

NEW HAVEN CITY HALL

New Haven, Connecticut

Project Description

This polychromatic Victorian Gothic structure bordering the New Haven Green with clock tower and tall iron staircase was one of Henry Austin's most important works in New Haven. Many decorative motifs and varieties of stone were employed to give the building a colorful, Venetian effect. When Mayor John Daniels began his tenure, the restoration and expansion of New Haven's City Hall, a Henry Austin masterpiece, had long been an elusive objective of the city's political administrations. However, as significant investment had already been made, Mayor Daniels was determined to bring the stalled restoration and renovation of this notable landmark to a successful closure. He turned to the Giordano team to provide the intellectual and logistical talent needed to organize and execute the completion of what had become a frustrating, decades long effort. Austin's Gothic Revival design is exceptional. Many motifs and varieties of stone were employed to give the building a lively, polychromatic, Venetian inspired exterior, and no expense was spared in the detailed ornamentation of the interior. However, the materials used were difficult to maintain, and thus susceptible to deterioration to the point that much of the original structure was demolished in 1976 (an ornate clock tower had been demolished in the 1950s). Austin's façade and interior decorative features were intact, but were in need of rescue. Also, a contractor hired to build an addition to accommodate the City's growing administrative functions was unable to complete the scope of work.

Giordano's team walked into a building shell in disrepair with structural features out of plumb and square on level. Perfecting the exterior and bringing the interiors of both spaces to a high level of finish was a significant challenge, but the effort transformed City Hall into the impressive landmark that it is today. Giordano rapidly performed extensive detailed masonry and millwork restorations; Austin's clock tower and cast iron staircase were fully refurbished; and the addition (a visually abstracted extension of the façade) was connected to and unified with what survived of the original structure through the incorporation of a modern space featuring expansive skylights and a stately colonnade, and then equipped with state-of-the-art building systems and finishes.

Services Provided

Construction Management

Owner

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