

Discussions to build a new city hall started as early as 1892 when a newspaper editorial

described the old one as a “fourth-class country barn.” Support grew and a referendum held in April 1896 passed 314 to 91 in favor of a new building. The city hired Appleton architect Wallace DeLong to design the new hall. He chose to design a Richardsonian Romanesque style building. A style used on only a dozen or so city halls around the state. Local contractors Sackett & Frieders won the bid to construct the new building.

By the beginning of 1897, the building was ready. The complete building included a large basement with a furnace. The first floor consisted of the city clerk and treasurers’ office, city jail, police and fire departments, engine room, tramp room, library and reading room. The second floor included court rooms, the council chamber, living quarters for a fireman responsible for the engine downstairs, among other rooms.

In 1900, the Post Office found a home in the building until it moved in 1946 to its current location.

Changes happened over the seventy years that the building served the community. However, by the late 1960s the city decided it needed a new city hall. By 1972, the New City Hall opened and Old City Hall sat vacant.

The city listed the building for sale and received two offers, one from a company that wished to tear down the building and build two new ones and one from Cline-Hanson Furniture to use the current structure. The city’s Public

Property Committee favored removing the building assuming two new buildings would generate more tax revenue. The Citizens for the Preservation of City Hall formed to save the structure. A local preservation advocate argued “to tear down the city hall would be like tearing down an old building out east that has stood since Revolutionary War days.” Cline-Hanson won and used the building for their business until 2003.

Shortly after the furniture store closed, Fox River Development purchased the old city hall and the two buildings immediately to the west. They renovated the buildings to include office and retail spaces on the first floors and ten apartments on the second floors.

