

MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF GREENVILLE

BUTLER COUNTY, ALABAMA

Historic name: Greenville City Hall Owner: City of Greenville
Common name: Greenville City Hall P. O. Box 158
Greenville, AL 36037

Address: E. Commerce Street

Acreage: less than one acre UTM: 16/535/690-3521/460

Verbal Boundary: Lot 17, Block 53, 314' x 212'

Architectural Design: Colonial Revival

Date of Construction: 1936

Architect, Builder: Moreland Griffith Smith

Statement of Significance:

Criterion C - Architecture:

The Greenville City Hall (1936) is a very fine example of Colonial Revival civic architecture and is the city's best example of that style. The building was designed by Montgomery architect Mooreland Griffith Smith.

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The ever popular Colonial Revival enjoyed a particular widespread popularity in the 1930s following the restoration/reproduction of Williamsburg, Va. by the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1920s. The style was deemed especially suitable for civic architecture.

Criterion A - Government:

The Greenville City Hall is significant for its association with the Federal Works Progress Administration of the 1930's. The City Hall, designed by Montgomery architect Mooreland Griffith Smith, was constructed in 1936 at a cost to the Federal Government of approximately \$30,000 and was one of several Federal Administered and Funded constructed projects in Greenville during the mid to late 1930's.

Exception to 50 year age Criteria:

The Greenville City Hall is a good example of a civic 1930's WPA project which marked the beginnings of a trend in American history toward an ever-deepening involvement of the Federal government in state and local affairs. The architectural style (Colonial Revival) of the building was one of the most popular design genres identified with WPA architectural projects.

Description:

The Greenville City Hall is a two-story brick, Colonial Revival structure. The building is tripartite in the Palladian tradition with the center block gable roof slightly raised above its flanking two story wings. The main section is further embellished by a slender lantern cupola centered above a full height tetrahedron portico which spans the three bays in the middle of the building. On either side of the portico is a fanlighted arched window located between the first and second floor. Stone quoining on the corners of the main block accentuate the shallow set back of each flanking wing. Centered over each window is an ashlar keystone. There are three double leaf entries beneath the portico with a scroll pediment over the center opening. In recent years (c1970) an arched breezeway was built onto the back of the city hall to connect it to a new city owned fire station.

Historical Summary:

The Greenville City Hall was constructed during 1936 as a Works Progress Administration project at a cost of approximately Thirty thousand dollars. The building is located on the site that was once occupied by the Greenville Grammar School. The school building was constructed during the 1890's and was partially destroyed by fire during the early 1920's. The building was rebuilt in 1925 but was again severely damaged by a 1927 fire and was deemed unsafe for reuse and demolished in 1928. The lot sat vacant until the construction of the new city hall.

As designed by Montgomery architect Moreland Griffith Smith the exterior of the new city hall was to be "brick with stone quoins, keystones, and wood columns and colonial lantern on the roof". The building was built to house all departments of city government, as well as a number of county offices. The first floor was to be occupied by the mayor's office, city clerk's office, court and council chambers, fire department and county health offices. On the second floor were to be the offices of the Resettlement Administration, Child Welfare Department, home demonstration and farm agents, as well as a laboratory. Also provided was space on the first floor for a city auditorium. Construction on the building was begun in 1936 and work was completed in 1937.