

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
State Historical Society of Iowa
Iowa Site Inventory Form
Continuation Sheet

Site Number __ 82-00414 _____
Related District Number _____

Page ____ 1 ____

Name of Property _____ Davenport City Hall _____ County _____ Scott _____

Address _____ 226 W. 4th Street _____ City _____ Davenport _____

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Davenport City Hall is located on Lots 7 & 8, Block 46 of LeClaire's 1st Addition. The building is sited on the northeast corner of the intersection of West 4th and Harrison Streets; its primary façade faces south, with a secondary elevation facing west. It is bound on the north by a commercial structure of much smaller scale, and by an alley on the east. A public sidewalk provides access to the building's entrances on West 4th Street and on Harrison Street.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The four-story Davenport City Hall is constructed of sandstone in the monumental style known as the Richardsonian Romanesque. As in this building, the style is generally expressed in stone and commonly integrates elements such as Roman arches, rusticated stone, and towers; all found in the Davenport City Hall. In addition, the building incorporates gable ends and corner towers in a complex, asymmetrical form. The net result is a structure of great mass and visual character.

An addition has been constructed on the north side of the building, which does not in any way correlate to the original architecture of the building, but rather detracts from the west elevation. The three-story addition is clad in white stucco, which is visually glaring against the sandstone color of the historic building.

Condition

Despite the unsightly addition made to the north of the building and the introduction of modern materials to its fenestration, the Davenport City Hall retains a high level of historic integrity. This is due in great part to the monumentality of the structure; an element indicative of the Richardsonian Romanesque and central to the issue of integrity.

The scale of this structure makes a reasonable assessment of its condition beyond the scope of the current survey, however, it should be noted that no significant deterioration was identified from the vantage point of the street level.

PROPERTY HISTORY

The Davenport City Hall was constructed in 1895 to house the offices of the Davenport city government, after a design by Davenport architect, John W. Ross. The building has functioned in that capacity from the time of its construction. Several additions have been made to the north side of the building.

John Ross came to Davenport in 1874. In addition to the City Hall, he is noted for his design of the Fire King Station (Hose Station No. 1) on Perry Street, and the 1888 supervision of the Scott County Courthouse, following the death of the building's original architect, John C. Cochrane.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Davenport City Hall was placed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Then, as now, the building was considered significant under Criterion A in its association with the history of city government. In addition, the building is considered significant under Criterion C as an important, and increasingly rare, expression of the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

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View of the Davenport City Hall, looking northeast from West Fourth Street.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

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View of west elevation and Harrison streetscape. Note the addition to the north elevation (white columnar entrance.)

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

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View of north elevation, looking southwest. From this vantage point the piling up of additions and mechanical systems is apparent.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

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View of the primary (4th Street) entrance, which features a prominent Roman arch supported by short columns with ornately carved capitals.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

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Detail view of the building's clock tower. The massive strength of the Richardsonian Romanesque is clearly and beautifully expressed in the tower.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

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Detail view of a column that flanks the building's entrances. This column is located on the building's west elevation.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting – November 2004)

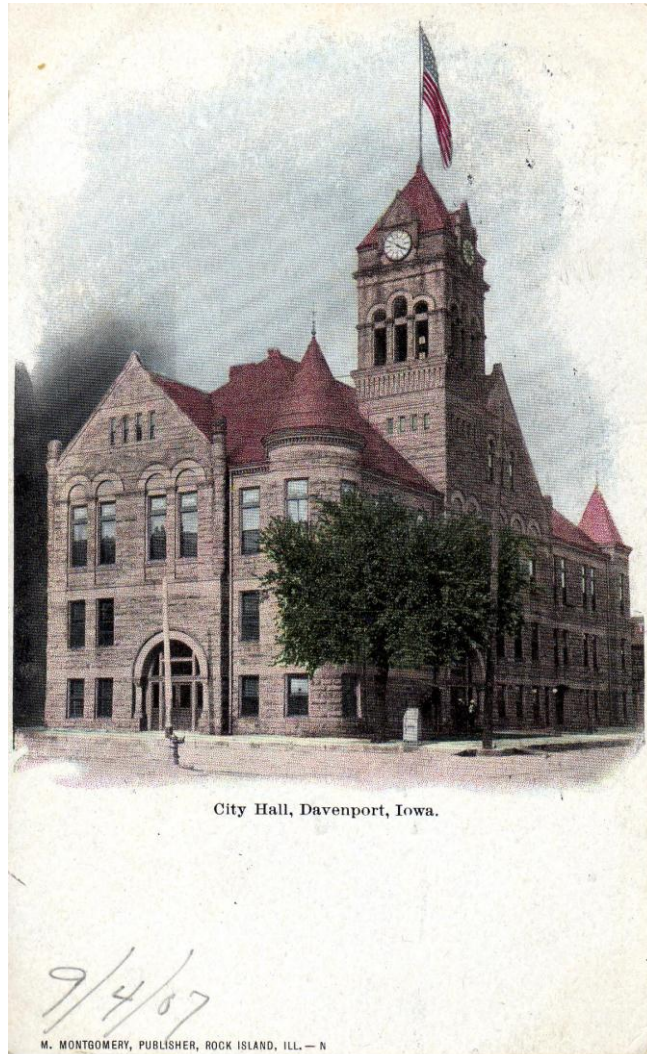
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This postcard image dates to 1907 and illustrates that, despite the introduction of modern windows and the addition made to the north of the building, the Davenport City Hall retains a relatively high level of architectural integrity.

(SOURCE: AKAY Consulting Postcard Collection: Image #08169-021005)

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This undated image (c.1925) documents the Davenport City Hall within the context of its historic streetscape. It has been suggested that the image was taken while the building was being cleaned – note the difference in tone of the stone surface and what appears to be hanging scaffolding.

(SOURCE: Davenport Public Library – Sloane-Richardson Special Collections)

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs

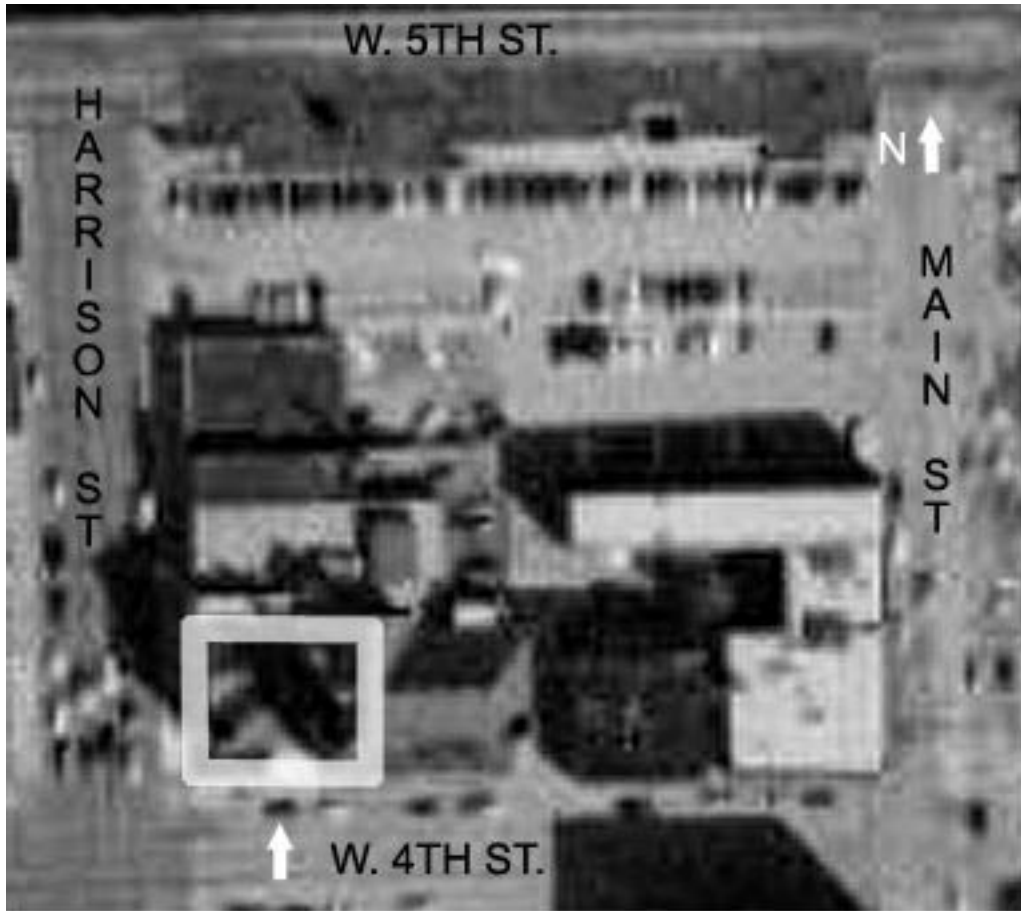
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The arrow indicates the location of the Davenport City Hall.

(SOURCE: City of Davenport – Planning Department – 1/2005)

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Special Collections

Davenport Public Library; Richardson-Sloane Special Collections
Davenport City Directory Collection 1890-1940
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Collection
Quad Cities Photograph Collection

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History Publications

Shank, Wesley. "Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary". University of Iowa Press: Iowa City, Iowa, 1999.

Local Publications

Svendsen, Marlys. "Davenport, Where the River Runs West: A Survey of Davenport History & Architecture". ND

Internet Resources

www.scottcountyiowa.com/assessor. Scott County Assessor.