

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name 209-2820-0105

historic Kansas City, Kansas City Hall and Fire Headquarters

and/or common Old City Hall and Main Fire Station

2. Location

street & number 805 and 815 North 6th Street

not for publication

city, town Kansas City N/A vicinity of

state Kansas code 020 county Wyandotte code 209

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name City of Kansas City, Kansas, c/o David T. Isabell, City Administrator

street & number Municipal Office Building, 701 North 7th Street

city, town Kansas City N/A vicinity of state Kansas 66101

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk

street & number Wyandotte County Courthouse, 700 North 7th Street

city, town Kansas City state Kansas 66101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kansas City, Kansas Historic District has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date December 1, 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records City Planning Division, City of Kansas City, Kansas

city, town Kansas City state Kansas 66101

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

The Old Kansas City, Kansas, City Hall (ca. 1910-1911; 1929-1930) is located in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas (pop. 161,148). The limestone and brick Renaissance Revival structure occupies the northeast corner of an .81 acre lot fronting Sixth Street and bounded by Ann Street on the south and by Armstrong Street on the north. Conceived by the Kansas City architectural firm of Rose and Peterson, the building was completed in two stages. Charles E. Keyser, also of Kansas City, was responsible for the 1929 annex or northern half of the City Hall and the adjoining Fire Headquarters.

The City Hall portion of the complex is four stories in height atop a raised base, with a fifth floor penthouse jail which is not generally visible from the street. The base is pierced by windows illuminating the basement floor. As the site slopes to the south and west, this base is highest, almost a full story, at the southwest corner. The base is Carthage limestone, the first floor is gray Bedford limestone, the latter being rusticated with horizontal striations in a manner appropriate to the style. Above a continuous sill or intermediary cornice line which occurs at the second floor sill line, the upper portions of the building are clad in a tan brick with cream colored terra cotta trim. The second and third floors are treated as a unity, with brick panels edged with flat pilasters rising to another continuous sill line at the fourth floor. Above this line the brick facade has horizontal striations echoing the first floor's rustication. This is topped by a strongly projecting cornice and a continuous brick parapet wall with a heavy cap. The building is thus divided into five horizontal bands which tend to minimize the structure's height. This horizontality is perhaps not consistent with the Renaissance Revival style but is certainly expressive of the nature of the building's function as a massive office block.

On the main, or 6th Street, facade the building is divided into seven bays, six containing paired double-hung windows on each floor including the basement. The windows on the first and second floors are topped by fixed transoms expressive of the greater height of these two levels. The central or entry bay is pulled forward, with the basement and first floor windows being replaced by a set of steps leading up and in to a pair of doors. These doors occur at a level intermediary between the sidewalk and the first floor, and are topped with a large fixed transom. A carved stone cartouche replaces the keystone over this opening. Above this, each opening contains a trio rather than a pair of windows. Between the second and third floor windows, a rectangular terra cotta panel contains raised letters spelling out "City Hall." At this same level, large terra cotta pilasters mark both the outer edge of the projecting bay and the outer corners of the building.

The treatment of the south, Ann Avenue, facade of the City Hall is somewhat different. Like the main facade this elevation is divided into seven bays, and the two end bays are identical to those on the front. The five intermediate bays, however, are set back slightly from the property edge causing the two end bays to read as corner pavilions. Moreover, the intermediary cornice that forms the fourth floor sill line is omitted in these five bays and instead they are arcaded on the fourth floor level, as was proposed in the original design. In the present scheme of the building this alternate treatment of the facade marks the two-story interior space of the former Commissioners Public Meeting Room on the third floor.

The rear of City Hall, facing an alley on the east, did not receive any decorative or architectonic treatment. On the north, however, where the third and fourth floors extend above the Fire Headquarters portion of the complex and are visible from the street, the facade treatment wraps around the corner to the depth of one bay, creating the impression of a corner pavilion similar to that on the south end.

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The interior layout of the City Hall is basically the same for each floor. Offices are arranged along the south and west sides of the building, taking advantage of the natural light. Interior windows with frosted glass occur in various locations to help with light diffusion. At the interior angle of the office "L," a reinforced concrete vault core extends through all floors. This vault core has two levels on both the first and second floors for a total of seven levels. At the center of each floor is a square lobby. In the original plans, square openings were proposed in the center of the third and fourth floor lobbies with a skylight above creating a three-story atrium, but this was never carried out. The wall separating the lobby from the offices on the south is structural. It is the thickness of an open door and contains various vent stacks. To the east of the lobby area is the service core containing two elevators, stairs and restrooms. As with the vaults, mezzanine levels occur here on the first and second floors. To the north of the lobby area is the one story police garage with access to the alley at the building's rear, part of the 1929 Annex.

The basement floor originally contained a large Municipal Court room on the south, flanked by various police facilities including the jail. This jail was later relocated to the fifth floor penthouse noted above. The first floor contained the City Clerk and Treasurer's offices, those most frequented by the public. The second floor originally contained the City Engineer, Building Inspector, and similar offices, but was later taken over by the Police Department. The third floor contained the Commissioner's Public Meeting Room on the south side, a two story space with a balcony on the east. Windows opened into this space from the fourth floor lobby. The Mayor's office and Commission offices were to the west of the Meeting Room, the City Counselor's office to the east. The fourth floor contained more Commission offices, as the City in 1911 had a five member city commission.

Interior finishes throughout are plastered walls with stained oak trim and tiled floors. Classically detailed ornamental brackets, beams and mouldings occur in the lobby areas and in the Meeting Room. Decorative wall stenciling in green, gold and rose can still be seen in one room of the City Counselor's office where it was covered over for years by bookcases. Such stenciling presumably occurred elsewhere but was long ago painted over.

The Fire Headquarters building is two stories in height, again with a high base pierced by windows illuminating the basement. (One of those basement offices for many years housed the Kansas Film Censor Board.) With an exception to be noted later, the facing of the building is entirely of gray Bedford limestone, matching the lower portions of the City Hall in color and finish. The profiles of the top of the base and of the continuous second floor sill line differ from those of City Hall but nevertheless align with them. The facing of the first floor is not rusticated, nor is the cornice as emphatic as that of City Hall. A false balustrade is carved into five bays along the 6th Street front, the two end bays being in the same plane as the City Hall facade and the center portion being slightly set back, echoing the Ann Avenue facade of City Hall.

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The large first floor window openings correspond to those on City Hall in size and placement, but the second floor windows are smaller than their City Hall counterparts and are divided by stone piers undifferentiated from the wall plane. The entry door in the center bay is at ground level, with internal stairs. Its carved enframing is rectangular, topped by a flat cornice supported by a pair of Corinthian brackets. Above this cornice is one of the few pieces of sculptural decoration on the building, a bas relief representation of the front end of a 1920s fire truck flanked by scrolls made up of fire hoses terminating in flanking fire plugs. Despite this bit of elaboration the overall effect is clean and subdued, as if to indicate that the Fire Headquarters is secondary and subordinate to City Hall. The north, Armstrong Avenue, facade of the Fire Headquarters continues the development of the west facade, but in a single plane. This facade is dominated by the six great doors of the main fire station. Individual bronze letters spelling out "FIRE HEADQUARTERS" are placed above these doors. The doors are flanked on the west by a small pedestrian entrance, and on the east by a five story tower. The tower is square in plan and projects forward of this facade, abutting it rather than engaged. A pedestrian door is centered in the west facade of the tower, with windows similarly centered on the other first floor facades and on each floor above. The third and fourth floors of the tower are faced in brick matching that of City Hall, while the fifth floor is again faced in stone without a cornice, roof, or strongly defined parapet. From the practical standpoint, the tower originally served for hose drying and for training exercises for the firemen. Visually, the tower functions as a campanile, terminating the composition when viewed at an angle from 6th Street and with its materials further emphasizing the unity of the two buildings.

The first floor of the Fire Headquarters is taken up largely with the great equipment room. On the west side, south of the entry, is a large ready room with a fireplace against the south wall next to the City Hall. The second floor is devoted to the men's quarters and Fire Department offices. As noted above, additional offices occupy the south portion of the basement next to the police garage, but the area under the equipment room was left unexcavated.

Changes to the complex over the years have been minimal. The most noticeable exterior change is the painting of the terra cotta trim of the City Hall a flat white. This was done in the early 1970s at the instigation of the then Commissioner of Finance, shortly before the building was abandoned by the City. A more recent change was the replacement of the equipment doors on the main fire station. The new doors are entirely of glass with thin metal mullions, an effect which seems surprisingly compatible with the restrained classicism of the building. It should be noted that because of the lack of maintenance, many of the wooden window frames on the City Hall have deteriorated to the point where replacement rather than repair will probably be called for should a new use ever be found for the structure.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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** ca. 1910-1911, 1929-1930 **Builder/Architect** William Warren Rose and David B. Peterson-  
Architects

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Old Kansas City, Kansas City Hall and Fire Headquarters (ca. 1910-1911; 1929-1930) is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its contribution to Kansas City history and for its architectural significance. The construction of this building marks Kansas City's transition from a Mayor-City Council form of government to a City Commission form of government. The building served the community as the local seat of government for sixty-two years. Initially designed by Kansas City architects William Warren Rose (1864-1931) and David B. Peterson (1875 - ?), the Renaissance Revival structure was completed in two stages. Charles E. Keyser, also of Kansas City, was responsible for the 1929 annex or northern half of the City Hall and the adjoining Fire Headquarters.

Rose and Peterson were a prominent local architectural firm active in Kansas City from 1909 until 1926. They are responsible for many significant Kansas City buildings, including the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Building (ca. 1923-1925; NR 1985), the Argentine Carnegie Library (ca. 1916-1917; NR pending), and at least six public schools. Prior to the Rose and Peterson partnership, Rose designed the Scottish Rite Temple (ca. 1908-1909; NR 1985) and the Kansas City Carnegie Library (ca. 1902-1904; demolished). These buildings shared a massing and eclecticism associated with the pre-Depression Twentieth Century Revival styles.

Rose was among the many eastern architects attracted to Kansas City in the 1880s by its rapid growth. He settled permanently in Kansas City, becoming an active member of its society and served a brief and controversial term as Mayor (1905-1906). Rose served as the Architect for the Kansas City Board of Education from 1891 until his retirement in 1926.

Financial problems troubled the City Hall project from its inception. The 1910 \$200,000.00 public bond issue proved to be insufficient to cover the construction costs of the Rose and Peterson design. It was decided to construct the building in stages and substitute brick for granite on the upper floors. The southern half of the City Hall, including the Sixth Street entrance, was completed in 1911. A proposal to issue more bonds in 1917 was overruled by the Kansas Supreme Court, which held that the city had already exceeded its bonded indebtedness. Finally in 1929, a \$70,000.00 bond issue to complete the City Hall and a \$280,000.00 bond issue to redesign and construct the Fire Headquarters were accepted. Until the 1929 project the adjacent 1886 Italianate City Hall served as the Fire Headquarters. It was razed to provide the necessary space for the construction.

A new Kansas City municipal office building was completed in 1973, effectively vacating the Old City Hall which had been in service since 1911. The building has been used for storage over the past twelve years. A proposal to rehabilitate the Old City Hall is under consideration. The Fire Headquarters continues to function as a fire station. Both the Old City Hall and the Fire Headquarters retain a high degree of external integrity and a moderate degree of internal integrity.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .81

Quadrangle name Kansas City

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	5	3	5	9	6	4	0	4	3	3	0	4	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

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D 

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Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property sits on a .81 acre rectangular lot bounded by North 6th Street to the west, Ann Street to the south, Armstrong Street to the north, and adjacent property lines to the east.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Gray Hagedorn, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date 1-7-86

street & number 120 West Tenth telephone 913-296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas 66612

# 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *James M. Snell*

Executive Director  
title Kansas State Historical Society date Jan. 10, 1986

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Hancks, Larry K. "Kansas City, Kansas City Hall and Fire Headquarters." (National Register nomination draft, 1985).

Harrington, Grant W. Historic Spots or Mile-Stones in the progress of Wyandotte County, Kansas. (Merriam, KS: Mission Press, 1935).

Kansas City, Kansas Board of City Commissioners, "Minutes," Journal A - No. 15 (December 31, 1928 - December 31, 1929), pp. 186, 203, 390, 484.

Kansas City Kansan, June 21, 1930.

Kansas City Kansan, June 24, 1930.

Kansas City Kansan, June 25, 1930.

Keyser, Charles E., Architect. Blueprints of plumbing and heating plans for City Hall Annex and Fire Headquarters, c. 1929.

Keyser, Charles E., Architect. Reproducible photocopy of 6th Street and Armstrong Avenue 1/8 scale elevations of City Hall and Fire Headquarters, c. 1929.

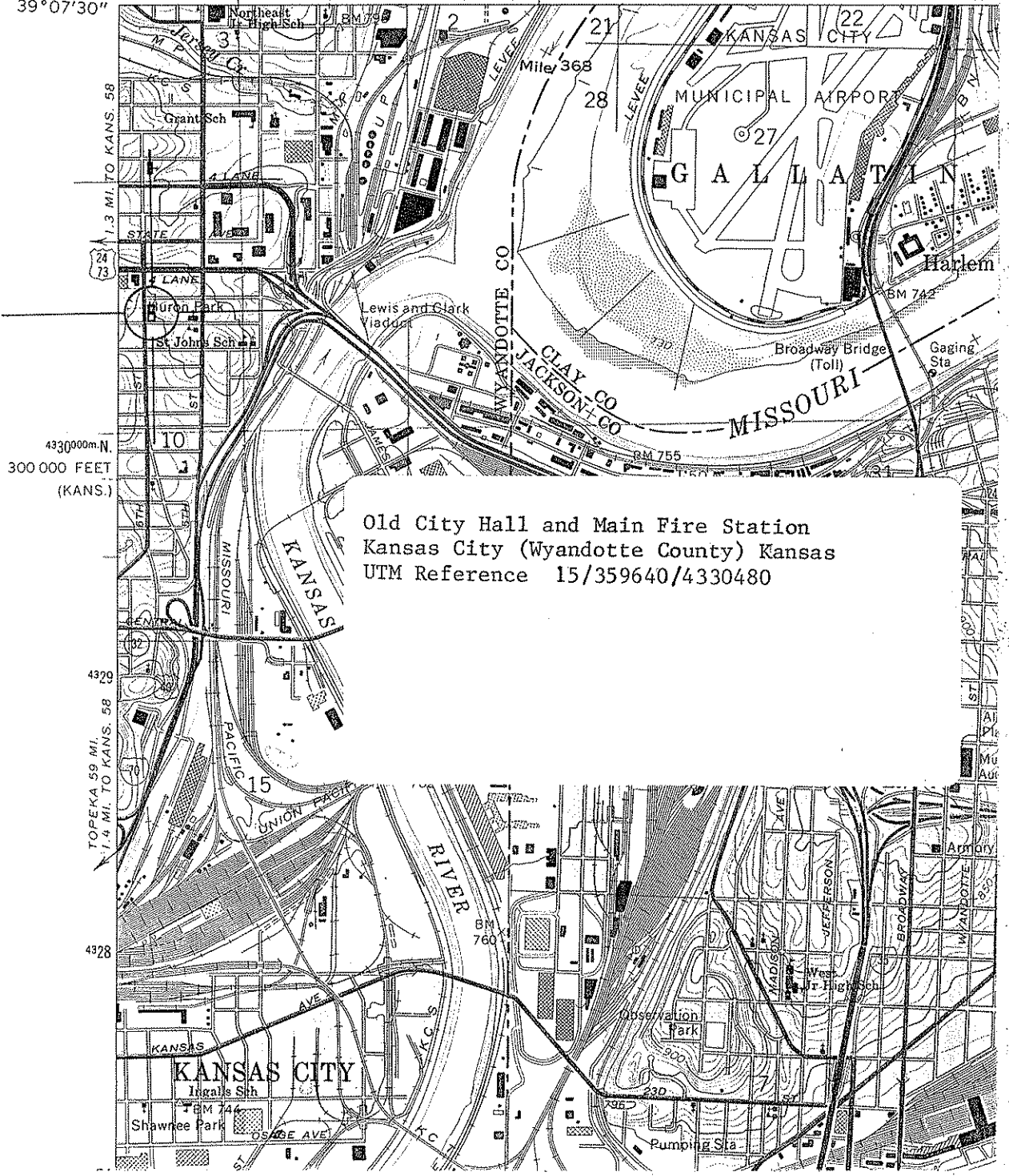
Rose and Peterson, Architects. Blueprints of working drawing floor plans of original proposal, showing City Hall (first phase) substantially as built and unexecuted Municipal Auditorium, c. 1910.

Rose and Peterson, Architects. General Specifications for City Hall (first phase), c. 1910.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

7062 II NW  
(PARKVILLE)

94°37'30" 360000m.E 2 960 000 FEET (KANS.) R. 25 E. R. 33 W. 362 363  
39°07'30"



Old City Hall and Main Fire Station  
Kansas City (Wyandotte County) Kansas  
UTM Reference 15/359640/4330480

4330000m.N.  
300 000 FEET  
(KANS.)

4329  
TOPEKA 59 MI.  
1.4 MI. TO KANS. 58

4328

KANSAS CITY  
Ingralls Sch  
Shawnee Park

Pumping Sta