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City Hall had additions

(Editor's note: This is the eleventh in a series of "then and now" articles on places of interest in Kansas City, Kan., compiled by area historian Margaret Landis in observance of the 100th birthday of KCK in 1986. Much of the information has appeared in The Kansan.)

(Transcriptions are presented without changes except to improve readability.)

In last week's "then and now" it was pointed out the New Market House on the southeast corner of 6th and Armstrong, built by the city of Wyandotte, served as the Kansas City, Kan., City Hall from 1886 until 1911.

But it was soon determined a new city hall was needed for more room. A special bond issue was passed in November 1909 and \$200,000 was set aside for the new city hall.

Where to build it was the question. Originally, there was a plan to combine the city hall and the courthouse, but it was abandoned.

Mayor U.S. Guyer said the city should buy about half of the block on 6th Street between Ann Avenue and Armstrong Avenue, and adjoining the city hall was appraised and condemned for the new city hall.

The plans for a new city hall called for a three-unit structure. They called for the building to contain separate jails for men and women, an emergency hospital and quarters for city officials. A large room would be provided for meetings of the commissioners and one for the police court. A new auditorium to seat 4,100 persons was included in the designs, but it was never built because cost exceeded the city's bonded indebtedness.

Therefore, only one unit was built at this time on the corner of 6th and Ann. It was one of four stories and built out of granite material. The cornerstone was laid April 25, 1911. The old city hall served as fire headquarters.



Old City Hall (top) is shown as it appeared in 1911 on the northeast corner of 6th and Ann. A part of the building at left of the pictures is the Grund Hotel (no longer standing) on the northwest corner. The annex or addition to the city hall (bottom) was built in 1929. The new fire headquarters at left of city hall also was built in 1929 on the site of the first city hall of the new Kansas City, Kan. Photos courtesy of KCK Planning Department.

In 1929 a bonds improvement program was approved for the erection of a new fire headquarters at its present location (old city hall) and for an annex (\$70,000) to adjoin the new city hall on the north to house the police and other departments.

The first wing of the city hall at 6th and Ann was used from 1911 to 1929 and with the annex being added, from 1929 to 1973. City business was transacted on this corner for 62 years.

On May 12, 1973, the new Municipal Office Building on the southeast corner of 7th and Ann (One Civic Plaza) was dedicated.

The old city hall has stood vacant for more than 10 years (except for some storage items). A commission was created by the council (May 20, 1983) to study uses for the old city hall. Several uses were suggested

Earlier this year the council selected John T. Julian and Conrad Miller Jr. to renovate the old city hall. They plan to transform it into a commercial office building along with an ethnic and/or a children's museum. The project is planned to be completed for next years centennial celebration.