

May 14, 2019



Ms. Tamie Ehinger, Chair
Design Review Commission
City of Saratoga Springs
474 Broadway
Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

RE: City Hall Renovation

Dear Tamie,

The Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation reviewed the plans and the material samples for the floor tile and the porcelain tile panel for the City Hall renovation.

The Foundation is pleased that the Department of Public Works is presenting the proposed renovation plans of City Hall, a Local Landmark, to the Design Review Commission for review.

The Foundation appreciates the number of improvements that need to be made to the infrastructure of the building – electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning, as well as communication and security systems – and the need to increase office and operational efficiencies and meet the state mandate to provide a second hearing room for the Saratoga Springs City Court. The Foundation has no objections to the proposed floor plans that have been presented.

The Foundation is very pleased with the plans to not only to preserve, but also to uncover many of the historic features of the building such as the tin ceilings, light fixtures, stained glass, art deco balustrade, doors, radiators, and, most importantly, the stairs as you enter City Hall as they are a significant character-defining feature of the building. The Foundation thanks Commissioner of Accounts John Franck for his willingness to sacrifice space for his department's offices in order to accommodate the proposed second elevator and preserve the stairs.

The Foundation is pleased that the diamond-patterned floor in the hall will be restored to its historic appearance, which emphasizes the path of circulation – visually connecting the entry of the building to the end of the hall, leading one to the City Council Chamber and where the historic court room was located. The Foundation recommends that there be significant contrast between the two colors of the diamond pattern as shown in historic photographs (see attached).

However, the Foundation does not support the proposed change to the vestibule that alters the entry into the interior of City Hall. The arrival experience, which is imposing and grand, and circulation axis, a key design feature of the space, should remain as it has historically – not requiring one to turn right or left to enter the building.

The Foundation also does not find the proposed treatment of the Music Hall appropriate. Its appearance should remain simple, consistent with the historic appearance of the Music Hall. The rendering is reminiscent of a hotel conference space, not the historic Music Hall. The Foundation objects to the applied moldings. It recommends a simple wainscoting. It also objects to the patterned wood floor. The floor should retain its

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historic appearance. Again, the Foundation understands the need to address acoustics, but the use of acoustic ceiling tiles is not appropriate for this space. The Foundation recommends acoustic drywall in lieu of acoustic ceiling tiles

Information regarding the palette of materials, finishes, and colors are extremely important to understanding the proposed renovation. Several dozen finishes and products are indicated in the drawing set and need to be presented. The Foundation found it challenging to comment on the treatments of the interiors without a better understanding of the finish materials and products. Specification sheets and samples of selected finishes and light fixtures in the public spaces will allow the Foundation to provide better informed comments on the interior treatments.

For example, there was no detailed information about the appearance of the proposed wood panels in the hall that will replace the laminate panels that were removed due to asbestos. The Foundation requests more information about those – including material, color, and texture – and how that will match the existing historic Art Deco doors and trim.

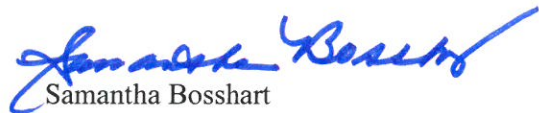
At this time, the Foundation recommends that this project receive a phased review from the Design Review Commission in order to not delay the progress of this important project moving forward. Phase I would allow for the Design Review Commission to approve the proposed floor plans, which the Foundation supports. Phase II would allow time for additional information to be provided regarding interior design details – including materials, finishes, and colors.

The Foundation supports this important capital project and the plans to comply with current life safety codes as well as to modernize office operations. The Foundation looks forward to having the opportunity to see more detailed information as the plans progress. Please let us know where we can be of assistance and help move this project forward on behalf of our city's residents.

Sincerely,



Matthew E. Veitch
President



Samantha Bosshart
Executive Director

Cc: Skip Scirocco, Commissioner of Public Works
Michael Veitch, Business Manager of the Department of Public Works

