

WOODBURY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA ITEM(S) REQUEST FORM

#9a

Date: 8/03/2016 Weekly Agenda Date: 8/09/2016

ELECTED OFFICIAL / DEPARTMENT HEAD / CITIZEN: Kenny Schmitz

WORDING FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Woodbury County Courthouse Exterior Window Frames & Sash Painting

ACTION REQUIRED:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Approve Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> | Approve Resolution <input type="checkbox"/> | Approve Motion <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Give Direction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other: Informational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Attachments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Direction is necessary to proceed with project painting of Courtroom #203 exterior windows

BACKGROUND:

Exterior window frames & sash must be repainted as part of the Courtroom #203 Project. All current exterior window frames and sash paint are architectural bronze (brown). 1921 reference indicates historically color of window frames were "vivid blue" and sash were "delicate grey".

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

N/A

IF THERE IS A CONTRACT INVOLVED IN THE AGENDA ITEM, HAS THE CONTRACT BEEN SUBMITTED AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR AND ANSWERED WITH A REVIEW BY THE COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE?

- Yes No

RECOMMENDATION:

The Courthouse Historical Committee recommendation is to restore to the original colors.

ACTION REQUIRED / PROPOSED MOTION:

Give Direction

Library

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The Fifty-fourth
Annual
Convention
A. I. A.

The directors of the American Institute of Architects have announced the fifty-fourth convention to be held at Washington, May 11, 12 and 13 1921.

While the wise decision has been made to devote more of the convention time to discussions relative to architecture as an art than has been the practice for some time, there are several administrative and regulatory subjects which will be reported upon by committees and require careful consideration in advance by Chapters and their delegates. The most important of these, as it goes into the future and affects not only present practice but the professionalism of architects, yes, even the position architecture will hold before the public, is that relating to state registration. The legalizing of the profession, though following a sequence through the growing recognition of its importance in social economy, did not come through the Institute, or even, as was proper, through public demand. It was taken up and literally forced into expression in legislatures by architects of local societies. Illinois through the activities of its architects, first pressed the issue with the state legislature and after repeated failures secured the basis of the satisfactory regulation law now in force. Other states have followed until, at present, twenty are practicing architecture under state registration laws. Each of these has had its struggle to accomplish the object, and public opposition as well as some professional on one hand, and the determined action and time sacrifice of individual architects on the other have been the distinguishing features. The personal work, now forgotten, of W. W. Carlin, of Buffalo, in securing the passage through the legislature of a law for New York state and its final failure through Governor Flower's refusal to sign before his term expired, almost thirty years ago, is only a sample of the devoted work expended by architects in every state where registration now obtains. For three years the Institute, by action of its conventions has approved the principle of registration. The problem of the coming conclave will be a decision whether to agree with the engineers upon a

joint registration law or a policy of independence and a continuance of the form now in force in over twenty states. To The WESTERN ARCHITECT the "problem" does not exist to any greater extent than that which might propose a similar joining with the medical profession. Both professions are connected with but subsidiary to architectural practice, yet each in its own relation to structure, and not at all in design. It is the political activity of the engineers and the laxity of architects which make the danger of a joint law even possible. The arguments set forth in a local controversy at Seattle by Charles H. Bebb, a Fellow of the Institute, and which we have before referred to as a clear and impressive pronouncement, covers the subject and should guide the Institute deliberations on this most important phase of registration legislation.

The Architectural
School an
Independent
Institution

In no department of higher education has the struggle been so prolonged for its independent environment than in the effort to establish that of architecture. Departments of engineering were formed with an architectural attachment, often a very small and practically useless addition, furnishing to the student little more than a line in the college prospectus. Columbia had its School of Mines, an engineering head to an architectural tail, till the force, genius and persistence of Ware made architecture there what it is today, a dominating feature in the college program. This reluctance of most universities to separate the science of engineering from the art of architecture is general, and even Michigan, which has just made such a separation, hesitates to go further and make its architectural school autonomous. Its head, Professor Emil Lorch, warns the profession that, "the status of the architectural profession itself must suffer in the eyes of the public as long as its professional schools do not receive full recognition." In Illinois a similar effort, backed by the Illinois Chapter of the Institute and the Illinois Society of Architects is being made to divorce the



WOODBURY COUNTY COURT HOUSE

SIoux CITY, IOWA

WILLIAM L. STEELE, ARCHITECT

PURCELL & ELMSLIE, ASSOC. ARCHITECTS

A public building—
Built without graft—
Built at the sacrifice of legitimate profit on the part of everybody concerned from the architect to the wielder of the final brush applied to the mural paintings!

Built in the face of a rising market by enthusiastic folks who were willing to lose money rather than spoil the job—

And some of them did lose money.

But Woodbury County, Iowa, was the gainer, and stranger still, they have a court house, as the result of the foregoing program, which is a splendid demonstration of modern common sense and architectural achievement.

February 24th, 1914, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to submit the question of erecting a new court house to the voters. In June of that year the vote was taken and was favorable. The next question to be settled was the site, and in September the Board of Supervisors resolved to submit that question to a vote at the general election in November. The proposition for a new site carried, but, unfortunately, only a quarter of a block was purchased. January 5th, 1915, William L. Steele, of Sioux City, a member of the American Institute of Architects, a graduate of the Architectural Department of the University of Illinois, and formerly a draftsman in the office of Louis H. Sullivan, was chosen architect. Mr. Steele immediately made arrangements with his friend, Mr. George Grant Elmslie of the firm of Purcell & Elmslie, of Chicago, for collaboration in this work. An organization was effected whereby Mr. Steele was to be executive head, Mr. Elmslie was to have charge of the planning and designing, Mr. Paul D. Cook, the structural engineering, and Mr. B. A. Broom, the mechanical engineering.

The work was soon under way and acceptance by the Board of Supervisors of preliminary sketches was secured on March 23rd, 1915. The work was carried on in the Sioux City office during the spring, summer and fall, with a large force of draftsmen. Numerous conferences were held with the supervisors and explanations of the design were made to various civic bodies. Opposition to what were felt to be radical innovations finally burst in the fall of that year, taking the shape of

heated attacks upon the Court House design in the local press and at public meetings. A thorough lack of understanding of what the Board of Supervisors and the architects were trying to do was manifest. The lack of sound and convincing argument on the part of the opposition merely had the effect of confirming the supervisors in their conviction that they were in the right, and on December 7th, 1915, the drawings and specifications were officially accepted.

Bids on the general construction were received on February 7th, 1916 and on February 15th the contract was awarded to Splady, Albee and Smith of Minneapolis, who carried out the work in the face of difficult conditions with the utmost fidelity and in a splendid spirit of co-operation.

On July 10th, 1916, the corner stone was laid. The ceremony was presided over by the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. E. C. Copeland. The principal address was given by Secretary of Labor W. B. Wilson. The building was finished and occupied by the County, March 1st, 1918.

Sioux City is a thriving little city of some seventy thousand inhabitants situated on the Missouri river in the northwest corner of Iowa, where the plains of South Dakota and Nebraska roll to meet the Iowa hills. It is in the center of perhaps the richest agricultural territory in the world. It has many things in common with all our hustling American cities, its peculiarities being that it has experienced both the heights and the depths of the results of our curious economic system, prosperity beyond the wildest dreams of avarice, following a zero point depression which resulted from the deflation of the "boom" of some thirty years ago. Its architecture shows the same general types as most of our middle-western cities. Here are Roman Temple banks, perforated-box warehouses, plate-glass store fronts, business-like (in varying degrees) office-buildings, busy streets congested by automobiles. One out of every six persons in Sioux City rides in a car.

When you find the Court House just north of an Uncle Sam transmogrification of the Palazzo Vecchio or the Palazzo Publico (I forget which), the Post Office; just northeast of the rock-faced Romanesque City Hall, east (across the street) from an ugly, barn-like structure dignified by the name of "Auditorium,"

southeast from a new fireproof automobile storage building, and south from a billboard with its promise for the future that Richard Roe will build there, you are conscious of a halting of the breath and a tightening at your throat.

Serene, almost impudent it stands there. You feel a sense of illusion about its reality which leaves you presently to be followed by the feeling that the building itself is the only reality and its surroundings are the phantoms. Unconsciously you find yourself eliminating the incongruous environment and seeing the building surrounded by a kind of Elysian field from which goes up to the unclouded Iowa sky a gentle murmur that can only be caused by grown-ups happily at work, and, yes, you can hear also the sweet voices of children at play.

A fine ripple of movement plays along the west front. What classic colonnade was ever finer than this stately row of brick, (yes, brick) piers with a charming interplay of ornament, light and shadow? The entrance is at once the focal point, with the majestic Mosaic figure which can mean none other than the mighty spirit of the LAW. To him as he stands there, aged and slumbrous, but strong armed and mighty, flow the tide of human life as it exists in organized society. All types are there, the old and the young, the soldier, the laborer, the father, the mother, the mystic, the poet, the man of affairs, the gay and the irresponsible and they who have known grief.

Above on the great quiet space which crowns the sequence of piers, we read, "Justice and Peace have met together. Truth has sprung out of the Earth." Amen. Let us hope, we say to that, and pass around to the north side where two great, elemental figures adorn the entrance, the man and the woman. The woman bears tenderly a little child. At once you see the connection and the symbolism. Here is the social unit, the Family, and we saw a moment ago Society as constituted under Law. Alfonso Iannelli of Park Ridge, Illinois, was the sculptor. We are impressed by the splendid spiritual quality of his work. It is elemental but not crude. It is worked out with fine dignity and restraint. It is not *applied* sculpture. It is organic and belongs in very truth to this building and nowhere else. What higher praise can be given to architectural sculpture?



We walk slowly around the building, though to do so we must traverse alleys on two sides. It is intensely interesting in its articulation and challenges our careful thought. Admiration grows as we gaze. We see a stately building of Roman brick, granite at the base and at the copings, enlivened with wonderfully modeled polychrome terra cotta, the entrance enriched with

vivid mosaic and bronze doors and grilles. The windows are a study in their simple unity of scheme and interesting variation in form. Above, at a height of about sixty feet, is the sheer granite coping, and the eye rests there and follows back along the horizontal bands that terminate the lower portion of the structure, before following the fascinating appeal of the "tower." This latter impresses one as a building of glass saved from the appearance of frailness by the powerful treatment of piers and corners. The great eagle (Iannelli's work) stretching westward is emblematic of the spirit of progress which made this building possible. A little later we see on the east side of the building, great bison heads, a gentle tribute to the earlier days, these latter modeled by Schneider.

The general color tones are a rich, light brown, too deep for buff, pleasantly varied and meeting congenially the color of the granite and the unglazed, natural burned-clay color of the terra cotta. This latter has been interspersed judiciously with a rich rendering of the same material in polychrome. The colors run the gamut of the primary tones, but so deftly are they handled that the eye is conscious only of a fine brilliance in the whole texture. The windows and their frames are metal and are enameled in a vivid blue with the sash picked out in a delicate gray which has almost the value of white in contrast. The sash throughout are of the casement type and filled with leaded glass of a very open and free pattern with beautifully regulated color spots giving an excellent over all value to the building as a whole.

We are made eager by what we have seen to go inside and see what it is all about, so different is our feeling from the ordinary impression gained from looking at a public building. In the usual case, after seeing the exterior we feel that the story is told, but not so with this Sioux City building. Here we feel that the most interesting part is still to come. Before we go inside, however, let us stop a bit and in the shadow of this earnest and sincere-looking building discuss its reason for being.

For the philosophy underlying the working out of the particular problem presented by this building no extended research is necessary. It represents the fearless application of logic and common sense to the problem, and its solution in conscientious accord with the fundamental principles of art. Ancient traditions have been dealt with in respect to what they stand for and really mean. The spirit of emulation of the past is here, not the veiled "we love the classic so" that ever seems to serve as a cloak to shield the inapt and the lazy in the development of this great art of building. So it would seem to the layman.

The Court House problem here was studied in its historic unfolding and brought squarely down to date. Did space permit it would be interesting to trace the history of the administration of justice in England and