

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT BUILDING
200 East Capitol Avenue
Springfield
Sangamon County
Illinois

HABS IL-330
HABS IL-330

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
ILLINOIS STATE SUPREME COURT BUILDING

HABS NO. IL-330

Location: 200 Capital Avenue, Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois

Present Owner
and Occupant: State of Illinois.

Present Use: Supreme Court of the State of Illinois.

Significance: The Illinois Supreme Court Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "C"; it embodies significant and distinctive characteristics of an architecture style, the American Beaux Arts, in an exemplary manner.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1908.
2. Architect: William Carbys Zimmerman (1859-1932) was the State Architect for Illinois from 1901 until 1909. He was also a noted architect in Chicago and designed several significant buildings in Illinois such as the Highland Park School in Highland Park, Illinois, Lincoln Hall and the Armory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign along with several notable residences on the Chicago North Shore.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The State of Illinois is the original and current owner of the Illinois Supreme Court Building.
4. Builder, Contractor: Jobst and Sons Contractors, Springfield, Illinois
5. Original plans and construction: The Illinois Supreme Court Building is a masonry, concrete frame, limestone clad three-story building, thirty-three thousand square feet in size, that is built in the American Beaux Arts style. A nine-bay colossal Ionic engaged columned north facing façade is framed by flanking pavilions. The engaged-colonnade rests on a rusticated base and the hipped roof is setback from a balustrade. Centered in the façade is the pedimented entry. The first and second floor plans feature a center hall, marble-clad, double-loaded corridor and a grand winding. The most significant rooms are the Supreme Court Chamber, the Appellate Court Chamber, and the Library. The first floor Supreme Court's Clerks Offices and the third floor Justices' Residential Suites have been significantly altered in the last thirty years.

6. Alterations and additions: On the first floor, the Supreme Court Clerk's Offices were altered with incongruent drop ceilings and new partitions with trim that does not match the original trim. On the third floor, the Justices' Residential Suites were updated twenty-five years ago. This alteration included adding new bathrooms and new kitchen areas. During this renovation, a skylight and light shaft, that illuminated a second floor stained-glass window wall, was closed. The stained glass window wall on the second floor is now artificially lit. The exterior has been minimally altered; an accessible ramp was added to the building's west elevation.

B. Historical Context:

Built in 1908, the Illinois Supreme Court Building is an outstanding example of Beaux Arts architecture built after the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and during the height of the Prairie Style in Illinois. William Carbys Zimmerman was a noted Chicago architect who used Prairie Style ornamentation within Beaux Arts planning and composition. The Illinois Supreme Court Building also features sculpture by noted sculptor Charles J. Mulligan of Pullman, Illinois and murals by Albert Henry Krehbeil of Denmark, Iowa.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Illinois Supreme Court Building is built in the American Beaux Arts style with Prairie Style detailing, specifically found on the interior columns and entablature of its most significant rooms.
2. Condition of fabric: The Illinois Supreme Court Building's fabric is in excellent condition with only a few areas where it has been altered, most notably on the first floor offices and the third floor residential suites.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 92'-7 1/2" wide by 171'-7" long.
2. Foundations: The Foundations are poured-in-place reinforced concrete.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are brick masonry and concrete frame and are clad with honed Indiana limestone. The interior walls are predominantly terra cotta block clad with plaster, marble, or walnut paneling.

4. Structural system, framing: The structure of the building is concrete frame with terra cotta tile infill. The roof structure is steel frame with gypsum panel substrate.
 5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads: There is a large terrace on the south face of the building for the main entry and a stoop with an accessible ramp located on the west elevation for the west facing entry.
 6. Chimneys: The building does not have any chimneys.
 7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main door is set in an Ionic-based portal; it is a simple double-leaf oak door with a large single light. The west elevation door is similar. The main doors throughout the building are two-panel oak doors with elaborate carvings found at the meeting rails.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The windows are all large French single-light casement windows with an ornamental metal grill placed in front of them. The building does not have any shutters fastened to the window openings.
 8. Roof: The building has one large hip roof covered with standing seam copper pans.
- C. Description of the Interior:
1. Floor Plans: The floor plans are attached.
 2. Stairways: There are two stairways. The main center stairway is an ornamental winding stair with an elaborate metal railing. The landing is set in an elaborate chamber with monumental plaques on all three sides. The main stairway and the walls around it are fabricated out of decorative marble. The secondary stairway, located on the west side of the building, is fabricated out of cast-iron with iron newels and simple iron pickets.
 3. Flooring: The flooring in the center hallways are inlaid marble. All other rooms have carpeted floors.
 4. Walls and ceiling finish: The first floor hallway walls are covered with Alabama white marble. The first floor hallway ceilings consist of a low-sloped ribbed barrel vault; the ribs are terminated with decorative eagles. The second floor hallway features a marble wainscoting, Ionic pilasters and a ceiling with ornamental plaster bays. The most ornamental rooms are the Supreme Court Chamber and the Appellate Court Chamber. The Supreme Court Chamber is paneled with ornamentally carved walnut paneling. Colossal Corinthian

columns and pilasters divide the chamber walls into four large bays. Above the paneling there are eight allegorical murals. The walls are terminated with an elaborate ornamental entablature. The ceiling is highly decorative and features a very prominent allegorical mural. The Appellate Court Chamber is finished in a similar manner except that the walls are covered with damask instead of walnut paneling. The Appellate Court Chamber features a large allegorical mural symbolizing justice on the west wall and a large ornamental ceiling with an allegorical mural. Both chambers have elaborately carved walnut portals and benches. The last most ornamentally finished room is the Library. Both the north and south walls have a four-bay Roman arcade. Ionic columns support the arcade arches. Behind the arches are the metal prefabricated book stacks shelving systems. The east wall features an elaborately carved oak portal. Allegorical murals are featured at the ends of the arcade. All other rooms are simply finished with square stock Prairie Style trim.

5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main doorways feature highly ornamental wood (quarter sawn oak or walnut) carved Ionic and Corinthian portals. Casings are carved with bundled leafs and each portal has an elaborate pedimented entablature. Doors are two-paneled with decorative carvings on the meeting rails.
 - b. Windows: All of the windows in the main rooms have elaborately carved casings. The stools for the windows in the Supreme Court Chamber and the Appellate Chamber are part of marble carved seat that also encloses the radiators. The main windows all feature large transoms over them.
6. Decorative features and trim: There are many notable decorative features in the Illinois Supreme Court Building. Both the Supreme Court Chamber and the Appellate Court Chamber have richly carved walnut raised paneled benches where the justices sit. On the west end of the second floor hallway, there is an elaborate stained glass light wall that was once illuminated by a light well and a skylight; it is now artificially lit. Four octagonal shaped Doric columns define the intersection of the main entry and the first floor east-west corridor.
7. Hardware: The hardware throughout the building is fabricated out of bronze. Each of the doorknobs features the seal of the Illinois Supreme Court.
8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, Air conditioning, Ventilation: The original heating system was a two-pipe steam radiator system. It was replaced with constant volume forced-air heating and air conditioning system.
- b. Lighting: The building feature decorative hanging half-globe pendants in the second floor corridor; the court chambers have small single bulb light fixtures embedded in the decorative ceilings and decorative wall sconces along all four walls. Modern light fixtures are featured in all other rooms.
- c. Plumbing: All of the original plumbing fixtures have been replaced with modern fixtures.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: The Illinois Supreme Court is located on the corner of Second Street and Capitol Avenue. Its west facing elevation is directly across from the Illinois State Capitol. The Illinois State Library faces it from the north and the Illinois State Bar building faces it on the south. The corner lot is approximately a half an acre in size. It has a monumental set of stairs and a decorative retaining wall on Capitol Avenue. A service drive is placed on its south side and the west side is where a large surface parking lot and the Illinois Central Rail line are located. The immediate landscape features a flagpole, deciduous trees, a grass lawn, and foundation plantings.
2. Outbuildings: There is a small prefabricated metal storage building located on the southeast side of the building lot.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: North Elevation and Site Plan by Ferry and Associates, October 1971, Physical Plant, Illinois Supreme Court.
- B. Early Views: None.
- C. Interviews: Jim Cimarossa, Clerk of the Illinois Supreme Court, 22 September 2012.
- D. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

a. Primary Sources

National Register Nominations: Capitol Avenue National Historic District, Springfield, Illinois, October 1975, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

b. Secondary Sources

Not Applicable

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Student Team: Brian Albrecht, Sara Alsum-Wassenaar, Erik Butka, Donald Hickman, Jr. Stephen Howard, Brianna Kraft, Stephanie Raney, Meggan Stanton, Joanna Wozniak, Wei Yu, and Michelle Zupancic.

Instructor: Paul Hardin Kapp, AIA, LEED AP, Associate Professor, School of Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.