DESIGN FOR A COUNTY COURT HOUSE

BY

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

ROBERT JAMES LOVE

ENTITLED DESIGN FOR A COUNTY COURT HOUSE

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

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Instructor in Charge.

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THE DESIGNING OF A COUNTY COURT HOUSE.

The courts of justice of the United States are divided into two classes, which in their turn are subdivided into a more exact classification, according to their relative powers as a court.

First under the Federal Courts there are the Supreme, Revenue, and District Courts. The writer, however, has to do with the second subdivision, namely, State Courts, which are divided into State Supreme Court, Appellate Court, Circuit Court and County Court.

The above are the requirements of the State of Illinois, and the building requirements of these courts differ according to the number and duties of their several offices.

Something concerning the purposes and proceedings of the various courts is needed in order to successfully plan for them.

STATE SUPREME COURT.

The State Supreme Court has all power and authority necessary to carry into complete execution all its judgments, decrees and determinations, in all matters within its jurisdiction. It is the highest court and is held at the Capitol. The State is divided into seven districts for the election of the judges of this court.

APPELLATE COURT.

The appellate courts are courts of record, with judges and clerks for each. Twelve judges of the Circuit Clerk, assigned by the Supreme Court, serve at the different Appellate Courts. These courts exercise appellate jurisdiction only, in matters of appeal, or writs of error, from the final judgments, orders or decrees of any of the circuit courts or county courts. There are four appellate courts held in this State, and each is held
by three judges of the Circuit Court. Courts are held in short
terms, from the first Tuesday of March and October in each year.
The Sheriff of the county, in which the court is held, attends
the Sessions.

CIRCUIT COURT.

Circuit courts are held in the county court
houses by three judges. The terms of this court vary. One term
begins on the fourth Monday of September and another one the first
Monday in March. Either a grand or petit jury may be summoned.

Of the two most important courts and accessories of Illinois,
the Circuit Court is more important in the less popular districts,
but in the City, the County Court is more important.

COUNTY COURT.

The County Court is a court of record styled
"The County Court of -------- County". The judge of this court
holds office for four years. The jurisdiction pertains to matters
of probate, settlements of estates of deceased persons, appoint­
ment of guardians, settlement of accounts, proceedings by executors
and so forth. Court is open from day to day and is attended by
twelve jurymen unless the parties to the suit care to elect six.

PROBATE COURT.

Another court in large cities is the pro­
bate court, which is a court of record in each county having a
population of 70,000 or more. It is held in the County Court
House. When there is a Probate Court, the County Court turns
over all of its Probate records to the former. This court also
is always open. It has jurisdiction in all matters of probate,
the settlement of estates of deceased persons, appointment of
guardians etc. The jury may be composed of either six or twelve.
COUNTY OFFICERS. In order to plan a County Court House we must also consider the different County Officers and their duties.

COUNTY CLERK. First, the County Clerk who is clerk of the County Court has care and custody of all records of the same. Consequently, his rooms should be near the Court room and ample space for the records must be provided. The clerk also issues marriage licenses, makes out the assessors books and has charge of the board of supervisors. All records kept by the clerk are open for the inspection of any persons who may wish to see them.

COUNTY TREASURER. The County Treasurer keeps the record of all revenues and other public moneys and is responsible for the safety of the same. Accordingly, he must have ample vault space.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT. County Superintendent of schools has charge of the registration of applicants for admission to State Normal Universities, and is required to hold examinations for the teachers, at least quarterly. He also sells township lands, and keeps a record of the sales of all school lands. Thus, either a special room for examinations or another room which may be used is necessary, besides the office of the Superintendent.

CORONER. The Coroner has charge of all dead bodies, when the death is caused by violence. He chooses six jurors for an inquest, and in case any person is suspicioned and committed, he acts as Sheriff. When there is a vacancy in the office of Sheriff, the Coroner fills this position.

SHERIFF. The Sheriff serves and executes writs and warrants
and is a conservator of peace. He must suppress all riots, and prevent crime as far as possible. He must attend all courts of records and has the custody of the Court House and the Jail.

A grand jury is composed of sixteen persons and a petit jury of six or twelve persons.

PROPORTION OF COURTS. The proportion of County Court rooms is about as follows. The supreme probate court or circuit court should be about $7/10$ of the criminal court.

INTERIOR. In the planning of the interior, the proper approach to, and distribution of and the arrangements of the chief court rooms and their dependencies must receive the first consideration. The number and character of the court rooms required will vary in different States, but they may be broadly classed as the criminal courts and those for other purposes such as common pleas, circuit, orphans, etc., with one room distinctly varying from the others, and of smaller dimensions but marked by a treatment of greater dignity and elegance, both in plan and details, for the use of the Supreme bench. Among the necessary dependencies or annexes to all court rooms there must be provided the judges private room, communicating with the court room near the bench, to have also, whenever possible, exit to the public corridor, and to be furnished with proper toilet rooms. For all courts there must be adequate clerk's rooms, communicating with the public corridors; one or two jury rooms (for courts requiring juries) and rooms for both male and female witnesses, all to have proper toilet facilities. Provision is also to be made for
the comfort of the jury when kept over night, and a matron's room should be placed near the female witness room in connection with the criminal court. It is important that the jury rooms, shall have private access from the court rooms, without the necessity of the jury passing through the main corridors, or coming in contact with the public in the court room itself.

The criminal courts require special attention to other details also, on account of the importance and popular interest attached to their proceedings, generally greater than those of other courts, consequently their areas should be larger, and their location and approaches more prominent. In fact, they should be treated as the most important points of the building and should open from the main vestibules, or corridors, with two entrances giving opportunity for speedily clearing and closing them when necessary, and ample space without, where the crowd which gathers about them may be properly taken care of in an orderly manner. By far the most important feature, however, to be considered in connection with the criminal courts, is the proper provision made for the reception and care of the prisoners. Whether brought from jails or lockups situated within the building itself, or in vans from a jail outside, their introduction into the court room must be accomplished with as little publicity as possible, and never through the main entrances or corridors where the public congregate. In direct communication with each criminal court room, having entrance thereto in the rear, near the prisoners "bar", either by private corridors or stairway (if a different floor is utilized for the purpose), should be arranged separate
and carefully guarded "lockups" for male and female prisoners, well lighted and ventilated, with smooth cement floors and walls glazed materials of light color, each provided with a toilet room and all protected from the gaze of the people from either within or without the building. If the prisoners are to come from the outside they should be brought in closed vans, which should only discharge their occupants at interior court spaces, from which the public are rigidly excluded, and directly at the entrance to the lockups, where the prisoners are kept until called for in the court itself, where they are taken by the private rear entrance, and immediately returned to the lockups when their presence is no longer needed, the vans meanwhile waiting in the court space to take them back to the jail on the final adjournment of the court.

In planning the areas required in the building for the necessary dependencies of each important court room, such as the clerk's department, and rooms for record and storage, will be found generally to be much greater than the area of each respective court room, the varying spaces required for these several departments depending largely upon the character of the respective courts to which they belong. The interior details such as the position and arrangement of the judges bench, the jury seats, the prisoner's bar, the witness stand, the lawyer's tables etc., may be regarded rather as adjustable matters of furniture which may greatly vary with circumstances. However, the bench should not be placed facing a wall in which there are windows, nor should there be windows immediately behind it, and while skylights may be admitted to increase the lighting and ventilation, without
serious objection, they should never be depended upon solely for this purpose.

RECORDS.
The department for records will require a larger area than any other, not excepting the largest criminal court, comprising first a large storage space, where the records should be disposed of in fireproof stacks, arranged so as to be readily accessible. A large recording room must be included, and this whole department, which may fittingly located on an upper floor must in that case, communicate by book lift with the room placed beneath on the ground floor for the reception of deeds and other documents.

STYLE.
The fact that the administration of law, justice, and equity is one of the most serious, important and dignified phases of life in a community, it is safe to suggest that its expression in architectural forms should be that of solidity, repose and order, to a greater degree than for any other building. For this reason the classic style seems to afford the best solution.

INTERIOR ARRANGEMENT.
There are several desirable and undesirable features to be considered. Light, ventilation and freedom from noise are important questions. All vibrations and noise in the court rooms from any power plant located in the building should be avoided. The lighting is an important feature and for court rooms, the light should come from the sides and a very desirable arrangement is to have, embraced within the building, one or more ample interior court spaces, into which the
windows of at least one side of the principal court rooms shall open.

POLICE, LICENSE, SHERIFF. In addition to the court rooms, three departments are generally to be provided for in the building of this class, namely those for the police, for licenses, and sheriff and can be well placed on the lower floor. The requirements are as follows:— For the police a board meeting room with commissioner's private room; a witness room and two lockups; secretary's office and clerk's room, and one or two additional rooms for toilets etc. The sheriff requires two or three ample rooms with one or two for prisoners. While for licenses only one large room is needed with a smaller clerk's room attached. In addition to these there must naturally be provided an office for the Superintendent. Public toilets should be arranged for but not conspicuously located. A possible disposition of these suggests itself in mezzanine floors opening from the landings of the staircases, and above the smaller rooms of the floor below, where the entire ceiling height of the court rooms is not needed.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT. The county superintendent of schools requires a suite of rooms and it is generally the custom for this officer to hold his examinations in the school house of the county seat, but occasionally, he is forced to use his own rooms, so they must be large enough to accommodate him. School elections are held in his rooms. The coroner in some court houses has a room allotted to him. It does not need to be very large as his jury never consists of more than six men.
FIREPROOFING.

The absolute necessity, court house should be built of some system of fireproof construction is recognized, because of the vast importance of the public records and other contents of such a building. So there are several vaults required. The County Clerk, Circuit Clerk and Treasurer's rooms should each contain one or more vaults.

Kidder estimates the approximate cost of court houses to be between 32 and 34 cents per cu. ft.
SECOND FLOOR PLAN.

A well arranged plan for light with
nice arrangement of court rooms.

Central stairway
Corridors extending around central
court and offices

New Jersey County Court House
South Bend Ind Court House.

Arrangement of court rooms not as good.

Light comes from skylights.

Corridors around court rooms. A.A.
SECOND FLOOR PLAN.

Plan of court house showing arrangement of court room
Light from skylight.
ARRANGEMENT OF COURT ROOMS.

1.

A Space for Officers
B Spectators
C Judge's Office
D Male Witness
E Female


2.

A Spectators
B Court Officers
C Passage to Judge's Room.