

NEWS RELEASE: July 10, 2008

Greene County seeking historic photos of Courthouse

Greene County is seeking photographs of the Greene County Historic Courthouse for its upcoming centennial restoration project.

Photos showing the Historic Courthouse's original exterior, interior and landscaping will be used for research purposes for possible restoration of the building's original features by 2012.

Tim Smith, Greene County Administrator, said the county is particularly interested in photos showing interior architectural details, like gas light fixtures, paint colors and the building's original skylights.

"We've checked the Greene County Archives, the History Museum and the library, but we're finding that photos of the original interior are almost nonexistent," said Tim Smith, Greene County Administrator. "Surely somebody out there has a box of old photos that could help us piece together what the inside of the courthouse used to look like."

Smith added that photos the county is also interested in any photos showing the building's parapet — a low wall of detailed stone work that lined the top perimeter of the courthouse until weight issues caused it to be removed in the 1960s.

Restoration of the courthouse began in 2007 and continues this year with repair of terrazzo flooring in the public corridors. Continued restoration, as well as proposed installation of energy-efficient features, is dependent upon securing state and federal grants.

"The funding is not yet available, but we can't take advantage of any grant opportunities before completing our research," said Smith.

The Historic Courthouse opened in 1912. Construction spanned from 1911-1915 and cost a total of \$150,000. It was Greene County's fourth courthouse, replacing a decrepit building on Springfield's public square, now site of the Heer's building. Previous courthouses included a log cabin and a brick structure which burned down in 1861. Built in the late neoclassical style with stone from Phenix Quarry, the four-story building originally housed county and court functions as well as some city offices.

Circuit Court operations were moved out of the building to the Greene County Judicial Courts Facility in 1996. The Historic Courthouse currently houses the county's Public Hearing room, elected offices of the Assessor, Auditor, Collector of Revenue, County Clerk, Recorder of Deeds and Treasurer, as well as the departments of Resource Management, Planning and Zoning, Information Services and Public Information. Though much of the building's interior has been modified for modern uses, the Courthouse Rotunda remains unaltered, including the leaded-glass dome ceiling and the second and third floor galleries, and is used for numerous public gatherings throughout the year.

If you have photos of the courthouse, or if you need more information, call Tim Smith, Greene County Administrator, at 868-4168, or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 829-6019 or 379-5713.

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