



City of Cambridge

O-21.

IN CITY COUNCIL

June 18, 2001

COUNCILLOR BORN

ORDERED: That the City Council express its general support for continuing design work on renovations and additions to City Hall; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report to the City Council on how the City Hall renovation project (both with, and without an addition) could fit into the City finance and capital projects plan, taking into account City Council priorities.

In City Council June 18, 2001.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "D. Margaret Drury".

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

SEE COMMITTEE REPORT #5

City of Cambridge

**PUBLIC FACILITIES, ART AND
CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Chair
Councillor Henrietta Davis
Councillor Michael A. Sullivan*

In City Council June 18, 2001

The Public Facilities, Art and Celebrations Committee held a public hearing on May 24, 2001, beginning at 10:30 A.M. in the Ackermann Room for the purpose of receiving a presentation by the architects on renovation plans for City Hall.

Present at the hearing were Kathleen L. Born, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Jim Braude, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Robert W. Healy, City Manager, Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City Manager, James Maloney, Assistant City Manager for Finance, Charles Sullivan, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission and Gerald Boyle, Department of Public Works. Also present were Peter A. Ringenbach and Frank A. Chirico, architects, Perry Dean Rogers Partner.

Councillor Born convened the hearing and explained the purpose.

Mr. Healy described the evolution of the plan for additions as well as renovations to City Hall from discussions on renovations. He noted the economy of scale in doing an addition at the same time as major systems work.

Councillor Born then requested that the architects introduce themselves and begin the presentation. Peter Ringenbach introduced himself and Frank Chirico. Mr. Ringenbach said that the primary purpose of the renovation project was to bring the building up to code with a second means of egress, sprinklers, systems work and to restore existing historic finishes within the building, mostly the lobby and stairs.

In the course of the initial design work, the issue of the need for more space then became more apparent. In order to create the second means of egress, space would have to be taken from existing offices. At the same time, the question of re-opening the second chamber was raised as a way of meeting the need for more public meeting spaces.

Mr. Chirico said that the assumption in the plans for the addition and renovation is that with the addition, the building will cover more of the entire site. The proposed plan includes two levels of parking, both of which enter the building through a lobby/atrium in place of the current "well," and which is covered by a skylight. This atrium could serve as a civic space and could probably accommodate about 100 or more people for a reception or a public meeting.

Councillor Sullivan asked about the net gain in floor space. Mr. Chirico stated that this plan would add 40,000 sq. ft., and increase the building total from 59,000 sq. ft. to 99,000 sq. ft., not including parking, which adds another 20,000. There would be a gain of 15,000 to 20,000 sq. ft. of usable office space.

Councillor Born asked how much usable space would be lost if the building were just renovated and not expanded, which would mean having to bring the building up to code with a second means of egress. Mr. Ringenbach said that 1200 sq. ft. would be lost.

Councillor Davis asked if the public could still walk through from Bigelow to Inman Street behind the building. Mr. Chirico said that it would be possible to walk straight through an interior corridor. Councillor Davis asked if there could be an exterior walkway. Mr. Ringenbach said there could be a walkway. Mr. Rossi said that the major issue for the abutters will not be the loss of a pathway to walk through; it will be the loss of parking on Dottie Doyle Way behind City Hall, especially on the weekends.

Councillor Davis asked what variances will be needed. Mr. Rossi said that the addition/renovations project would need relief on a variety of issues. The City will need a variance for front yard setbacks, also for side yard setbacks.

Mr. Healy noted that in this case the topography of the lot really is a hardship within the meaning of the zoning law.

Councillor Sullivan asked about an anteroom for the City Council Chamber. Mr. Ringenbach said that a small room could be built behind the chamber rather than on the side.

Councillor Davis stated that the additional parking is not a big selling point; nor is it the reason for doing the addition.

Councillor Reeves said that remediation of the lack of parking in a place where citizens come to do business is a public benefit in his opinion.

Councillor Born said that under zoning, the standard is one space per 400 sq. ft. That would require about 50-60 spaces for the City Hall project. The City will need a variance to reduce parking to the amount proposed.

Councillor Reeves noted the present attractiveness of the wall at the back of City Hall as seen from Inman Street while walking down to Massachusetts Avenue. He questioned what impact the renovations would have on this.

Councillor Sullivan said that although the renovations would be taking space from the back, removing the hedges in front will be creating more public space.

Councillor Davis asked what LEED standard the building will meet. Mr. Ringenbach said that the architect will certainly look at what can be done to make a green building, and will be presenting a menu of choices in this area. Mr. Rossi said that it is a little harder to meet the highest standard when working with an old building.

Councillor Reeves asked about cost. Mr. Rossi estimated \$18 million in 2001 costs. Mr. Healy noted the possibility of the use of a percentage of CPA funds because of the historic preservation involved in renovating City Hall.

Mr. Healy said that he believes that the next biggest renovation/building need is the police station. If this addition can fit into a reasonable financing plan, it is worth looking at.

Councillor Reeves stated that the worst combination of historic building and renovations is the current addition to the main library. Mr. Rossi agreed and compared the library and its addition to a marriage of the White House and Woolworths. Councillor Reeves said that the proposal for the back is a lot of square windows without any arches. He suggested looking at creating some reference to the arches. A lot of these modern square windows do not look very good. That is one of the problems with Central Square. Councillor Reeves then asked about replication of the stone - is it available? Mr. Ringenbach answered in the affirmative. There are limited quantities. The budget presumes stone façade and slate roofs.

Councillor Davis asked about employees - when will they hear about these renovations? Mr. Rossi said that there will be a programming phase, where all employees are consulted about their needs.

Mr. Healy said that he hopes that the City Council will really think about this. Is it something that the City Council believes that the City should go forward with?

Councillor Sullivan wished to be recorded in favor of continuing to work on this project.

Councillor Davis asked about the mechanicals. Mr. Ringenbach said that they are recessed in the roof.

Councillor Reeves asked if these plans would mean that the City would still keep the Lombardi Building, and if so, would the City lose any other space.

Mr. Healy said that the City would keep all current buildings, alleviate overcrowding, create more public space for public meetings and a new atrium. Mr. Rossi added that the new chamber would be state of the art vis-à-vis capability for media presentations. Mr. Healy noted that the space to be gained by an addition to City Hall would allow relocation of all traffic ticketing operations to move to City Hall.

Councillor Davis asked about the cost of the additional space. Mr. Ringenbach said that it is approximately \$11 million. The remainder is for the upgrade of the present space. For an increase gross space of 45,000 sq. ft. this represents about \$250 per sq. ft. which is roughly the same as what the library will cost, ultimately.

Councillor Born asked about where the proposal goes from here. She sees the following choices:

1. Hold off on the addition; just do interior spaces and mechanicals. Watching the window and exterior renovations led her to the realization that major interior renovations will necessitate the temporary relocation of all City Hall employees. Mr. Chirico said that an advantage of doing the addition is that the City will be able to use the new portion of City Hall as swing space because it could be built and occupied before renovation of the existing part of City Hall began.
2. Hold off and wait for full rehab and additions and just do some refreshing work in the interior. Mr. Ringenbach said that you could do something with lobby finishes in the interior, if it is going to be five years or so before you can do the full job. In that case, don't do the mechanicals.
3. Go ahead with the new addition and renovations.

Mr. Rossi suggested that the City staff provide a report on how the project would fit into the City financing plan and the City Council priorities for other buildings.

Councillor Born congratulated the staff on the kind of planning that this proposal represents. She requested a summary analysis of the cost to the City of living within existing space.

Councillor Reeves said that the City owns the Lombardi Building and asked about the possibility of buying the two houses next to it on Massachusetts Avenue and building a new building to accommodate all of the people.

Councillor Born added that perhaps the City should consider purchasing the building on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Inman Street because it is similar in style to City Hall.

Councillor Born asked how much of current employee space does not meet industry standards. Mr. Healy said that he would provide that information. Mr. Ringenbach said that it is difficult to take private industry standards and apply this to public space where there need to be counters, and other such public-oriented space needs.

Councillor Born stated that this has been a thorough and well-thought presentation with excellent visual information. She said that she likes the idea of the atrium. She requested that each City Council receive a copy of the plans.

Councillor Born made the following motion:

ORDERED: That the committee express its general support for continuing design work on renovations and additions to City Hall; and be it further

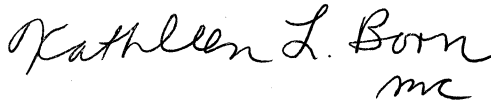
ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report to the City Council on how the City Hall renovation project (both with, and without an addition) could fit into the City finance and capital projects plan, taking into account City Council priorities.

The motion passed on a voice vote without objection.

Councillor Born thanked those present for their participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 P.M.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen L. Born" followed by a small "mc" or "me" mark.

Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Chair

2455

Committee Report #5

A communication was received from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk, transmitting a report from Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Chair of the Public Facilities, Art and Celebrations Committee for a meeting held on May 24, 2001 for the purpose of receiving a presentation by the architects on renovation plans for City Hall.

In City Council June 18, 2001

*Report Accepted
Order #21 adopted*