

Executive Summary

The historic Hall of Waters, located in downtown Excelsior Springs, Missouri, is the focus of this Assessment and Feasibility Study. This c. 1938 Art Deco Style building currently serves as the City Hall of Excelsior Springs and has a rich history in the overall historic context and fabric of the historic downtown.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Excelsior Springs was famous world-wide for its healing waters which flowed from its varied natural mineral springs. These historic springs were harnessed and used for medicinal and therapeutic purposes. The historic Hall of Waters was constructed by the City of Excelsior Springs and housed one of the largest public spas of its time which included a large swimming pool, water bar, bottling facilities and separate ladies and men's spa treatment areas.

The City of Excelsior Springs moved their offices into the building to serve as City Hall in the 1990s and still occupies, portions of the building. A devastating flood in the summer of 1993 caused extensive damage to the building and its systems from which it has never fully recovered. The constant threat of flooding has, to date, stalled future development plans for the building on its lower levels. Major building upgrades since the 1993 flood included a new elevator, new electrical service (relocated to a higher floor level) and minor modifications throughout the building in order to meet contemporary needs. Current mechanical systems are in need of replacement, as there is only one functioning boiler with no redundancy, aging infrastructure and no central air conditioning system. Programming of the vacant spaces within the building is a priority of the City.

This Assessment and Feasibility Study serves as a current snapshot of the historic Hall of Waters building exterior and interior conditions, site and utilities/building systems during the 2012-2013 study. It is intended that this report be used as a guide for future rehabilitation endeavors, with respect to the treatment of this significant historic building. Therefore, this document should be viewed as dynamic, with the ability to change and be updated as new information is collected and as phased rehabilitation work progresses.

The objectives of this Assessment and Feasibility Study include:

- Provide a historical background of the building and its site, including the cultural significance within the community.
- To identify the most important character defining features and historic elements of the building which should be closely guarded and preserved during proposed future work.
- Study the existing building's construction, materials and usage.
- To bring together a team of professionals to evaluate the existing building systems and make appropriate recommendations for future rehabilitation and improvements.
- Observe and determine the factors which are causing deterioration to the significant historic structure and to make recommendations on how to alleviate these forces.
- To evaluate compliancy with building codes, ADA accessibility and health and life safety.
- To provide technical guidance for the preservation, conservation and rehabilitation of the existing historic materials.

- To work with an Advisory Committee to help with the visioning process for potential redevelopment and rehabilitation of the building.
 - Outline ideas for redevelopment opportunities that complement the historic nature of the building and reinvigorate under-utilized portions of the building while providing additional income to the City.
 - Outline ideas for how the building's current City Hall function could be maintained and made more user friendly and efficient.
- To prioritize the immediate, short term and long term goals for the stabilization and rehabilitation of the structure.
- To assist in determining possible future use and programming strategies.
- To provide basic opinions of probable cost to assist in establishing future projects.
- To provide ideas for potential funding strategies based on the established priorities.

Research Methodology

The assessment of the existing physical building conditions was completed in 2012-2013 by the Design Team professionals. Drafts of the existing conditions and recommendations portion of the report were presented to the Advisory Committee and City of Excelsior Springs in the spring of 2013, and the final treatment recommendations in the fall of 2013. The final report with cost estimates was issued to the City in August 2014.

For the purposes of this report, some of the original 1938 drawings blueprints were scanned and were traced in AutoCAD 2010 to approximate the existing floor plans of the building. Many of the scanned historic drawings are included in Appendix B for reference. No field measuring was performed for this report. It is recommended that prior to rehabilitation of the building; the electronic drawings should be updated with field measurements for a better representation of current conditions. The AutoCAD drawings produced for this report are included at the end of the Treatment Recommendations section and in Appendix A.

The Hall of Waters site and building have been photographically documented by each Design Team consultant. All exterior survey work was conducted from grade or from the roof, utilizing a high powered scope and binoculars. No destructive testing was completed, though several recommendations for exploration or testing are suggested in the structural section of this report.

The Design Team carefully reviewed historic photographs and written histories of the Hall of Waters Building at the local Excelsior Springs Museum & Archives. Information regarding previous flooding and usage of the building and site was provided by City staff. A supplementary report was completed for the North Well Pump Room terrace in July 2012 by Structural Engineering Associates, Inc. and titled "Hall of Waters North Terrace Well Pump Room" and is included within Appendix D.

Additional References:

- Original Construction Documents 1934-1938,
 - Keene & Simpson Architects, W.L. Cassell MEP, Erwin Pfuhl, Structural
- *Hall of Waters Pool Renovation Study*, Excelsior Springs, Missouri. Prepared by Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corporation and Water's Edge Aquatic Design, November 9, 2004.
- National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, Hall of Waters, Prepared by Patti Banks, Community Development Director, August 3, 1981.
- Excelsior Springs Museum & Archives website:
<http://exsmo.com/museum/business/hallwaters/hall.html>

Acknowledgements

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Steve Marriott, Finance Department Director
Bill Ahrens, Planning & Zoning Department Director
Larry Murry, Inspections Department Director
Nick Pappas, GIS Coordinator
Chad Birdsong, Public Works Director
Katie Noyd, Parks and Recreation Director

Historic Preservation Commission

Sonya Morgan - Council Liaison
Members: Betty Bissell, Nile Brown, James Bowman, Darryl Coutts, Patrick Grass, Lance Lamb, Earl McElwee

Hall of Waters Assessment Advisory Committee

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Chad Birdsong, Public Works Director
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Missouri State Historic Preservation Office

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
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Consultant Team

A team of consultants, qualified to assess and make recommendations for the rehabilitation of the Hall of Waters was assembled for this specific project.

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