

# Self Guided Walking Tour Portland City Hall



## Exterior and Grounds:

### A new entrance through the rose garden

The first thing you may discover about the renovated City Hall is something old. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave is once again the main entrance. The address has been officially changed to 1221 SW Fourth Ave, emphasizing the point. Things to notice:

**Landscaping:** Pavement – and parking – replaced with a Rose Garden and the “Better Together Garden”, a vegetable garden developed to feed the poor. New street trees on Fourth Ave. are Saw leaf Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*).

**Suzhou Stone:** Across 4<sup>th</sup> Ave in Terry Schrunk Park is the Suzhou Stone, a sister city gift from Suzhou, China.



Liberty Bell

**Liberty Bell:** The Suzhou Stone was replaced by the Liberty Bell replica now located on the northeast corner of the City Hall block.

**Façade:** the external sandstone wall appears lighter in color, the results of cleaning and surface treatment. Damaged stonework was replaced, including sections of the balustrade surrounding the building.

**Roof:** Up on the roof, the decorative 4 foot high urns are back on top standing as stone sentinels along roof line. The original solid limestone urns were removed as a safety hazard. Lighter-weight replicas now appear in place.

## Interior designs:

### Natural light Court and open stairways

Before renovations, the interior of City Hall was dark and gloomy, especially the first floor. It didn't used to be that way. Restoring City Hall's light courts brightens the interior the way the architect intended.

First Floor Public Area



**Elevator and stairs:** In detailing reminiscent of City Hall's early days, wrought ironwork forms the new open-air stairwell and elevator shafts. The decorative copper plating along the stairway is original – a surprise renovation discovery hidden by walls added later to enclose the stairwell.

**Light Court:** Two atrium-style light courts flood the lower levels of City Hall with natural light. They are located next to the north and south stairways. Most of the glazed white tiles are original. They were covered up when the stairwells were enclosed. Public events and art happenings are regularly scheduled for these new open areas. The original light courts were filled in for more floor space in the 1930's. Restoring the courts was more than a nice idea. It was a cost-efficient design that offered an innovative solution to fire code compliance.

**Floor tile and colors:** Decorative floor tile has been restored. Three-quarters of the original marble tiles were saved and reinstalled in the hallway and open areas of the first three floors. Replica tiles were needed only on the top floor. Throughout the building, warm earth tone colors - gold, rust and green – have been used.

**Woodwork and Windows:** Whenever possible, original doors and moldings were restored in the public areas. Only the north side of the building features reused single pane windows. All new double-pane windows were installed throughout the rest of City Hall.

## First floor:

### Art, History and the financial nerve center of the city

Enter City Hall through its Fourth Ave main entrance and things immediately appear different. This is no longer City Hall's basement.

**Office of Neighborhood Involvement:** Room 110 - Portland is known for its livable neighborhoods. So it's fitting that one of the first offices visitors will see, to the left as you enter City Hall, is the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI).

**Oregonian office:** In the south atrium next to the available seating and tables in the South light Court.

Room 120 - used to be the city Treasury office that was located along the Fifth Ave side of the first floor.

**Visual Chronicles** Selections from the "Visual Chronicles of Portland" are located in first floor lobby. These photographs are an archival collection of artworks on paper which portray an artist's view of what makes this city unique. The Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC) began the collection in 1985 and continues to add new works each year.

**City Auditor:** Room 130 & 140 - the city Auditor's Office is found on the north side of the floor on the Madison Street side. The Auditor is one of the six elected city officials with the mandate of ensuring city business is conducted efficiently.

**The Evolution of the City,** A permanent art exhibit location in the north light court is sure to draw attention. It's a display of photos depicting old Portland scenes gleaned from public and private collections. Evolution of the City – a photographic tour through time was produced by Jim Blashfield and Carol Sherman. These digital images continuously flip across the screen of a large television monitor. Ask at the ONI office Room 110 about ordering prints from the display. Artist's statement: "Evolution of the City" is a way to present Portland's past to itself by unearthing and exhibiting, in an interesting and unusual way, a vast collection of historical still photographs taken over the past hundred years in various parts of the city". - Jim Blashfield and Carol Sherman

## **Second floor: Council Chambers and Commissioners offices**

**Commissioner's offices:** All four Commissioners and their staff are found on the second floor. They are located in each corner of the building. Before renovations the various commissioner offices were located on several floors.

**Two conference rooms:** There are two conference rooms along Fifth Avenue side. The Pettygrove and Lovejoy rooms seat up to 50 persons each. These facilities are available for community events. Contact Facilities Dispatch services at 823-5252 for details on scheduling a room. The Pettygrove Room has an ornate circular staircase leading to an upper story safe room.

### **Council Chambers**



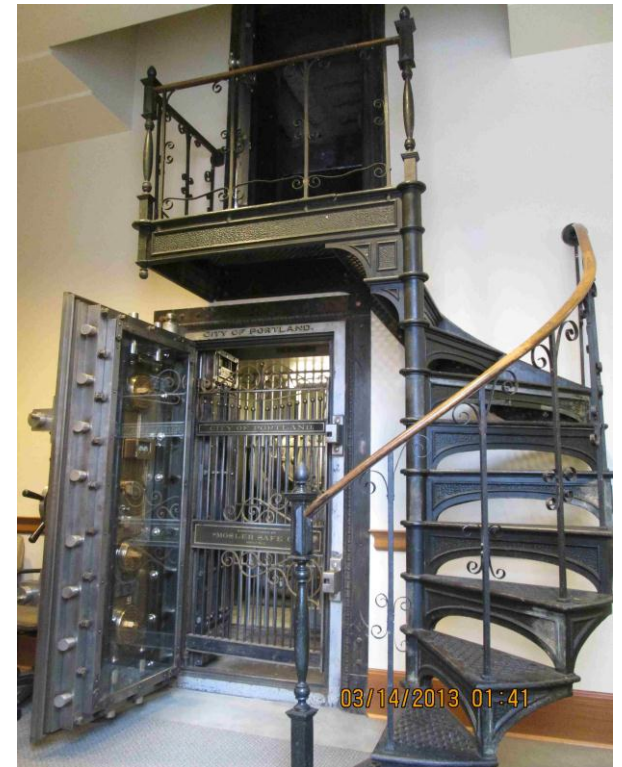
**Council Chambers:** The renovated meeting hall is dramatically different. Much of the original design and character has been restored. More natural light luminates the room because main floor windows have emerged from behind the old wood paneling that covered the east wall. It seats 80 plus another 100 persons in the balcony.

**Chamber communications links:** Citizens may get their point across to council in more visual and creative ways. The chamber is now equipped to handle audio and video conferencing, video rear projection and computer graphics.

**Community access:** City hall is now a great location to hold important community events because of new, flexible seating arrangement and high-tech communication tools. Contact Facilities Dispatch at 823-5252 for details.

**Chamber public art:** A whimsical tribute to Portland citizen's entitled "**Our Time**" by Don Merkt combines bronze, steel, paint and light. Artist's statement - "ironically, this is a timeless piece which honors the citizens of Portland who occupy the council chambers with their time and vision, in order to build a better Portland and enrich "our time".

### **Inside the Pettygrove Room**



Merkt has another work behind the council dais entitled “**PORT-LAND**” done in enforced plaster and paint. Artist statement, “this diptych paraphrase the name “PORTLAND” by illustrating our city’s topography as a place defined by interaction of it’s natural resources, water and land”.

**Chamber lobby art:** a work in bronze, aluminum and plaster entitled “**Brief Cases**” by artists Norie Sato, Tad Savinar and Bill Will is located in the chamber lobby. Artist statement: “The formalities of the city government are often seen in contrast to the idiosyncrasies of the individual lives that make up its population. Brief Cases offers a view of the interweaving of the personal and the civic that is the core of city’s character”.

### **Third and Fourth floor:**

#### **Mayor’s office, Rose room, City Attorney office**

**Mayor’s office:** As you face the entrance to the balcony the Mayor’s office is located to the left along Madison Street. The Mayor’s suite has been reconfigured into a more efficient office space.

**The Rose Room**



**Third floor offices:** Two other key offices are located on the Jefferson Street side of the floor – the Internal Police Review (IPR) office and Audit Services office.

**Rose Room:** Located on the Fifth Ave side of the third floor, the Rose Room is a spacious meeting facility with seating for 94 persons. It is available for community events.

**Council Chambers Balcony public art:** An oil and canvas work by Michael F. Brophy entitled “**Lower Willamette working through the arch: River and Forest**” is located at the balcony arch directly above the screen. Artist statement: “Portland is a city founded on a river in the middle of a forest and my intent is to depict the sweep of the river valley and a nod towards its history. Stretching from the lower left across the canvas up river the 20<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and pre-settlement centuries are presented. The foreground trees are Douglas Firs, the state tree, and rise like columns supporting the region and defining its character and prosperity”.

**Approach to balcony:** Visitors to the balcony lobby are greeted by a 106-piece wood carving by Jack McLarty entitled “**The Portland Story**”. Artist statement - “The mural is a mix of old and new Portland history. The Willamette River is the heart of the city and so the central section of the mural is the Rose Festival River. The side sections represent incidents, people and buildings important in Portland’s history. Some still stand others have vanished forever.”

**Fourth floor art:** On the east wall of the lobby are two paintings by Lucinda Parker entitled “**Rose City, City Rose**”. They are composed of acrylic on canvas and wood. Artist statement: “The Rose two versions of the classic concentric spiraling form which challenges the painter to see it fresh: not a copy of nature, which already does it better, but a re-invention based on a collision between geometry and gesture”.

**Fourth floor office:** The City Attorney's Office and the Government Relations Office occupy most of the fourth floor.

## Hold your Community event at City hall

### Rooms with a view

Following its renovation City Hall has become even more of a downtown destination not only for Portlanders but for out-of-town visitors. The historic building is not just City Hall it's also the venue for public and private community events. Public spaces at City Hall are available by contacting Facilities Dispatch at 823-5252 for information about schedules and rates.

## City Hall history

By 1890 Portland had long needed a permanent place to house the city Government. At each election of a new mayor, new headquarters had to be established. Residents were tired of wandering the city in search of their leaders. Construction of a new building however was not an easy endeavor primarily because it cost money and Portland citizens who were as conscious of government spending then as they are now kept a strong hold on the city purse strings. City leaders finally approved a \$175,000 bond issue to purchase land. Initially the lot on which Pioneer Court House Square is located was considered but it was eventually determined that the lot where St Helens Hall an Episcopal girls school stood would be the place.

A man named Henry Hefty was given the honor of being its architect. Hefty proceeded to design a building unlike any other on this continent. Resembling the Russian Kremlin it had five stories and was layered in porticos, balconies and ornate decoration. In later years critics dubbed it "Hefty mass" or "magnificent mess". Nevertheless city fathers approved the plan. Construction progressed not much further than the foundation level when the builders determined it would take twice the amount of money available. The false start sat as an eyesore for two years when again money was appropriated and two local architects Tom Whidden and Ion Lewis designed the building we have today, with one exception. Their design included a 200 foot clock tower which was later excluded to cut costs. The final cost was \$575,000.



**City Hall from 5th Avenue 1905**

The building is distinctive for a number of reasons. In the Mannerist Italian renaissance architectural style of the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was considered daring in 1895 and was one of the first examples of an innovative steel frame construction in which walls carry floor and roof loads. The exterior is sandstone from a quarry in Wyoming and the Aberdeen granite columns at the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> avenue entrance came from Scotland. The architect noted that the stone ornaments on the roof were created to symbolize "urn of fate from which destiny flows".



**City Hall from 4th Avenue Unknown date**

The inside columns are made from plaster covered with scagliola, an imitation marble involving the use of dyes and threads applied to drying plaster a complicated process that today would cost for more than real marble. The lobby floor is marble and the woodwork white oak. The stairway inside is an intricate plated cast-iron copperwork with original cast bronze stairs and marble treads. Other interesting features were added as time went on. In 1902 Port Orford cedars were planted on the

east side grounds. In 1910 ornate iron elevators were added and the original gas lighting was replaced with electricity. In 1963 an exact replica of the Liberty Bell all the way from Baltimore Maryland was presented to the city on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. It found a home in the east entrance portico. During the Vietnam War protests in 1970 a bomb explosion shattered it. It was repaired and moved across the street to Terry Schruck Plaza. When the building reopened in 1998 the Liberty Bell was moved back to City Hall.

Some changes over the years proved practical but undesirable. To create more space for storage and offices in the 1930's construction closed off the light courts that had brightened the lobby area and added a feeling of spaciousness. Windows in the council chambers were sealed off and the focal point turned around. The main entrance area was reduced to a parking lot. Such changes were detrimental to the intended character of the building. The restoration in 1998 brought back all the original features even to the opening of the light courts - major project in itself.

At the invitation of the Regional Arts & Culture Council, seven artist teams were selected to create artwork reflecting the history of City Hall and Portland. Michael Brophy's oil painting in the council chambers is a historical landscape of Portland from the west hills looking toward Mt Hood. Jack McLarty's woodcuts located on the third floor balcony wall are historical vignettes of Portland. Don Merkt's "Port-land" is a diptych on the wall behind the council members showing adjacent negative and positive images of the Portland area in low relief. Another Don Merkt piece "Our Time" is a working clock placed on a chair in the audience area of the council chambers. Lucinda Parker painted two quasi-cubist rose murals which hang in the main corridor on the fourth floor. Norie Sato, Tad Savinar and Bill Will created a sculpture in stainless steel and bronze castings for curved wall of council chambers on the second floor weaving ideas which focus on "the people, the places and the land". Jim Blashfield and Carol Sherman created "Evolution of the City" an interactive video moving-image presentation located under one of the main stairways on the first floor.

Today after the work of restoration the building looks as glorious as it did in 1895 but in fact it is much better than the original. Installed with climate control it keeps occupants warm in the winter and cool in the summer. It is wired throughout for state of the art technology with special lighting and sound equipment in the council chambers. It is earthquake safe and meets all other building codes including the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. A perfect blend of old and new Portland City hall is more than a place to conduct city government it is a symbol of the City of Portland's rich past and its promising future.



## City Seal information

Portlandia from the annual report of June 5 1878: The City of Portland does ordain as follows:

**Section 1:** That the seal to be hereafter used and known as the seal of the city of Portland shall consist of a female figure in the center thereof representing commerce and holding in her right hand a trident and pointing with her left hand a sheaf of wheat and a forest with a representation of Mt Hood in the background and at her feet a cogwheel and hammer and on her right a steamship coming into port. Said seal shall also have the words "City of Portland, Oregon" in the outer rim thereof also the figure "1851" the date of the incorporation oath this City of Portland and shall make an impression 2¼ inches in diameter.

**Section 2:** That the seal described in section 1 of this ordinance be and is hereby adopted as the "Seal of the City of Portland"



## Time capsule contents (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)

1. Portland environment handbook including the Portland plant list  
(Suggested by Charlie Shipman)
2. Water samples: tap water, rain water, Willamette River (Suggested by Richard Wagner)
3. GIS Map of Portland 1889 - 1998  
(Donated by Bureau of Planning)
4. 1998 Rose Festival Pin and coupon book  
(Donated by the Rose Festival Association)
5. Irvington elementary school: letters to students of 2098, photo of school and class, t-shirt  
(Donated by Cathy Percich's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade class)
6. Bubbler fountain pin  
(Designed and donated by Robert W Parsons)
7. 1898 1998 U.S. coins, one 1998 silver dollar  
(Donated by Norman Locke, Columbia Coin Company Inc)
8. Model of City vehicle with logo "The City that Works"  
(Donated by Bureau of General Services)
9. Portland Marathon medal  
(Donated by Lee Smith, the Portland Marathon Director)
10. Letter to Portland Citizens of 2098  
(Written by Frances B. Caldwell)
11. The Portland Building Pin  
(Donated by Bureau of General Service)
12. City Hall 1995, Christmas ornament  
(Designed by Betty Woods Gimarelli, donated by Bureau of General Services)
13. Various renovation construction photos  
Renovation Committee & Project Team Photos (Donated by Bureau of General Services)
14. Time Capsule media release, City hall press kit, Renovation master plan, Renovation project goals, Taking care of City Hall, City Hall note cards, growing better, *a report to the planning commission on phase I of the Livable City project*  
(Donated by Bureau of General Services)
15. Share your fondest memories cards  
(From attendee's at City hall Gala Fundraiser)
16. Portlandia Marquette #418/500. From the original sketch model  
(Sculpted by Raymond Kaskey, donated by Charles hall)
17. City Hall Renovation Videos (donated by Bureau of General Services)



# Portlandia

Artist: Raymond J Kaskey

Medium: Hammer copper

Height: 36 feet 10 inches

Weight: 6.5 tons

Location: pedestal above the 5<sup>th</sup> ave entrance of the Portland Building 1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> ave

Theme: Lady Commerce (based on the city or Portland seal)

Dedicated: October 8, 1985

The idea for Portlandia a classical allegorical figure representing the spirit of Portland came from the official Portland city seal. The seal depicts a wilderness scene including mountains, forest and the sea. In the foreground Lady Commerce stand on the shore with a trident in her right hand as a ship enters the port behind her. A sheaf of grain, a cogwheel and a sledge hammer lie to her left in the foreground. Together these figures symbolize the origins of the city its culture, agrarian base and industry.

Michael Graves suggested a statue of her as part of his design for the Portland Building. Raymond J. Kaskey a Washington DC sculptor won the commission through the city's percent for the art program. The sculpture is made of hammered copper sheeting about the thickness of a dime formed around a steel armature and the artist spent three years creating the massive work. She is 1/3 the size of the statue of liberty the only larger statue of this kind in the nation.

Portlandia was shipped across country by rail in eight pieces after being assembled in a local shipyard she rode by river verge and truck to her final destination welcomed by thousands of Portland residents along the riverbank, streets and bridges. Her dedication to the citizens of Portland on October 8, 1985 confirmed her acceptance as a new symbol of the city.

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