

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 22 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places
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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Freeport City Hall

other names/site number _____

Name of Multiple Property Listing _____

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

2. Location

street & number 230 W. Stephenson

☐ not for publication

city or town Freeport

☐ vicinity

state Illinois

county Stephenson

zip code 61032

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 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 at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide ✓ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ✓ A B ✓ C D



4-18-16

Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):



6-7-16

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Freeport City Hall
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Stephenson, Illinois
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		site
		structure
		object
1		Total

**Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register**

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government – city hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian: Richardson-Romanesque

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Local limestone and concrete masonry units

walls: Brick with exterior sandstone facade

roof: Asphalt shingles on wood deck w/ heavy timber roof structure..

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

Freeport City Hall was built in 1899 to function as a multi-purpose, two-story municipal structure. When it was originally built it housed city administrative functions, city council chambers, the police station, city fire station, and the city library. Over the years, the building had varying functions, but was been the location of city government operations for 111 years. With its masonry exterior, the Freeport City Hall sits prominently in the center of Freeport's downtown and is in relatively good condition, considering it has suffered from deferred maintenance and poorly planned renovations over the years.

The Freeport City Hall is a Romanesque Revival Style, two story rectangular building which occupies its entire footprint (60' x 145'). The building is a stone-clad load-bearing masonry structure and also includes a mezzanine level and a full basement. It has a hip roof framed with heavy timber trusses and framing with gable dormers. Special features of the building are its sandstone, unique to Northwest Illinois, its ornamental main staircase with a cast iron balustrade, very tall ceilings, and its wonderful heavy-timbered truss roof system.

When it was constructed, the first floor was used for a fire station and the second story was used for City Hall purposes.

The interior still has some of the original historic elements, including a front staircase with iron work and marble flooring. There are also many of the original doors and woodwork on the second floor. The original Council Chambers has a domed ceiling with decorative molding. In addition, there are also frescoes on the ceiling, depicting Truth, Government and Justice.

The building is situated within the Freeport's Local Historic District and sits prominently on the corner of a lot, and extends to the next street. In addition, two other historically significant buildings sit in close proximity – First Presbyterian Church, and the Masonic Temple.

The City Hall building anchors one complete side of a city block near the center of Freeport's Historic District which was certified by the National Park Service. It is located in the heart of downtown that retains several other significant historic buildings. Across the street is the 1880's steeple-capped United Presbyterian Church and the 1928 Masonic Temple, very fine examples of Victorian and Neo-Classical architecture, respectively.

Current Use and Condition:

This building remained the home of the City Hall until November of 2011 when health concerns due to possible mold and structural issues prompted relocation of city hall offices to a temporary location. The building is now standing vacant.

Over the last three years there have been a of number studies – both formal and informal, all concluding that the building is structurally sound though in need of significant repairs and updates to systems such as the roof and the HVAC.

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Narrative Description

EXTERIOR:

The building has seen various remodeling efforts over time; still the basic structure and form remain intact. The exterior of the building also features stone arches on the main floor for window and door openings, and imported and rusticated stone forming the exterior of the first floor.

Construction features include:

The structure is a load-bearing masonry structure with a number of floor framing systems which reflect the changing nature of construction methods and materials of time and place. Those systems range from a modified mill (solid 2 x 8 floors) to concrete pan-joist construction. The main interior framing structure consists of steel beams and columns.

The roof framing is heavy timber with wood decking and asphalt shingles. The dormers are masonry with a portion bearing on the timber truss framing.

The south façade includes the main entry, which is located in a classical portico, up three steps from the sidewalk.

The west side, or long side of the building which faces the historic United Presbyterian Church, has as its entrance a set of three arches that originally led to the police department with storage of police vehicles. A remodeling project closed off those entrances but provided a handicapped accessible entrance to the building and the elevator added in a 1970's remodeling project. Two gable dormers also grace this elevation.

The north side of the building was originally the entrance and storage area for the fire department's equipment. Three magnificent stone arches framing those door openings have been unartfully filled in with wood framing and windows. This area most recently housed the Freeport Township offices until the building was abandoned.

The form and shape of the building remain intact, though most of the interior has been remodeled as needs changed. Most of the interior remodeling consisted of carving up the interior in an exceedingly poor manner though most, if not all, of this work is reversible.

INTERIOR:

The main entry leads into a completely intact lobby with ornamental stair and ornamental iron balustrade, glazed brick, and stair treads, on a mosaic floor. This entrance also includes a secondary entry way that most recently led to the water and sewer department.

There is a side entrance that leads to another stairway in the middle of the building. This stairway leads to a mezzanine level. The mezzanine level most recently had two offices: the Township Assessor's and the Fire Department Administration Offices. Another entrance on the side of the building leads to the back of the building which most recently housed the Township Supervisor Office.

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On the second floor of the building there are offices and the city council chambers. In the front of the building, coming from the main stairway, the Mayor's Office is to the right and front of the building. The city council chambers are situated at the southwest corner of the building. The original door to the council chambers and word work is still intact. There is a domed ceiling with ornamentations in Italian renaissance style. In addition, there are frescoes with three female figures depicting Government, Truth and Justice. These frescoes were designed and executed by Wm. G Andrews, a Clinton, Iowa-based fresco artist. There are also frescoes in various offices throughout the building. However, these features are covered by a dropped ceiling that was installed in the 1970's.

Moving down the hall from the council chambers is the clerk's office, also with the original doors and woodwork intact. Also within the clerk's office is a safe that is still there. Across the hall from the clerk's office is the treasurer's office. Further down the hall are additional offices, including the community development department, and corporation council offices.

The basement of the building is only used for storage and its only purpose if functional in nature.

The building has gone through a number of changes over the years. Originally city hall housed the fire department, which was located at the back of the building on the north side. The most significant change related to the aspect of the building was when the doors that led to the fire station were removed. This change occurred in 1987.

In addition, originally the police department entrance and storage of vehicles was located on the west side of the building. When the police department moved to a new location in 1975. The entrances were closed, creating a new entrance on this side of the building.

Finally, the mezzanine level was also not original to the building, and was added sometime in the mid 1960's to accommodate additional offices space.

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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1899 - 1965

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

N/A

Architect/Builder

Schureman, David S.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The Freeport City Hall is being nominating under National Register Criteria A and C. The Freeport City Hall is associated with local politics and government and has made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. It served as the seat of Freeport's government until 2011. The building is also an excellent local example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. The period of significance is 1899, the date of its construction, until 1965, the fifty year cutoff for National Register significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The 1899 Freeport City Hall was built at the site of the first fire station and former city hall of 1868 – 1898. After the local population rose to 10,000, it was determined that there was a need for a new building. Ultimately, it was decided that a new building would be constructed and that it would house the fire station, police station, city hall administrative offices, and a library. The building was completed in 1899, and served as the location for city government operations until 2011.

Over the years, the original multi-purpose approach evolved and changed as priorities and needs changed with the times. The police department was housed there for 75 years and the fire station was at that location for 87 years. The city jail was also located in the basement of city hall in the early years. In addition, the Freeport Township, the Freeport Assessor's offices, and the Water and Sewer Commission were also located in the City Hall building, as well.

FREEPORT HISTORY

Freeport, a small city of about 25,000 in northwest Illinois, is located about 100 miles west of Chicago, 65 miles east of Dubuque, Iowa and the Mississippi River, and 18 miles south of the Wisconsin border. The nearest metropolitan city is Rockford (about 150,000 people), 40 miles to the east. Freeport is the county seat of Stephenson County.

In the early 19th century, the area, characterized by gently-rolling hills, was dominated by the Sac and Fox Indians. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 prompted the Black Hawk War of 1832, which led to the forced migration of most of the Native Americans west of the Mississippi River.

As a result, increasing numbers of European Americans began moving into the area. By 1835, William "Tutty" Baker and his wife, Phoebe, considered to be the founders of Freeport, were operating a ferry across the Pecatonica River.

According to legend, the city got its name because Phoebe thought her husband to be too generous with customers, accusing him of operating a "free port." The Census of 1840 reported 491 people living in Freeport. While many ethnicities would be represented in Freeport, the predominant group of settlers in its early decades were German, especially German Lutherans. In June 1837 the State of Illinois designated Freeport as the county seat of Stephenson County. It was incorporated as a city on February 14, 1855, and by 1860 had a population of 5,376.

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The most prominent event of 19th-century Freeport was when it hosted one of the seven Lincoln-Douglas debates on August 27, 1858. The event generated much excitement, and an audience estimated at 10,000 to 20,000 came to hear the U.S. Senate candidates. It was at this debate that Abraham Lincoln forced Senator Stephen Douglas to restate his support for "popular sovereignty," the right of the people of a territory to restrict or exclude slavery. This became known as the "Freeport Doctrine." Douglas' statement enabled him to narrowly defeat Lincoln and retain his Senate seat, but contributed to his loss in the presidential election of 1860, as white southerners believed that Douglas betrayed them with "The Freeport Heresy." During the Civil War of 1861-1865, Stephenson County strongly supported the Union cause, contributing over 3,000 soldiers and sailors, of whom several hundred lost their lives in the conflict.

The principal organizer of the Lincoln-Douglas debate in Freeport was Lincoln's friend John H. Addams of nearby Cedarville, a prominent Freeport and Cedarville businessman and philanthropist and long-time state legislator. He was also the father of Jane Addams, born in 1860 in Cedarville, the co-founder, along with Ellen Gates Starr of nearby Durand, of Hull House in Chicago. Jane Addams was also the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1930. When she died in 1935, her body was returned to Freeport by train, followed by an automobile procession to Cedarville, where she was buried. A more notorious Freeport native was Charles J. Guiteau, who assassinated President James A. Garfield in 1881.

His half-sister, Flora Guiteau, was a respected Freeport teacher, friend of Jane Addams, and the first president of the Freeport League of Women Voters in the 1920s.

By 1860 the first railroads had arrived in Freeport and the small city began to thrive as a business and manufacturing center and a farm supply town. Freeport also boasted several breweries and many saloons prior to Prohibition. There was also a pretzel bakery on the site of the present-day Freeport High School, leading to Freeport's designation as the "Pretzel City" and providing the high school with the pretzel mascot, the only such mascot in the United States.

The most prominent of Freeport's public buildings in the late 19th and 20th centuries was the Stephenson County Courthouse and Freeport City Hall. A wooden two story structure served as the courthouse between 1839 and 1870. In 1870, construction began on a four-story stone building with a pillared porch, mansard roof and bell tower. It was completed in 1873, and served as the seat of county government for a century. President Theodore Roosevelt came to Freeport in June 1903 to dedicate the Lincoln-Douglas debate square and spoke from the steps of the courthouse. Despite gaining National Register of Historic Place status in February 1974, the Stephenson County Courthouse was demolished three months later. From 1868 to 1898, a two-story brick structure at Stephenson and Walnut streets served as Freeport City Hall and Fire House. By the late 1890s Freeport's population approached 13,000. In 1898, city officials decided to replace the existing building with a larger three-story structure on the same site. The cornerstone was laid in May 1899. It initially contained all city functions, including the Police and Fire departments. It was also to contain the city's public library, but a separate Carnegie Library was completed in 1902 to serve this function. The expanded City Hall was to serve as the center of city government for 112 years until abandoned in 2011.

Among the most illustrious Freeport businesses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was the Henney Wagon and Carriage Works (later Henney Motor Company), the W.T. Rawleigh Company, and the Arcade Manufacturing Company. The Henney company moved from Cedarville to Freeport in 1879, and with the advent of the automobile, became a manufacturer of specialized motorcars in the early 20th century, especially hearses, ambulances, and limousines, including eight cars built for the White House fleet when Harry S Truman was president. The Henney Buggy Company went out of business in the mid-1950s. The W.T. Rawleigh Company was established in 1890, by the early 20th century becoming the largest manufacturer and distributor of spices, extracts, and salves in the United States, sold exclusively by thousands of door-to-door salesmen. The Rawleigh Company survived until the 1980s. The founder of the company, W.T. Rawleigh, was Freeport's most prominent citizen until his death in 1951. He also briefly served as

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Freeport's mayor from 1909 to 1910. The Arcade Manufacturing Company was a well-known toy manufacturer for decades until it went out of business in 1953.

Although a few African Americans resided in Freeport from its earliest years, large numbers of them did not arrive until the "Great Migration" northward in the early 20th century. Most black Freeporters trace their ancestry to the lower Mississippi valley, especially from the state of Mississippi. By the mid-20th century Freeport's African American population was well over ten percent, and because of racial segregation was concentrated on the city's east side. Despite formidable obstacles, Freeport blacks maintained a vibrant presence in church and civic organizations. The Freeport branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed in 1936.

The first black alderman, Albert Williams, was seated in 1953, and the first black police officer, Albert Lenoir, was sworn in the same year. Another small milestone toward equal rights associated with Freeport City Hall was the appointment of the first woman to be appointed as City Clerk, Irma Datt, in July 1926.

Freeport reached its peak of prosperity as a community in the 1960s with a strong industrial and commercial base and a population of about 27,000. Since then, the city's manufacturing base has shrunk substantially, mirroring a similar trend nationwide. As Freeport's tax base has declined and city services have become increasingly difficult to fund, Freeport has struggled to redefine itself and revitalize its economy.

A major historic and potentially economic asset, often unappreciated locally, is its hundreds of Victorian homes and other private and public buildings. Along with its Lincoln-Douglas debate connection, this historic heritage could serve as a base for future growth and stability.

FREEPORT CITY HALL:

CONNECTIONS WITH LOCAL HISTORY AND POLITICAL SIGNICANCE 1899 - 1965

Freeport City Hall was of course the center of governmental decision-making from its dedication in May 1899 to its abandonment as city hall in November 2011. Most of the formal decisions, in the form of ordinances, resolutions, and personnel changes were made during meetings of the City Council, usually held on Monday evenings in the ornate City Council chamber on the second floor of the building. The City Council chamber, across the hall from the mayor's office, features a domed ceiling dominated by allegorical paintings of Truth, Justice, and Government. While most of the decisions were of a routine nature (approval of budgets, hiring and firing of city personnel, infrastructure and street improvements, repairs and equipment purchases), on occasion actions by the mayor and council marked momentous events for the city, and sometimes were linked to profound events occurring nationally and globally. What follows is a sample of the more significant events for the city from the dedication of Freeport City Hall in 1899 through 1965.

On Wednesday, June 3, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt visited Freeport to dedicate Debate Square, where the second of the seven Lincoln-Douglas Debates was held on August 27, 1858. President Roosevelt arrived by train promptly at 8 a.m. His visit lasted only twenty-seven minutes, but included a stop at Debate Square, a brief address from the steps of the Stephenson County Courthouse, followed by a dash back to the train depot. During his whirlwind visit, the president was escorted by a local delegation headed by Freeport Mayor Christopher J. Dittmar. As the president returned to the train platform, he turned and called, "Mr. Mayor, Mr. Mayor." Mayor Dittmar stepped forward and President Roosevelt shook his hand and said: "Let me thank you and congratulate you upon the excellent reception which you have given me."

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In the fall of 1940, the president's son, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., visited Freeport during the presidency of his distant cousin, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Colonel Roosevelt was taken to Debate Square to see the plaque dedicated by his father 37 years before. He read aloud the inscription, "Dedicated by President Roosevelt, June 3, 1903," smiled and said, "I do think we should know which President Roosevelt!" Soon after the Freeport Woman's Club replaced the plaque with one that read "Dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt, June 3, 1903."

Seven years later, after leaving the presidency, Theodore Roosevelt returned to Freeport on Thursday, September 8, 1910 to speak at a picnic and benefit sponsored by the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen in Taylor Park. Roosevelt, who was welcomed by Mayor W.T. Rawleigh, mounted a table and addressed a large crowd on the need for better citizenship and clean government.

On Wednesday, April 11, 1917, five days after the United States entered the First World War, a patriotic march and rally was held in downtown Freeport. The march, in which thousands participated, began at City Hall, wound through the downtown streets, and ended at the Odd Fellows temple. Each marcher carried an American flag, and included military, patriotic, and fraternal organizations. Every age group from the Boy Scouts to Civil War veterans took part. It was estimated that nearly two thousand people packed the temple to hear patriotic speeches, and many more remained in the street, unable to find room inside.

On June 21, 1926, Irma Datt became the first woman to head a department of Freeport city government when Mayor Oscar E. Mellom nominated her to fill the vacated position of City Clerk. The City Council unanimously confirmed her appointment. Ms. Datt had served for the previous five years as Deputy Clerk. The only controversy occurred when Mayor Mellom announced that Ms. Datt had chosen Vades Mellom, the mayor's daughter, as the new Deputy Clerk. Alderman Loewe objected, but not for reasons of nepotism, but because he believed the Deputy Clerk position should be filled by a man. However, on the roll call for confirmation of Ms. Mellom, she was also unanimously confirmed.

In an attempt to strengthen enforcement of both state and national Prohibition laws, on December 21, 1931 the Freeport City Council passed an ordinance increasing penalties for transportation of liquor within the city limits. However, the national Prohibition law, in force since 1920 under the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act, along with accompanying legislation from the State of Illinois, began to unravel in early 1933. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who took office on March 4, campaigned in 1932 on a platform which called for the repeal of Prohibition. Many favored repeal, partly because the law seemed to be unworkable, and partly because it was thought that the sale of alcohol would help to stimulate the economy, which at that time was in the depths of the Great Depression. Even before Roosevelt took office, Congress proposed the Twenty-First Amendment on February 20, calling for the repeal of Prohibition. By mid-March the Illinois Legislature had repealed Illinois' prohibition law. On March 15, 1933, Freeport City Attorney A.H. Manus announced his opinion that the repeal of the Illinois prohibition act had voided the local liquor control ordinance, and the city, like others in the state, had no control over liquor traffic. He also indicated that it would not be necessary to repeal the ordinance and the City Council did not need to take further action until the Legislature adopted new regulatory measures. The Twenty-First Amendment, ending Prohibition nationwide, was ratified on December 5, 1933.

On July 17, 1934, it was announced that two local Freeport projects were approved under the auspices of the Civil Works Administration (CWA), a New Deal program designed to put unemployed men to work. The projects included one at Krape Park, which involved grading near the new community building, and construction of a steel bridge. The other was at Taylor Park, where silt would be removed from the lagoon and placed on garden plots as it had been found that the silt had great value as a fertilizer, especially in growing vegetables. Twenty men would be employed at Taylor Park and sixteen at Krape Park for a forty-day period. Only eight men were new to the list as the others had been previously employed on city sewer projects.

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On November 12, 1934, Mayor John A. Ascher announced that he would not be a candidate for reelection in the local election scheduled for April 1935. Dr. Ascher, a practicing physician and surgeon, had been elected mayor in 1933. In a letter addressed to the Freeport Journal-Standard and the people of Freeport, he explained his reasons for withdrawing from public life: "From experience I have concluded that no business or professional man, or one of financial responsibility, doing his full duty can afford to take the office. Not doing his full duty he will lose his own self-respect. Therefore my decision is that I will not again be a candidate for mayor."

Local politics complicated plans to obtain a \$291,000 allotment from the Public Works Administration (PWA), another New Deal program, to construct a new sewer project and sewage disposal plant. On Friday, April 5, 1935, the Freeport City Council voted to approve a \$7,500 contract with Freeport and Rockford engineers to do the preliminary work for the project. However, in order to complete the project, a referendum would have to be submitted to the voters to approve or reject the issuance of sewer revenue bonds. Since Freeport voters rejected such a plan by a margin of 272 votes three days earlier, future approval would prove difficult.

The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 brought the United States into the Second World War. Eight days later, on Monday, December 15, 1941, the Freeport City Council unanimously adopted an ordinance "prepared and asked for by the federal government." This created a municipal defense council which would serve to coordinate local efforts with the national defense program for the duration of the war emergency. This council was chaired by Mayor Earl E. Miller, and the other members, not to exceed eleven, would be named by the mayor "in the near future." A vice chairman would also be selected and serve as defense coordinator for the city during the life of the ordinance.

At 1:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 14, 1945, the residents of Freeport were awakened by the "ringing of church bells, the blowing of sirens and whistles and tooting of automobile horns" as a United Press International news flash was received of Japan's surrender. Although the war had ended in Europe three months earlier, the global conflict was finally brought to a close with Japan's defeat following the dropping of two atomic bombs days earlier on mainland Japanese cities.

Fire Chief Albert Luedeke was awakened by "exuberant celebrants" and he gave permission for the use of a fire truck to lead a parade through the city. The noisy activity continued until dawn, when a "shower, which soon turned into a cloudburst, kept many enthusiasts from joining in, and the excitement gradually subsided."

Celebration turned to fear one week later when it was reported that a 19-year-old Freeport woman died of poliomyelitis at a nearby Rockford hospital, and a 35-year-old Freeport man had also been stricken with the disease and was also being treated in Rockford. On Tuesday, August 21, 1945, a statement was issued jointly by Mayor Earl E. Miller and Dr. H.J. Stickle, the city health commissioner in an attempt to reassure the public that no additional cases were reported in Freeport. Also, as a precaution, parents were reminded to keep their children away from public places, and to immediately report suspicious symptoms to their family doctor. Despite this reassurance, at least twelve new cases were confirmed over the following week. On Wednesday, August 29, it was announced that a headquarters for the Stephenson County Chapter for Infantile Paralysis had been established at the Hotel Freeport, and that "Chapter officers and members, assisted by women volunteers, will be on hand daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. to answer all inquiries regarding the Freeport cases of poliomyelitis." At the same time, it was reported that all three Freeport movie theatres voluntarily closed following the recommendation of Mayor Miller. Also, it was announced that several public meetings, dances, parties, and other gatherings had been cancelled.

By Tuesday, September 4, 1945, about 30 cases of polio and four deaths had been reported in the Freeport area. In response to this crisis, "the most drastic health protection order in [Freeport's] history" was issued to fight the polio epidemic. The city Board of Health, in conjunction with the City Council and the Stephenson County Medical Society ordered the closing of all theatres, schools, churches, dance halls, taverns, bowling alleys, refreshment stands, clubs, and all other places where people congregate. The exception was

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restaurants, which were permitted to serve coffee, milk, and tea but no soft drinks. City Attorney J.G. Whiton advised that the Board of Health was within its legal right to order the closing of any and all businesses for the protection of the public health. He said that he doubted the board had the authority to order church closings, but it was "generally understood that the churches and places of worship would cooperate." Mayor Miller ordered Chief of Police Walter L. Marsh to inform all proprietors affected by the order with a warning that any violations would lead to arrests. It was also announced that Freeport schools would delay their opening day from September 10 to September 24. On Tuesday, September 11. The Stephenson County Medical Society announced that restrictions on public meetings or gatherings for people over age 16 would be lifted on Saturday, September 15 providing that there were no new cases of polio before then. No new cases were reported in Freeport during the previous five days, which was credited "to the very comprehensive recommendations made and to the compliance by the public."

The reality of social segregation and discrimination by race in Freeport was subtly revealed by Mayor Miller at the City Council meeting of Monday, October 1, 1945. The mayor advised the council that "requests had been made for a tavern license to be issued to a colored resident of the city for the purpose of providing a tavern within the city for colored patrons." Almost eight years later, on Tuesday, April 7, 1953, the first black alderman in Freeport's history was narrowly elected. By a nine-vote margin out of more than 1,200 ballots cast, Albert Williams was chosen to represent the city's Third Ward. Three months later, a petition signed by 86 "Negro taxpayers," requesting the hiring of a black policeman, was presented to the City Council at its meeting on Monday, July 6, 1953. This generated considerable discussion at the meeting. Police Chief Walter L. Marsh said that it would be to his advantage "to have a Negro officer." Newly-elected Alderman Williams insisted that the council act favorably on the request "to eliminate discrimination and give representation [to] Negro taxpayers," who he said at present feel they are "second class citizens." Alderman George Madden said he believed the council "has no feeling of race prejudice" but that appointments should be done through "the regular procedure." Alderman Williams responded, "Meanwhile we go on with taxation without representation." He added that all he and other black residents wanted was "a fair chance on the examination." Mayor Glen F. Kunkle said that to address the issue, he would call a meeting of "the police and fire committee, the police and fire commission, the mayor and Alderman Williams." Before the end of the year, Albert Lenoir was sworn in as the first black police officer in Freeport's history.

As civil rights became an increasingly urgent issue in the 1950s and early 1960s, the Freeport City Council responded in 1962 by adopting an ordinance creating a Human Relations Commission.

The ordinance stated its purpose was "to promote tolerance and good will between racial and religious groups in the city of Freeport; to work toward the elimination of prejudice and discrimination against any individual or group because of race, color, creed, national origin, or ancestry; to assure fair and equal treatment and opportunity under the law to all citizens." A fair housing ordinance was adopted in 1966 and strengthened in 1970. The ordinance delegated enforcement to the Human Relations Commission as the investigating body with the authority to mediate, conduct hearings, make recommendations, and report to the City Council when legal action should be considered.

The assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963 brought shock and grief to the Freeport community as it did across the nation and world. As the Freeport Journal-Standard reported: "Faces and conversations mirrored the thought 'It couldn't have happened' as people huddled around radios or television sets...Word passed quickly from person to person on downtown streets...Business came to a near standstill until the death was confirmed. Bud Carr, owner of the Beef Eater Inn, said his dining room was full when he went around telling customers the news. 'I never saw people so shocked,' he said. 'Everyone just got up and left.'" The reaction from Mayor Joe Shelly reflected that of most of the community. "It is terrible. I feel shaken, as we all do," he said. "It comes as close to each of us as the death of a member of the family."

Freeport, as most communities nationwide, was greatly affected by the post-World War II "baby boom" along with a severe housing shortage exacerbated by the home construction slump during the Great Depression of the 1930s and the war years of the early 1940s. The result was a rapid growth of the city to the south and west

Freeport City Hall

Name of Property

Stephenson, Illinois

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from the late 1940s through the 1960s. There was increasing pressure from new homeowners living beyond the city limits to be annexed so they could be connected to city water and other services. At a City Council meeting on Monday, December 7, 1953, Alderman Karl V. Janssen, chair of the council's legal affairs committee, reported: "We have received numerous inquiries about annexation from residents outside the city who are interested in city services including garbage collection, police and fire protection, city insurance rates, and the protection of property values." Most of these rural residents soon got their requests for annexation fulfilled.

Indeed, between 1899 and 1965 Freeport doubled in population from about 13,000 residents to about 27,000. In the interim, the city, as did the nation, weathered two world wars, a great depression, substantial social, cultural, and technological changes, and health scares such as the 1945 polio epidemic described above. Throughout this period, city government exercised a dynamic influence on its residents through the adoption of ordinances and resolutions as well as responding to crises and changes. The focal point for these actions was the venerable Freeport City Hall building. This building housed most city departments, including the police and fire departments, the mayor's office, and especially the City Council chamber where, on numerous Monday evenings, the most critical decisions were made.

BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS

Stylistically, the Freeport City Hall leans toward a Richardson-Romanesque style, somewhat unique to this area. Special features of the building are its red stone Romanesque style, unique to Northwest Illinois, its ornamental main staircase with a lovely cast iron balustrade, the very tall ceilings, and its wonderful heavy-timbered truss roof system.

Capping these features is the barrel-vaulted ceiling with a painted frieze depicting the three women, representing Government, Truth, and Justice. This ceiling has been covered by a drop ceiling, but could be renovated and restored to its original beauty.

Freeport City Hall is representative of late 19th century civic architecture. It combines a couple of classical styles that convey stability and strength. The dominant theme is Romanesque with classical elements in the entry portico with its paired Tuscan columns. This style is also found in the dormer and west entry gable pediment.

Romanesque buildings were typically used as grand public buildings such as courthouses, city halls, and churches, as the style was complex and expensive. However, with the style came great appeal and a sense of stability and strength, good features for public buildings.

The building has a heavily rusticated Portage red stone base with semi-circular arched window and door openings, a smooth ashlar Portage red stone "piano nobile" with tall "punched" rectangular windows with transom openings. Interestingly the stone used in the building is also found in a number of buildings in the Upper Peninsula in Michigan. The building is topped with a Frieze which features the names of famous authors, philosophers, and historical figures. The facade is simple to plain in ornateness except for the detail work in the pediments.

This building is unique in the Freeport community from both styling and materials. Most civic structures in Freeport from this era have been demolished. Two buildings that come to mind are the city jail and the Stephenson County Court House were the closest examples – both were 2nd Empire Italianate styles. The Peoria, IL City Hall is very similar in style and in the materials used to the Freeport City Hall.

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Perhaps one of the most defining and most interesting features of the building is the cornice frieze that wraps the three public facades. Carved into the frieze are the names of famous, though sometimes obscure, names in literature and science. The first letters of each of these names spells out name of the architect, D.S. Schureman, who as legend holds, was not allowed to place his name on the structure due to some political squabbles during construction of the building. When the city fathers refused Mr. Schureman the right to place his name on the building's cornerstone, he presented them with the frieze concept. It wasn't until much later that city officials realized they'd been duped and that the architect was indeed immortalized on the structure.

Freeport City Hall

Name of Property

Stephenson, Illinois

County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

1. Freeport Daily Bulletin, Freeport, Illinois. Newspaper articles from 1903 to 1917.
2. Freeport Journal-Standard, Freeport, Illinois. Newspaper articles from 1900 & 1926 to 1963.
3. Fulwinder, Addison L. History of Stephenson County, Illinois: A Record of Its Settlement, Organization, and Three-Quarters of a Century of Progress, vol. II. Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1910.
4. History of Stephenson County, 1970. Freeport, Illinois: County of Stephenson, 1972.
5. Images of America: Freeport. Freeport, Illinois: The Journal-Standard, 2009. Published by Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina.
6. In the Foot-Prints of the Pioneers of Stephenson County, Illinois: A Genealogical Record. Freeport, Illinois: The Pioneer Publishing Co., 1900.
7. Understanding Architecture Volume I, Bussagli, Marco, Giunti Industrie Grafiche S.p.A., Prato, 2004.
8. The Past and Present of the City of Rockford and Winnebago County, Church, Charles A., S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1905
9. <http://www.cityoffreeport.org>

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other
Name of repository: Freeport Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

Freeport City Hall
Name of Property

Stephenson, Illinois
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>42.2975193</u>	<u>-89.6231716</u>	3	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Original town LT 1 BLK 54

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Lot historically associated with building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Deb Elzinga</u>	date	_____
organization	<u>Citizens for Saving Freeport City Hall</u>	telephone	<u>815-238-5871</u>
street & number	<u>1147 W. Lincoln</u>	email	<u>debe@nwhomestart.org</u>
city or town	<u>Freeport</u>	state	<u>IL</u> zip code <u>60132</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

Freeport City Hall

Name of Property

Stephenson, Illinois

County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Freeport City Hall

City or Vicinity: Freeport

County: Stephenson **State:** Illinois

Photographer: Kathleen Wilken and Susie Dvorak

Date Photographed: November 2012 – May 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera: **View is from across the street – on southwest corner, facing northeast.**

- 1 of 14, Exterior, southwest corner, facing northeast
- 2 of 14, Council Chamber, second floor, facing north
- 3 of 14, Basement Hallway, facing north
- 4 of 14, Front Entrance, facing north
- 5 of 14, Cornerstone, facing west
- 6 of 14, Fire Station Entrance, facing south
- 7 of 14, Exterior Commemorative Plaque, facing southeast
- 8 of 14, Exterior Frieze, facing north
- 9 of 14, Grand Staircase Front Entrance, facing northeast
- 10 of 14, Victor Safe, Clerk's Office, second floor, facing east
- 11 of 14, Hallway, second floor, showing office doors and tile, facing south
- 12 of 14, Domed Ceiling, Council Chamber, second floor, showing decorative carved plaster, facing west
- 13 of 14, Attic Interior, showing rafters, facing northwest
- 14 of 14, Mural on Domed Ceiling, Council Chamber, second floor, facing north

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. 460 et seq.).

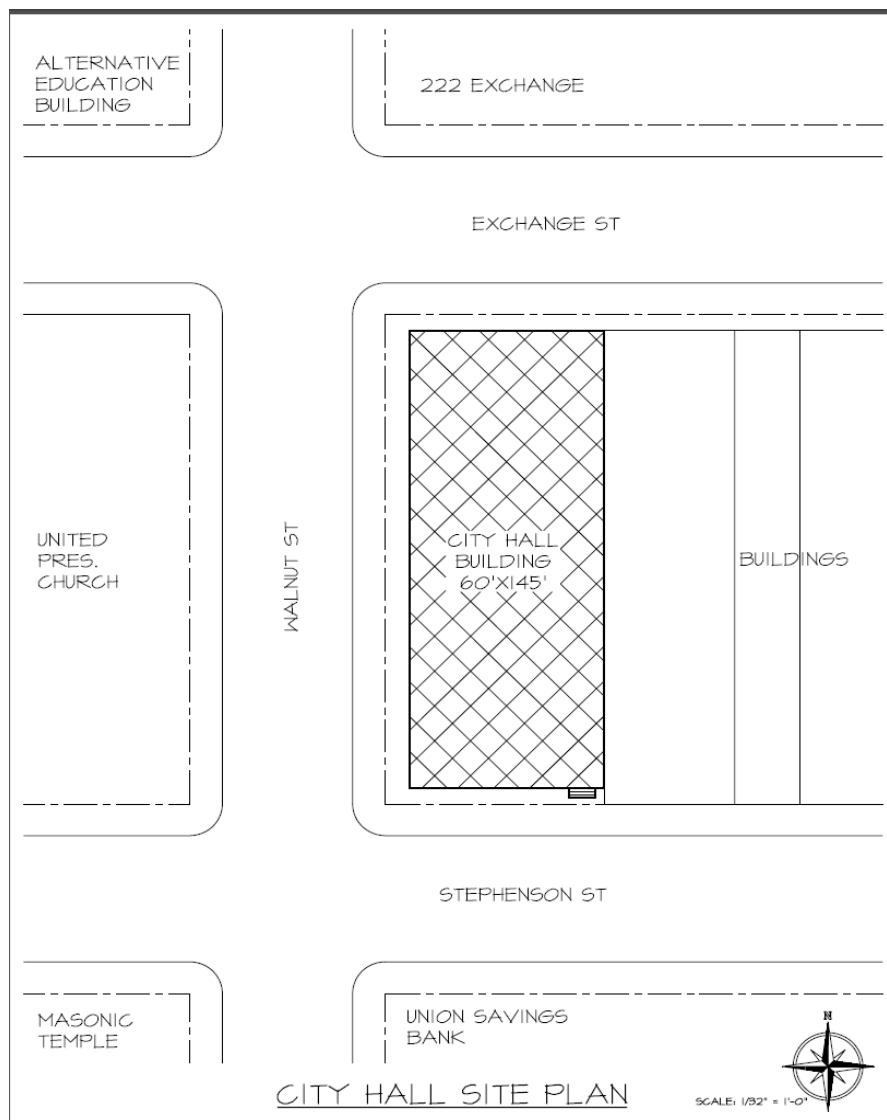
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

Freeport City Hall

Name of Property

Stephenson, Illinois

County and State





CHANCEY HOMER

ONE WAY

224 WEST







CITY HALL

NEWTON

LAI D BY THE
MASONIC FRATERNITY

MAY 30 A. D. 1899

A. L. 5899.

EDWARD COOK.

GRAND MASTER.





CITY
HALL
1898



MILTON

ADDISON

NEWTON



ELEVATOR

CITY OF FREEPORT.



The
— Victor Safe & Lock Co —
CINCINNATI, OHIO



CITY TREASURER
LINDA L. BLISS

CITY COUNCIL ROOM







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Freeport City Hall
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ILLINOIS, Stephenson

DATE RECEIVED: 4/22/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/25/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/09/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/07/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000329

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6-7-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**Illinois Historic
Preservation Agency**

One Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, Illinois 62701 • www.illinois-history.gov • TTY 217.524.7128

RECEIVED 2280

APR 22 2016

**Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service**

April 18, 2016

Ms. Barbara Wyatt
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW Suite NC400
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Wyatt:

Enclosed for your review are three National Register Nomination Forms. They have been recommended by the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council and signed by the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. They are being submitted in a digital format on the enclosed disks, and are the true and correct copies.

Freeport City Hall - Freeport, Stephenson County
Downtown Aledo Historic District - Aledo, Mercer County
Margaret and Bird Van Leer Broadview Mansion - Normal, McLean County

Also being submitted are two additional documentation forms, and one boundary increase.

Colonel Gustavus A. Palmer House (additional doc.)
Garfield Farm and Garfield Tavern (additional doc.) (boundary increase)

Please contact me at the address above, or by telephone at 217-785-4324. You can also email me at andrew.heckenkamp@illinois.gov if you need any additional information or clarification. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew Heckenkamp
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures