NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fort Pierce City Hall, Old

other names/site number Old City Hall, Fort Pierce City Hall, City Hall Annex, Historic City Hall/ # 8SL00289

2. Location	
street & number 315 Avenue A	N/A not for publication
city or town Fort Pierce	N/A vicinity
state Florida code FL county	St. Lucie code111 zip code 34950

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this is nomination crequest for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (Commend that this property be considered significant Signature of certifying of cial/Title Date Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property 🗆 meets 🗖 does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau National Park Service Certification I hereby certify that the property is: entered in the National Register □ See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet. removed from the National

Register.

□ other, (explain)

Date of Action onature of

St. Lucie Co., FL County and State

5. Classification	······································			. <u>An a</u> <u>an</u> 10	
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)			
☐ private ⊠ public-local	⊠ buildings □ district	Contributing	Noncontribu	ting	
public-State public-Federal	site	1	0	buildings	
	object	0	0	sites	
		0	0	structures	
		0	0	objects	
		1	0	total	
Name of related multiple property listings (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)		Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register			
N	/A	0			
6. Function or Use				<u>,</u>	
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instr	ructions)		
Government/City Hall	······	Commerce/Professional	Offices	<u></u>	
		Recreation and Culture/	Hall		
		Social/Meeting Hall	<u></u>		
7. Description				·····	
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from	n instructions)		
Late 19th and Early 20th Century	Revivals	foundation Concr	ete	<u></u>	
Mediterranean Revival		walls Stucco			
	······································	roof Tile	······································		
		other Cast Stone			

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria	Areas of Significance
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)	(Enter categories from instructions)
A Property is associated with events that have made	Architecture
a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Politics/Government
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics	
of a type, period, or method of construction or	
represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and	Period of Significance
distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	1925-1951
—	
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.	
	Significant Dates
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	1925
Property is:	
A owned by a religious institution or used for	
religious purposes.	Significant Person
	<u>N/A</u>
B removed from its original location.	Cultural Affiliation
C a birthplace or grave.	
	<u>N/A</u>
D a cemetery.	
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
	Architect/Builder
F a commemorative property.	Hatcher, William W./ Hanner, J. C.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years	······································
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	
9. Major Bibliographical References	
Bibliography	
Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or Previous documentation on file (NPS) :	Primary location of additional data:
preliminary determination of individual listing (36	State Historic Preservation Office
CFR 36) has been requested	Other State Agency Federal agency
previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National	Local government
Register	
designated a National Historic Landmark	Other
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	Name of Repository
#	

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#

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#

St. Lucie Co., FL County and State

10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre	
UTM References (Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 7 5 6 5 8 0 3 0 3 6 0 4 0 Zone Easting Northing 1	3 Zone Easting Northing 4 See continuation sheet
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/title Tim Harrington, Consultant; W. Carl Shiver, Historic	Sites Specialist; Brent A. Tozzer, Historian
organization Bureau of Historic Preservation, FL Department of	State date _August, 2001
street & number <u>R. A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough St</u>	telephone (850) 245-6333
city or town Tallahassee	
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the	e property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties ha	aving large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
name City of Fort Pierce	
street & number 100 North U. S. Hwy. 1	telephone (561) 460-2200
city or town Fort Pierce	state FL zip code 34950

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

Old City Hall was erected in 1925 and restored in 1995. It is a two-story, rectangular, reinforced-concrete structure finished in a warm gray, textured stucco. The hip roof is made of red clay barrel tile. The façade is symmetrical. A cast stone frieze bands the length and widths of the building below a molded cornice. A projecting, sculptural entrance at the north elevation leads through an ornamental iron gate to a central hallway, with offices on either side. At the end of the hallway, stairs to the second floor divide over a rear entrance. The second floor is devoted to a large hall, originally council chambers, now used for meetings and parties. At the east and west ends of the hall, exit doors with fire stairs to the ground have been added. A narrow addition to the rear elevation houses an elevator providing handicapped accessibility. The additions were part of the 1995 restoration. Stylistically, Old City Hall is Mediterranean Revival with Italian Renaissance details.

SETTING

Fort Pierce is on the east coast of Florida, approximately 238 miles south of Jacksonville and 58 miles north of West Palm Beach. The city consists of nine square miles of irregularly shaped land surrounded by unincorporated areas of St. Lucie County. Fort Pierce is the county seat. It occupies the banks of the Indian River lagoon and the northern tip of Hutchinson Island, a barrier island separating the lagoon from the ocean. The city contains several residential neighborhoods, an oceanfront resort area and the county's historic downtown. The major traffic arteries serving the city are Interstate Highway 95, U. S. Route 1, and Coastal Highway A1A. There is a small airport. A commercial seaport and the city marina can be reached from the Intracoastal Waterway and through the Fort Pierce Inlet to the Atlantic Ocean.

Old City Hall faces north at the southeast corner of U.S. 1 and Avenue A, standing on a large block bounded on the south by Orange Avenue, and on the east by the Florida East Coast Railroad tracks. It occupies a space approximately 60 feet north by 105 west on the corner of the block. Avenue A and Orange Avenue cross the heart of downtown, running eastward four blocks to the Indian River. The nine-year-old new City Hall stands next to the old, occupying the rest of the western half of the block (Photo 1). The eastern half provides parking for both buildings. Construction of this parking lot caused the demolition of the old fire station, companion to Old City Hall. The fire station replaced an earlier station, which had also accommodated city council meetings (Figures 1, 2, and 3). Across Avenue A, built beside the railroad tracks, is the East Coast Lumber Company, founded in 1902.

About the time City Hall was built, several large, mixed-use commercial buildings were constructed around it. The Peacock and Arcade Buildings faced City Hall on opposite corners, surrounding it with activity. Today those buildings remain occupied and are undergoing restoration. As U.S. 1 widened and the speed limit rose, the highway cut off the western part of the business district, contributing to the decline of the downtown area. Highway improvements are being planned that will restore pedestrian accessibility. During the last three years

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 2 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA DESCRIPTION

of the 1990's, the downtown, a traditional center of activity, has begun to reintegrate the blocks west of Old City Hall, which contain several historic buildings.

EXTERIOR

The main block of the Old City Hall is a rectangular, two-story, reinforced-concrete building with a hipped roof and a stucco exterior (Photo 1). The roofing is red clay barrel tile. A decorative stone frieze runs the length of the main (north) façade and both side elevations of the building below a heavily molded cornice. The façade is symmetrical. Fenestration consists of 6/6 double hung sash windows above and transomed casement windows with eight lights below. The entrance at the center of the north elevation is accentuated by a projecting bay finished in stucco scored to look like stone block (Photo 2). Double wood and glass entry doors are recessed within a vestibule, protected by a massive ornamental iron gate. Flanking the gate are double pilasters, supporting brackets with engaged finials (Photos 2 and 7). A pair of double hung windows with fanlights, separated by an engaged column and flanked by pilasters, are centered over the entrance. The fanlights are united in a scored arch, inset with cast stone ornament (Photos 2 and 8). This window treatment is repeated symmetrically across the second story façade. A parapet tops the entry bay with cast stone brackets and finials, crowned by a cast stone emblem in the motif of a sun rising over waves (Photo 8). The entrance is flanked by pairs of eight-light casement windows on scrolled cast stone aprons, repeated symmetrically across the first floor facade (Photo 2 and 10). A panel over the entrance is inscribed with the words "CITY HALL" (Photo 7). Panels of cast stone ornament echo the central panel in a horizontal band across the façade. The cornerstone is located at the west end of the north façade (Photo 9). The east and west elevations are symmetrical, having first and second floor exit doors centered at exterior concrete staircases (Photos 3 - 6). The corners of the main building are quoined (Photos 4 and 12). The rear (south) part of the building is slightly lower in height, with a combined hipped tile/flat roof, finished similarly to the main block (Photos 1, 4, and 12). Fenestration is similar to that of the side elevations. A narrow addition to the west of the rear entrance houses an elevator shaft (Photo 5).

INTERIOR

A hallway crosses the length of the building connecting front vestibule (Photo 14) and rear entrance (Photo 13). To the west of the rear door is an elevator. The east and west ends contain office spaces whose lobbies open onto the hall (Photo 15). The central hall space is dominated on four corners by structural columns, classically finished with plaster molding (Photo 16). A double staircase at the rear reaches the second floor by a broad landing, which overlooks the rear courtyard through four casement windows (Photo 20). The northern two-thirds of the building upstairs is a single meeting hall, the former Council Chamber (Photos 23, 24), entered through two double doors at the head of the stairs (Photos 18, 22). Exits at either end open onto exterior fire stairs (Photos 4, 6), and a single door to the southeast leads to a storage room (Photo 19). Adjacent to the storage room is a kitchenette and handicapped-accessible rest room. Opposite, west of the stairwell, are the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 3 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA DESCRIPTION

elevator (Photo 21), a closet and men's and women's rest rooms. Floors are hardwood except for hallways, which are tiled. Walls are plaster with wood molding at floors, ceilings, and openings. Ceilings in the former Council Chamber and lobby are tall, with exposed beams decoratively molded in white-painted plaster.

ALTERATIONS

The original drawings by architect William W. Hatcher are dated December, 1924 (See attachments). He designed a two story addition to the rear, south elevation of the building in drawings dated April, 1950. It was 24 feet deep by 32 feet wide, to accommodate an expanded tax department on the first floor, and additional offices on the second. Drawings dated May, 1955, show that Mr. Hatcher again added cabinetry, duct-work, and minor changes to the restrooms. This was his last job on the building.

In 1958, 288 sq. ft. was added to the 1950 addition: 12 ft. to its east side. The tax department doubled in size, sharing the entire ground floor with the utilities department. The mayor, city manager, the secretaries, clerks, and engineers moved to the second floor, which meant partitioning the great hall that had been council chambers.¹ In 1963 minor interior repartitioning was done and some plumbing, cabinetry, electrical, and air conditioning added.² In 1971, about half of the city government relocated until a new city hall was built in 1991.

Concerned citizens united under the Main Street organization and saved Old City Hall from demolition at that time. It was restored in 1995 to approximate its original 1920's form. Some additions, including all of the 1950s structures, were removed. The elevator was added to the south elevation to provide handicap accessibility. Fire exits and new concrete stairs with metal railing were added to the east and west elevations. Council chambers were restored to become the great hall upstairs. The first floor office spaces are adapted to modern businesses, but retain the original finishes, except where floors are carpeted. The tile on the stair and landing is intact, but the tile has been covered by a resilient vinyl. The original hardwood flooring has been preserved on the second floor. The southern spaces off the hall on the second floor are reused in contemporary ways, preserving original finishes. Architect Robert Terry, Jr., drew the plans, and the R. K. Davis Construction Company supervised the work. Of the \$500,000 restoration cost, half consisted of grants from the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Much of the labor and material was volunteered or donated.

¹Architectural drawings by Kendall P. Starratt, 1958.

²Architectural drawings by Terry & Stebbins, 1963.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 4 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA DESCRIPTION

Old City Hall is owned by the City of Fort Pierce and leased by Main Street Fort Pierce. The first floor office spaces are currently rented to a local accounting firm. The great hall is rented for meetings or parties. It is also used for a variety of public functions sponsored by either the City or Main Street Fort Pierce.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 1

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

Old City Hall is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. It is exemplary of the Mediterranean Revival architecture of the time, excelling in the use of classical proportions and Italian Renaissance details to distinguish the public nature of the building from contemporaneous structures. It was designed by architect William W. Hatcher, who made a major contribution to Fort Pierce's architectural heritage during his 48 year career there. It is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government. Old City Hall was the headquarters of city government in Fort Pierce for 46 years. The mayor who oversaw its construction was C. E. Cahow, one of the city's earliest and most visionary developers, who served from 1923 to 1927. His career spanned the rise and fall of the south Florida land boom. In 1971 the mayor and his staff moved to "temporary" quarters, and the building housed Planning, Building and Community Development until a new city hall reunited all the departments in 1991. The building was saved from demolition, and restored in 1995. It is now used for commercial offices and as a public meeting place under the auspices of the Main Street organization. The restoration of Old City Hall was a positive turning point for the preservation and revitalization movement in downtown Fort Pierce.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The United States took possession of Florida from Spain in 1821. The Ais of the south-central coast and other early Florida peoples were virtually extinct by then. Their few descendants melded with the mixture of immigrant tribes and runaway slaves who became the Seminoles, about 5,000 in Florida at the time. Friction with surveyors and settlers culminated in the 1835 attack on plantations south of St. Augustine which set off the Second Seminole War (1835-1842).³ The United States Army built a series of forts to counter the attacks and expedite the policy of Indian removal. One fort was founded on a bluff, the highest point visible, on the west bank four miles south of the Indian River Inlet, near an Ais mound and a spring. This took place in late 1837 by some accounts; perhaps on the morning of January 2, 1838, according to the journal of Dr. Jacob Rhett Motte, physician to the party of scouts. They named it after their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Pierce, a career officer whose brother was Franklin Pierce, fourteenth President of the United States. The fort was deactivated after the war and burned down in 1843.⁴

The war stopped rather than ended, and settlers replaced soldiers under the Armed Occupation Act passed by Congress in 1842, providing for the homesteading of 160 acre lots of land. The sporadic pioneers of the 1840's along the Indian River often used the ruins of Fort Pierce as a reference point in describing claims.⁵ The first attempt by an "Indian River Colony" to settle an area a few miles north of the fort was interrupted by the

³Lucille Rieley Rights, <u>A Portrait of St. Lucie County</u>, 29.

⁴Ibid., 30-31.

⁵Ibid., 36.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 2 FOR FOR

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA SIGNIFICANCE

stabbing of John Barker, keeper of a trading post, by some Indians he had cheated.⁶ The family and neighbors escaped to St. Augustine, not to return until the 1850's, after the government had Fort Capron built near their homesteads, the site of present day St. Lucie Village. St. Lucie County had been created out of vast Mosquito County in 1844, the year before Florida became a state. The 1850 U.S. Census taker reported a county population of nearly 140, of whom 30 were soldiers, and 27, slaves, commenting that "The inhabitants of the County were driven from it on account of the Indian hostilities and only a few of them have, as yet, returned."⁷

It was not until the 1870's that a settlement was founded that would be the beginning of Fort Pierce as a city. Alexander Bell had started a trading post at the site of the old fort in 1871, and later homesteaded the land between Taylor Creek to the north and Moore's Creek to the south.⁸ Moore's Creek remains the northern border of the commercial downtown. This would become Fort Pierce's first residential neighborhood. It was named Edgartown, after the grandson of A. G. LaGow, one of the pioneers. Other founders were the families of Frank and James Bell, and Reuben Carlton.⁹ Edgartown had a post office, named after the first postmaster, Thomas C. Bass. School was taught by Miss Ella Bell, in her home, until the first schoolhouse was in 1881, a "one-room palmetto-thatched shack."¹⁰

In 1879 Captain Benjamin Hogg and his wife Annie surprised and delighted the isolated settlers when they landed near Moore's Creek with a shipload of goods for sale. They considered the site of the old fort, about a mile and a half away, as a place to set up shop. But finally, in 1882, they built a two-story wooden building, with a long wooden dock stretching out into the river, about a block south of the mouth of Moore's Creek. Annie tended store while the Captain sailed his schooner between Fort Pierce, the Bahamas, and Jacksonville, trading green turtles and coconuts for goods with which to stock his trading post.¹¹ Annie found a much-needed assistant in Peter P. Cobb, who came from Cazenovia, New York, in 1883.¹²

When some New England investors bought the building to start an oyster cannery in the mid-1880's, Cobb stayed on to run the store. They called the place, "Cantown."¹³ After a year Cobb bought the cannery out and turned it into P. P. Cobb's General Merchandise Store. He also expanded the pier into Cobb's Dock, which eventually extended twelve hundred feet into the Indian River, accommodating steam ships, fish houses, an oyster house, and tracks for carting ice out, and fish back. Bass Post Office in Edgartown was closed down in 1888, in favor of a new post office opened in the store, with Cobb as postmaster. The new post office was

⁶Ada Coats Williams, <u>A Brief History of St. Lucie County</u>, 3.

⁷Lucille Rieley Rights, 36-41.

⁸Emily Lagow Bell, <u>My Pioneer Days in Florida, 1876-1898</u>, 25-29.

⁹Charles S. Miley, <u>Miley's Memos</u>, 3.

¹⁰Ibid., 3,8.

¹¹Ada Coats Williams, 11.

¹²Charles S. Miley, 97.

¹³Emily Lagow Bell, 29-30.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 3 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA SIGNIFICANCE

named "Fort Pierce." The commercial district that grew up around the river landing and general store followed suit. Throughout the pioneer period, when the Indian River settlements were only accessible by boat, both Hoggs' trading post and Cobb's store were famous from Eau Gallie to Jupiter. The fame of Fort Pierce extended inland, too, both among Indians and cowmen, to Fort Drum and Okeechobee. Fort Pierce was the eastern origin of the cattle drives, along a route now designated the Florida Cracker Trail,¹⁴ which ended with the sale of cattle in Fort Myers for shipment to Cuba from the port of Punta Rassa.¹⁵

The arrival in 1894 of Henry Flagler's railway, on its way south from Jacksonville, opened Fort Pierce to a new wave of settlers and a new range of economic possibilities. Pineapple growing was added to fishing and cattle raising. The city grew from a village to a town, incorporated on February 2, 1901, with 53 out of 66 qualified voters present.¹⁶ The Indian River Telephone Company was established in 1902, with exchanges in Jensen and Fort Pierce, salvaging parts of the one-wire telegraph line laid by the army, from one end of the Indian River to the other, during the Seminole wars.¹⁷ The Fee family opened the Bank of Fort Pierce in 1903.¹⁸ In 1905 Fort Pierce became the seat of St. Lucie County, population about 3000, created out of Brevard County, the seat of which was Titusville. The Florida East Coast Railroad had established a division point at Fort Pierce, boosting the job market. A proper county courthouse was built in 1909. The St. Lucie County Bank moved from Jensen to Fort Pierce in 1910 in recognition of the fact of the city's progress.¹⁹ It had become the center of commerce for the entire county. The population of the county was over 4,000; that of the city just under 1,500. Citizens had electricity by 1912. In 1914, Fort Pierce High School was built, an outstanding example of Mission style architecture, which for many years housed the only high school from Stuart to Melbourne.²⁰ Although the pineapple farming declined, the citrus industry took its place, followed by winter vegetable farming. Tourism was beginning to figure in the economy. By the end of the decade, the town had six churches, several hotels, a semi-weekly newspaper, a Golf and Country Club, a Rod and Gun Club, and a Chamber of Commerce with a dedicated promotional program. The Fort Pierce ocean inlet was being dredged and scheduled to open in 1921.²¹ The population was over 2,000 and growing fast. Fort Pierce was ready to take advantage of the land boom of the 1920's.

The early twenties saw plans underway for the opening of an ocean inlet and for a causeway to the barrier island. Symbolic of the optimism of the time, the Sunrise Theater was built by one of the town's leading entrepreneurs, Rupert Koblegard. It was, at the time of its construction in 1923, the largest theater between

¹⁴The Tampa Tribune, September 9 & 10, 1987.

¹⁵Edward A. Fernald, <u>Atlas of Florida</u>, 101.

¹⁶Charles S. Miley, 5.

¹⁷Walter R. Hellier, <u>Indian River, Florida's Treasure Coast</u>, 39, 99.

¹⁸Ibid., 92.

¹⁹Ibid., 96.

²⁰Mary A. Bennett, Fort Pierce Elementary, A School and Its History, 36.

²¹Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, Fort Pierce Florida, "The Golden Belt", 1921.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA SIGNIFICANCE

Jacksonville and Miami.²² Fort Pierce began to call itself, "The Sunrise City."²³ The city capitalized on its growing population and expansion of revenues with a series of community improvements. Street paving and widening, sewers, canals, and bridges were given high priority.²⁴ A water filtration plant, incinerator, parks, and wharves for the new port were planned. From 1921 to 1923 more than 200 houses, the theater, a school, several businesses, and office buildings were constructed, at a cost of over \$1,000,000. In 1924, the population was 4,000 and expenditures on development were expected to exceed \$1,500,000.²⁵ Most of the local lawyers were busy with work for real estate dealers. The largest payroll in the city was still that of the Florida East Coast Railroad.²⁶ In 1925, the population peaked at 8,500. A new fire station, a jail, and the elegant Mediterranean style City Hall were built. The county had 67 miles of paved roads, predominantly the Dixie Highway and Indian River Drive. The causeway from downtown to the beach on Hutchinson Island was complete. Among the luxury projects were: a casino built at the beach; a man-made island, in the manner of those between Miami and Miami Beach, on the drawing boards; and several grandiose subdivisions planned by private developers.²⁷

The city's own Venetian Island, and Coral Gables-style developments like Indrio, turned out to be sand castles when the real estate market collapsed, exacerbated by the south Florida hurricane of 1926. In Fort Pierce an ingenious method was devised to put people to work for the city and pay them in scrip.²⁸ Development continued at a slower pace until the Bank of Fort Pierce closed in 1927; two hurricanes, back to back, hit closer to home in 1928; and the stock market crashed in 1929. The St. Lucie County Bank was saved. The port was finished, giving Fort Pierce the only important deep water harbor between Jacksonville and Miami. Completion of the Dixie Highway kept the city on the tourist map. The county built a 167-acre airport. The Chamber of Commerce, somewhat diminished in both resources and exuberance, continued to promote the image of Fort Pierce that was perfected during the golden age of the twenties.²⁹ In 1930 the population of the city had declined to under 5,000, but rose to over 6,000 in 1935.³⁰

²²Nichols Schwab Inc. et al., Sunrise Theater, Architectural Assessment

and Preservation Plan, 6.

²³E. L. Adams, Centennial Reflections, 34.

²⁴Fort Pierce News Tribune, June 19, 1925.

²⁵Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, <u>The Cat's Out of the Bag at Fort</u>

Pierce Florida, "The Sunrise City."

²⁶Judge Alto Lee Adams, The Fourth Quarter, 59-61.

²⁷Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, Prosperous Fort Pierce-Where Ocean,

River, Rail and Highway Meet, 1925.

²⁸Judge Alto Lee Adams, 69.

²⁹Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, Economic Survey of Fort Pierce and

<u>St. Lucie County</u>, 1934. ³⁰Fort Pierce Chamber of Commerce, <u>1935 Directory of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County</u>.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	8	Page	5	FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD
-	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	-		FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
				SIGNIFICANCE

In 1931 P. P. Cobb's store closed. The News Tribune wrote: "The closing of Cobb's store will mark the passing of a landmark, an institution that has been largely responsible for the development of this section. Thousands of families and individuals, both in pioneer and in later days, have been materially aided through the liberal but quiet generosity of its owner."³¹ Only two significant buildings went up during the depression: the post office in 1935, and the Coast Guard station in 1937. Cattle ranchers and tomato farmers found a mutually beneficial arrangement whereby a pasture was lent to tomatoes one year and grass the next.³² People who could went back to living off the land. For the average person, subsistence was the economic level, and barter, the medium of exchange. Nevertheless, community spirit was well: the beaches were pristine; there were always dances to attend, and movies to see; and the fishing was still good.

In 1940 the city estimated its population at "8,000 in summer and 11,000 in winter."³³ One of 17 State Farmer's Markets was built in Fort Pierce and opened in 1941, primarily to serve tomato growers.³⁴ As the Second World War began, construction came to a dead stop, but the depression was banished. The Navy chose Fort Pierce for the site of an amphibious training base, and many servicemen became part of community after the war. With its \$380,000 citrus pre-cooling and refrigeration plant, the port of Fort Pierce was rated fifth in importance in the state.³⁵ In 1946 the city's first radio station, WIRA, began broadcasting.³⁶ The marina, beaches, and fishing spots began to thrive again with tourists, and retirees discovered that the area was an affordable paradise. Postwar prosperity buoyed the economy throughout the fifties and sixties, although it brought with it serious new challenges to the city's viability.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

On February 2, 1901, the registered voters of Fort Pierce drew up a charter of incorporation. A. C. Dittmar was the first mayor.³⁷ According to oral tradition, the city records were kept in a one-room wooden shack, at the corner of Depot Drive and Avenue A, just west of the railroad tracks and across the street from where the East Coast Lumber Company would be built the following year.³⁸ In 1906, a special meeting of the Town Council was called at the office of the St. Lucie Ice Company to "dispose of Old Council Hall" and other business. The old building was sold for \$75, and a motion was made to build a new "Engine House & Council Hall," 40 x 20 feet in size.³⁹ The first Sanborn map of the city, for 1915, shows this structure next door to Old City Hall, on

³¹Charles S. Miley, 97.

³⁶E. L. Adams, 66.

³²Interview with Pete Serra, Fort Pierce State Farmers' Market, 2000.

³³R.L. Polk & Co., Polk's Fort Pierce City Directory 1940.

³⁴Pete Serra.

³⁵R. L. Polk & Co.

³⁷Charles S. Miley, 5.

³⁸Interview with Allan King, St. Lucie County Historical Museum, 1999.

³⁹City of Fort Pierce, Minutes, June 20, 1906.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 6

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA SIGNIFICANCE

the site of the now-demolished fire station built in 1925. It is not known how long the clerk kept his records in the wooden shack next to the Engine House & Council Hall, but the location may have contributed to the loss of Volume II of Council minutes—an enormous tome covering the second decade of the town's history. Minutes take up again in 1922 with a special session, where "after discussion the Clerk was authorized to offer a reward for the return of the City records taken from the office and \$100.00 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the party or parties taking same."⁴⁰ The clerk was also authorized to buy a new Mayors Docket and Minute Book.⁴¹ The disappearance remains a mystery to this day. In the early days, councilmen got together to conduct official business relatively infrequently. As that business grew, their pragmatism and perseverance must be admired. They waited until the peak of the boom to build a proper city hall.

Clarence E. Cahow had managed the millwork factory for East Coast Lumber before starting his own contracting business.⁴² His company built the Sunrise Theater in 1923, and during the same year, he was elected mayor. Cahow was one of a small group of "highly qualified and far-seeing men" who seized the opportunity to build the infrastructure the city needed, to do it well, and to complete it, against the odds, in the latter half of the twenties.⁴³ He was known as a fine builder, and he used his knowledge to select and actively recruit good architects. One was William W. Hatcher of Alabama, who had been working on a school in Montgomery when he was approached about a project in Florida.⁴⁴ He came to Fort Pierce in 1923, and went straight to work on the Raulerson Building, finished in 1924,⁴⁵ the new fire station, and the new City Hall, built in 1925.

Thirty-three mayors served their terms in Old City Hall. Mayor Cahow presided over city affairs from the height of the boom to the collapse of the Bank of Fort Pierce in 1927. Later mayors governed through everyday affairs and outstanding events, such as: the stock market crash of 1929 and the Depression; the deepening of the inlet and opening of the Port of Fort Pierce in 1930; the New Deal and the new Post Office it helped build in Fort Pierce in 1935; building of the Farmers Market in 1941; the war years; the last cattle drive, with the closing of open range in 1949; the boom in citrus after the freeze of 1950; the end of passenger service on the FEC in 1963; in fact, all that mattered to Fort Pierce, for well over half a century. The old City Hall was retired from service in 1991.

When the building was outgrown, it was renamed City Hall Annex and housed the code-enforcement, zoning, building, planning, and community development departments. The rest of city government moved to rented quarters until a new facility could be built. The architectural firm from out of town who won the contract, when

⁴⁰City of Fort Pierce, Minutes, October 23, 1922.

⁴¹City of Fort Pierce, Minutes, November 1, 1922.

⁴²Fort Pierce City Directory and St. Lucie County Gazetteer, 1920-1926.

⁴³Judge Alto Lee Adams, 69.

⁴⁴Interview with Ames Bennett, architect, 1999.

⁴⁵E. L. Adams, 35.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	8	Page	7	FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD
-				FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
				SIGNIFICANCE

requested to match the style of the original, reportedly answered that they did not do that sort of thing.⁴⁶ They went ahead with a modernist structure, out of touch with the surrounding styles. Neighboring Old City Hall was slated for demolition. The prospect of losing the landmark galvanized the grass roots efforts which had struggled to reclaim the downtown since the mid 1980's. The rescue and restoration of Old City Hall in 1995 cemented cooperation among concerned citizens. It was the turning point for Main Street Fort Pierce, and the preservation and revitalization movement in Fort Pierce.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

A reawakening of interest in Spanish architecture, inspired by the missions of the southwest, began in California and was popularized by the Panama-California Exposition of 1915 in San Diego. Its chief architect was Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, who had written a book on Spanish Colonial architecture in Mexico. He applied that knowledge to the exhibition and stimulated interest in exploring the use of vernacular design elements originating from the several cultures around the Mediterranean Sea. The resulting styles became popular in areas of appropriate climate and history, such as California and Florida. Mediterranean Revival architecture includes elements common to Mission, Spanish Colonial, and Italian Renaissance styles, such as: classical or Moorish columns; low pitched, clay tile, gabled, hipped, or flat, parapeted roofs; stucco exteriors with terra cotta decorative features; loggias, arcades, and courtyards; walls decorated with cartouches, tile, and terra cotta inserts; and decoration, often concentrated at door and window surrounds.⁴⁷

Mediterranean Revival became the signatory style of the boom times in southeast Florida. Fort Pierce was well within the sphere of influence of the center of activity–Palm Beach–of its most prolific practitioners. City Hall was built in the center of town at the height of prosperity. Facing it across either street were two Mediterranean style commercial buildings, the vast Arcade to the west and the Peacock Building to the north. With few exceptions, Fort Pierce's golden age was a Mediterranean revival city-wide, in the midst of which City Hall needed to stand out and be recognized. Architect William Hatcher had to have been particularly conscious of this since he had just designed the Raulerson Building around the corner. Without extravagance, and without departing from the ambience of the city, he used classical proportions and Italian Renaissance details to dignify City Hall and distinguish it from every other important building in Fort Pierce.

Although the equal of Palm Beach in natural setting, Fort Pierce was a small, working-class, country town. Its best architecture, as practiced by William Hatcher and exemplified in Old City Hall, was an architecture of common sense rather than of luxury. It made sensible urban use of the aesthetic and practical architectural

⁴⁶Interview with Joan Willem, Fort Pierce Building Department, 1999.

⁴⁷Marcus Whiffen, <u>American Architecture Since 1780</u>, 225-230.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 8 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA SIGNIFICANCE

elements available. Mr. Hatcher passed by Old City Hall every day and never tired of seeing it. It was always his favorite work.⁴⁸

WILLIAM WESLEY HATCHER

William Wesley Hatcher was born in Dothan, Alabama, on May 13, 1891. He was not interested in staying on the family farm, but went into the building trades, and became an accomplished carpenter. He was so fascinated by the drawings with which he worked that at age 26, with his father's help, he enrolled in the School of Architecture at Auburn University, then Alabama Polytechnic Institute. He was only a month from graduation when childbirth suspended his wife's teaching career, and financial obstacles forced him to withdraw. Undeterred, he had already done some large residences in Atlanta, and was designing a school in Montgomery, when visionary developer C. E. Cahow persuaded him to come to Fort Pierce. He was licensed in Florida on January 12, 1924.⁴⁹

His first design in Fort Pierce was the 1924 Raulerson Building, an L-shaped Mediterranean building with rows of storefronts beneath a series of office spaces divided by long hallways. He established his own office at the north end of the main hallway, overlooking the intersection of 2nd Street and Avenue A. He was one block west of Cobb's store, and two blocks east of the site of the new City Hall he was designing. It soon became the offices of Hatcher and Funke, when he invited Lawrence Sidney Funke, from Atlanta, to form a partnership.⁵⁰ Across the street was the elegant, classically styled Fort Pierce Bank by Jacksonville architect W. B. Camp.⁵¹ John N. Sherwood's office was two blocks south on 2nd Street — Fort Pierce's "Main Street" — in the Sunrise Building, which Sherwood had designed in 1922. Sherwood was working on the expansion of Camp's 1914 Fort Pierce High School at the time. Hatcher and Funke, with Cahow as builder, would complete a third phase of the school in 1926.⁵² The school is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (St. Lucie High School, NR 1984).

One of Hatcher and Funke's first projects together was the First United Methodist Church, a Mission style building with Baroque façade, and its adjoining parsonage. C. E. Cahow's company built the church in 1925. William Hatcher designed all its subsequent additions and modifications until the 1960's.⁵³ The parsonage was demolished, but the church remains in its original form and prominence. The same may be said of other Hatcher and Funke landmarks in their respective communities: White City School, a Mediterranean Revival building in brick; the Okeechobee City Hall, similar in concept to that of Fort Pierce, smaller in scale; and the

⁴⁸Interview with Gloria Rooks, 1999.

⁴⁹Ames Bennett, 1999.

⁵⁰Gloria Rooks, 1999.

⁵¹Fort Pierce News, February 20 and March 13, 1914.

⁵²Mary A. Bennett, 2.

⁵³E. L. Adams, 35-38, 74.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 9 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA SIGNIFICANCE

Mission Revival Okeechobee High School. The partners designed a number of Fort Pierce residences in addition to their public and commercial work.

Although Hatcher and Funke and John Sherwood were the only architects advertising in the city directories of the twenties, they were not the only ones working on boom time projects in Fort Pierce. Aside from William Hatcher, other architects who applied for their state architectural licenses from Fort Pierce were Arthur Beck, Samuel E. Clippard, and Duane Lyon. Beck designed Casa Caprona (NR 1984). Each of the latter three men applied in 1926. Willis Irwin designed the Arcade Building across the street from City Hall. Of these architects, and others as yet unidentified, all but Hatcher and Funke were gone by the end of the decade. Funke kept his name on the partnership for a few years, even after moving south to take a job with the prestigious Volk firm in Palm Beach.⁵⁴ Only William Hatcher stayed out the bust and the depression to make Fort Pierce his home.

Despite the scarcity of work in the thirties, he maintained his office in the Raulerson Building. A frequent visitor was Rupert Koblegard, owner of the Sunrise Theater. "The old man" had a knack of coming up with some job or other just when times got toughest. While Mrs. Hatcher was busy teaching at the elementary school, Mr. Hatcher looked after their little girl. He took her with him to inspect projects; she spent the afternoons in his office; and they went to every new movie at the Sunrise Theater together. Although his collaboration with Funke continued to some extent, it was usually Hatcher who commuted to Palm Beach. His work in Fort Pierce, when it was available, was residential. Memorial Hospital, done just before World War II, was the first major building Mr. Hatcher had designed in Fort Pierce since the late twenties. During the war, he was away most of the time supervising the construction of a naval air base in Deland, after which he resumed his Fort Pierce practice. He left no comment on the loss of so many landmark buildings after the war; although he was known to remark in private, "There are some people who have a lot of taste, but it's all bad."⁵⁵

William Hatcher remained the accomplished carpenter who could "hang eight doors in a day." He took a personal interest in the craftsmanship that went into his buildings. He was often seen clambering over a work in progress to examine the execution of some detail. At the same time, he was studious and had a large library of books on art. He was quiet, six feet tall, and almost always wore a hat. He was a member of the Elks Club, played golf every winter with cartoonist Fontaine Fox, and was a neighbor and friend of painter Albert Ernest ("Beanie") Backus (1906-1990). Everyone in town knew Hatcher. For many elders of the present generation,

⁵⁴Ames Bennett, <u>Space, Time and Architects</u>, 1999.

⁵⁵Gloria Rooks.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number	8	Page	10	FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD
				FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
				SIGNIFICANCE

he was the architect who designed their family home. Hatcher made a major contribution in his lifetime to the architectural heritage of Fort Pierce.

It was not until his wife died in 1961 that William Hatcher made his first and only trip abroad, to see first-hand the sources of so much of his inspiration. He continued to practice architecture until shortly before his death on February 5, 1971, at age 80. His library was donated to Beanie Backus' art studio for the use of the students.⁵⁶ Lawrence Funke had died a decade earlier, on November 9, 1960, at age 60. Both men are buried in the old Fort Pierce cemetery, their headstones but a few feet apart.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 1 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

 Section number
 9
 Page
 2
 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD

 FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA
 FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 3 FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 Page 1

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

Old City Hall occupies a lot bounded by Avenue A to the north and Orange Avenue to the south; U.S. 1 to the east and the Florida East Coast Railroad tracks to the west. It stands on the northwest corner of the lot. The lot is owned by the City of Fort Pierce. The legal description according to the St. Lucie County appraiser's office is:

"AARON LEE'S MAP OF FORT PIERCE BLK 1 ALL BLOCK - LESS E 20 FT & LESS U. S. #1 (MAP 24/10D) (OR 656-1912 : 653-1790 : 655-2681 : 656-2115 - 694-44)."

See attached site plan.

Boundary Justification:

The building footprint coincides with that shown on the 1929 Sanborn Map. The general historic boundaries of the building include the street frontage north and east of Old City Hall, plus 10 feet distance from its south and west elevations. These boundaries define the land historically associated with the Old Fort Pierce City Hall.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Page 1

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPHIC INVENTORY

- 1. Old City Hall, 315 Avenue A
- 2. Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida
- 3. Trent Greenan
- 4. May 10, 1999
- 5. Planning Department, City of Fort Pierce
- 6. Aerial view-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 1 of 24

Items 1, 2, and 5 are the same for photos 1 through 24.

- 1. Old City Hall, 315 Avenue A
- 2. Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida
- 3. Tim Harrington
- 4. June 24, 1999
- 5. Planning Department, City of Fort Pierce
- 6. North elevation-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 2 of 24

Items 1 - 5 are the same for photos 3 - 24.

- 6. East elevation-Camera facing southwest
- 7. Photo 3 of 24
- 6. East elevation-Camera facing west
- 7. Photo 4 of 24
- 6. South elevation, Camera facing northwest
- 7. Photo 5 of 24
- 6. West elevation-Camera facing east
- 7. Photo 6 of 24
- 6. Front entrance, north elevation-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 7 of 24

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number Page 2

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA PHOTOGRAPHS

- 6. Parapet, north elevation-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 8 of 24
- 6. Cornerstone, north elevation-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 9 of 24
- 6. Frieze and cornice, east elevation-Camera facing west
- 7. Photo 10 of 24
- 6. Detail, east elevation-Camera facing west
- 7. Photo 11 of 24
- 6. Quoin and corner detail, east elevation-Camera facing northwest
- 7. Photo 12 of 24
- 6. Interior, 1st floor hallway-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 13 of 24
- 6. Interior, 1st floor hallway-Camera facing north
- 7. Photo 14 of 24
- Interior, 1st floor hallway-Camera facing west
 Photo 15 of 24
- 6. Column and ceiling detail, 1st floor hallway-Camera facing southeast
- 7. Photo 16 of 24
- 6. Closets below stairs at rear entrance-Camera facing west
- 7. Photo 17 of 24
- 6. Entrance to great hall from landing-Camera facing north
- 7. Photo 18 of 24
- 6. 2nd floor storage room-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 19 of 24
- 6. View of landing from 2nd floor-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 20 of 24

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number _____ Page __3___

FORT PIERCE CITY HALL, OLD FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA PHOTOGRAPHS

- 6. Elevator door on 2nd floor-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 21 of 24
- 6. Entry doors from inside great hall-Camera facing south
- 7. Photo 22 of 24
- 6. Great hall-Camera facing northeast
- 7. Photo 23 of 24
- 6. Great hall-Camera facing northwest
- 7. Photo 24 of 24

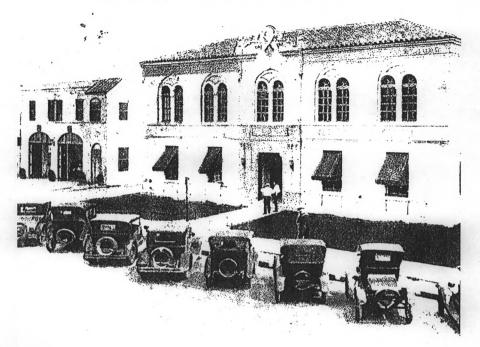


FIGURE 1

North elevation looking southeast, showing the old fire station to the east. Photo by Harry or Lowell Hill, c. 1928. Courtesy of St. Lucie County Historical Museum.



Figure 2

North elevation looking southwest, showing the old fire station to the east. Photo by Harry or Lowell Hill, c. 1928 Courtesy of St. Lucie County Historical Museum.



Figure 3

Florida East Coast railroad main line,camera facing west; at left is the first Fort Pierce City Hall, with the Hendry House and First Baptist Church beyond it. On right is the East Coast Lumber and Supply Company. C. 1900-1919. Courtesy of Florida State Archives (print collections, Florida Photographic Collection).



Figure 4

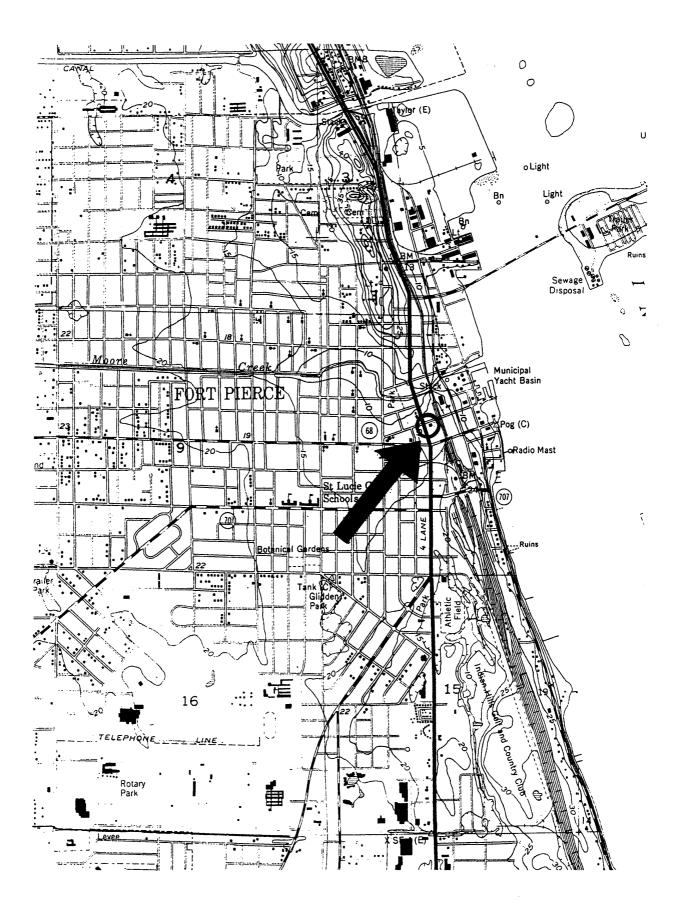
Avenue A with City Hall, camera facing southeast, c. 1920s. Courtesy of Florida State Archives.



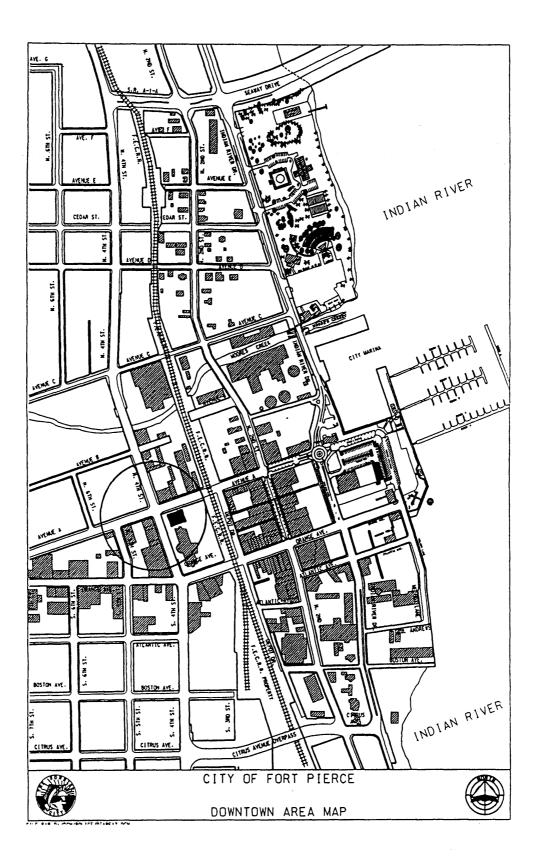


Figure 6

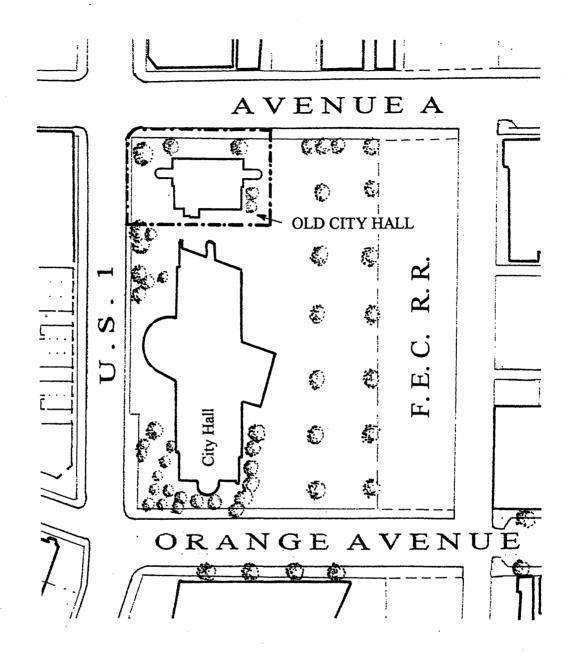
Old City Hall building, Fort Pierce, Florida, 2001. Camera facing southeast. Courtesy of Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc.



OLD CITY HALL Location on USGS map, Fort Pierce Quadrangle, FL St. Lucie County; 1983.



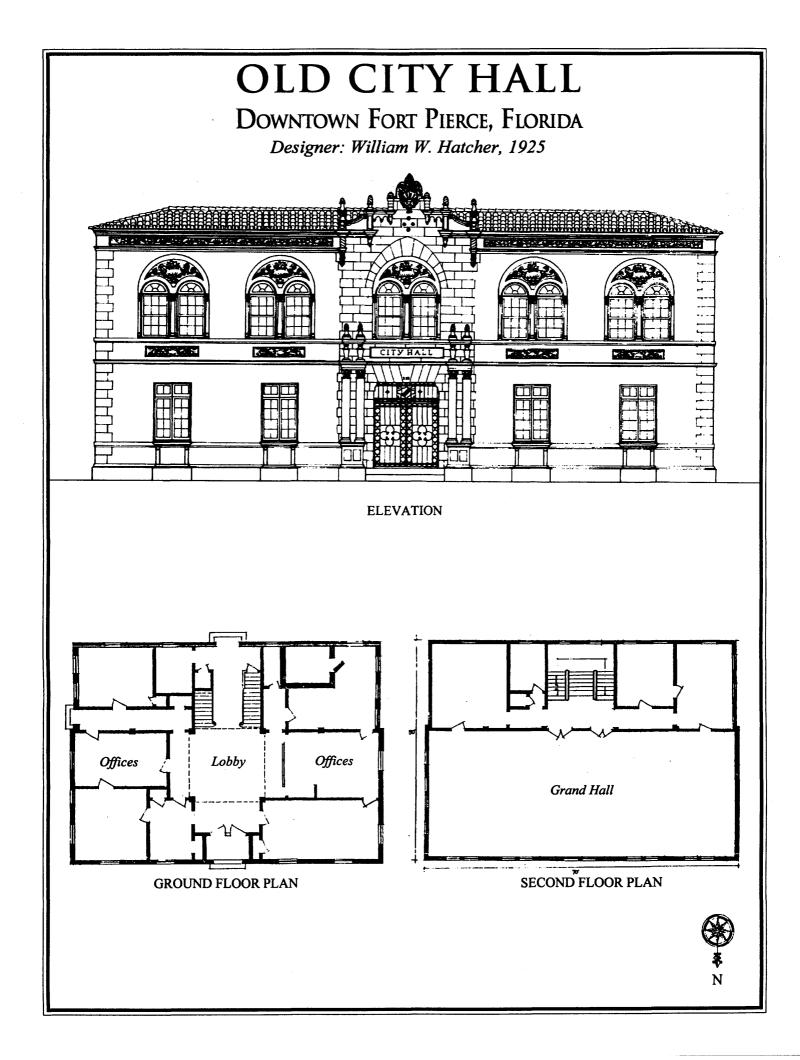
Location of OLD CITY HALL, Fort Pierce, St. Lucie, Florida

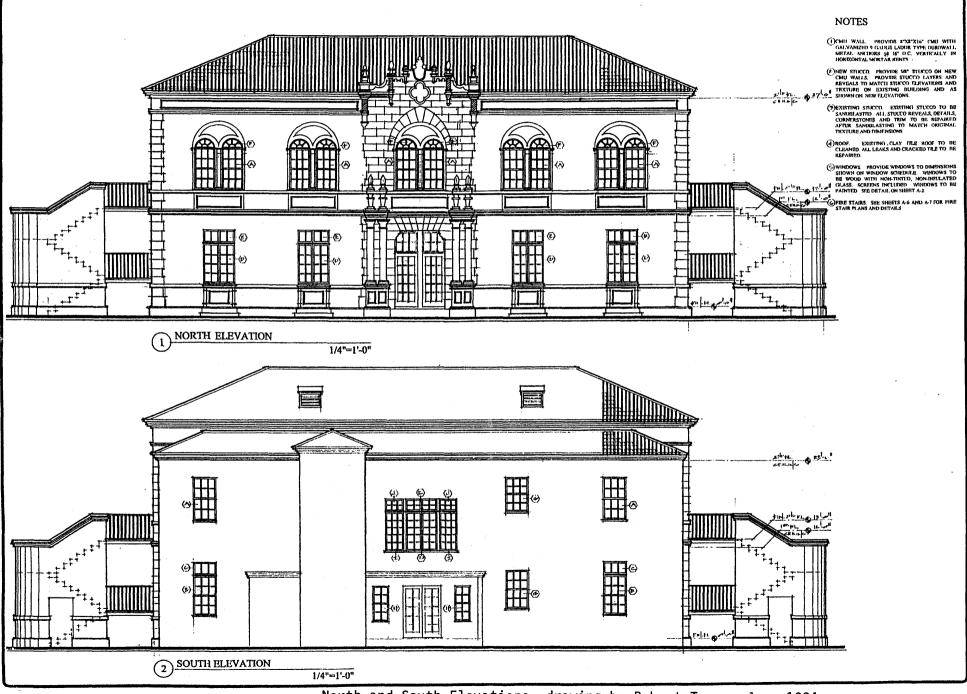




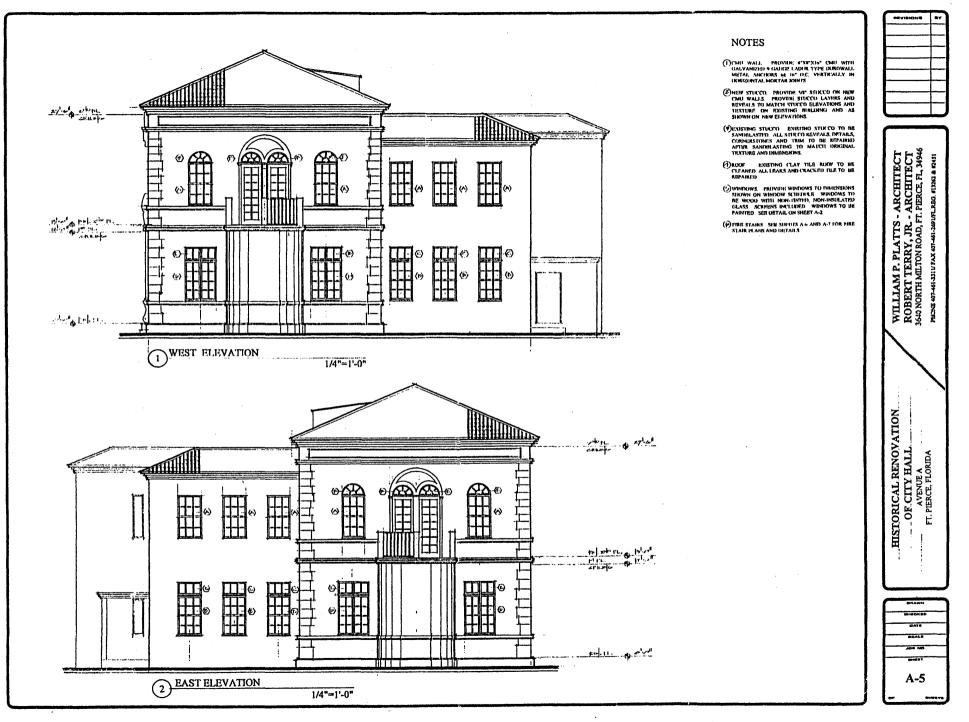
Site Plan: OLD CITY HALL, Fort Pierce, St. Lucie, Florida Approx. Scale: 1" = 100'

----- = Boundary Line



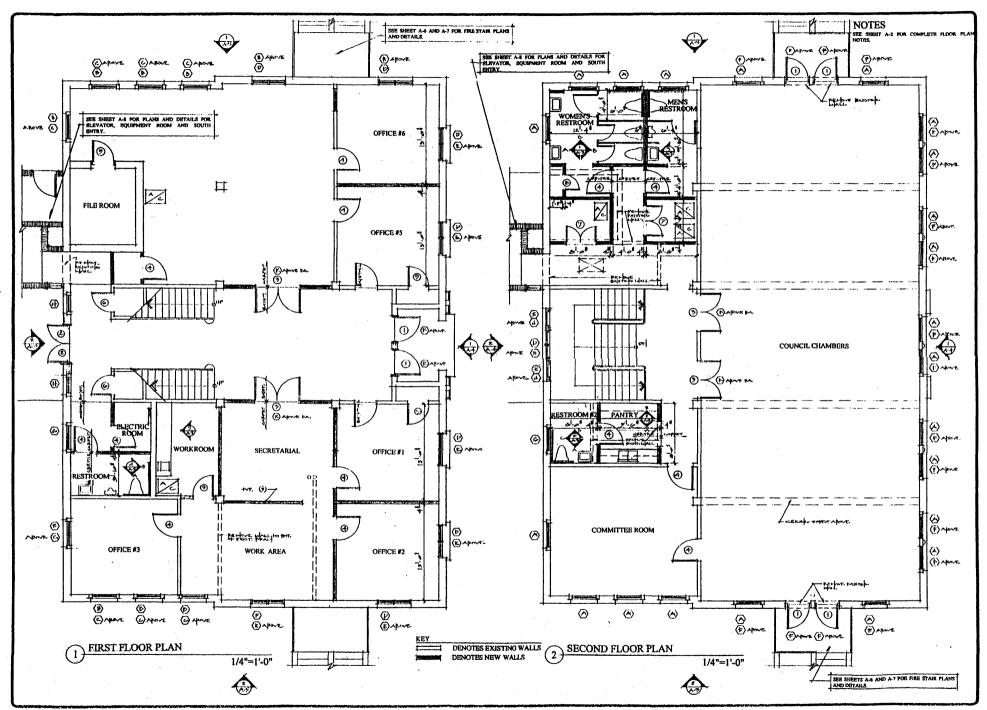


North and South Elevations, drawing by Robert Terry, Jr., 1994.

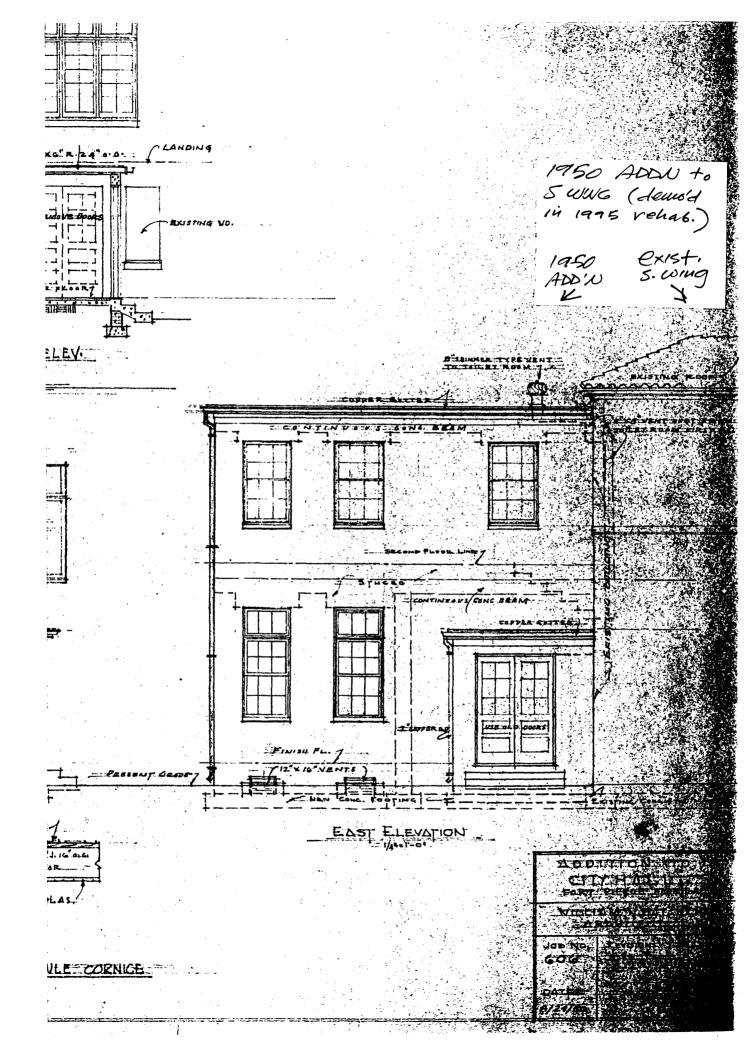


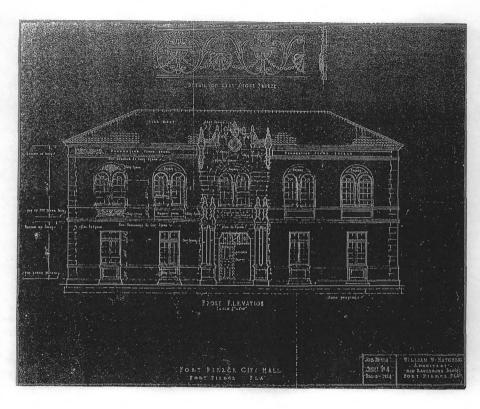
East and West Elevations, drawing by Robert Terry, Jr., 1994.

OLD CITY HALL, FORT PIERCE, ST. LUCIE, FLORIDA



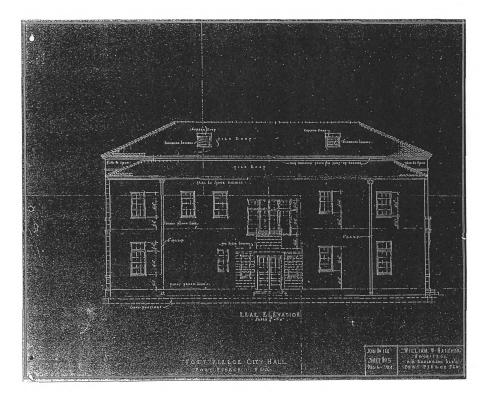
First and Second Floor Plans, drawing by Robert Terry, Jr., 1994





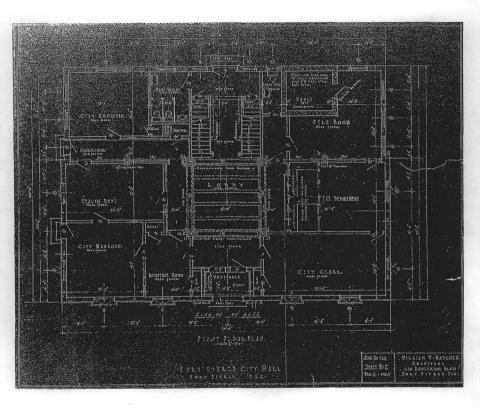
Attachment1 of 4

Front (north) Elevation, drawing by William W. Hatcher, Dec. 8, 1924.



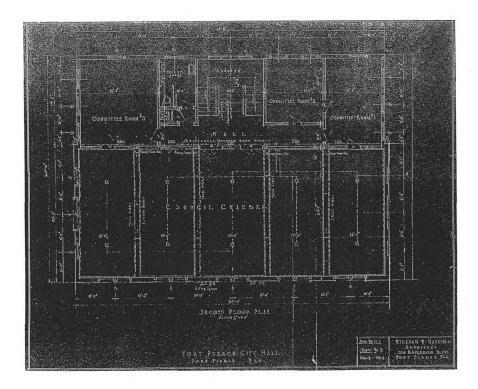
Attachment 2 of 4

Rear (south) Elevation, drawing by William W. Hatcher, Dec. 6, 1924.



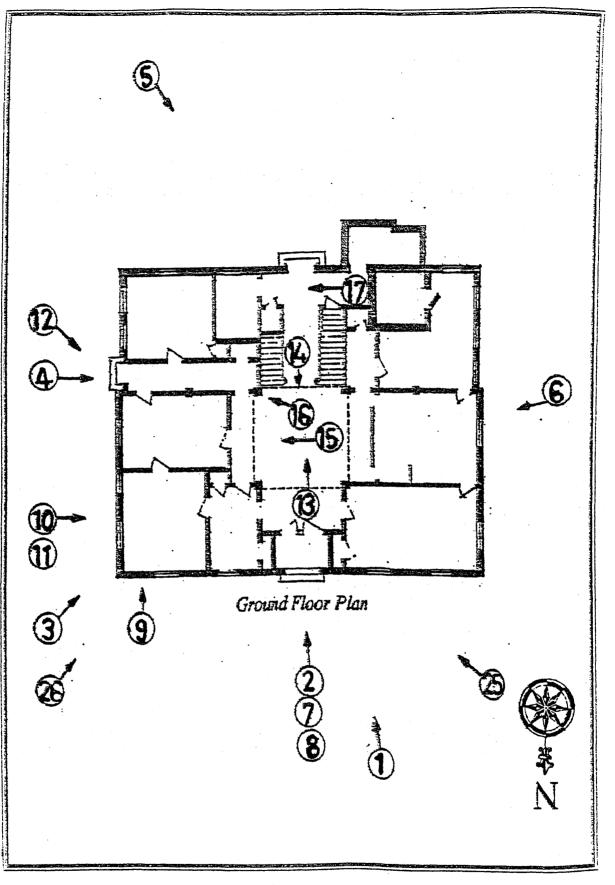
Attachment 3 of 4

First Floor Plan, drawing by William W. Hatcher, Dec. 4, 1924.

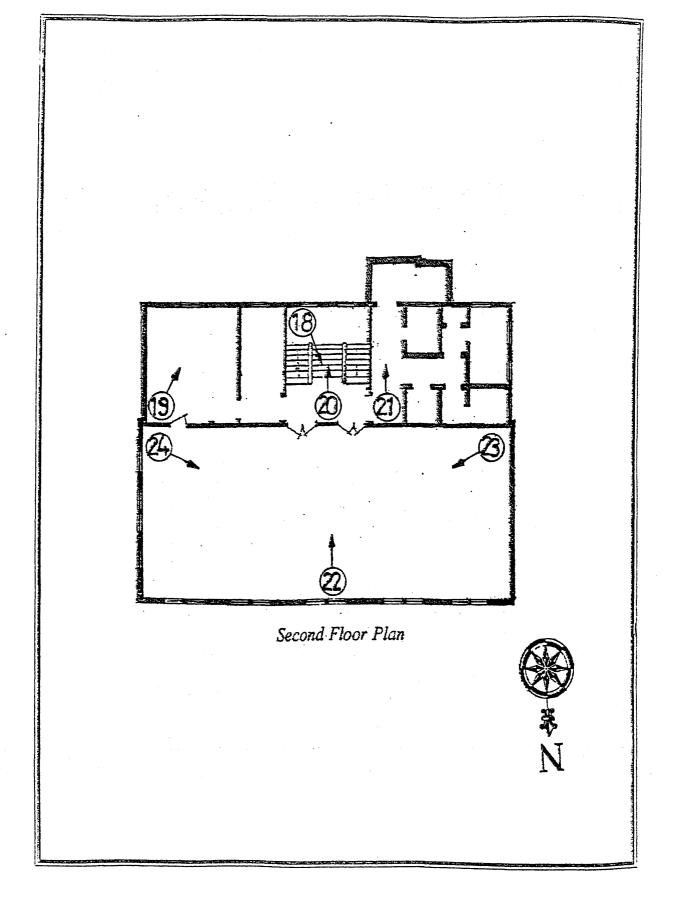


Attachment 4 of 4

Second Floor Plan, drawing by William W. Hatcher, Dec. 4, 1924.



First Floor Key to Photographic Inventory: OLD CITY HALL, Fort Pierce, St. Lucie, Florida



Second Floor Key to Photographic Inventory: OLD CITY HALL, Fort Pierce, St. Lucie, Florida