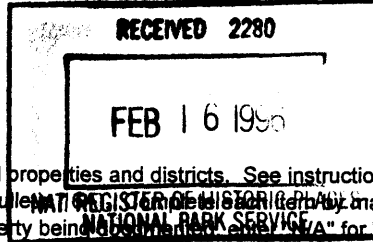


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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 68) for instructions. Marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being submitted, 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 Aurora City Hall
other names/site number 029-029-51085 029-029-51284

2. Location

street & number 216 Third Street and 233-237 Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town Aurora N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Dearborn code 029 zip code 47001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request 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 36CFR 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. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard R. Roberts 1-30-96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana Department of Natural 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

4. 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
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:)

Edson W. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

3/14/96
Date of Action

Entered in the
National Register

Name of Property Aurora City Hall

County and State Dearborn IN

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building 03M333A
- district
- site
- structure 444
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

NA

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: City Hall

Government: Fire Station

Government: Correctional Facility

Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government: City Hall

Government: Fire Station

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Italianate

Late Victorian: Romanesque

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Limestone

walls BRICK

STONE: Limestone

roof METAL: Tin

other METAL

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

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- 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 distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- 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 Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1882-1945

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

McDonald Brothers

Kreite, Louis

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

NR files

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 6	6 8 1 7 1 0	4 3 2 4 8 1 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

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 Jefferey L. Huntington

organization _____ date _____

street & number 4338 W. Pine Blvd. #2 R telephone _____

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63108

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

- Maps**
- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
 - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having 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 Aurora Mayor Leon Kelly

street & number 237 Main Street telephone _____

city or town Aurora state IN zip code 47001

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 to amend existing 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.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana

Section 7-Narrative Description

Aurora City Hall is a grouping of two distinct but connected historic buildings which have served the community since the 1880s. The buildings are located at the corner of Third and Main Streets in the center of the old commercial core of this Ohio River town. The Fire Department building is a two story, brick and stone Italianate block which faces Main Street, while the main building is a two story brick and stone, gable-fronted building designed in the Romanesque Revival mode (photo 7).

The Main Street block was built about 1870, but was bought for use by the city fire department in 1882 (photo 7). It was later joined to the 1886 City Hall building. This typical Italianate commercial building has a principle facade on Main Street. The pattern of the original storefronts are still visible, because the cast iron pilasters and frieze (beam) are still in place. In place of windows are various materials. Presumably, at least one bay was made into a garage bay in 1882 to house fire equipment. The southernmost bay is now the garage bay, with an overhead door and small flanking walls faced with permastone to hold the door in place. Next to the north, two original pilasters are closely spaced, indicating an entrance. A doorway is still in this bay, though a modern door and vertical siding over the transom area now occupy the space. The next bay has brick veneer walls, a triple wood window, and a door north of the window group. Judging from the brick and window types, this bay was altered in c.1925. The end bay also has a brick veneer, but of a different type and age, with a large fixed picture window and multi-light door beside it.

Above the first floor are seven evenly spaced round arched windows. The painted stone hoods have plain keystones and springer blocks, the stone sills have small corbels. Window sash are plain rectangular one-over-one double hung units; the lunettes are blind or have been covered by panels. The heavy entablature crowning the building has a base molding, plain frieze, and paired scroll brackets placed between each window. Dentils mark the top of the frieze and a heavy cornice is carried by the brackets. The slightly pitched, half-hip roof is not visible behind the entablature.

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Section number 7 Page 2

**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana**

The south elevation has only one opening on the ground level, at a point where the storefront wraps around to this side to frame a narrow side entry door. The rest of the first floor is a solid wall of brick. The second floor has five symmetrically placed bays of rectangular windows with plain flat stone sills and lintels. The entablature treatment continues on this elevation.

The north elevation and east elevations are partly obscured. A very narrow space divides the north wall from the south wall of the building to the north, rendering this elevation almost undetectable. This wall is a gable end, from which the main roof ridge starts. The ridge divides to form a half-hip structure over the building. The east (rear) is visible on the second story. The cornice continues on the rear elevation but it lacks the bracket work. There were probably seven bays of plain windows originally, but only those to the north are visible.

The interior of the Fire Department section is very plain. An engine bay is located inside the first floor area to the south. An original staircase divides this section from several first floor offices. The first floor offices have been altered with masonite paneling and suspended ceilings. The second floor was probably served as living quarters for on-duty firemen. These rooms are very utilitarian in finish. A hall way runs parallel to the front wall, with rooms opening off either side. Most rooms have been paneled with masonite and have hollow core doors, but several rooms at the south end of the hall retain molded surrounds, transomed doorways, and other modest features.

The City Hall building on Third Street is most commonly identified as the primary building of city government in Aurora (photo 1). It was built for city use in 1887. The front facade is three bays wide, with two bays rising to form a full front gabled section while a slightly recessed bay to the west rises a scant two stories, terminating with a lower half gable. The foundation is faced with rock-faced limestone, now painted, and is more visible on other elevations. The first floor has two vehicle bays with modern overhead doors with transoms. Flanking and central piers have recessed panels which are corbeled back into the wall and marked by rock faced limestone bases and capitals. The central pier is wider and has two

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 3

**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana**

panels. The recessed bay to the west has a single pedestrian round arched entry. The more recent steel and glass door has narrow sidelights but the original fanlight transom is intact. The arch is multiple coursed with projecting header row on the extrados. A dressed stone cornice-like stringcourse divides the first and second floors. On the second floor of the main gabled section are two massive round arched windows centered over the vehicle bays. Console volute scrolls which rest just above the stringcourse flank the pilasters which define the edges of this section (photo 2). The windows are recessed within a corbeled back panel and framed by an arch like that over the entry. An entablature-like impost molding formed of projecting header courses links the two windows across the central pilaster. The windows are paired one-over-one wood double hung units with three light semicircular transoms. Sills are dressed stone. A small niche with stone header is located between the central paired pilasters. A stone belt course runs atop the recessed window panels.

On the second level of the west bay is a large oculus with surround detailed like the arches (photo 2). It rests in a recessed, corbeled back panel with flanking pilasters. The oculus has a central bull's eye light with surrounding quarter segment panes. A brick header course runs across the upper part of this bay. Above the brick wall is a half gable with simple wood cornice, infilled with carved wood sunburst panel. The half gable terminates at the level of the stone belt course.

Over the main section is a gable end with full pediment. The tympanum has several brick corbeled back panels which are divided symmetrically about the center line of the gable. Raised applied letters read "CITY BUILDING". The gable roof is clad with standing seam metal. Set back from the west entry bay is the four story tower. A cornice indicates its base, from this rises a tall section with corner pilasters and a corbeled back panel. Set high in this panel is triple window arcade of three round arched narrow windows with a continuous stone sill. The arches have diminutive brick work echoing those over the main windows. A wooden cornice caps this section, then a wood framed belfry forms the next stage. Originally, this section was an open watch tower with a single large round arch opening on each side, and a short railing at the base. It has since been enclosed in aluminum siding. The roof was originally pyramidal with a lightning rod or weather vane at the apex, but now

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana**

it is nearly flat. All sides of the tower are similar.

The east elevation of the building is very functional (photo 3). Originally, an alley ran along this side of the building, this has been vacated for a parking lot. Three segmental arched openings are aligned on each floor. The first floor openings are covered with siding. The central second floor window is also covered, but the flanking windows have been partly covered to fit shorter window sash. The stone belt course continues across the top of the wall as does the wood cornice. A tall brick chimney rises at the north edge of the two story wall, and a one story shed roofed addition with overhead door abuts it.

On the rear or north wall of the main section of the City Building, a single large window group like those of the front facade is centered on the second story level (photo 5). The brick arch is plain, lacking the detail of the front windows. The gable end has a wood cornice but lacks the enclosed pediment of the front gable, having only returns (the east return has been altered by the previously described chimney). Beside the previously mentioned one story shed roof garage addition is a two story, flat roofed section which terminates beside the large window, but wraps around to the west side of the building. The first story was the jail, and is built of solid limestone rock-faced walls with narrow vertical slits for windows (photo 6). The second story of this section is of brick with segmental arched six-over-six windows.

In about 1970, a connector was built between the c.1870 building and the 1887 City Hall building. It is modern in style, with tan brick walls and small second floor windows. A raised flower bed with brick walls runs along the lower section of the first story. The overall height of the addition is lower than the second floor of either building, yet high enough to effectively block any street view of the west side of the 1887 building.

The section of the south elevation which houses the arched entry and oculus window shelters a stair hall within (photo 8). The stairs begin at the far end of the hallway. The staircase has an octagonal newel post with turned cap and the balusters are also lathe-turned and tapered. Applied scrolls decorate the stringers, and the

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana**

handrail is molded. The stairs have a landing directly under the oculus window, doglegging at that point to reach the second story.

The other rooms of the first floor are functional in appearance. A door at the end of the stair hall leads to the fire engine bays. To the left of this door is a door which leads to a series of small rooms used by the police department. Little historic fabric is left in these rooms. Further back in this section are the jail cells. The original strap lattice iron doors are intact (photos 9 and 10), though the walls have been covered with paneling.

The entire second floor of the main part of the 1887 building is currently in use as the City Council chambers, but it is unknown if this was the original use (photo 11). No accounts or minutes have been found concerning the City Council moving into this space, however, such an event may have gone unrecognized. This room is thought to have served as the "Fireman's Hall" which was mentioned in the minutes and newspaper accounts.

The room has a raised platform across the south wall and there are five old desks facing north and five facing south for the mayor, council, and other city officials. Window moldings are plain stained wood and half-round valances cover the transoms. Ceiling beams and a cornice were added to the room at some point. A low semi-circular railing, Gothic Revival in style, divides the council from the rest of the room. This railing was added to the room; it was removed from the Aurora Methodist Episcopal Church during a remodeling in the 1950s. The small rooms above the jail section to the rear are used today as offices for the mayor and Fire Chief. They may have been sleeping rooms for the Police Department. No significant features remain in these rooms.

Overall, the interior is very plain and has been remodeled several times. Floods have played a role in the need for some remodelings. Others features, such as suspended ceilings, have been installed to modernize the facility. Both buildings remain in use as Aurora's City Hall.

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National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 6

**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana***Section 8-Statement of Significance*

The Aurora City Hall buildings are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The buildings are important to the citizens of Aurora as the seat of local government since 1882-1887, and the buildings are architecturally significant as well. The Third Street building (1887) in particular is a fine example of small town civic architecture from the late 1800s. The prominent firm of McDonald Brothers from Louisville, Kentucky designed the Third Street building, which was given a rating of "outstanding" in the 1983 Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory.

The significance of the establishment of a permanent location for the city government of Aurora is best understood within the context of the development of the community. Aurora is situated on the banks of the Ohio River at the confluence of Hogan Creek, four miles below Lawrenceburg and twenty-six miles below Cincinnati. The first house in the area was established by Adam Flake in January 1796, according to some sources. Other settlers soon came, clearing land and building homes. The idea of a permanent town on the site was generated by the Aurora Internal Improvements Association, a group of businessmen from Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. They platted the town in January 1819 and the first sales of lots took place in April of the same year. The first elections were held in 1822. The town's first house, doubling as a hotel and store, was built in 1822, but development was gradual until Hogan Creek was spanned in 1836.

The 1830s to 1860s were prosperous years for Aurora as Ohio River traffic spurred settlement and commerce. By the 1880s, Aurora was flourishing with industries and businesses even though the heyday of river trade had crested. The population reached new records, and the community was formalizing civic and commercial institutions. Streets were being paved, new schools were being built, and a new generation of permanent buildings were under construction downtown. Increasingly as the twentieth century neared, development in Aurora diminished. Rail access which at first gave industries new opportunities also brought new competition from larger concerns in Cincinnati.

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**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana**

The construction of a new City Hall symbolizes the high point of Aurora's development. Prior to 1887, city government had been housed at several different locations. In 1882, the Italianate building at Third and Main (included in this nomination) was bought from the Criswell family for \$6,059. It was then used for some government offices, and still is. The movement toward consolidation of city services began on November 19, 1883, when the City of Aurora purchased lot #99 on Third Street for a building site. In 1886, a committee was formed to investigate the feasibility and costs of constructing a new city building. By August of 1886, plans and specifications for the new city hall had been approved by the city council. McDonald Brothers of Louisville had been hired by the city to design the building and provide specifications. An advertisement for sealed bids for construction was made in September of 1886. The bids were reviewed in October 1886 and contractor W.W. McCoy was selected. However, McCoy was unable to secure a bond and the process was reopened.

In November 1886, Louis Kreite from Aurora was the lowest bidder at \$8,499.00. City engineer Albert Gridley was the superintendent of construction for the project. In April of 1887, the Aurora City Council authorized payment of \$212.47 to McDonald Brothers for the plans and specifications. By October 21, 1887, the building was completed except for incidental site work.

A series of heavy floods in 1882, 1883, and 1884 may account for the delay of three years after the lot purchase. In some cases, water levels reached the second story of some buildings downtown.

The construction of City Hall adjacent to the Main Street building in 1887 brought fire, police, and city government offices together in one location for the first time. Law enforcement was established upon Aurora's founding, but fire protection was provided by bucket brigade until 1876, when the city bought a fire engine. Named "Thomas Gaff" in honor of the greatest donor, the engine was at first housed in the T. & J.W. Gaff & Co. Distillery on Hogan Creek. The City Hall building provided a new home for the city's fire fighting equipment.

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**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana**

The architectural firm of McDonald Brothers, Louisville, was one of the most prolific firms in the Ohio Valley. Young engineer Harry Peake McDonald began the firm in Louisville in the 1870s. Harry Peake McDonald was born in Romney, Virginia on April 14, 1848 to Angus and Cornelia McDonald. His early education was received at Winchester Academy and after the Civil War at Washington University (Washington and Lee). He received a degree in civil engineering in 1869. By 1873, he was a superintendent for Louisville architect John Andrewartha. Next year, Harry established his own practice in Louisville. Kenneth, a younger brother to Harry, joined the firm in 1878. Born in 1852, Kenneth too had received a civil engineering degree, from Virginia Military Institute. Two other younger brothers, Donald (born 1858) and Roy (born 1856) also trained at Washington and Lee. Roy graduated with an engineering degree, while Donald completed three years of training. By 1878, the firm was listed as McDonald Brothers in directories.

Jails and courthouses were a specialty of the firm. The Louisville Courier-Journal credited the firm with over 100 jails in six different states and a number of courthouses (January 1, 1891, "Building Activity"). This out-of-town success is attributed to the work of Donald, whose primary responsibility was to travel to different communities to secure business. After Donald left the firm in 1892, few commissions were received outside of Louisville. Harry and Kenneth continued until 1895, after that, Harry practiced on his own. Harry McDonald died in 1904. Kenneth formed other partnerships, most notably with William Dodd; McDonald & Dodd designed many Louisville landmarks between 1905 and 1913. In 1913, Kenneth retired to San Francisco and lived until 1940.

Aurora City Hall represents a building type for which the McDonald firm was famous. It is also significant as city government building. Compared to other city hall buildings in Indiana, Aurora's 1887 building is, to the best of the DHPA's knowledge, the third oldest existing city government building in the state. Huntingburg Town Hall (NR, 5-12-75) is the oldest, built 1866. Wabash's old city hall was completed in 1883. Others for Fort Wayne, Columbus, and Kokomo were completed in the 1890s. Interestingly, all are Romanesque Revival style buildings except for Huntingburg.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 9

**Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, Indiana**

An addition in the 1970s connected the two city government buildings, yet it does not detract from the character of either. The Aurora City Hall buildings still serve the community as city government offices.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 10

Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, IN

Section 9-Bibliography

Bibliography

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 11

Aurora City Hall
Dearborn County, IN

Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at the northeast corner of Third and Main Streets, proceed along Main Street right of way north 61', then east 106', then south 61', then west along Third Street right of way 106' to point of origin. Also defined as adjacent lots 082 and 072 on the enclosed 1"= 200' map.

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes the two historic interconnected city government buildings.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Photos Page 1

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Aurora City Hall
2. Aurora, Indiana
3. Dr. Leslie Baker, photographer
4. July 1, 1994
5. Negatives: Dr. Leslie Baker, 211 Hillview Drive, Aurora, IN
47001

Photograph #1

Exterior - front facade. Camera facing north.

Photograph #2

Exterior - detail of front facade. Camera facing northwest.

Photograph #3

Exterior - front and east facades. Camera facing northwest.

Photograph #4

Exterior. Camera facing northwest.

Photograph #5

Exterior - rear facade. Camera facing southwest.

Photograph #6

Exterior - detail of rear jail. Camera facing southeast.

Photograph #7

Exterior. Camera facing northeast.

Photograph #8

Interior - detail of stairs. Camera facing east.

Photograph #9

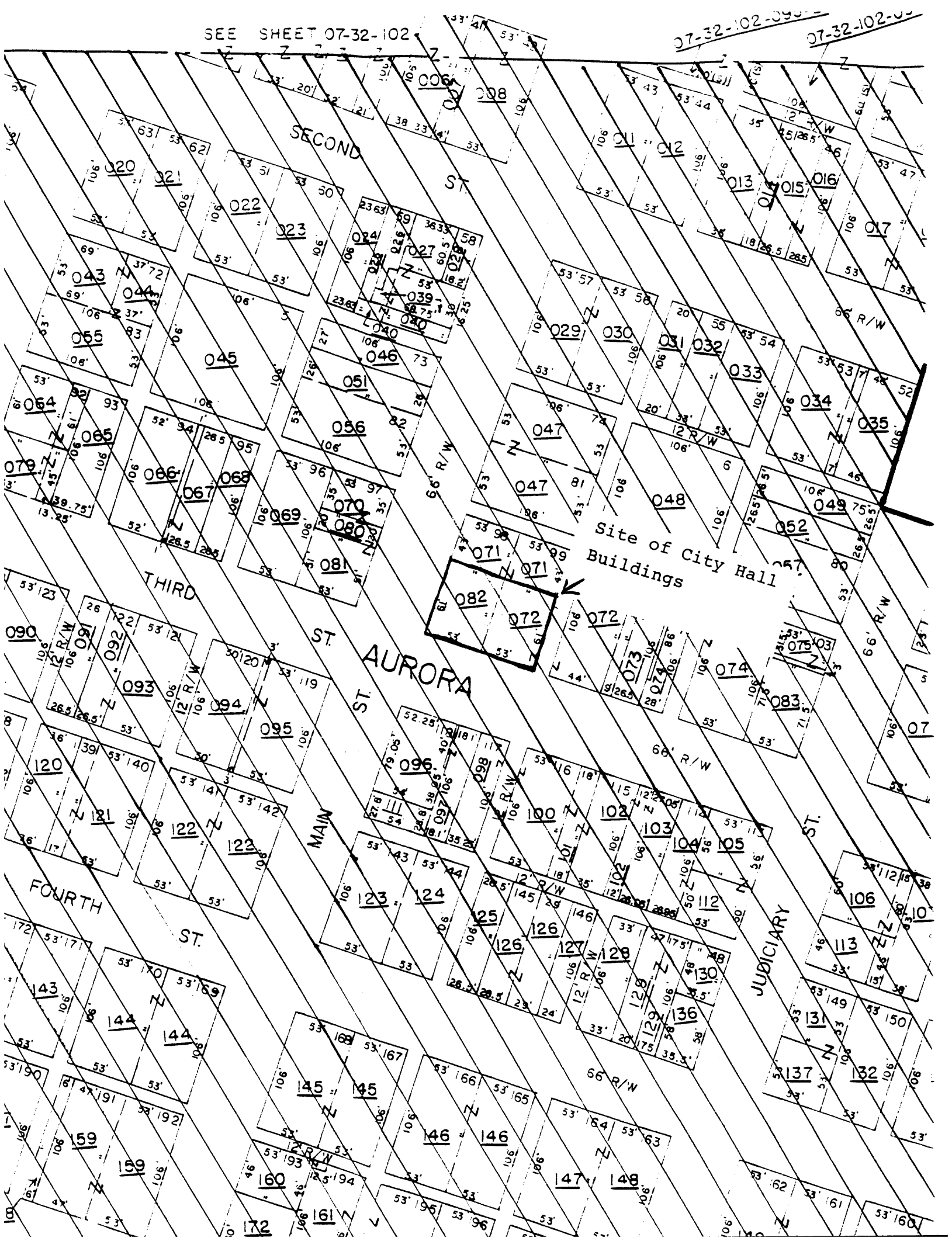
Interior - detail of iron door to jail. Camera facing north.

Photograph #10

Interior - detail of iron cell door. Camera facing west.

Photograph #11

Interior - City Council Chambers. Camera facing south.



SECOND ST

THIRD ST

ST. AURORA

FOURTH ST

MAIN ST

JUDICIARY ST

Site of City Hall Buildings



- 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 033, 034, 035
- 040, 041, 042, 043, 044, 045, 046, 047, 048, 049
- 050, 051, 052, 053, 054, 055, 056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 061, 062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 071, 072, 073, 074, 075, 076, 077, 078, 079, 080, 081, 082, 083, 084, 085, 086, 087, 088, 089, 090, 091, 092, 093, 094, 095, 096, 097, 098, 099, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172