

Historic Building Assessment

Town Hall and Courthouse

Newport, New Hampshire



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Building Names – There are three buildings mentioned in this report that include the word 'Courthouse'; the Town Hall and Courthouse, The Old Courthouse and the Courthouse Annex. Additionally there is reference to the Town Hall and Town Offices. The reader may find it useful to review the Site Plan on page 22 to better understand the relationship of these buildings and the orientation of the North Arrow.

Introduction

The official name for this building is the 'Town Hall and Courthouse'. This is the name engraved on the front (west side) of the building and also used on the National register of Historic Places Nomination Form. In reality most of the town hall functions moved out of the building shortly after the building was constructed. Locally the building is known as the 'Newport Opera House' or the 'Courthouse and Opera House'.

The building is owned by the Town of Newport. The building has two uses. Most of the building is used by the Newport Opera House Association. This includes the basement, a first floor lobby, a mezzanine level between the first and second floor used as dressing rooms, the second floor and the third floor (balcony level). When the building was constructed in 1886 and expanded in 1904 the county court used the eastern portion of the first floor. Over the years the court expanded their use of the first floor. More recently the court changed from a county courthouse to a State of New Hampshire Superior Court for Sullivan County. The state now controls any improvement within their portion of the building.

The layout and exterior appearance of the building has changed little since the addition was constructed in 1904. The only exception to this are some revisions to the first floor court space dating to 1986. Overall the building is in fair to good condition. This has been helped by a series of repairs made to the building starting in the mid 1970's and then more recently starting in the mid 1990's.

Recently the town identified several repairs that were needed to the building. The most pressing of these was to replace the roof membrane on the flat (low sloping) areas of the roof. Last year the town had these roofs replaced by The Melanson Company, which did a very good job.

The town hopes to qualify for LCHIP funding for some of the additional repairs and requested a proposal for an Historic Assessment Report. Scully Architects of Keene, NH was selected to prepare the report. Project manager David Drasba prepared the assessment and recommendation. He was assisted by Larry Cote, director of the Newport Historical Society, who shared historical information and photographs from the Newport Historical Society Museum. Additional historic information was supplied by the Newport Opera House Association. Ken Dennis of the Town of Newport Buildings & Ground Department was a great resource for repairs and improvements made to the building starting in 1996.

No program changes are planned for the building and it is not likely any interior walls or doors will be moved. The work that is recommended herein should conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. We have organized these recommendations into Phase 1, Phase 2 and Future Phases. Phase 1 includes some life safety concerns and items that are most critical to the preservation of the building. Phase 2 are items that should be addressed but are not as urgent.

History and Development of the Property

THE NEWPORT TOWN HALL AND COURTHOUSE

The original Town Hall and Courthouse was built on this site in the center of Newport in 1872 and destroyed by fire in 1885. The impressive brick building was considered the focal element in Newport, both visually and functionally.



Photo 1 – Exterior view of original Town Hall and Courthouse looking north east from main Street

The present building was completed in 1886 and featured many upgrades from the former structure. The Architect was Frederick N. Footman of Cambridge, Ma. The builder was H. R. Beckwith of Claremont, N.H. at a cost of \$26,000. The walls are 16" thick on the first floor and 12" thick on the second floor. There was a town jail in the basement, the first floor held the Town Offices and the "Sullivan County Court". One of the jewels of the new building was the Opera House located on the second floor that housed a stage considered the largest north of Boston. The most up to date stage was designed by J.P. McElpatrick and Son of New York with scenery and permanent fixtures created by P. Dodd, Ackekrman and Company of Brooklyn.



Photo 2 – Exterior view of Town Hall and Courthouse built in 1885 looking south east from main Street. As no fly loft can be seen, this photo was taken prior to 1904.



Photo 3 – Exterior view of Town Hall and Courthouse looking north east from main Street. Fly loft can be seen at east end (top right) of building.

The Newport Opera House soon became the center of entertainment in Sullivan County and patrons came from far away to enjoy the large variety of programs presented. The large hall played host to dances, boxing matches, weddings, political rallies, plays, school graduations, International Shoe Company Ladies' Minstrel shows, magic shows, dance recitals, Firemen's Annual Ball, Saturday night movies, Armelia Bloomer's suffragette rally, John Philip Sousa's Band, Winter Carnival activities, annual town meetings and elections. The flexible floor plan with large deacons' benches allowed the floor to be arranged in any format. A wrap around balcony offered additional seating in more comfortable theatre type seats.

Outstanding performances filled the Opera House for years. In 1892 Miss Mary Howe, Soprano appeared in a "Grand Concert" that reports, "a beautiful hall, free from alcoves and scenery to break the sound, and with no poor seats—everyone is a good one."



Photo 4 – Interior view of Opera House prior to 1904 addition, looking east at original stage



Photo 5 – Interior view of Opera House after to 1904 addition, looking east at new stage

In 1897 the town purchased the Revere bell hung from the Newport Universalist-Unitarian Church for \$200. The bell had been housed in the belfry of the Universalist-Unitarian Church from about 1837 until 1896. In 1897 the bell was hoisted to the roof of the Town Hall for use as the town's main fire alarm and was used for the purpose until 1923 when the present horn was purchased. This bell was housed in a cupola at the center of the roof and is not the bell in the bell tower that was connected to the clock. From 1923 until recent years it was used as an auxiliary alarm with the horn and also tolling at the funerals of fireman. For the latter purpose it had an appropriately doleful tone.

The exact age of the bell is unknown. It almost certainly was made after 1802 as it is not listed in "The early Bells of Paul Revere" covering the period 1792 - 1802 and showing the names and locations of the purchasers of Paul Revere's first 46 bells. Nor could it be one of those bells, bought second hand, because they are all marked with Paul Revere's full name as founder. Later ones are marked "Paul Revere and Son", or "Revere and Co." or as this case, "Revere – Boston."

Paul Revere's bell-casting business was carried on by Paul's son, Joseph, after Paul's death in 1818 until 1828 when it passed to the Revere Copper Company which never undertook bell casting. So, this bell must have been made before 1828.

The town offices moved out of the Town Hall and Courthouse and into the County Safe building in 1897.

In 1904 the building was expanded to the east along with extensive electrical equipment. This 3-story addition created a large stage area with a fly loft and was referred to as "the largest stage north of Boston." Eleven dressing rooms were located on the first floor below the stage. Brick work was by F. A. Gilman of Tilton, N.H., The stage completed by December 16, 1904. As part of these renovations the front of the stage was moved further back to the east, approximately in line with the original east exterior wall, and an ornate wood proscenium arch was constructed. The portion of the original balcony in the south east and north east corners were reconfigured. The new configuration had balconies at two levels on both sides of the stage. One level that is 2 feet above the main floor of the Opera House and a second higher level that aligns with the highest level of the balcony tiers. These areas originally could be used as private box seat areas or alternatively be used as extensions of the stage.

No drawings of the of the building from 1885 or 1904 have been located. The existing court room is located in part of the original building as well as part of the 1904 addition, so it must have been reconfigured as part of that project.

In 1906 a touring version of Minnie Foster's UNCLE TOM'S CABIN was presented on the Opera House stage. Friday night Basketball was popular in 1908 and the floor welcomed the "Leans" and the "Fats" as well as the ladies' teams the "Reds" and the "Whites."

In 1913, two 3-globe lampposts were set in front of the Opera House, the model for today's vintage lighting on Main Street.

1930 saw a mock court trial and Newport's very own Charlie Jobes both performed and directed community shows throughout the 30's. Billy B. Van starred in 'Star Time Revue' in 1948 under the direction of Lee Collins. These performances were always sponsored by local merchants who have historically supported the community performances at the Opera House.



Photo 6 – Town Hall and Courthouse
most likely taken in the 1930's

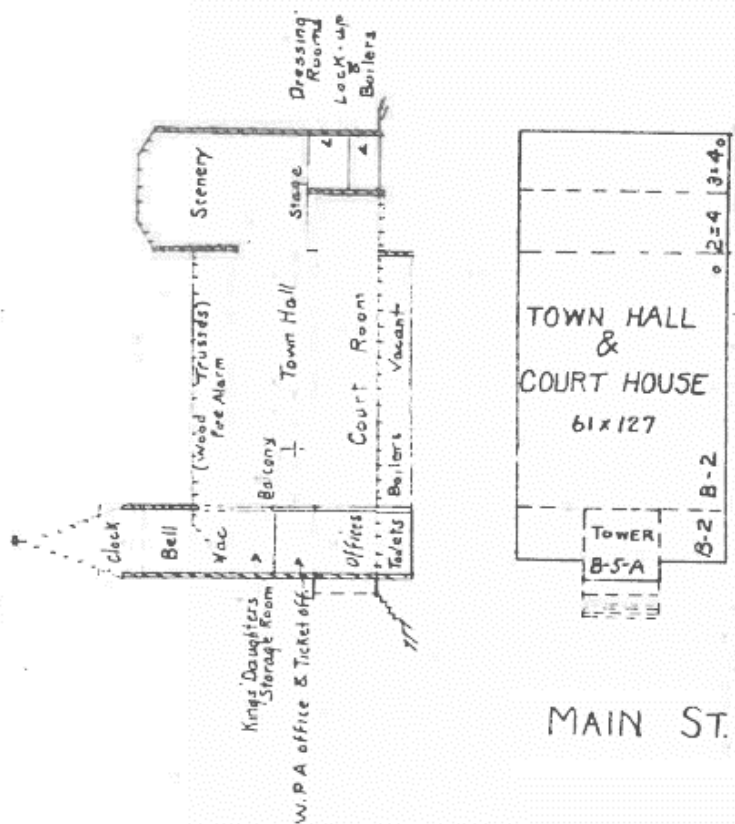


Photo 7 – Drawing from Newport Historical
Society

The 50's and the 60's were not as kind to the historic old building and it soon started to show its age. Suddenly the Opera House was not used as much, and events moved to more comfortable locations throughout the community. In the summer of 1967 while serving as an apprentice at the New London Barn Playhouse, Charles H. Massey a college student from North Carolina was shown the building by fellow company member Charlie Jobes. It was this initial introduction to the "grand old hall" that stuck with Massey for years. As fate would have it, he ended up staying in New Hampshire long after his summers at the Barn Playhouse and accepted a teaching position at the Newport High School.



Photo 8 – Above - Town Hall and Courthouse most likely taken in the 1940's



Photo 9 – Right - Town Hall and courthouse most likely taken in the 1960's

In 1974 Charles Massey spearheaded an effort to restore and maintain the Newport Opera House as a center for the arts in the community. Soon the Newport Opera House Association was formed as a non-profit group dedicated to the restoration needed to bring the “grand old hall” back to its former glory. Mrs. Bernard Towne was the first President of the organization. Following over a year of cleaning, painting, floor refinishing and fund raising the hall was ready for its unveiling. The group first produced an original revue entitled ‘Town Hall Tonight’ with the express purpose of getting people back into the hall and making them aware of their plans and getting the community involved in the ongoing restoration project.

Volunteers were the main work force involved in the months ahead. Over two hundred community members became involved in the project to reclaim what was to become their pride and joy. The lobby was painted, new carpet was installed, and new light fixtures were hung. The hall was painted, and all of the woodwork was cleaned and polished. The dressing rooms were cleaned, painted and new electric work was installed. Stage curtains were ordered and new rigging was placed in the fly loft. Theatrical lighting was designed and installed. A beautiful mirrored and crystal chandelier was found and restored as a gift from the Sturm, Ruger Company. This became the crowning jewel of the newly restored Opera House.

On June 4, 1976 the new hall was unveiled with a production of Meredith Willson’s ‘The Music Man’, under the direction of Charles H. Massey with music direction by Mrs. Werner (Gerri) Rudenfeldt. Once the public found their way back to the Opera House they continued to come and productions continued to flourish. In addition to the Newport Opera House Association productions, the facility became the venue for school concerts and plays, movies, community meetings, voting, dance recitals, lectures, weddings, banquets,

dances and high school graduation. In short, it was well on its way to returning to the “golden days” when it really was the center of the community.

Until 1976, deacons’ benches were used on the main floor, many of these are now stored in the attic.

In the spring of 1977 Charles H. Massey moved to New York City to pursue a career in the entertainment industry, but the Opera House continued in the hands of the strong board and volunteer base that had been a part of the organization from the start. These years were active ones and the activities included many plays, concerts, dances and theatre trips to Boston.

In 1977 the Paul Revere Bell, which once sounded fire alarms was removed from the Town Hall roof cupola was placed in a permanent display in front of the Town Hall and Courthouse building. The wood and plexiglass structure cost \$1,300.

In 1980, the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1986 the county built an annex on the north side of the building to house additional office related to the county courtroom. At the same time the county renovated portions of the first floor as office and support spaces for the court room. The courtroom appears to be mostly original to the 1904 renovations with two exceptions. First the judge’s bench and the configuration of the jury seating was slightly modified. Second a small conference room was created in the southwest corner. Since no drawings of the 1986 renovations have been located, we have made an educated guess as to what walls were likely modified or added at that time, based on the type of interior finishes that were observed.

As part of these renovations an elevator was installed which made the second floor Opera House accessible for the first time. A covered walkway was also added on the east end of the north side of the building. This provided access from the adjacent east parking lot to the Opera House. It is likely that this is when the sprinkler system was installed throughout the building.

These renovations included removing several sets of double hung windows on the north side of the building. This included the five sets of windows on the second floor of the Opera House. The main first floor hallway which ran in an east to west from the main entrance was closed off just east of the central stairway so that the courthouse would have its own entrance on the north side of the building. At the same time a vestibule was created just inside the main entrance on the west side of the building to create an air lock.

The 90s saw many of the same people leading the community arts organization. A wide variety of entertainment filled the hall ranging from standup comics to dance groups and local jazz artists. Wightman’s cabaret style atmosphere became a major draw in the old hall.

In 1995 the Town of Newport started a series of improvements under the direction of Ken Dennis of the town’s Buildings & Ground Department. These improvements were made

with a combination of town employees from the Buildings & Ground Department, local sub-contractors and specialists were needed. Ken Dennis recounted the following improvements and approximate timeline.

1996 – Exterior renovations of the clock tower and east side of the building. This included replacing the Vermont green slate roof on the north, south and west sides of the clock tower and reusing the best of the existing slate on the east side. Repair and repainting of exterior wood finished. Having the clock faces repaired and repainted. The roman numeral clock numbers and minute markers were replicated, and gold leafed. The brickwork was repointed where needed. The weathervane was removed, repaired, painted and reinstalled. Portions of the weathervane, based on historic photographs, were gilded in gold leaf.

The slate roof above the second floor on the east side of the building was replaced. This included replacing copper flashings, gutters and downspouts. The wood railing above the entry portico was rebuilt and the roof above the portico was replaced.



Photo 10 – Clock tower being renovated in 1996. Helicopter removing weathervane



Photo 11 – Weathervane after removal in 1996

1997 – The south exterior side was renovated. This included repairing the existing wood windows, repainting windows and exterior wood work, repointing brickwork as needed. The slate roof above the second floor was replaced. New copper flashings, gutters and downspouts were installed. A new flat seam copper roof and flashings

were installed over the flat roof above the entry portico on the west side of the building.

1998 - The north exterior side of the building along with the west side of the fly loft was renovated. This included repairing the existing wood windows, repainting windows and exterior wood work, repointing brickwork as needed. The slate roof above the second floor was replaced.

1998 –The half round window sash located directly above the second floor double hung windows contain stain glass panels. These sashes had deteriorated as well as the stain glass panel. In 1998 these sashes were removed, and temporary plywood panels were installed in their place. Starting in 1998, new sashes were made of mahogany to match the existing in size and profile. Also new curved mahogany sash stops were made using the existing stops as templates. Also starting in 1998 and continuing for approximately the next 12 years the stain glass panels were restored one at a time by a local artisan.

16 of these sashes have been restored and are ready to be reinstalled (see photos on next page).



Photo 12 – West side of Town Hall and Courthouse, date believed to be late 1970's or early 1980's



Photo 13 – Enlargement of Photo 12 showing half-round sash and satin glass prior to removal.

Photo 14 – Restored sash & stain glass currently being store on second floor. Also shown are half-round mahogany sash stops.



99 – The east exterior side was renovated. This included painting exterior wood work, repointing brickwork as needed. The slate roof above the fly loft was replaced. New copper flashings, gutters and downspouts were installed. A new foundation drain was installed along the east side of the building. This was installed about 4 feet below grade and extends to the south to daylight through a retaining wall constructed of pressure treated timbers. A concrete slab was installed at grade below the fire escape from the Opera House.

2000 – The first floor main entrance and lobby on the east side of the building was renovated. This included repairing the plaster walls and ceiling, interior repainting, and installing vinyl stair treads. Based on conversation with Ken Dennis plaster restoration was generally done in accordance with NPS Preservation Brief 21 'Repairing Historic Flat Plaster Walls and Ceilings'

The existing natural woodwork was cleaned, and coats of tongs oil were applied

Photo 15 – First floor main entrance looking south at stairway to second floor.

Photo take November 2018



2001 – The second floor stair and lobby on the east side of the building was renovated. This included repairing the plaster walls and ceiling, interior repainting, and installing vinyl stair treads. The existing natural woodwork was cleaned, and coats of tongs oil were applied. A new concession counters were installed in the south west corner of the Opera House

2002 - The third floor stair and lobby on the east side of the building was renovated. This included repairing the plaster walls and ceiling, interior repainting, and installing

vinyl stair treads. The existing natural woodwork was cleaned, and coats of tongs oil were applied.

2003 – The plaster wall on the main level of the Opera House where repaired and painted. The wood wainscoting was cleaned, and coats of tongs oil were applied.

The original wood shutters at the second floor double hung windows, which had been stored in the attic, where cleaned and reinstalled. This included the windows within the Opera House and the windows in the second and third floor lobbies. There are four shutters for each double hung window that slide vertically in four separate tracks. The shutters are held in place with metal spring clips secured to the vertical edges (see photos on next page).



Photo 16— Window shutters at
south wall of Opera House
Photo take November 2018



Photo 17— Wood track for
vertically sliding window
shutters. November 2018

2004 – The plaster ceiling of the Opera House was renovated. Scaffolding was staged throughout the Opera House. The existing plaster was in poor condition and was removed. The existing wood lath was left in place and covered with a layer of expanded metal lath. A new three coat plaster ceiling was installed and painted.

Renovated both levels of the small balconies in the north east and south east corners of the Opera House. This included repairing plaster and painting walls and ceilings. Repairs were made to stairways in these areas.

The chandler at the center of the opera house ceiling was cleaned and some of the missing crystals were replaced.

Photo 18—Opera house chandler.



2005 – Starting in 2005 and continuing for the next six years the electrical systems in the building were up graded. This started in the basement by replacing old knob and tube type wiring and other wiring and electrical devices that were deemed unsafe or outdated. The fire alarm and smoke detector systems where upgraded at the same time.

Some modifications were completed on the court house portions of the first floor. This was primarily to segregate wiring associated to the court house from the rest of the building.

To the best of Ken Dennis's memory, only a few spaces with the building were not rewired, these include the space under the Opera House stage and the workroom in the south west corner of the second floor.

2006 – The plaster ceiling below the opera house balcony was renovated. The existing plaster was in poor condition and was removed. The existing wood lath was left in place and covered with a layer of expanded metal lath. A new three coat plaster ceiling was installed and painted.

2014 – The existing wall sconces at both the main level and balcony were restored. The wiring and light sockets were replaced, the fixtures were repaired, and the brass was polished.

Ken was an invaluable resource for the history of what improvements have been made in the building for the past 23 years. Ken also pointed out the timing of any repairs or future renovations is affected by the schedule for performances and practices for the opera house and also the operations of the court house located on the first floor. Typically, this has limited this type of work to the three summer months of June, July and August to be compatible with the opera house and then further limited by the operations of the court house.

Most of the information on the history of the property and historic photographs were supplied by Larry Cote, Museum Director of the Newport Historical Society. Additional information was supplied by the Newport Opera House Association.

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY OF NEWPORT, N.H.

A chronology history of Newport from 1724 to 2007 was compiled by Evan Hill. This is currently available on the Town of Newport web site.

The following are excerpts from this 200 page text, that are related to the Newport Town Hall and Courthouse.

The sources vary. They include Wheeler's History of Newport, Parmalee's history of Newport in the 1886 History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties, Pillsbury's New Hampshire, A History, Edes' Tales from the History of Newport, Newport's Bicentennial Booklet, the original Proprietors' Records on microfilm at the town clerk's office, the Granite State Monthly, the 1870 Newport Business Directory, the Scrapbooks of the Newport Historical Society, which are coded in the entries as NHS, the Argus-Champion and its predecessors (where they exist) -- The Argus, The New Hampshire Argus, The New Hampshire Argus and Spectator, The New Hampshire Spectator, The Argus and Spectator, and The Republican Champion. Many entries have come from the fine work that Ella Reney did for years in her weekly Argus-Champion column As We Were, and later by Roger Small. A good reference for understanding what the early settlers faced and how is A Long Deep Furrow -- Three Centuries of Farming in New England by Howard S. Russell, 1982, University Press of New England. When Andler is listed as a source, this refers to an article by Kenneth Andler titled "Newport, N.H. 1761-1961" and published in the Bicentennial Booklet.

1872 -- Town Hall and Court House was built by town vote on Main Street at a cost of \$40,000. It burned in June of 1885 and was rebuilt immediately on the same site. Wheeler 70; Bicentennial 6 and 7.

The court house and town hall building was erected in the fall of 1872, and the spring and summer of 1873, at an expense of over \$40,000, and is one of the finest edifices of the kind in the State.

1885 -- "Great fire in Newport...Sunday morning at 2 a.m., the Nettleton Block was found to be on fire, and the flames did not cease to rage until the corner of the buildings enclosed by Main and Sunapee Streets, including the Nettleton Block and ell owned by F.W. Lewis and Mrs. Bella Nettleton, M.S. Jackson's livery stable and office, the dwelling known as the 'Bank Building' and barns connected therewith, owned by F.W. Lewis, and the county building [town hall] containing court room, Odd Fellows, GAR Halls, etc., were completely destroyed. -- Argus June 26, 1885. Hist. Soc. Scrapbook Vol. I p. 79.

The next week, "the bell was taken from the ruins of the town hall Monday and the safes there have been covered to protect them from the rain." -- Argus 3 July 1885; Hist. Soc. Scrapbook Vol I. p. 84. see also As We Were, p. 91, Hist. Soc. Scrapbook, Vol. I; Bicentennial 6 and 7. As a result of the fire, the Argus & Spectator moved to the first floor of Wheeler's Block. -- Hist. Soc. Scrap. Vol. I, p. 87.

1885 -- The Registry of Deeds was first housed in the Old Grange Hall in Newport (now known as the Harry V. Spanos District Court Building) and later moved to the Town Hall. In 1885 a town hall fire damaged some of the earlier Registry records and Volume 1 was

destroyed. -- Sullivan County Historical Sheets by Donald Fontaine, Sr. a county 45 commissioner 19 Feb. 1892.

1892 -- Newport Electric Light Co. is incorporated, and on the evening of Saturday, May 28, 1892, a "trial was made of the arc electric light plant by which our streets are to be illuminated." -- 15 arc lights. -- Bicentennial Booklet, p. 59.

1892 -- The Opera House is to be thoroughly lighted by electricity during the week of the musical festival -- Repub.-Champ. 21 July 1892.

1897 -- The Newport High School Senior class will give an entertainment in the Opera House March 10 to defray the expenses of graduation. The main feature of the evening will be a talk upon "Books and Reading" by Prof. Gardner. Whatever the subject may indicate, it is guaranteed that this talk will be the reverse of dry. The class consists of only five members and relies upon the people of Newport for support. -- Argus and Spec. - 22 Feb. 1897.

1900 -- Some homes get electricity. First time since Newport Electric Light Co. put in lighting has the public been inconvenienced. Opera House Tuesday evening was plunged into darkness. Power failed because the engine at Richards Mill broke down. -- Rep. Champ. p. 4, 18 Jan. 1900.

1904 -- "In 1904 a three-story stage was added [to the Town Hall], along with extensive electrical equipment and was referred to as 'the largest stage north of Boston.' Directly beneath the stage were 11 dressing rooms." -- Newport Town Times, p. 2, Vol. 11, Fall, 1997.

1904 -- The first appearance of an automobile in town was on Friday, when two suddenly appeared on Main Street -- one in charge of E.B. Bisbee and the other in charge of B.H. Wells of Barre, Vt. The parties were on their way from Boston to Barre.

1910 -- New dark brown three-section seats are bought to replace the deacons' benches in the Town Hall (Opera House). -- Pamphlet by the Newport Opera House Association at 1998 annual fund drive.

1912 -- The President of the United States comes to Newport. President William Howard Taft in front of the Newport House on Oct. 10, 1912 (photo) -- Argus 6 July 1972.

1913 -- "...two 3-globe lampposts were set in front of the Opera House [the Town Hall], the model for today's vintage lighting on Main Street." -- Newport Town Times, p. 2, Vol. 11, Fall, 1997.

1917 --WORLD WAR I U.S. enters war on April 6; war ends Nov. 11, 1918. 230 Newporters serve in World War I. Nine die in service. -- Andrew L. Andrews, American Legion.

1917 -- National Guard returns from Mexican Border (Pancho Villa troubles.) The arrival of Co. M in Newport was announced by the ringing of all the bells in town and the blowing of whistles on all of the mills as soon as the train left Sunapee depot. The men arrived in two special cars attached to the five o'clock train Monday afternoon. The whole town was out to see them and the square at the station was filled with friends of the men that Newport is proud to have sent to the border just eight months ago to the day. Front page photos of Capt. (Sam) Edes, Lieut. Taylor, and Lt. Bowen. -- Argus and N.H. Spec. - 23 Feb. 1917.

1917 -- Grantham - The Newport stage went on wheels Monday for the first time this season and the Lebanon stage on Tuesday. (On skis or sled runners for the winter?) /// Lyman H. Howe's moving pictures drew a good attendance in the opera house Friday evening, and was, as always, very instructive and interesting. -- Repub. Champ. - 29 Mar. 1917.

1918 -- The town hall has been closed for the remainder of the winter to conserve coal. -- Repub. Champ. 10 Jan. 1918.

1918 -- The town hall bell was rung Monday afternoon to announce the surrender of Austria. Germany comes next. The (influenza) ban on public gatherings, with the exception of dancing, was lifted Saturday at midnight, and everything has resumed its normal condition. -- Repub-Champ. - 7 Nov. 1918.

1918 WORLD WAR I ENDS ON NOVEMBER 11

1918 -- There will be a grand concert and ball in the opera house Monday evening, Dec. 9, for the benefit of the Newport Cadet Band in appreciation of the services at various sendoffs of the boys drafted in the service. /// Richards mill is on a three-days-a-week schedule until further notice. -- Rep. Champ. 5 Dec. 1918.

1922 -- Headline: Newport voters give Loren D. Towle unanimous endorsement. The annual meeting of the Newport School District ... held Saturday afternoon proved a record breaker in every respect. Probably there never were so many people in the townhall at any one time. About 900 seats were provided and 200 or 300 people were standing in the rear of the hall and in the balconies. Likewise, it was the angriest, most determined crowd which ever met there, and the anger and determination were directed at the members of the school board who had, in their opinion, not only offended the town's friend and benefactor (Loren D. Towle) but placed it in a bad light in the eyes of the rest of New England. -- Argus and Spec. 11 Mar. 1922. [This excerpt from the Argus' 100 Years Ago, does not explain what Towle had offered, what the school board had done, and what the Saturday school district meeting did. Same with excerpt of 4 Mar. 1922 above.]

1928 -- The American Legion minstrel show on Thursday and Friday proved a riot from start to finish. The Opera House was practically filled the first night, and the second performance played to a standing room only house. This made a total attendance of more than 1,500, more than have ever patronized any one show in the theatrical history of the town. -- Argus 1 March 1928.

1941-1945 -- WORLD WAR II begins Dec. 7, 1941 when Japanese aircraft attack Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Germany surrenders May 7, 1945; Japan on August 14, 1945 701 Newport residents serve in World War II. 26 die in service. -- Source: - Andrew L. Andrews, American Legion.

1947 -- John Fairbanks, chairman of the Newport Town Manager committee, announced today that plans have been completed for Newport's first public forum to be held on the Town Manager form of government Oct. 24, in the Town Hall. -- Argus -- 6 Oct. 1947.

1948 -- The Sullivan County Convention (composed of the towns' representatives to the General Court) authorized the County Commissioners to borrow \$85,000 to build a new County Records Building. -- Sullivan County Historical Information Sheets by Donald Fontaine, Sr., a county commissioner. /// Workmen yesterday began demolition of the foundation of the town's honor roll to make room for the new records building. --Argus 8 July 1948.

1967 -- A face-lifting plan for Newport's Main St., will be proposed in March, John Cummings, chairman of the Newport Chamber of Commerce mercantile committee, announced at the annual banquet Monday night. -- Argus 12 Jan. 1967.

1967 -- Rehearsals are now in full swing for the 1967 American Legion Minstrel Show to be presented in the Opera House in April. (Clearly Newport was not yet sensitive to the protests of American blacks about minstrel shows.) -- Argus 20 April 1967.

1967 -- Colonial restoration (of Main Street) has been recommended by a Dartmouth College survey team of three architectural course students. -- Argus 27 April 1967.

1974 -- (Photo) -- Newport selectmen look over their new offices as work begins on the remodeling of the old Primary School building on Sunapee St. The finished building will house the town offices, currently located in the old Citizens National Bank building and the Supervisory Union #43 school offices, now at 11 Main Street. -- Argus 3 July 1974.

1974 -- Newport Opera House Association is formed. -- Newport Town Times, p. 2, Vol. 11, Fall 1997. // Argus p.C9 (Sunshine Town) 24 May 2006.

1975 -- [photo] On its way from the roof of Newport Town Hall to the belfry of the renovated Newport District Courthouse, the Revere Bell that originally called worshipers to the Universalist Church and later firemen to Newport duty, is lifted by a giant crane. It will be housed in the Newport Fire Station for the winter and is expected to be installed in the spring. [Is this the bell sitting in a little house in front of the town hall?] -- Argus -12 Nov. 1975.

1977 -- Bruce Cronin plans first world premiere of his new movie, "Henry Phipps Goes Skiing" starring Babe Sargent at Sawyer Center in New London. The second premiere is planned at the Newport Opera House for the NOHA's benefit.

1977 -- Newport's Paul Revere Bell, which once sounded fire alarms, was placed in a permanent display in front of the Town Hall Oct. 21. The \$1,300 wood and Plexiglas structure was built by United Construction Corp. [Photo] -- Argus 2 Nov. 1977.

1980 -- The Town Hall and Opera House is place on the National Historic Register. -- Pamphlet by the Newport Opera House Association for its 1998 Annual Fund Drive

1982 -- Town Manager Wm. K. Dugan will investigate cost and legal restrictions of having seven of the eight chimneys removed from the Town Hall. The building uses only one of the chimneys. (The town hall used wood (coal?) for heating when built in 1886.) --Argus - 27 Jan. 1982 (*The chimneys were not removed*)

1984 -- Newport receives \$46,779 in federal funds to restore Sullivan County Courthouse. It must be matched by the town, which voted the funds at Town Meeting. --Argus 8/15/84 (story contains good background of the building.)

1985 -- The DeWolf Block, built in 1893, becomes the Sullivan County office building, housing the Registers of Deeds and Probate, and the County Commissioners. -- Hist. Soc. Scrapbook I, p. 41.

1986 In May the Registry of Deeds, along with the other county offices, is moved to the old Hirsch/Hubert's Department Store building (the DeWolf Block).

1986 -- Controversy over stained glass windows in Opera House being permanently covered during renovations. Article states Sullivan County owns ground floor of Town Hall and town owns second floor. -- Hist. Soc. Scrapbook II, p., 109.

1996 -- Town meeting votes to appropriate \$595,000 to buy the Priscilla Sweet Shop building at 59 Main St. and to renovate the building as a police station. // Town meeting also votes \$115,000 "to rehabilitate the Main St. facade of the Opera House." (The town hall.) -- May 14 Town Meeting.

1996 -- In August hundreds watch as the beautiful weathervane atop the town hall is removed by helicopter and landed on the common for repair and refurbishing. Two futile attempts to remove it from the town hall steeple were made. Then workers discovered that its base -- a one-inch iron rod -- was threaded eight inches into the roof. Unscrewing it was no problem. It was returned to the steeple by the end of the month, with its vane and directional letters covered with gold leaf.

1996 -- The slate roof and the front and clock tower of the Town Hall (built in 1886) are refurbished. The weather vane is removed by helicopter and restored. Next year's plans include work on the south side, repairing slate, masonry and painting. This is part of a several-years plan to revitalize Main St. -- p. 11 of 1996 Annual Town Report.

1997 -- This year "there will be a major effort put forth to install curbing, planters, enhanced crosswalks, trees and shrubbery, along with new lighting down the center of Main St. All of the old overhead wires which cross the street from the corner of Chubba's [a restaurant in

the Lewis Block at SE corner of Main and Sunapee streets] to the corner of Lake Sunapee Bank [Richards Block across the street] will be removed and lighting will be proposed for the center section of the street and the Little Common replicating the style of lights which were present on the Common at the turn of the century." -- Town Manager's Report on p. 11 of 1996 Annual Town Report. By the middle of June, at the cost of the land owners (the Lake Sunapee Bank, and James Lantz) the sidewalk on the west side of Main St. in front of the Gamash, Emerson and Kendall Blocks, and the building immediately south (the former Ben Franklin Store and occupied in 1997 by the Sierra Photo shop -- all owned by the bank), and in front of the old jail and in front of the Citizens' Bank Building (both owned by Lantz) was replaced with brick. Lantz landscaped the ugly square between his Bank Building and the Sierra Photo with grass and shrubbery.

Statement of Significance

The following is taken from the Section 8 'Significance' of the national register of Historic places Inventory Nomination Form filed in 1980.

The Town Hall and Courthouse is a focal element in Newport, both visually' and functionally. The structure is a prominent one in the downtown and as the seat of county government has long been a magnet attracting people and commerce to Newport. Locally, it has been the site of a wide range of community activities such as plays, dances, graduations, public hearings, and town meetings.

The structure is also significant as a characteristic example of institutional buildings in New Hampshire constructed during the last quarter of the 19th century. It is of a grander scale than its neighbors, of masonry construction, and illustrating a reserved interpretation of popular architectural styling of the day. The building's eclectic design includes elements from late 19th century architectural idioms, with particular emphasis on Queen Anne/Brick panel. This is manifested in the use of banded rustication, corbelling, decorative lintel and sill courses and terracotta.

Architectural Description

The following is taken from the Section 7 'Description' of the national register of Historic places Inventory Nomination Form filed in 1980.

The Newport Town Hall and Courthouse is a 2 1/2 story brick building with a central projecting clock and bell tower with pyramidal hip roof. The center entry is protected by a portico supported by square brick columns and crowned by a deck balustrade.

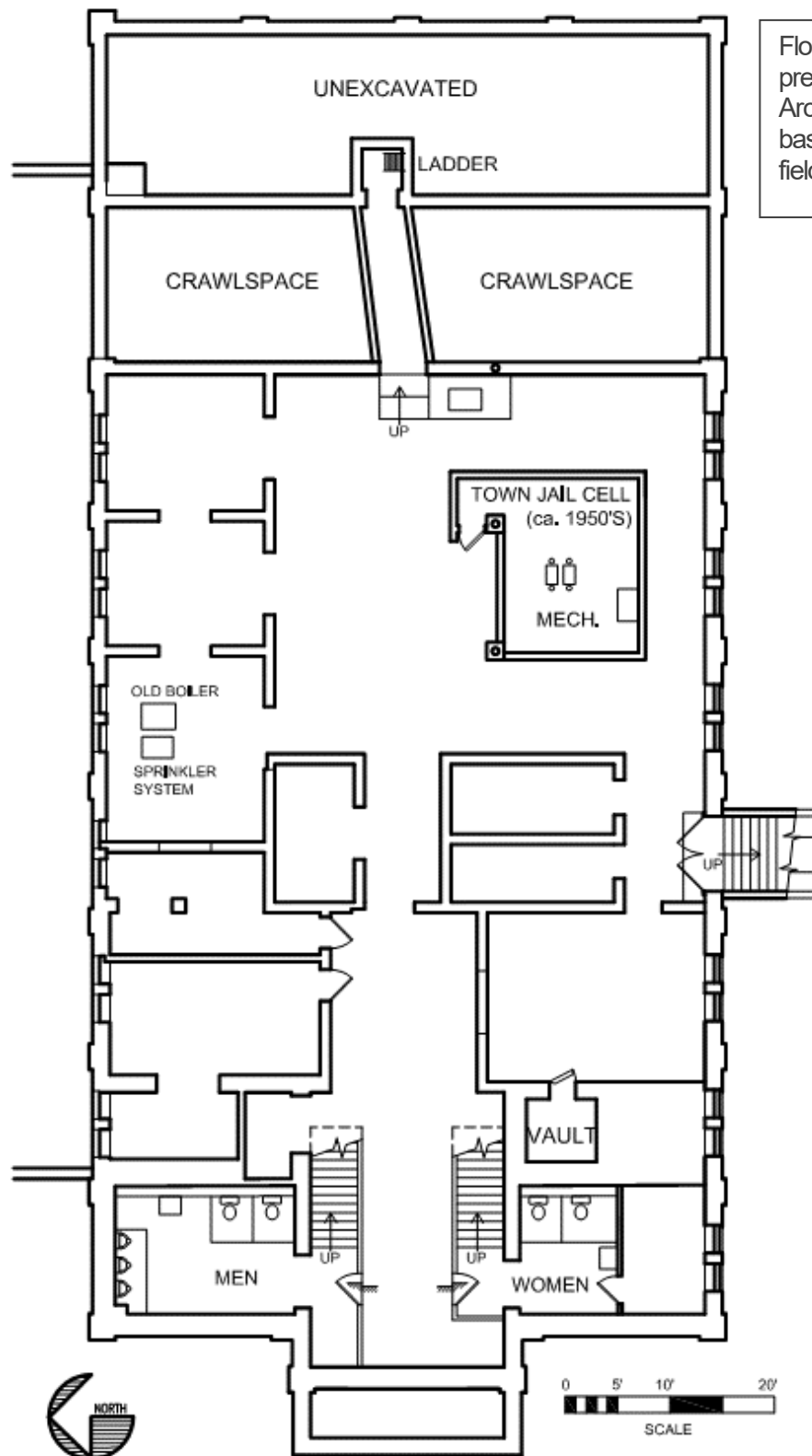
First story windows are paired four over four double hung sashes with transom light and segmentally arched lintel above. Second story windows are paired six over six sashes crowned with a round arched transom light and lintel.

The building's wall planes are embellished by decorative brick work. Pilasters at corners and in between bays are rusticated on the lower half of the building. Lintel courses are articulated by the use of lunged soldiers and corbel tables decorate the cornices of main block and tower.

Existing Site Plan

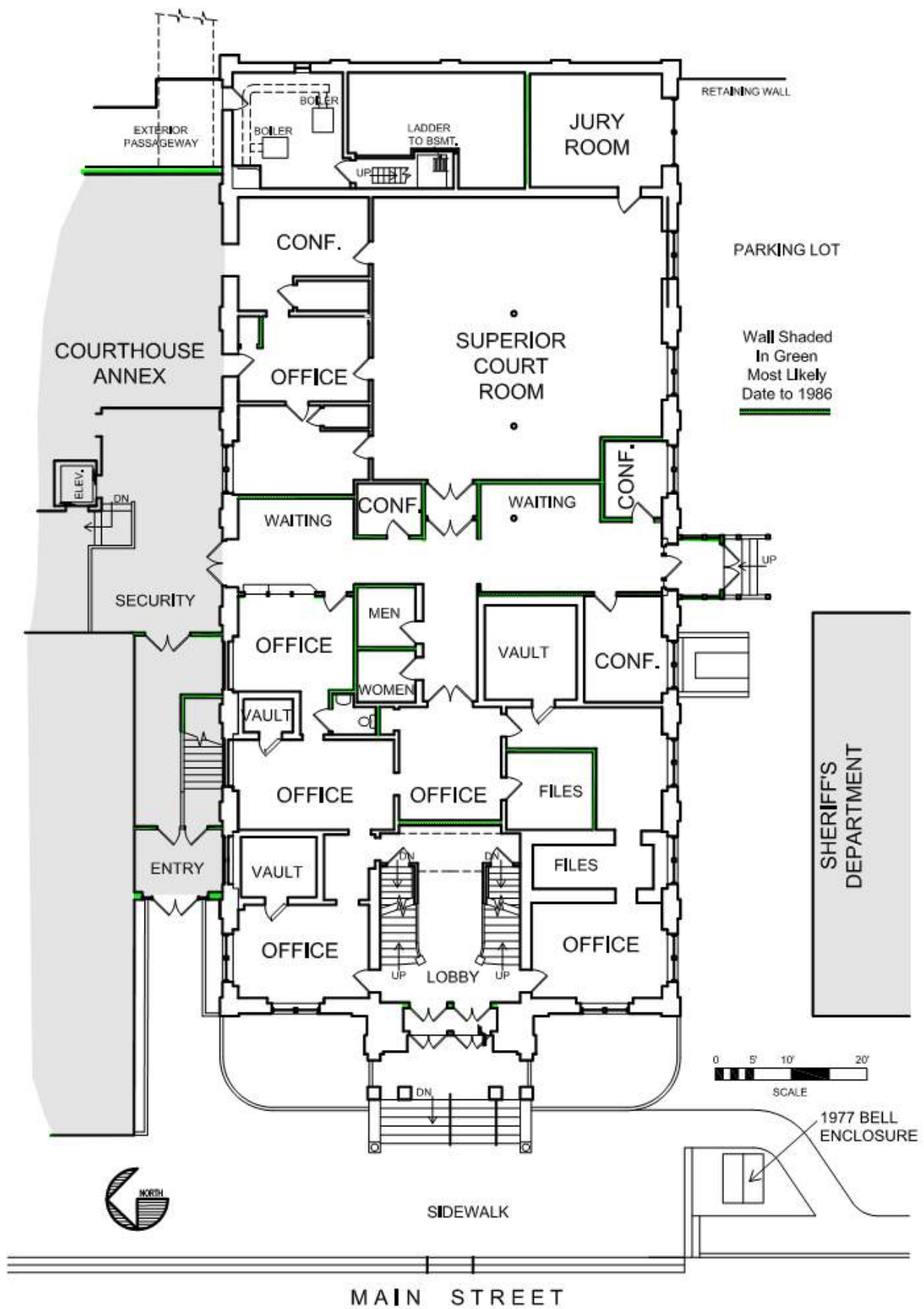


Existing Floor Plans

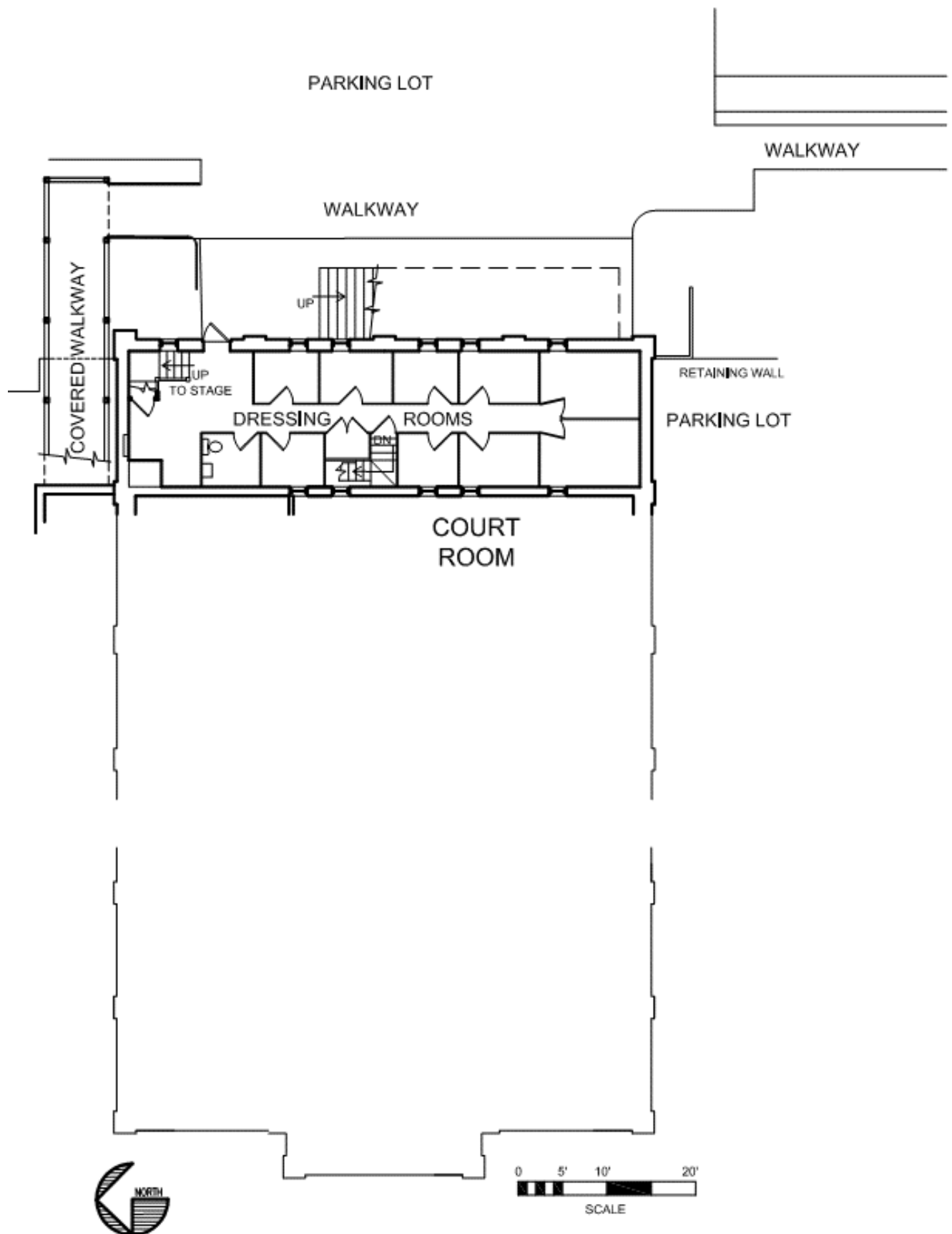


Floor plans were prepared by Scully Architects in 2018 based on limited field survey.

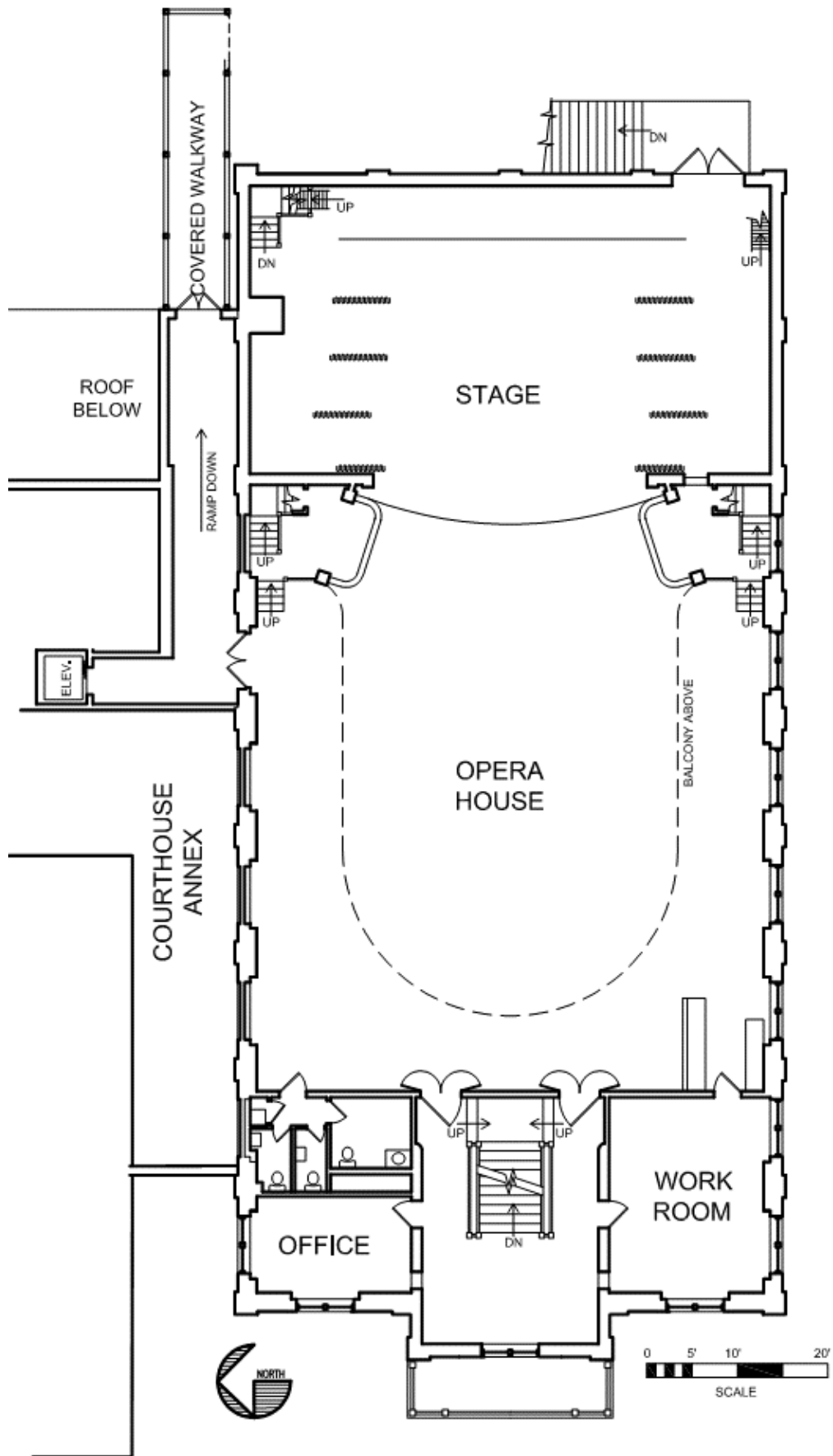
EXISTING BASEMENT PLAN



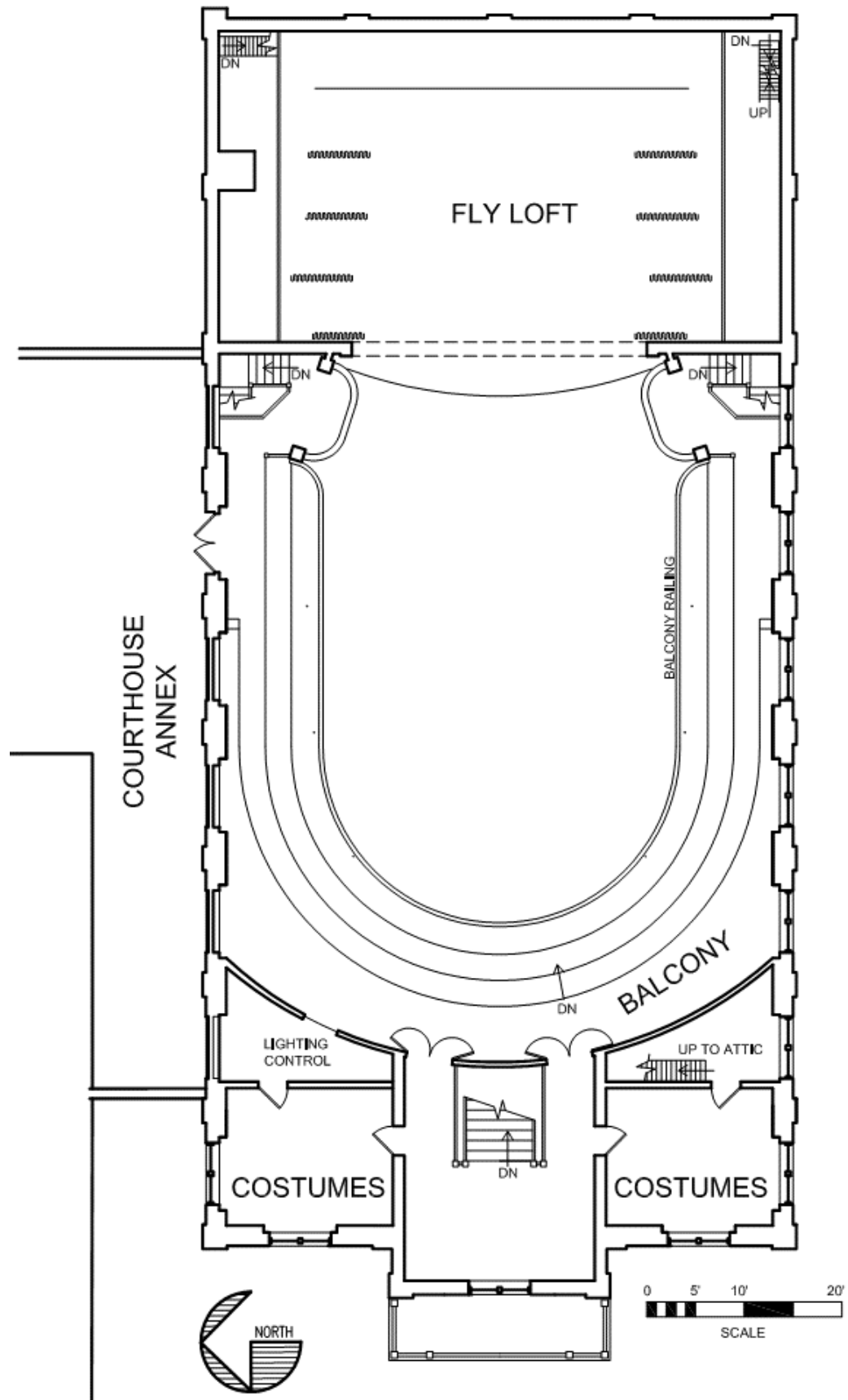
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



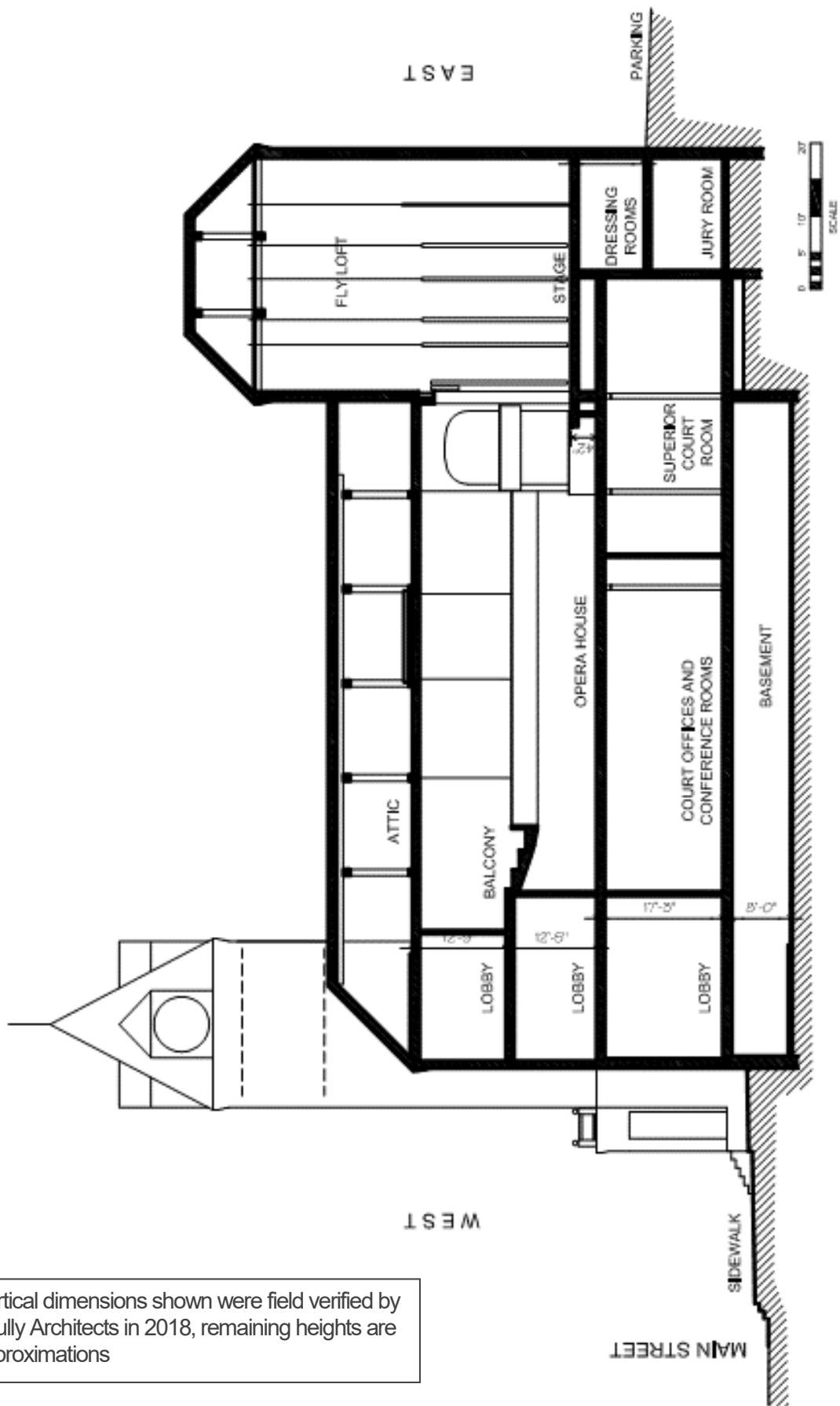
EXISTING MEZZANINE PLAN



EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN



EXISTING THIRD FLOOR (BALCONY) PLAN



Assessment of Conditions

TERMINOLOGY

As used in assessing the condition of the building and site the following meanings shall apply.

Poor; needing major repairs or replacement to achieve structural and aesthetic integrity.

Fair; needing only minor repairs and or repainting to achieve structural and aesthetic integrity.

Good; requiring hardly or not any improvement to achieve structural and aesthetic integrity. Slight flaws are observable but not greatly impeding function or appreciation of material.

Excellence; Not having any flaw in appearance or structure, as in pristine preservation or recently restored or replaced.

SITE CONDITIONS

WEST SITE AREA

The west side of the building faces Main Street. The sidewalk along Main Street is made of interlocking concrete pavers. Main Street and the sidewalk slope downwards towards the south. The reddish colored pavers are generally in good condition. There are some slight undulations in the surface of the pavers at the base of the stairs that held up to the Town Hall & Courthouse and more significantly at the ramped area adjacent to the Revere Bell enclosure.



Photo 19— West side of building along main Street, looking south



Photo 20— West side of building looking east at entrance to 1986 courthouse

The west edge of the sidewalk is bordered by three concrete steps that lead down to the street level. These steps wrap around at the south end of the side (adjacent to the bell enclosure) as the sidewalk continues to the south. At the north side of the building the sidewalk extends to the east to the new (1986) entrance to the court house. There are two small lawn areas on either side of the main entrance to the building. These are border with granite curbs adjacent to the sidewalks. These areas all seem to be in good condition.



Photo 21—Looking east at main entrance to Town Hall & Courthouse



Photo 22—West side of building looking north. Revere bell enclosure in foreground

Within the lawn area there are two recessed lighting fixtures on both sides of the main entrance. These were installed in the 1980's and were intended to up light the west side of the building. Their use was discontinued several years after they were installed.

There are 6 granite steps that lead up to the main entrance to the building. There are three steel handrails located at these stairs. These steps are bordered by sloped granite curbs at the north and side sides. At the base of these sloped curbs are two cast iron light posts each with three white glass globes which date to 1913. The granite stairs and curbs, lamp posts and handrails are in good condition.

At the top of these stairs is a landing made of ceramic tile. These tiles were replaced during the 1996 renovations to the west façade and are in excellent condition.

SOUTH SITE AREA

The south side of the building is typically paved up to the building with asphalt paving. The paving is generally in fair to poor condition and slopes away from the building.

There is a propane tank buried in the parking lot adjacent to the south east corner of the building. This supplies the propane boilers used by the county for the first floor courthouse.

At the east end of this parking lot there is a dry laid field stone retaining wall approximately 6 feet high that appears to be in good condition. Above this and adjacent to the south east

corner of the building is a 4 feet high wood timber retaining wall. The wood retaining wall was installed in 1999 as part of the east wall drainage improvement.



Photo 23—South side of building looking west, Town Hall & Courthouse at right



Photo 24—South side of building looking east



Photo 25—South side of building looking north at Town Hall & Courthouse



Photo 26—South side of building looking west, Town Hall & Courthouse at right



Photo 27—Cap for buried propane tank and protective steel bollards adjacent to south side of the building

EAST SITE AREA

Most of the area on the east side of the building is paved. A portion of this serves as a walkway connecting the entrance and exits on the east side of the Town Hall & Courthouse to the adjacent 'Old Courthouse'. That building currently is used as a restaurant on the first floor and by the Newport Historical Society on the second floor. The remainder of the paved area extends to the east and serves as a parking lot for the Town Hall & Courthouse, the Opera House and the adjacent Town Office to the north east.



Photo 28—East side of Town Hall & Courthouse at looking west. Metal and wood stairway lead to back of stage (double green doors). Single green door leads to dressing rooms.



Photo 29—East side of Town Hall & Courthouse at looking north west. Covered walkway provides accessible route to Opera House on second floor and to elevator installed in 1986.

The paving adjacent to the building is in fair to poor condition. There are undulations in the paving, most likely caused by frost action, that have created potential tripping hazards. The area under the stairway that leads up to the stage is paved with concrete. This was

installed after the 1999 east wall drainage improvement. This concrete is generally in good condition, except there is some surface spaulding of the concrete at the bottom of the stairway.

NORTH SITE AREA

Most of the north side of the building is occupied by the Courthouse Annex built in 1986. Part of that annex was a covered walkway that leads from the second floor eastward to the parking lot. The floor of the walkway is ramped to provide accessible access to the opera house and elevator which connects the first and second floor of the annex as well as the Town Hall & Courthouse. The floor of the ramp is 2x6 decking with a small spacing between the boards. The center of the walkway was later cover with a ½ inch thick layer of plywood. Condition is fair.



Photo 30—Ramped covered walkway on north side of building looking east.

EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING

MASONRY

The exterior walls are constructed of 16 inch thick brick at the first floor and 12 inches thick at the second floor. The brick is accented with vertical pilaster and corbeled horizontal bands. There are several corbeled brick courses below the roof lines. The brick is also accented with limestone at the base of the building, at the main entrance and at the windows. The brickwork is generally in fair to good condition with some minor repointing needed. These areas are noted in the Recommendation section of this report.

While some repointing work has occurred over the preceding years, it does not appear as if the brickwork or stone accent have ever been cleaned. There is some staining of the brick, mostly on the vertical pilaster. These can be seen in photos 38, 40 and 41. This was most likely caused by faulty gutters and downspout prior to their replacement in 1996 - 1999. No current wet spots were observed.



Photo 31 — West side of building



Photo 32 — Main entrance at west side building



Photo 33 — West façade above main entrance



Photo 35— West side of
weathervane

Photo 34— West side of clock
and bell tower



Photo 36— North west corner of bell tower



Photo 37— South east corner of bell tower



Photo 38—South façade of building. Sheriff's department building at left of photo



Photo 39—West side of stage fly loft



Photo 40—South side of stage fly



Photo 41— East side of building

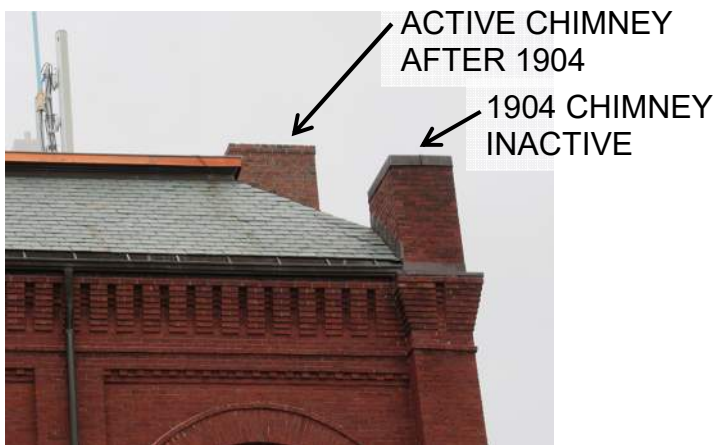


Photo 42— North east corner of building

Photo 43— At right -North east corner of building. Limited view of north façade above roof of covered walkway



There some deterioration at the face of the limestone base and at some of the limestone window trim pieces. These are detailed in the Recommendation section of this report.

WINDOWS

The first floor windows are typically a pair of wood double hung sash with an arched stained glass fixed sash above. The window sills are limestone. There are fixed storm windows over the top window sash and operable storm windows over the lower sash. These most likely date to the 1986 renovations to the courthouse. There are no storm panel over the stain glass sash.

The second floor windows are typically a pair of wood double hung sash. There had been a half-round arched stained glass fixed sash above (see photos 13 & 14), but these were removed in 1996 to be restored and temporary plywood panels are current in place. The window sills are limestone. On the south side at the second floor there are fixed storm windows over the top window sash and operable storm windows over the lower sash. On the west and north sides at the second floor there are operable storm windows over both the upper and lower sash.

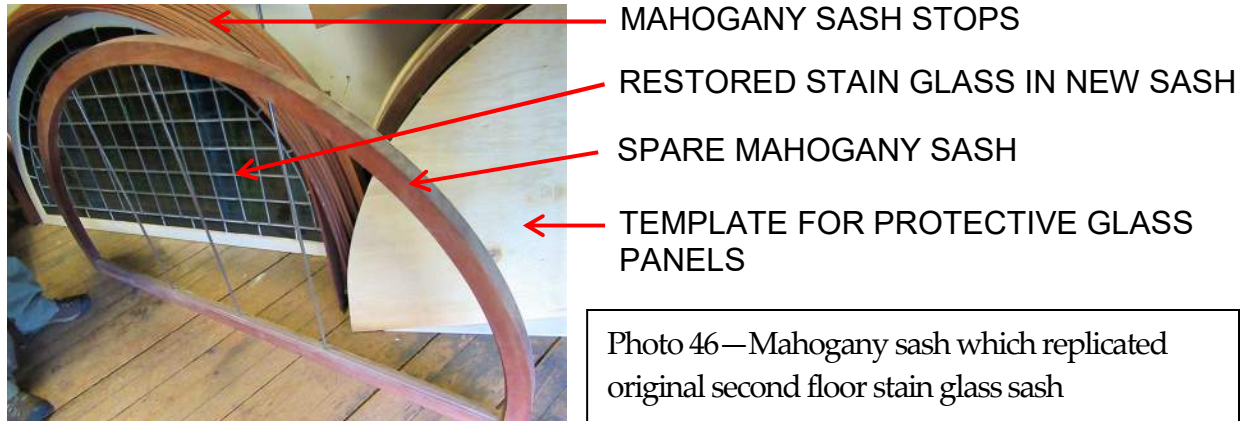


Photo 44—Typical first floor window grouping



Photo 45—Typical second floor window grouping

The half round sash and stain glass panels have been restored and are currently being stored on the second floor (see photo 15). The sashes were made of mahogany with vertical steel reinforcing rods (see photo 46). The stain glass panels were restored and glazed into the sash. The exterior of the sashes has been prime painted. Interior mahogany sash stops have been made. There are 16 of these restored sashes. Seven will be on the south side of the building (see photo 38), three will be on the west side (see photo 31) and six of these will be on the north side of the building. Of the six sashes on the north side only the western most of these is an exterior window. The remaining five sash are in the wall common to the Courthouse Annex. The intent to install these and back light them. (see



interior photo XX).

The town intends to have protective glass panels made for both the interior and exterior of the sash. Plywood templates have been made for these glass panels. The town then plans to have the stain glass sash and protective glass panels installed.

There are six small double hung wood windows on the first floor of the east exterior wall (see photos 41 and 47). These windows have stone sills but do not have any storm windows.

Photo 47—First floor double hung window at east side of building



The first and second floor windows are in fair condition. The sash and frames need to be painted and some glazing needs to be repaired or replaced. The caulking at the perimeter of the frames is in poor condition. The glazing at the perimeter of the first floor stain glass panels is in poor condition and there are a few broken or missing pieces of stain glass at the southernmost window on the west side of the building. There are some open joints on the frame around the stain glass panels that needed to be caulked.

There were originally a series of small window sash at the base of the building that opened to the basement. All of these sashes have either been removed or covered over with plywood. What remains of the original window sash and frames, as well as the plywood coverings are in poor condition. In many locations the pavement is in contact with the wood. There are pathways for water to enter the building.



Photo 48—Pervious location of basement windows at west end of north exterior wall



Photo 49—Basement windows covered with plywood at west end of south exterior wall



VENT FOR COURTHOUSE
PROPANE BOILERS LOCATED IN
BASEMENT

Photo 50—Basement windows below first floor court room south exterior wall

At the east end of the south wall there is a pair of windows that were installed as part of the 1986 courthouse renovations (see photo 40). These are common to the jury room. These vinyl clad wood windows are in fair condition.

DOORS

There are two pair of wood doors with glass vision panels at the main entrance to the first floor on the west side of the building (see photo 32). These doors and frames are in fair condition they need some minor repairs, painting, replacement of weather-stripping and adjustments to the remaining hardware. There is evidence that this doorway was modified sometime in the past (see photo 48). There were modifications made to the door sill and exterior jamb



Photo 51 — Southernmost door at first floor main entrance at west side of building. Evidence that this entrance was altered in the past.

Above these doors there is a wood painted sign that reads 'Newport Opera House Performance Center' These doors serve as the primary entrance to the opera house. The sign is in good condition.

This sign most likely dates to the 1986 courthouse renovation. Previous to those renovations there were 4 wood and glass transom panels above these doors (see photo 12). There were removed to create the interior vestibule airlock. Above the sign are four decorative wood and glass transom that are original to the building. The transoms and adjacent wood trim are in good condition.

On the south side of the building there is a bulkhead and doors that provide access to the basement. These doors and adjacent trim are in poor condition. They need significant repair or replacement.



Photo 52 — Bulkhead entrance to basement located on south side of the building



Photo 53 — Covered entry into courthouse at south side, most likely part of 1986 reno.

Also, on the south side of the building, adjacent to the basement bulkhead is a covered entry to the county courthouse on the first floor. This entry most likely was constructed as part of the 1986 renovations to the courthouse. These doors are typically locked from the exterior, so people must enter the courthouse at the north entrance from Main Street. These doors serve as an emergency exit path from the courthouse. The exterior set of doors are wood, set in a hollow metal frame and are in fair condition.

On the east side of the building there is a single door at grade that leads to the dressing rooms. It is labeled 'Stage Door'. This is a wood door with a wood frame. The door has been covered with a layer of plywood. The door is in poor condition. The frame is in fair condition.



Photo 54—Stage Door at east exterior wall



Photo 55—Loading Doors at east exterior wall, leading to stage

At the south end of the east side of the building there is a pair of doors at the top of the exterior stairs that leads to the back wall of the stage. It is labeled 'Loading Door'. These are wood doors with a wood frame. The doors have been covered with a layer of plywood. The doors are in poor condition. The frame is in fair condition.

CLOCK and BELL TOWER

The clock and bell tower is a brick structure that extends two-stores above the second floor. It is capped with a wood framed pyramid shaped roof which is covered in slate roof shingles. The brickwork is accented with limestone features. On the west side of the tower and centered above the second floor window is a limestone plaque that reads 'TOWN HALL AND COURT HOUSE'. There are 12 decorative terra cotta tiles located on either side of this plaque (see photos 33 and 34). The exterior brickwork, limestone and terra cotta tiles appear to be in good condition.

It does not appear as if the brickwork or stone accent have not been cleaned in a long time, if ever. The limestone and terra cotta tiles are dirty.

There are two wood double hung windows on the west side at the attic level. They have a limestone window sill. The windows are in poor condition.

At the bell level there are three wood louvered opening on each of the four sides of the tower. The louvers are in fair condition. The top of each louver was ordinarily covered with slate roof shingles. In some locations the slate has been replaced with metal sheet work. The slate on these louvers is in fair condition. Some of these slate need to be repaired or replaced.

One of the louvers on the east side of the tower was modified to provide an access hatch to the flat portion roof of the original building.

The clock faces and adjacent wood trim were last painted in 1996. A lot of the gold leaf gilded on the roman numerals and clock hands has been lost. These areas are in fair condition, they need to be repainted.

The weathervane appears to be in good condition, but it has been over 20 years since it was last repainted.

The tower features a large clock face on all four sides above the bell level. The clock is functional, but not currently connected to the bell below. This is discussed later in this report.

ROOFS

The primary roof of the original building as well as the 1904 addition are low sloping roofs (see photo 39). These roofs were replaced earlier this year with a PVC membrane type roof with copper perimeter flashings. This work was completed by The Melanson Company of Keene, NH. These roofs are in excellent condition.

COPPER ROOF EDGE
FLASHING INSTALLED 2018

REMAINING COPPER FLASHINGS,
GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS
DATE TO 1996-1999

Photo 56—South west
corner of stage fly loft



At the perimeter of the building there is a mansard roof that slopes up to the low sloping roof. These roofs are covered with slate roof shingles (see photos 31, 38, 39, 41 & 42). These slate roofs and the copper flashings were replaced between 1996 and 1999. These roofs and flashings are in good condition.

The slate roofs and flashings at the bell tower (photos 34 through 37) are in good condition. In 1996, the slate on the north, south and west sides was replaced, and the best remaining slate was reinstalled on the east side.

The small one story entry on the south side of the building (photo 53) has a copper standing seam roof. This is in good condition.

There is a small roof above the entry portico on the west side of the building this has a flat seem copper roof and flashings which are in good condition.

OTHER EXTERIOR ITEMS

There is a small covered entry to the county courthouse on the first floor. This entry most likely was constructed as part of the 1986 renovations to the courthouse. This is constructed of wood with some fixed glass panels (see above for roof of entry). The entry is in fair condition.

There is an exterior stairway on the east side of the building that leads up to the back of the stage. This is a steel structure with a nominal 2 inch wood deck and stair treads. These are in fair condition. The handrails are steel pipe supported on steel angle posts. The hand rail mounted to the wall and the guard and handrail at the open sides of the stair and landing are in poor condition and would not comply with current codes.



Photo 57— Exterior stair at east end of building looking south

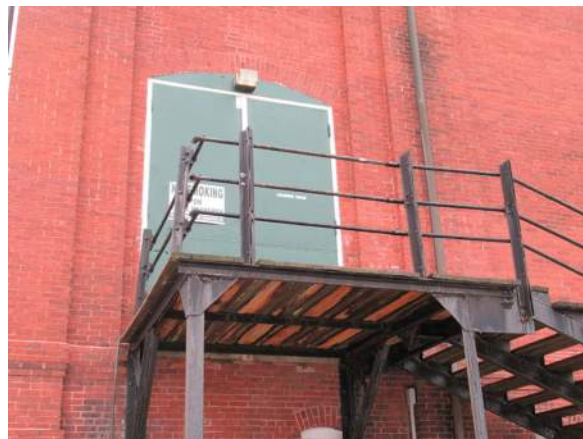


Photo 58— Exterior stair at east end of building looking west

The covered walkway at the north end of the building is part of the courthouse annex (see photos 28, 29, 30 & 43), but does provide egress for the second floor opera house.

BUILDING STRUCTURE

The building has exterior bearing masonry walls that are 16 inches thick at the first floor and 12 inches thick at the second floor. The north and south walls of the bell tower extend down to the basement through the interior of the building. The exterior foundation walls of the original building are large mortared stone to a height of about 6 feet above the basement floor with brick walls above.



Photo 59 — North exterior foundation wall in basement, original basement windows in-filled with concrete masonry units, most likely when 1986 Courthouse Annex was constructed.



Photo 60 — South exterior foundation wall. The previous basement window openings seen here corresponds to exterior photo 50.

The interior bearing walls are brick walls, typically 12" thick. Larger wall opening have brick arches. The exterior foundation walls of the 1904 addition are formed concrete.

The first and second floor are framed with nominal 2 inch thick wood floor joist. These are supported typically by wood frame interior wall.



Photo 61 — Portion of typical first floor framing looking south.

The exception to this is in the first floor court room. There are two cast iron columns which support the second floor framing. The eastern most of these two columns is in line with the original east exterior wall, so therefore this column most likely dates to 1904 when the addition was constructed. Since the western column matches, it is likely from the same time period. The beam above these columns is concealed, but most likely runs in a north to south direction.

This column supports a portion the original east exterior wall.



Photo 62—First floor court room looking east.



Photo 63—First floor court room looking west, two cast iron columns

The roof over the original portion of the building is framed with wood trusses that span from the north to south exterior walls. These are spaced about 13 feet on center and centered between the exterior windows and correspond to the brick pilasters that can be seen on the south exterior wall (see photo 38). The top and bottom chords are each made up of four vertical members that are bolted together and make up beams that are 11" wide. The bottom chord is 15 1/2" tall and the top chord is 11 1/2" tall. The diagonal members are 10" high and 9" wide. The bottom of some of the diagonal members are cut flush with the horizontal top and bottom chords and others are let-in to these chords. The joints at these connections are secured with threaded steel rods. There are five vertical steel rods, the ends of these rods are threaded and have large square steel nuts. The center rod is 1 1/8" in diameter, moving outwards from the center the next rods are 1 1/4" in diameter and the outer two rods are 1 1/2" in diameter. There are timber beams that run east to west that sit on the top of these roof trusses that are 10" deep and 7" wide. One is located at the center of the truss and also at the north and south ends of the top horizontal chord. These timbers support 2" by 10" roof joist which run north to south and are spaced 14" to 16" on center and slope down slightly from the center beam. The diagonal mansard roofs at the north and south sides of the roof are support by the same east to west timber at the top of the truss and by the top of the brick exterior walls below.



Photo 64—North end of original roof trusses looking east.



Photo 65—Middle portion of original roof trusses looking east.



Photo 66—South end of original roof trusses looking east.



Photo 67—South top corner of original roof trusses looking east.

The bottom chord of the roof trusses supports 2" by 9" ceiling joist 16" on center than span east to west.

Overall the trusses are in good condition, there is some checking of individual timbers and some shrinkage in the length of some of the diagonal members. This has provided for some open joints between the diagonal members which are not in compression and the horizontal members.

I used a 4' long level and checked the bottom chords of the trusses in 12 locations. Over the 4' length the bottom chords varied from level to 1/4" out of level. Based on the age and span of these trusses that would be considered acceptable.

Three of these trusses also support the railing edge of the opera house balcony below. There are a total of six 1 ¼' diameter steel rods (two at each of these trusses). The top of the rods are threaded and held in place with a large square steel nut and washer.



Photo 68—Top of north east most steel rod supporting balcony at bottom chord of roof truss, looking west.



Photo 69—Top of south center steel rod supporting balcony at bottom of roof truss, looking south.

The roof of both the original building and 1904 addition are covered with 1 inch nominal thick roof sheathing boards installed perpendicular to the roof joists.

The roof over the 1904 addition is supported primary by two wood trusses that have a similar configuration to the roof trusses of the original building. These trusses support nominal 2 x 8 roof joist spaced approximately 20" on center, that span east to west and cantilever out from the trusses to the top of the 2 x 8 diagonal roof joists that form the mansard roofs at the east and west ends of the 1904 addition. The bottom of these diagonal joists are supported by the exterior brick walls below. The top of the mansard roof joists at the north and south ends are supported by wood timber beams that rest on top of the north and south ends of the top horizontal chords of the roof trusses.

Photo 70—Two roof trusses that support roof of 1904 addition, looking north.

West Roof Truss

East Roof Truss



The roof of the clock and bell tower is a pyramid shape and framed with 2 x 10 roof joist. The wood sill plate and roof hip rafters of the roof framing are anchor bolted to the top of the masonry wall (see photo 6x). These roof rafters are covered with 1x4 roof sheathing boards.



Photo 71—Roof of bell tower looking north

Photo 72—Roof framing of bell tower, looking upward





Photo 73—North east corner of bell tower



Photo 74—Close up of north east corner, note open brick joints

No areas of concern were observed in the roof framing. See recommendations for some maintenance on the main roof trusses that would be appropriate.

There is a small area of the second floor ceiling that needs some reinforcing. There is an opening through the ceiling rafters for the stair that extends from the second floor to the attic. This stair was added at some point in time and the framing to the east of this opening is not properly supported. While this header only supports a small area of the attic floor, a proper header should be installed.

Photo 75—Opening in attic floor (second floor ceiling) at top of access stairs from second floor, looking east.

This header needs to be reinforced or replaced



In general, the structure of the masonry bearing walls and wood framing appears to be in good condition with a few exceptions which are listed below.

There is a significant sag in the north east corner of the first floor mezzanine (level of stage dressing rooms). It dips down about 3" over 10' horizontally. This appears to be limited to the floor framing in an area about 10' by 10' in the north east corner as there are no signs of settlement or cracking in the adjacent exterior bearing brick walls. This is most likely associated with the wood framing adjacent to the stair opening. The exterior brick walls below grade in this corner of the building show signs of pervious water infiltration. It appears that the water infiltration has been stopped and the interior of this this area is dry (see photos 91 & 92).

While the mortared stone foundation walls are in fair to good condition there is some mortar loss in the brick wall directly above the stone. The height of these bricks relates directly to the finish grade outside of the building. This is most likely caused by rising dampness.

There is a crack in what was the original brick east exterior wall. This can be seen in the attic at the south end of the wall and also seen on the elevated platform leading to the fly loft. The crack starts at the south end of the steel beam that supports the proscenium arch of the stage below and continues upward in a northerly direction. The crack is widest at the bottom and decreases in size as it goes up. There is a slight offset with the brick below the crack about ¼' east of the wall above the crack. This offset also decreases as the crack gets smaller. Given the layers of dirt within the crack it is likely this condition has existed for a long time. There does not appear to be a similar crack at the north end of the proscenium arch. This crack was most likely caused by settlement or a slight deflection of the beam installed above the court room in 1904.

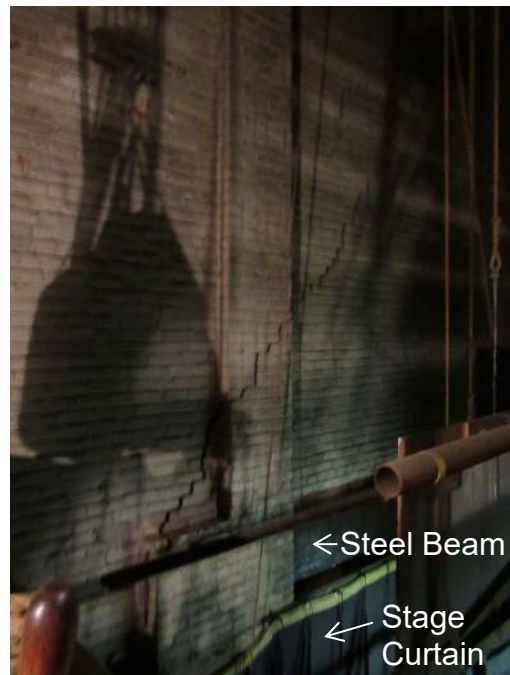


Photo 76—Open joint in masonry wall. Looking west at original exterior east wall.

There are some minor cracks in the brick wall common to the first floor dressing rooms and the court room. These can be seen in the dressing room where the brick is exposed but do not telegraph through the plaster wall finish on the court room side of the wall. This wall supports the floor joist of the stage above. These cracks are most likely caused by minor settlement and based on the paint that is in these cracks, this condition most likely has existed for a long time.

Photo 77 —Open mortar joints in west wall of dressing room in south west corner of mezzanine level.



At the top of the masonry wall of the bell tower there are some minor open brick joints on the interior of the north east corner (see photo 71). No open joints can be seen on the exterior of the same area.

At the main stairway at the west end of the building, there is a sag in the landing located between the first and second floor. This landing spans from the south to the north walls of the lobby. The framing for this landing is concealed by floor and ceiling finishes.

INTERIOR OF BUILDING

BASEMENT

The basement is primary used for storage for the opera house. There is a concrete floor, exposed brick walls and piers and exposed wood framing above. This space seems adequate for its use.

In the north and south west corners there are toilet rooms. These are the primary toilet rooms for court house employees and are also used by the opera house. While these are functional, the finishes are in worn condition. Neither of these toilet rooms would be considered handicapped accessible.

Photo 78 —Men's toilet room in basement looking north.





Photo 79 — West end of basement looking west.



Photo 80 — West end of basement looking east.



Photo 81 — North center of basement looking north, sprinkler system to left and old boiler (discontinued) at right.



Photo 82 — South east corner of basement looking north.

At the center of the basement is an interior room constructed of concrete masonry units. This is believed to have been constructed in the 1950's as a jail when the police department was housed within the building. This room is now used as a mechanical room (photo 83) for the courthouse. There is a concrete floor, exposed brick walls and piers and exposed wood framing above. This space seems adequate for its use.

Photo 83 -Mechanical room looking west.





Photo 84 — Center of basement looking south at interior brick pier and base of one of the first floor steel columns.



Photo 85 — South east corner of basement looking west, south exterior wall at left and basement mechanical room at right.



Photo 87 — Doors leading to bulkhead at south side of the building.

Photo 86 — East end of basement looking east. Ladder to first floor at end of hallway.

There is limited exiting from the basement. There are the two stairs at the west end of the building. There is the bulkhead door on the south side of the building (photos 24 & 87), and a ladder from the east end of the basement to a hallway leading to the first floor mechanical room (photo 86). The bulkhead and ladder access could not be classified exits from a code standpoint and the stairs at the west end are not completely code compliant.

TOWN PORTION OF FIRST FLOOR

The main entrance for the opera house is on the west end of the first floor. Directly inside the main entrance doors is a small 3 feet wide air lock vestibule. This was part of the 1986 court house renovations. The finishes in the vestibule are in fair to poor condition.

Photo 88—First floor vestibule looking north.



Inside this vestibule is the main lobby. This was the lobby for the entire building prior to the 1986 renovations. The east end of the lobby was closed off with a wall at that time. The lobby now primarily serves the opera house on the second floor. The lobby has plaster walls and ceiling and vinyl tile on the floor. There are a pair of stairs that extend down to the basement. There are two flights of stairs leading up that connect at a landing midway between the first and second floor. Then, there is a single wider flight of stairs to the second floor.



Photo 89—First floor lobby looking west at vestibule added in 1986.

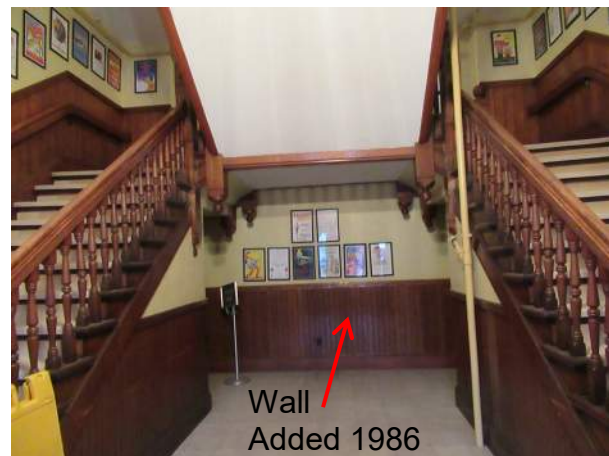


Photo 90—First floor lobby looking east.

This lobby and stair were last renovated in 2000, the walls have been repainted since then. The plaster walls and ceilings are in good condition. The woodwork at the stairway, the wood wainscoting, doors and frames are in good to fair condition. The floor tiles and stair tread coverings are in fair to poor condition.



Photo 93—First floor lobby looking south.

In the north east corner of the first floor there is a mechanical room which contains the boilers for the heating system for the building. This space has a concrete floor exposed brick walls which seem adequate for the use. The ceiling is plaster over metal lath, which is attached directly to the first floor wood joists. The ceiling is in poor condition with some missing plaster. This floor structure supporting the ceiling is the same area previously noted under the Structure section of this report, that is sagging. It is likely that portions of this ceiling will need to be removed to repair the floor structure.



Photo 91 —First floor mechanical room looking north.

Photo 92 —North east corner of mechanical room showing deteriorated mortar joints.



COURTHOUSE PORTION OF FIRST FLOOR

The interior of the courthouse is out of the control of the Town of Newport. Any improvement to these areas would be undertaken by the state or county. The interior finishes are a combination of finishes some of which are original to the building, some were installed or modified as part of the 1904 renovation and 1986 renovations. In general, the finishes are in fair to good condition. Examples of interior finishes follow, also see photos 62 & 63 of Superior Court Room.



Photo 94—Courthouse office in north west corner, looking south.

Photo 93—Courthouse office in north west corner, looking north.



Photo 95—North central courthouse office, looking west.



Photo 96—Courthouse office in south west corner, looking north.



Photo 97—Interior hallway, looking west. Pair of doors are incorrectly labeled



Photo 98—Interior hallway, looking east at entrance to Superior Court Room.



Photo 99—Interior hallway, looking north.



Photo 100—Interior hallway, looking south.

MEZZANINE LEVEL BETWEEN FIRST & SECOND FLOORS

At the east end of the 1904 addition there is a mezzanine level between the first and second floors. This level houses 9 dressing rooms and a toilet room that are connected to the north east corner of the stage by a small 'L' shaped stairway.

The interior walls are a single layer of beaded tongue and groove boards, the ceiling is also beaded tongue and groove boards. The floor coverings are mostly carpeting with some vinyl composition floor tile in the north east corner. There is an exterior entrance on the east wall adjacent to the stairway (photo 40).

The finishes are generally in fair condition. The floor is generally level except an area about 10' by 10' in the north east corner dips down about 3" towards the north east corner.

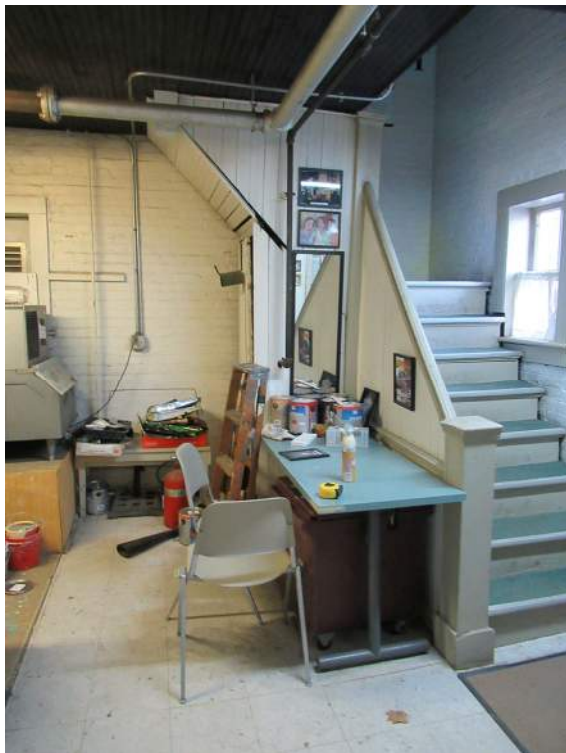


Photo 101—North east corner of mezzanine level, looking north



Photo 102—North end of mezzanine level, looking south. Doors in hallway lead to dressing rooms.

SECOND FLOOR

The majority of the second floor is occupied by the opera house and stage. At the west end of the building the central stairway and lobby is flanked by an office and toilet rooms to the north and a workroom to the south.

This lobby and stair were last renovated in 2001, the walls have been repainted since then. The plaster walls and ceilings are in good condition. The woodwork at the stairway, the wood wainscoting, doors and frames are in good to fair condition. The floor carpeting and stair tread coverings are in fair to poor condition.



Photo 103—Second floor lobby looking east, stair down to first floor



Photo 104—Second floor lobby looking west, stair up to balcony level



Photo 105—Second floor lobby looking east, one of two entrance doors into opera



Photo 106—Second floor lobby looking north at ticket window and office

The workroom in the south east corner of the second floor was not renovated as part of the other renovations in the early 2000's. The plaster walls, plaster ceiling and resilient floor covering are in poor condition.



Photo 107—Second floor workroom & storage area looking south.



Photo 108—Second floor workroom looking south.

The office for the opera house is located in the north west corner of the second floor. The Plaster walls, plaster ceiling, wainscoting and wood trim are in good condition. The plaster walls, plaster ceiling and resilient floor covering are in poor condition. The carpeting is in worn condition.



Photo 109—Second floor office looking north.



Photo 110—Second floor office looking south.

There are three toilet rooms that are located between the second floor office and the opera house. Adjacent to the toilet rooms is a small janitor's closet.



Photo 111—Men's toilet room looking west



Photo 112—Women's toilet room looking west



Photo 113—Unisex toilet room looking north



Photo 114—Unisex toilet room looking south

The walls are a combination of wood paneling, plaster and some of the original wood wainscoting. The condition of these finishes is fair. The ceilings are acoustical tiles in a metal suspended grid. The ceilings are in fair condition. The resilient flooring in these rooms is in poor condition.

Opera House

The plaster walls and ceilings in the opera house were restored between 2003 and 2006, these are in good condition. Some of the woodwork including the wainscoting at the lower level were cleaned during that same time period. Other woodwork such as the window trim and the wood railing at the balcony were not cleaned at that time and have a heavy build up varnish like finish and needs to be cleaned.



Photo 115—Opera House looking east.

The floor of the opera house is random length tongue and groove maple. The floor is poor condition. According to Ken Dennis the floor was refinished about every 5 years between 1995 and 2011. The floor was sanded to bear wood (not using a drum sander) and sealed with 3 coats of finish. In the years that it was not refinished, the floor was scuff sanded, not

down to bear wood, and three coats of sealer were applied. This process stopped in 2011 because the boards were thin to sand any further. A number of floor boards have crack in the surface of the tongue and groove edges.



Photo 116—Opera House, looking south.



Photo 117—Opera House, looking west from stage.



Photo 119—Opera House, looking south.

Photo 118—Opera House, looking north.



Photo 120—Concession stand south west corner of Opera House.



Photo 121—Exit door from Opera House at north wall, looking at elevator.



Photo 122—Exit hallway from Opera House, looking east.



Photo 223— Exit hallway. Looking south at original window openings.



Photo 224— Exit from Opera House, looking south



Photo 125— Example of split floor boards in Opera House



Photo 126— Example of split floor boards in Opera House



Photo 127—Stage, looking north.

The floor of the stage is a combination of the original floor (believed to be Douglas fir) and a portion along the west side of the stage that was previously replaced with maple strip flooring. The floors are in poor condition and need to be replaced.

The walls of the stage are unfinished brick which is in good condition, with the exception of the crack in the original brick wall previously noted in the 'Building Structure' section of this report.

There is a fly loft above the stage with a wood grid deck at the bottom of the roof trusses above. There are wood platforms at the south and north ends of the fly loft located about half way up to the grid deck.

Photo 128—North east corner of stage, stairway down to dressing rooms.



Most of the fly loft, with the exception of stage lighting, appears to be original and is in functional condition.



Photo 129— West edge of stage detail.



Photo 130— West edge of stage with light trough covered.



Photo 131— Example of split & cracked floor boards at stage.



Photo 132— West edge of stage looking south with light trough uncovered.

There is a recessed lighting trough along the west edge of the stage. This is covered with removable panels made of pine boards. These boards and the boards at the very edge of the stage are in poor condition. It does not appear that the lighting in this trough is functional.

CLEAR FINISHED WOODWORK

The woodwork through the town controlled areas of the building is in need to cleaning and some repairs to the finish. These areas include;

- The first floor entry vestibule and lobby.
- The central stairway from the first floor to the third floor.
- Second floor lobby and work room
- Opera house and balconies
- Third floor lobby.

Woodwork would include; Windows, doors, casings, sills, baseboards, wainscoting, stair railings, balusters, newel post and stair stringer. This would also include all clear finished woodwork within the opera house and stage area.

The original finish was most likely a shellac type finish, other types of finishes may have been applied over this. There are areas where the existing finish has alligatorated and some areas have crystalized.



Photo 133— Example of clear finish with has 'alligatorated'.

THIRD FLOOR, BALCONY LEVEL

The lobby and stairs at this level were last renovated in 2002, the walls have been repainted since then. The plaster walls and ceilings are in good condition. The woodwork at the stairway, the wood wainscoting, doors and frames are in good to fair condition. The floor carpeting and stair tread coverings are in fair to poor condition.



Photo 134— Third floor lobby, looking east towards opera house balcony.



Photo 135— Third floor lobby, looking west.

There is a storage room in the south west corner of the third floor that is primarily for costumes. The room has plaster walls and ceilings that are in good condition and a wood floor that is in fair, but adequate condition.

Adjacent to this room is a small space that is the access to the attic. This is where the stained glass windows are being stored. The walls, ceiling and floor are unfinished which is adequate for this space.



Photo 136— Third floor south west corner storage room, looking south.

There is a similar storage room in the north west corner of the third floor which is used for costume storage. The plaster walls and ceiling need some repair. The wood floor is in fair, but adequate condition.

Adjacent, and accessed through this storage room, is the stage lighting control room. The room has plaster walls and ceilings that are in good condition and a wood floor that is in fair, but adequate condition.



Photo 137—North east corner of stage,
Looking north east at stair down to
dressing rooms on mezzanine level.



Photo 138—North east corner of stage,
Looking north east at stair down to
dressing rooms on mezzanine level.

Balcony of Opera House

The plaster wall and ceiling were restored in 2004 and are in good condition. The wood floor and risers of the balcony are painted and are in fair condition. The clear finished woodwork such as the window trim and the wood railing at the balcony have a heavy build up of varnish like finish and need to be cleaned.

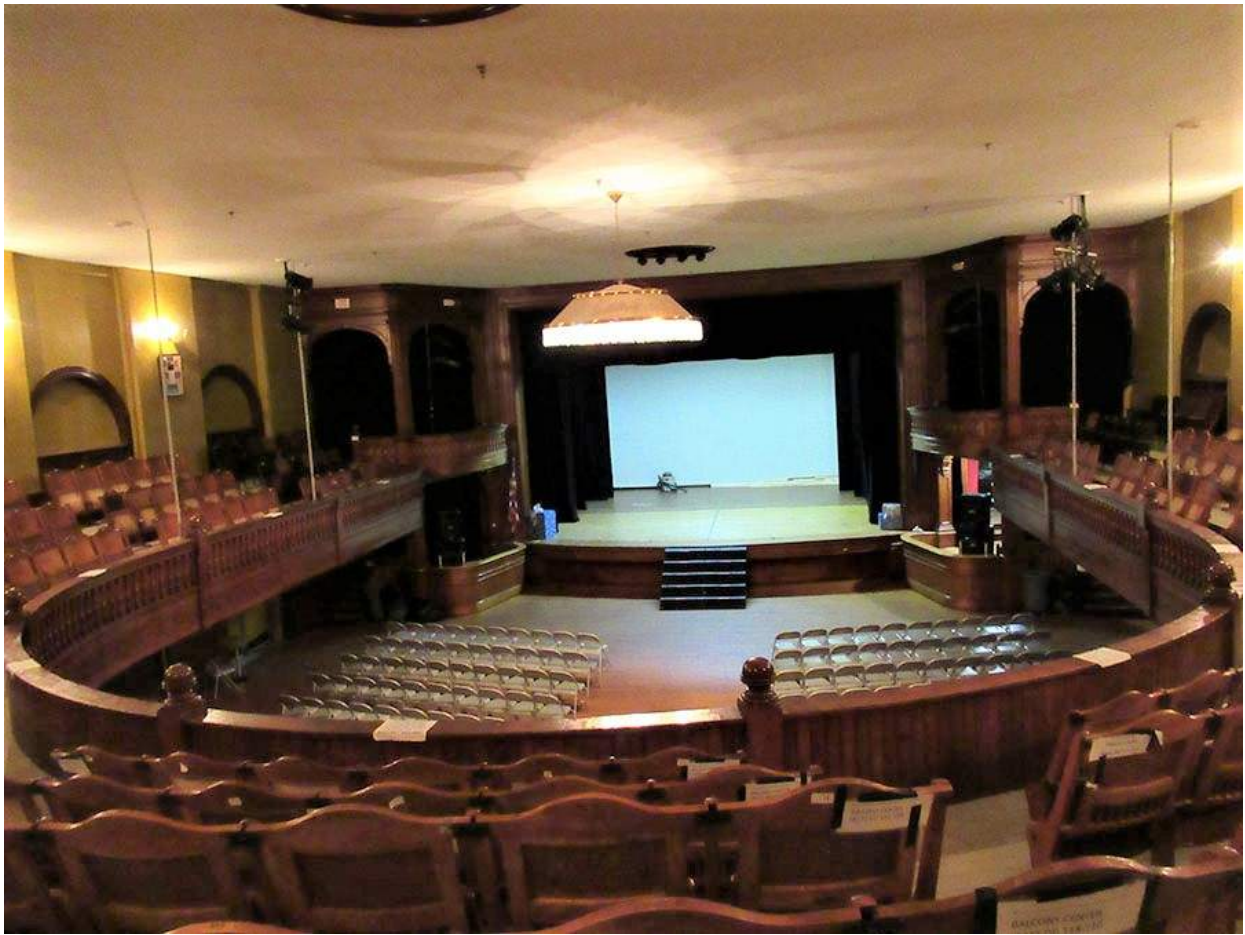


Photo 139—View from balcony looking east at stage.



Photo 140—West end of balcony, looking north.



Photo 141—South side of balcony, looking east.

BUILDING UTILITIES

WATER SUPPLY – The building is served by the municipal water system.

SEWER SYSTEM – The building is served by the municipal sewer system.

PLUMBING SYSTEM – Most of the building plumbing is concealed within walls and above ceilings. What can be observed, is mostly in the basement, appears to be in serviceable condition. There are no known problems with the plumbing system.

SPRINKLER SYSTEM – The building is protected throughout by a sprinkler system that was install as part of the 1986 renovations. The sprinkler piping is threaded steel pipe. The main control valves for the system are located in north central area of the basement (see photo 81). The system is tested and inspected yearly by Vermont Life Safety LLC located in Bolton, Vermont.

HEATING SYSTEMS – Most of the building is heated with two oil fired hot water boilers located in the first floor mechanical room in the north east corner of the room (photos 91 & 141). Both boilers were replaced in 2017 and appear to be in good condition. They are serviced by Goodrich Oil Company of Newport, NH. The boilers are connected to the masonry chimney, in the north west corner of the mechanical room, with stainless steel flue pipe, which is partially insulated.



Photo 142—First floor mechanical room looking west.

There is a 10,000 gallon oil tank located in the building located adjacent and north of this building. This tank supplies oil to other town controlled buildings.

Hot water piping is typically threaded steel pipe that feed cast iron radiators. Most of the heating piping is run exposed in the building. There are several different styles of radiators found throughout the building.

While most of the heating system is old it appears to be is in serviceable condition.

Photo 143—Cast iron radiator at south wall of opera house.





Photo 144—Cast iron radiator at north wall of opera house.



Photo 145—Cast iron radiator at south wall of opera house.

Most of the first floor courthouse is heated with a propane fired boiler that is located in the basement mechanical room (see photos 83 & 146). The boiler, circulating pumps and expansion tank all appear to be recently installed and in good condition. This system has direct PVC vent that extend to the south wall (see photos 50 & 147). There is an underground propane tank located under the parking area to the south of the building.



Photo 146—basement mechanical room, looking east at propane boiler.



Photo 147—South exterior wall, vent pipe from propane boiler.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM – The electric service appears to have had many upgrades since electricity was introduced to the building in 1892. The most recent and significant upgrades were done in 2005 to 2011. During that time frame substantial efforts were made to replace as much of the original knob and tube wiring, and other unsafe conditions, as practical. This was done at each floor including the basement and attic. Efforts were also made to segregate the electrical wiring for the first floor courthouse from the remainder of the building.



Photo 148— Electrical service, and meters at north wall of stage.



Photo 149— Electrical panel at east wall of third floor room that leads to attic.

New electrical panels were installed at a few locations including the north end of the stage and in the third floor room that accesses the attic.



Photo 150— Electrical panel, meters and disconnects at east wall of first floor mechanical room.



Photo 151— Example of wiring upgrades made in attic, at south exterior wall.

Based on conversation with Ken Dennis, who managed the electrical improvement noted above, there is likely some knob and tube wiring under the stage. Knob and tube wiring was observed in the workroom in the south west corner of the second floor and in the basement.

Similar upgrades were made to the building fire alarm system.



Photo 152—Under side of first floor framing at center area of basement, looking west.

Recommended Rehabilitation Approach

The repair and deferred maintenance work that is recommended herein shall conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. No work is recommended in this study to alter the existing plans of the building.

The following are our recommendations for repairs to the Newport Town Hall and Courthouse. We have organized these recommendations into Phase 1, Phase 2 and Future Phases. Phase 1 includes some life safety concerns and items that are most critical to the preservation of the building.

PHASE 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 - The crack in the brick wall above the proscenium arch of the stage (see photo 76) should be repaired. This can most likely be filled with and injectable epoxy. A structural engineer will need to make specific recommendations.

There is a similar, but smaller crack in the brick work in the west wall of the south most dressing room on the mezzanine level that should be repaired in a similar fashion.

- 2 - The floor above the first floor mechanical room in the north east corner of the building should be repaired. This will most likely require the existing plaster ceiling of the mechanical room (which is in poor condition) to be removed and portions of the floor to be reframed. A new fire rated ceiling should be installed in the entire mechanical room. The stairway from the dressing rooms on the mezzanine level up to the stage should be repaired or replaced in kind. These repairs will most likely require temporary support of all of the existing overhead piping.
- 3 - The stair stringers that support both stairs that run from the first floor lobby, at the west end of the building, to the basement need to be reinforced (see photo 79). This can be corrected by building a wood framed knee wall below the stringer at mid-span.
- 4 - A second exit path should be created from the basement and from the first floor mechanical room. At a minimum the ladder that connects the basement to the first floor mechanical room should be reconfigured. A better solution would be to install a ships ladder of stairway. That would likely require enlarging the existing vertical shaftway. The wood stair and handrails up to the mezzanine should also be rebuilt.



Photo 153— Access ladder down to basement from first floor mechanical room, looking south



Photo 154— Passage way from first floor mechanical room to stair to first floor (at right) and to ladder (at back left).

- 5 - The remaining knob and tube wiring in the building should be removed and replaced with proper wiring, junction boxes and devices.
- 6 - The half round stain glass transoms above the second floor windows should be reinstalled (see photos 31, 38, 45 & 46).
- 7 - The exterior woodwork needs to be repainted; This includes windows, doors, frames, adjacent trim and transoms. All wood trim and louvers at the bell tower. The wood railing above the west main entrance. The first floor entrance on the south side of the building. As part of this work the clock faces should be repainted and the numerals, clock dials and minute markers re-gilded in gold. The weathervane should also be repainted and directional letters re-gilded in gold (see photos 19 through 25, 31 through 45). The perimeter of window and door opening need to be caulked.

The extent of the window painting will need to be determined based on whether the windows are restored.

- 8 - The three exterior wood doors at the east side of the building should be replaced (see photos 41, 54 & 55). The exterior doors at the main entrance on the west of the

building should be repaired and repainted (refinished on interior). There are 4 exterior doors (photo 32) and 4 vestibule doors (see photos 89). The hardware and weather-stripping on all of these doors should be replaced.

- 9 - The bulkhead door, frame and wood surround at the entrance to the basement on the south side of the building needs to be rebuilt (see photo 52). The large pair of doors inside the bulkhead at the basement also need to be rebuilt or repaired (see photo 87).
- 10 - If the downspouts are not extended and run underground as suggested in Item 2, the bottom of the downspouts should be examined verify they are sufficiently opened (see photo 156). The PVS receiving pipe need a bell type fitting so that the bottom copper downspout is not pinched too tightly.



Photo 155—Downspout located south of main entrance on west side of the building.

PHASE 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11 - The paving adjacent to the south and east sides of the building should be replaced or resurfaced and sloped away from the building. Prior to this, the area adjacent to the south side of the building should be excavated down to the top of the stone portion of the exterior foundation walls (approximately 2') and any soft mortar joints should be repointed (see photos 25 & 29).



Photo 156—South side of building

- 12 - Consideration should be given to improve drainage away from the building by installing underground piping to collect water from downspouts. More information will be needed about the underground storm water piping in the vicinity of the building.

Photo 157—South west corner of building.



- 13 - The exterior brickwork needs some repointing primary at the south and west sides at the base of the building and most likely below grade (also as referred to in Item 1 above). What is left of the wood basement window frames should be removed and the existing masonry openings infilled with a matching brick and mortar (see photos 38, 49, 50 & 60).



Photo 158—West side of the building adjacent to Stage Door.



Photo 159—North east corner of the building.

- 14 – The face of some of the limestone trim and base units on the exterior of the building are deteriorating. In most conditions the face of the limestone has spalled off. If not corrected these areas will continue to deteriorate.

Based on available craftsmen, these can be repaired by consolidation, surface patching or by replacement.



Photo 160—Limestone base at north west corner of building, looking south



Photo 161—Limestone trim at first floor window

- 15 - There is some soft, loose or missing mortar in the brick joints at the base of the brick exterior walls. This is directly above the stone portion of the exterior foundation walls in the basement of the original portion of the building. These areas should be repointed.



Photo 162—Top of exterior foundation wall in basement at south wall.



Photo 163— Top of exterior foundation wall in basement at north wall.

Also, in the basement there are a few locations where openings in interior brick bearing walls should be patched.

Photo 164—brick arch in basement bearing wall.



The brick at the north wall of the first floor mechanical room should be repointed where needed to replace soft or missing mortar (see photos 91 & 92).

The brick at the top of the bell tower, in the north east corner should be repointed where there are open or soft mortar joints. (see photo 74).

- 16 - The maple flooring in the opera house and stage needs to be replaced (see photos 115, 125, 126, 127, 130, 131 & 132). We will need to determine whether to remove the existing maple floor or install over it.

There is an existing sound control issue that potentially could be improved as part of this work. The east end of the opera house floor and about one half of the stage are directly above the superior court room. Foot traffic on the stage or in the opera house can be heard in the court room below. Therefore, when the court is in session all activities on the stage and the opera house must stop.

It may be possible to install a thin layer of sound deadening material below the new flooring. An acoustical engineer should be consulted to see if there is a viable solution.

A $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick maple floor would add approximately 2.5 to 3 pounds per square foot of dead weight to the floor. The existing floor framing can most likely accommodate this additional weight, but it should be verified with a structural engineer. If a sound deadening material is added the weight of that material will also need to be considered.

The doors into this space already have $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick thresholds, so minimal adjustments should be needed to the height of the doors. The stairs leading up to the two side stages may need to be adjusted. Going over the existing floor would save demolition and disposal costs. It would reduce noise and dust for occupants on the first floor below during installation.

- 17 - At the main stairway at the west end of the building, there is a sag in the landings located between the first and second floor, and the landing between the second and third floor. These landings span from the south to the north walls of the lobby. The plaster ceilings in these areas will need to be partially removed for further investigation. It is likely this framing can be jacked up close to a level condition and be reinforced with wood or possible steel components.
- 18 - Some of the interior floor finishes need to be replaced. These are worn or loose and are potentially a tripping hazard. These include,
- The vinyl floor tile at the first floor lobby
 - The vinyl stair treads at the central stairway at the west end of the building.
 - The carpeting at second & third floor lobbies at the west end of the building.
 - The vinyl flooring in the work room in the south west corner of the second floor.
 - The carpeting in the opera house office on the second floor.



Photo 165—brick arch in basement bearing wall.



Photo 166—brick arch in basement bearing wall.

- 19 - The stair treads on the both stairs that run from the first floor lobby, at the west end of the building, to the basement need to be replaced. These are painted wood treads and most have an uneven surface due to wear. Handrails should also be installed at both sides of these stairs.
- 20 - New metal handrails and guard should be installed at the stairway from the back of the stage to grade on the east side of the building (see photos 41, 57 & 58).

- 21 - Window Restoration - Most of the windows at the exterior of the building have sound frames and sash. They need minor repairs, the glass needs to be reglazed, repainted and weather-stripping installed. This work should be completed by someone experienced in wood window restoration. This type of specialized firm would be better qualified to reinstall the stain glass window at the second floor and to evaluate the stain glass at the first floor windows.

The existing storm windows are at least 30 years old and will need to be removed in order to restore the windows. New low profile storm windows should be installed at the same time. This will protect the investment in the windows and will provide tighter fitting windows which will save energy dollars.

- 22 - The exterior of the brick and limestone trim units are quite dirty, and the appearance of the building would be greatly improved with a mild cleaning. This would require some field testing put would most likely be washing with low-pressure or medium-pressure water. A non-ionic detergent and scrubbing with a natural bristle or synthetic bristle may be needed at heavily stained areas.

While the cleaning is not as much of a priority as the masonry repairs and exterior painting. Ideally it would take place prior to the repairs and painting

- 23 - Overall the trusses are in good condition, there is some checking of individual timbers and some shrinkage in the length of some of the diagonal members. This has provided for some open joints between the diagonal members which are not in compression and the horizontal members. These open joints should be shimmed as directed by a structural engineer.

- 24 - The interior woodwork with a clear finish throughout the town controlled areas of the building needs to be cleaned. This would include;

- The first floor entry vestibule and lobby.
- The central stairway from the first floor to the third floor.
- Second floor lobby and work room
- Opera house and balconies
- Third floor lobby.

Woodwork would include; Windows, doors, casings, sills, baseboards, wainscoting, stair railings, balusters, newel post and stair stringer. This would also include all clear finished woodwork within the opera house and stage area.

Some field test would need to be verify which cleaning methods work best. Assuming this is a shellac finish, these areas can be cleaned with a mild, biodegradable liquid dishwashing soap diluted in warm water. Areas that are 'alligatored' or have small cracks should be able to be repaired with denatured alcohol applied with a natural bristled brush. The alcohol should melt the surface of

the finish, causing the alligatored finish to smooth out again. When the old shellac achieves a smooth consistency, apply a clear shellac topcoat to the affected areas.

Further Study

Further study may be needed in the following issues:

- If an environmental assessment has not already been completed, one should be done before any renovation work takes place.
- A structural engineer should review the two cracks in the interior brick walls and make recommendation for repair.
- An acoustical engineer and structural engineer should be consulted about the potential to add sound deadening below the new hardwood floors planned for the opera house and stage.

Photograph Credits

The photograph used on the cover of this report along with photographs 1 through 13 were provided by of the Newport Historical Society Museum Director, Larry Cote.

Photograph 18 was provided by of the Newport Opera House Association.

The remaining photographs were taken by David Drasba project manager for Scully Architects between 11-26-18 and 12-20-18.

Statement of Probable Cost

Repairs and Renovations to the Newport Town Hall and Courtroom Building

Statement of Probable Cost

Updated: 01-16-19

PHASE 1		Low	High
Item	Outline Description	Estimate	Estimate
1	Repair cracks in interior brick walls	\$5,000	\$10,000
2	Repair ceiling and floor framing above first floor mechanical room.	\$5,000	\$10,000
3	Reinforce stair stringers at first floor lobby to basement	\$800	\$1,000
4	Improve exit pathway from basement and mechanical room.	\$5,000	\$10,000
5	Replace remaining knob and tube wiring.	\$10,000	\$20,000
6	Reinstall half round stain glass panels at second floor.	\$16,000	\$20,000
7	Paint exterior of building.	\$80,000	\$100,000
8	Exterior doors & hardware.	\$25,000	\$30,000
9	Repair bulkhead door to basement.	\$8,000	\$12,000
10	Correct bottom fittings of downspouts.	\$500	\$800
	Sub-Total	\$155,300	\$213,800
	Contingency @10%	\$15,500	\$21,300
	Estimated Arch. & engineering fees	\$20,000	\$25,000
	PHASE 1 Probable Costs	\$190,800	\$260,100

Costs assume that no hazardous materials are encountered.

PHASE 2		Low	High
Item	Outline Description	Estimate	Estimate
11	Adjust paving at south and east sides of building excavate down 2' along south wall.	\$7,000	\$10,000
12	Install underground storm water piping at south side of building.	\$6,000	\$10,000
13	Repointing at exterior of building.	\$25,000	\$30,000
14	Repair or replace limestone trim units.	\$3,000	\$5,000
15	Interior brick repointing	\$5,000	\$8,000
16	Install new maple floor in opera house and stage. 5,700 sf	\$70,000	\$85,000
17	Repair sagging landings at west stairway	\$8,000	\$12,000
18	New interior floor finishes.	\$15,000	\$20,000
19	Replace wood stair threads from first floor lobby to basement.	\$1,500	\$2,000
20	Install new metal handrails and guard at east exterior stairs.	\$15,000	\$20,000
	Sub-Total	\$155,500	\$202,000
	Contingency @10%	\$15,500	\$20,000
	Estimated Arch. & engineering fees	\$20,000	\$25,000
	PHASE 2 Probable Costs	\$191,000	\$247,000

FUTURE PHASES		Low	High
Item	Outline Description	Estimate	Estimate
21	Window restoration.	\$100,000	\$150,000
22	Clean exterior masonry; brick, limestone & terra cotta.	\$65,000	\$85,000
23	Shim roof trusses	\$3,000	\$4,000
24	Clean Interior clear finished woodwork	\$40,000	\$60,000
	Sub-Total	\$208,000	\$299,000
	Contingency @10%	\$21,000	\$30,000
	Estimated Arch. & engineering fees	\$20,000	\$25,000
	FUTURE PHASES Probable Costs	\$249,000	\$354,000

Appendix

The following appendixes are attached.

- A) Secretary of the Interior's Standards
- B) Preservation Brief 2 - Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings
- C) Preservation Brief 9 - The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows
- D) Preservation Brief 21 – Repairing Historic Flat Plaster Walls & Ceilings
- E) Preservation Brief 28 - Painting Historic Interiors
- F) Copy of National Register of Historic Places – Nomination Form