

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received SEP 2 1980

date entered DEC 2 1980

1. Name

historic Anchorage City Hall (AHR-ANC-240)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 524 West Fourth Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Anchorage _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district Alaska at Large

state Alaska code 02 county Anchorage Division code 020

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: bank

4. Owner of Property

name Municipality of Anchorage (907) 264-4224

street & number Pouch 6-650

city, town Anchorage _____ vicinity of _____ state Alaska 99502

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. District Recorder

street & number 941 West Fourth Avenue

city, town Anchorage _____ state AK 99501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Patterns of the Past: An Inventory of
title Anchorage's Heritage Resources

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Planning Department, Municipality of Anchorage

city, town Anchorage _____ state Alaska

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Anchorage's City Hall is a cast-concrete building which was constructed in 1936 as a Public Works Administration project. E. Ellsworth Sedille, the local architect who designed the two-story building, selected classical elements in preparing his plans. Most prominent of these elements are the dentils of its cornices, the simulated rustication of the exterior walls, the round arch doorway, and its pediments. The overall dimension of the main buildings are 54 by 78 feet, including the projection on the front facade (8 by 32 feet). That projection, which is capped with a pediment, encompasses the entryway and its accompanying fanlight.

Structural details concerning City Hall's architectural fabric are well described in an Anchorage Times article ("Permanency Marks Structure of Anchorage City Building, Outstanding in Territory," November 14, 1936).

One of the finest public buildings in Alaska is the description which can rightly be given the new Municipal Building . . . it is an imposing structure, both exterior and interior . . . Its concrete walls are eight inches thick, doubly reinforced with steel and lined with four inches of gypsum block on the inside. Interior walls are covered with smooth plaster.

The roof is constructed of concrete slabs four and one-half inches thick, supported as steel and concrete beams . . . The floors are also concrete . . . (and are covered with) red quarry tile . . . Indirect lighting is a feature of the building throughout, with lighting fixtures a silver satin color.

During the early years of its use, nearly every operation of the City was provided office space. In 1936 the main portion of City Hall included the Mayor's office, the Clerk's office, the telephone switchboard, the City Council chambers, the Police Chief's office, the City Engineer's office, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Utilities and the library. Three jail cells, a "tank room" for overnight drunks and a caretaker's apartment were located in the basement. A wing to the west side (35 by 35 by 44 feet) originally housed the fire department. Later, another extension (35 feet in length) was projected to its west side.

Following the creation of the Municipality in 1975 (at that time the former City and Borough governments were consolidated), the first floor at City Hall was restored as a Bicentennial Project. During this project the archways, corners, tile flooring, lighting and woodwork were restored. This restoration work included the foyer, Mayor's office and Municipal Manager's office. In December 1979, when the administrative offices along with most other Municipal departments were relocated to Anchorage's Hill Building, the City Hall was vacated. Municipal ownership has been retained.

The block on which City Hall is located is associated with the original townsite plan. The Anchorage townsite was laid out in a grid pattern in 1915 through the direction of Captain Frederick Mears of the Alaska Engineering Commission and Andrew Christensen of the General Land Office. A few selected uses of townsite land

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1915, 1936 **Builder/Architect** Gastineau Construction Co. (Builder)
E. I. Sedille (Architect)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the City Hall rests with the following: (1) the original town plan as platted by the Alaska Engineering Commission; (2) the architectural attributes of the building; and (3) the building's symbolism of civic government.

During the summer of 1915 the Alaska Engineering Commission (A.E.C), the federal agency which developed the Alaska Railroad, created the Anchorage Townsite. Andrew Christensen of the General Land office and Captain Frederick Mears of the Alaska Engineering Commission collaborated in platting and surveying the Original Townsite during May and June 1915. Their deliberate efforts in creating a town were necessitated because of the temporary settlement known as "Tent City". This chaotic camp was composed of construction workers and other seeking railroad-related business opportunities. The AEC platted a series of blocks using a grid pattern. Among them was the Municipal Reserve. During the initial five years of Anchorage's existence, the town was managed by Alaska Engineering Commission. It was not until 1922, two years after incorporation that the Municipal Reserve was deeded to the City of Anchorage. Prior to 1936, the year that City Hall was built, the Reserve contained a Fire Hall, a small, frame municipal building and a set of tennis courts. The term, Municipal Reserve, has been appropriate: this block in the heart of the townsite has continuously been used for Municipal purposes.

As of 1936 Anchorage had experienced a lull in its development. Born during the boom of railroad construction some twenty years earlier, its growth was stagnant during the 1920's and 1930's. The lack of growth was reflected in the town's architecture. Few new buildings had been constructed along Fourth Avenue after 1920. Thus the frame construction of the early false-fronted commercial establishments, and the pitched-roofed public buildings formed the townscape. The construction of City Hall marked a major change in Anchorage's townsite development; in fact, one local headline proclaimed that the "New Building Will Mark (the) Downtown Skyline as (the) Hub of Municipal Government."

City Hall, with the solid, pretentious image of its time, started the "Second Generation" of Anchorage architecture, an era of building in which case, reinforced concrete was widely used in a series of public buildings. Other "Second Generation" buildings included the Central Grade School (1938), Providence Hospital (1938) and the Federal Building (1939, listed on the National Register in 1977). City Hall ushered in the new building era, and although it retained may classical elements, the building moved Anchorage toward the era of modern architecture.

In March, 1935, Anchorage Mayor O. S. Gill called a special meeting of the City Council to place a \$75,000 bond proposal before the taxpayers to build City Hall under National Recovery Act provisions. Later that year the bond issued passed in a landslide vote of 452 in favor and 59 against.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Anchorage Daily Times, May 2, 1936; and November 14, 1936.

Carberry, M. Patterns of the Past: An Inventory of Anchorage's Heritage Resources.
Municipality of Anchorage, 1979.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 0.48 acres

Quadrangle name A-8 (Anchorage)

Quadrangle scale 1:63 360

UMT References

A

0	6	3	44	7	5	0	6	7	9	0	3	9	0
Zone			Easting			Northing							

B

Zone			Easting			Northing							

C

Zone			Easting			Northing							

D

Zone			Easting			Northing							

E

Zone			Easting			Northing							

F

Zone			Easting			Northing							

G

Zone			Easting			Northing							

H

Zone			Easting			Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

North half of Block 42, Original Townsite

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael E. Carberry, Senior Planner, Municipal Planning Department

Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission

organization Municipality of Anchorage

date

street & number Pouch 6-650

telephone (907) 264-4224

city or town Anchorage

state Alaska 99502

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Douglas R. Rege

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 8-21-80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

James W. Ray
Keeper of the National Register

date 12/2/80

Attest:

Linda Flint McClelland
Chief of Registration

date 12.2.80

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received SEP 2 1980

date entered

DEC 2 1980

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

were prescribed, including a Federal Reserve, a School Reserve, Park Reserves and a Municipal Reserve - the site where City Hall was built some 20 years later. In 1922 the Reserve was patented to the City of Anchorage by the Federal Government under President Harding's administration. In 1974, under U.S. Public Law 93-566, restrictions on the use of the Reserve were eliminated; however, the use of the block has been maintained for municipal services.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received SEP 2 1980

date entered DEC 2 1980

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

The federally backed project was carried out in conjunction with the Public Works Administration. The cost of the building itself was \$55,000. The additional \$20,000 was used in providing a telephone exchange.

The building was completed under the administration of Mayor H.E. Brown. Brown served two terms as Mayor (1936-37, 1939-40). Other Mayors who have been associated with the building included: Dr. J.M. Romig (1937-38), George Vaara (1940-41), William Stolt (1941-44), Ray Wolfe (1944-45), John Manders (1945-46), Win Ervin (1946), Francis Bowden (1946-49), Z. J. Loussac (1949-51), Maynard L. Taylor (1951-55), Ken Hinchey (1955-56), Anton Anderson (1956-58), Hewit Lounsbury (1958-59), George Byer (1959-61), George Sharrock (1961-64), Elmer Rasmuson (1965-67) and George M. Sullivan (1967-present).

During the terms of those mayors, Anchorage grew from a town of less than 4,000 to a metropolitan area of approximately 200,000. Still the focus of local government for most of those years has been City Hall. The building continues to exude a sense of civic life and symbolizes Anchorage's progress from the 1930's to the present era.