

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Turner Town Hall
other names/site number West Chicago City Hall
City of West Chicago Historical Museum

2. Location

street & number 132 Main Street
city, town West Chicago
state Illinois code IL county DuPage code 043 zip code 60185

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local (checked), public-State, public-Federal
Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 1, Noncontributing 0, Total 1

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination (checked) request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: William C. Wheeler, SHPO
Date: 3-28-91
State or Federal agency and bureau: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:)

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government - city hall

Government - fire station

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture - museum

**7. Description**Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian - Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other

**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Turner Town Hall (Photo No. 1) is located on Lot No. 7 in the middle of a block on Main Street in West Chicago, DuPage County, Illinois. The two-story masonry structure with basement was originally built as a detached town hall building (Photo No. 2) and subsequently became part of the contiguous commercial district of downtown West Chicago (Photo No. 3).

Constructed in 1884, the structure completely covers a lot at 132 Main Street (formerly Depot Street) which is twenty-four feet wide by sixty feet deep. The Main Street elevation exists as an asymmetrical two-story front of Italianate design, including a tower and round top windows. A group of three windows with the center window slightly taller than the other two is located at the second floor level (Photo No. 7). The tower is projected from the front face of the building with four steps of corbelled brick. An entrance door is at the first floor level (Photo No. 5) with a single round top window at the second floor. An elaborately corbelled brick cornice enhances the top of the building at the front and back. A large semi-circular date stone with an approximately six foot base is set into the front face of tower (Photo No. 6).

The Turner Town Hall was constructed with a cream colored brick exterior on a limestone foundation. The brick is laid in a common bond with every seventh course being headers. Originally the tower was capped with a metal pyramidal roof (Photo No. 2) which had been removed in the structure's early history and certainly before the fire department equipment was moved from the first floor to the basement level in 1942. At that time the double front swinging doors were replaced with the existing Federal style single door with sidelights. A concrete ramp at the double doors was removed and replaced with concrete steps.

On the back or alley side of the building (the only other completely exposed elevation), the upper floors are brick and the lower or basement level is limestone. Three eight foot tall by three foot four inches wide windows were spaced evenly on each of the two floors with the basement level actually having two windows and a door. This side of the building had changes made to the windows by shortening them by two feet and adding a fire escape door at the first and second floors. A metal spiral stair at the north end of the alley side elevation acts as the first escape stair. The basement level became the fire department in the 1942 renovation when it was determined that the first floor could not support heavier equipment. This caused a large opening to be necessary at this level. This opening has since been filled in with concrete block with a standard door (Photo No. 8).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

Turner Town Hall

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While there is little documentation regarding interior changes in the Town Hall, it is apparent that there were few, if any, walls on the first and second floors. Originally the first floor (Photo No. 9) housed the fire department, its equipment and the police lock-up with the space being primarily open. The village board and later the city council met at the second floor (Photo No. 10). Social events such as dances and dinners were held on the second floor since it too had a large open space. Since the City of West Chicago Historical Museum occupied the building in 1976, there have been alterations to the basement, primarily to create storage, workroom and office spaces.

In 1952 the brick front was painted and remained painted until it was chemically cleaned and tuckpointed in 1985. Also, sometime between 1951 and 1969 the four second floor windows were replaced with square top windows in the original curve top openings. The 1985 restoration of the facade saw the curve top windows return. The reconstructed sash and frames are painted wood (Photo No. 4).

Today the Turner Town Hall is known as the City of West Chicago Historical Museum and presents itself as an unpretentious small scale design in a pleasing Italianate style, appearing on its front elevation virtually as it did in 1942 with the tower, windows and masonry work preserved to reflect its original architectural characteristics. The building has retained a significant integrity of location, design, materials and association of use to display the setting for the important growth of the community of West Chicago.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Politics/Government

Period of Significance  
1884-1940

Significant Dates  
1884  
1896

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Norris, Alfred/designer  
Hills and Hartman Bros./builders

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Turner Town Hall meets Criterion A for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a locally significant building associated with the need to provide facilities for public welfare and safety. The Turner Town Hall was developed as a place to hold town meetings, social activities and was the center for the newly organized professional police and fire departments.

The arrival of three railroads to the Village of Junction in 1849 made what is now known as West Chicago, Illinois' first pioneer railroad community. Originally known only as "Junction," the village marks the junction of three separate railroads. Regular train service between Chicago and Junction began November 12, 1849 on the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad (Now the Chicago and North Western). By 1854, Junction was a bustling center of railroad activity. Steam engine and car repair shops were in operation. This railroad activity brought growth and disorder. The local fire fighting system, which depended on private companies, was ineffective.

In 1883, ten years after the incorporation of the Village of Turner (earlier changed from the Village of Junction), a vote was taken by the board of trustees in respect to the building of a Town Hall and "lockup." The roll call vote shows that two members favored immediate construction, while four trustees wished to hold the construction off for a period of time. In June of 1884, plans for a new Town Hall were accepted by the board of trustees and construction was begun shortly thereafter. Walter S. Wilson, who was the street commissioner, police constable and pound master, was instructed to start the excavation work. John Norris, the village president, was also a prominent building contractor. His oldest son, Alfred Norris, was paid \$10.00 for preparing construction drawings and specifications for the Town Hall.

On June 6, 1884, the Wheaton Illinoian newspaper stated these comments about the Town Hall project and purpose:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Turner Town Hall

"At a regular meeting of our city fathers Tuesday night, it was decided to build a new Town Hall on the lot opposite Barth's Hardware Store. It is to be a brick two-story and basement structure, and at last the Junction will have a calaboose -- for the reception of tramps and disorderly persons with whom we have, of late, been overrun -- in the basement.

"The first floor will be used as a polling place, and if the Turner people ever get up spunk enough to purchase an engine we will have a place for a good fire department. The third floor will be the Hall, a place for our city fathers to meet and discuss the great and serious questions that may disturb their quiet slumber."

In addition to the Town Hall as a response to the need for public services like a fire department, the building also satisfied the widespread demand by rural and small communities for cultural and intellectual entertainment. Economic prosperity and the growing network of railroads made it possible for smaller communities like the Village of Turner to accommodate entertainment and community events which earlier had been enjoyed, for the most part, only by larger communities.

Cultural events such as art exhibits, bazaars and monthly dances were held at the Town Hall. There was even a museum which was reportedly very popular in the summer of 1885.

Not only did the Town Hall serve as the center of government and cultural events, it also housed a much needed police lock-up for the increasing number of tramps coming through town due to the heavy railroad traffic. The fire department and hook and ladder company was officially organized in 1888 to add fire protection to other village services centered in the Town Hall.

The name "Town Hall" was changed in 1896 to "City Hall" when the Village of Turner became the City of West Chicago. The building was to continue as the center of local government until 1976 when it became the home of the City of West Chicago Historical Museum, owned and operated by the City. It is noteworthy that the building has maintained its public use for 106 years to date with its function as the center of local government lasting 92 years. The Illinois Historic Structures Survey prepared in 1975 states that the West Chicago City Hall is the "oldest structure to serve continuously as a seat of municipal government in the western suburbs".

For the people of West Chicago, the Turner Town Hall was a place where opinions were expressed, decisions made, and municipal activities took place. The hall accommodated both political and social functions. Town meetings were regularly held on the second floor, the first meeting being held on May 29, 1885. At this first meeting, Ordinance No. 30 concerning the licensing of billiard tables and Ordinance No. 31 which amended the business hours of saloons were the first ordinances to be passed in the new and permanent meeting place. The future of West Chicago unfolded at the Turner Town Hall in 1896 when the village was renamed and a meeting to organize a volunteer fire department was held in August. From this evolved the West Chicago Hose Company No. 1

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3

Turner Town Hall

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and the Hook and Ladder Company with all their subsequent meetings held at the Town Hall.

In April, 1904, the West Chicago village board granted a franchise to the LaGrange Gas Company to lay out gas lines for street lighting and gas lighting at the Town Hall. Also at a meeting of the village fathers at the Town Hall in September of 1908, authorization to the Chicago, Wheaton and Western Railway Company to construct and operate a railroad on certain streets in West Chicago was granted. This assured the continuance of the rich railroad heritage on which much of the development of West Chicago is based.

No other building has been so intrinsically identified with the shaping of West Chicago's history as the Turner Town Hall. From the creation of a Health Department in 1938 and a Fire Department in 1934 to regulating disturbing noises by locomotive engines in 1931 and establishing a public library and reading room in 1929, the Turner Town Hall was the edifice from which municipal decisions were made until the structure became the West Chicago Historical Museum in 1976.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Scobey, Frank F., A Random Review of West Chicago History, West Chicago Historical Commission, West Chicago, Illinois, 1976.

Lebovich, William L., America's City Halls, Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press/National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1984.

Zurier, Rebecca, The American Firehouse, New York: Abbeville Press, 1982.

West Chicago Press, articles on the Turner Town Hall and the West Chicago City Hall; December 23, 1937; July 17, August 21, October 23, 1941; March 23, 1950.

Wheaton Illinoian, articles on the Turner Town Hall; January 2, February 6, February 20, April 17 and June 26, 1885; May 7 and June 16, 1886.

West Chicago Ordinance Books, 1896 through 1936.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other IL Historic Structures Survey/1975

Specify repository:

The City of West Chicago Historical Museum / IL Historic Preservation Agency

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A 16 400080 4637350  
 Zone Easting Northing

C         

B           
 Zone Easting Northing

D         

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies lot #7 in Block #108 of the original Town of Junction, now the City of West Chicago. The lot is 24 feet wide in the west to east dimension and 60 feet deep in the north to south dimension. The Turner Town Hall building occupies the entire property.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundry includes the city lot which has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Michael A. Dixon, AIA/Architect

organization Dixon Associates, AIA/Architects date November 28, 1990

street & number 202 West Main Street telephone (708) 377-9399

city or town St. Charles state Illinois zip code 60174

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/241-8592.

KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Certification Date, Reference Number, NHL status

MAY 24 1991

ILLINOIS  
Cahoon County  
Amriton Electric and Gas Company Plant, Old  
Amriton, Illinois  
Amriton 5/18/91 91000611

The Prairie  
Amriton 5/18/91 91000584

Lawrence County  
Courtland Historic District  
Roughly bounded by Clinton, Madison, Van Buren, Jefferson, U  
Courtland 5/13/91 91000587

St. Clair County  
Risington-Judge Elisha House  
US 231 S of 1st, with N. 23  
Risington 5/13/91 91000585

MICHIGAN  
Macomb County  
Obispo, William Lewis House  
1208 W. Pierce Ave.  
Peweeville 5/13/91 91000584

MISSOURI  
Crawford County  
Crawford-Hawell-Burson House  
1000 S. 1st St.  
Van Buren 5/14/91 91000582

Nebraska  
Johnston County  
First Presbyterian Church  
212 College Ave.  
Elkhartville 5/13/91 91000588

NEBRASKA  
Crawford County  
Crawford-Hawell-Burson House  
1000 S. 1st St.  
Van Buren 5/14/91 91000582

NEBRASKA  
Johnston County  
First Presbyterian Church  
212 College Ave.  
Elkhartville 5/13/91 91000588

NEBRASKA  
Crawford County  
Crawford-Hawell-Burson House  
1000 S. 1st St.  
Van Buren 5/14/91 91000582

NEBRASKA  
Johnston County  
First Presbyterian Church  
212 College Ave.  
Elkhartville 5/13/91 91000588

NEBRASKA  
Crawford County  
Crawford-Hawell-Burson House  
1000 S. 1st St.  
Van Buren 5/14/91 91000582

NEBRASKA  
Johnston County  
First Presbyterian Church  
212 College Ave.  
Elkhartville 5/13/91 91000588

NEBRASKA  
Crawford County  
Crawford-Hawell-Burson House  
1000 S. 1st St.  
Van Buren 5/14/91 91000582

NEBRASKA  
Johnston County  
First Presbyterian Church  
212 College Ave.  
Elkhartville 5/13/91 91000588

NEBRASKA  
Crawford County  
Crawford-Hawell-Burson House  
1000 S. 1st St.  
Van Buren 5/14/91 91000582

ILLINOIS  
Greene County  
Greene County Birthplace  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Carrollton 5/17/91 91000588

Logan County  
House of J. H. Elevator  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Atlanta 5/17/91 91000571

Sebastian County  
Price-Prather House  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Atlanta 5/17/91 91000574

LOUISIANA  
Caddo Parish  
Central High School  
Shreveport 5/18/91 91000606

MASSACHUSETTS  
Hampshire County  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Brookfield 5/16/91 91000600

NEVADA  
Clark County  
Roughly bounded by Hill St., Clark's Landing Rd., Adams Ave.,  
Port Republic City 5/16/91 91000586

NEVADA  
Clark County  
Roughly bounded by Hill St., Clark's Landing Rd., Adams Ave.,  
Port Republic City 5/16/91 91000586

NEW YORK  
Ulster County  
Lake View  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Yellowspring National Park 5/16/91 91000617

MULTIPLE RESOURCE GRANTS  
Multiple Resource Grants were identified by NHR  
Thematic Resources were identified by NHR  
NHL designates a National Historic Landmark

The following properties were also entered in the National Register but were  
excluded from a previous notice:  
KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City,  
Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL status

CALIFORNIA  
Monterey County  
Monterey County  
1000 N. 1st St.  
San Lucas 5/08/91 91000530

IDAHO  
Shoshone County  
Science Hall  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Pocatello 5/08/91 91000535

TEXAS  
Harris County  
Harris County  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Harrisburg 5/02/91 91000488

UTAH  
Wasatch-Cache National Monument  
1000 N. 1st St.  
Wasatch-Cache National Monument 5/08/91 91000535

The following actions have been taken on the following properties:  
KEY: Property Name, Multiple Name, Address/Boundary, City,  
Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL status, Requested Action, Decision Date

MISSOURI  
Crawford County  
Crawford-Hawell-Burson House  
1000 S. 1st St.  
Van Buren 5/14/91 91000582

MISSOURI  
Johnston County  
First Presbyterian Church  
212 College Ave.  
Elkhartville 5/13/91 91000588



ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

Du-H-6  
200821

1. Name of Site:

Common

Historic

West Chicago City Hall

2. Location:

Street and Number

132 Main  
City or Town

W. Chicago  
County

Du Page

Zip Code

Township

T 39N  
Range

R 9E

Section

9  
1/4 Section

NE

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

District  Building  
 Site  Structure

Integrity (check one)

Altered  Unaltered  
 Moved  Original Site

4. Ownership:

Private  
 Public

Status (check one)

Occupied  
 Unoccupied  
 Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

Yes  Restricted  Unrestricted  No

Present Use (check one or more)

Agricultural  Industrial  Religious  
 Commercial  Military  Scientific  
 Educational  Museum  Transportation  
 Entertainment  Park  Other  
 Government  Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name City of W. Chicago

Phone Number

Street and Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

GOVERNMENT

6. Description:

Red Brick

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  
 Ruins  Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway?

Yes  No

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archeological Site (Pre-Columbian)
- Archeological Site (Post-Columbian to 1673)
- French Influence (1673-1780)
- Illinois Frontier (1780-1818)
- Illinois Early (1818-1850)
- Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
- Illinois Late (1900-present)
- Famous People (give names & dates)

8. Specific Date: 1884

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- Aboriginal (historic)
- Aboriginal (pre-historic)
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Art
- Commerce
- Communication
- Conservation
- Education
- Engineering
- Industry
- Invention
- Landscape Architecture
- Literature
- Military
- Music
- Political
- Religion/Philosophy
- Science
- Sculpture
- Social/Humanitarian
- Theater
- Transportation
- Urban Planning
- Other (specify)

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)

Use additional sheets if necessary. "Very large & impressive city hall for its day". "Oldest structure to serve continuously as seat of municipal

9. Form prepared by: government in western suburbs."

Name and Title:

Date:

Organization:

Phone:

Street and Number:

City or Town:

County:

Zip Code

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

