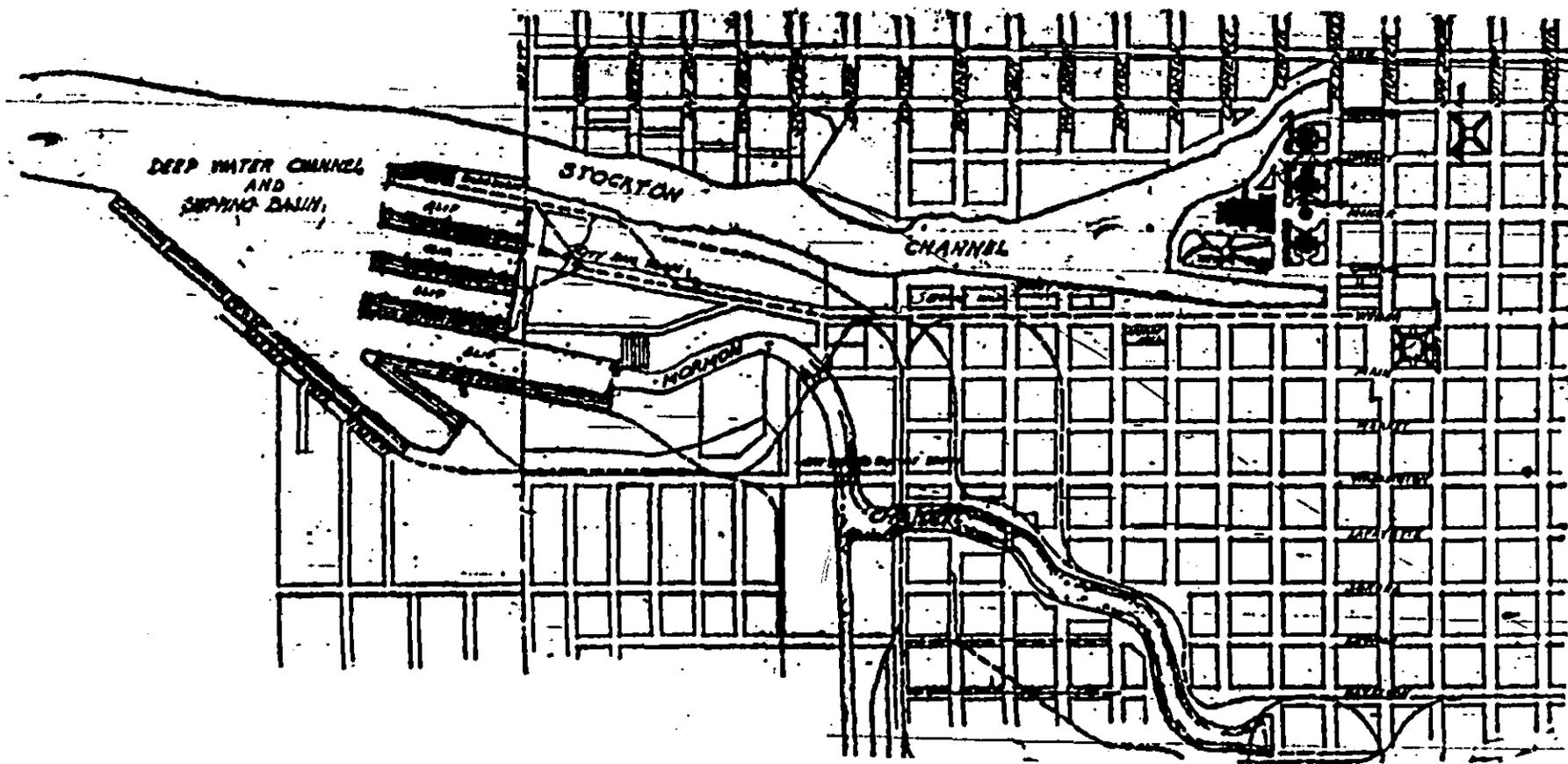
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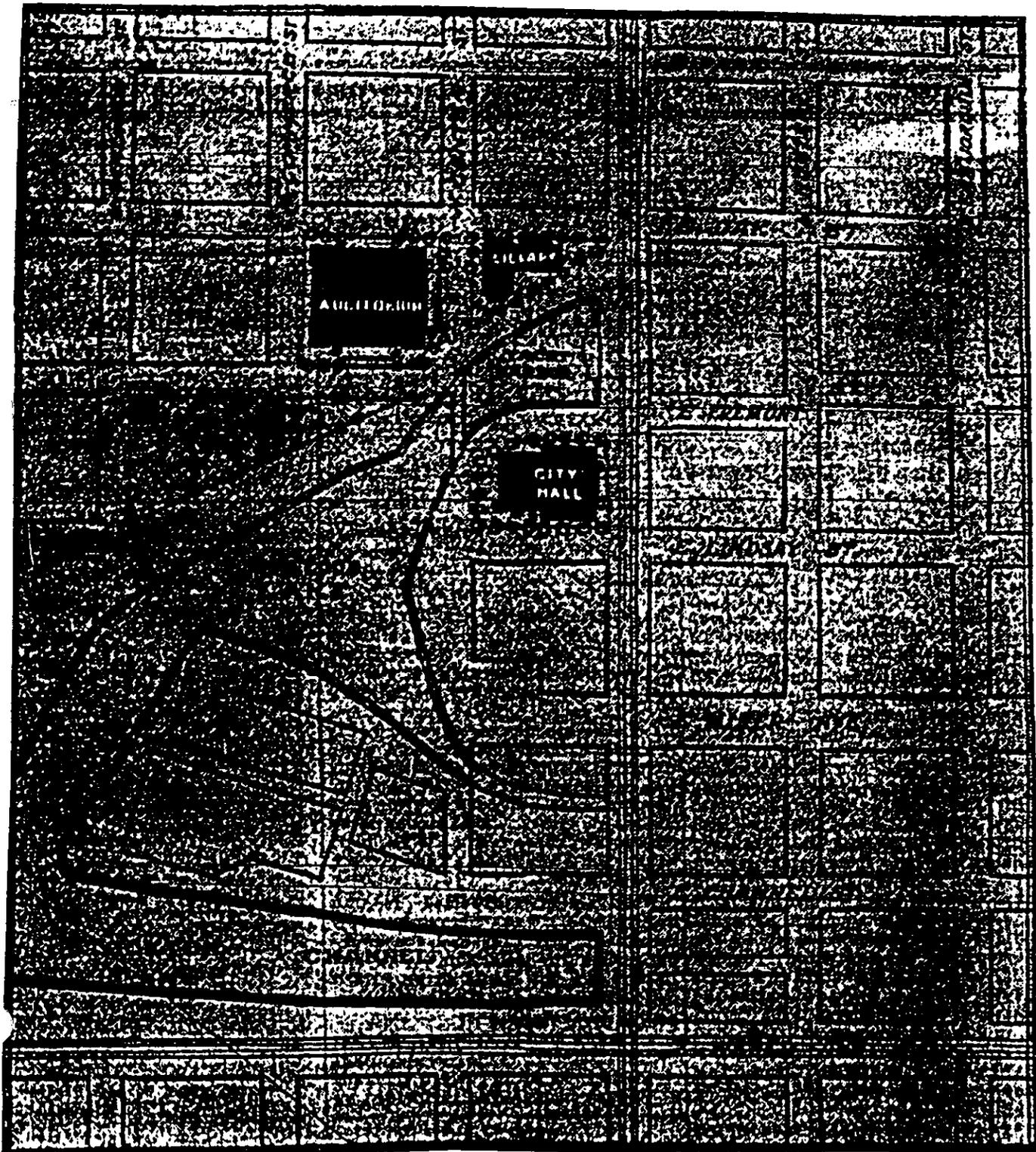
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W. J. WRIGHT PLAN FOR CIVIC CENTER
ON WEBER AND LINDSAY POINTS
STOCKTON RECORD, 11/5/1921



**FRANK V. MAYO PLAN FOR A CIVIC CENTER ON LINDSAY POINT,
THE TWO GROUPS OF BUILDINGS CONNECTED BY A BRIDGE
& McLEOD LAKE THE SITE OF A YACHT HARBOR
STOCKTON RECORD, 11/5/1921**



CLOUDSLEY PRESENTS CASE FOR FREMONT SQUARE LOCATION

Architect, In Submitting Plan, Discusses Merits of Park Center

Editor Record:

While the discussion is going on concerning the various sites for our proposed memorial auditorium I think a few more comparisons should be brought forward relative to the merits of those in questions. While the chamber of commerce referendum brought out a majority of votes in favor of Fremont park site and while this site is also the one favored by the American Legion, too little has been said concerning its merits over other sites suggested.

Central Location

An auditorium to be of most benefit to the whole community should be located as nearly as possible to the center of the city, should have good street car facilities and should be able to take care of automobile traffic in the quickest possible manner. The Fremont park site combines all these desirable features. It is closer to the center of the city (taking Sutter and Main streets as being the center) by two blocks than the Weber point site and is only half as far, or five blocks closer, than the proposed McLeod lake site. This is more important for people naturally like to go down town into the center of things when going to an entertainment and it is also more convenient for visitors at conventions who have not the time to go long distances from their hotels and the restaurants.

Street Car Lines Close

As to street car transportation the Fremont park site is ideal, for you have the El Dorado street line only two blocks away, and the California street line two blocks away and the Weber avenue line three blocks away; these lines serving the whole city car system without transfer. And yet there is no car line directly bounding the site to interfere with parking of autos or to interfere in any way with auto traffic. Also the car lines are just far enough away so as not to disturb the assemblages by their noise. Here you have the maximum efficiency in handling the street car traffic, for the crowds belching forth from the auditorium would melt quickly away in three directions at once. Contrast this with the waterfront sites where one car line only must take care of those to be transported by street cars, and transfer then from this line to others in order to get them to their various parts of the city. To take care of this crowd a great many street cars would have to line up and wait for the outpouring throngs, blocking auto traffic and congesting things generally.

Auto Parking Space

Then there is the automobile to take care of and here again Fremont park far outshines all others. There is amply parking space on all the surrounding streets which have clear getaways in all directions, north, south, east and west, including broad Miner avenue just one block away. The automobilist has little to bother him here when he wants to get away quickly to his home wherever it may be. In the Weber point scheme you have practically a dead end to all the streets besides having to cross a street car

track probably lined with cars awaiting the crowds. In the McLeod lake scheme the north and south streets near the auditorium have dead ends as well as several of the east and west streets. This would cause a serious congestion of automobile traffic in this vicinity.

The Waterfront Sites

In selecting the Fremont park location for an auditorium we have a ready made, almost perfect setting. Fremont park with its trees and grass would need little if any costly improvement. All that is left to be done is to build the building. In the Weber point scheme costly dredging and filling is necessary as well as the necessity of making new parking and improving the water front. To make the McLeod lake site comparable to the Fremont park site you must buy and improve the park space as well as do something to the now ugly water front.

There are several disadvantages to a water front location in Stockton for an auditorium. To my mind the water front here will always be a water front of boats, warehouses, box-cars and railroad tracks, for we are a natural shipping center. Even supposing the proposed harbor or turning basin is placed as far down as the mouth of Mormon channel, do you suppose that all water draft will stop there? Certainly not, for there is still waterway up into the heart of the market district. We have municipally-owned sheds and buildings at the present head of navigation and are building more. All this to be junked for an auditorium? Our water front right to its head will always be the scene to busy loading and unloading of passengers and freight from our river and delta regions and from San Francisco and by points. The ocean-going boats will be the users of our harbor. This means our water front can never be the beautiful spot some of us would like to see. The water in our channel is back water and tide water as well, bringing all the refuse oil and dirt of a busy water front. Then what would be done with the banks of the channel or yacht harbor. We could not plant it to grass or flowers, for in the spring the spring freshets would cause the water to rise to the tops of the banks and higher as we already well know, killing any grass or flowers outright and depositing the oil and other refuse on the banks as it recedes. And when summer comes and the water is low can you picture the looks of those banks? Not very beautiful, is it? If we cannot park the banks then we are forced to bulkhead them with concrete and place a balustrade at the top. This would look quite well even if it did get a deposit of oil over the face, but think of the cost.

Consideration of Costs

Cost seems to be one of the items that those who oppose the Fremont park site bring forth. Supposing the land, acre for acre, is more costly. What of it? Is it not more valuable also? Is it not worth more to the city of Stockton than other locations further out? Land out in Stockton acres or Burkett addition is also much cheaper. But we will all agree that we do not want our auditorium there. Even at a higher cost of the land the Fremont park site is still the cheapest when all things are considered. You buy the land and build the building and you are through, for you have the ready-made setting in Fremont park. Not so of other locations. Weber point puts this place out of the question. The same is true of McLeod lake. The land for the auditorium is not so costly, but you must pay and pay big for the setting. If you would have it compare with Fremont park site, you must buy the additional triangular piece of land to the south for a park. You must improve this park. Then you must bulkhead the lake at tremendous cost, and the

bridge shown in the scheme necessary to tie the civic center together could not be built for nothing. Somebody will have to pay for all this.

Full Block Not Needed

Another point has been lost sight of in reference to cost. A full block, while desirable, is not necessary for an auditorium the size for which we have need. On the two-thirds of a block facing Fremont park could be built an auditorium to seat five thousand people with all necessary adjuncts such as full size stage with dressing rooms, entrance memorial hall, small lecture hall to seat five hundred people, coat and rest rooms, committee rooms, trophy hall or museum, quarters for the various war veteran organizations, as well as many other necessary rooms. We do not need an auditorium to seat ten or twelve thousand people as some seems to think, nor could we pay for such a large building. San Francisco's auditorium seats about twelve thousand people. We are not, nor probably ever will be, in a position to compete with San Francisco for conventions of such magnitude as to need so large a hall. We could not fee or house such a gathering properly. Thus by placing the auditorium on two-thirds of a block instead of a whole block the first cost of land could be materially reduced.

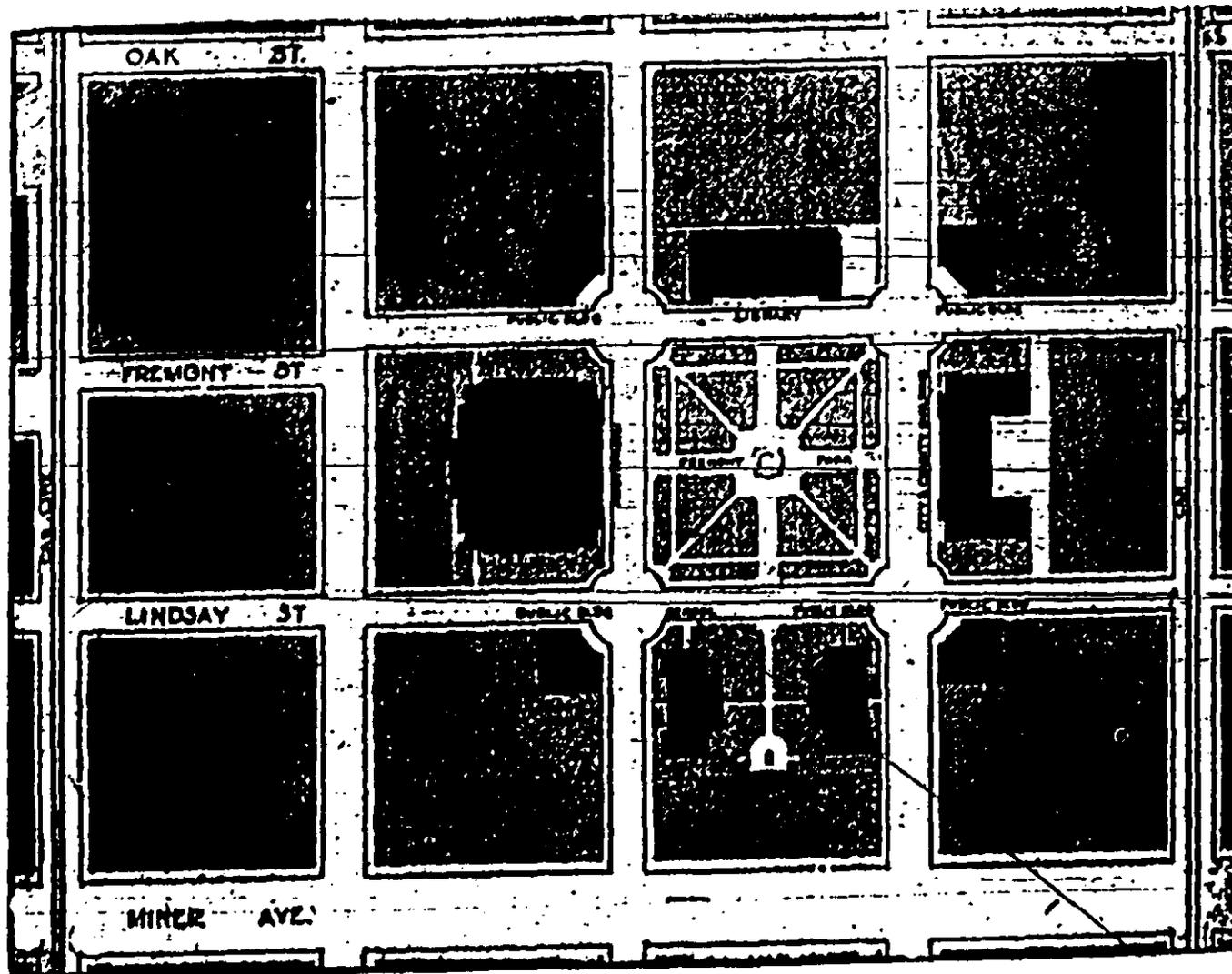
As a location for a civic center Fremont park has many desirable features. There are four facings on the park which could be used for present or future public buildings, thus giving a chance for a symmetrical and architectural treatment which is lacking on the Mcleod lake site. A fine public school already has a facing here, giving a start to the scheme. With the auditorium and the city hall or city hall and courthouse combined facing on this park for a starter, a civic scheme to be proud of could soon be developed. A reference to the accompanying plans will give a conception of the possibilities of this site as a civic center.

Very truly yours,

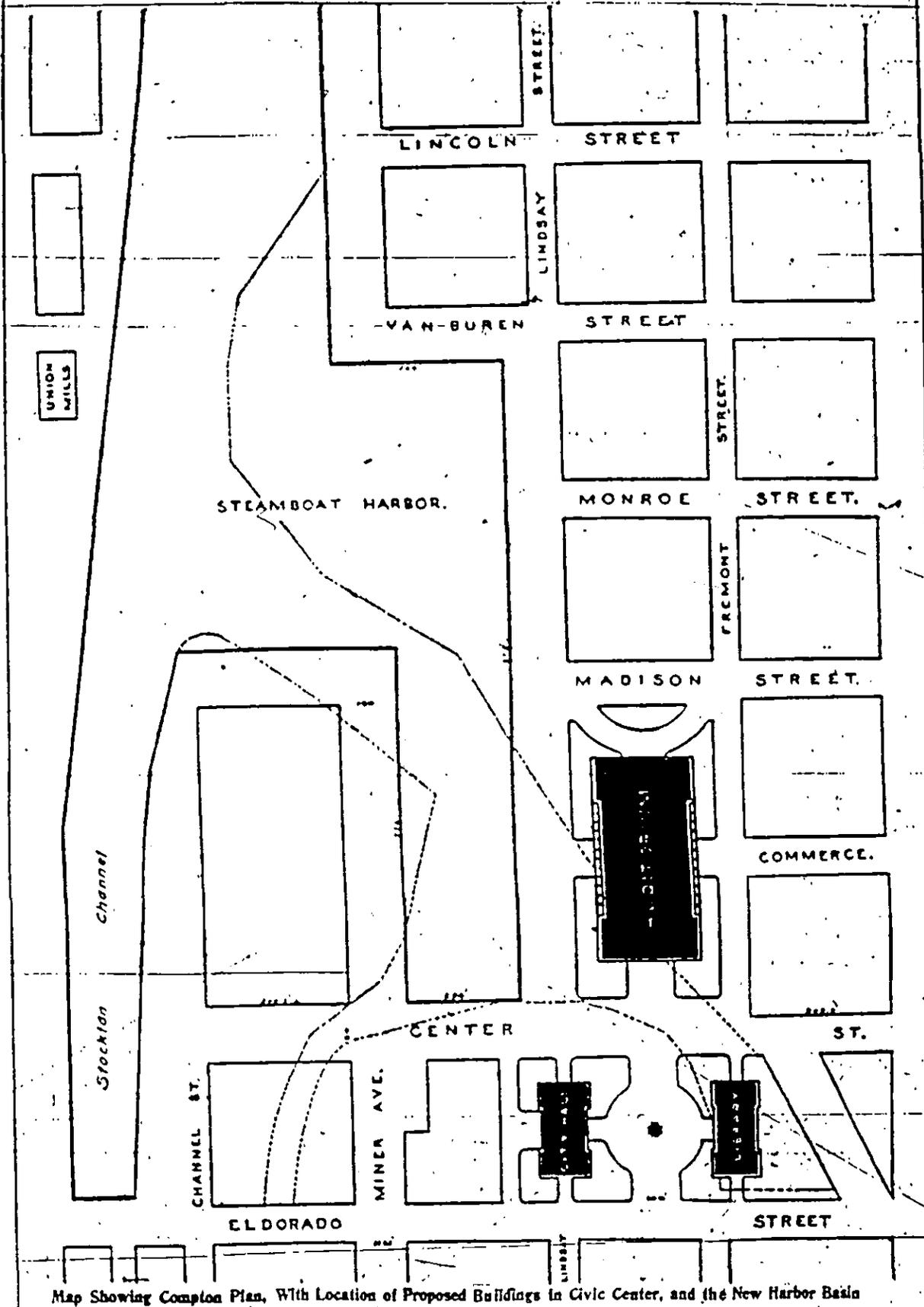
J. U. CLOUDSLEY,

Architect

JOHN UPTON CLOUDSLEY PLAN FOR CIVIC CENTER
DEVELOPMENT AROUND FREMONT PARK
WITH THE BUILDING TO HOUSE THE CITY HALL ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE PARK
STOCKTON RECORD, 11/5/1921



City Seeks Federal Approval of Compton Plan For New Harbor and Civic Center



Map Showing Compton Plan, With Location of Proposed Buildings in Civic Center, and the New Harbor Basin

**SECOND SAN JOAQUIN
COUNTY COURTHOUSE,
COMPLETED 1890,
SHARED WITH
CITY OF STOCKTON**

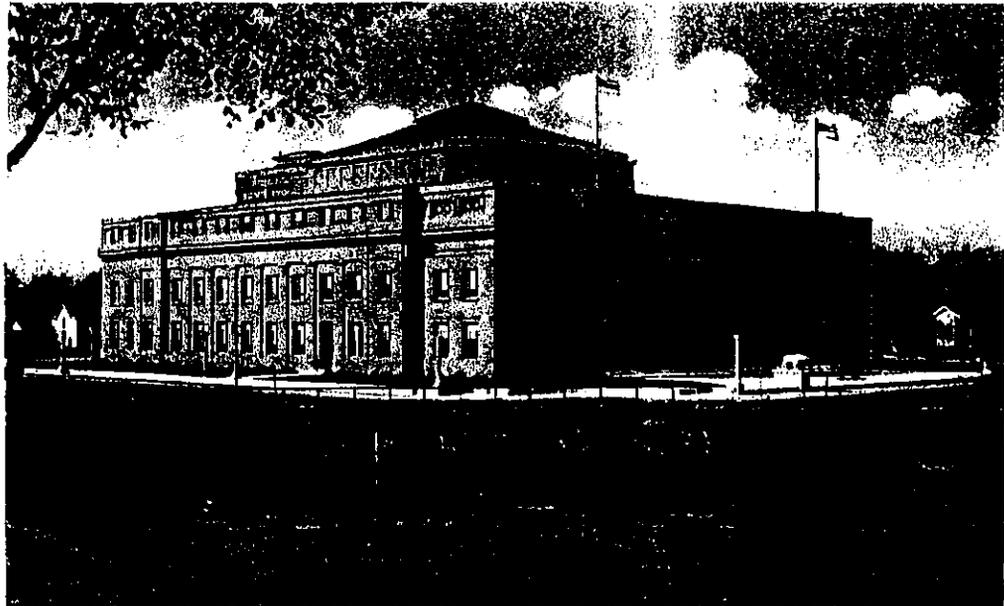


**HOTEL STOCKTON,
COMPLETED 1910,
CITY OF STOCKTON
LEASED SPACE FOR
CITY HALL OFFICES**



**STOCKTON MEMORIAL
CIVIC AUDITORIUM**

**FIRST OF THE CIVIC CENTER
STRUCTURES, COMPLETED
NOVEMBER 1926
NOTE McLEOD LAKE IN
FOREGROUND**

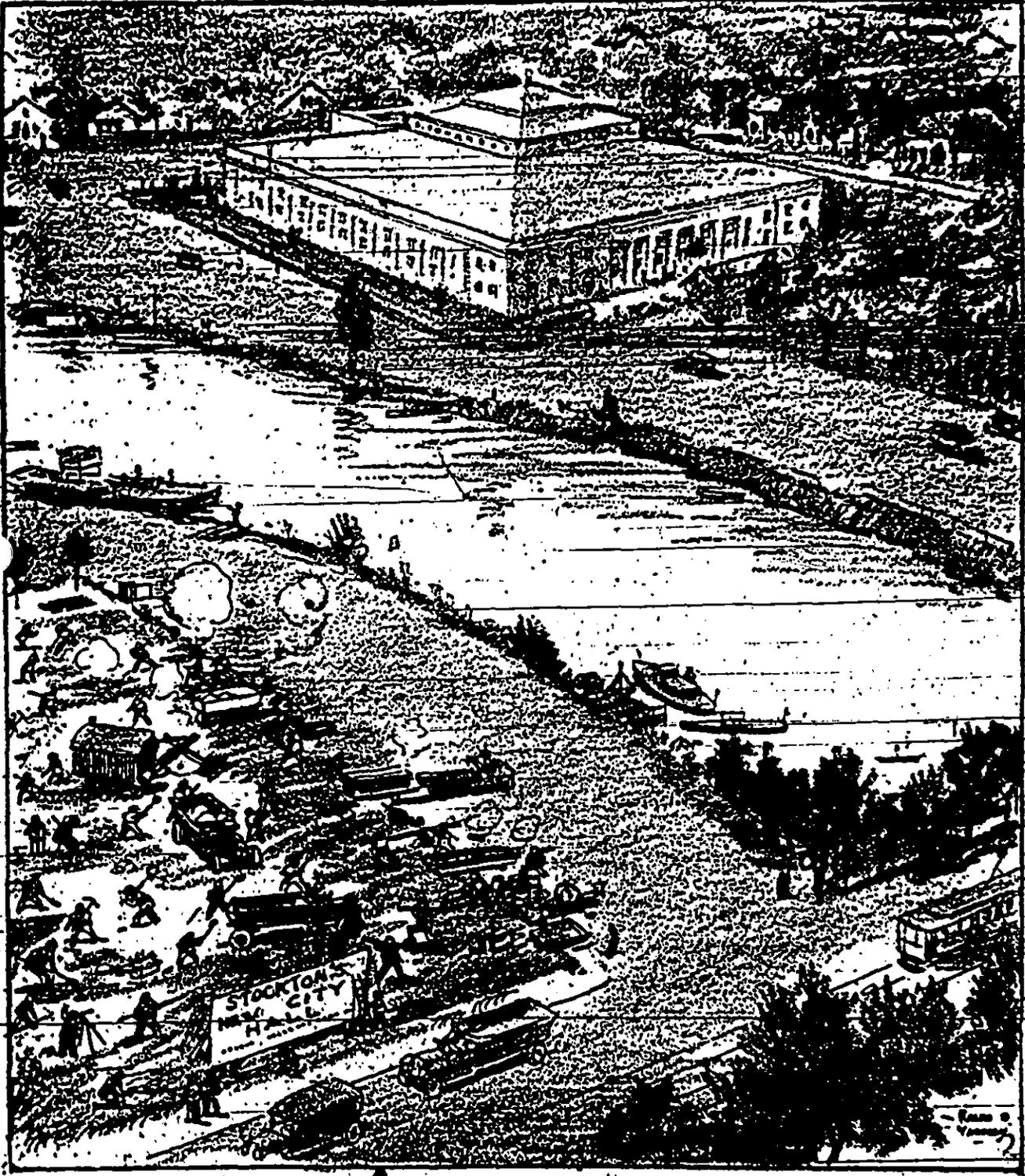


STOCKTON MEMORIAL CIVIC AUDITORIUM, STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA

Coming to the Center

By Yardley

Mayor Wheeler Signs City Hall Contracts and Work Is to Start June 1

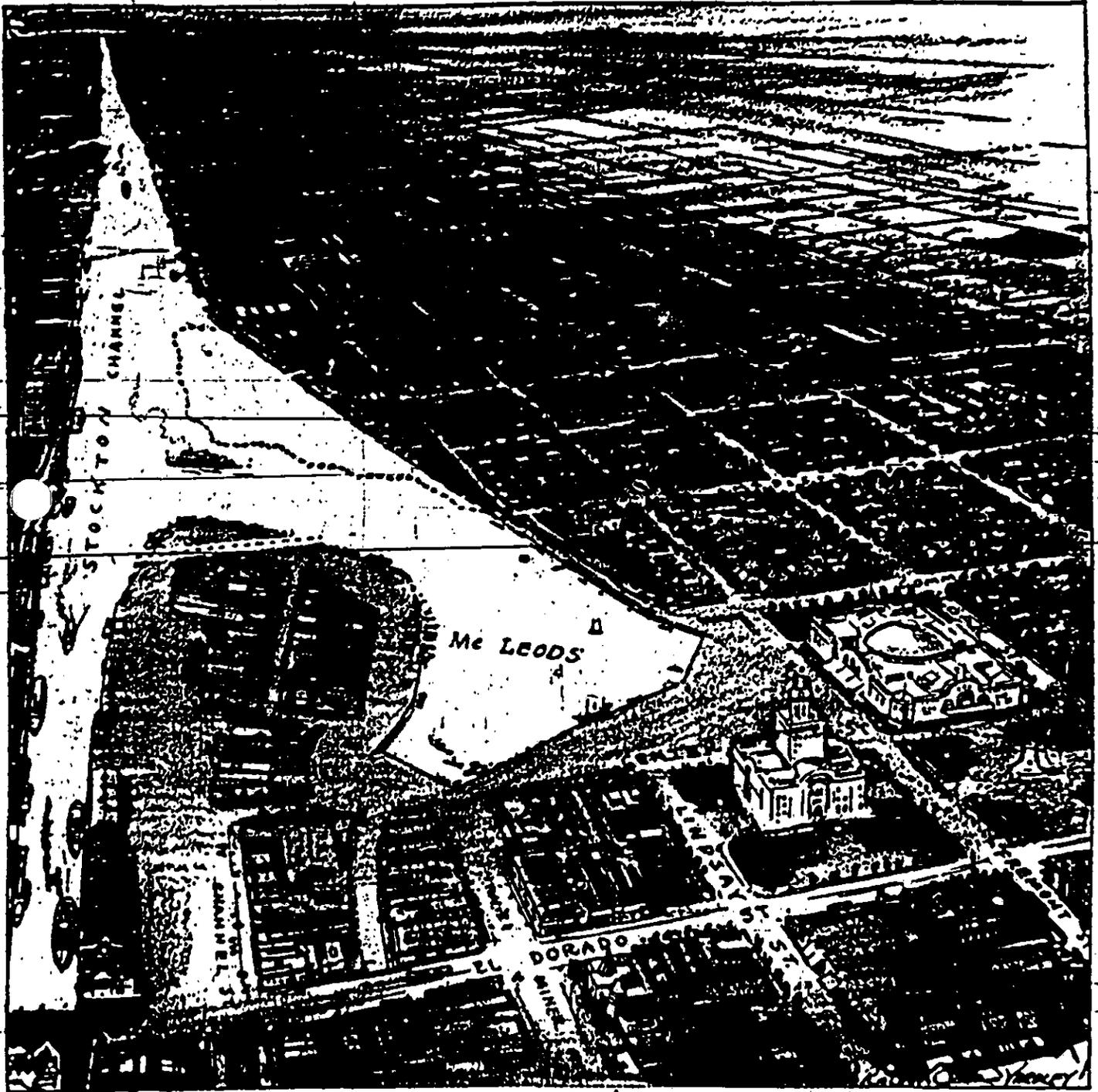


— From a
Yardley

An Improved Harbor and a Civic Center

By Yardley

Hunter's Adaptation of Compton's Plan As the Artist Sees It From the Sky.

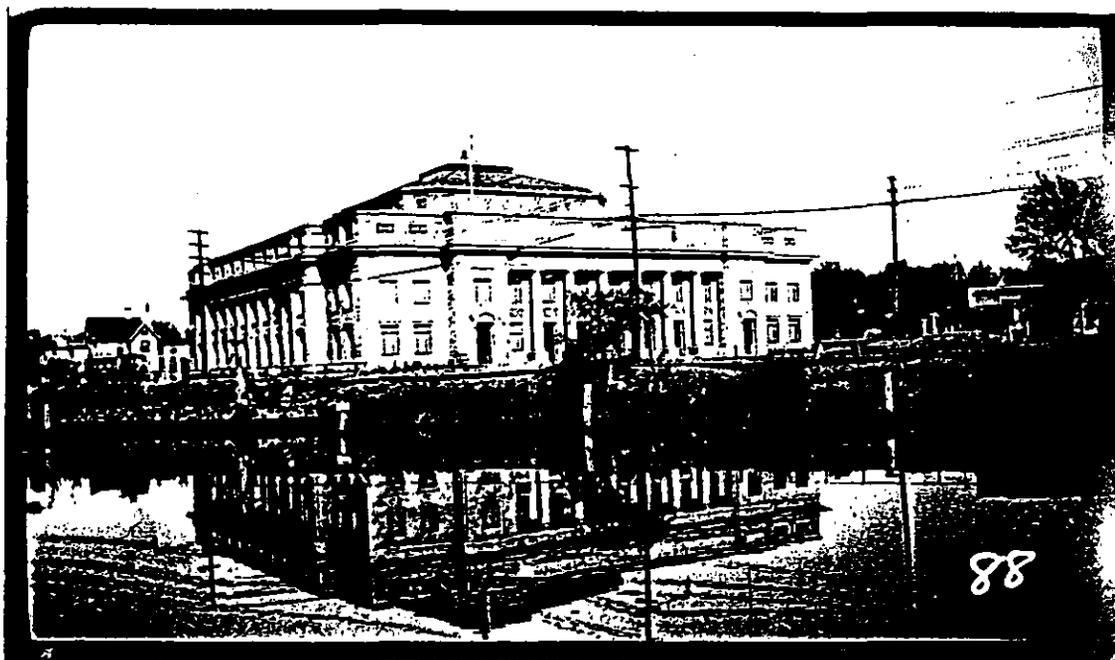


INSIDE OF SECOND COURTHOUSE DOME, WHERE CITY RECORDS WERE KEPT

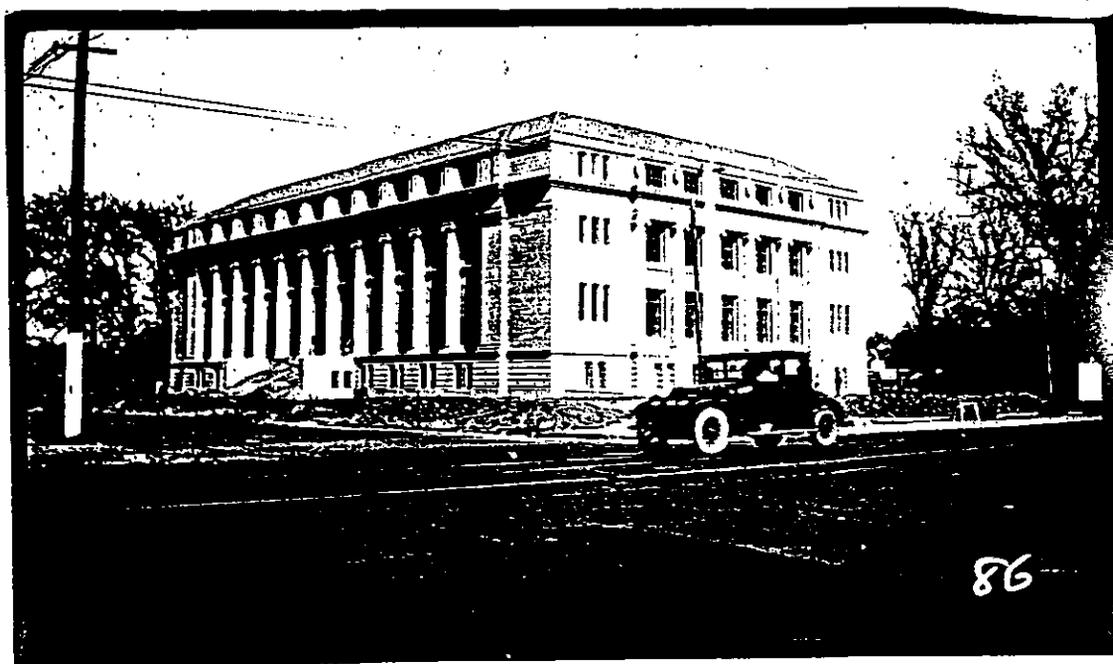


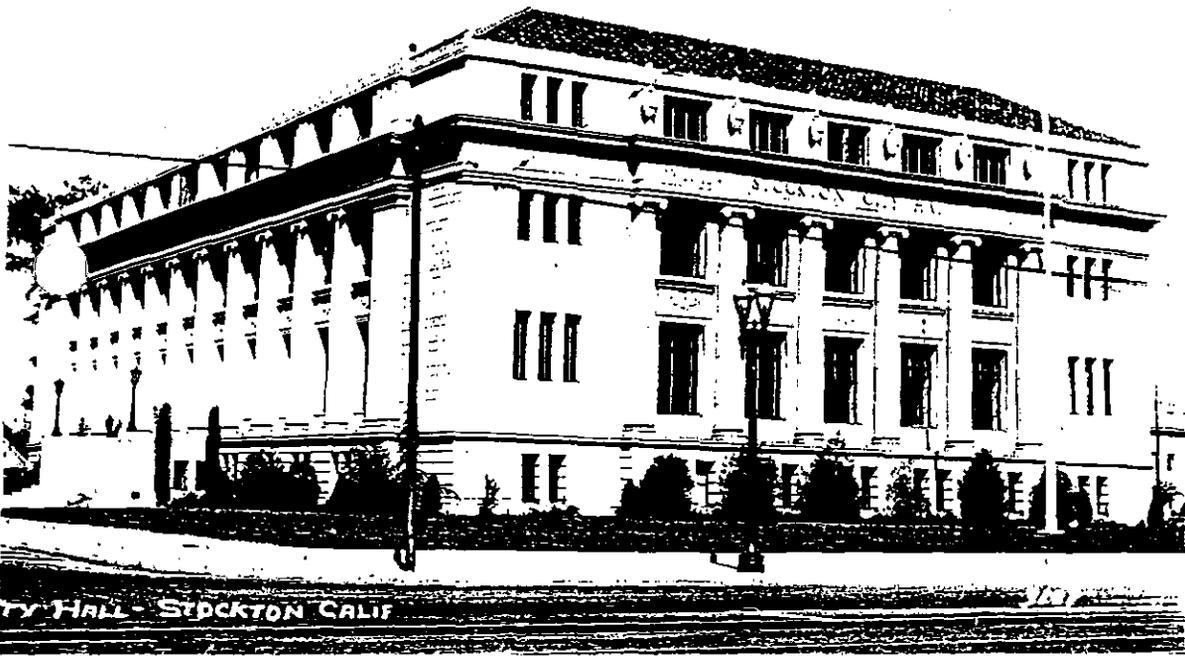
PHOTO BY Ken Brown
STOUGHTON, MASS.

STOCKTON CIVIC MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM, 1926



STOCKTON CITY HALL, 1926





STOCKTON CITY HALL c. 1930s



CITY HALL IN STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA



