

Existing Conditions Report

Griffin Old City Hall

Griffin, GA



Surveyed for
The City of Griffin, Georgia

Surveyed by
Preservation South, LLC

June, 2015

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Cover Graphic: Historic Postcard of Griffin City Hall, Boston Public Library Collection

Executive Summary:

The Old City Hall building in Griffin, GA was constructed in 1910 based on plans created by noted Atlanta Architect Haralson Bleckley in the Beaux Arts Style. The masonry building is a multiuse facility designed to house city administration, the fire department, and the police department and jail, as well as an auditorium space. The building was occupied in total or in part until the 1990's when it became vacant and used for storage. Over the course of its history, the building has undergone a number of modifications including the removal of historic walls and the construction of non-historic walls, the removal of interior architectural features and the addition of paneling and drop ceilings. The building was originally constructed using time tested materials including lime based plaster vs. gypsum and full dimensional lumber etc. which have allowed it to remain sound through continued periods of deferred maintenance. The building was included in the Georgia Trust's Places in Peril for 2014 and the city included its rehabilitation in the SPLOST referendum for that year, which was voted down.

In 2015, the City of Griffin commissioned an Existing Conditions Report (ECR) of the Old City Hall to determine the buildings needs and a more accurate cost of appropriately restoring it to its former glory. The following ECR was developed utilizing archival research of the buildings original appearance, systematic on site inspection and evaluation of the building, and consultation with qualified sub contractors. The level of restoration, materials choices, and treatment of the building and its elements were made in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, which is the bench mark for sensitively addressing an historic building like the Old City Hall. The assessment found that approximately 50% of the buildings interior spaces had been significantly altered through the addition or removal of walls. Significant features like the right oak stair case in the lobby and the stage in the auditorium were previously removed. The building currently suffers from significant and prolonged water damage from large areas of missing shingles that are not adequately addressed by tarps. This water infiltration has resulted in plaster loss and damage to the original hardwood floors. All of the mechanical equipment and electrical service is antiquated and in poor repair and should be replaced.



(City Hall Today)

Existing Condition Report Background:

The Old Griffin City Hall has been a corner stone of the downtown commercial district for over a century. The building ceased its use as a public building in the 1990's and has suffered from deferred maintenance since that time. There have been attempts to sell the building or discussions of tearing it down and the building was placed on the 2014 *Places in Peril* List by the Georgia Trust. The City of Griffin had the building evaluated by an engineer who found it retains enough structural integrity to be restored. An opinion of renovation cost was also received by the city from a local construction firm based solely on an estimated cost per square foot. The renovation of Old City Hall was then added to the SPLOST referendum in 2014 which failed to pass. In the spring of 2015, the city contracted with Preservation South, LLC to complete an Existing Conditions Report for the building based on the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* in order to come up with a more accurate cost estimate for the buildings rehabilitation.

Historic Background:

The Old City Hall was constructed in 1910 at the corner of Sixth and Solomon Streets on the site of the former city hospital. The building was designed by prominent Georgia Architect Haralson Bleckley who in addition to designing this building also designed the replacement city hospital on Meriwether Street. The building is executed in the Beaux Arts style which was very popular in the period for large civic buildings in major cities, but is rare in smaller communities like Griffin. The building was constructed for a cost of fifty thousand dollars at the time and was created to serve multiple functions for the community including city government offices, police department, fire department, and an auditorium space. The building was widely celebrated in the papers of the day as a fine new home for the City and quickly became the background for many community activities.

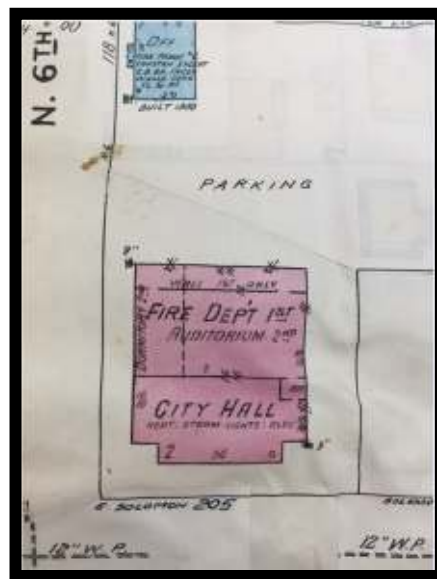
The building was modified a number of times over its history as the needs of the city and its agencies changed. The cupola seen in early pictures came off the roof in a storm some time in the middle of the 19th century. The jail in the basement was updated and a police station addition was built on the right of the buildings basement. A stair tower was also added to the rear of the building to provide egress from the Auditorium on the second floor and the fire hall bay doors were widened in order to accommodate the larger trucks. In the interior, various walls were added and removed over time, and the stage was removed from the auditorium, and the right hand main staircase was removed for additional office space.

Survey Scope:

The Survey of the buildings existing conditions was conducted based on the guidelines put forth in *Conditions Report Assessment Guidelines for Historic Structures*, prepared by William Hover, Technical Services Unit, Georgia Department of Natural Resources - Historic Preservation Division, 2008 (REV). The survey visually assessed the buildings needs with regard to historic materials, character defining features, historic spatial relationships, mechanical systems and historic finishes. The survey did not assess the structural stability of the building, the surrounding site, or specific modifications based on a to be determined use. It also did not include the development of as built floor plans, per the cities request. The survey also did not include the use of any invasive assessment techniques, therefore issues inside walls and in between floors could not be assessed conclusively. Determinations were made based on the visible surface indications and patterns of damage within the building.

Survey Methodology:

The Survey was initiated by researching the history of the building and locating as many historic photos from the building's past in order to have a baseline for the identification of missing or damaged architectural elements. This information was compiled along with archival newspaper accounts of the buildings construction and use to develop a context for the building. The site was then assessed in a systematic fashion in order identify missing or damaged features that should be replaced or restored. Additionally, the building was evaluated for later additions like structures, walls, ceilings and mechanical.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Griffin, Griffin Archives Collection

Existing Conditions Report Findings

General Overview:

The assessment of the building found that it was in remarkably good shape given the extended period of differed maintenance and disuse. The building's needs can be categorized into two main categories: water infiltration related and insensitive remodeling related. The primary water infiltration related issues associated with the building are related to roof leaks and clogged internal downspouts that have gone unaddressed for long periods of time. The water infiltration from the roof has caused significant damage to the plaster work on the ceilings and some of the walls. The water has also caused significant damage to areas of the hardwood floors and potentially the subfloor. Additionally, the internal downspouts nearest the street corner were reoriented to the exterior and have backed up, resulting in the erosion of the mortar joints and the need for re-pointing. The basement continues to take on water from the roof leaks and there are signs of rising damp in the brick foundation walls.

Alterations to the building over its history have resulted in the loss of interior architectural elements, including some of a character defining nature. In the lobby, the twin of the existing stair case was removed and walls were put up to divide the space. In the auditorium, the stage was removed and the rear wall was taken out. The room was then subdivided into multiple spaces and the ceiling lowered. A stair well for fire egress was added to the back of the building which resulted in the two center windows being covered over. Many of the walls were covered in faux wood paneling at some point and the historic trim was removed in order to add furring strips for the paneling. Many of the floors, including the Terrazzo in the lobby, were covered with multiple layers of linoleum tile, the bottom layer of which likely contains asbestos.

The buildings mechanical systems are unusable at this point. The building did not have central air when it was constructed and the units currently in the building are poorly placed and the ducts are installed for dropped ceilings. The building had a boiler system for radiant heat which has been removed too. The plumbing system has not been utilized in many years and likely is no longer sound. The buildings wiring appears to be supported by knob and tube wires from the era of construction. This system is a fire hazard and is unusable. The building does have a fire sprinkler system, but likely has not had a flow check in at least a decade and it is installed for the dropped ceiling.

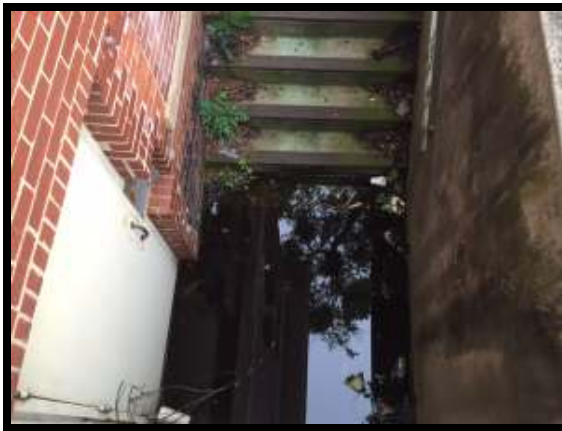
Exterior Features

Foundations:

The building is constructed with a masonry perimeter foundation of brick with a few masonry cross walls and a field of wood posts. The foundation walls appear to be in good shape and no signs of significant settling or deflection. The interior walls do show signs of rising damp where moisture wicks up from the ground through the masonry which can cause degradation of mortar joints over time. The wood piers supporting the floor above appear to be in good shape.

Recommendations:

Repairing the roof will remove a significant amount of the water that is currently pooling in the basement. Additional moisture could be removed through the installation of a dehumidification system and site work to make sure the surrounding grade drains water away from the building effectively. The basement stairs on the sixth street side does not drain effectively and this should be addressed in any future work. Any future work that restores the internal downspout system should make sure that the drain lines are sound below grade, as well as in the walls.



(L) Pooling Water outside basement door (R) Signs of rising damp in basement

Masonry:

The building is primarily constructed on brick masonry walls in common bond. The two primary facades facing Sixth and Solomon Streets are in a high quality red brick with limestone trim. The secondary facades are constructed of a lesser quality brick of local clay. The brick walls are in good shape for their age but there are signs of erosion where the copper downspouts have over flown and washed the mortar joints away over time and now require re-pointing. Also, two foot portions of the brick walls were removed on the outer edges of the fire bay doors. The limestone belt course in that area was also removed, and the remainder of the lime stone is stained with dirt and biological growth.

Recommendations:

The missing brick and limestone around the fire hall doors should be replaced with in-kind materials that match the color, strength and makeup of the originals, including the mortar materials. The areas where the mortar joints have eroded should be re-pointed using mortar that matches the original in material make up, strength, color, and is the same profile as the original. The entire building should be cleaned low pressure rinses and mild detergent, the limestone should be cleaned using D2 Biologic cleaner per the manufacturers instructions.



(L) Damage to masonry walls around fire bay doors (R) Signs of overflow eroding brick

Windows:

The buildings original wood windows are 8/2 double hung sashes with large half round fan lights that tilt in for ventilation on the front facade and in the court room. The windows have undergone significant water and light degradation over the years and many panes of glass and a few of the lower sash muttons are missing. The basement windows on the front façade have been bricked up and two of the auditorium windows were closed off for the addition of a rear stair tower. The right window in the auditorium has been replaced with an inappropriate replacement and should be returned to its original configuration. None of the existing windows are operable at this time.

Recommendations:

All of the windows need to be removed and restored by a qualified professional by replacing rotten wood and missing or broken glass with a new pane that matches the original level of waves and imperfections. The old glazing should be removed and replaced with new glazing compound. All of the windows should receive new weather stripping on all edges of each sash and the sash cords should be replaced. Interior storm windows can be added to increase the energy efficiency of the windows if necessary.



(L) Bricked in basement windows (R) Mortise and tenon construction of original windows

Cornice:

The large cornice on the primary façade of the building is made of stamped metal and then painted to match the limestone. The metal is in remarkable shape for its age, but does show signs of corrosion around fasteners and joints. Additionally, two of the triangular pieces under the triglyphs on the front façade are missing.

Recommendation:

The cornice should be stripped of paint using soda blasting after a small test patch is completed to make sure it does not etch the metal. The cornice should then be primed using a good quality corrosion inhibiting primer and then repainted.



(L) View of cornice sections (R) Metal Cornice showing corrosion and copper top

Roof:

The existing roof is comprised of a parapet wall and concealed gutter with drains, all covered in sheets of soldered copper. The sloped portion of the pyramidal roof is made of 1 inch board sheathing with at least three layers of deteriorated asphalt shingles. The top portion of the roof where the roof access and cupola were located is also flat panels of soldered copper. The asphalt shingles are missing, or significantly degraded, over much of the roof, and the interior downspouts are clogged and leaking. The cupola is now missing from the top of the roof and there are no visible support or anchor points evident.

Recommendations:

The roof is the main cause of the buildings issues and should be the top priority dealt with before any other issue can be addressed. The copper roofing is heavy gauge, and in good shape overall, and should be preserved and restored by a qualified contractor. Any leaking seams should be cleaned and re-soldered in the copper roofing and around the roof drains. The roof drains should be cleaned, and relined with epoxy, and sealed around the drain cover. The existing asphalt roof should be removed and the decking material that is water damaged should be replaced in kind. The roof should be covered in an ice and water membrane and then new faux slate should be installed with a copper half round ridge cap. The cupola should be replaced using exterior grade materials based on the many historic images of the cupola. It should be mounted securely to the roof using noncorrosive anchors and flashing to protect against moisture. If the cupola is to be constructed in a future phase, its construction should be planned from the beginning, and its mounting system should be installed and weatherproofed prior to the installation of the new roof.



(L) Current roof showing copper plates and ruined tarps (R) Signs or roof leak

Interior Features

Flooring:

The existing flooring is 1.5 inch strip oak which was popular at the time the building was constructed but is not a standard form today. Much of the original floors are significantly damaged due to roof leaks or covered by glued down vinyl tiles and will need to be replaced. In the Auditorium, the mounting holes and spacing of the original theatre seats are evident, as well as the original floor stain tone. In the foyer and stair hall, the original floors are terrazzo, which is a mixture of cement and marble chips in a white tone with a reddish trim band, which appear to be in good shape.

Recommendation:

The terrazzo floors can be cleaned with a medium soft scrubber and mild detergent. The spacing of the auditorium seats and the floor stain color should be documented for future replication. The damaged wood flooring should be removed and replaced with new material that matches the original in dimension, milling direction, and species. The floors should then be finished in place using stain that matched the original and a satin varnish.



(L) Terrazzo floor with border (R) Wood floor showing mounting and wear pattern of seats

Plaster:

The buildings walls are covered in lime based plaster in a smooth finish. Lime based plaster is superior to gypsum based plaster that became popular in the twentieth century because lime plaster can get wet without degrading, while gypsum will chemically deteriorate. The areas where the plaster has failed are primarily on the ceiling, and are caused by the excess weight of water from the leaking roof, which caused the plaster keys to fail and the plaster to fall. The remainder of the damage is from insensitive alterations like adding duct work and removing transoms. The remaining walls and ceilings have been covered with furring strips and faux wood paneling and dropped ceilings that are not historically appropriate.

Recommendation:

The paneling, furring strips, and dropped ceiling should be removed and patched where necessary. The original plaster should be checked for loose sections that may fall, and any areas identified as unsound should be removed. The remaining plaster needs to be repaired using lime based plaster applied by a qualified contractor. The building needs to be acclimatized for at least six months before the plaster is painted in order for the excess moisture to escape, otherwise, it will force the paint off the plaster.

It is possible to remove all the plaster and replace it with drywall, but additional costs for demolition and removal of the existing plaster may be incurred.



(L) Plaster ceiling damage (R) Water damage to wall plaster paint

Trim:

The existing trim is a mixture of oak in the more public areas and pine in the secondary spaces. The building has tall 12 inch baseboards and panelized wainscot in the lobby and auditorium. The door and window casing is slightly more elaborate in the primary spaces and simplified in the secondary with the addition of a chair rail. There are surviving examples of all of the trim in the building, but considerable portions are missing where doors were moved and later paneling was added.

Recommendation:

The missing trim should be replaced with like materials that match the profile and dimension of the original. The remaining original trim should be stripped to bare wood and all of the trim, new and old, should be refinished based on the original stain and varnish combination.



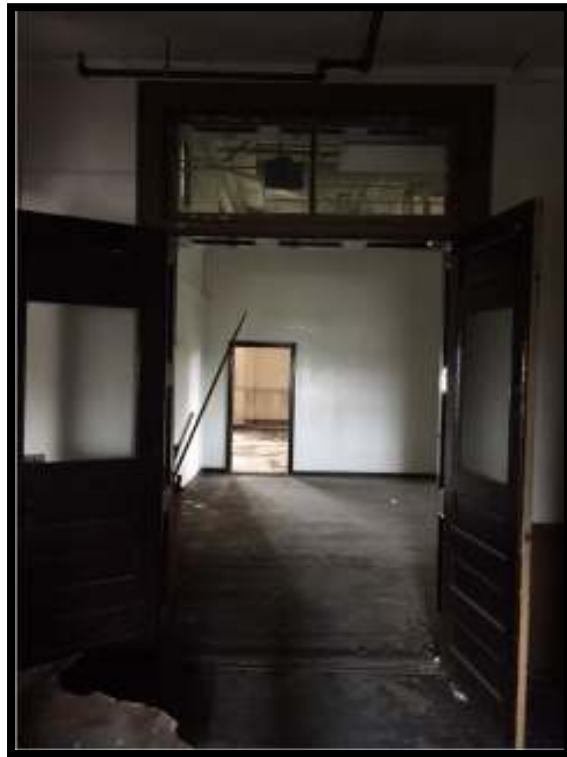
(L) Trim and Wainscot in Auditorium (R) Outline of missing steps and stage

Doors:

The original doors in the building were 6 horizontal panel oak doors which only survive in a few locations. The remainder of the doors have been replaced with glass or hollow core doors that are incompatible with the buildings historic character. The original doors have brass hinges and handles typical of that era. Many of the doors had operable glass transoms to allow light and air into the center of the building, but most of them have been removed.

Recommendation:

The missing original doors should be replaced with new wood doors that match the originals in design, profile, dimension, and material, including the operable transoms. The surviving original doors should be stripped and refinished to match the original along with the new replacement doors. All of the hardware should be replaced with new unlacquered brass that matches the original in size and profile. The interior set of front doors between the vestibule and lobby should be glazed similar to the auditorium doors on the second floor.



(L) Existing six panel door in bathroom (R) Glazed auditorium doors with transom

Staircases:

One main staircase with large newel posts, turned balustrades, and heavy rail survives on the left side of the lobby. A twin stair has been removed on the right side and a new floor installed in its place. There is also a stair to the auditorium balcony on the left side of the second floor that has significant water damage. In the rear left corner of the building, there is a metal stair case that has suffered water damage from roof leaks and is too narrow for current fire egress standards. The rear of the building has a large fire escape stair well that detracts from the buildings architectural integrity.

Recommendation:

The surviving main stair should be stripped and repaired to be used as a template for the reconstruction of the right stair out of matching materials with identical profiles, scale and layout. The balcony stair should be repaired with new materials where the existing is significantly degraded. The rear corner stair does not meet fire code and should be reconstructed with a 4 foot width. The rear fire escape stair well should be removed and the back wall repaired.



(L) Water damage in surviving stair well (R) Exterior stair well addition in rear

Mechanical:

The building was constructed before the use of Air Conditioning, and was originally heated by radiators powered by a boiler in the basement. Over time, the boiler was removed and the windows were sealed shut for the addition of central heat and air. Multiple HVAC units were installed with duct work run through walls and above the dropped ceilings that are now functionally obsolete.

Recommendation:

All of the existing mechanical equipment and duct work should be removed and replaced with new high efficiency equipment in the basement and attic where the duct work can be run under the floor or above the ceiling respectively. A high pressure system with a low profile vent opening should be considered in order to limit the visual impact.



(L) Duct work added to the lobby (R) Ducts in the Auditorium

Lighting/ Electrical:

The current electrical system appears to be a combination of new wiring and original knob and tube. This system is dangerous and has a significant risk of fire.

Recommendation:

The existing electrical service should be replaced completely with new service that meets current code. The current fixtures in the building are not historically accurate and should be replaced with modern electrical fixtures that are appropriate to the era. These include push button switches and three tiers of lighting; Beaux Arts pendants in the public spaces, school house pendants in the office spaces, and period industrial fixtures in the fire hall areas.



(L) Knob and tube wiring in attic (R) Non-original light fixture in auditorium

Plumbing:

The buildings cast iron plumbing has not been used in many years and may not hold pressure at this point. Many of the current plumbing locations are not conducive to the future use of the building.

Recommendation:

The plumbing system should be assessed by a qualified plumbing contractor and the lines reoriented to new plumbing locations, based on future rehabilitation plans. Original plumbing fixtures in good shape should be salvaged and restored where possible.



(L) Original plumbing with signs of corrosion (R) Missing boiler in basement

Fire Suppression:

The building currently has a fire suppression system on all floors and the attic with the main stack located in the lobby. The system has not been flushed in many years and the heads should be checked before it is pressurized again. The system was also installed in conjunction with the installation of the dropped ceiling which required heads oriented down and up below the original ceiling.

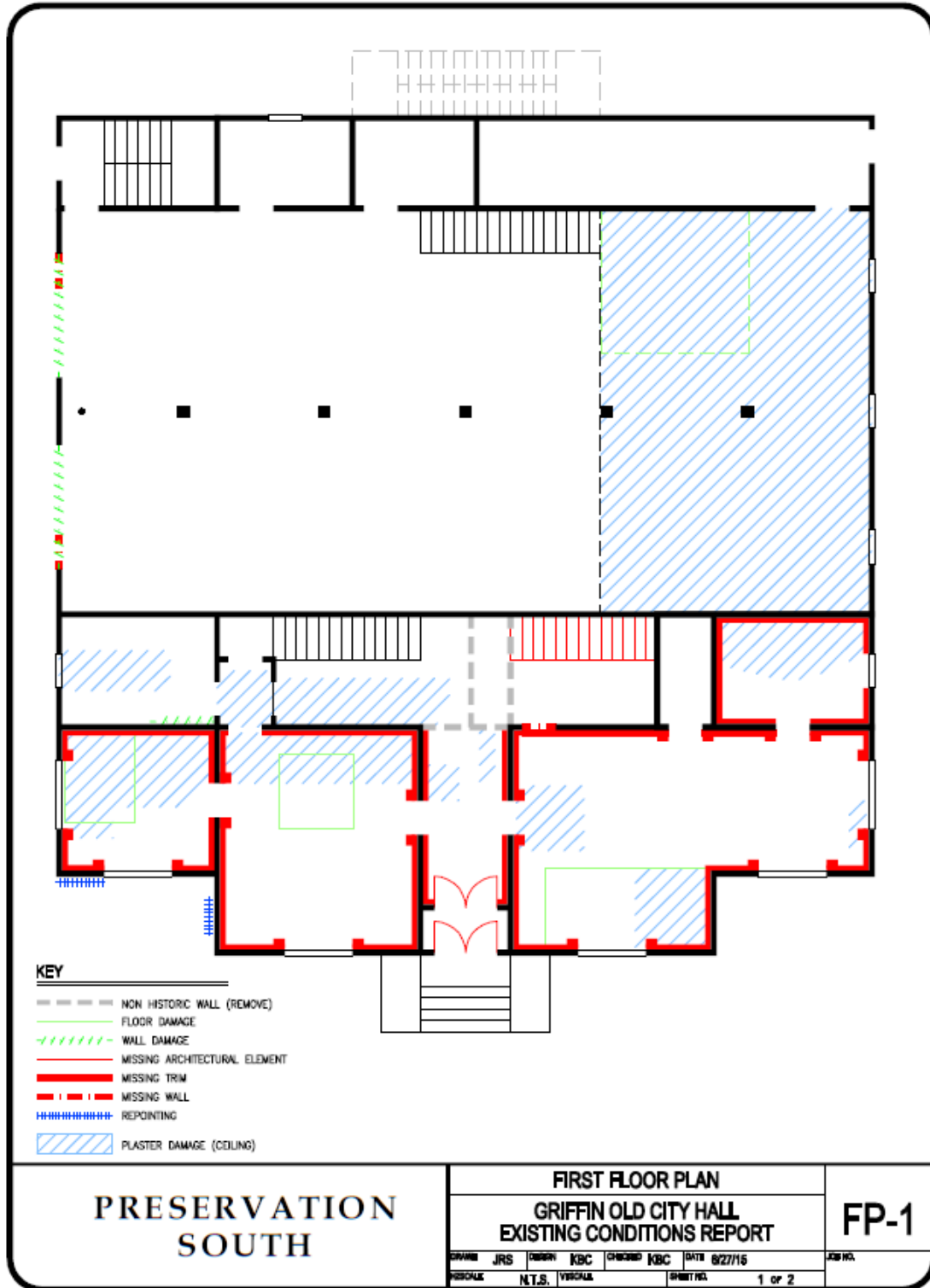
Recommendation:

The fire suppression system is an asset to the building and should be maintained and restored in a future rehabilitation. The system can be left intact in the attic, but should be reconfigured on the remaining floors to place the pipes behind the plaster and the heads recessed in the ceiling with a cover. The main stand pipe should be relocated out of the lobby and into a more discrete location.

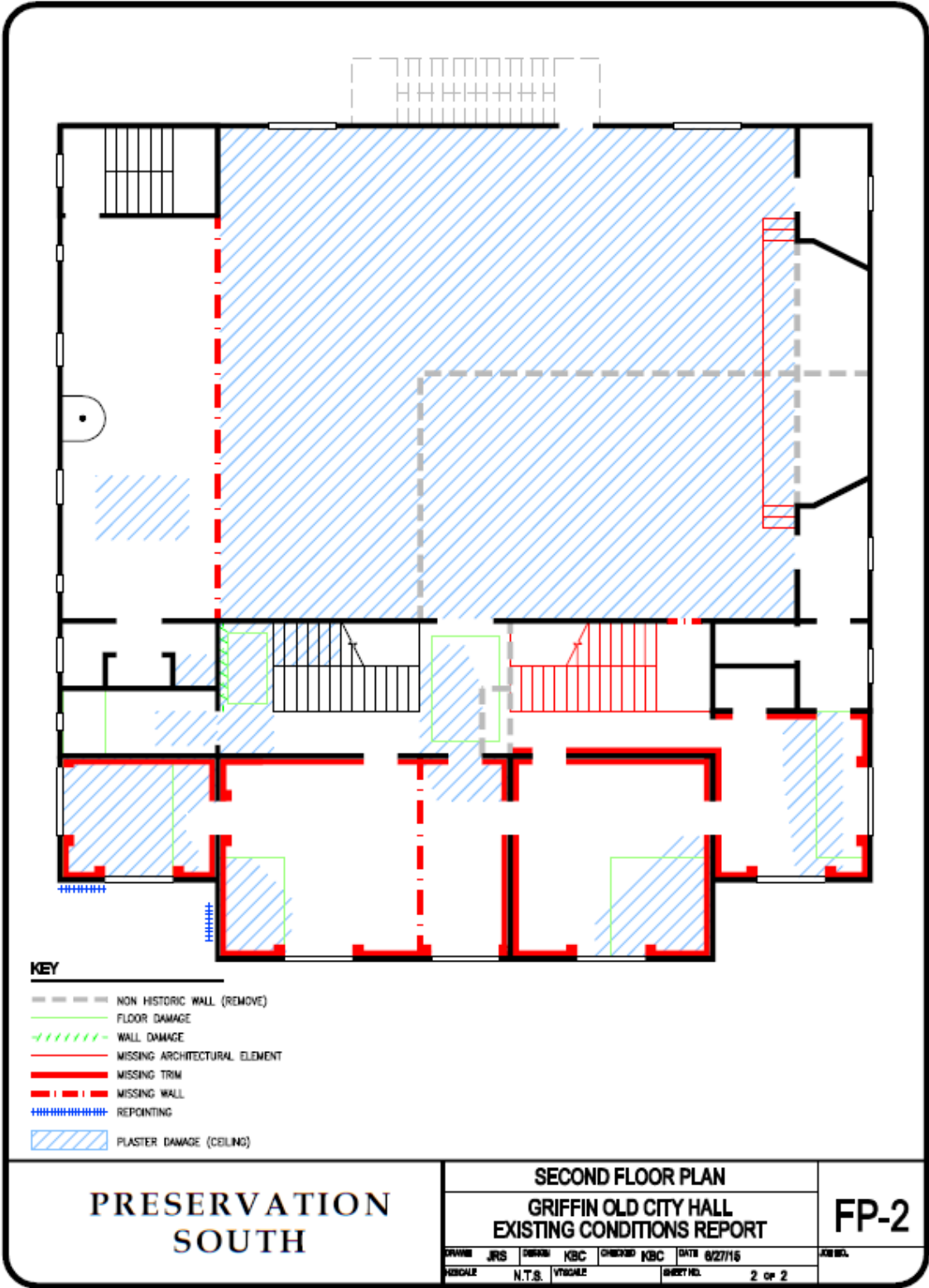


(L) Sprinkler pipes in first floor ceiling (R) Stand pipe in foyer behind door

Condition Issues, First Floor



Condition Issues, Second Floor



Estimated Rehabilitation Costs:

Griffin Old City Hall (C.1910)

Total Square Footage 16,532 (Estimate)

Budget Item:	Cost per:	Total:	Note:
Wood Floor (1.5")	\$12/SqFt	133,056	Inc. Shipping, Demo and Finish
Sub Floor Repl.	\$5/SqFt	50,000	50% replacement
Demolition	\$5/SqFt	85,000	Interior
Asbestos Abatement	\$4/SqFt	66,000	Floor tile and pipes
Lead Abatement	\$10/SqFt	83,000	Trim/spalling walls
Plaster Repair	\$13/SqFt	201,314	Lime based plaster
Drywall	\$4/SqFt	123,886	N/A if plaster repaired
Plaster Demo	\$5/SqFt	154,330	To put up drywall, N/A plaster
Wood Stripping	\$10/LFt	20,000	Public spaces
Trim	\$10/LFt	15,000	Oak or Pine depending on room
Paint/ Stain	\$3/SqFt	93,000	Interior
Stencil/ Faux		20,000	Public Spaces
Mural(s)		50,000	Public Spaces
New Stair Case		35,000	Recreate missing oak stair
Doors	\$600/each	18,000	With Jamb
Transom	\$250/each	10,000	With Hardware
Door Hardware	\$100/door	3,000	Knob, lock, hinges
Glass Wall	\$150/SqFt	40,000	Fire Hall doors
Windows	\$2,000/each	84,000	Repair or Replace in kind
Insulation	\$3/SqFt	18,000	Attic
Fire Sprinkler	\$3.50/SqFt	60,000	New for all floors by attic
Roof		100,000	Repair copper, faux slate
Internal Downspout	\$100/LFt	21,000	Clear and reline
Cupola		35,000	Recreate from photos
Soda Blast Cornice		5,000	Metal exterior cornice
Sheet metal repair		10,000	Exterior Cornice
New Brick	\$3/each	1,800	Fire Hall arches
New Limestone		5,000	Fire Hall Doors
Fire Hall Doors WD		10,000	Outer doors, two pair
Clean Limestone		3,000	Using D2
Landscaping		10,000	
Light Standards		40,000	Cast to match missing two
Addition demo		40,000	Stair and Police wing
Fire Stair Mod.		20,000	Widen rear stair if required
Elevator		125,000	3 Stop
Electrical rough in		140,000	
Plumbing		150,000	

HVAC		200,000	High pressure system
Lighting Fixtures		75,000	Period appropriate/ 3 levels
Architect Team		85,000	Architect/ Engineer
Pres. Proj. Mgr.	4%	100,000	Restoration oversight
Furniture		100,000	Allowance
PLASTER Total	\$141/SqFt	2,330,200	+ 30% Cont. (699,060)
Grand Total			3,029,230 (Plaster)
DRYWALL Total	\$145/SqFt	2,407,082	+ 30% Cont. (722,124)
Grand Total			3,129,206 (Drywall)

Notes on Restoration Cost:

- Some costs can be brought down by using inmates work crews and city staff where appropriate.
- Costs suppose the front half of the basement is gutted and converted to public bathrooms.
- Stenciling/ Faux Painting were popular interior ornamentation techniques during the period the building was constructed and would be appropriate to recreate in the public spaces and on the pilasters.
- Murals were also popular ornamental elements of public buildings of the period and would be appropriate to create in the lobby and in the auditorium.
- The glass wall is for the fire hall bay doors to make them weather tight while allowing the wood doors to remain open for light.
- The HVAC system is estimated as a high velocity system with small vents for low visual impact.
- Lighting fixtures are estimated based on three levels of recreated fixtures appropriate to the period; the selection of different fixtures will alter the estimate.
- The Preservation Project Manager provides on site supervision and quality control for the project to ensure that the work is completed according to the standards.

Appendix:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.