

PHLF NEWS

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

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PHLF PRESENTS ECONOMICAL, EFFICIENT ALTERNATIVE TO COSTLY "HALL OF JUSTICE" PROPOSAL FOR ALLEGHENY COUNTY



"The Courthouse is the most magnificent and imposing of Richardson's works, yet it is the most logical and quiet. . . There is no other municipal building like Richardson's Courthouse. It is as new as the needs it meets, as American as the community for which it was built, yet it might stand without loss of prestige in any city in the world." - Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer

Allegheny County is fortunate to own and occupy two of the most significant architectural monuments in the world: The Allegheny County Courthouse, and its great adjoining County Jail Building, both designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and built 1884-1888. These two structures are landmarks of international distinction, and bestow upon our county seat of government an impressiveness far transcending its day-to-day operations. Not only have they become an important symbol to the people of this county but for thousands of other people they represent an apex in the history of American architecture. These structures climaxed the career of one of America's greatest architects and constitute his masterpiece. The County also has space in the City-County Building, designed by Palmer, Hornbostel and Jones and built 1915-1917, another landmark of distinction.

But unfortunately Allegheny County, and particularly its courts, face a critical space problem. An official study by Price Waterhouse, Inc., of County space needs submitted to the Commissioners on January 26, 1970 noted that:

The deficit (shortage) of County-owned administrative space for agencies studies is. . . .calculated at 122,000 square feet in 1967.

This deficit in 1967 amounts to 24.8% of County owned space and it increases to 55.1% in 1987 or 315,000 square feet.

The courts present the most critical ingredient in this problem.

The study points out:

The requirements of the Court system have a significant impact on the results of the study. The need for court space is expected to grow 62% over the 20-year period as compared with 36% growth in all other agencies studied.

By 1987 the study anticipates a need of 181,000 additional square feet for the courts.

Evidence that this projection foretold the future was produced in 1972 when the Pennsylvania legislature authorized the addition of four more judges to Allegheny County and on January 3, 1973 Governor Milton Shapp appointed those judges.

Searches for Solutions

Although no studies have been formally commissioned to solve the space problem in general, various proposals have been advanced and considered. The fact that much of the problem is being caused by the rapid expansion of the court system has lead generally to the formulation, by representatives of the courts, of a solution that concentrates on their problem. The remaining county agencies play a subsidiary role.

It should first be pointed out that the Price Waterhouse study does not appear to have taken into consideration the possible underuse of the court facilities frequently alleged to exist. Various critics have pointed out that the courts are in session less than eight hours a day and less than 52 weeks a year. Before any action is taken regarding expanding existing court space, an analysis should be made of the potential, higher use of the existing court facilities.

The most serious proposal for solving the space problem appears to be that of erecting a "Hall of Justice" on the open land now bounded by Grant Street, Third Avenue, Fourth Avenue, and Smithfield Street to house all courts and all court-related agencies. In addition it is proposed that the County would acquire one of the smaller office buildings now in private ownership near this new structure and use it for additional county office space. We then would assume that the Court House itself would cease to be a court house and would be renovated for offices. It

might also be demolished. Although no feasibility study of this plan has been made, a cost of \$45,000,000 has been mentioned for the "Hall of Justice" alone; costs for housing non-court related offices have not been estimated. It should be noted that recently substantial tax money was invested in renovating existing court rooms in the court house.

Currently a bill has been introduced into the State legislature (Senate Bill #650, Session of 1973) that expands the powers of the General State Authority so that it can borrow money to build "facilities for the conduct of judicial proceedings." This bill would empower GSA to construct a "Hall of Justice" for Allegheny County in accord with the wishes of those who desire such a structure and to construct similar buildings in each of the other 65 counties of the Commonwealth as well, creating an expensive burden to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth.

A More Practical Solution

We respectfully suggest that a more practical solution might exist and should be examined. We start from the premise that we have a noble and famous court house, designed to be a court house, and recently partially modernized to permit it to continue as a court house: we suggest that every consideration should be given to continuing it as a court house. Located across the street from it is the City-County Building, which contains the Supreme Court Courtroom, one of the most magnificent spaces in the County, and Law Library, also handsomely housed, and other court related agencies. In addition it contains large open spaces, now used ineffectively as offices. We suggest that after such time as the court facilities in the courthouse are operating on a full-time, efficient basis, the City-County Building might without difficulty be remodelled to contain additional court rooms and ante-rooms, and retain some of its court-related offices.

The County Office Building at Forbes and Ross could also be made available for courts and court-related offices. Non-court related offices of Allegheny County also require additional office space. We propose that it should be all non-court-related county offices that should be housed in one building so that a person who has business with various county agencies can transact it easily and so that these agencies can interact more easily.

Although no feasibility study has yet been made, we believe that it is clear, prima facie, that it would be less expensive and more useful to erect a modern office structure to house all county, non-court-related offices and include in it moveable wall systems, such as are used in most modern buildings by business and industry, so that as agencies expand and contract, the building can easily be adapted to their space requirements. Or possibly a study would show that the County should simply acquire an older building near the Court House and modernize it for this purpose.

Included in this building would be a number of offices that are not court-related but that are now housed in the Court House, the City-County Building, and the County Office Building, including the following. Listed is their 1967 space allocation according to the Price Waterhouse study.

Commissioner's Office.....	11,212	sq. ft
Department of Property & Supplies.....	9,316	" "
Bureau of Accounts, Statistics & Budget....	2,422	" "
Purchasing Department.....	4,102	" "
Bureau of Weights & Measures.....	612	" "
Health Department.....	21,000	" "
Board of Viewers.....	3,190	" "
Controller.....	14,900	" "
Treasurer.....	12,367	" "
County Fair.....	290	" "
Department of Regional Parks.....	430	" "
Department of Property Assessment, Appeals & Review.....	20,352	" "
Department of Records.....	4,783	" "
Bureau of Election.....	16,149	" "
Civil Defense.....	175	" "
Department of Works.....	28,183	" "
Department of Parks.....	1,802	" "
Superintendent of City Schools.....	7,003	" "
Recorder of Deeds.....	47,911	" "
Department of Deed Registry.....	20,436	" "
TOTAL.....	226,635	" "

If all these agencies were to be removed to quarters in a structure designed specifically for offices and adaptable for changing space needs, a total of 226,635 square feet now in use by them would come available in the Court House, City-County Building, and County Office Building.

The study shows an existing 1967 space deficit of 67,000 square feet and estimates that the courts will need an additional 114,000 square feet by 1987 resulting in a total space need beyond that currently in use of 181,000 square feet, of which approximately 15,000 square feet may be housed in a Juvenile Court Building leaving a total need of 166,000 square feet for courts. This figure could be reduced by the efficiency study of the use of court space.

In addition to the 166,000 square feet maximum required by the courts, the court-related offices will require the following space by 1987 according to Price Waterhouse.

Clerk of Courts.....	10,461	sq. ft
County Police.....	1,913	" "
Sheriff.....	14,482	" "
Registrar of Wills.....	22,818	" "
Prothonotary.....	45,125	" "
District Attorney.....	42,378	" "
TOTAL.....	137,177	" "

These offices already occupy 89,070 square feet of space. Their additional need by 1987 is 48,107 square feet. If this additional need is added to the 1987 court needs of 166,000 additional square feet, a total additional need will exist of 214,107 square feet. By vacating the non-court related offices in the three existing buildings, 226,635 sq. feet comes available, thereby resulting in a surplus of 12,528 sq. ft. after all court and court related needs through 1987 are met.

The Price Waterhouse study indicates a total 1987 space need for all County offices of 886,560 square feet. By using the three existing county buildings for courts and court related offices as we propose, the County will then need to accommodate elsewhere 449,758 square feet by 1987, most of which should be located in a new or renovated downtown building. The Construction Cost Data Book for 1973 shows that the median cost of an office building is \$29.60 per square foot compared to a \$46.80 per square foot median cost for courthouses.

A side benefit to this proposal is that those working in those structures that we propose for housing court facilities - Court House, City-County Building, County Office Building - would have easy access to all the buildings through the existing underground pedestrian walkways.

Merits of the Proposal

1. The renovation of the office spaces in the Court House, City-County and County Office Buildings to use them as court rooms and related space allocations should result in a cost considerably less than that of designing and erecting a new structure for courts. This would mean that the number of square feet currently used by courts and court-related agencies combined with that needed by 1987 would necessitate minimal additional investment; this figure could perhaps be substantially reduced at the completion of an efficiency study of the use of existing court space.
2. The acquisition or erection of an office building for the other county agencies should create less expenditure of public funds. Designed as a straightforward office building (or already existing as such), and highly adaptable for changing needs, the new structure should be less costly to build than one erected to house the varying and highly individualized space needs of courts with their jury rooms, chambers, ante-rooms, and the appurtenant spaces.
3. The erection or addition of the new building for offices will not result in drastically remodelling of the Court House and City-County Building to turn them into office structures, a procedure that would obviously result in very high costs.

(Concluded on back page)

Manchester Bridge Sculptures Placed in Garden Court

The momentous day was November 1, 1973. The wind was high and sharp, and the clouds rolled rapidly and dramatically overhead. At apartment #3 in Allegheny Center residents had their breakfast at their picture windows overlooking the garden court and watched the 40-foot crane as preparations were made for the most spectacular event in the development of the artifact garden court.

Two days earlier Dravo Corporation had generously delivered the great Manchester Bridge portal sculptures which the firm had been storing for us at no charge at Neville Island. Reiber Construction Company had prepared a huge footer consisting of 27 cubic yards of concrete with steel anchor bolts. Specifications for the footer had been prepared by J. Fred Triggs, engineer, donating his services on behalf of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers. The news media were on the scene together with a large number of sidewalk superintendents including Ellis Schmidlapp and Arthur Ziegler from our staff.

The Manchester portal sculptures were designed by the New York sculptor Charles Keck and date from 1917 just four years after the bridge itself. They are 37 feet long, 13 feet high and each weighs 10,000 pounds. The sculptures themselves are bronze and are still attached to the steel portal truss work of the bridge.

Designs called for a large steel plate to be placed on top of the concrete footer, for holes to be drilled in the bottom angle of the truss work of each sculpture, and for the sculptures to be placed upon this steel plate so that the twenty bolts that extend upright from the concrete footer through the steel plate would pass through the holes in the bottom of the truss work.

Our own work crew pitched in after regular working hours the night before the sculptures were to be placed to scrape and paint the bottom of the angle that would be resting on the steel plate so that it would have several good coats of red lead paint to protect it because it will never again be accessible. In spite of considerable mud in the garden court due to the three days rain, Warren Schweitzer, Anthony Vennare, and Frank Vennare completed the painting just before dark.

The next day the giant crane had to slip the sculptures down over the bolts in spite of the high winds which tended to swing the sculptures freely in the air. Nevertheless, the two great sculptures went into place almost perfectly, were bolted down, and another steel plate was added between them near the top to form a continuous stabilizing element. That plate was welded into place and within eight hours the entire project was completed.

Also on November 1 we moved the granite maidens that had originally stood on the roof of the Fourth Avenue Post Office and had been resting in the area proposed for the garden court. They were lifted over the new Belgian block wall along the western side of the court and placed in the arc area of the wall where they are now visible to everyone driving the Allegheny Commons loop or approaching the Old Post Office Museum from Western Avenue.



First sculpture settles down almost perfectly over the bolts extending up through the concrete



The second sculpture is moved into position by the great crane



The second sculpture, featuring the miner and the steel worker, slides easily over the bolts



The construction crew prepares to add the bracing between the sculptures at the top



The construction foreman motions for the crane to hoist the largest of the two statues up over the wall



Her sister joins her



The completed statues face out toward the western sun

Dravo Films Manchester Bridge Sculptures

Dravo Corporation very generously provided camera crews to record the arrival, the unloading, and the erection of the Manchester Bridge portal sculptures. The crews were on the roof of the Old Post Office building, the roof of the apartment building across from the garden court and at ground level.

Through the courtesy of Dravo we have a complete record of this unique event in our history. Our staff intends to edit the several hundred feet of movie film that were taken and place it in an automated machine in the museum where visitors can activate it and see how the sculptures were raised into position.

PHLF Director Chosen Man of the Year by Southside Chamber of Commerce

James Bibro, a member of our board of directors and very active in the Birmingham program, was honored on November 15 by the South Side Chamber of Commerce. He was named by the group as the "Man who, because of outstanding leadership qualities and dedicated service, has made the greatest contributions toward total community development of the South Side for the current year".

Mr. Bibro has been in business at the Terminal Properties on Carson Street for 16 years and is President of Puro Water Filter Co. Mr. Bibro and his wife, Genevieve, have two children. He is a member of the board at St. Joseph's Hospital and is chairman of the consolidation committee. He serves as a director of the South Side Chamber of Commerce and is a member of Kiwanis International.

Mr. Bibro continues to serve as board liaison with the staff for the Birmingham program and has been active in PHLF's efforts to restore the South Side, particularly in trying to encourage the businessmen to realize the potential economic and aesthetic benefits of commercial restoration of their buildings along Carson St.

Help Save Our Toy Museum!

At this writing eleven families plus the Fashion Group of Pittsburgh have contributed \$100. each to help save the Toy Museum. This \$1200. enabled us to buy the small Victorian parlour (value \$650), 4 architectural banks (\$85), and the paper village (\$50).

The proceeds from the drawing for the sterling silver miniature room will enable us to complete payment on the large Victorian parlour.

One would only have to see one small child's face when viewing the toy collection to realize its intrinsic value.

NEW

"A Memorial Exhibition of the Embroidery of Gladys Schmitt", the Pittsburgh novelist, is now open at the Old Post Office.

Known for her many historical novels, Gladys Schmitt wrote ten books including a volume of poems--Sonnets for an Analyst published posthumously last June. Ms. Schmitt attained national recognition early in her career with the publication of David the King. Her books became best sellers, and many were translated into foreign languages and published throughout the world. Some of the foreign and American editions are included in the display.

Less known was her art with embroidery. Gladys Schmitt produced many textile creations. Included in the display at the Old Post Office are a number of ornamental alphabet letters, animal scenes, a brick wall with butterflies, and a map designed and stitched by Marlee Myers, an apprentice.

Ms. Schmitt was professor of creative writing at Carnegie-Mellon University for more than twenty years.

This exhibit pays tribute to her talent with her hands as well as her mind and imagination.

It is sponsored by the Craftsman Branch of the Embroiderers Guild, and will run daily, except Monday, until January 13.

With thanks

Many thanks to the members of the Eastmont Garden Club for their time and work in preparing the Victorian dried-flower arrangements for use in the Museum.

A special thanks to the Pittsburgh Doll Club and their leaders who worked so hard preparing the Christmas toy exhibit at the Old Post Office for our Christmas Exhibit.

Put London in Your Christmas Stocking . . .

by signing up for
THE LANDMARKS' LONDON HOLIDAY

May 24th through June 2nd, 1974



- fly non-stop from Pittsburgh, round trip on a Pan American charter jet airplane
- stay at the new London Embassy Hotel, across from Kensington Gardens
- see Westminster Abbey, Parliament, Tower of London, and many more London landmarks
- visit Bath, Stonehenge and Salisbury and enjoy the excitement of these famous areas
- see the Queen's Birthday parade and Trooping of the Colours
- meet the members and staff of the London Victorian Society at our special meeting there
- learn about National Trust functions and visit one of their properties
- join your friends and meet new ones on PHLF's first tour program abroad
- plan to be pampered and thrilled throughout this special travel program and store up many happy memories of London, an ancient Roman village, now one of today's world capitals

OR . . . JUST TAKE THE ROUND TRIP FLIGHT ON THE PHLF
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for a confirmed reservation, complete and mail application:
- - - - -

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
PERSONS TO ACCOMPANY ME _____ your own TELEPHONE _____
check preference: twin _____ single _____ airfare only _____
Name of roommate _____

ENCLOSE DEPOSIT OF \$50. for each person. Final payment is
due April 1, 1974. Make all checks payable to Pittsburgh
History & Landmarks Foundation.

REFUNDS AND CANCELLATIONS: Airfare cancelled up to 45-days prior to departure will be refunded in full, less a \$10. non-refundable deposit. For cancellations on airfare later than 45-days prior to departure, there will be no refund due unless the seat can be sold to a member of PHLF. For cancellation on land program, out-of pocket expenses will be deducted from refund paid.

SPECIAL NOTE: mark the date, January 23, 1974
Wednesday, at 7:00 p.m.
at the Old Post Office Museum

- see a film on London as it is today
- ask questions of the tour organizers and PHLF representatives
- get together with your friends for a travelogue
- refreshments will be served

Third Annual SIA Convention to Meet Here in Spring

Because of the industrial history of Pittsburgh and the activities of PHLF, the Society for Industrial Archaeology has chosen Pittsburgh for its Third Annual Convention. They will convene at the William Penn Hotel and hold some meetings here at the Old Post Office. Many of the earliest members of the SIA are native Pittsburghers and members of our organization. Two of our active members and hard-working volunteers are co-chairmen of the arrangements committee for the convention--Field Curry and Harold Lyke.

The Gateway Party Liner has been chartered for April 27 so that members of PHLF can join the SIA for dinner and a trip on the Pittsburgh rivers. Mark this date on your calendar now and watch for more details and reservation forms in forthcoming Newsletters.

4. All non-court related offices would be under one roof; under the proposal to erect a "Hall of Justice" county offices would be even further scattered among four or five different buildings.
5. The public would continue to enjoy relative security and low cost in transporting prisoners to and from the courts. Prisoners held in Allegheny County Jail could continue to walk over the "Bridge of Sighs", with their guards, and directly into the Court House. No vans would be needed, no prisoners would be on or near the sidewalks and streets, no special police would be required beyond accompanying guards, and no association with the public would occur.

We Therefore Propose

We therefore propose that the Commissioners of Allegheny County authorize and instruct the Planning Department to investigate the merits of this proposal before taking any action concerning the "Hall of Justice" or any other solution proposed for the growing space problems of the County agencies and the courts.

CHRISTMAS TIME
AT THE OLD POST OFFICE

The Old Post Office Museum will open its "Old Fashioned Christmas" exhibition on December 2 with a Christmas party for members of PHLF. Over 250 adults and children will help trim an 18-foot silver fir tree, listen to stories told by Mother Goose, hear concerts by The Consort of Musick and the Teutonia Menterchor, and enjoy refreshments.

On December 4 the exhibition will open to the public. This year the exhibit is under the chairmanship of Mrs. Paul McBeth, Jr. The Pittsburgh Doll Club has prepared displays of old-time dolls and toys. Included are Victorian hand-made dolls, wind-up toys, several electric trains from the early part of this century, paper games, doll houses, and rocking horses. Members of PHLF have loaned additional old-time toys.

A feature of the show is a Pittsburgh taxi from 1906 drawn by a paper mache horse.

The Fashion Group of Pittsburgh, utilizing the extensive fashion collection owned by the Museum, has dressed manikins in elaborate Victorian dresses and suits that might have been worn at Christmas time in the late 19th century. These have been incorporated into room settings with Victorian and Edwardian furniture.

GIVE A CHRISTMAS GIFT THAT LASTS ALL YEAR
MEMBERSHIP IN PITTSBURGH HISTORY & LANDMARKS

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Honorable Leonard C. Staisey
Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
Allegheny County Court House
Pittsburgh, Penna. 15219

Dear Commissioner Staisey:

We are enclosing herewith a report urging that the County Commissioners authorize a full feasibility study of alternative solutions to solving the County Office space needs as outlined in the Price Waterhouse report of January, 1970.

Currently Senate Bill 650 would empower the General State Authority to borrow funds to construct "facilities for judicial proceedings;" the proposal is being advanced locally that some \$45,000,000 be spent on such a "Hall of Justice" for our county.

We believe that no recommendation should be made by the County Commissioners on that bill until alternatives are explored. Our report indicates that a less costly alternative may derive from simply removing all non-court-related offices from the Court House, the City-County Building and the County Office Building and making the minor remodeling that would be necessary to use those buildings (as they already in part are being used) for the courts and court-related facilities. Then all other county offices could be housed in one new or remodelled downtown office building.

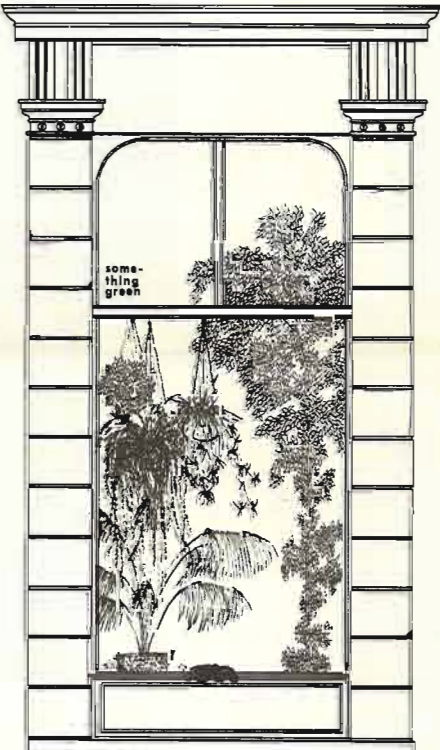
Before this large commitment of taxpayer money is committed to this project, we believe that our proposal and all other proposals should be explored.

We would appreciate hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur P. Ziegler, Jr.
Executive Director

APZ/va
Enclosures

NEW



something green, located in the mexican war steels restoration district, is an interior plant shop, offering the finest tropical foliage in the city. in addition to a very large selection of fine plants, something green also offers a varied collection of pottery, hangers, basketry and other unique planters and containers. we invite your telephone inquires at 321-3556 and cordially extend to you, an invitation to visit with us at something green. marilyn detwiler michael schmidt proprietors
hours: monday thru thursday 11am - 5pm
closed tuesday
friday 11am - 9pm
saturday and sunday 11am - 5pm

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

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Husband & Wife	from \$12.00
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Active	from \$25.00
Contributing	from \$50.00
Sustaining	from \$100.00
Patron	from \$500.00

MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

- Free admission to the Old Post Office, the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Museum.
- 5% discount on purchases at the Old Post Office Museum Gift Shop.
- Subscription to "News for Members" and special publications on architecture and history.
- Free admission or discount tickets for walking and bus tours.
- Free admission to winter lecture series.
- Notification of new exhibits at the Old Post Office.
- Participation in an organization given national awards "for the vigor of its programs."