

FLORAL HALL
(Needle Hall)
City Park, Conneaut Avenue
Bowling Green
Wood County
Ohio

HABS OH-2488
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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
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FLORAL HALL (Needle Hall)

HABS No. OH-2488

- Location: North side of Conneaut Avenue, 0.3 miles west of State Route 25 in City Park, the oldest municipal park of Bowling Green, Wood County, Ohio.
- Coordinates: N 41 22'47" W 83 39'31"
- Present Owner: The City of Bowling Green, 304 N. Church Street, Bowling Green, Ohio, 43402.
- Present Use: The structure is currently utilized by the City as an outdoor performing arts venue, shelter hall rental, and park storage.
- Significance: This is the only original building remaining on the earliest Bowling Green site of the Wood County Fairgrounds. Its octagonal shape is an excellent example of "Floral Halls" that were commonly found on county fairgrounds to display area floral and agricultural produce. At a later date, it was used as a needle work display hall which is where the name Needle Hall was introduced.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical history

1. Date of erection: ca. 1884. In the year 1882, the site of the Wood County Fairgrounds moved to Bowling Green from nearby Tontogany. Floral Hall was the smallest of three cross shaped buildings within the Fine Arts Buildings.
2. Architect/Builder: Unknown.
3. Alterations and additions: 1982, wood shake roof; stage structure and white plywood projection screen; access ramp.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement

1. Architectural character: Standing as the only representative survivor of the old Wood County Fairgrounds, Floral Hall has a list of historical architectural character-defining features, on the exterior and interior. The most obvious being the overall shape of the Greek cross and the stick style ornamentation that is focused on the ends of the wings and just below the eaves on the hinged shutters. Behind the hinged shutters, the bands of windows show the structure's original purpose of an exhibition space for agricultural products.

Natural light and ventilation from the windows were essential to this purpose as well as the overall space configuration formed by the four cross arms and central hub. On the interior, the craftsmanship of the beams, rafters and joists of the central roof support represents the structure as a historic vernacular building.

2. Architectural style: Rural vernacular.

3. Condition of fabric: Overall the structure is in fairly well condition for surviving over 120 years as there is no serious sagging or deterioration to the structural system evident. However, some minor damage to the fabric of the roof and walls is present. There is moss accumulation and growth on the wood shake roof and with no rain water collection system installed, water either runs down the exterior walls or drains off at the base of the foundation wall. With this issue, water intrusion on the inside walls of the upper hub has occurred along with water staining and peeling paint on the exterior. The runoff water has also caused erosion of the earth around the foundation. Gaps around the small access doors and double doors allow for the possibility of insect and small rodent infestation and moisture infiltration. Floor boards have already fallen victim to boring beetles. Other issues of the exterior fabric include the rotting of the wood water table, spalling of bricks and stone along with the loss of mortar from joints in sections of the foundation, and regular wear and aging of the building.

B. Description of exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Greek cross plan of four cross arms around a central octagonal hub. 60'3" x 60'3".

2. Foundation: Four courses of common brick atop limestone rubble.

3. Wall construction: An entire wood frame construction, most likely of oak, covered with vertical boards, that each sport a decorative groove in the center. A wood water table and stick style ornamentation is also applied to the exterior.

4. Structural system: All load-bearing walls with the center roof structure supported by a complex series of rafters, joists, and braces circumventing a central oak pole. Horizontal tensioning rafters connect the radiating "spindles" to the walls.

5. Accessibility: Concrete steps located at the double doors of three of the four wings allow entry into Floral Hall. A wood access ramp and stairs leading up to the stage platform allow access to the fourth wing and personnel door, the latter being additions to the structure.

6. Openings

a. Doorways: Double doors open at the end of each of the four wings. A contemporary personnel door was installed on the southeast arm for security purposes as the double doors can only be barred from the inside.

b. Windows: Four small hinges access doors situated in each of the four narrow walls between and above the cross arms. Below the entire lower eaves, hinged panels can be lowered to expose bands of three-over-three glass windows (forty total).

7. Roof

a. Shape: The main roof is an eight-sided hip, as are those over the four wings.

b. Eaves: No rainwater collection transport system installed. Below the eaves of the drum, a band of horizontal louvers circumnavigate the central section allowing for ventilation.

C. Description of interior

1. Floor plan: Greek cross shape composed of unpainted oak floor boards.

2. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted horizontal wood boards on lower walls. Structural support is visible as ceiling is left open and unfinished.

3. Lighting: Originally constructed without electrical service, for purposes of illumination and safety today, fixtures were installed.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The foundation of Floral Hall is located in a well-drained soil of sandy loam in which several very large and mature oak trees stand. These trees provide shading to the structure during the period of the year when the trees are in leaf. Sharing the same site of the city park with the Hall are five other shelters, playground equipment, and a Veterans' Building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Balduf, Tom. Floral Hall, Bowling Green, Ohio, Preliminary Condition Assessment, November 2005.

Bowling Green City Council. Nomination, 1981, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service. www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/oh/Wood/state.html