

## History and Development of the Property

### Building Chronology & History of Development:

The Rochester City Hall Annex has gone through several evolutionary stages between 1905, when it was constructed as a fire station, and 2015, when it has been reduced to an abandoned brick shell. The structure sits at the very heart of Rochester, having served as a fire station between 1905 and 1974, a police station between 1975 and 2004, and an abandoned building between 2005 and the present. For several years, the building has been somewhat of a white elephant, as the City struggles to find an adaptive reuse that will honor the structure's past while meeting modern building code.

### Need for Fire Station Identified

To understand the context in which Rochester City Hall Annex was constructed, one must understand what was going on in the new City of Rochester at the turn of the twentieth century.

A fire department was in existence in Rochester well before Rochester gained city status. The Rochester fire engine company was enlarged and incorporated in June 1836, suggesting that it had been previously organized.<sup>1</sup> In March 1845 \$400 was appropriated to purchase a fire engine.<sup>2</sup> During the 1860s, Rochester made appropriations to build engine houses for several companies: "\$900 for Coheco Company, \$900 for Torrent Company No. 2, \$1,000 for Tiger Company, and \$1,500 for Torrent Company No. 5 at East Rochester."<sup>3</sup>

In 1891 Rochester became a city and attempted to streamline the fire department. At this time, there were three engine companies with forty men each and six hose companies: the Coheco, Sturtevant, Pioneer (later Ela), A. D. Whitehouse, Larkin Harrington, and Torrent and the Resolute Hook & Ladder Company.<sup>4</sup> The department was reorganized, the engine companies disbanded and hook & ladder companies created in their stead. By the end of 1892, there were no longer any engine companies and the department had decreased from 177 to 85 men.<sup>5</sup>

The new City needed a new centralized Fire Station, City Hall, Library, and Police Station. A Committee for Public Buildings was created to help identify potential building locations. In 1895, the Committee "suggested the two-acre lot and buildings owned by the late John McDuffee on Wakefield Street as 'the very best lot' for a city hall."<sup>6</sup> The lot contained the two-story side-gable house, ells, and attached barn that had belonged to John McDuffee (1803-1890) were identified on the 1892 Hurd Map (See page 17) as owned by his son, George McDuffee (1845-1923). The Committee urged the Rochester City Council to purchase the property so that "sometime in the future a good substantial building be built, one that the tax payers will not be ashamed of, as they are now, when strangers ask to see our city hall."<sup>7</sup> The Rochester City Council failed to support this recommendation and the Committee explored several other alternate

<sup>1</sup> Franklin McDuffee, *History of the Town of Rochester New Hampshire, from 1722 to 1890* (Manchester, NH: The John B. Clarke Co., Printers, 1892), 539.

<sup>2</sup> McDuffee, 539.

<sup>3</sup> McDuffee, 540.

<sup>4</sup> Kathryn Grover, *Rochester, New Hampshire 1890-2010: "A Compact Little City"* (Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2013), 23.

<sup>5</sup> Grover, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Grover, 121.

<sup>7</sup> Grover, 121.

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locations. In June 1896, Councilor Nathaniel T. Kimball introduced a resolution to buy the McDuffee property “in view of the fact that in the near future a suitable lot convenient to our business center will be needed for a city building, central fire station, public library, etc.”<sup>8</sup> He argued that the lot was a good size and at a central location and that the existing house and outbuildings could be used temporarily as plans were made for new construction. The City Council was finally swayed, and the property was purchased.

\$1,600 was appropriated to renovate the old McDuffee house into city offices and a library. The purchase agreement stipulated that no city hall was to be constructed on the property for ten years. The Library joined the City Offices at this location in Jan. 1897, and by 1902 the outbuildings were used for the storage of a hose wagon and hook & ladder truck.<sup>9</sup> (See 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, page 18)

In 1902, Mayor William G. Bradley began to champion the need for a new, centralized fire station.

I think this is one of the most urgent needs of the city at the present time, and if built on this lot you would have ample room on the back end of the lot for all the carts, wagons, road machines, snow plows, sleds, etc. Then your horses and all of these things would be right here together, and it seems to me that it might be maintained in this way at a much less yearly expense to the city and at the same time be more convenient, as the location is certainly as central as you could get, and besides you would center all of these several things right where they could be looked after. Now it seems to be me this would be a better plan than to go out elsewhere and buy or take any lot that the city now owns at from \$3,000 to \$5,000 expense.

It is true that the material to build today costs a good deal more than it would have a few years ago. Still I think you have built a new fire station and public hall combined at East Rochester the past year as cheaply as you would have / gotten such a building two or three years ago, notwithstanding the advance in building material during that time.<sup>10</sup>

February 3, 1903, the City voted to spend no more than \$17,000 for the construction of the new purpose-built Fire Station on the Wakefield Street lot.<sup>11</sup> At this time the fire apparatus was housed in the city stable, off of the back of the John McDuffee house.

### Walker & Sons

On March 1, 1904 the City Council authorized the Mayor to form a committee with two others to construct the new fire station from plans by the Providence, Rhode Island architectural firm, William R. Walker & Sons.

The firm of William R. Walker & Sons was part of a dynasty of architects started by General William R. Walker (1830-1905). Born in Seekonk, Massachusetts on April 14, 1830, William R. graduated from Seekonk Classical Academy in 1846 and went to Providence, Rhode Island to become an apprentice for three years.<sup>12</sup> During this time, he enrolled in courses in mechanical and architectural drawing at Schofield College. In 1864 he opened his first architectural office in Providence, which operated under the name William R. Walker between 1864 and 1876.

<sup>8</sup> Grover, 121.

<sup>9</sup> The ells and outbuildings of the McDuffee House were demolished to make way for the new City Hall, but the house itself stood until 1908, when the new offices were ready in the City Hall.

<sup>10</sup> City of Rochester, *Eleventh Annual Report of the City of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1902*, 7-8.

<sup>11</sup> Grover, 123 and City of Rochester, *Twelfth Annual Report of the City of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1903*, 14.

<sup>12</sup> Rachel Pierson, “Rhode Island Architecture: The Walker Dynasty,” 1.

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**Figure 1: Pawtucket Hair Cloth Mill, Central Falls, RI (Image courtesy of wikimedia)**

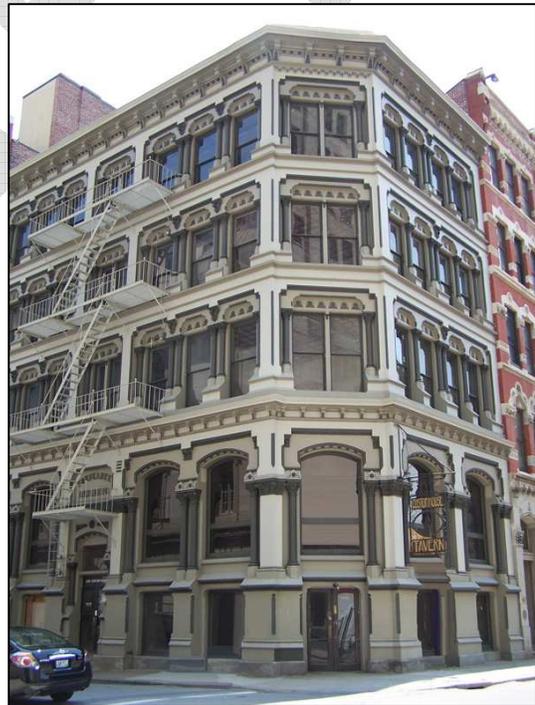
prominent Providence citizens. In 1870 he designed the House and residence of Alfred A. Reed. The Equitable Building on Custom House Street was designed in 1872 with Thomas T. Gould and marked the first in the string of municipal buildings the Walkers are most known for. The New Providence City Hall was designed in 1873-74 and the Hope High School in 1875.

In 1874, William R. Walker's son, Colonel William Howard Walker (1856-1922) began working as a draftsman at his father's firm. Like his father, he received a public high school education. He was prominent in Masonic circles and was a Quarter Master General in the Rhode Island Militia between 1892 and 1912.<sup>15</sup> In 1918 he was elected to the Rhode Island chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and was a National AIA Member between 1918 and 1921.

With Thomas T. Gould, under the name Walker & Gould, William R. Walker designed the 1876 Providence High School, marking the development of Walker's style with stone-trimmed red brick Georgian-revivals.<sup>16</sup> In 1879, General Walker formed a short-lived partnership with

General William R. Walker was a Lieutenant in the Civil War and remained active in the State Militia until he retired in 1879 with the rank of Major General.<sup>13</sup> He was an active Mason, holding offices at both lodge and state levels. He was a member of the Town Council of Providence and Pawtucket and a member of the General Assembly of Rhode Island.

William R. Walker ran a prolific practice. The first known structure he designed was the Pawtucket Hair Cloth Mill in Central Falls, Rhode Island in 1863.<sup>14</sup> The American File Company Mill was also completed in 1863. In the 1860s, he designed grand residences for several Amasa Sprague Estate Mansion and Carriage



**Figure 2: Equitable Building, Custom Street, Providence, RI (Image courtesy of [onecustomhouse.com](http://onecustomhouse.com))**

<sup>13</sup> Pierson, 2.

<sup>14</sup> This building was listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 as part of the Central Falls Mill Historic District.

<sup>15</sup> Pierson, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Pierson, 7.

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Thomas J. Gould, with the partnership lasting only until 1881.

In 1880, Colonel William Howard Walker became a junior partner, and the name of the firm was changed in 1881 to William R. Walker & Son when he was elevated to full partner. This iteration of the office had a reputation that was by no means limited to Providence, with designs throughout Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Maine.

There are no better evidences of the culture and refinement possessed by the people of the City of Providence than that displayed in the architecture of her public buildings. It is sufficient proof to the eye of a connoisseur that they are the work of a master hand. Inquiry will develop the fact that many of the finest specimens of architectural skill that abound on every hand throughout the city are the work of Messrs. William R. Walker & Son, the well-known architects of Number 27 Custom House Street in that city.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 3: Cumberland Town Hall, Cumberland, RI (Image Courtesy of Wikimedia)

The list of architectural works by William R. Walker & Sons is extremely extensive, with many of the extant structures listed to the National Register of Historic Places. Walker & Sons designed many residences, churches, schools, and municipal buildings between 1881 and the 1920s. Some of the buildings constructed during this period include the Fall River City Hall (1886), George Hail Free Library (1888) and Warren Town Hall (1890), Church Hill Grammar School in Pawtucket (1889), St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Barrington (1891), Cumberland Town Hall (1894), Pawtucket Armory (1894), Narragansett Hotel in Kennebunk, ME (1905), and Goff Memorial Building in Rehoboth MA (1915). Walker & Sons also are known to have designed other fire stations during this period, including the Atwells Avenue Fire Station in Providence (1886), Greenwich Street Fire Station and 9<sup>th</sup> Ward Wardroom in Providence (1888),<sup>18</sup> Fire Station No. 3 in Cranston, RI (1920), Fire Station No. 1 in Cranston, RI (1927).

<sup>17</sup> Pierson 31, quoting Robert Grieve and John P. Fernald, *Cotton Centennial* (Providence, RI: J. A. & R. A. Reid Publishers, 1891), 149.

<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, both of the Providence, RI fire stations have been demolished.

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Figure 5: Greenwich Street Fire Street Fire Station & Wardroom, 1888. (Demolished)



Figure 4: Fire Station No. 3, Cranston RI (1920) Addition in foreground recently added by Saccoccio & Associates Architects, Cranston.

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In 1905, General Walker retired, giving Colonel William Howard Walker full charge of the company. His son, William Russell Walker, II (1884-1946) joined the firm as a partner in 1922 and became the last in the family of architects.

The Rochester Fire Station was designed and constructed during a great period of growth for the City of Rochester and opened the same year as the Andrew Carnegie Library. Fortunately, the City of Rochester retains the full set of plans submitted by Walker & Sons. The construction of the fire station started in 1904, and the 1904 *Annual Report of the City of Rochester*, lists the following payments:

Paid H L Worcester, express on plans	\$ 1.00
L. E. Scruton, laying out building	\$ 11.60
Water Dept. connection with water	\$ 16.25
J. H. Mendell & Co, on contract	<u>\$9,150.00</u>
	\$9,178.85 <sup>19</sup>

Though there are no known as-built plans, one can assume that when it opened in 1905, the Fire Station as constructed very closely resembled the plans. The Mayor, along with two appointees created a committee to construct the fire station from the plans selected, “with such changes as said committee may deem advisable.”<sup>20</sup> This committee was also authorized to make any contracts necessary for the construction project.

### Fire Station (1905-1974)

Construction of the Fire Station continued for the first two months of 1905. The 1905 *Annual Report of the City of Rochester* lists the following additional payments for finishing up the Fire Station:

Paid William R. Walker & Son, on contract	\$ 825.00
J. H. Mendell & Co., on contract	\$6,200.00
H. C. Hanson, labor and material	\$ 69.78
John W. Dame, labor	\$ 4.17
Berry & Shorey, hardware	\$ 9.46
Charles M. Bailey, merchandise	\$ 46.93
Hanscam & McDuffee, furniture	\$ 104.00
Rochester Carpet Co., molding and shades	\$ 28.13
Will L. Richmond, electric fixtures	\$ 85.00
Harry A. Glazier, harnesses	\$ 367.00 <sup>21</sup>

Because the project actually came in \$1,486.64 under budget, part of the leftover money was used to purchase two additional new sets of harnesses.<sup>22</sup>

On February 6, 1905, the long-awaited Fire Station, located on Wakefield Street adjacent to the City Hall, was ready for occupancy and opened for public inspection.<sup>23</sup> The carefully thought-out building was a source of pride for the community, especially having come in under budget.

<sup>19</sup> City of Rochester, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the City of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31, 1904*, 58.

<sup>20</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report for 1904*, 18.

<sup>21</sup> City of Rochester, *Fourteenth Annual Report of the City of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1905*, 59-60.

<sup>22</sup> Ruth L. Howland, *The Olden Days, Rochester, New Hampshire* (Farmington, NH: The Foster Press, 1976), 74.

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As constructed, there were three apparatus bays along the first floor, opening west onto Wakefield Street. The first floor contained a 33'8" by 48' apparatus room at the west side of the building with room for three companies. The east side of the structure was a large stable to hold eight horses, and opened west onto a yard behind. There was a standard sized (8'x11') box stall in the northeast corner of the structure, with eight standing stalls located adjacent to the apparatus room, on either side of a wide aisle. The aisle allowed for the hook & ladder truck to drive straight through the building. Each stall was open at the back with double doors along the front that, when opened, would allow the horses to move forward into the apparatus room. The stalls floors most-likely sloped back into a gutter behind them that collected urine. Also behind each set of stalls was a manure scuttle, to allow manure to be cleaned directly into the basement. Two sets of stairs were located along the south wall, one at either corner. Along the south wall, between the stable and apparatus room was a large harness room, complete with sink for cleaning tack.

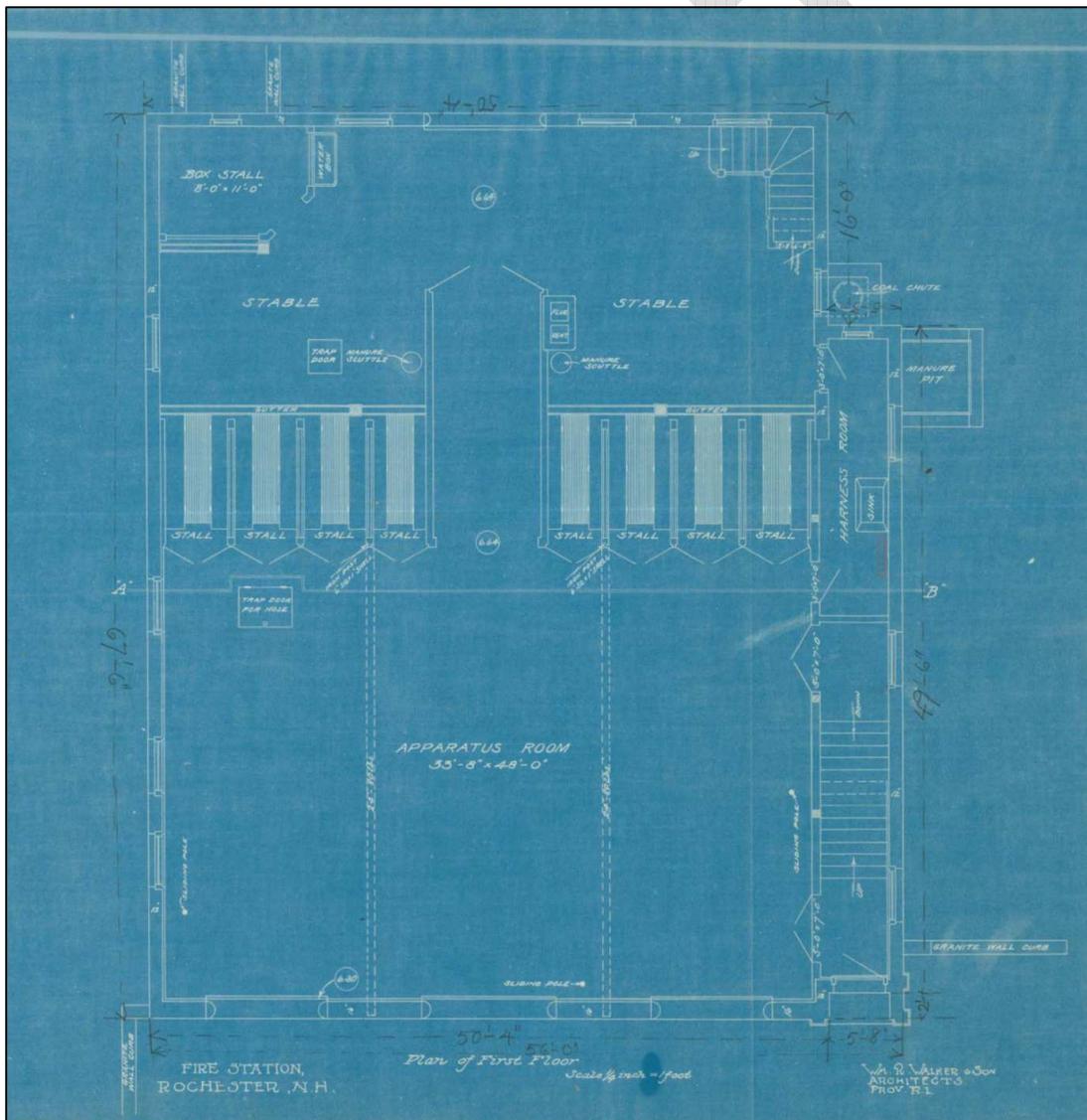


Figure 6: Walker & Sons plan of 1st Floor, 1903.

<sup>23</sup> Howland, 74.

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The second floor of the Fire Station was similarly divided, with a large hay loft at the east side, above the horse stalls, and company rooms to the west, above the apparatus room. The space above the apparatus room was divided into three large company rooms: one for Hose No. 1, one for Hook & Ladder, and a third for Steamer No. 1. Each company room had its own sliding pole into the apparatus room below. The company rooms were accessed from a corridor along the north-south building axis. The corridor had an 8'6" x 10' office at the north end for the Chief Engineer and lockers for the firemen along the east wall. The area above the horse stalls was occupied by a very large hayloft. Two large hay chutes were located in the center of the floor, with smaller hay and grain chutes along the west side of the room, above the horse's heads. The "attic space" above does not appear to have been used and was occupied only by two large ventilation ducts connecting the hay loft with the cupola above. A small water closet was located off of the south side of the hayloft, adjacent to a full bath that was accessible from the west side of the building, off of the corridor. These two bathrooms were directly above the harness room, allowing for all of the building plumbing to be located along a single vertical plane.

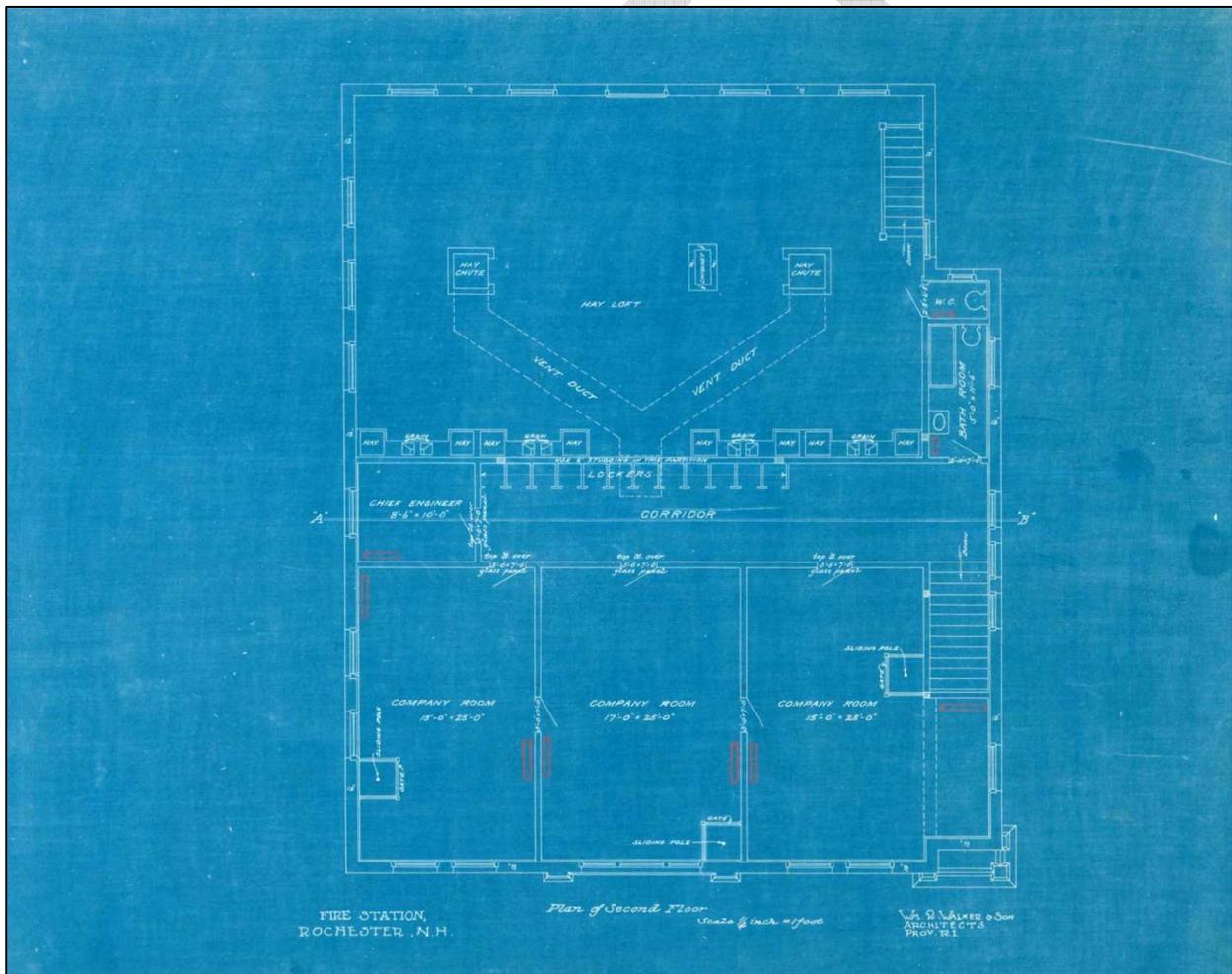


Figure 7 Walker & Sons plan of 2nd Floor, 1903.

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The basement of the fire station contained five rooms. A large front cellar was located below the apparatus room. A stable cellar was beneath the horse stalls with a manure pit located at the south side of this section. A hose cellar stretched the entire length of the building, along the north side and was accessible from an exterior door to the east. When Walker & Sons submitted their design of the Fire Station, they had added a large clock tower to hold the hoses. The addition of the tower was more than the City was willing to spend, so the hoses got relegated to the basement.<sup>24</sup> The east section of the basement was used for mechanical rooms with a battery room off of the hose cellar and boiler room at the southeast. A coal chute was located at the southwest corner of the boiler room.

Very little is known about the original interior furnishings of the fire station. A sectional drawing in the 1903 Walker & Sons plans show that the interior doors had four panels. The doors at the west end of the hose stalls were composed of one large vertical panel in the top over three smaller horizontal panels, and the large doors between the apparatus room and stable were each eight panel. The upstairs hallway had bead board wainscot, most-likely with plaster above. The doors to the firemen's lockers were also paneled. Ruth Howland, writing in 1976, describes the interior of having "hard pine sheathing."<sup>25</sup>

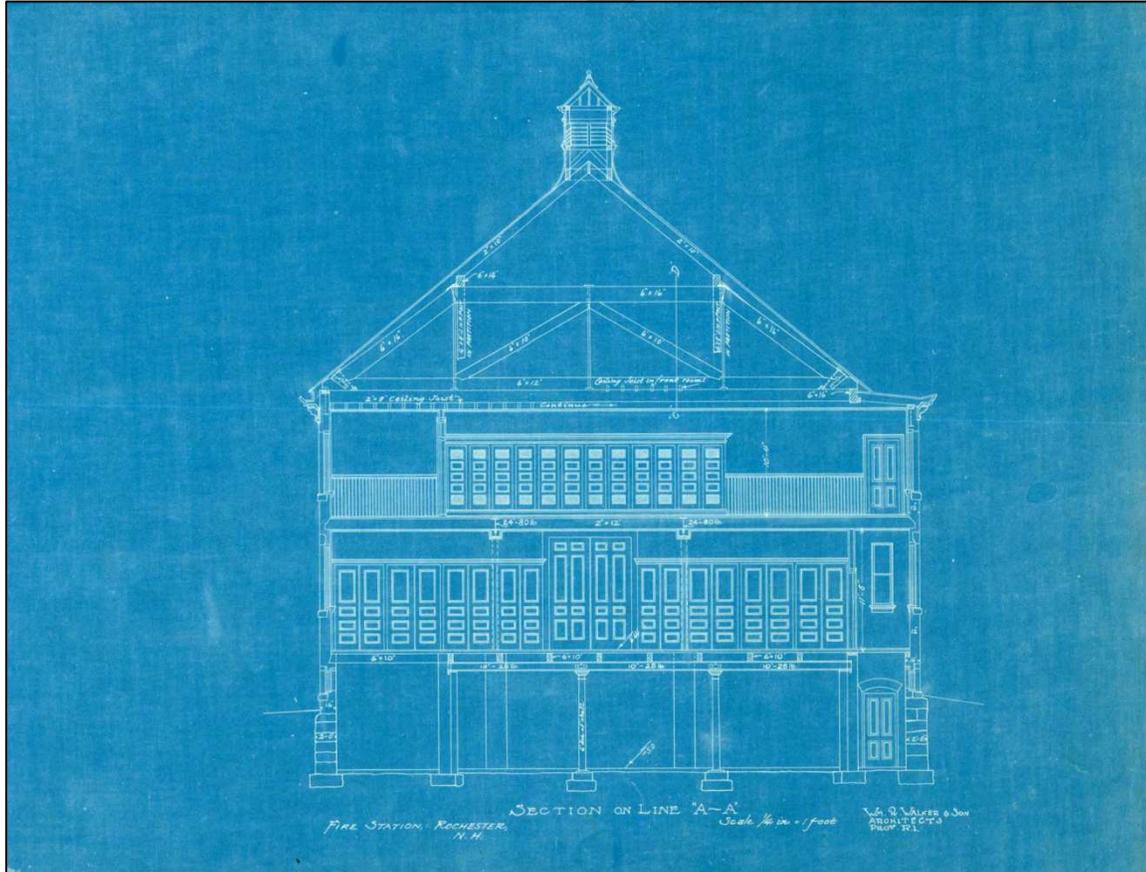


Figure 8 Walker & Sons section, 1903.

<sup>24</sup> Mark Dupuis, Assistant Fire Chief, Rochester Fire Department in conversation with the author November 6, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Howland, 74.

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The building was “commodious and modern”<sup>26</sup> and clearly something the City was very proud of. The Fire Station was dedicated on the Thursday of the opening week at an event that included a supper and dancing.<sup>27</sup> The new fire station represented period of municipal growth and civic pride for Rochester, coincided with the opening of the city’s new Carnegie library, and was soon followed by the construction of Rochester City Hall in 1907.



Figure 9 Rochester Fire Station ca. 1909

In 1907, when the Rochester City Hall was constructed next door to the Fire Department, a tunnel was added off of the southwest corner of the fire station basement, connecting the two buildings. This underground passageway is visible on the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. (See page 19)

In 1910, Rochester Fire Department hired Charles Emerson as their first full-time fire fighter.<sup>28</sup> In 1917, the City hired “a second permanent man, to be on duty at the Central Fire Station twenty-four hours per day, with the exception of three hours per day for meals. Said man shall sleep at the fire station and be under the orders of the chief engineer at all times. Said man to receive two dollars per day.”<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report, 1904*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Howland, 74.

<sup>28</sup> *Nineteenth Annual Report of the City of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup> Nineteen Hundred and Ten* (Rochester, NH: Rochester Printing Company, 1911), 52.

<sup>29</sup> *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the City of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup> Nineteen Hundred and Seventeen* (Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke Co., 1918), 19.

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In 1916, Rochester Fire Department began to slowly transition from horse-drawn fire equipment to motorized trucks. April 4, 1916, \$5,000 was raised for the purpose of purchasing a combination motor drawn fire truck.<sup>30</sup> The 1916 American LaFrance Triple-Combination Chemical Truck was purchased from the American LaFrance Fire Engine Co. for \$4,900.<sup>31</sup> In 1917, Rochester purchased their last horse-drawn vehicle, a second-hand LaFrance Steamer.<sup>32</sup> In 1922, two new 1922 Model “A” Ford Fire Trucks were purchased for Gonic and East Rochester.

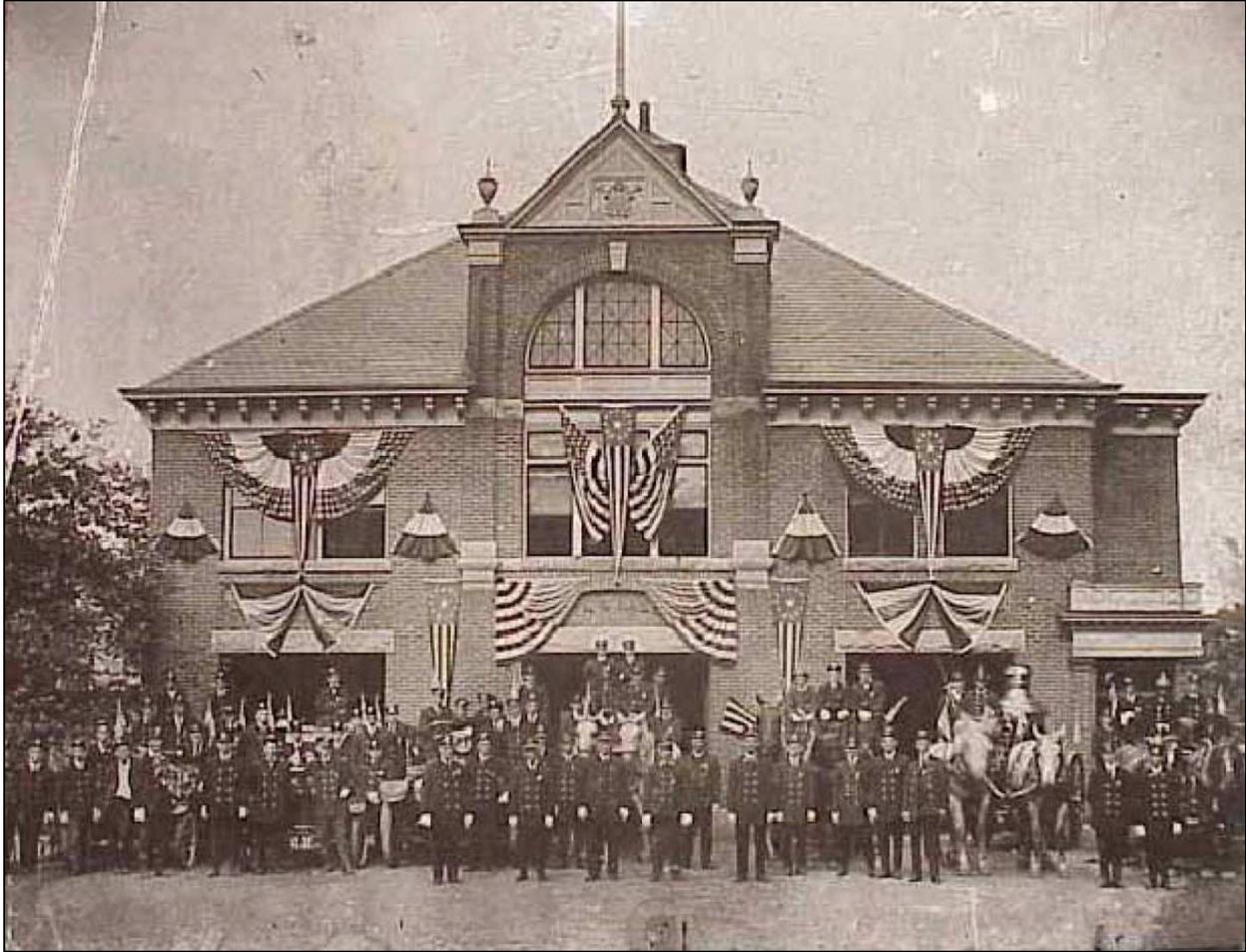


Figure 10: Fire Station, 1922, decorated either for the 4th of July or for a presidential visit. (Image courtesy of the Rochester Fire Department) The 1922 Model “A” Trucks are visible in this image, as is the 1916 Chemical Truck and the 1917 Steamer.

<sup>30</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup> Nineteen Hundred and Sixteen* (Rochester, NH: Record Press Printer, 1917), 22.

<sup>31</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report, 1916*, 130.

<sup>32</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report, 1917*, 190.

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Figure 11: Rochester Firemen fix toys in the 1950s, possibly in the former hayloft space (image courtesy of Rochester Historical Society)

In 1924, the Committee on Fire Department was authorized to purchase for the Fire Department “one Triple Combination Pump Chemical and Hose Truck and all necessary hose; one Service Hook and Ladder Truck; a Two Circuit Fire Alarm System for the equipment of the City proper; and one Electric Siren for East Rochester Village.”<sup>33</sup> An American La France Co. 6-cylinder motor driven city service ladder truck was purchased for \$8,820 and a type 75 triple combination pumper, chemical and hose motor truck was purchased for \$12,250.<sup>34</sup> The same year, the Committee on Fire Department was authorized to dispose of one pair of horses and old equipment<sup>35</sup> and the Chief Engineer of the Fire Department stated that “the Fire Department needs all the room there is in the Fire Station in order to place their equipment as it should be and your Fire Committee will agree with me this ammonia that comes from the stable, takes the paint off the cars.”<sup>36</sup> In 1925, the horses were taken to a new stable off-site and the horse stalls and old sheathing were removed and replaced. “They also removed the large chimney that was in the

<sup>33</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report, 1924*, 15

<sup>34</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report, 1924*, 77.

<sup>35</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report, 1924*, 27.

<sup>36</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report, 1924*, 136.

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center of the station, and placed it on one side of the station. They also put copper all around the eaves of the station, and after all the changes it was necessary to put in a new heating system.”<sup>37</sup>

The former stable area of the first floor was used as additional garage space after 1925. One can assume that the hayloft space was converted for use as additional offices, but no record of these changes has been found.

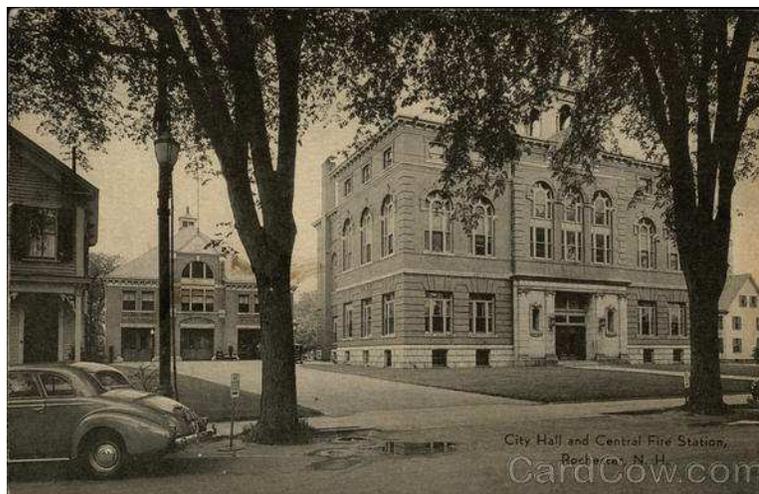


Figure 12 City Hall & Central Fire Station in the 1950s.

By the early 1970s, the City of Rochester had identified the need for a modern fire station. In March 1972, the City Council approved the acceptance of a property donation for “a new fire station.”<sup>38</sup> In 1974, the Mayor and City Council appropriated \$60,000 to purchase the so-called Robie Property, “located on the easterly side of Wakefield Street adjoining and abutting the property of the Rochester City Hall and running to Summer Street and numbered 37, 41, and 41-A Wakefield Street, Rochester.”<sup>39</sup> The property was to be used for a new central Fire Station “or any other use deemed prudent by the Mayor and City Council of Rochester.”<sup>40</sup> Further funds were appropriated to construct a new Fire Station and to renovate “the said old Central Fire Station for use as a Police Station and a Court Room”<sup>41</sup>, and renovate the City Hall. All of this work was expected to extend the useful life of the three buildings for thirty years or more.

### Police Station (1975-2004)

The building plans for the renovation of the Central Fire Station for use as a police station were formulated during 1974.<sup>42</sup> Until they moved into the newly renovated building in 1975, the Police had been housed in the basement of the City Hall next door.

Renovations to the old Central Fire Station started shortly after the firemen moved into the new fire station on Wakefield Street during the week of February 13, 1975.<sup>43</sup> The remodeling of the interior and exterior was conceived by Richard B. Gray, an architect from Somersworth. Unfortunately, the original plans for this renovation have been lost and very little is known about Gray. It seems that the building was largely gutted, with very few original interior elements left in place. The original timber framing was augmented in places with steel beams and columns, 4” concrete slabs were placed over the first and

<sup>37</sup> *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the City of Rochester, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31<sup>st</sup> Nineteen Hundred and Twenty Five* (Rochester: Rochester Printing Company, 1926), 126.

<sup>38</sup> *City of Rochester, Annual Report for the Year 1972, City of Rochester, New Hampshire*, 9.

<sup>39</sup> *City of Rochester, Annual Report for the Year 1974, City of Rochester, New Hampshire*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> *City of Rochester, Annual Report, 1974*, 7.

<sup>41</sup> *City of Rochester, Annual Report, 1974*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> The *Rochester Courier* reported on January 30, 1975 that the plans had been drawn up over a year previously.

<sup>43</sup> “City Has Accepted New Fire Station” (*Rochester Courier*, February 13, 1975).

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second floors, and the positions of the stairwells were moved. The Police Station occupied the entire first floor and the Court room was located on the second floor. Some of the money saved from the erection of the fire station was used to add a brick veneer “to the old station to bring it into an architectural balance with the new building and city hall.”<sup>44</sup>

A small park was created in front of the newly renovated building, on the location of the old Fire Station’s driveway. This mini-park was a bit of a pet project of the Mayor’s and came to be called “John Shaw Park” in his honor. The resolution authorizing the construction of the park was passed by the City Council on December 2, 1975.<sup>45</sup>

The completion date for the opening of the new Police Station was pushed back several times. In July 1975, the *Rochester Courier* anticipated a finish date of August.<sup>46</sup> By August, the date had been pushed back to Labor Day weekend in the beginning of September.<sup>47</sup> September 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 1975 an open house was held.

On April 8, 1983, the Rochester City Hall Annex was added to the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource in the Rochester Commercial/Industrial Historic District. Because of the alteration to the façade by the application of brick veneer, the Rochester Fire House/Police Station/City Hall Annex was seen as a minor contributor to the district, despite its important historic use as a fire station.<sup>48</sup>

In 1988, an elevated covered walkway was added to the southwest corner of the City Hall Annex, connecting it to the City Hall building next door and the entrance was made to be “handicapped accessible.”<sup>49</sup> The connector was designed by Paul Gosselin of Salmon Falls Architecture.

Further changes to the building occurred in 1994, when A. E. Design Group, Inc. of Rochester performed some interior renovations. From analyzing the renovation plans, it does not appear that any major changes were made at this time and that the majority of the changes that were made were to non-historic elements such as the removal of sections of the 1975 interior walls, changes to the 1975 stairwells, and replacement of finish materials from the 1970s. New counters and fixtures were installed. All windows on the second floor were removed, and new insulated glass was inserted before they were re-glazed and reinstalled.

### 2004 to Present

In 2004, Police Station was removed from the City Hall Annex and the building was left largely vacant. At some point between 1994 and the present, the window at the northwest corner of the first floor (at the location of one of the original doors) was walled in. Most likely this happened ca. 1998, when the Fire Station dispatch moved from the Fire Station next door to this location.

<sup>44</sup> “City Has Accepted new Fire Station” (*Rochester Courier*, February 13, 1975).

<sup>45</sup> City of Rochester, *Annual Report for the Year 1975*, 16.

<sup>46</sup> *Rochester Courier*, July 3, 1975.

<sup>47</sup> “Police Headquarters Nearing Completion” (*Rochester Courier*, August 4, 1975).

<sup>48</sup> Roger A. Brevoort, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for the Rochester Commercial and Industrial Historic District” (National Park Service website, 1983), 21.

<sup>49</sup> City of Rochester, *City Report 1988-1989*, 69.

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In summer 2013, Skyline Roofing, Inc. of Manchester, NH performed some repairs to portions of the slate and flat roofs and the large dormer on the west elevation to stop water leaks. The same year, extensive interior demolition and environmental remediation was conducted by EnviroVantage of Epping, NH. The demolition removed non-structural components and substrates to remove microbial growth and minor quantities of asbestos-containing materials. All non-structural components were removed from the building interior, leaving the existing structural shell.

In early 2014, the City of Rochester began to explore potential reuse options for the City Hall Annex. Potential reuse opportunities were explored in light of the condition of the structure in hopes of eventually reusing the former Fire Station/Police Station as offices for staff currently residing at City Hall. Two options were explored: renovating the existing structure and tearing down the City Hall Annex and building a new structure on the same approximate location. Later the third option of demolishing the existing City Hall Annex and rebuilding off site was also explored.

### Statement of Significance

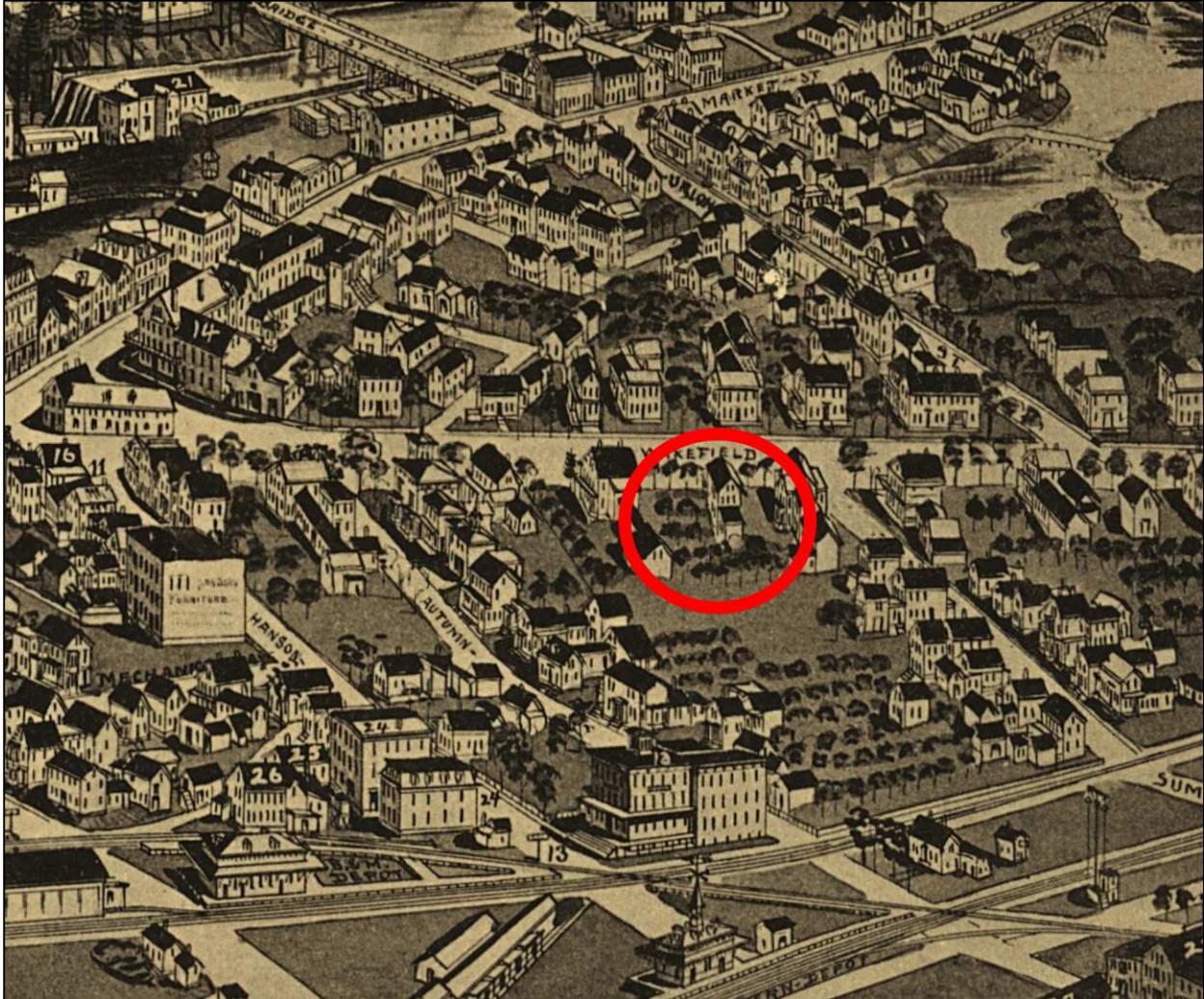
The City Hall Annex is significant for its central role in the municipal history of Rochester. Constructed as part of the municipal building campaign shortly after the establishment of City status in 1891, the City Hall Annex was at the very center of the complex of municipal buildings on Wakefield Street. Built at the same time as the Carnegie Library, the Annex was part of the first wave of new civic structures for the City of Rochester. Historic sources show that care was given to locating a civic campus in an easily accessible part of the city. The evolution of the Rochester City Hall Annex from fire station to police station to potential offices echoes larger patterns of development and technological changes.

Though the City Hall Annex has lost much of its architectural integrity, it is still significant as an example of an early fire station designed by Walker & Sons of Providence, Rhode Island. Not many fire stations from the age of horse-drawn equipment survive, and what remains of the City Fire Station era of history for the Rochester City Hall Annex building is important to the history of Rochester.

Walker & Sons was a very well-known and widely used architectural firm in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their work is very well known throughout New England, with many of their projects listed to the National Register. The original building design of the Rochester City Hall Annex (Fire Station) is comparable to other fire stations designed by Walker & Sons. Details such as general building form, massing, and materials are indicative of their work and help broaden our understanding of their catalogue of known designs.

## History and Development of the Property

### Historic Photographs/Maps:

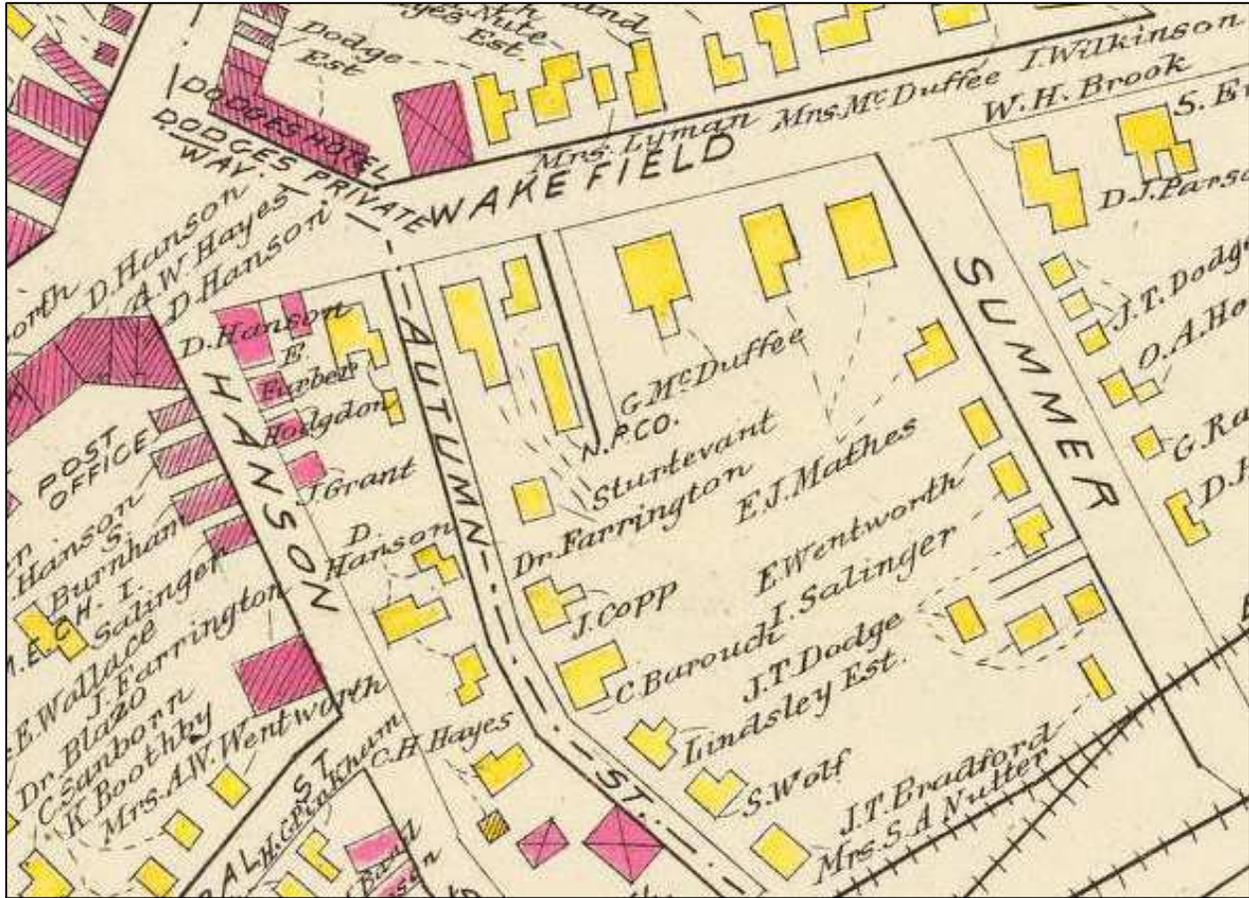


#### 1884 Bird's Eye View of Rochester, NH

Showing future location of Rochester City Hall Annex on Wakefield Street

Source: Library of Congress Website ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov))

## History and Development of the Property

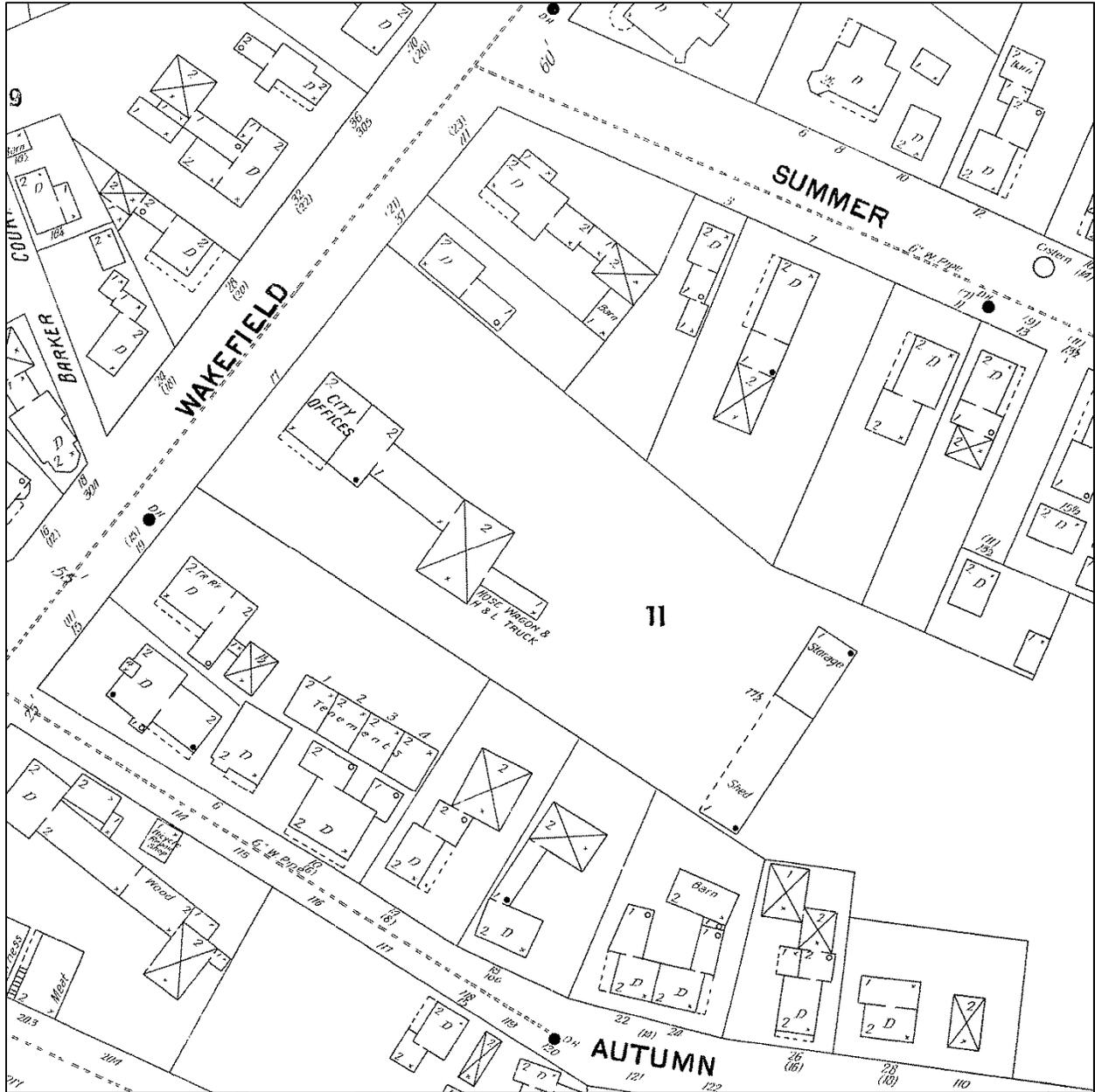


### 1892 Hurd Map of Rochester, NH

Showing future location of John McDuffee House (G. McDuffee) on Wakefield Street.

Source: David Ramsey Map Collection (<http://www.davidrumsey.com/>)

## History and Development of the Property

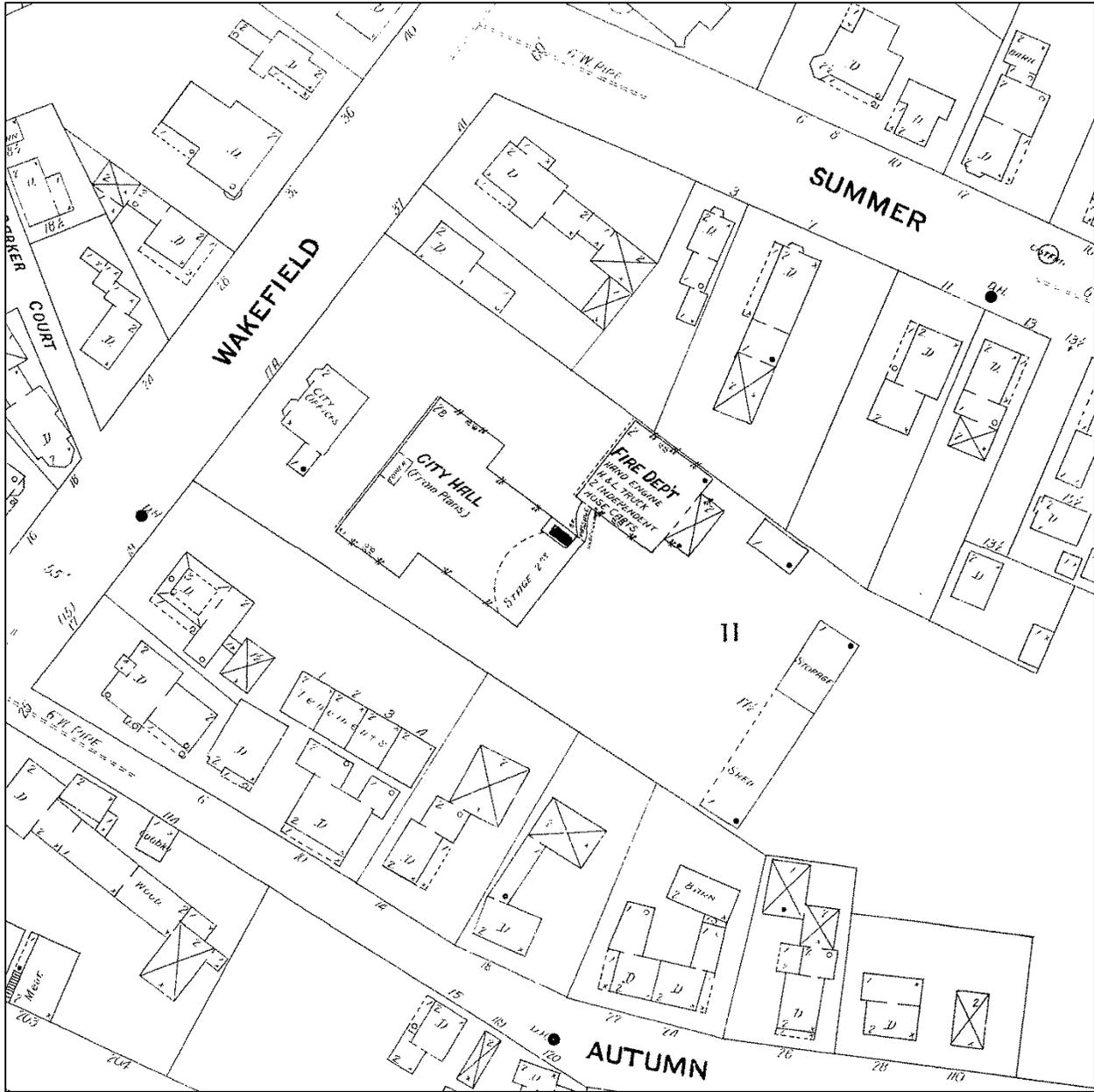


### 1902 Map of Rochester, NH

Showing future location of Rochester City Hall Annex at 17 Wakefield Street

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Jan. 1902, Sheet 4

## History and Development of the Property



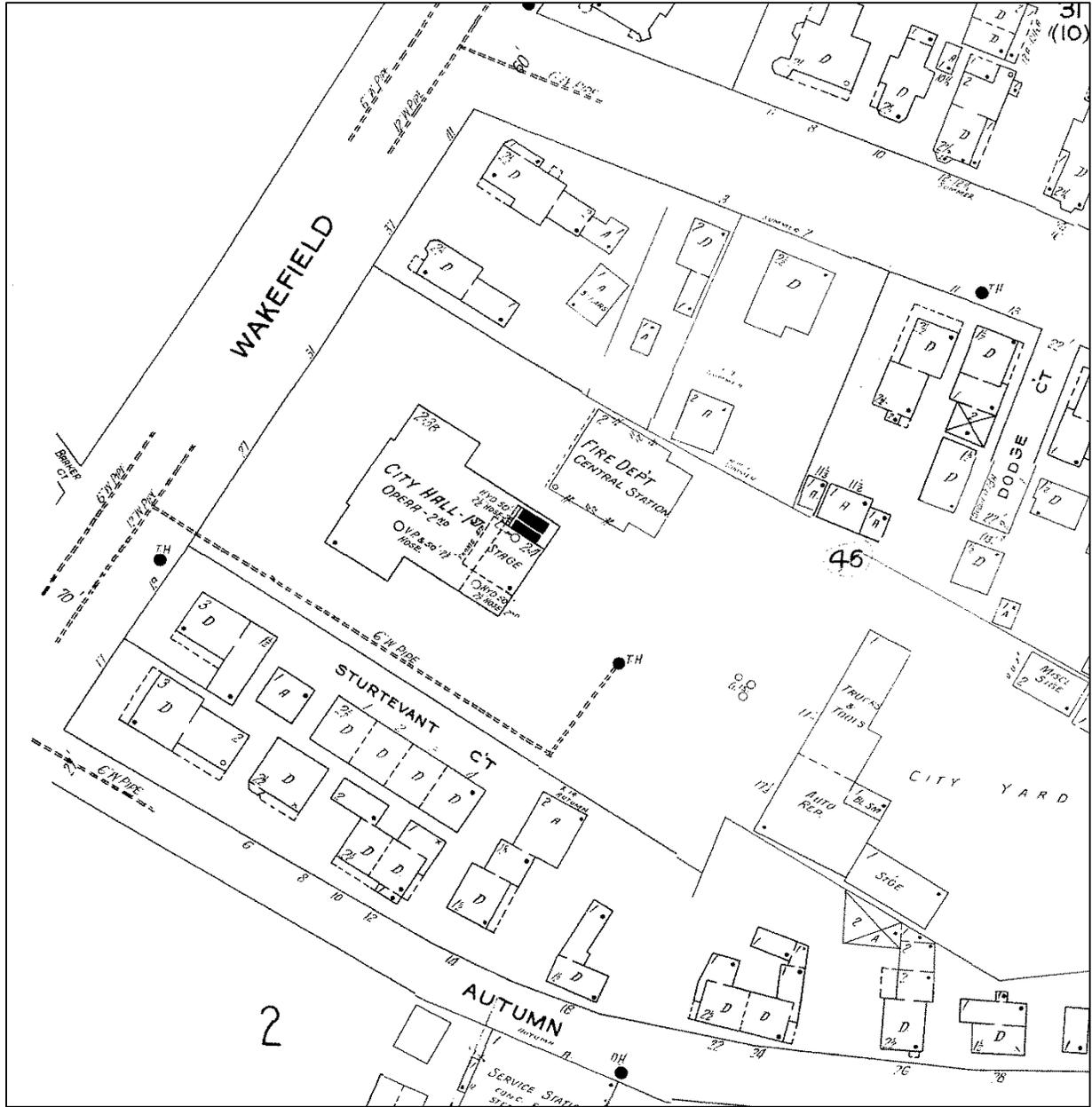
### 1908 Map of Rochester, NH

Depicting Rochester City Hall Annex (Fire Dep't) Connected to City Hall (under construction)

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Jan. 1908, Sheet 4<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Sheet 4 of the October 1914 and Sheet 3 of the July 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps are very similar to the 1908 map.

# History and Development of the Property



## 1949 Map of Rochester, NH

Depicting Rochester City Hall Annex (Fire Dep't) next to City Hall  
Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Jul 1925 updated 1949, Sheet 3

## History and Development of the Property



### **Rochester City Hall Annex, 1981**

Rochester City Hall Annex behind City Hall

Source: Roger A. Brevoort, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form for the Rochester Commercial and Industrial District", 1981[listed 1983]. National Park Service Website ([www.nps.gov/nr](http://www.nps.gov/nr))

## History and Development of the Property

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