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THE SYMBOLIC IMPLICATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT
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SYMBOLIC IMPLICATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT CITY HALLS IN GREATER LANSING, MICHIGAN

By

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ABSTRACT

SYMBOLIC IMPLICATIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT CITY HALLS IN GREATER LANSING, MICHIGAN

By

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The Preservation Act of 1966 has created much awareness in the United States, in terms of enhancing the protection of many worthy historic structures. This study has been partly inspired by this legislation and explores the symbolic implications of past and present city halls of Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan from 1895-1988. It investigates the symbolic implications of city halls and determines the cultural, historic and stylistic impact, if any, these buildings have on each city. An interdisciplinary approach was used with a contextual analysis.

Sources include blueprints of city hall buildings, city planning guides, newspapers, journals, photographs and books.

The study concludes that preservation was rarely considered when the original city halls could not meet their increasing demands for space, efficiency and image. Therefore, as time passed, the communities found it more appropriate to rebuild anew, and in the process to reflect

the cultural values of their time in the new city halls. In effect, the demolition of the old city halls meant the destruction of important cultural values of the time.

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I extend special thanks to my family and friends who have supported me. They continue to re-kindle my sanity, my sense of direction and my sense of humor.

I will always be deeply grateful to my Grandfather, "Neetunkasheela," whose love, support, and generosity made it possible for me to continue my education.

"Perhaps it is the strength of such buildings as symbols that accounts for the preservation of so many of the major ones. . . . But the force of that symbolism often fails to rub-off on lesser public buildings, many of them of greater architectural distinction. A city councilman might shudder if he heard the Capitol was going to be torn down, but he will vote without qualm to raze the old city hall and build a new one. He will have little regard for the relative quality of what will be lost and what will be gained, and the chances are that the quality will not be as good. . . .

The fault is all ours. If as citizens we value efficient office cubicles and inefficient but cheap parking arrangements over an expression of the majesty and dignity of our form of government, we will get what we deserve."

LOST AMERICA

Constance M. Greiff, Editor

PREFACE

The popular mid-1970's song by Joni Mitchell, "They Tore Down Paradise and Put up a Parking Lot," should be designated as the memorial anthem for all razed architecture. Had valuable architecture been saved, protected and maintained, it might have enlightened present and future generations through its cultural, historic, and stylistic significance. Although very late in coming, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 has been instrumental in turning not only the political machine, but also the public mind towards the importance of salvaging, preserving and maintaining important structures.

Some people have questioned the validity of historic preservation legislation. They have also raised such legitimate questions as: Why do we need to save these buildings? How do we decide which ones should be saved, and which ones should be sacrificed at the altar of expediency?

It must of course be admitted that the case for architectural preservation should be selective, as not all architecture is worthy of salvation and not all is redeemable. But, nevertheless, architecture which is of

value to contemporary society should in fact be preserved, and, to that end, certain yardsticks and criteria have been established to guide in discharging this historic responsibility. But what about those structures that were demolished? Was there a genuine lack of understanding of their form and function? Were they destroyed merely for the sake of opening up space for new buildings in the name of progress? Are the new buildings "better" than the old ones? Does the new architectural style reflect the characteristics of the old structures, or radically break from it? These and similar other questions arise when the issue of which buildings should or should not be saved is discussed. While not all the questions can be answered satisfactorily, it is important to address them.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 is still in force. Much has also been done to preserve historic monuments and sites in such cities as Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Chicago, and New York. But, much still remains to be done at the community level through education, research, and funding. This is evidenced by the numerous historic monuments that have been arbitrarily demolished in many communities, even since the enactment of this legislation.

Is the destruction of early architecture justified? This is an essential question which every educated community should ask. If only the community had assessed and saved

the 'worthy' buildings, what architectural qualities might have been contributed to the cultural essence of that community? As Louis Sullivan once said, "our architecture reflects us, as truly as a mirror. . . . "[1]

If this observation is true, then a city hall reflects the values of its time, and, therefore, may be regarded as an encapsulation of certain attitudes and beliefs fashioned in its character. The history of the city hall is a record of society's evolving beliefs and efforts concerning the purpose and the nature of municipal government. Hence, the more culturally reflective the 'time capsules' lost through demolition, the less we will ever know about our predecessors, their quality of life, and how their values and experiences affected contemporary society. Even if, as it is often said, what is reflected in the mirror is sometimes distorted, is not that distorted image of our past far better than none?

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the symbolic implications of past and present city hall buildings of Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan, to determine the cultural, historic, and stylistic impact, if any, these buildings have on each city and to learn whether these city halls influence one another. This is done in an endeavor to expand existing knowledge of architectural history, and so enhance critical evaluation of city halls. In doing so, it is necessary to show their evolutionary development between 1895 and 1988 the years between which the city halls were built. This study seems appropriate in view of the fact that 1987 was the sesquicentennial year of the State of Michigan--a year of reflection.

The Greater Lansing area is a medium-sized metropolitan area of the state of Michigan (Figure 1). The site consists of the state capital, an automobile city (Lansing), a university city (East Lansing), and a suburban area (Okemos). The area of Lansing proper is about 38 square

miles and has a population of about 128,000. East Lansing has a population of 51,000.[1]

In 1837 the first settlers came to Lansing and built the first permanent dwelling.[2] When legislators selected Lansing as the new state capital, it was a mere forest and had only a few families living there. Most of these pioneers came from the East, and named this new village, Lansing, after their village in New York.

The new "capitol of the woods" grew rapidly after the state government moved to the site in 1847. Eight years later, the first land-grant agricultural college in the United States was established in the capital area. By 1859 the population numbered 4,000 and Lansing was incorporated as a city. By the end of the last century, when the gasoline engine became available, Lansing became one of the major automobile producing centers. In the domain of architecture, the styles of the Greek and Gothic, the Italianate, and the Queen Anne were prevalent in the state of Michigan. They still exist in varying degrees of physical condition.

The evergrowing interest in the historic preservation of buildings in the United States has inspired Michigan, and provided the necessary incentive to preserve historic architecture.

Traditionally, Michigan's historic civic structures have been viewed as symbols of democracy. Municipal government, in particular, divined a purpose for one such government type-namely, city hall. These local structures of self-government, bearing lesser monumental proportions than county courthouses, were erected in strategic central locations, either on or nearby town squares.[3] They have maintained similar definitive functions, yet vary in stylistic characteristics.

City hall buildings have been the focal points of their communities. Imbued with symbols, they tended to have an important impact on a community's local history. The city hall buildings of Lansing and East Lansing, for example, are representative of this tendency.

In keeping with the objectives of the study, this paper intends to address the following questions: What influenced the form and stylistic character of the city halls of Lansing and East Lansing? What symbolic implications are reflected in their design and construction? Do the historical features of past forms have any influence over the present ones and, if so, how? What overall cultural values and implications are discernible in these architectural accomplishments?

To answer these questions I have consulted various sources. These include local newspapers, architectural and popular magazine articles, and books. An important book

which surveys numerous city halls in the United States, America's City Halls, published by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1984, provides a chronological history of city halls in conjunction with the corresponding political events of the time. It has been most useful. Other sources which have been consulted include Henry-Russell Hitchcock's Temples of Democracy: The State Capitols of the USA (1976); Willard B. Robinson's The People's Architecture: Texas Courthouse, Jails and Municipal Buildings (1983); Charles King Hoyt's Public Municipal and Community Buildings (1980); and Lois Craig's The Federal Presence (1978). These authors survey the various forms of national governmental architecture, discuss the better and best examples of architecture, and state reasons for their selections.

A cursory glance at these sources reveals that more has been written about federal buildings, state capitols, and county courthouses, and much less on city halls. For example, Lansing and East Lansing are not covered in any of these studies. I therefore intend to compare the old city hall of Lansing (1896), with the present city hall (1959) and then to compare the city hall of East Lansing (1923) with the present city hall of Lansing (1959). It must also be pointed out that, in contrast to the Lansing City Hall, there is less information available for the East Lansing City Hall especially regarding the process of planning and

building. The study had to rely on scanty newspaper reports.

Philosophical, aesthetic, and sociological works have helped to provide a framework for a discussion of symbolic content. Important aesthetic and philosophical resources were Suzanne Langer's Feeling and Form, 1953; Peter Collins' Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture: 1750-1950, 1965; and Roger Scruton's The Aesthetics of Architecture, 1979. Books used specifically for the sociological pursuit include Anthony D. King's (ed.) Buildings and Society, 1980; Serge Chermayeff's Design and the Public Good, 1982; and Vincent Scully, Jr.'s Modern Architecture: The Architecture of Democracy, 1974. These references collectively provided different perspectives on architecture as art.

In an attempt to broaden the sample of built environments through time and to establish an historical background, I have used a contextual analysis with an interdisciplinary approach for the study of the symbolic implications of these public buildings. I have also attempted to demonstrate whether historical and cultural aspects of Lansing and East Lansing have influenced or have had an impact on city hall architectural forms.

Nelson Goodman's article on architecture, "Che Cosa Significa Construire E Quando E Perche," provides four terms of reference: denotation, exemplification, expression, and

mediated references.[4] These terms have been used in the text to analyze the symbolic implications of the city halls.

Rationale for Symbolic Implications

Anthropological, sociological and other studies show how dwellings and settlement forms relate to culture as a way of life, as a world view, and as a form of social organization.[5] A critical examination of the symbolic implications of architecture is necessary in order to determine its place in the domain of art. According to Nelson Goodman:

> A building is art only insofar as it signifies, means, refers, symbolizes in some way. That, may seem less than obvious; for the sheer bulk of an architectural work and its dedication to a practical purpose often tend to obscure its symbolic function.[6]

The fact that architecture partially functions as a symbol places it in the domain of art. Painting and sculpture are also functional at the symbolic level, yet the functions they serve differ from those of architecture.[7] As Goodman argues:

> . . . architecture has a close affinity to music unlike paintings or plays or novels because. . .they [i.e., architecture and music] are seldom descriptive or representational.[8]

The purpose of public architecture lies in part, in its social function which, historically, has served as a link between politics, the community, and its identity.

Goodman explains 'denotation' as a building in reference to itself. In this case, specific representation can occur through its form. For example, a hot dog stand can be shaped in the form of a hot dog. Likewise, 'exemplification', becomes "a reference by a building to the properties it possesses either literally or metaphorically." However, for written purposes, Goodman prefers to use the term 'expression' for the metaphorical properties and refers to the literal properties as 'exemplification.' Similarly, 'mediated references' are the objects or events to which the structure refers. This can involve a chain of reference, by which these objects or events alluded to refer to other ideas, concepts, or theories.[9]

In this study, the three universally accepted definitions of culture, provided by Amos Rapoport are employed: culture as a way of life typical of a group; culture as a system of symbols, meanings and cognitions; or as a set of adapted strategies for survival related to ecology and resources.[10]

Such an interdisciplinary approach should help to determine what symbolic implications, if any, are embodied in the designs of the city halls of Lansing and East Lansing.

Buildings, as products of history, culture, and social organization, are erected to respond to specific social and historical needs. In the distant past, when humans were

directly subjected to the forces of nature--art, architecture and literature expressed this reality. Later, when humans began to manipulate the forces of nature to their advantage and way of life, this aspect of human history was portrayed and expressed in art and architecture.

Although Rapoport has drawn on historical research, the focus of his work has been on comparative studies across cultures rather than across time. And yet he admits that historical studies are a further way of broadening the sample of environments in order to arrive at a valid theory.[11]

Cities, no matter how large or small, are complex because they are products of the complex human mind. I agree with Robert Hughes that architecture needs to be thought of as "real place, rather than abstract space, multiple meanings rather than a single meaning, and of human needs instead of political aspirations,"[12] in order to encourage hope for the future.

> The crucial point, however, is that the lesson of modernism can now be treated as one aesthetic choice among others, and not as binding historical legacy. The first casualty of this was the idea that architects or artists can create working Utopias. Cities are more complex than that, and the needs of those who live in them less readily quantifiable. What seems obvious now was rank heresy to the modern movement: the fact that societies cannot be architecturally "purified" without a thousand grating invasions of freedom; that the architects' moral charter, as it were, includes the duty to work with the real world and its inherited content. Memory is reality. It is better to recycle what exists, to avoid mortgaging a workable past to a non-existent Future, and to

> think small. In the life of cities, only conservatism is sanity. It has taken almost a century of modernist claims and counterclaims to arrive at such a point. But perhaps is was worth the trouble.[13]

In a word, the idea of perfection does not exist in a human-made environment, but aesthetics can elevate the quality of excellence within it.

Symbolic implications of public buildings in the service of municipal politics are usually difficult to peg with any exactitude. Nevertheless, I believe in the importance of trying to elicit the multi-meaning of Lansing and East Lansing city halls in an effort to derive a comprehensive overall understanding of the complex issue of meaning.

In this respect it is important to understand how the physical structures of the city halls of the Greater Lansing area provide the public, consciously or subconsciously, with clues to each city's separate cultural sense of identity. It should also be demonstrated whether the structures actually aid Lansing and East Lansing's "sense of community" and culture, and how they relate at the local level to the concepts of 'pride,' 'community,' and 'democracy.'

The visual assessment and interpretation of the public building's stylistic development is important in order to distinguish the architectural symbolism of public buildings. By establishing the evolution of each community's city hall,

as building types--past and present--it will be possible to determine to some degree their meanings as a reflection of their community. In this regard, as Louis Sullivan notes: "Architecture is a social manifestation. . .our buildings as a whole are an image of a people as a whole. . . ."[14] One of East Lansing's former City Managers, John M. Patriarche, too, appropriately established the merits of a public building's function and site in his Report of 1962:

> Public buildings are important to any community for they provide the physical structures in which all the important administrative functions are carried on by the public agency. The way a city is administered and serviced, in turn can largely determine the desirability of that city as a place in which to live and work. Moreover, the proper location of public buildings is essential if the community is to provide convenient, effective, and efficient service to its citizens....[15]

Architecture, architectural contexts, and environmental sites, can therefore signal to those who are aware, explicit and implicit visual messages not only from that which is seen, but equally important, from that which is not seen. Public architecture displays these explicit and implicit messages. Suzanne Langer, a philosopher of art, confirms this. She defines the term 'symbol' as: "any device whereby we are enabled to make an abstraction,"[16] and describes the importance of symbols as follows:

> The architect creates its [culture's] images: a physically present human environment that expresses the characteristic rhythmic functional patterns which constitute a culture. . . . That is the image of an ethnic domain, the primary illusion of architecture. . . . But the great architectural ideas have rarely, if ever, arisen from domestic needs. They grew as the temple, the

> tomb, the fortress, the hall, the theatre. . . . That is the image of life which is created in buildings; it is the visible semblance of an "ethnic domain," the symbol of humanity to be found in the strength and interplay of forms.[17]

In these observations one witnesses the importance Langer extends to virtual "place" created by ethnic origins, thus creating architectural illusion which is an 'imaginary perception' of architecture or that which is unseen. The style of a building can relay these overt and covert signals, reflect certain attitudes and characteristics prevalent at the time of its erection.

Moreover, each city's elected or appointed governing civic body can establish a particular precedent in the process of selecting the architectural style of a city hall. In favor of a certain architect and his design proposal, these governing officials base their decision-making on their ideology or other political, historical, or socio-economical values. The designs selected for each city hall do indeed embody the municipal government's ideology, whether moral, political, ethical, or social. The designs themselves yield clues as to which values shape, govern, or dominate in the process of selection.

Consequently, it is essential to justify the use of a comprehensive interdisciplinary method for analyzing the cultural, historical, and stylistic implications of Lansing and East Lansing's city halls--past and present. This comprehensive insight will be attempted at the expense of an

in-depth study of each variable, due to my very limited knowledge and understanding of some of the variables, and also for the sake of brevity. I believe that the aforementioned variables themselves are important. The cultural image of each community could further be enhanced or distorted by its public architecture. It is for want of the former, that the architecture should reflect the community in such a capacity. In the following chapters I shall determine whether each of these structures lends itself to the "concept of community" and to examine in what sense each succeeds or fails.

Historical Background of the Greater Lansing Area

Brief History of Lansing

Lansing, an industrialized city, is the capital of the state of Michigan. The 1840 edition of The Michigan Statistical Abstract, gives an early description of Lansing, when it had a mere population of 2,500:

> The new capital of Michigan is just beginning to assume the appearance of a town, and is pleasantly situated in the northwest part of Ingham county, near the confluence of the Cedar and Grand Rivers. At first view it seems strange that a dense forest with only here and there an opening, should have been selected as the site for the city. But when understood, one will not think so. The advantages to the state in general by the removal of the capital from Detroit, will be very great. There it was at one side; here it is in the center of the state, and surrounded by a territory, which in point of fertility and all other agricultural facilities, is scarcely anywhere equalled.

> On the river near the town is abundance of water power. . . . There is not stone on the soil; but an abundance of stone convenient for building is found in the river. New roads are opened and settlers fast coming in; and what was formerly regarded an obscure by-place, will soon be the place for news and intelligence for all this vicinity. A line of stages now communicates between this place and the railroad at Jackson, and the trip from Detroit is easy.[18]

Within one year after the city's incorporation in 1860 Lansing's population had swelled to 2,850. Its population reached 12,202 by 1890, and by the turn-of-the-century, 16,845. In 1905 it reached 29,000 (Figure 2). With this rise came also an increase in industry, education and government professions.[19]

Lansing's early expansion, both in size and population, as well as in economic development was impressive. But the intensity of the depression of 1893, which formed a "water-shed" in American history, arrested its development. Its banks were closed, farmers were put in debt, and business was brought to a standstill. The emotional and intellectual impact of the depression was also considerable. In this regard, Kestenbaum maintains:

> The bank failures seem to have placed Lansing squarely in the grip of the depression; there was little good economic news until a national upturn became apparent in 1898. . . .[20]

With recovery in sight, the year 1896 was also memorable for the completion of city hall.[21] "Memorable," perhaps, because the construction of the new city hall offered itself to the city of Lansing as a symbol of faith

in Lansing's ability to better manage its own affairs in the years to come.

Despite the hope imbued within these new city walls, the structure was declared a pawn in an ongoing controversy created over whether Lansing should become the county-seat, instead of Mason, located only twelve miles away. According to Kestenbaum:

> The issue of location of the county-seat in Lansing had hung fire for years. In 1877, 500 persons had crowded into a meeting hall as the county board of supervisors failed to garner the required two-thirds majority to place county-seat location before the voters. With the completion of Lansing's city hall in 1897, the issue rose again; the press reported an informal discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of locating in Lansing as the county board visited Lansing's new city hall. The supervisors from Mason had voted against accepting the invitation to visit the new city hall, denouncing it as the "entering wedge" by which Lansing men hoped to start the movement in favor of removing the county-seat.[22]

Mason remained the county-seat. Lansing weathered its economic slump and gradually began to recover. The turn-of-the-century brought wealth to Lansing once again, due to one of its industrious citizens, Ransom E. Olds, founder of the Olds Motor Works Industry. As Kestenbaum observes:

> Olds was a genuine pioneer of the automobile industry. His cars, named Oldsmobile in 1900, did much to popularize the motor car with the American public and to "democratize" automobile ownership, previously limited to the very wealthy. . . . In 1902, the company turned out 2,500 cars, and in 1903, 4,000 vehicles were produced and sold. Wealthy and prominent persons, as well as ordinary citizens, bought curved dash Oldsmobiles.
>
> The company prospered. Within three years of its founding, the Olds Motor Works became the leading

> American automobile manufacturer, and Lansing the center of the automobile industry. . . .[23]

Lansing experienced a few other financial setbacks, most noticeably the Depression of the 1930's. Kestenbaum attributes the revival of the local economy to "an unexpected source--the construction industry."[24] With the new surge of building that was carried on in downtown Lansing, a revived interest in city planning led in December 1936 to the formation of a new planning commission by Mayor Max A. Templeton. Among its newly appointed members was Kenneth Black, a graduate of the University of Michigan's School of Architecture, whose Lansing architectural firm was later hired to design the new Lansing city hall of 1959. In 1938, the Harland Bartholomew firm was hired by the city planning commission, "to prepare a master plan which used 'city functional' planning rather than the 'city beautiful' approach of 1921."[25] Kestenbaum cites the automobile industry as a key element in the changing needs of the community:

> By 1938, the automobile had transformed Lansing's relationship with the surrounding area; the city's economic reach as shown in commuting distances and a greatly expanded market region meant that the future of the city and growing area of its hinterland were intertwined.[26]

A plan for city and state buildings in downtown Lansing was drawn. This plan, which was eventually adopted in its broad outlines, continues to have an important effect on the central core of the capital region.[27]

A city hall, jail, and "civic center" or large auditorium for conventions and public meetings. These structures, too, were eventually built, but the coming of the Second World War disrupted life in the capital region and their completion was delayed for a generation.[28]

As Kestenbaum views it:

> As victory became imminent, Lansing turned to planning for the postwar era, when the city's excellent financial position would at last make possible the execution of Bartholomew's plan for downtown buildings. By 1944, the city had eliminated its debt, and on June 4, 1944, Mayor Ralph W. Crego inaugurated postwar planning by appointing a committee of aldermen to study the city's needs and propose a plan of action. The long-discussed new city hall, Crego announced, would cost about $1.5 million; the city had ample funds in reserve, and the Board of Water and Light had agreed not only to participate in paying for the structure but also to locate its offices there. . . .[29]

Architect Kenneth Black announced in August 1965 that plans for a new city hall were underway and it was to be erected on the old city hall site.[30] "Legal problems, opposition to tearing down the old city hall, and the city's policy of paying cash for improvements were major reasons for delaying the construction of city hall and the civic center.'[31]

Construction, however, finally occurred. The publication of Birt Darling's book, City in the Forest, on the history of Lansing contributed to it, by helping to enhance civic pride. Indeed, within a few years of this publication, the city under Mayor Ralph W. Crego's leadership completed its long-planned city hall and civic

center. The ultra-modern city hall and police building, designed by Kenneth Black, appeared where the old city hall and post office had stood;. . . .[32]

Exactly one hundred years had passed since Lansing was incorporated as a city. Two city halls in that span of time had been built. The Comprehensive Master Plan for Lansing and Its Environs (1960-1980) had also been completed.[33]

The Lansing of the 1980s is now realizing some of its goals addressed in this "new city plan." In this regard, a civic center located close to the downtown business center, and the gradual development of River Front Park has taken place, east of the State Capitol on Michigan Avenue.

Brief History of East Lansing

The Michigan Agricultural College (M.A.C.) was established in 1855 as the first land-grant college in the nation, to be located within 10 miles of Lansing. "The site chosen was on a plot of land consisting of 677 acres located east of Lansing."[34]

As the population grew, a school district was formed. Small businesses sprang up to accommodate the needs of the residents of East Lansing, so that trips to Lansing for necessary supplies gradually diminished in frequency. Hence:

> East Lansing began as a college town which developed around "faculty row," a group of homes

built in the late 1850's specifically for the MSU faculty. "Collegeville" grew to serve the needs of students and faculty.[35]

In 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt honored the celebration of the Michigan Agricultural College's (now Michigan State University) fiftieth anniversary with his presence.[36] The significance of this event was great. East Lansing had actually grown up around the College, and the charter for East Lansing's incorporation as a fourth-class city had been ratified. The population count in East Lansing in 1907 was about 1,500. It grew to 2,000 in 1923, the year that marked the construction of the first East Lansing city hall.

In all this it should be noted that the city of East Lansing grew as a result of the land that it acquired by annexations. The map shows how much land East Lansing had acquired, from its original boundaries in 1907 (Figure 3). By 1960 the population had reached 29,745 (or 50,000, including the university housing, which accounts for 45% of the population in East Lansing). East Lansing's city area covered 8 1/2 square miles, and annexation of portions of Meridian Township in 1979 increased East Lansing's population by approximately 2,600 and the city area by 34 acres.

The choice for the city hall of East Lansing was a conscious act. It did and still does fulfill a number of

requirements. As social and economic scientists, Bert and Edith Swanson note that:

> A number of efforts have been made to delineate the factors associated with the location of communities. Among them is the central-place theory, which describes the geography of economic regions as a function of distance, mass production, and competition. This may lead to perceiving a system of cities as an urban hierarchy, based on 'rank size,' and to classifying centers according to their place in the hierarchy and/or according to the functional correlates of city size.[37]

In addition to size and population, there are also social, economic and political processes which Anthony B. King refers to as the "new urban sociology:"

> Cities and buildings, however, are not explained simply by reference to social and cultural variables. They also reflect a distribution of power. . . .[For example], Delhi [India is] the result of political, economic and social processes of colonialism. As such, it had its own institutions, and to understand the city as a social (rather than a physical) entity meant, understanding the society of which it was a part.[38]

In America, local government serves most communities as:

> The formal, legal basis to make collective decisions on behalf of all their citizens. Since the broad legal authority of cities has been established by each state and administratively shared locally, there have come into being a number of different forms of city and town governments."[39]

In this context, four major types of local governments have evolved: 1) mayor-council, 2) council-manager, 3) commission, and 4) town-meetings.

Lansing residents directly elect a mayor every four years, who serves full time in a non-partisan, mayor-council form of city government. Eight aldermen are elected and serve as the City Council. Out of these, four are elected from the city-at-large, and one is elected from each of the city's four wards (Figure 4).[40]

East Lansing's government, on the other hand, is structured around the council-manager form of government. This form:

> Was established in 1944 when residents voted to amend the city charter to change from a fourth-class city to a home-rule city. This allowed for five council members to be elected at large with the mayor elected among the council, and for the appointment of a city manager to administer the daily operations of the city. Since 1944 East Lansing has had only four city managers.[41]

The mayor-council form of local government most closely resembles the form of national government established by our ancestors with the intention of keeping the branches of power separate, i.e., the executive (mayor) and the legislative (city council). Also known as the "strong-mayor" type, the mayor-council form is typically used in the larger cities, whereas the smaller cities, with population counts of 5,000-10,000 people, usually opt for the "weak-mayor" type. The mayor in the former kind holds:

> The authority to hire and fire the department heads, and to engage in the preparation and control of the budget for effective management in the delivery of public services, especially in the big systems, and permits the mayor to veto council decisions.[42]

The council-manager form of local government evolved as a type of reformation movement to counteract the corruption and inefficiency that some local governments had experienced. It endeavored to move party politics out of the arena, so the council-manager form could focus mainly on the needs of the community. The City Council appoints the City Manager, who in turn,

> hires and fires the department heads, prepares a city budget for council approval, and makes recommendations to the council which is ultimately responsible to the public. The mayor essentially performs ceremonial functions but also presides over the city meetings and votes in case of a tie.[43]

Lansing developed around the state government of Michigan and, industry, whereas, the primary factor that brought East Lansing into incorporation as a city was education. With a moderately sized population centered around small business and the university, East Lansing became typically a residential community. While both places share a common boundary, they do have separate identities.

In conclusion then, we could say that architecture is an expression of culture. It is a source of history in as much as it reflects human aspirations, concerns and achievements. In an investigation such as this, it becomes possible to examine the past and present city halls of Lansing and East Lansing in order to determine what symbolic implications, if any are reflected.

CHAPTER 2

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CITY HALLS AS BUILDING TYPES

Physical Description of City Hall

Lansing City Hall

Situated between the Post Office and the Universalist Church, and standing directly across the tree-lined Capitol Avenue from the State Capitol Building, this Romanesque Revival structure was built as the City Hall of Lansing in 1896 (Figures 5-9). The use of this style largely resembles H.H. Richardson's 1884 Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Figure 10). Today, some may consider the old City Hall building traditional in character, but its style must once have caused a considerable sensation because of the unfamiliarity of the Richardsonian Romanesque in this particular region.

If we examine the architecture of this City Hall, we see a tall clock tower which, according to architect Edwin A. Bowd (1865-1940), was built in the Gothic style, and dominated its composition. Two-story walls of Amherst blue, rough-hewned stone supported the peach, bolton-slate roof and were edged by copper cornices. Moulding ornamentation and gargoyle forms adorned their surfaces. Lacking the

rounded medieval fortress tower that the Post Office possessed, the old City Hall maintained similar bands of arched and transomed windows which were typical of the Romanesque Revival style (Figure 11). The rustication, also characteristic of this style, was reflected in both the Post Office and City Hall structures. The YMCA building (1908) sat adjacent to the old Post Office building, and also faced Michigan Avenue (Figure 12). Its exterior, apart from the flat roof, was similar to that of the Post Office (1894) and City Hall, in terms of color and materials. But nevertheless, it differed in style. The smooth red brick facade also displayed bands of windows, and limestone coursing but the Post Office is a skeletal block with classical detailing and larger expanses of windows including most likely, some Chicago windows (Figure 12).

Space around each of the old buildings was not immense and open, as the walls of all buildings were butted up against the edge of the wide sidewalks (Figure 13). In 1959, the architectural scenery and space was to change the entire appearance of this particular Lansing city site. The new City Hall, fashioned in the modern International Style developed by such architects as Mies van der Rohe, was built at the corner of the block. Its main entrance faces Michigan Avenue whereas the main entrance of the first City Hall, by architect Edwin A. Bowd faced the Capitol and its avenue.

Two simple rectangular blocks were joined, and together, formed the new ten-story City Hall and six-story Police Station (Figures 14-16). These geometrical shapes emphasized the effects of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the building unlike the previous structure. This style was possible, in part, because of the technological advances made in modern steel construction. Moreover, the solid steel framework enabled the new City Hall to accommodate a large expanse of windows and limestone slabs on its sides without having to rely on interior columns, thereby opening up the interior space. This new device drew more attention to its pronounced and dominating structure than could the old Richardsonian Romanesque building.

A landscaped plaza, corresponding to the area of the old Post Office, now lays in front of the main entrance to the new building (Figure 17). This huge, open space in front of the building provides a leisurely place where people can sit for a brief rest or can eat their lunches at noon.

By 1976 at least three-quarters of the block was occupied by City Hall. Imposing in scale as it is, it is dominated by still taller and more stately buildings in its block and neighboring blocks, such as the State Capitol Building, the Michigan National Tower (1927-31) situated Northeast corner of Capitol Avenue and Allegan Street, and

the Bank of Lansing (1931) located on the northeast corner of Washington and Michigan Avenues. The Michigan National Tower is the tallest in the city of Lansing and stands 345 feet high with 25 floors. The Central United Methodist Church (1888-1889), located one black away at 200 West Ottawa Street, is another familiar and imposing structure (Figures 18-21).

City Hall is located next to two small commercial blocks which face Michigan Avenue and are contiguous with Manufacturers Bank (formerly Bank of Lansing). These three buildings existed long before City Hall was built. The Board of Water and Light is also adjoined to City Hall, along with the Washington Square Annex which faces West Ottawa Avenue (Figures 6, 20 and 23). The facade of City Hall can barely be distinguished from these parts, except by a small, low-relief displaying a farmer and other symbols reflective of Lansing's city history and the words "Lansing City Hall' located over an unremarkable doorway facing Capitol Avenue (Figure 24). The character of the Washington Square Annex, the Board of Water and Light and the City Hall is very similar, but is also markedly different from the other buildings on the block. The silhouette of old City Hall which once adorned Lansing's horizon has disappeared, favoring the geometrically crisp skyline of the twentieth century.

East Lansing City Hall

East Lansing City Hall is located on 410 Abbott Road (Figure 25). Although the original City Hall no longer stands, the address remains the same. The original building was a red-brick and wood-trim structure (Figure 26). There is no mention of a record of the architect who designed it in 1923, under the influence of the Bungalow Style. This style is characterized by a low-pitched gabled roof (or hipped as in the case of East Lansing's City Hall), with wide, eave overhangs.

Adjacent to the present City Hall stands a house (c. 1920) at 322 Abbott Road which is similar in style to that of the original city hall (Figure 27). The old Post Office, now the Evergreen Restaurant (1934), stands almost directly across Abbott Road from City Hall. The environmental surroundings at the time the old City Hall was built were residential and suburban.

Catering to a smaller population than Lansing, East Lansing City Hall was modest in scale and materials. Its two stories and basement, housed the fire station, the police station, the jail, and the court system. But, as the population increased and the needs of the community developed additions were made subsequently in 1931 and in 1965, and, most recently, in 1988.

Architect Harold A. Childs designed the city hall additions in 1931, to house the fire department, all city offices, and the East Lansing Public Library. They were constructed by C. Hodge, a local contractor. The library was separated from City Hall and moved into its new building in 1962. It was located a few blocks further to the North on 950 Abbott Road, close to the present post office (which again faces Abbott Road).

As early as 1962 a new city hall became an issue before the East Lansing City Council. The design for the other addition was fashioned in the International style, not in keeping with the Bungalow-influenced style (Figures 28 and 29), and thus a metal mesh screen was placed over the facade of the old structure in order to make its appearance more compatible. In 1988 the old structure was completely demolished to make way for the new 1988-89 addition, which is currently in the process of being built.

Development of City Halls

Nikolaus Pevsner, in his book, History of Building Types, 1976, demonstrated the development of building types both by style and by function. He defines style to be a matter of architectural history and function, as well as a matter of social history. In the course of designating building types, he follows their changes in planning "from the most monumental to the least monumental, from the most

ideal to the most utilitarian, and from national monuments to factories."[1] With regard to the evolution of the structure of town halls as building types, Pevsner distinguishes between modern town halls and the medieval type comprising an open ground floor and council rooms. The monumentality of the Amsterdam Town Hall (1648-55) illustrates stylistic, not functional development,[2] and serves as a useful case (Figure 30).

Similarly, the architect Robert Stern, in his book, Pride of Place, 1986, supports Pevsner's view of the stylistic development of city halls, and contends that historical architectural symbols of government have given way to contemporary public architecture which is "occasionally grand, but usually symbolically incomprehensible."[3] In this regard, Stern cites Boston's City Hall (Figure 31) as an example of symbolically incomprehensible public architecture, and argues that it does not celebrate the glories of the past, nor does it convey a sense of boundless optimism about the future. Rather, it confronts with the all too harsh reality of the present.[4] Thus, Stern depicts an abrupt shift, in Boston City Hall, from historical continuity to a reaction against architectural history, and Pevsner is similarly apprehensive of this building:

> Boston City Hall, 1962-69 [is] wildly arbitrary in its motifs, oppressively top heavy and forbidding rather than inviting. It is a tour de force and one marvels at the courage of the City authorities

> in accepting it, but it cannot be assessed in rational terms, and can it be loved?[5] (Figure 31)

Studying the changes in the building types of Lansing and East Lansing city halls--both past and present--is necessary for the development of a comprehensive understanding of their symbolic implications in relation to changes which have occurred over the years, and to the concept of the "change of change." Serge Chermayeff, architect and environmental designer, in his book, Design and the Public Good, quoted the biologist Heinz von Foerster:

> It is not merely change one has to contemplate, it is the change of change that complicates the issue of development devoid of almost all continuities, resembling a cascade of discontinuities, of "quantum jumps" in kind....[6]

Description of our changing world is not always comprehensible and history, as von Foerster states, "is merely descriptive," thus making the recorded processes of change appear relatively simplistic and arbitrary. Our changing world is growing increasingly complicated and complex. Mere description alone will not suffice society any longer. Instead, prescription for a changing world is in order. More than a "one-dimensional view" of society is needed to benefit human beings and their needs in a built environment. Hence, acknowledging these interdisciplinary relationships with architecture may bring a greater awareness to people within the community. It may also offer the community some insights that could help to alleviate

future blunders. The merits of rational research should be employed, yet tempered with intuition and creativity. Prescriptive measures based upon sound and objective environmental and behavioral design research suggest hope for our future.

Peter Collins, in his book, Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture, 1950, describes the development of architectural history:

> Architectural history was divided into periods, which led the way to the division of architecture into styles. Once history was thought of as apocalyptic, it tempted architectural historians to become theorists who try to determine the future as well as the past.[7]

Architects who develop architectural theory are useful and even admirable when their motivation prompts them to be ever mindful of human needs. However, architectural theory that confines itself to "art for art's sake," and neglects human needs, becomes dangerous to society-at-large. This becomes so, when buildings erected in accordance with such theories perpetuate the alienation of social beings, and thus exacerbate the already deteriorated social conditions.

Collins cites useful clues as to how the new awareness of history created new trends in architectural thought from works of the first modern historian, Voltaire:

> His text, Essays on the General History of Manners, [1754] treats change as more characteristic of nature than permanence and implies that this change is effected gradually (i.e. by evolution) or suddenly (i.e. revolution) as a direct result of human agency and will. Now

> this is the essence of the modern architectural concept of history. . . It was not until the middle of the 18th century that architects began to think of architecture as a sequence of forms which evolve and it was this at the same time that some of them deliberately sought to accelerate the process of historical change by devising revolutionary shapes.[8]

These revolutionary shapes, I believe, resulted more in terms of stylistic change than in functional development as an investigation of the historical symbolic content of the city halls of Lansing and East Lansing reveals.

Lansing City Hall

The first City Hall in Lansing was constructed in 1895-1896 in response to a greatly needed seat for its municipal government at a modest cost of $108,069.11.[9] Previously, the city offices had been located on the second and third floors of a building reportedly owned and occupied until as late as 1953 by the Consumer's Power Company, in the 100 block of East Michigan Avenue (Figure 32).

On March 25, 1895, the Lansing City Council voted and thereby selected a local contractor, Mr. C.M. Chittenden, with a $108,069.11 bid to build the "new" city hall, designed by E. A. Bowd. According to the State Republican, "there was more confidence in the careful construction and a speedy completion of the building if it was done by a competent contractor, besides meeting the favor of public sentiment."[10] The vote, however, was not unanimous, as three aldermen opposed the bid. The State Republican

states: There was some opposition, because of the increase in his bid (Chittenden's), Alderman Baird said (at a committee meeting of City Commissioners held on the evening of March 25, 1895):

> The question is, what would small taxpayers do in such a case? The entire thing amounts to three per cent. If they were going to build a house and Mr. Jack or Mr. Moody (other bidders) charged $1,000 and Mr. Chittenden $1,030, Mr. Chittenden would get it. It is good business judgement to let him have it. Mr. Chittenden lives here and will employ Lansing labor, and if it comes to a choice it is either Mr. Jack or Mr. Chittenden, for Mr. Jack is a lower bidder than Moody.[11]

Monday, April 15, 1895, saw the breaking of ground in order to begin the erection of Lansing's first City Hall. The State Republican reported on Tuesday evening of December 29, 1896, that:

> ...the whole building is now complete and finished according to plans and specifications, except that there were changes necessary which would cost from $100. to $150...Actually, the cost was only $306.78 ($108,374.89) more than the original contract price [$108.069.11]...A remarkable showing considering the cost of the work.[12]

An open-house from 3-5 o'clock on New Year's Day of 1897 for the showing of the "new city hall" drew a flood of visitors. The new stone building, situated on the corner of Ottawa Street and Capitol Avenue, was the object of admiration that day. Its new convenient police headquarters drew special attention (Figures 8 and 9). The State Republican documented the celebration:

> One of the greatest objects of curiosity was the clock and nothing but vigilant watch kept the public from doing a great deal of damage up in the

> tower. One man was caught by Patrolman Esselystyn pounding the edge of the bell with a brick that he had carried up with him for the purpose, but for the most part the crowd was orderly and respected the beautiful structure and well adapted to its purpose.[13]

The photograph of Lansing's early City Hall reveals the two-story building's character located in its downtown architectural setting (Figure 7). It is imbued with a restrained sense of dignity. As described by the State Republican:

> . . .The style of architecture is not strictly classic, to quote Architect Bowd, but is nearer Romanesque than anything else. The arches are Romanesque, the lintels Greek and the tower Gothic. The floors are laid on steel beams with brick and terra cotta arches. The outer walls are of Amherst blue stone solid and furred with steel lath. The roof is of peach bolton slate and the cornices of copper. . . .[14]

In addition, the State Republican comments on how the architecture reflects its government:

> The exterior of the building is already a familiar feature of the city's architecture. With its broad surfaces, long parallel lines of masonry and square windows the structure is a fitting type of the solid respectability that ought to characterize the municipal government of which it is to be th home.[15]

On March 3, 1959, Lloyd J. Moles of the Lansing State Journal, wrote in hindsight:

> . . .The old city hall was constructed in 1896, a thing of beauty and pride in the community. Its Indiana limestone exterior was enhanced with hand-chiseled gargoyles, figurines, and other elaborate carvings.
>
> The interior boasted simplicity in beauty, with three flights of stairs with elaborate wrought

> iron railings. Hallways and most of the offices and courts featured solid oak paneling.
>
> This municipal building had much more space than was needed, and helped fill the gaps in unused space. The city established its library there along with other municipal and civic offices. It became the center of community affairs where the legislative, judicial, and administrative branches of municipal government served Lansing citizens. . . .[16]

The stone structure served Lansing for sixty-five years, until it had decidedly become outgrown and outdated (Figure 33). It was razed in 1959 in order to accommodate additional new city buildings including the new City Hall, the police department, and the Water and Light building (Figures 34-37). In fact, as far back as 1938, Lansing's City Council had incorporated a site into its city plan specifically designated for a new city hall (Figure 38).[17] However, not until the City Council hearing which took place on July 15, 1953, did this site actually become a debated issue when the city proposed building a new city hall, police department and city jail. Arguments were made both in favor and against the 1938 designated site. "The property is too valuable. We could just as easily purchase other land for much less money than we can sell the present site."[18]

> Other reasons were brought to light at this hearing:
>
> Another Lansing resident in opposition felt that downtown was not a prime location for the jail. He said he saw no reason for the downtown location for a city jail because few citizens had business at the jail which would justify a central location. . .Mayor Ralph W. Crego said, ". . .all

> city planning is aimed at centralization because it makes for greater governmental economy." . . .John Webb, city treasurer, defended the location of the jail in the city hall. He said that experiences in other cities have shown that that arrangement is the most economical.[19]

Parking space was another major concern in determining the location of the new city hall complex. In this regard, The Lansing State Journal reported:

> Charles W. Fratcher. . .urged councilmen to consider a site where there would be plenty of parking space available for the public because, primarily, "the city hall will be built to serve the public." . . .Ald. Charles G. Hayden of the sixth ward expressed opposition to the location of the new city hall in the present block. . . ."Present plans," he said, "would make the property at the northeast corner of North Washington avenue and Saginaw street more feasible. Saginaw street will be widened and the hill can be leveled, making an ideal location with plenty of parking space available," the alderman said. . . .Speaking as a taxpayer, Evans E. Boucher. . .declared that traditionally the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government are in one location. He urged the downtown site because the government should be the center of the community. . . .Another proponent of the downtown site was Mrs. Celia E. Ivanick, "if the city hall were constructed on the Saginaw street site," she asked, "how soon would it be until that area would be just as crowded as any location?" She also felt that the downtown site would be more convenient for the public. . . .Ald. George R. Sidwell of the second ward suggested the council could use the experiences of other cities to advantage, "Detroit and Kalamazoo have found that parking is essential. We know that in the future less and less street parking will be available," he said, "and we must plan for the future."[20]

And, 'plan for the future,' they did. The firm hired by the city of Lansing was the Black and Black firm--a local

company. They designed a structure which will triple the space in the old city hall. . . .[21]

Acclaimed by a journalist for the Lansing State Journal as one of the foremost architectural attractions in the midwest,[22] the modern design has been likened with that of the Lever Building by architect Gordon Bunshaft, in New York City, wrought in the International Style (Figure 39):

> The new building will be ten stories high and will be the first of its type in the midwest. Its construction will be similar to the Lever building in New York City, with both sides faced in almost solid glass, with the ends having white limestone facing. . . .[23]

The ranking of the new building and its status in the midwest can in fact be disputed. But, at any rate after fifteen years of planning, the building was finally completed in early 1958. It was situated on the originally approved site of 1938 (Figure 6) for the two reasons cited by the Lansing State Journal:

> It was generally conceded that there was a definite need to continue municipal governments in the central part of the city. A strong reason, other than central service to citizens, was the need to bolster up the business section on Washington avenue, north of Michigan avenue, which had been slowly deteriorating. It was felt that the new city hall would serve as an anchor between the state capitol ground and development area to the west and the city's core of business adjacent on the east.[24]

With regard to its symbolic content, The Lansing State Journal's correspondent, Lloyd J. Moles, comments:

> The beautiful structure is representative of the hopes, toil, and dreams of local citizens dating back to Lansing's infancy and incorporation.
>
> Recalling words of a world statesman reminding his countrymen that "the highest of distinctions is service to others," municipal officials say they will dedicate this structure to this concept, and hope it will serve as a symbol of service to the future and a monument to the faith and progress of the past.[25]

The new city hall was believed to provide adequate service and ample space for the next fifty years. Yet, only eight years after it had been built, the need for more space was strongly felt. Eventually, some of the Lansing City Hall occupants moved into the Grant Building on Washington Avenue. The Washington Square Annex was later added (c. 1976) in order to help create more space.

The transition from one city hall form to another has affected Lansing's architectural stylistic context not only in skyline, but also in ways that may not be commonly realized. The symbols have changed in historic, stylistic, and cultural meanings over time. In order to determine what generates these attitudinal shifts, it is imperative to discuss the nature of these elements.

East Lansing City Hall

As was pointed out in the introduction to this study, there is a notable lack of information on East Lansing City Hall, concerning both its planning and its construction.

The scanty information available is mostly confined to local newspaper articles.

The first City Hall of East Lansing was built in 1923, in order to accommodate the needs of the growing community. Materials included red brick, wood and glass (Figure 26). The East Lansing Press discussed the two new wings, which were approved by the City Council to add to the original structure in 1931:

> The new addition, which will be twelve feet wide on the north side and twenty-one feet wide on the east will provide for the future expansion of the city fire department and will allow all city offices to be located in this building. The new wing on the north will be used at the present, it is expected, to house the East Lansing public library which is now located at People's church. Provisions will also be made for city comfort stations in the building. When this new addition is completed, it is believed that the city hall will answer all the requirements of the city for the next ten or fifteen years.[26]

Before this addition, city offices had been placed throughout the city. The City Council was pressing for a centralized location of all city offices.

On May 25, 1931, East Lansing City Council selected an architect Harold A. Childs. The bids for construction were received and the general building contract given to C. Hodge.[27] Thursday morning, July 2, 1931, construction began. With an estimated cost of $15,000.28, early fall was the anticipated date for the completion of the addition.[28]

After its completion on November 6, 1931, East Lansing city officials held an open house on Wednesday, November 11, for all the citizens of East Lansing.[29] They were invited to see the new public library, the police and fire departments, the municipal court and the public restrooms. The pride that the city felt towards its new city hall addition, is revealed in a statement by the East Lansing Press:

> With all the city departments housed in the city hall, it is believed by city officials that they will be able to serve more efficiently the needs of the city.[30]

The city of East Lansing managed to utilize the new addition for the next thirty-one years. But, as the city grew and new city offices were established, among other consequences, overcrowding became the lot of the City Hall. Even some offices spilled over into hallway space, making it difficult for staff and citizens to get around to their points of destination within the building (Figures 40 and 41). City Manager John M. Patriarche commented:

> The existing city offices, Police Department and Fire Department are horribly overcrowded with every inch of available space in the building in use. Operational efficiency is a constant struggle in our environment of too many machines and too many people in too small an area.[31]

The same problem is described somewhat dramatically by the Lansing State Journal:

> City employees in East Lansing fight the city hall space problem every working day.

> It is so crowded that police and firemen are tripping over each other. Office workers complain about the lack of working area and the fact that they are scattered in different buildings.[32]

Plans for expansion of the City Hall, designed by architects Mayotte-Webb, were approved in April 1963 and explained as follows:

> Plans call for adding a two story wing adjacent to the present building which would house all of the general administrative offices of the city, including a municipal court room and council room. This would consolidate the city operation by transferring the Engineering staff, Assessor's office, and Building Inspector from their present location at the city Garage to the Central City Hall. It would also allow the city to discontinue leased space in various locations in the city which has become expensive and could become more so (Figure 42).[33]

Patriarche's desire for a centrally located government housed under one municipal roof was anticipated to cost a total of $575,000, which included remodeling of the old 1923 structure. It was to be financed through general obligation bonds.[34] The "low bids, however, on the proposed City Hall additions far exceeded the original estimate by $133,203.[35] Part of this excessive amount included the expense of removing the roof from the old structure and also:

> . . .an underestimate in the cost of making the actual connections from the two wings to the old building. The wings were designed to extend east and north from the old central structure, one wing for police and the other for municipal offices.[36]

Work commenced on the new addition in 1964 (Figure 43). The completion date for the project was anticipated to be December 24, 1964, along with remodeling of the old City

Hall, according to Art Carney, administrative assistant to the City Manager.[37]

The addition was actually completed in 1965, at the total cost of $630,000 (Figure 44). As Patriarche describes it:

> . . .As a result of this extensive program the citizens of East Lansing now possess a modern, impressive looking government facility. They may now receive nearly all their services, in a pleasant and efficient atmosphere, by contacting the offices and departments located within this one structure. All residents may take pride in this center of community. . . .[38]

The addition had two expansion areas and Carney thought that it would provide adequate office space for at least the next fifteen years. In his own words:

> We hope to get along with what we have until 1980 and possibly longer, depending on the growth of the community.
>
> One large expansion area could be utilized as one large office or several smaller offices. The other smaller expansion room would accommodate a private office and secretarial space. Both expansion areas currently are not used.[39]

The city hall and its new addition houses the offices of the Mayor, City Manager, Treasurer, Assessor, City Clerk, Planning Director, Building and Parking Superintendents, City Engineer and Building Inspector. It also houses the Traffic Bureau and the Police, Fire and Water Departments. The Jail is also located within its premises. The fifty-foot space shooting range used by the East Lansing police officers is found in the basement.

Future plans call for the establishment of court facilities, which include an expanded space for concurrent trials, a modern jail space, meeting for jurors, witnesses, litigants and lawyers.[40] The concern for additional space was raised following a court administrative study which found East Lansing to have a immense backlog of cases:

> . . .making it by far the busiest court in the state.[41]

As of 1989, the old City Hall has been totally demolished and remains only as a photographic memory. There is no physical trace of it. The new City Hall expansion will adjoin the 1965 addition.

Comparison with other Governmental Structures

The fall of the European feudal system brought with it a shifting of town control from royalty, nobility, and the church to urban dwellers. With this shift came a marriage between commerce and politics. Architecture had to reflect this marriage. In this respect, the oldest known hall--as a building type--is believed to be the Palazzo del Broletto (1215) in Como, Italy (Figure 45).[42] The upper floor of the building, which comprised smaller rooms to keep records in, and assembly halls, represents politics. The first floor, which includes an open arcade for markets, together with the adjacent bell and clock tower, represents commerce.[43]

In the latter half of the thirteenth century, when political life was still ordinarily separated from the life of the market, marked the emergence of political architecture in the modern sense, historian Jurgen Paul has pointed out.[44] The closing of the ground floors in the thirteenth and fourteenth century town halls of Florence and Siena meant the separation of the political sphere from business and commerce. The market places were also moved to adjacent squares.[45] In this regard, little change occurred in the functional aspects of the European town halls between 1300 and 1700. However, Lois Craig argues that by 1800 the functions of law administration and commerce were, for the most part, separately housed. City halls served chiefly political and ceremonial functions, garbed in prevalent styles. The ebullience of style and size was also one measure of city pride; another was the festivity and rhetoric that flowered at dedication ceremonies.[46] Exemplifying this stylistic diversity are Boston's second City Hall, wrought in the Second Empire style, which grew in popularity with the new Louvre in Paris (Figure 46); Richmond City Hall (1886-94) in the High Victorian Gothic style (Figure 47); and Henry Hobson Richardson's Romanesque City Hall in Albany, New York (1881-83) (Figure 48).

The Romanesque Revival, inspired by Richardson established a standard for other United States civic structures to follow. Among these were: Lowell, Massachusetts (1890-93); Bay City, Michigan (1894-97);

Cambridge, Massachusetts (1889); Minneapolis, Minnesota (built as a city-county building, 1889-1905); and Rochester, New York (built as a U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, 1884-91).

According to historian Alan Gowans, one reason for the popularity of this style was Richardson's ability to synthesize the conflicting aesthetic values of naturalism and classicism, which were in conflict with each other at the time.[47] Art historian Vincent Scully, Jr. confirms Gowan's view:

> America in the nineteenth century was the one to which the future seemed most open and in which the sense of actual uprootedness was most strong, it was in America that the polarities [meaning Romantic-Classicism and Romantic-Naturalism] were first swept away in terms of a new continuous architectural order.[48]

In light of this, Scully credits H.H. Richardson as the first American to unite continuity and permanent shelter into architectural form as a single theme.[49]

The City Hall of Albany, New York (1881-83), by Richardson (Figure 48), is imbued with this sense of continuity and permanence as well as the idea of monumentality. The first City Hall of Lansing (1896) is comparable because its design also reveals the Richardsonian influence. This style can be distinguished by the round-topped arches occurring over windows, porch supports, or the entranceway. The masonry walls usually consist of rough-faced, squared stonework. Most structures wrought in this

style have towers which are normally round with conical roofs. The facade is usually asymmetrical. It is eclectic in nature, as it is adorned with a Gothic clock tower. Albany's city hall shows better integration and balance in its vertical and horizontal massing than does Lansing's first city hall. Bay City City Hall, by architects Pratt and Koeppe, (1894-97) is a beautiful late example of the Richardsonian style (Figure 49). Particularly noteworthy is Lansing's bell tower, which dates back stylistically to the medieval period. Bell towers were used specifically for calling towns people to assembly meetings. Other Richardsonian followers, besides Bowd, also favored the return of the bell tower as a distinguishing feature of city halls.

By 1892, the Romanesque Revival popularity had died out partially due to the rise of Louis Sullivan's architectural influence and the challenge of steel-cage construction. Soon afterwards, the impact of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition also placed white architecture in high demand in Lansing and elsewhere.

Across the street from the Lansing city hall stood the third state capitol building, designed by the renowned self-made architect, Elijah Myers(1832-1909), in response to the new Michigan Capitol competition announced through the press on June 6, 1871 (Figure 50). Myers called the style of the state capitol building, "Palladian."[50] Each exterior level

of the capitol is designated by the Doric pilaster on the first floor, the Ionic on the second floor, and the Corinthian on the third floor. This capitol building remains now as it was then on the exterior. But, today's Lansing City Hall is built in the International style. One of the journalists working for Lansing State Journal, Lloyd Moles, likened the new city hall building, stylistically, to that of the Lever Building in New York City as was mentioned previously. The Lever Building, as can be observed, is proportionally more slender than Lansing's city hall, due to its vast thirty-nine story height (Figure 15). Squatty, cumbersome and lacking in aesthetic sleekness, the City Hall fails to capture and captivate the attention of an audience which the Lever Building does. The new materials of limestone, steel and glass are used repetitively in both buildings. The Lever Building on the other hand cleverly varies the use of the innovative glass walls by means of the different sizes of rectangular shapes. Lansing's city hall fails to join in such play of delightful variation, and therefore, causing the all-too-common malady--mediocrity, to set in. The overall monotonous tone quickly loses its visual appeal.

Monumentality is a characteristic attributable to each building. But, in the aesthetic sense, true monumentalism is attained in the Lever Building, but, except in scale, not in the Lansing City Hall. Talbot Hamlin, the renowned architectural historian of the 1920s and 30s, declares that

"true monumentalism can be expressed only through an architecture which combines into an aesthetic organic unity, the basic principles of integrity, order and simplicity."[51]

If one surveys the Lever walls upward, at a glance, it greatly dwarfs a person's height to ant-size. Lansing City Hall, on the other hand, neither accomplishes this awesome dramatic effect, nor does it fully conform to the human scale. This double failure leaves one in a kind of limbo as this sense of neutrality tends to detach itself from individual involvement, thereby leaving the occupant with a feeling of incoherence and lack of participation.

Unlike either of the city halls of Lansing, East Lansing's city Hall was, and is, a reflection of a suburban community, as it was originally built in the form of residential architecture--in the Bungalow style. This style evolved during the Arts and Crafts period and was especially popular for residential architecture from 1910 to about 1930. The Bungalow style was sometimes selected and employed by municipal architects for smaller local government buildings and fire stations. The Colonial and Greek Revival styles (to name a few), became more popular, as one can see from the many pictures of civic architecture at that time (Figures 51-53). The stylistic choice for East Lansing's first City Hall was a design quite typical of the 1920s and 1930s for communities of its size. It was indigenous in character and logical in plan.

CHAPTER 3

TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS:
Symbolic Implications
of City Halls within a Contextual Analysis

As mentioned in the Introduction, Nelson Goodman's four terms of reference, i.e.--denotation, exemplification, expression, and mediated references, are useful in analyzing the symbolic implications of the city halls of the Greater Lansing area.

Denotation means a building in reference to itself. Exemplification is a reference by a building to the properties it possesses either literally or metaphorically. Goodman prefers to use the term 'exemplification' for literal properties and 'expression' for the metaphorical properties. Mediated references are the objects or events to which the structure refers. This can involve a chain of reference, by which these objects or events alluded to refer to other ideas, concepts, or theories.

Lansing

The concepts of exemplification, expression and mediated references might all be introduced into the

discussion of Lansing's first city hall. Exemplification is quite literally illustrated through the use of heavy rough-hewn stone, which implies possessing the quality of massive solidity. Expression is attributed to the powerful interplay of historic architectural features united into a single and simple composition. Mediated reference links this structure to its historic architectural past, with the Romanesque arches, Greek lintels and the so-called Gothic tower. Connotations of these features conjure memories of architecture from ancient Greece and Rome and link it to the original concepts of democracy and freedom. The Gothic element signifies religious fervor, perhaps, or reaching towards greater heights as stressed in its height. It is apparent that architecture can convey symbolic meaning on many levels.

The Lansing City Hall (1958-59) can again be analyzed as exemplification, expression and mediated references. The exploitation of new materials and technology is an example of exemplification, as they are literal references to the properties that this International style building possesses. Metaphorically speaking, the expression of city hall can be interpreted through the use of new materials and technology in such a way as to provoke the image of 'progress.' The structure also conveys, at the same time, a mediated reference: this new technology addresses the architectural principles of regularity and functionalism, both of which

are followed in the International style. The repetitive geometric shapes made of glass and metal rearticulate the block design of the structure itself. In this manner, attention is focused upon the straight lines and sharp angles, collectively emphasizing the severity of shape.

East Lansing

If we now shift the discussion to East Lansing, we should note that, denotation applies to the first City Hall of East Lansing (1923). As it was fashioned after the Bungalow house style, this building thereby referred to itself, denoted itself as a house, and its importance as a focus of a suburban community. Clearly, it was not meant to appear an office building. Rather it blended in with the residential neighborhood. This house-like image of local government, was intended as the expression of a smaller community, free from the more complex pressures known to city life.

The mediated references link this structure, in turn, to the American dream of success. Implicit in the appearance of this building was the suggestion that if you live in East Lansing, you might own a house, have a family, and live a comfortable life in the suburban atmosphere of peace and tranquility.

But then this house-like image was covered up by the later additions, in the International style. This

predominantly International style projected a new image for East Lansing. It was now becoming more like Lansing's new City Hall, only its materials of brick and glass add a little warmth and character on a much smaller and more human scale, appropriate to a modern suburb.

Cultural Assessment

In order to understand the image being represented by the forms of the City Hall in relation to its community, in addition to what has been provided by Rapoport, it is necessary to define first the concept of culture.

The term 'culture' is considered by Raymond Williams as "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language." According to him, the traditional interpretation of the word 'culture':

> has been understood as 'high culture'--art, literature, and the life-style of the well-to-do. However, contemporary usage of the word is understood in the more familiar anthropological sense, that is, the total complex way of life, material and social as well as intellectual and spiritual.[2]

For the purpose of this paper, I prefer the following anthropological definition because it includes a broader segment of society, rather than a select few:

> Anthropologists agree about the centrality of 'culture' in defining humanity. Beyond that however, they disagree much more, so the definitions abound. . . .

> . . .it is enough to note that all definitions fall into one of these categories. The first of these defines culture in terms of a way of life typical of a group; the second defines it as a system of symbols, meanings and cognitive schemata transmitted through symbolic codes; the third defines it as a set of adaptive strategies for survival, related to the ecology and resources. Increasingly, these three views are not seen as being in conflict but rather as complementary. . . .[3]

What is important here is that 'culture' is to be viewed as all-inclusive, rather than exclusive. We could also provide a further definition, The Dictionary of Concepts in History defines the term 'culture' as: first, the total complex of intellectual and material life of a particular society; secondly, a condition of moral and intellectual refinement attained by individual persons; thirdly, a level of development attained by an entire society; and finally, the arts in general--music, the visual arts, literature and so on.[4] These four interpretations present themselves to different factions of society in their different ways.

How can architecture then bridge the cultural gap between the community and the individual? After all, for any message to be communicated, it must first have a "sender" and a "receiver." In this context, the message sent via a building, namely a city hall, is from the "community." The 'receivers' of the community's message are the individuals themselves who make up the community. Here 'community' is comprised of its government and its citizens.

In addition to members of a particular community, visitors from other places can be included as receivers. Hence, civic architecture can impact on the person playing different roles. A useful example of this is Alvar Aalto's Civic Center in (Figure 54) Harris Stone's Monuments and Mainstreets. Stone attributes each detail of the Civic Center design as being significant to the extent that it expresses the dialectic between a person as an individual and a person as a social being. He considers the tensions and contradictions of each individual and his/her relation to nature and other human beings in a changing society to be the important factors which molded the design of "Finlandia" Hall.[5]

The distinction Aalto makes here between the person as an individual and the person as a social being is an important one. The dialectical interaction between a person as an individual and a person as a social being, as expressed by the entirety of "Finlandia" Hall, holds regional communicative implications for the private and public roles of a person. Stone credits Aalto's civic structure with taking visually active participation in mediating between the individual as private self and the social being as public self in such a manner as to ease the tension and contradiction through architectural form. That, Aalto claims, is the "communally binding realism" that can provide a constant buffer between a citizen's private self and public self within unfolding change.

Like Aalto, Serge Chermayeff--architect, environmental designer and author of Design and the Public Good, (1982), believes in "the shape of community," which also depends upon the individual, both as private and public entities. Chermayeff wants "each public and private (domain) to be true to itself..."[6] Aalto, on this matter agrees, for he contends the fact that architecture can, indeed, possess the capacity to sustain the dynamic balance between both private and public entities.[7] Therefore, Chermayeff and Aalto both recognize the role that architecture can positively play within the "community." And this can be illustrated by the fact that city halls, as architectural forms, can be visually active in defining the image of the community.

The urban sociologist Robert Parks describes the city as "community" in terms of being a state of mind...a legal entity, a product of human nature. . .[and] a body of customs and traditions. [It] is comprised of inherent organized attitudes and sentiments,. . .involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it, and . . .a collection of people further organized by human "tools" like communications, transportation, political institutions and economic devices. All of these, he states, are woven into one "psycho-physical" mechanism.[8]

Parks is describing here the city in terms of relationships between culture, the sense of community, and the individual. This interaction of human "tools," i.e.

communications, transportation, political institutions, and so on, combined with the "vital processes" of city members and their customs and traditions, all operate and are perhaps motivated by a given ideology--in this specific case, the ideology of capitalism. Ideology in this context is used to mean "any pattern of symbols and ideas which serve the purpose of stabilizing the existing social reality."[9] Art as "symbols and ideas" can reflect this equilibrative force. Thus, the concept of ideology is useful in analyzing the social history of architecture--namely, city halls--in terms of their cultural implications.

> As architectural needs and demands become more complex and expand into open areas, roads and public squares take on architectural significance.[10]

Lansing

As has already been said in the previous discussion of civic architecture, the size of the municipality greatly determines the number and the types of services and administrative functions that need to be included within the city hall. Such an emphasis on function is exhibited in two different types of design: first, in the small community town hall and, secondly, in the metropolitan city hall. Kump informs us that "the plan requirement and the resultant structure emphasize the dominance of the legislative and social functions in the former case, and in the latter, that of the executive, service, and administrative activities: the two approaches provide a telling comparison of the

differences in character of the program for the two types of structure--the town hall and the large city hall."[11]

It follows that architecture can be validly called a social art and a social technology. Moreover, architecture is social in that it expresses a social trend even if that is very limited in extent. An architectural style represents the efforts of many persons through a number of generations who express themselves in a way that represents all their beliefs and aspirations; in other words, it is not just the efforts of a single architect, of one class, of even one generation.[12] Consequently, local architecture retains the ideals and aspirations of the past members of the community. The demolition of local symbols, as is the case of Lansing and East Lansing, becomes noteworthy because it signifies the fact that the value and identity of each city hall decreases with the passing of time. New buildings erected in place of the old city halls gain a new set of values and identity. Some new buildings may retain the characteristics or integrity of the past, although such a retention is in fact unlikely. At any rate, they reveal at least four of the following factors: cultural implications pertaining to the act of demolition, technological advancements in their construction, and the industrialization and urbanization of the city.

The very act of demolition of the old City Hall structure of Lansing, itself, becomes an omen, as the razing

of an endured architectural community member erases its value and obliterates its identity. Once commanding visual attention from the whole of the city, the growth and expansion of the city of Lansing eventually obscured the view of the entire building, especially with the arrival of the new City Hall structure. Lansing's population and economic growth required a building with better accommodations. Technological advancement including the invention of the elevator in 1854, had long ago made taller structures possible. This innovation came approximately forty-two years before Lansing's first City Hall was put in place. Several more floors were added to the new City Hall as technological development made this possible. The expansion of the 1959 city hall in Lansing was a necessary response to increased urbanization. Lansing acquired new wealth through the R.E. Olds plant and, this, in turn, resulted in new jobs and the establishment of increased housing, thus creating a need for a variety of new social departments.

East Lansing

East Lansing's first City Hall was demolished in 1988. The fact that it was hidden from view underneath a wire mesh screen meant the original value of the structure had been obscured for years. Consequently, its meaning was no longer of any importance to the city of East Lansing. Just as Lansing's population and economic growth had influenced its

new building, especially in scale and style, the expansion in East Lansing had impacted similarly. The new 1988 extension, wrought in the International style, was added to the existing 1964 city hall addition. It is much larger than its 1923 predecessor which once occupied that space. The smaller residential scale ballooned with an updated desire to become 'big.' In essence, East Lansing had outgrown its historically modest suburban status, acquiring instead, an image of suburbanity.

Stylistic Assessment

Stylistic decisions for municipal architecture are usually based on a made upon consideration of various factors by the municipal architect such as the size of the municipality, the architectural styles which are popular at the time or which the architect favors and the approval of the city council, its mayor or manager, and its citizens.

Lansing

Because of geographic proximity and architectural influence, Chicago has proved to be an excellent source of stylistic, if not functional, inspiration to both city halls in Lansing. The evidence which supports this observation can be summarized as follows. Two renowned architectural styles, 'the Richardsonian Romanesque,' and the 'International Style,' were both well exemplified and

revered in the city of Chicago. Henry Hobson Richardson, the innovative creator of 'Richardsonian style,' and Mies van der Rohe, partly responsible for the ingenuity of the latter style, were the architects whom fellow architects held in high esteem and emulation. I believe that the philosophies of these architects, governed by their individual ideologies, became the seeds for a predominant mode of American architectural form. Being men of their time, their creativity and internal conviction tended to give each style integrity and therefore inherent meaning. Americans, as well as Europeans, could to some degree, identify with these physical and visual characteristics in ways they could understand. However different from one another, both styles, in their separate ways, subscribe to an effect of simplicity.

Many American, as well as European architects visited the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, in honor of H.H. Richardson who had died seven years before. Located approximately 165 miles from Chicago, Lansing--with the growing availability of transportation and newspaper information, became increasingly more exposed to influences from Chicago. Many city halls built before the turn-of-the-century followed H.H. Richardson's stylistic lead, making Lansing's choice of design rather typical of its time.

Richardson developed his style between the years 1870 and 1873. In fact, most authors agree that his most

significant building is the Marshall Field Warehouse Store of 1885-87 in Chicago (Figure 55). This building did not rely on historicism as its predecessors had done, rather, it maintained a character all its own, as Leonard K. Eaton, says in American Architecture Comes of Age:

> The Romanesque was the round-arched, barrel-vaulted style of the twelfth-century in Western Europe, but it must be stated that in turning to it for inspiration Richardson went far beyond the traditional historicism of his day. What he was seeking was its primitive strength and vigor...his buildings were only vaguely archeological. They made an overwhelming impression on Richardson's contemporaries by the boldness of their stonework. In an age of Jerry-building, Richardson not only insisted on the integrity of the masonry wall but often employed a powerful, rock-faced ashlar to obtain a characteristically strong textural effect. In a sense they were excellent symbols for his clients, who included some of the foremost industrial tycoons and political spoilsmen of the day. As Lewis Mumford has pointed out, Richardson must be seen as an architect very much in tune with his own time. He did not reject the forces of industrialism but sought to discipline them.[1]

The Albany City Hall was chosen as one of the best known buildings by Richardson (Figure 48). The characteristics for making this particular style a popular choice of its time are cited by Vincent Scully in Modern Architecture:

> The power of Richardson's forms gave a demonstration of unmatched confidence was in three things: in continuity, in permanence, and in the power of a building to embody an heroic attitude. Richardson's Marshall Field Warehouse in Chicago, of 1885-87, shows all these qualities best (Figure 55).[2]

Lansing's original City Hall displays these three qualities: continuity, permanence and embodiment of an

heroic attitude. This solid fortress-like structure gives the spectator the impression of stability depicted by the heavy mass which is effectively situated in a commanding site. The heroic attitude was made explicit by its silhouette, especially with the Gothic clock tower rising high above the skyline of the entire city of Lansing. This City Hall is by far more humble and modest than its other Richardsonian Romanesque "cousins," and yet it maintains the dignity associated with an heroic attitude. The translation of the past, i.e., the Romanesque, Greek and Gothic architectural features, honor the present with the thread of continuity as a metaphor for city government.

The International style (1925-present) in architecture was primarily designed by six architects: Le Corbusier (France), J.J.P. Oud and Gerrit Rietveld (Holland), Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Germany) and Philip Johnson (United States). It appears that these architects developed the architectural theory of regularity that grew out of an innovative technological concept which held that a structural skeleton, usually of steel, could be covered by a thin, non-structural skin. This exploitation of new materials and technology explored and emphasized the functions of the building, rather than the previously favored visual expression of historical features. The facades were designed asymmetrically, as they were thought to reflect the compositions of the internal structural skeletons. Other characteristics of this style include

unornamented wall surfaces in which windows, often encased in metal, sat flush, and both windows and doors lacked decorative details. The roof of an International style building is flat and lacks a ledge.

Lansing's second City Hall of 1958-59 holds true to this description of the International style. The city officials thought the City Hall design would honor Lansing as the new symbol of progress, since they considered it a progressive, industrial city in the late 50's.

In the industrial sense, progress meant making a profit --a reward for business. Since business is one form of social organization around which the economy of the community revolves and thrives, the large block of City Hall, adjoined with the smaller block of the Police Station and Jail could better exemplify the systematic operations of business, its routine and meticulous efficiency. The once redeeming qualities of continuity, permanence and embodiment of an heroic attitude became old-fashioned, even though Lansing's first City Hall had displayed faith in business through its massive solidity.

Instead, the repetition of geometric planes articulated the horizontality and verticality of the great rectangular blocks of City Hall. The volume of glass and painted metal abound, yet the variety of size is lacking, which gives more attention to the monotonous rush of unadorned surfaces. Lansing's present City Hall is simple, yes...and sterile.

It lacks the often elegant and refined simplicity one finds in Mies van der Rohe's creations. Monumental, yes...Grandeur, no. As one can admire the buildings of Mies van der Rohe, this building lacks the visual appeal of architecture as art. Unfortunately, this building is architecture as an engineering exercise. Zest and vitality of design are de-emphasized in this monstrosity. It sits, but it does not breathe... not in the characteristic way the original stone building once did. A sense of dehumanization prevails. This city hall occupies space, but it does not inspire. It serves to echo the urban sprawl of concrete and metal. Its foreboding presence implores citizens and visitors to stay away, unless the transaction should take only a few minutes. In other words...we can do business, but make it snappy. Gone is the personalization and warmth of business of the past.

East Lansing

The influence of the Bungalow style is inherent within the first City Hall of East Lansing (1923). The architectural features of this building are similar to the characteristics of houses built in the eclectic Bungalow style. It is agreeable that such an appropriate style was selected for the purpose of a municipal building. This stylistic preference seems to "fit" the image that East Lansing wanted to project at that particular time. In its early years, East Lansing was modestly suburban and

residential, the town had certain appeal for those who desired life in a peaceful and tranquil environment. This life appealed strongly to the faculty, staff and students of Michigan Agriculture College. The advantage of living in East Lansing was that it was close to the college campus and relatively close to the larger city of Lansing.

The house-like image of City Hall projected the familiarity of "home" and whatever people associated with that term.

The International style was designated as the style which could successfully recreate a new image for the city of East Lansing. The question of image appears to be raised as an important issue following the construction of Lansing's new City Hall (1958-59). The Lansing State Journal, to which many East Lansing residents subscribed, made quite a stir over its new municipal structure. Their awareness of their neighbor's excitement was felt. Excitement, like wild fire, spreads and cannot be easily contained. The rationale--that if Lansing needed cosmetic surgery in its public appearance--then, perhaps, so did East Lansing.

As East Lansing was a smaller community than Lansing, funds for City Hall were smaller. Therefore, only an addition to the main structure (1923) was made in 1962. This part, fashioned in a geometric block of the International style, created an entirely different image

from the previous one. The shift from the image of an agricultural community to a suburban one was in the process of being established. The acquisition of land and population helped to spur this development.

The East Lansing community still retains some architectural members of its past which reflect the Bungalow style. These structures can serve to recreate some of the essence which was felt in East Lansing's early days. Some of these buildings lie in the immediate surroundings of the "new" City Hall site. While the losses of the early City Hall buildings are felt, especially after researching the histories of Lansing and East Lansing, I feel it is important to become aware of the changes and the "change of change" made in local history. Visual references in physical structures are particularly useful in understanding the process and nature of societal and cultural change. Therefore, stylistic implications of city halls become extremely useful in understanding their symbolic nature.

Historical Influences of Past Forms over Present Ones

Lansing

The shaping of city hall forms is governed by historical considerations, as well as cultural and stylistic ones. The historical development of Lansing and East Lansing, which made a difference in the process of selection

of their city halls, is a case in point. Lansing, we recall, was settled by pioneers and later grew into a very stable agricultural community. At one time it was even the center for national wheat distribution. The first Lansing City Hall exemplified this stronghold in agriculture and promoted Lansing as a truly stable and sound city, in all its rustic and monumental solidity.

After the chaos of World War II, the old structure was found to be too small. Size was not the only determining factor. It was believed that Lansing had outgrown the agricultural image. Hence, in 1959, it dedicated its new International Style city hall, as a "symbol of pride and faith in progress" to all its citizens and the rest of the world. Lansing's image had changed. It was no longer strictly agricultural in nature. Instead, Oldsmobile had made Lansing world famous for its automobile industry. The community thrived on its newly found recognition and prestige. What was needed to promote the new image was therefore, a new city hall, one which would reflect Lansing's advancement and its faith in progress, and in which the community fervently believed. This belief was greatly revered and the citizens of Lansing were convinced that it would eventually lead them to "bigger and even better things." The new twentieth century refinement of steel and glass curtain walls provided a remarkable vocabulary for showing that technological advancement was being made in Lansing. The pride of Lansing's community

swelled with the monumental proportions of the new City Hall. It retained the overt message of pride which the old City Hall had generously offered to its citizens, but in a "new language" for a new generation. This became the pivotal point around which the community could rally, even though the building is a monstrosity.

East Lansing

Lack of funds made it difficult to build a new structure in the 1960s, so new additions made up for space expansion as well as stylistic change. The old brick City Hall created in the fashion of a big house, was thought necessary to become more contemporary and professional in appearance in order to fulfill its role as a suburban city hall. Once again, the International Style was put to use. Six years after Lansing's new City Hall had been dedicated, East Lansing's city hall gained its new image. The original simple brick structure was camouflaged from public view with a metal mesh screen and white paint. The new part displayed a new office-like image. Professionalism, in this case, in the interest of the evergrowing university population was its intent. It, too, provided a new pivotal point for its community. As of this year, the old part of City Hall has been demolished and a new addition is being adjoined in the old place.

Now that both Lansing and East Lansing's old City Halls are gone in favor of building of modern design, one may ask:

Was the symbolic and architectural language of these past City Halls simply unknown or just misunderstood by the new city governments and the new generation? The lack of knowledge of local history makes it difficult to understand the historic significance of the old City Halls, of what they symbolized. Understanding the history would have created a flow of communication between the past and present--an appreciation and respect for the achievements of those who came before us and upon which we have built. These collective memories fostered through tangible sources can keep alive the understanding and respect we have for others and for society. If a community should ever lose sight of its past, then it runs the danger of risking its identity, especially now that the world is becoming engulfed and enmeshed within a global view of place. To be able to learn from past generations, to be inspired by their achievements--and most importantly, to learn from their mistakes is a task assigned by history. To demolish one possible source of history--in this case, city halls, is therefore to demolish one's past and hence one's history.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

We live in an age when it has been a more common practice to write architectural theory rather than to test it with buildings, and to destroy older buildings while new buildings undergo construction. Such devastating change has revolutionized the way we think about buildings, especially the old. Once taken for granted and razed, the older existing structures are now being reassessed and conserved by various means.

Many angry protests of architectural rapes over the past twenty years have actually led to the awareness of the need to preserve our American heritage. As a result, the torch for historic preservation is being carried. Rather than razing the architecture of the past, the preservation movement has seen fit to incorporate our architectural past well into the mainstream of the future.

No longer must our city images suffer trauma from the severance of their roots, as they are now able to integrate their histories with the present in a nationwide effort to protect diminishing unique city identities. Regional identities coupled with their symbols of the past enhance

"the life of the city," and its vitality, because they can provide ambiance and identity which separates and gives character to a particular city that is identical to none.

After World War II, faith in progress became our future. Such faith was the emerging result from new discoveries in science and technology, and recovery from the war. The social ills in our society, however, were not solved and continue to run rampant. We have learned the hard way that "faith in conservation" provides hope for our future. It can hardly be disputed that the recent past confronts us with a dismal, generic, and sterile landscape view with which "progress" has rewarded us. The buildings protected by various means of conservation leave us the roots of our past that can provide us with stability and protect us from the sense of lost identity. No longer shall we fall prey to amnesia. For the quality of stability <u>is</u> the very prescription necessary to remedy the instability caused partially be the lack of knowledge of and respect for our history, and partially by the ominous possibilities of nuclear devastation, pollution and the eruption of social violence which mercilessly hover over our heads day in and day out.

The late British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill was right when he said, "We shape our buildings: thereafter they shape us."[1] We do give cultural expression to our building forms because their meanings are embodied within. The

buildings become eventually so familiar to us through the community fabric, that we become a part of them through identifying with the region. We cannot, in fact, escape our identification with them. These visual memories lodged so deeply within us become the symbolic origins for each individual's concept of community, either on the conscious or subconscious level.

We have also learned that newer does not always mean better; bigger does not always mean better; and older does not always mean better, but to the latter's credit, it has stood the test of time. That, in itself, is worthy of merit.

It is often said that the past can inform and instruct the present, and that, even if history does not repeat itself, its circumstances can and often do go in parallels. Given that, if society is to draw the necessary inspiration from the past and to be able to learn from its accomplishments, its historic achievements must be conserved. In this case, conservation becomes progress in the historical sense of the term.

In the past, numerous and valuable historic structures in the United States were razed for one reason or another--including giving way to modern "progress." In razing such structures, the American people were declaring war on themselves. This is so because by cutting themselves from their past, they were questioning their achievements on

which their present is built and on which their future depends.

Nevertheless, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, even if it came too late, has had positive effects. Indeed, as a result of that legislation, many historic structures have been saved and protected. But what about those that have been razed?

This study which has been inspired in part by the implications of that historic act, has attempted to investigate the symbolic implications of past and present city hall buildings of Lansing and East Lansing. In the process, it has surveyed their evolutionary developments between 1859 and 1988, and has also addressed such questions as: What influenced the form and stylistic character of the city halls? What symbolic implications are reflected in their design and constitutions? Do the historical influences of the past forms have any influence on the present structures? What are the cultural values manifested in the structural forms?

In attempting to answer such questions, and in investigating the nature of the structures, an interdisciplinary approach has been utilized. Such an approach involves history, aesthetics, architecture, philosophy, economics, and sociology in order to interpret the symbolic implications of city halls past and present, in the Greater Lansing Area.

Evidently, the meaning derived from investigating the architectures cannot just be aesthetic. They do relate to a variety of different interpretations and respond to different levels of society. The various layers of meaning therefore reflect the cultural values inherent within the community.

If we take the original Lansing City Hall, for instance, it reflected the Lansing government body's ideals and aspirations through its carefully chosen Richardsonian style of 1896. Similarly, when the new City Hall was built in Lansing in 1959, it supposedly represented their faith in "progress." Progress--in this case--meant, displaying technological achievements. But in razing the old City Hall, the act could mean negating consciously or unconsciously what it represented--the spirit of the old pioneers, the community's values, the rich history of the automotive and agricultural industries, H.H. Richardson's architectural style, and the spirit of the first government of the city of Lansing.

The new City Hall, therefore, represented order and the power and influence of business. If reflected the transition from an agricultural economy into an industrial one. Most significantly, its cold metallic exterior does not engage the human spirit and blends into the concrete jungle. It has no ornamentation and is devoid of historic

continuity. It conveys the power of mechanical technology over the human spirit.

East Lansing's first City Hall has not fared any better. The original building, which was constructed in 1923, eventually disappeared to the point where it could not be recognized. At the time of this writing, and as a matter of fact, it has been entirely torn down, and is to be replaced by a new addition.

"New" additions were made to the original structure in 1931, and also in 1965. The old building, to which the 1965 expansion was added, was covered with white paint and a metal mesh screen. This has denied all links with the past in order to maintain visual coherence with the new part. What should be noted in this case, is the little concern made for history and for historical continuity at the local level.

Strange as it may seem, the State of Michigan has a rich history that the American people can be justifiably proud of--and that is worth preserving. The state government should therefore take the initiative to formulate and enact the necessary legislation to that end. Funds could be raised by means of which awareness can be intensified, and adequate research and surveys made in order to determine, and thereby to conserve those structures for history and posterity.

Figure 1. Map of Greater Lansing, Michigan.

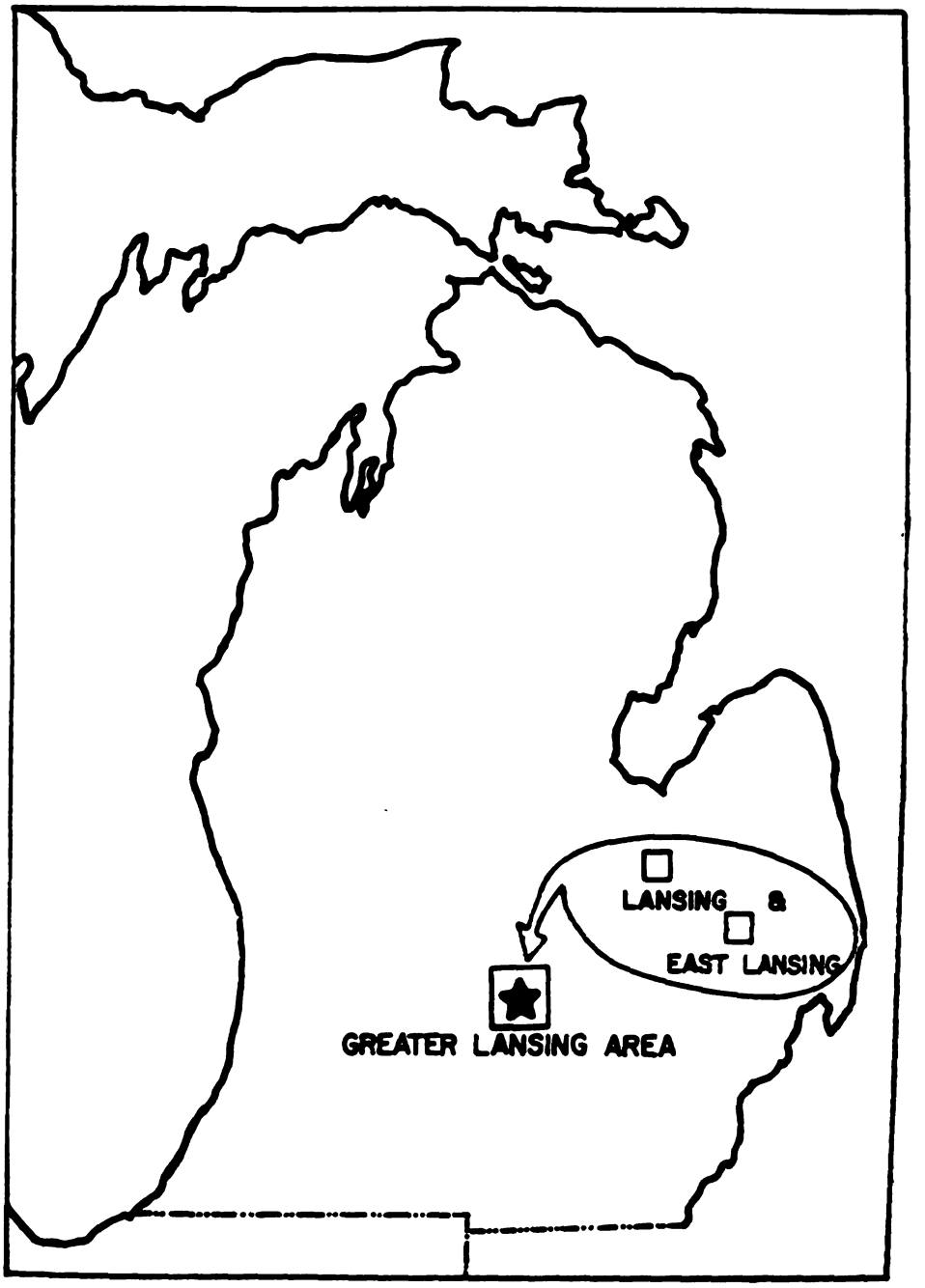


Figure 2. Population Growth--Lansing & Its Environs.

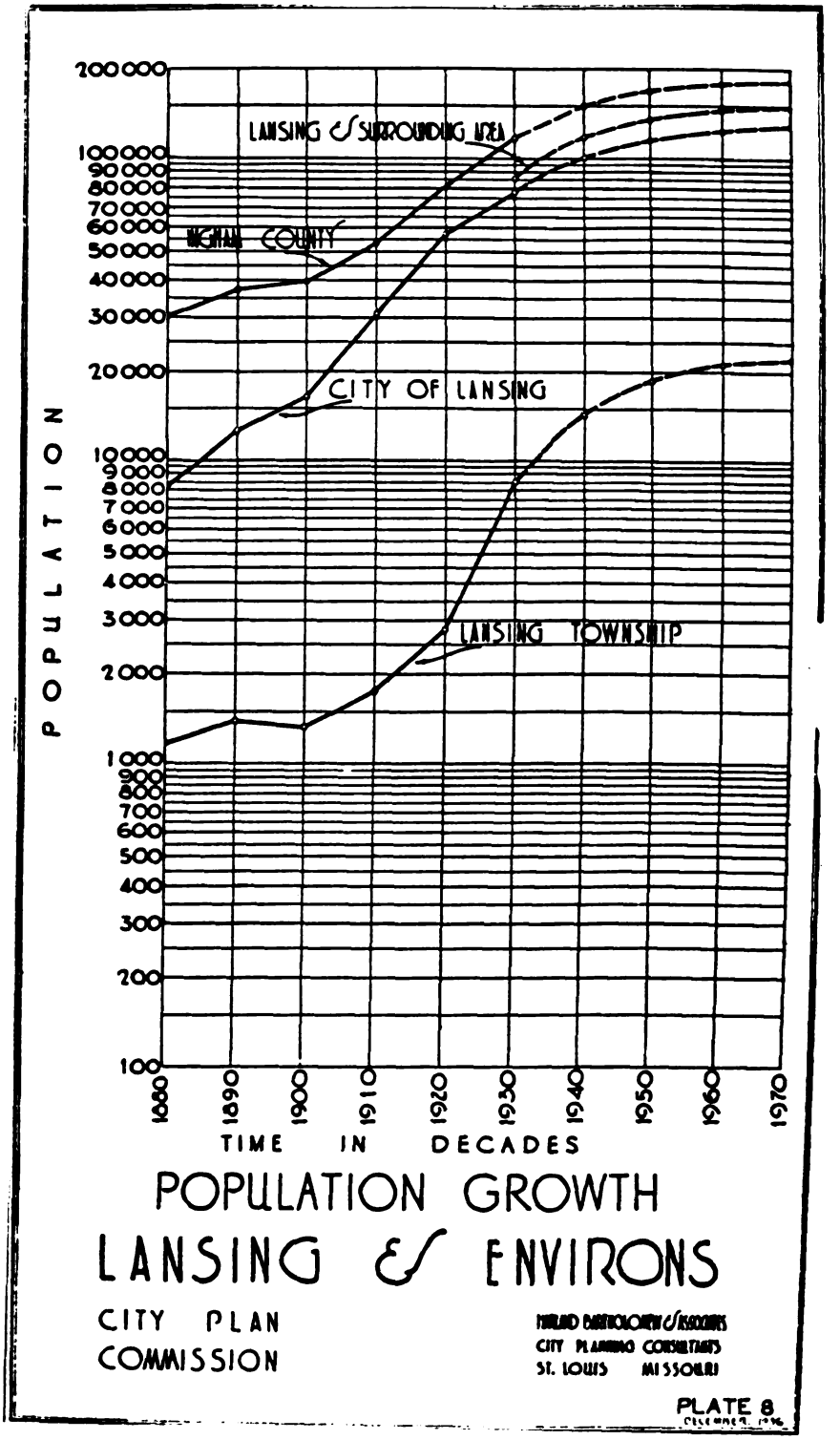


Figure 3. City Growth of East Lansing.

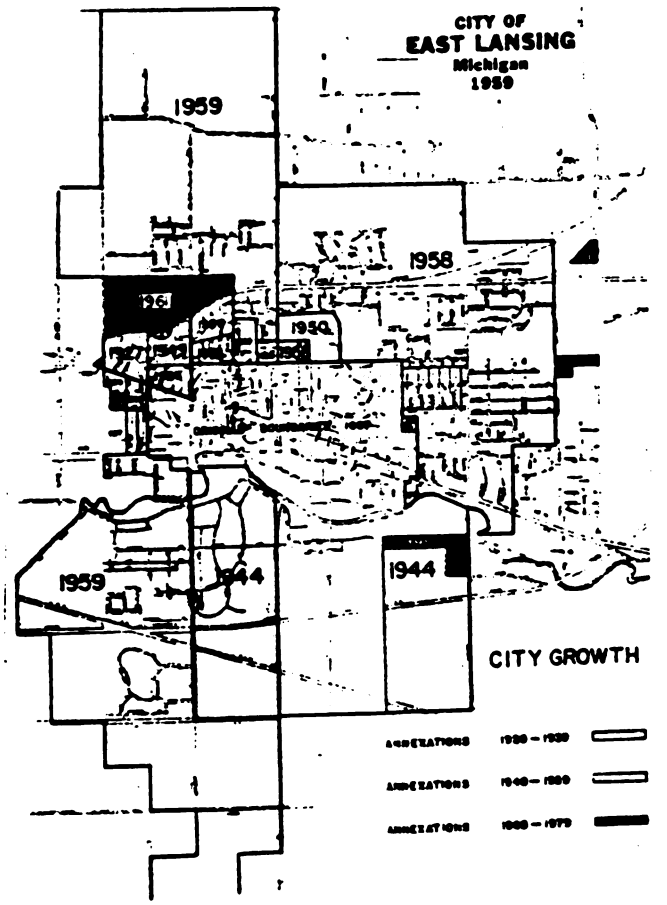


Figure 4. Two Municipal Forms of Government.

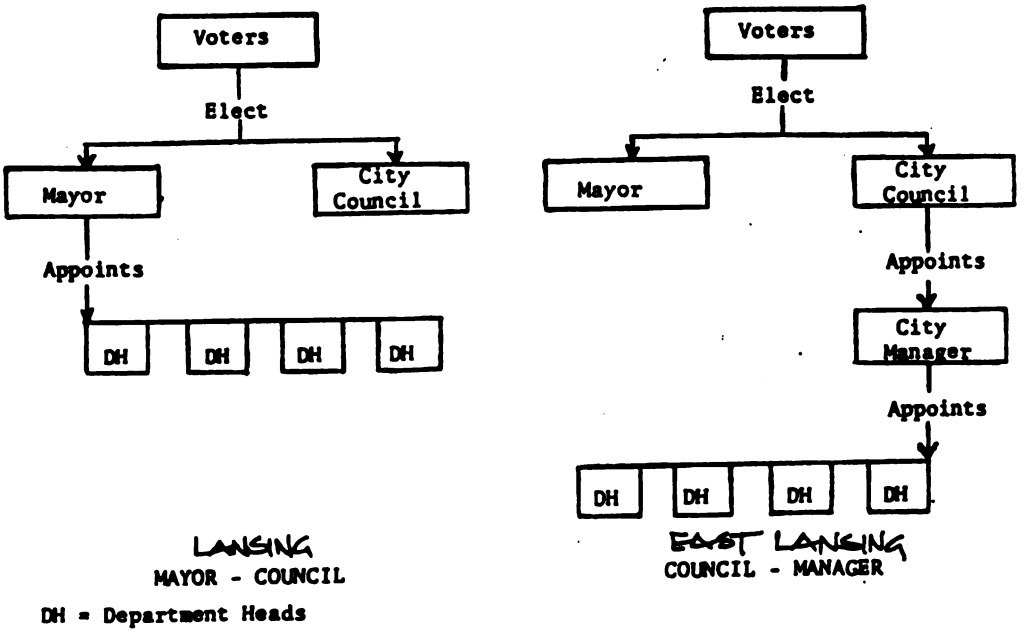


Figure 5. Map of Lansing.

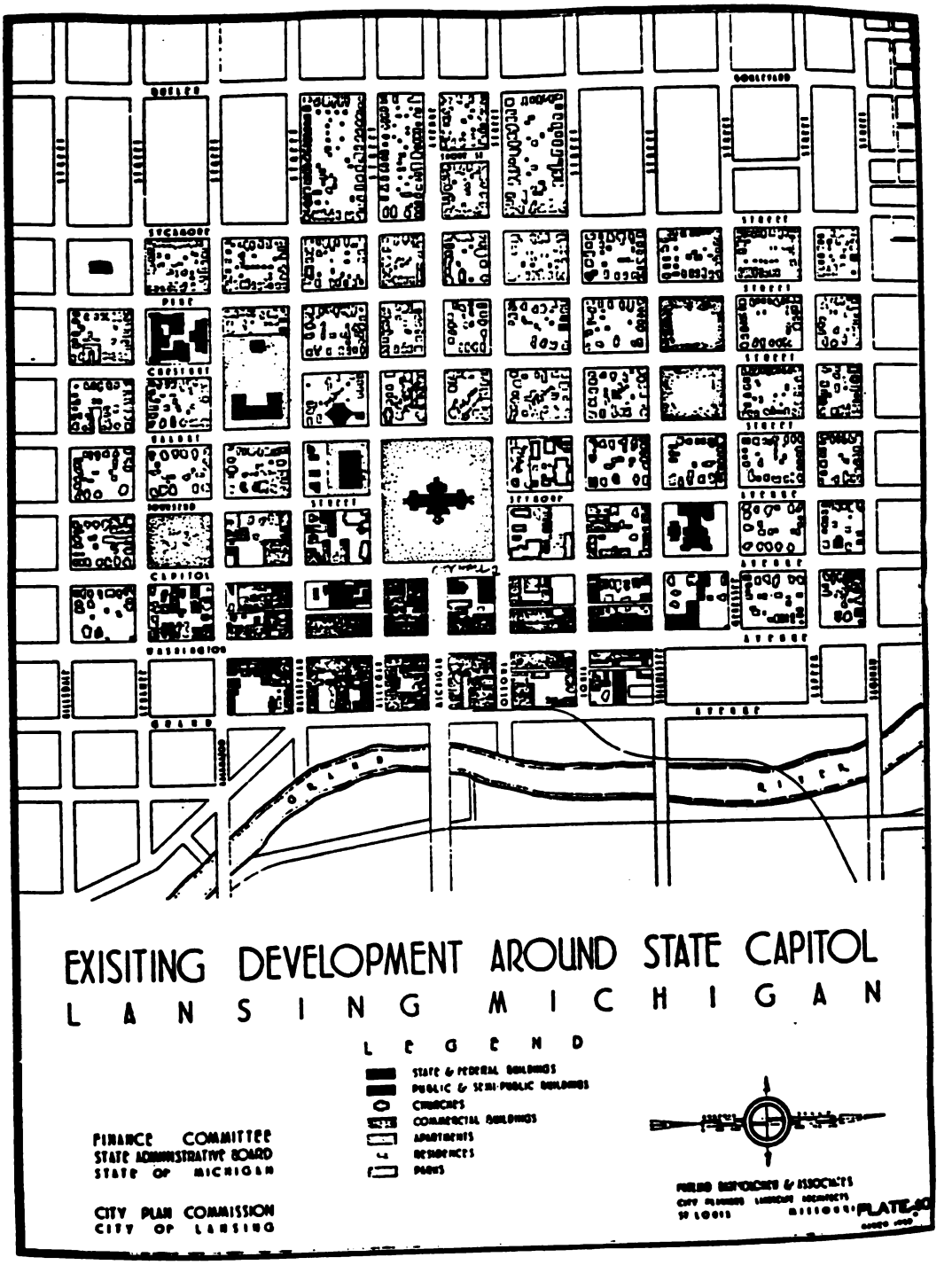


Figure 6. Map of Lansing--Enlargement.

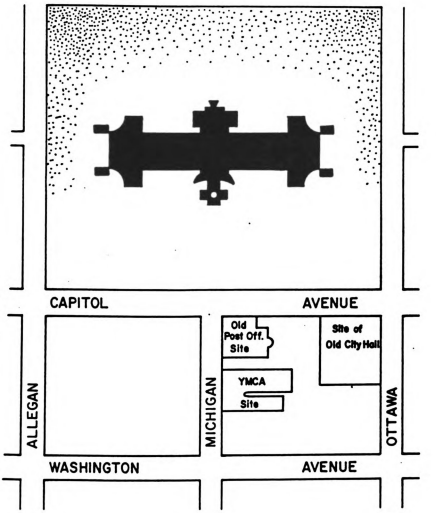
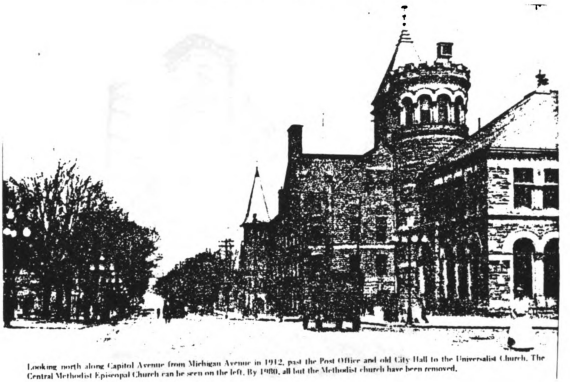


Figure 7. Old City Hall in its environment. Edwin A. Bowd. Lansing, Michigan (1895-96).



Looking north along Capitol Avenue from Michigan Avenue in 1912, past the Post Office and old City Hall to the Universalist Church. The Central Methodist Episcopal Church can be seen on the left. By 1980, all but the Methodist church have been removed.

Figure 8. Old City Hall. E. A. Bowd. Lansing (1895-96). Facing Corner of Capitol Avenue and Ottawa Street.

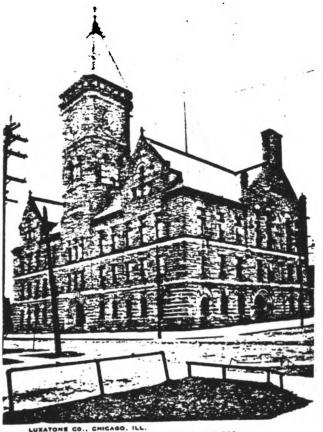


Figure 9. Old City Hall. E. A. Bowd. Lansing (1895-96). Facing Ottawa Street.

Figure 10. Allegheny County Courthouse. H. H. Richardson. Pennsylvania (1884-88).

Figure 11. Old Post Office (1894) and Old City Hall. E. A. Bowd. Lansing (1895-96). Facing Corner of Capitol and Michigan Avenues.

Figure 12. Old Post Office (1894) and Old YMCA (1908). Lansing. Facing Michigan Avenue.

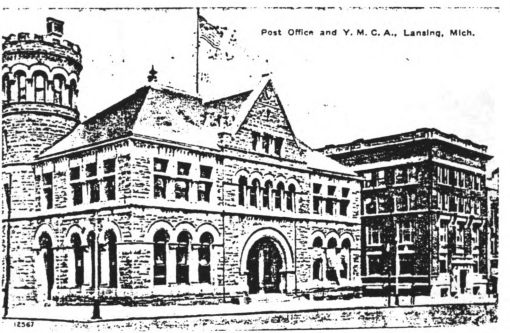


Figure 13. Old Post Office (1894), Old City Hall (1895-96), and Old YMCA (1908). Lansing. Facing Corner of Capitol and Michigan Avenues.

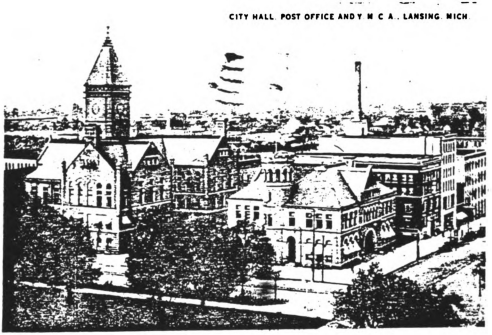
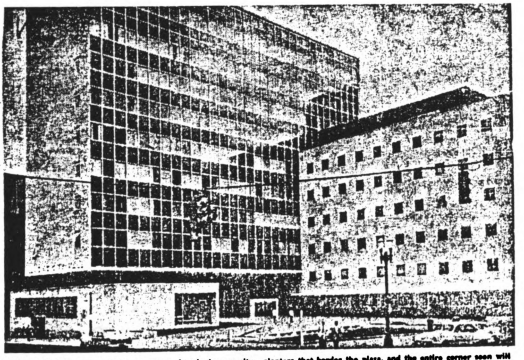


Figure 14. New City Hall and Police Station. Kenneth Black. Lansing, Michigan (1958-59). Facing Northeast Corner of Capitol and Michigan Avenues.



SHOWPLACE—Serving as entrance-way to Lansing's new city hall and police building, the garden-plaza above is now open to the public. Decorative trees and shrubs will be set into the planters that border the plaza, and the entire corner soon will stand as an eye-pleasing showplace. (State Journal Photo).

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Figure 15. Washington Square Annex, New City Hall and Police Station. Kenneth Black. Lansing (1958-59).

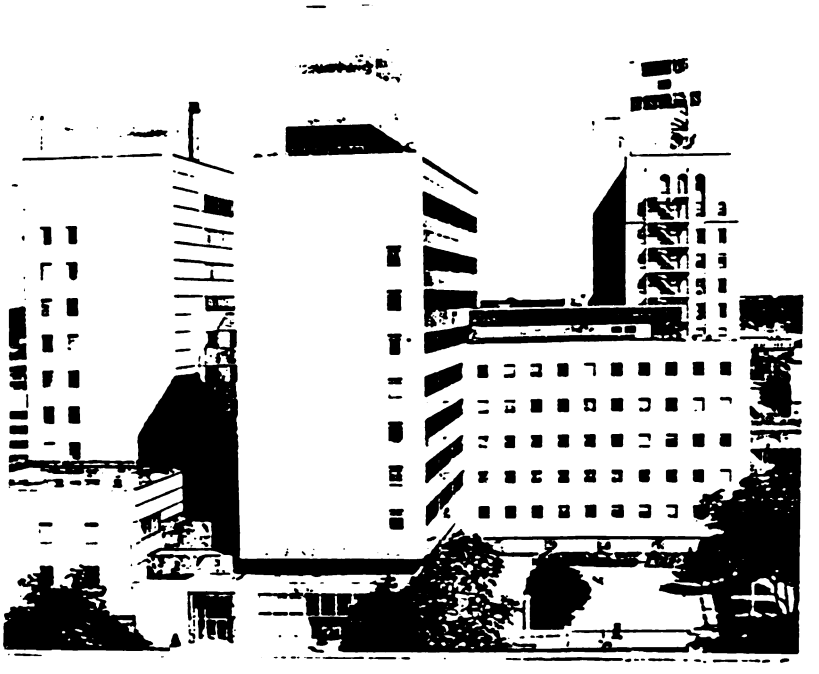


Figure 16. New City Hall. Kenneth Black. Lansing (1958-59). Facing Capitol Avenue.

Figure 17. New City Hall and Landscaped Plaza on Corner of Capitol and Michigan Avenues.

Figure 18. Capitol Building of Michigan. E. E. Myers. Lansing (1879).

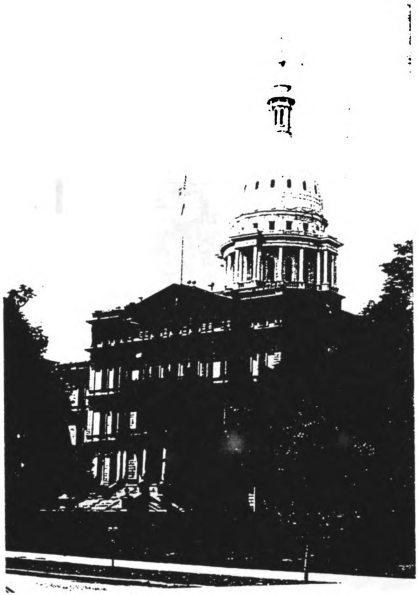


Figure 19. Michigan National Tower. Lansing (1927-31). Facing Northeast Corner of Capitol Avenue and Allegan Street.

Figure 20. Bank of Lansing. Lansing (1931). Facing Northeast Corner of Washington and Michigan Avenues.

Figure 21. Central United Methodist Church. Lansing (1888-89). 200 West Ottawa Street.

Figure 22. Side Entry to Washington Square Annex. Lansing. Facing Ottawa Street.

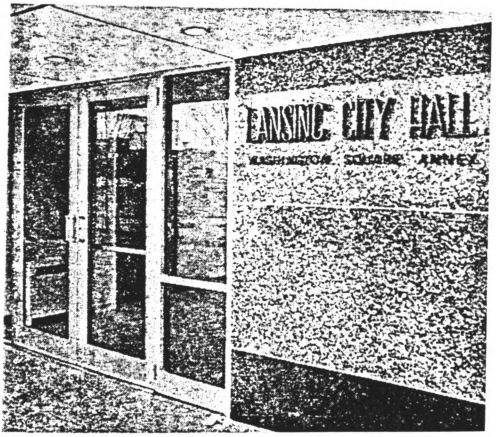


Figure 23. Washington Square Annex and Board of Water and Light. Lansing. Facing Capitol Avenue.

Figure 24. New City Hall Motif. Facing Capitol Avenue.

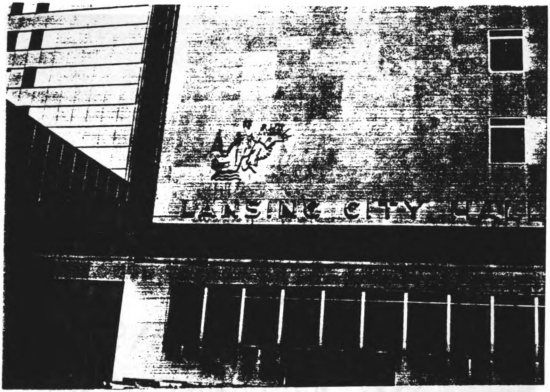


Figure 25. New City Hall Addition. TMP Architects. East Lansing, Michigan (1988).

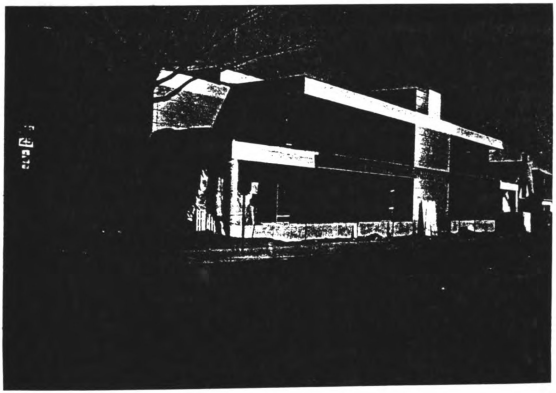


Figure 26. Old City Hall. East Lansing (1923-31).

Figure 27. House at 322 Abbott Road. East Lansing (c. 1920).

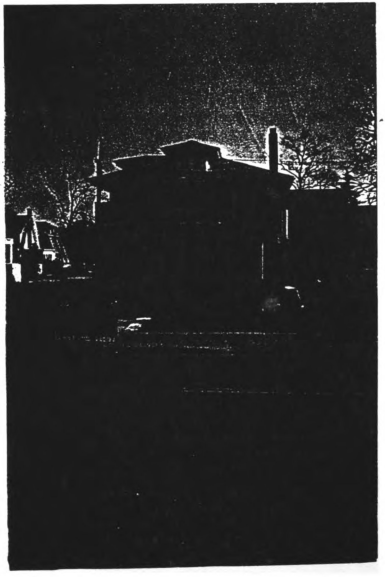
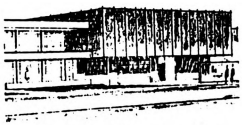
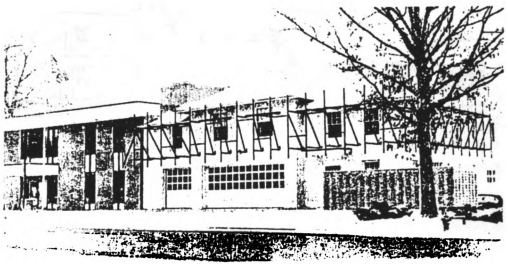


Figure 28. 1962 Addition to City Hall. East Lansing. Facing Abbott Road.



HOW IT MIGHT LOOK—how one architect envisioned the screen covering the old city hall will look (see story for details).



THE STEEL BRACES—note them on the sides of the old City Hall

Figure 29. 1962 Addition to City Hall. East Lansing. Facing Abbott Road.

Figure 30. Amsterdam Town Hall. Holland (1648-55).

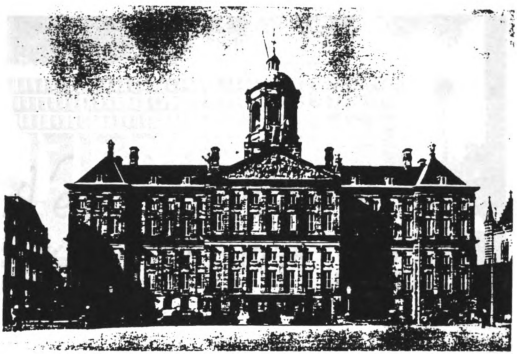


Figure 31. Boston City Hall. Kallman, Mc Kinnell & Knowles. Massachusetts (1962-69).

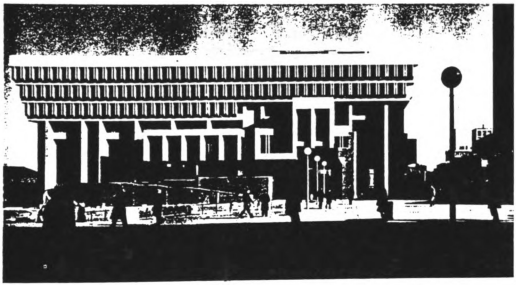


Figure 32. Consumer's Power Company. Lansing (served as City Hall 1859-96). Facing East Michigan Avenue.

112 East Michigan Avenue — CITY HALL until 1896, also housed the Board offices.

Figure 33. Juxtaposition of Old and New City Hall. Lansing (1895-1959).

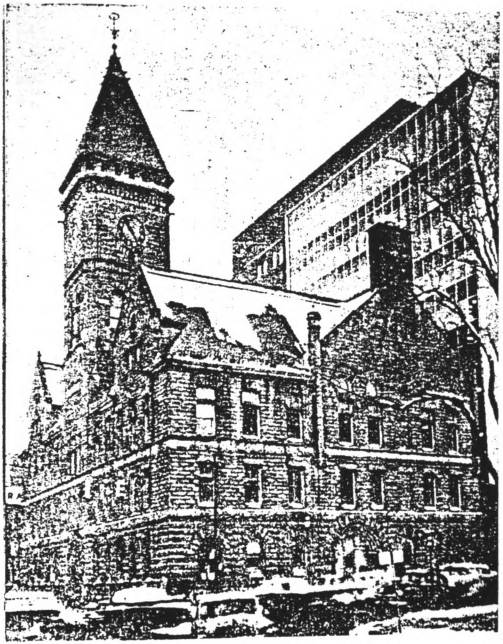


Figure 34. Razing Old City Hall. Lansing (1895-96).

Figure 35. Razing Old City Hall. Lansing (1895-96).

VANISHING LANDMARK — The old city hall almost reduced to rubble, here frames the capitol with its last remaining piece, the bell tower, on the right, and the beautiful new city hall on the left. (State Journal Photo)

Figure 36. Razing Old City Hall. Lansing (1895-96).

DOWN SHE GOES!—Sidewalk and office window engineers by the dozens gaped in fascination Monday afternoon as this huge crane with bucket and claws battered down the east wall of the old city hall on W. Ottawa st. Clouds of plaster dust bloomed over the whole block as the claws dumped massive chunks of brick and mortar to barricaded areas below. Workers on top are removing the roof and clock tower and the job is expected to be completed in about five or six weeks.

Figure 37. Razing Old City Hall. Lansing (1895-96).

Figure 38. Plans for Civic Center. Lansing (1938).

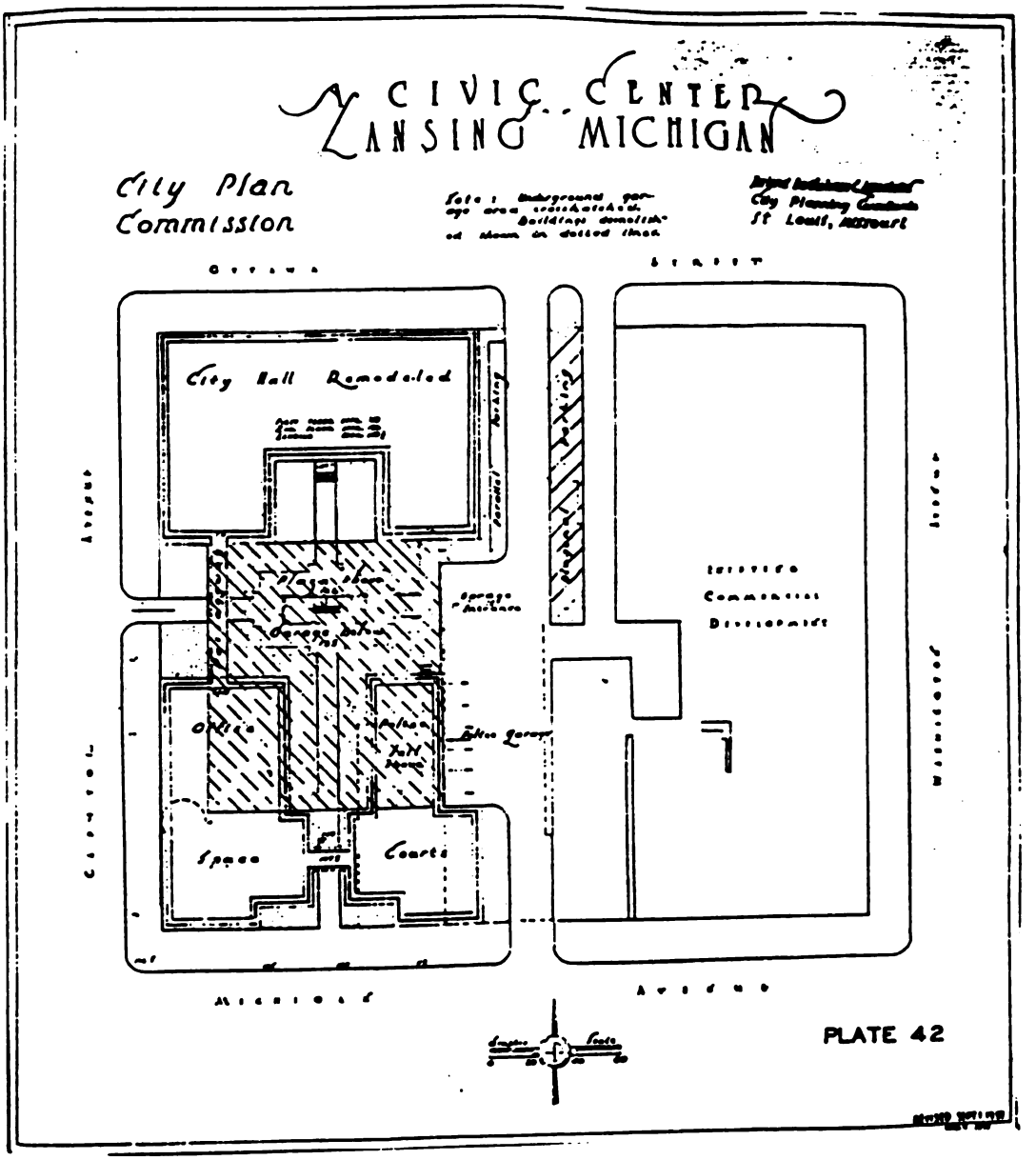
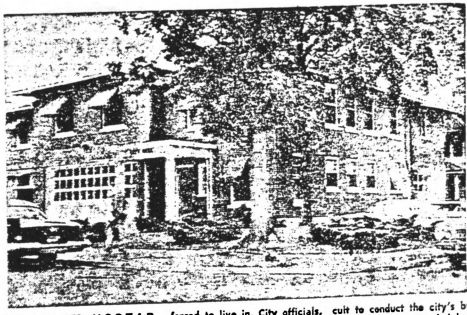


Figure 39. Lever Building. Gordon Bunshaft. New York City (c. 1945).

Figure 40. Overcrowding in City Hall. East Lansing (1923-1931).

LOW PIPES! — Keeping accident records is hazardous duty for Corp. John Platte because of low-hanging drain and water pipes. Taller officers like 6-foot-plus Sgt. William Sharp don't dare stand at attention in the detective "bureau" in the basement of East Lansing's city hall. Snow blowing in during the winter and dripping pipes in the summer keep officers on their toes.

Figure 41. Overcrowding in City Hall. East Lansing (1923-31).



BURSTING ITS MORTAR JOINTS — East Lansing's city hall is like the shoe the Old Woman and all her kids were forced to live in. City officials, police and firemen and office workers who total around 60 during work days find it difficult to conduct the city's business in the overcrowded building. (State Journal Photos.)

Figure 42. Proposed City Hall. Mayotte-Webb Architects. East Lansing 1923-1963).

PROPOSED CITY HALL

This is the proposed new City Hall for East Lansing. The area obscured by an aluminum solar screen (right) is the present building. A small part of the front of the present library, will be removed to permit installation of the large windows. The drawing shows a two-story addition on the north, extending several feet north of the present building line. On the south side (not shown) a one-story wing will be extended along Linden St. The plans, drawn by Mayotte-Webb Architects, have not been finalized. But City Manager John Patrikercho said preliminary estimates are that the building will cost about $500,000. The present building was constructed in 1923, with additions over the next few years. Financing will be determined by voters deciding on a general obligation bond issue this spring at the city elections.

Figure 43. Construction on City Hall. East Lansing.

You're used to looking at the front (Abbott Rd.) side of City Hall. There's considerably more square footage hidden on back (Grove St.) side. This is how it looks from Grove. The Police Department will occupy the ground floor portion in the foreground. The old City Hall shows at left.

Towne Courier photo by Boyd Shumaker

Figure 44. Completed City Hall. East Lansing (1923-65).

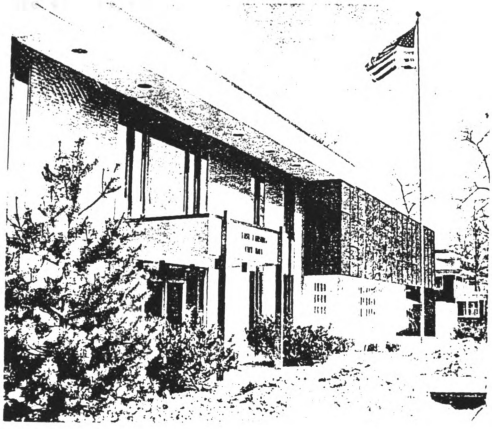


Figure 45. Palazzo de Broletto. Como, Italy (1215).

Figure 46. Boston Old City Hall. Massachusetts (1862-65). HABS.

Figure 47. Richmond City Hall. Virginia (1886-94).

Figure 48. Albany City Hall. New York (1881-83).

Figure 49. Bay City City Hall. Pratt and Koeppe Architects. Michigan (1894-97).

Figure 50. Michigan Capitol. E. E. Myers. Lansing, Michigan (1871).

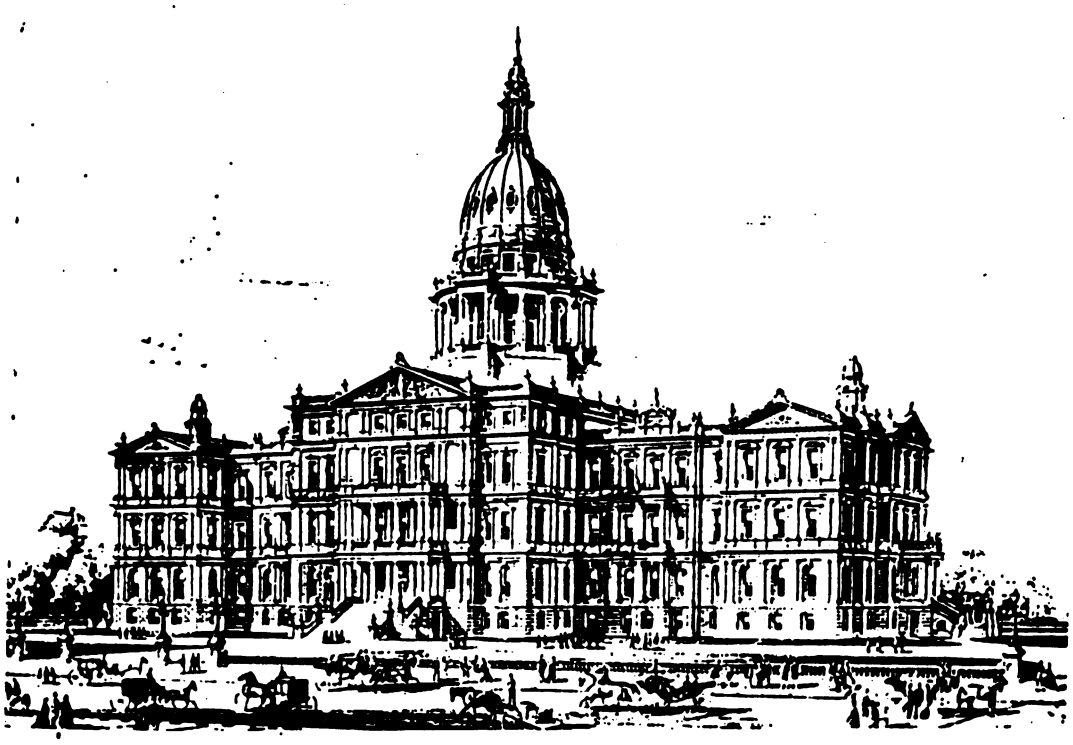


Figure 51. Town Hall. Bigelow and Wadsworth, Architects. Weston, Massachusetts.

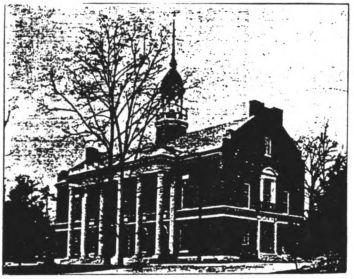


Figure 52. City Hall. John Russell Pope.
Plattsburgh, New York.

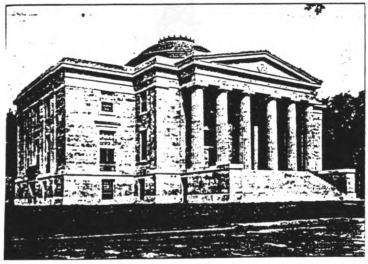


Figure 53. Municipal Group at Springfield, Massachusetts. Pell and Corbett Architects.

Figure 54. Civic Center. Alvar Aalto. Säynätsalo, Finland (1950-51). East Entrance.

Figure 55. Marshall Field Warehouse. Henry Hobson Richardson. Chicago, Illinois (1885-87).

FOOTNOTES

Preface

1) Louis Sullivan, Kindergarten Chats (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, c. 1947), quoted in David Lowe, Lost Chicago (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), introductory page.

CHAPTER 1

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1) "Getting Around Greater Lansing," Lansing State Journal, August 23, 1987, p. 2.

2) Romig, Walter. Michigan Place Names, 1973, p. 318.

3) Robinson, Willard B. The People's Architecture, ix.

4) Goodman, Nelson. "Che Cosa Significa Construire, E Quando E Perche," Domus, vol. #672-74, May-August 1986, p. 20.

Rationale for Symbolic Implications

5) King, Anthony D. Building and Society, p. 4.

6) Goodman, p. 17.

7) Ibid.

8) Ibid.

9) Goodman, p. 20.

10) King, ed., Rapport, Amos. "Cultural Determinants of Form," Building and Society, p. 286.

11) Ibid.

12) Hughes, Robert. Shock of the New, p. 211.

13) Ibid.

14) Sullivan, Louis. Kindergarten Chats.

15) Patriarche, John M. Report to the Citizens in the City of East Lansing, 1965, pp. 24-25.

16) Langer, Suzanne K. Feeling and Form, p. xi.

17) Ibid., p. 96, 97, and 99.

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18) Verway, David F., editor. The Michigan Statistical Abstract, Twentieth Edition, 1986-87, April, 1987. Bureau of Business Research School of Business Administration, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. Appendix, p.x.

19) Kestenbaum, Justin L. Out of a Wilderness, p.37.

20) Kestenbaum, p.67.

21) Ibid.

22) Kestenbaum, p. 68.

23) Kestenbaum, p. 73.

24) Kestenbaum, p. 104.

25) Kestenbaum, p. 105.

26) Kestenbaum, p. 106.

27) Ibid.

28) Ibid.

29) Kestenbaum, p. 110.

30) Kestenbaum, p. 111.

31) Kestenbaum, p. 114.

32) Ibid.

33) Ibid.

34) Kestenbaum, p. 41.

35) Manassah, Sallie M. Lansing: capital, campus, and cars, 1986, p. 178.

36) Manassah, p. 178.

37) Swanson, Bert and Edith Swanson. Discovering the Community. p. 23.

38) King, Anthony D. p. 4.

39) Swanson, p. 137.

40) Martin, Paul A., ed. Our Town Welcomes You to Lansing, Your Town: "Pocket Guide to Lansing, Capital of Michigan," 1960, p. 2.

41) Manassah, p. 178.

42) Swanson, p. 139.

43) Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

Architectural and Historical Development of City Halls as Building Types

1) Pevsner, Nikolaus. A History of Building Types, 1976, p. 10.

2) Ibid, p. 53.

3) Stern, Robert. Pride of Place, 1986, p. 220-221.

4) Ibid.

5) Pevsner, p. 62.

6) Chermayeff, Serge. Design and the Public Good, 1982, p. 92-93.

7) Collins, Peter. Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture, 1965, p. 30.

8) Ibid, p. 31.

Lansing City Hall

9) "Chittenden Gets it Done," State Republican, March 26, 1895, p. 1.

10) Ibid.

11) Ibid.

12) State Republican, December 29, 1896, p. 1.

13) "Public Seems Well Pleased," State Republican, January 2, 1897, p. 1.

14) "The New Stone House," State Republican, December 12, 1896, p. 1.

15) Ibid.

16) Moles, Lloyd J., "Landmark Razing Set by Council," Lansing State Journal, March 3, 1959.

17) "Ingham Lawyers Approve Present City Hall Site," Lansing State Journal, July 19, 1953.

"In the original Lansing city plan, drawn up in 1938 by Harland Bartholomew and Associates of St. Louis, Mo., city planning consultants presented the present city hall, police station and a city jail.

On January 2, 1947, the city planning commission unanimously approved the revised plans for the new city hall, which called for construction on the present site."

18) Christensen, Don. "Opinions Presented at Hearing," Lansing State Journal, July 1, 1953.

19) Ibid.

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21) "Two New City Buildings to Solve Growing Pains," Lansing State Journal, January 2, 1955.

22) Ibid.

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26) "To Enlarge City Hall," The East Lansing Press, May 15, 1931, p. 1.

27) "City Starts New Buildings," The East Lansing Press, July 3, 1931, p. 1.

28) Ibid.

29) "Open House at City Hall will be Next Wednesday," East Lansing Press, November 6, 1931, p. 1.

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31) Patriarche, John M. A Report to the Citizens in the City of East Lansing, 1962, p. 25.

32) "Lack of Space Hampers Work of East Lansing City Employees," Lansing State Journal, July 24, 1966.

33) Patriarche, p. 25.

34) Ibid.

35) "Expansion Problem Goes to Councilmen," East Lansing Towne Courier, November 4, 1963, p. 1.

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37) "Next: Fixing up old part of City Hall," East Lansing Towne Courier, August 18, 1964, p. 20.

38) Patriarche, p. 25.

39) "Is new city hall big enough?," East Lansing Towne Courier, May 11, 1965, p. 6.

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41) Ibid.

42) Historic American Buildings Survey. America's City Halls. p. 14.

43) Ibid.

44) Craig, Lois. "The Boston City Hall and Its Antecedents," AIA Journal, p. 48.

45) Ibid.

46) Ibid.

47) For further discussion see Gowans, Alan. Images of American Living, pp. 350-362.

48) Scully, Vincent. Modern Architecture, p. 17.

49) Ibid, p. 18.

50) Hitchocock, Henry-Russell, Temples of Democracy, 1976, p. 177.

51) Hamlin, Talbot. Forms and Functions in Twentieth Century Architecture, vol. 3., p. 802.

CHAPTER 3

Cultural Assessment

1) Historic American Buildings Survey. America's City Halls, p. 9.

2) Williams, Raymond. Dictionary of Concepts in History, p. 89.

3) King, Anthony D., ed., Rapoport, Amos. "Cultural Determinants of Form," Buildings and Society, p. 286.

4) Williams, p. 89.

5) Stone, Harris. Monuments and Mainstreets, p. 208.

6) Chermayeff, Serge. "Design and Transition," Design and the Public Good, pp. 43-44.

7) Stone, p. 208.

8) White, Monton and Lucia, ed., Parks, Robert. The Intellect vs. the City, p. 159.

9) "Ideology," Dictionary of Concepts in History, p. 215.

10) Doxiadis, C.A. "Architecture," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, p. 392-393.

11) Hamlin, Talbot, ed., Kump, Ernest J. "Town and City Halls," Forms and Functions of Twentieth Century Architecture, vol. 3, p. 793.

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Stylistic Assessment

1) Eaton, Leonard K. American Architecture Comes of Age, p. 14.

2) Scully, Vincent. Modern Architecture, p. 18.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

1) Churchill, Sir Winston. Time, September 12, 1960.

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