

PH 363146

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

APR 7 1977

DATE ENTERED

SEP 19 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC Bridgeport City Hall

AND/OR COMMON

McLevy Hall

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 202 State Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY/TOWN

Bridgeport

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th - Stewart B. McKinney

STATE

Connecticut

VICINITY OF

CODE
09

COUNTY

Fairfield

CODE
001**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME City of Bridgeport

STREET & NUMBER

45 Lyon Terrace

CITY/TOWN

Bridgeport

VICINITY OF

STATE

CT

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Bridgeport City Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

45 Lyon Terrace

CITY/TOWN

Bridgeport

STATE

CT

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources

DATE

1969

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY/TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT

McLevy Hall, Bridgeport block-sized public park. Building the width of the block so that the walls are formed by large openings. There are four openings on the north end, the openings between the ends is faced with a random ashlar stone, backed up with rubble.

Because of its remodeling differs from its original appearance two stories with a high base which was recessed between the openings were divided into four the wall. The glass panes were the stories. Then as now the the frieze was a bold Greek supported by large curved brackets several unevenly spaced chimneys dome was removed sometime in

In 1905 the building was lowered to street level and two story. The interior was completed two small gabled skylights and window scheme was retained by making a single wide window nearly at street level, has a The north entrance is similar the flat entablature each column, echoing the shape of was added to the tympanum of formally. The drastic overhang the brackets, and the frieze motif. The cornice, frieze, with finely corrugated copper

Recently the interior serves the probate court and are probably part of the 1905

Outside on the north notices. Believed to date from with a turret roof and is now 1959 it was faced with thin

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

McLevy Hall, Bridgeport's old City Hall, is located at the west end of a block-sized public park. Built in 1854 in temple form, its long axis is along the width of the block so that the entrances are quite close to the side walks. The walls are formed by large square piers alternating with full-height windows. There are four piers on the north and south facades and eight along the sides; the openings between the end piers on the sides do not have windows. The exterior is faced with a random ashlar of light-colored, smoothly dressed Portland brownstone, backed up with rubble stonework.

Because of its remodelling in the early twentieth century, City Hall today differs from its original appearance. Originally, the interior was arranged as two stories with a high basement. A flight of steps led to the main entrance, which was recessed between the middle two piers on the south end. The window openings were divided into four narrow windows by mullions running the height of the wall. The glass panes were full-height except for small solid panels marking the stories. Then as now the piers had simple stepped capitals. Running around the frieze was a bold Greek fret, and the unusually projecting cornice was supported by large curved brackets. Surmounting the shallow-pitched roof were several unevenly spaced chimneys and a domed skylight with ironwork cresting. The dome was removed sometime in the 19th century.

In 1905 the building was extensively remodelled. The first-floor was lowered to street level and the walls raised 2½ feet so as to accommodate a third story. The interior was completely reconstructed. To the new roof were added two small gabled skylights and small ventilating stacks above each pier. The window scheme was retained but the central mullion of each opening was removed, making a single wide window flanked by two narrow ones. The main entrance, now nearly at street level, has a shallow portico supported by two Doric fluted columns. The north entrance is similar but has two engaged square piers instead. Above the flat entablature each entrance has a stone crest, with breaks above the columns, echoing the shape and pitch of the gable above. A small arched window was added to the tympanum of the south facade. The cornice was treated much more formally. The drastic overhang was reduced, flat classical mutules replaced the brackets, and the frieze was done with an alternating triglyph and disk motif. The cornice, frieze, capitals, window bars and panels were all covered with finely corrugated copper sheet.

Recently the interior was redecorated in contemporary office style and serves the probate court and some municipal offices. The brass stair railings are probably part of the 1905 remodelling.

Outside on the north side of the building is a board for posting official notices. Believed to date from the 1850's, it is a small four-sided wooden box with a turret roof and is mounted on a pole. To prevent further weathering, in 1959 it was faced with thin pieces of plywood.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMIC
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVESTIGATION

SPECIFIC DATES 1854 - built
1905 - remodelled

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bridgeport's old City Hall is the late Greek Revival design of Josiah Davis, a prominent architect of the 19th century. He is best remembered for his production of many designs for public buildings. Even when designing temple-form buildings, he was influenced by romantic impulses, as was well illustrated by the wildly projecting cornice, though these features were removed, the remains, the tall, narrow sets of windows, which the architect himself called the Davis Gothic, creates a Gothic suggestion, and is characteristic of the Revival commercial buildings. The building is figured in Davis's designs, although some of his commercial designs were rejected. The Commercial Exchange is remarkably well preserved, and up the value of this building as a landmark in commercial buildings.

Joseph Northrop tried to moderate the verticality of the building, he replaced the fret with a more restrained design. He trimmed down the cornice projecting above the building. Once Davis's frivolities were removed, the masonry appealed to the Neo-Gothic style. He was the best building in the city. He who designed among others the Kott

The building also has local significance. It was built in town and donated to the Fairfield County. It would be the principal seat of county government, inducement for the county, the town, as well as a place of public assembly. In 1854 a new city hall built, and even today it serves as offices.

The building was renamed in 1905 in honor of Mayor of Bridgeport for three decades.

McKinney

OF
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DATE RESIDENCE

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ASPORTATION

SER

SIGNIFICANCE

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

's old City Hall, is located at the west end of a block in 1854 in temple form, its long axis is along the street. The entrances are quite close to the side walks. The building has four square piers alternating with full-height windows. The north and south facades and eight along the sides; the piers on the sides do not have windows. The exterior is of light-colored, smoothly dressed Portland brown-ironwork.

During the early twentieth century, City Hall today's appearance. Originally, the interior was arranged as a temple. A flight of steps led to the main entrance, flanked by two piers on the south end. The window openings were narrow windows by mullions running the height of the full-height except for small solid panels marking the piers had simple stepped capitals. Running around the building and the unusually projecting cornice was a frieze. Surmounting the shallow-pitched roof were iron piers and a domed skylight with ironwork cresting. The building was remodeled in the 19th century.

The building was extensively remodelled. The first-floor walls were raised 2½ feet so as to accommodate a third story. The second story was completely reconstructed. To the new roof were added small ventilating stacks above each pier. The central mullion of each opening was removed, replaced by two narrow ones. The main entrance, now a shallow portico supported by two Doric fluted columns, but has two engaged square piers instead. Above the main entrance has a stone crest, with breaks above the pitch of the gable above. A small arched window is in the south facade. The cornice was treated much more simply. The window was reduced, flat classical mutules replaced by a frieze as done with an alternating triglyph and disk capitals, window bars and panels were all covered with sheet metal.

The building was redecorated in contemporary office style and some municipal offices. The brass stair railings were removed.

The side of the building is a board for posting official notices. In the 1850's, it is a small four-sided wooden box mounted on a pole. To prevent further weathering, in places of plywood.

PERIOD

PREHISTORIC
 1400-1499
 1500-1599
 1600-1699
 1700-1799
 1800-1899
 1900-

ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
 ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC
 AGRICULTURE
 ARCHITECTURE
 ART
 COMMERCE
 COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

COMMUNITY PLANNING
 CONSERVATION
 ECONOMICS
 EDUCATION
 ENGINEERING
 EXPLORATION-SETTLEMENT
 INDUSTRY
 INVENTION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
 LAW
 LITERATURE
 MILITARY
 MUSIC
 PHILOSOPHY
 POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

RELIGION
 SCIENCE
 SCULPTURE
 SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
 THEATER
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES 1854 - built
1905 - remodelled

BUILDER/ARCHITECT A.J. Davis, architect
Joseph Northrop (remodelling)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bridgeport's old City Hall is actually the cross-product of two designs, the late Greek Revival design of A.J. Davis and Joseph Northrop's 1905 Neo-Classical reconstruction. Davis was one of the most outstanding architects of the 19th century. He is best remembered for his romantic Gothic creations, but he produced many designs for public and commercial buildings in classical styles. Even when designing temple-form buildings, Davis gave free rein to his romantic impulses, as was well illustrated by this building - the bold frieze, the wildly projecting cornice, the brackets, and the fanciful dome. Although these features were removed, the most characteristic part of the original design remains, the tall, narrow sets of windows between masonry piers which the architect himself called the Davisean window. The verticality of the windows creates a Gothic suggestion, and indeed, such windows are found in his Gothic Revival commercial buildings. The development of glass curtain walls is pre-figured in Davis's designs, although there was little actual continuity. Many of his commercial designs were rejected. His proposal for the New York Commercial Exchange is remarkably similar to Bridgeport City Hall, and points up the value of this building as an example of Davis's designs for public and commercial buildings.

Joseph Northrop tried to make the building more serious and disciplined. He moderated the verticality of the windows by removing one mullion. He replaced the fret with a more restrained and more properly classical design, and he trimmed down the cornice projection. What was left was a solid, dignified building. Once Davis's frivolities were removed, the temple form and the mass of the masonry appealed to the Neo-Classical aesthetic. Cass Gilbert thought it was the best building in the city. Northrop was a prominent Bridgeport architect who designed among others the Mott building, Lexington Avenue, New York City.

The building also has local historical significance. It was built by the town and donated to the Fairfield County Court in order to insure that Bridgeport would be the principal seat of county government. As a by-product of this inducement for the county, the town received a place to conduct its business, as well as a place of public assembly (Lincoln spoke here). Not until the 1930's was a new city hall built, and even today the building is occupied by municipal offices.

The building was renamed in 1966 for Jasper McLevy, a Socialist who was mayor of Bridgeport for three decades.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Barnum and His Sympathizers - Great Meeting," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 10, 1856, p. 345. Early engravings.

Newton, Roger H. Town and Davis, Architects. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942.

Northrop, Joseph. "Joseph Northrop, Designer of Many Bridgeport Buildings, Celebrates Golden Anniversary as Practicing Architect," Bridgeport Post,

March 3, 1935.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.4

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	6	5,1	7,6,0	4,5	5,9	7,4,0	B								
	ZONE		EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					
C								D								

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bruce Clouette, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

November 22, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

John A. Clouette

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer and
Director, Conn. Historical Commission

DATE March 30, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

[Signature]

DATE

3/15/77

DATE

2-18-77