

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kansas	
COUNTY: Sedgwick	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 715,20-0024	DATE 5/14/71



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Wichita City Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
204 South Main St.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wichita

STATE Kansas	CODE 67202	COUNTY: Sedgwick	CODE 173
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
City of Wichita

STREET AND NUMBER:  
204 South Main St.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wichita

STATE:  
Kansas

CODE:  
67202

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Sedgwick County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:  
Wichita

STATE:  
Kansas

CODE:  
67203

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
NONE

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Kansas  
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Wichita City Hall is a three-story building with a full basement. Built of rough cut limestone blocks, its stone walls are 18 inches thick and lined with two courses of brick. At the four corners of the structure are round towers with conical roofs, and in the center is a large square clock tower with a pyramidal tar roof. Four magnificent entrance ways are centered on the four sides between the corner towers. (However there is no door or entrance arch on the south side.) A gable roof covers each entrance way. Window styles in the building range from rectangular with arched or horizontal lintels to completely semicircular light openings.

The stone facades are intricately detailed. The stones themselves are laid in alternating wide and narrow courses. Each floor of the towers and entry ways is separated by a course of beautifully carved stone in a leaf pattern. There is also detailed stone work along the cornice. Both the west front entry way and the northwest corner tower have false porches at the second floor level.

The central clock tower, six stories in height, has eight key-hole-shaped arches--two on each side--plus a flat protruding arch above each pair. Each corner of the clock tower has a cylindrically shaped tower which is capped by a multilayered top resembling a crown. Similar crowns top the west entry way. Clock faces eight feet in diameter are mounted on each of the four sides. The clock tower, like all the towers, is made of rough cut limestone.

The exterior of the building is basically original except for minor repairs; however the original slate roof has been replaced by one of rubber. In 1938 an annex was built to the east of the city hall and connected to it. The annex has three stories and is also made of limestone; the north front is of smooth cut stone while the other three sides are rough cut.

The interior has been remodeled and modernized a number of times.

Wichita City Hall, a good example of a government building designed in the "Richardsonian style," has been called a "masterpiece of the stonemason's art."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1889-1892

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Construction of the Wichita City Hall was authorized by a bond election in November, 1889, and plans were formally accepted by the city council December 9, 1889. Acquisition of land at the southeast corner of Main and William streets began three days later. Total cost of the site was \$19,500. The architectural firm selected by the city council on December 20 was Proudfoot and Bird of Philadelphia. The building was designed in the "Richardsonian style," which featured heavy stone work, tall Norman towers, and graceful Roman arches. The contract stipulated that Proudfoot and Bird could not charge more than five per cent of the \$70,000 allocated from public funds to complete the building. On January 1, 1890, the council selected R. Rogers as the contractor. His bid of \$61,965 was later revised to \$64,665 by mutual agreement when it was determined that Cambridge stone from Cowley county should be used instead of Augusta stone from Butler county because of the former's greater durability. The adjustment in the bid was made because of the greater distance of Cambridge from Wichita.

The cornerstone was laid in 1890 when George W. Clement was mayor. He is given much of the credit for making the city hall a reality. Construction was completed in 1892 and the building was accepted by the council on March 28. Cost of the city hall construction is variously given from \$75,000 to \$150,000. Final payments on the bonds were made in 1928. Apparently no city administration was greatly concerned about paying off the bonds and simply refunded them as they came due. It was not until Wichita changed its municipal government to the city manager form that efforts were made to pay for the building. By the time it was paid for, interest costs had amounted to as much as the original cost of construction.

A Seth Thomas clock and a bell were installed in the central tower in 1917. The first elevator was installed in 1940, eliminating the use of the circular staircase, from first to fourth floors, under the clock tower.

One of the more interesting episodes in the building's history was the 1910 affair of the "hidden room," which was built in one corner of the electrician's room in the basement. Allegedly the fire chief and the former police chief had furnished it and used it for immoral and illegal activities. After the press published the story, the room was torn out.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bentley, Orsemus H., editor, History of Wichita and Sedgwick County (Chicago, C. F. Cooper and Co., 1910), pp. 241, 242.  
 "City Hall, Built in 1892, Has Watched Wichita's Growth," Wichita Sunday Eagle, July 27, 1947.  
 "Hidden Room Investigators File Official Report of Their Findings," Wichita Eagle, October 19, 1910.  
Illuminated Resume of City of Wichita (Wichita, Chamber of Commerce, n. d.), p. 3.  
 Long, Richard M., Wichita Century (Wichita, Wichita Historical Museum Association, Inc., 1970), p. 234.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		37 41 24	97 20 15	
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Charles L. Hall, Architectural Consultant  
Richard Pankratz, Planner

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society DATE: January 5, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth St.

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka STATE: Kansas 66612 CODE: 20

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Nyle H. Miller  
 Nyle H. Miller

Title Executive Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society

Date January 12, 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

James A. Connolly  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**MAY 14 1971**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
William M. ...  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date **APR 19 1971**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kansas	
COUNTY Sedgwick	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 715,47,0034	DATE 5/14/71

(Number all entries)

2. Kansas Congressional District no. 4  
Congressman Garner Shriver

8.

As Wichita's population increased, the city hall became increasingly crowded. When remodeling projects could no longer provide adequate space, some changes were made. Various departments were moved to other facilities, and an adjacent building was constructed directly east of the city hall to house the police department.

This massive castle-like structure with its tower and turrets has been a Wichita landmark since 1892 as well as the center of Wichita's municipal government. It is a well-kept example of the "Richardsonian style"; not many public buildings of this type were built in the Midwest although the style was quite popular in the East.

9.

"Our Historic City Hall--a Monument in Stone," Wichita Beacon,  
February 21, 1966.

"Welcome to Wichita" (Wichita, n. p., 1970), 8 page brochure.

