

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property**DRAFT**Historic name: Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 26 Corte Madera AvenueCity or town: Mill Valley State: California County: MarinNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:**Date**_____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:**Date**_____
Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☒
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: city hall

GOVERNMENT: fire station

GOVERNMENT: correctional facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: city hall

GOVERNMENT: fire station

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

Tudor Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: concrete

Walls: stucco; brick; wood: weatherboard; concrete

Roof: terra cotta; stone: slate

Other: metal: copper; terra cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station in downtown Mill Valley was built in 1936 in the Tudor Revival style and designed by architects Walter C. Falch and Donnell E. Jaekle. The building is complex in plan and massing with a two-story front-gabled entry bay, four-story turret, a two-story primary wing, a one-and-a-half-story secondary wing at the southern side, a two-story fire station, and a three-story rear addition. Following the building's completion, it housed the city's fire department, city hall, and the police department, with three small fireproof jail cells at the southern secondary wing.¹ At the time of nomination, the building houses Mill Valley City Hall and a small cohort of firefighters in the Fire Station. While the exterior remains generally unaltered at the primary façade and secondary elevations, the interior was renovated extensively in the 1970s, and an addition was constructed to the rear elevation in 1978. The property

¹ "New Mill Valley City Hall Is Completed," *Petaluma Argus Courier*, July 21, 1936, 8.

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otherwise retains all aspects of historic integrity and is in good condition, with the majority of its character-defining features intact.

Narrative Description

Setting

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is located in downtown Mill Valley within an area that includes residential, commercial, and institutional land uses. The property is located on the east side of Corte Madera Avenue, with a deep setback from the sidewalk. The block is bounded by Corte Madera Avenue to the west, Gardner Street to the north, West Blithedale Avenue to the east, and Throckmorton Avenue to the south, and is bisected by the Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio creek, which runs parallel to Corte Madera and West Blithedale Avenues. The building is surrounded by a surface parking lot on three sides. Adjacent properties to the south and west include commercial buildings and a social hall. It is bordered by residential properties to the north and east.

Description

The Tudor Revival style building is comprised of the L-shaped City Hall at the southern side and an attached Fire Station at the northern side, above a basement level. The portion containing City Hall is cross-gabled with a front-gabled central entry bay and integrated turret, a side-gabled primary wing with a secondary nestled wing to the south, and a front-gabled rear ell addition. The attached Fire Station consists of a one-and-a-half-story portion facing Corte Madera Avenue with a side-gabled roof and central dormer, and a two-story square portion capped by a flat roof at the rear of the building. Both the City Hall and attached Fire Station are constructed of reinforced concrete and are characterized by clinker brick veneer at the primary (west), south, and north elevations, half-timbered stucco cladding, and a rusticated stone base. The rear (east) elevation and part of the north elevation of the Fire Station are clad with painted concrete. Typical windows throughout are multi-lite steel sash casement with punched openings, unless otherwise noted. The roof has a minimal overhang with a boxed eave and copper gutters and is clad with slate tiles. The rear addition, added in 1978, is covered with square terra cotta roof tiles. The gable ends on the original portions are each capped by a wood finial and feature a wide, plain bargeboard with angled ends and a beveled edge. Drop finials are also present at the base of several bargeboards.

A four-story square turret is integrated into the primary façade of the entry bay at the first two stories and is nestled between gables facing east and north at the upper stories. The turret is clad with plain stucco and features clipped edges on all sides with a stepped, sloping cornice and a slightly recessed narrow bay running centrally along the vertical face of each elevation. A narrow, four-lite steel sash window is located at the third story of the primary façade, and rectilinear vents adorn all four sides of the fourth story. The turret is capped by a recessed octagonal bell tower supported by columns clad with stacked bond brick veneer and attached, shaped terra cotta lintels. The roof is clad with copper sheet roofing culminating in a metal weathervane.

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Primary (West) Façade

The primary façade consists of the west- and south-facing walls of the Fire Station, the west-facing walls of the front gabled entry bay with turret, and the primary and secondary wings.

Fire Station

The primary façade of the Fire Station faces Corte Madera Avenue and is accessed from a short, paved driveway. There are three garage doors recessed within individual bays, each capped by a carved wood lintel. The south-facing wall of the Fire Station is one-and-a-half stories and is clad with clinker brick veneer at the first story and stucco half-timbering at the gable end. There are steel sash multi-lite casement windows aligned vertically at each story.

Front Gabled Entry Bay

The primary (west) façade of the building features a two-story front-gabled central entry bay and two overlapping side-gabled wings.² The central entry bay projects slightly from the primary wing but is set back behind the primary façade plane of the adjacent fire station. The entry bay is clad with plain stucco and half-timbering at the upper gable end. The entry bay features a symmetrical fenestration pattern, with a central doorway beneath a copper-clad oriel window and multi-lite steel sash casement windows flanking either side at both levels. The oriel window has three multi-lite steel sash casement windows. The primary entrance to City Hall is accessed from a set of brick steps and a concrete ramp with a metal railing. A pointed Tudor arch with terra cotta quoining surrounds a recessed double doorway with partially glazed wood paneled doors and a multi-lite transom window. Metal lanterns flank the entryway, and an embossed wood sign is placed directly above the door, denoting the entrance to City Hall.

Primary Wing

The primary façade of the south wing of the City Hall portion is clad with clinker brick at the first story and stucco half-timbering at the second story. There is a terra cotta water table above a stone base course veneer. The left (north) side of the façade is divided into four bays, with three symmetrically arranged window bays at both stories. There is a smaller window at the first story to the right (south) side. The symmetrical bays consist of three windows at the first story, each with multi-lite steel sash casement windows, a concrete sill, and soldier course brick lintels. Windows at the second story are gabled wall dormers with multi-lite steel sash casement and simple wood sills and casing.

Secondary Wing

The primary façade of the secondary wing is one story and set back slightly from the façade plane of the primary wing. It features a recessed doorway within a segmental arched opening that is clad with terra cotta quoining. The door is a glazed multi-lite steel French door with a stained-glass transom, and it is accessed from a concrete stoop with brick paving and metal railing. At the right (south) side, there is a smaller multi-lite steel sash casement window with a concrete sill and soldier course brick lintels.

² The property is not oriented along true Cardinal directions; for the sake of clarity, the primary southwest façade will be referred to as “west,” the rear northeast elevation will be referred to as “east,” and so on.

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South Elevation

The south elevation of the building contains the south-facing walls of the primary and secondary wings. Both walls are brick at the first story and feature stucco and half timbering in their gable ends. The gable end of the secondary wing is nested into the gable end of the primary wing, which rises an additional half-story. At the visible portion of the primary wing's south elevation, there is a multi-lite steel sash hopper window and a vent at the gable end.

Openings at the first story of the secondary wing include a multi-lite steel sash casement window at the left (west) side, and a small, metal jalousie window with wood casing at the right (east) side. Both windows have a concrete sill and a soldier course brick lintel.

Rear (East) Elevation

The rear (east) elevation of the City Hall portion of the building consists of the two-story portion of the primary wing and the one-story portion of the secondary wing, along with the two-story rear elevation of the fire station on the right (north) side of the 1978 addition. The rear addition, while part of the rear elevation, is described in a separate section below.

Primary Wing

The rear (east) elevation of the primary wing is divided into four bays with an asymmetrical fenestration pattern. At the first story, there are three multi-lite steel sash casement windows with a simple concrete sill. On the left (south) side of the wing, there is a mezzanine-level multi-lite steel sash casement windows and concrete sill. At the second story, there is a grouping of three symmetrical gabled wall dormers with multi-lite steel sash.

Secondary South Wing

At the rear (east) elevation of the secondary wing, there is a metal slider window and a metal partially glazed door accessed from a wood frame stoop.

Fire Station

The rear (east) elevation of the Fire Station is partially obscured from view by a wood fence that encloses a small patio. There are groupings of multi-lite awning windows at the first and second stories, along with one single-lite casement window.

North Elevation

The Fire Station encompasses the entire north elevation. It is separated into a front-gabled bay at the furthest west side that is integrated into a two-story rectangular portion. The front-gabled bay is clad with clinker brick veneer at the first story and stucco half-timbering within the gable end, with steel sash multi-lite casement windows aligned vertically at each story. The two-story rectangular portion to the east is clad with painted concrete and contains a metal door and multi-lite transom at the first story, and groupings of two and four multi-lite steel sash awning windows at the first and second story.

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Rear Addition (1978)

The rear addition, built in 1978, forms an ell at the rear of the primary wing. The addition is two-and-a-half stories and features a front-gabled roof. The rear (east) elevation is clad with painted concrete and half-timbering at the uppermost part of the gable end. It is divided into three bays, with a recessed entryway at the first story accessed through a glazed metal door covered by a metal awning. At the center of the first story, there is a bay window with single-lite glazing. The second story features two multi-lite steel sash windows, and the attic level features one multi-lite steel sash casement window. At the south elevation of the rear addition, there is a single bay of multi-lite casement windows continuing upwards from the first story, mezzanine level, and second story. The roof level features a reverse dormer and a small, shed dormer with a single-lite window, along with a small chimney. At the north elevation of the rear addition, there are no openings apart from a multi-lite steel sash casement within a gabled dormer. The dormer is connected to a metal fire escape.

Interior

Upon entering the main entrance to the City Hall portion from Corte Madera Avenue, the interior circulation begins with a lobby space that leads eastward into a hallway connecting to the first story of the rear addition. At the south side of the lobby, there is a planning counter and a network of office spaces extending south along the first story of the primary and secondary wings of the building. At the north side of the lobby, a staircase with a mahogany banister leads to the second story, where a small landing opens to the Council Chambers to the south. Council Chambers is a rectilinear room with an exposed truss ceiling and windows along the west and east elevations. The chambers can also be accessed from a hallway at the second story of the 1978 addition.

The Fire Station is not publicly accessible from the interior of the City Hall portion. On the first story of the Fire Station, there is an apparatus room/garage for fire trucks and other equipment. This is accessed through the three garage doors fronting Corte Madera Avenue. The apparatus room/garage features a bronze fire pole that previously connected to a part of the second story, which was converted to office space for City Hall in the 1970s. A break room is located at the rear of the first story, and a dormitory is located at the second story.

The interior of City Hall was remodeled extensively in the 1970s. Council Chambers were remodeled in 1975; the original wood truss ceiling remains extant. The firm Bull, Field, Volkmann & Stockwell made further interior renovations and designed a new rear wing in 1978.³ The rear addition included a new elevator and stairwell, new office space, enlarged bathrooms, and a third-story lunchroom. Original finishes that remain from the 1936 design include the flooring in the lobby and some offices, the staircase and mahogany banister, multi-lite steel windows throughout the 1936 portions, the wood truss ceiling in Council Chambers, and the brass pole in the Fire Station.⁴

³ Carey & Co. Inc., "Mill Valley City Hall Historic Resource Evaluation," June 10, 2016, 8.

⁴ Carey & Co. Inc., "Mill Valley City Hall Historic Resource Evaluation."

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Alterations

The interior of City Hall underwent extensive renovations completed in 1978, including the addition of a three-story rear ell.⁵ In 1976, the police force and fire department relocated the headquarters for each department to a new building, and only a reduced cohort of firefighters remained at the Fire Station.⁶ In 1992, exterior alterations included repainting, removal of stucco, replacement of trim, and reinforcing the brickwork. A seismic and structural upgrade by McNealy Construction Company was done in 1995, and a bathroom renovation was done in 2002. An ADA accessible ramp was installed at the primary entryway in 2018.⁷ At an unknown date, the three holding cells on the first floor were removed and converted to offices. No further alterations were recorded by previous documentation or the permit record. From visual analysis performed during the site visit, it appears that several window and door replacements have been made at the south, rear, and north elevations.

Integrity

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station retains all aspects of integrity. The building's exterior elevations that are visible from the public right-of-way have been minimally altered, and the property retains the majority of its character-defining features. Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station retains integrity of *location*, as it has never been moved. Integrity of *setting* is high, as the surrounding area retains its original commercial and residential nature reflective of Mill Valley's historic downtown. While integrity of design has been impacted by the rear addition, the overall integrity of *design* remains intact as the addition is not visible from the street and is largely compatible with the original 1936 design. The property also retains the majority of its original finishes and exterior cladding materials dating to 1936, the year of construction; thus, the property retains integrity of *workmanship* and *materials*. As the property continues to be owned by the City and used as a city hall and fire station, Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station retains integrity of *feeling* and *association*.

⁵ Carey & Co. Inc., 8.

⁶ Carey & Co. Inc., 8.

⁷ Carey & Co. Inc., "Mill Valley City Hall Historic Resource Evaluation."

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1936-1943

Significant Dates

1936

1943

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Falch, Walter C.

Jaekle, D. E.

Maggiora, Vincent (builder)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government as an important institutional property associated with civic and cultural values emblematic of Mill Valley's Depression-era patterns of development during a period of institutional growth spurred by New Deal-era Federal programs in the wake of the Great Depression and a period of reconstruction following Mill Valley's Great Fire of 1929. The property was constructed with funding provided by the Public Works Administration (PWA) and serves as a symbol of the collective effort and collaboration undertaken by Mill Valley's citizens during a prolonged period of economic hardship. Designed by local architects Walter C. Falch and D. E. Jaekle, the property is also eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent local example of an institutional building in the Tudor Revival style. The building features high-style motifs including cross-gabled, steeply pitched roof forms, a prominent turret, half-timbering, clinker brick veneer, and door openings with Tudor arches. The period of significance is 1936 to 1943, from construction in 1936 through the sunset of the New Deal era federal Public Works Program in 1943, the culmination of a period of federally funded civic development in Mill Valley.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Social History

History of the Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station

Earlier City Halls and Fire Stations

In 1900, Mill Valley was officially incorporated as a town. The location of the Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station building was purchased by the City of Mill Valley in 1902. The redwood grove had been used by workers of the Mountain Railway as a campsite for their temporary living quarters. Prior to the construction of the building in 1936, Mill Valley had three city hall gathering spaces, including Grethel's Hall from 1900 to 1903 and the newly built Masonic Temple on Corte Madera Avenue from 1903 to 1908. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire created the greatest percentage of population increase ever experienced in Mill Valley. Prior to this disaster, the town was home to 1,000 permanent residents and 1,000 seasonal visitors.⁸ Following the earthquake, many San Francisco refugees made Mill Valley their permanent home, and the population reached 2,500 by 1910.⁹

In 1908, the Mill Valley Fire Department built a two-story wood-frame building, which included a stable on the first story and a town hall and firemen's quarters on the second story. By 1929,

⁸ Claudine Chalmers, *Images of America: Early Mill Valley* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 73.

⁹ "Mill Valley, the Wonderland, New buildings show progress of popular Marin resort," *San Francisco Call*. (September 2, 1911), 18.

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Mill Valley's population was 4,000. That July, the town experienced a devastating fire that burned for four days through Blithedale Canyon and into Middle Ridge, destroying over 110 homes and greatly damaging 2,500 acres of land.¹⁰ Three months later, in October 1929, the stock market crashed on Wall Street, and the United States entered the Great Depression. The combined physical damage from the fire and the economic recession caused the city's already dwindling railroad tourism to Mt. Tamalpais to dry up completely, and both economic and population growth slowed in Mill Valley in the 1930s.¹¹

Construction of the Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station

By 1935, the city had outgrown the Town Hall and Fire Station building, and it was torn down to allow for the construction of the City Hall and Fire Station.¹² On November 5, 1935, Mill Valley voters approved a \$30,000 bond measure to fund the construction of a new City Hall. The new City Hall was proposed to include a fire station, police station, and three jail cells—including one for a woman offender and two for men.¹³ To supplement the existing parcel, the city also purchased the adjacent lot, which allowed for more room to build.¹⁴ Architects Walter C. Falch and D.E. Jaekle were chosen to design the building following a design competition.¹⁵ Ground was broken for the construction on December 12, 1935, under the direction of contractor Vincent Maggiora. To supplement funding from the bond measure, the project received a grant totaling forty-five percent of construction costs from the federal New Deal agency, the Public Works Administration (PWA).¹⁶ Construction on the building took seven months and was completed by August 1, 1936, with a dedication ceremony held by the City.¹⁷

The Public Works Administration in Mill Valley

Public Works Administration (PWA) National Context

After the 1929 stock market crash, the United States unemployment rate spiked, the gross domestic product (GDP) plummeted, and some 5,755 banks failed in the span of a few years. After being elected in 1932, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established a series of federal economic stimulus and work programs and new financial reforms and regulations, collectively known as the New Deal. The first programs and reforms included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) under the Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933 and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created through the Federal American Relief Act of 1933. On June 16, 1933, President Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act, Title II, which established the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, later known as the Public

¹⁰ Mill Valley Public Library. "History of Mill Valley," January 23, 2025.

<https://millvalleylibrary.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1250> (accessed July 7, 2025).

¹¹ Page & Turnbull, Inc., *Mill Valley Historic Context Statement* (City of Mill Valley Planning Department, 2021).

¹² Mill Valley Historical Society. "VIGNETTE: Town Hall," 2017 <https://www.mvhistory.org/vignette-town-hall/> (accessed April 17, 2025).

¹³ "Description of New Building," *Mill Valley Record* 38, no. 23 (July 31, 1936): 9–12.

¹⁴ "Dedicate City Hall Saturday," *Mill Valley Record* 38, no. 23 (July 31, 1936): 9–12.

¹⁵ "City Hall Architects Chosen; Falch and Jaekle Appointed," *Mill Valley Record* 37, no. 28 (August 30, 1935): 3; "Dedicate City Hall Saturday."

¹⁶ "City Council Makes Statement: Council Thanks and Commends Many for Cooperation and Help," *Mill Valley Record* 38, no. 23 (July 31, 1936): 9–12.

¹⁷ "City Council Makes Statement: Council Thanks and Commends Many for Cooperation and Help."

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Works Administration (PWA). Over a period of ten years, the PWA pumped billions of dollars into tens of thousands of infrastructure projects nationally. Two years later, Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7034 that created the Works Progress Administration (WPA); the WPA provided jobs to over 8.5 million formerly unemployed Americans over the course of its eight-year existence.¹⁸

The Public Works Administration (PWA) operated nationally from 1929 through 1943, when it was formally ended and federal funding transitioned to wartime planning.¹⁹ The PWA had an overall operating budget of \$3.3 billion and prioritized providing stable employment opportunities to American citizens through construction contracts and use of American materials. The PWA funded the construction of a wide range of public projects during this period, including the construction of new civic buildings, housing, hospitals, dams, warships, and airports, among many others. The most common projects to be funded by the PWA program were the construction of roads and new schools, and funding was allocated to state and federal agencies either as grants or a combination of grants and loans.

New Deal Projects in Mill Valley

In Mill Valley, New Deal era programs, including the PWA, WPA, and CCC, played an important role in helping the Mill Valley community rebuild its existing infrastructure, complete new infrastructure projects, and construct several civic and cultural buildings in the wake of the physical losses of the 1929 Mill Valley fire and the financial turmoil of the Great Depression. Buildings in Mill Valley constructed with New Deal-era funding include City Hall and Fire Station, an expansion of Tamalpais High School, Mead Theater, and Park School (also designed by Walter C. Falch).

As a central anchor of Mill Valley's downtown and hub for local governance built with PWA funding assistance, Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is emblematic of this period of development, and its completion served as a milestone marking a new chapter for the city.²⁰ The events of the fire, in particular, left a traumatic impact on the Mill Valley community, and coupled with the economic downturn caused by the Great Depression, these events spurred a collective impetus to move the city forward.²¹ The spirit of cooperative action shared amongst Mill Valley residents and civic leaders is evidenced by the passing of local bond measures, which paved the way for New Deal supplemental funding.²² Upon completion of the new and modernized fire department, police chief headquarters, and City Hall, the building served as an important landmark of federally funded local infrastructure in Mill Valley, as well as a symbol of civic pride and optimism following a period of both economic hardship and post-fire recovery.

¹⁸ "Part 1: The Stock Market Crash, the Great Depression, and the First New Deal, 1929-1934," The Living New Deal, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://livingnewdeal.org/what-was-the-new-deal/timeline/>.

¹⁹ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Public Works Administration," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, April 22, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Public-Works-Administration>.

²⁰ "Dedicate City Hall Saturday."

²¹ Page & Turnbull, Inc., *Mill Valley Historic Context Statement*, 2021; "Dedicate City Hall Saturday."

²² "Will Dedicated Mill Valley's City Hall," *Petaluma Argus Courier*, July 28, 1936, 8.

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Criterion C: Architecture

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is significant for its Tudor Revival style design by local architects Walter C. Falch and D. E. Jaekle.

Walter C. Falch and D.E. Jaekle, Architects

Walter C. Falch (1883-1969) was a practicing architect in the Bay Area and a longtime resident of Mill Valley. Falch was born in Mill Valley and graduated from the University of California with a degree in engineering.²³ Falch partnered with Andrew H. Knoll from 1912 to 1919. Falch & Knoll was known primarily for their designs of churches and high-end residential commissions in San Francisco, including the 1921 Ninth Church of Christ, Scientist (later Christian Science Church) at 175 Junipero Serra Boulevard. Falch later was a partner at the firm Walton and Walter C. Falch. Falch also designed Park School in Mill Valley at 360 East Blithedale Avenue, built in 1938. His best-known works were done in revival styles including Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and, less commonly, Art Deco. Falch retired in 1956.²⁴

Donnell E. Jaekle (1902-1972) was raised in Napa, California, and moved to San Francisco in 1927. He received his state certification in architecture in 1933 and went on to design residential, commercial, and industrial buildings including residences for the Trace Park subdivision and the Rosemary Garden tract. In 1954, Jaekle partnered with Donald French.²⁵

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is the only documented collaborative work between Falch and Jaekle, and it appears to have been an informal partnership specific to the project.

Tudor Revival Style

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station was built in 1936 in the Tudor Revival style. The Tudor Revival style first appeared in the United States in the 1880s; it did not reach popularity until the twentieth century. The style initially developed as an expression of patriotism, elitism, and practicality.²⁶ It served as a link with the colonial past of the United States and provided Anglo Americans a way to distinguish themselves from the contemporary waves of immigrants. In addition to its association with heritage, the style's costly materials and handcrafted details suggested the prosperity and aristocracy of medieval England.

The Tudor Revival style appeared on a few modest residential examples from 1900 to 1920. The style's distinctive steeply pitched roofs, cross gables, tall narrow windows, large clustered chimney stacks, and decorative half-timbering were not widespread until after World War I.²⁷ At

²³ Carey & Co. Inc., "Mill Valley City Hall Historic Resource Evaluation."

²⁴ "Architecture, Planning, and Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies" (San Francisco Planning, 2023).

²⁵ Carey & Co. Inc., "Mill Valley City Hall Historic Resource Evaluation," 11.

²⁶ Lee Goff, *Tudor Style: Tudor Revival Houses in American from 1890 to the Present* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2002), 10-11.

²⁷ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 455.

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that time, new masonry veneering techniques allowed the brick and stone exteriors of English prototypes to be imitated at a lower cost, which made Tudor Revival style houses available to the mass market and second in popularity only to the Colonial Revival style in the growing middle-class suburbs.²⁸ The 1920s were the heyday of the Tudor Revival style, as large-scale developers looked to provide the impression of permanence and prosperity. Residential use of the style is most common; however, examples of commercial and institutional design can be found in many cities and small towns throughout Northern California.

In downtown Mill Valley, the Tudor Revival style was used for several significant commercial and institutional buildings. The Tudor Revival style Bennetts Building (since altered) was home to Mill Valley's first bank until 1911, and the *Mill Valley Record* occupied a Tudor Revival style building at 17 Madrona Street from 1906 to 1940.²⁹ By the time the Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station was built, the Tudor Revival style was already an established characteristic downtown.

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is a particularly excellent institutional building designed of the Tudor Revival style, communicated through its cross-gabled massing with steeply pitched gables and dormer windows; turret with copper roof and brick columns; original cladding including clinker brick veneer, half-timbering, rusticated base, terra cotta water table, stucco, and painted concrete; recessed entryways at the primary façade with Tudor arch openings and terra cotta surrounds with quoining; multi-lite steel-sash windows; copper-clad oriel window; wall dormers; finials and drop finials at the gable ends and some bargeboard ends; angled wood bargeboard with beveled edges at gable ends; original light fixtures, including metal lanterns at the primary façade; and lintels above each garage opening.

Conclusion

Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is one of several institutional buildings constructed in Mill Valley with the aid of New Deal Federal funding and is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for this association. It has served as a civic and cultural anchor to the city since its construction. Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its Tudor Revival style design by local architects Walter C. Falch and Donnell E. Jackle. The building displays excellent local craftsmanship, materiality, and form reflective of the Tudor Revival style, as applied to an early twentieth-century institutional building.

²⁸ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*.

²⁹ Page & Turnbull, Inc., *Mill Valley Historic Context Statement*, (adopted 2021), 87-88.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: City of Mill Valley, County of Marin Assessor-Recorder-County Clerk, Mill Valley Public Library, Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.907302

Longitude: -122.547964

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary corresponds to the legal boundary with the County of Marin Assessor-Recorder-County Clerk, parcel number 028-014-16.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary corresponds to the legal boundary of the parcel on which the building has been located since its construction in 1936.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Samantha Purnell, Architectural Historian/Cultural Resources Planner

organization: Page & Turnbull, Inc.

street & number: 170 Maiden Lane, 5th Floor

city or town: San Francisco state: CA zip code: 94108

e-mail: purnell@page-turnbull.com

telephone: (415) 593-3223

date: May 2025; Revised July 2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to

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the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station
City or Vicinity: Mill Valley
County: Marin
State: California
Photographer: Samantha Purnell, Page & Turnbull
Date Photographed: April 9, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 21 Oblique view of primary (west) façades of Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station, looking east from Corte Madera Avenue
- 2 of 21 Oblique view of primary (west) façade of Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station, looking north from Corte Madera Avenue
- 3 of 21 Primary (west) façade, looking northeast from Corte Madera Avenue
- 4 of 21 Detail view of turret, looking northeast
- 5 of 21 Primary (west) façade of Fire Station, looking northeast
- 6 of 21 Detail view of dormer window at primary (west) façade of Fire Station, looking northeast
- 7 of 21 Detail view of main entryway on primary (west) façade, looking northeast
- 8 of 21 South elevation of Fire Station, looking northwest
- 9 of 21 Detail view of primary wing (west) façade, looking northeast
- 10 of 21 Detail view of entryway on secondary wing of primary (west) façade, looking northeast
- 11 of 21 Context view of primary (west) façade and south elevations of primary and secondary wings, looking north
- 12 of 21 Context view of south elevation and rear (east) elevation of southern wing and rear addition, looking west

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- 13 of 21 Rear (east) elevation of south wing and rear addition, looking southwest
- 14 of 21 Oblique view of rear (east) elevation of Fire Station, looking south
- 15 of 21 North elevation of Fire Station, looking southeast
- 16 of 21 Fire Station garage, with the bronze fire pole visible in the foreground at left, looking south
- 17 of 21 City Hall lobby, looking towards rear of building
- 18 of 21 Main staircase within City Hall lobby
- 19 of 21 Oblique view of service counter, interior lobby, looking south towards main entrance
- 20 of 21 Second-story council chambers, looking south towards front of chambers
- 21 of 21 Second-story council chambers, looking northwest towards rear of chambers

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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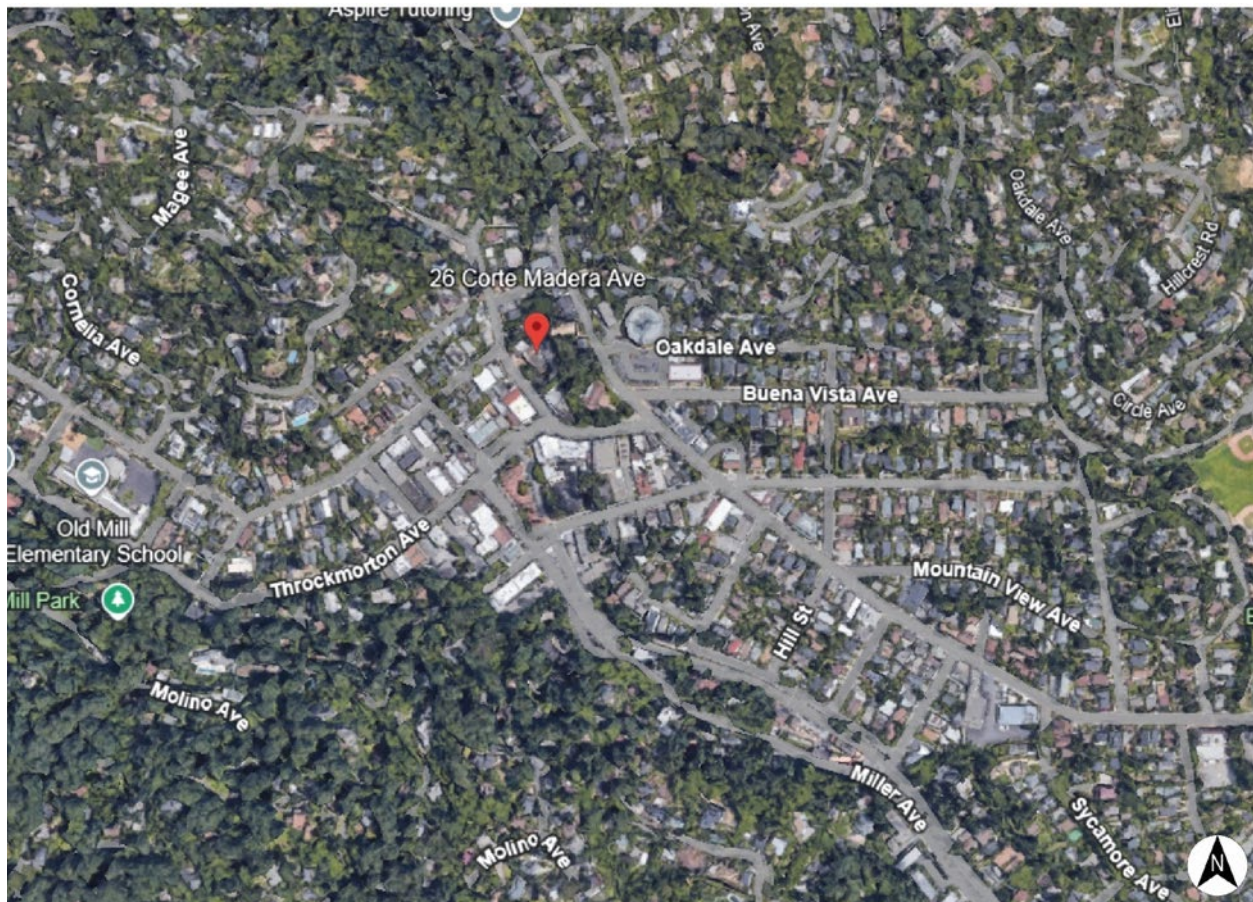
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Location Map

Latitude: 37.907302

Longitude: -122.54764

Source: Google Earth, 2019; edited by Page & Turnbull, 2025



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Vicinity Map

Source: Google Earth, 2020; edited by Page & Turnbull, 2025

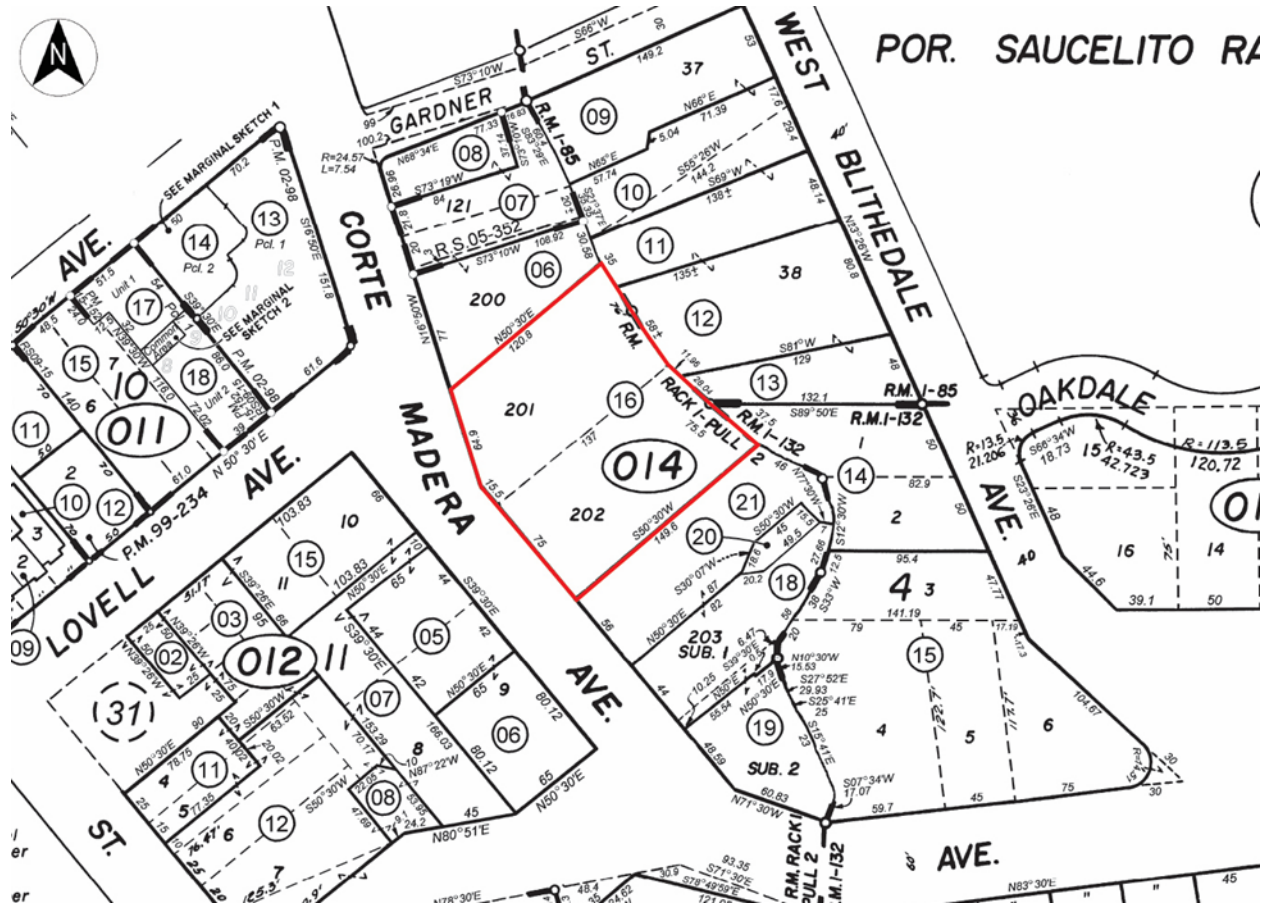


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Property Boundary Map

Source: Marin County Assessor Property Map, edited by Page & Turnbull, 2025



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Photo Key—Exterior

Created by Page & Turnbull, 2025; base image Google Earth 2025

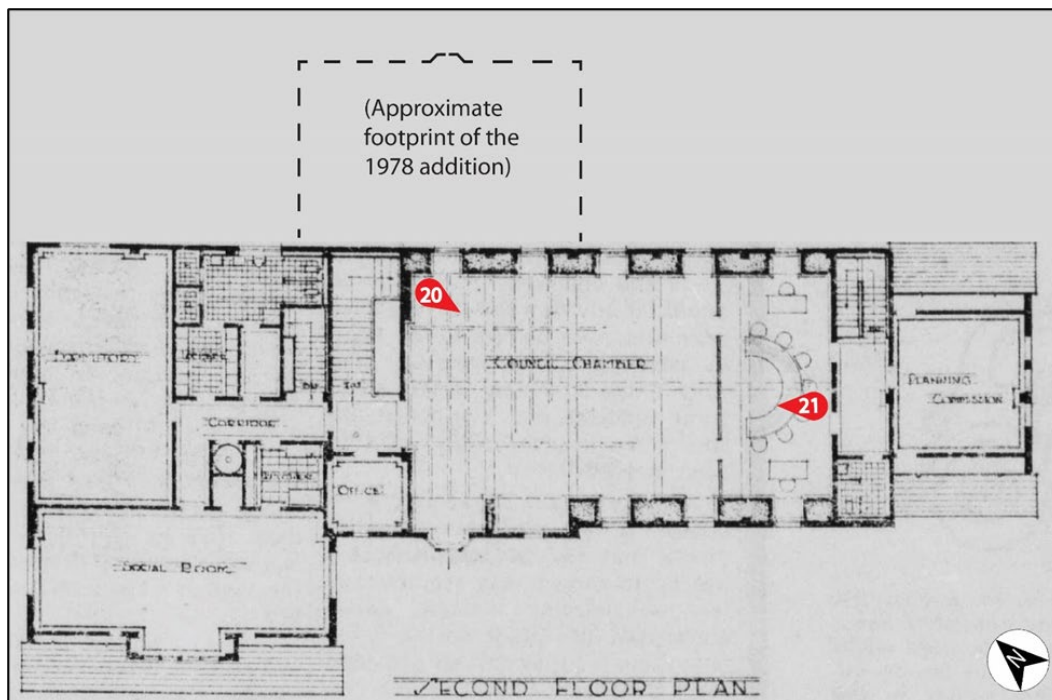
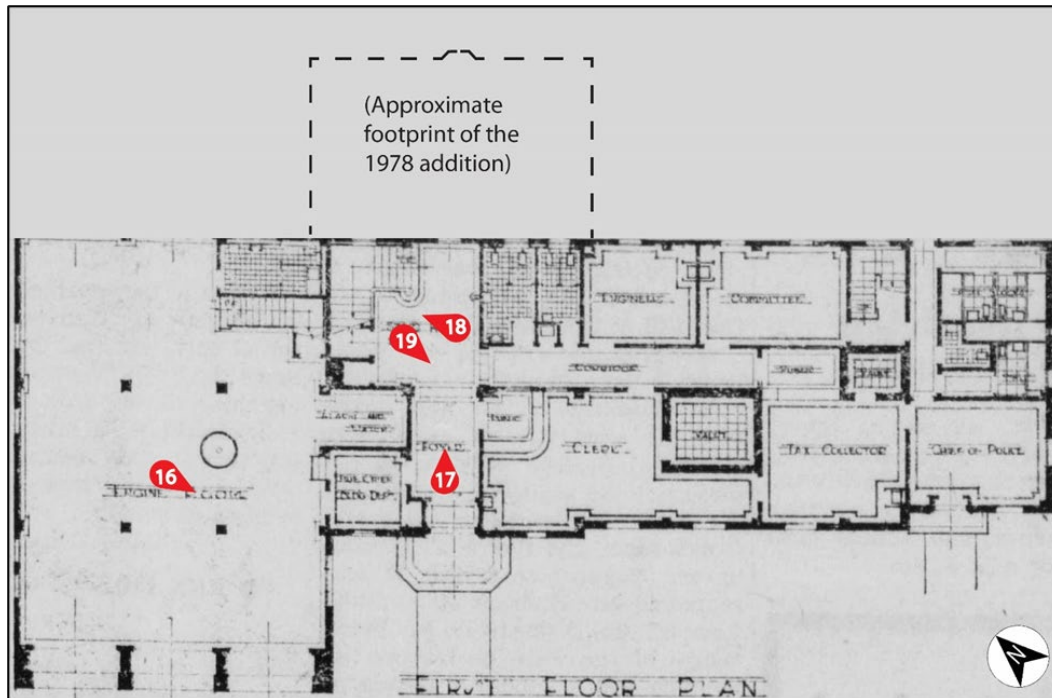


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Photo Keys—Interior

Base image source: “First and Second Floor Plans of Proposed City Hall,” *Mill Valley Record* 37, no. 36 (October 25, 1935): 5. California Digital Newspaper Collection



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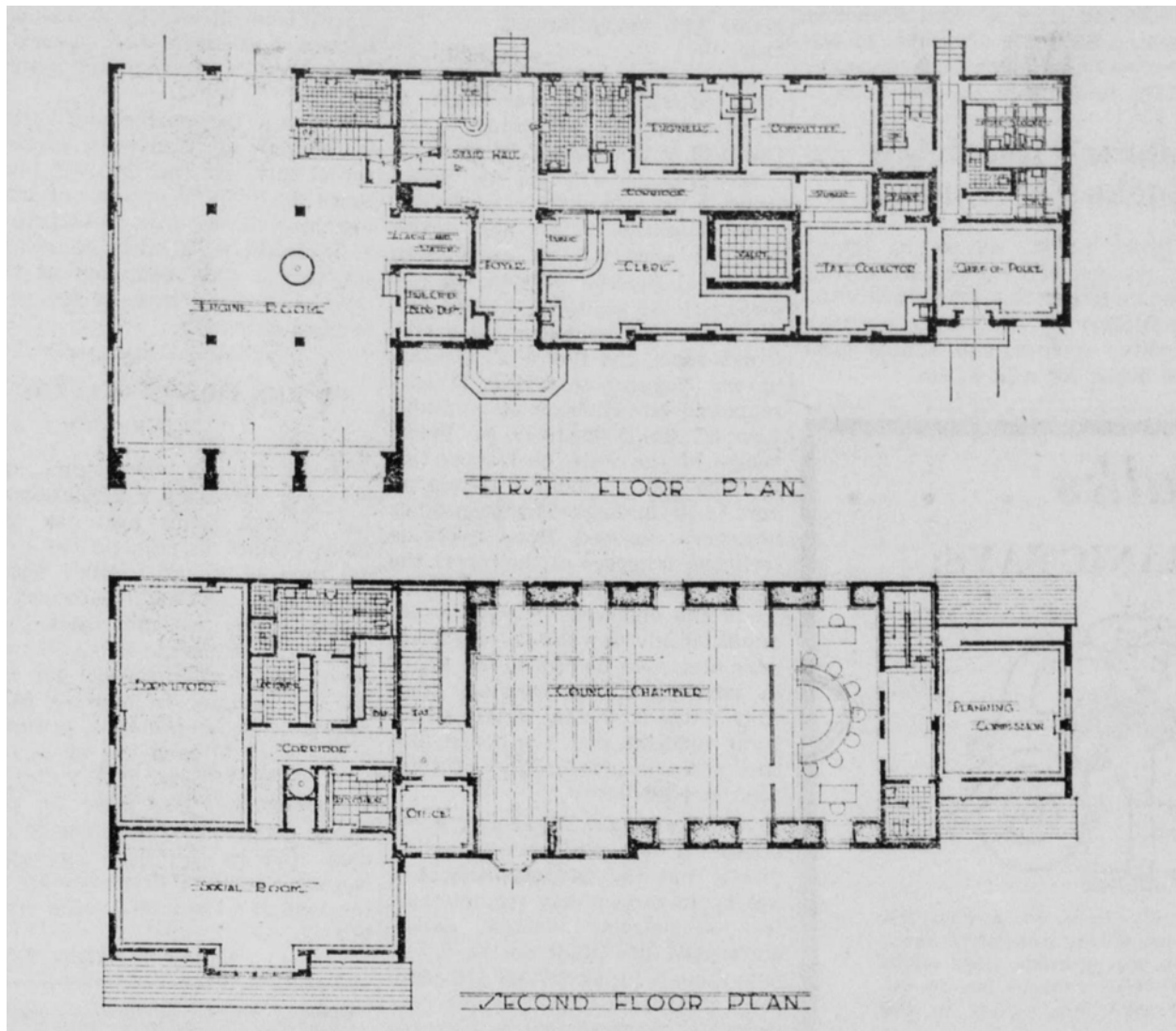
Figure 1 Proposed rendering of future City Hall and Fire Station by D.E. Jaekle and Walter C. Falch, architects, October 1935; Courtesy Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Public Library



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Figure 2 Proposed floorplan of future City Hall and Fire Station by D.E. Jaekle and Walter C. Falch, architects, October 1935; Courtesy Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Public Library



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Figure 3 Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station, 1936, shortly after completion; Courtesy
Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Public Library



Figure 4 Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station with equipment, 1936, shortly after
completion; Courtesy Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Public Library



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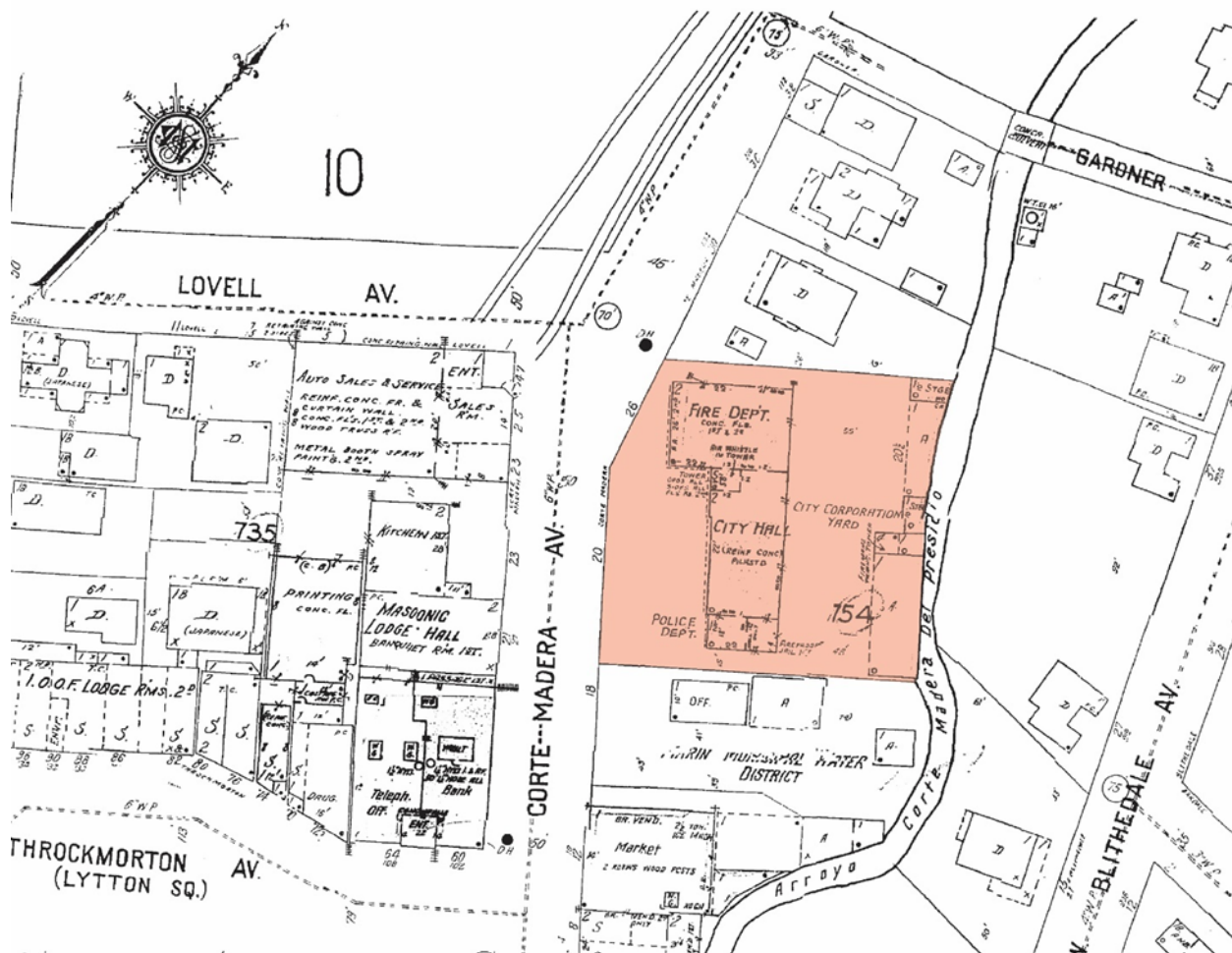
Figure 5 Dedication ceremony, 1936; Courtesy Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Public Library



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Figure 6 Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map, 1948, Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station shaded in red; Source: Library of Congress, edited by Page & Turnbull.



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Figure 7 Council Chambers, Source: ©1980 Photo by Mush Emmons; Courtesy Lucretia Little History Room, Mill Valley Public Library



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Photo 1 Oblique view of primary (west) façades of Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station, looking east from Corte Madera Avenue



Photo 2 Oblique view of primary (west) façades of Mill Valley City Hall and Fire Station, looking north from Corte Madera Avenue



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Photo 3 Primary (west) façade, looking northeast from Corte Madera Avenue



Photo 4 Detail view of turret, looking northeast



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Photo 5 Primary (west) façade of Fire Station, looking northeast



Photo 6 Detail view of dormer window at primary (west) façade of Fire Station, looking northeast



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Photo 7 Detail view of main entryway on primary (west) façade, looking northeast



Photo 8 South elevation of Fire Station, looking northwest



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Photo 9 Detail view of primary wing of (west) façade, looking northeast



Photo 10 Detail view of entryway on secondary wing of primary (west) façade, looking northeast



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Photo 11 Context view of primary (west) façade and south elevations of primary and secondary wings, looking north



Photo 12 Context view of south elevation and rear (east) elevation of southern wing and rear addition, looking west



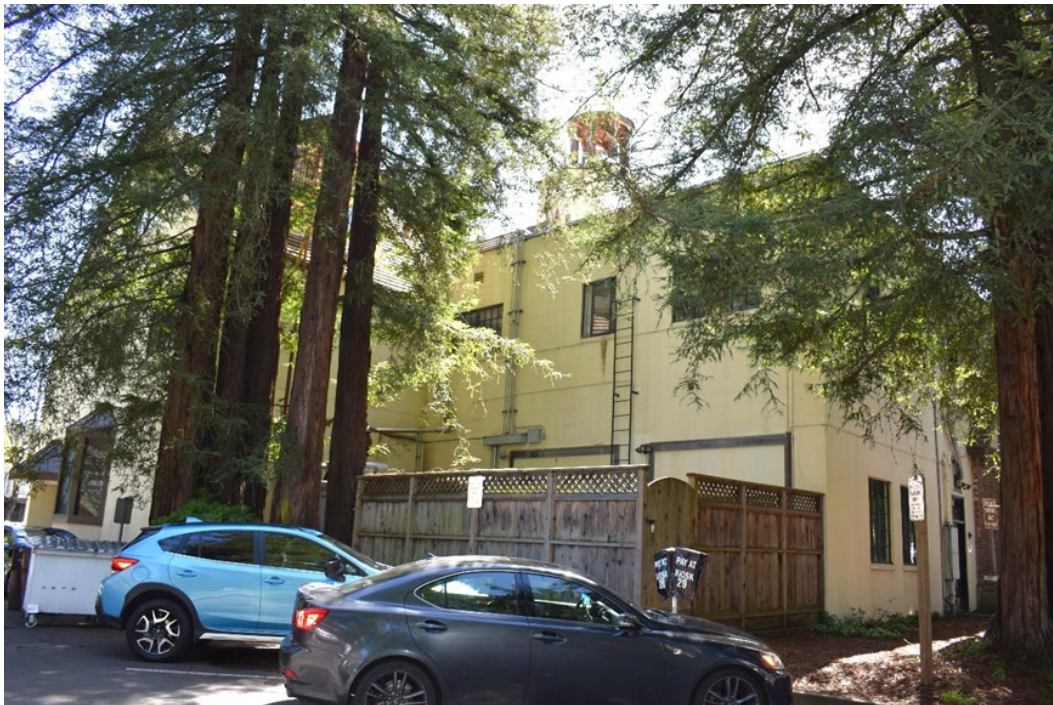
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Photo 13 Rear (east) elevation of south wing and rear addition, looking southwest



Photo 14 Oblique view of rear (east) elevation of Fire Station, looking south



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Photo 15 North elevation of Fire Station, looking southeast



Photo 16 Fire Station garage, with the bronze fire pole visible in the foreground at left, looking south



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Photo 17 City Hall lobby, looking towards rear of building

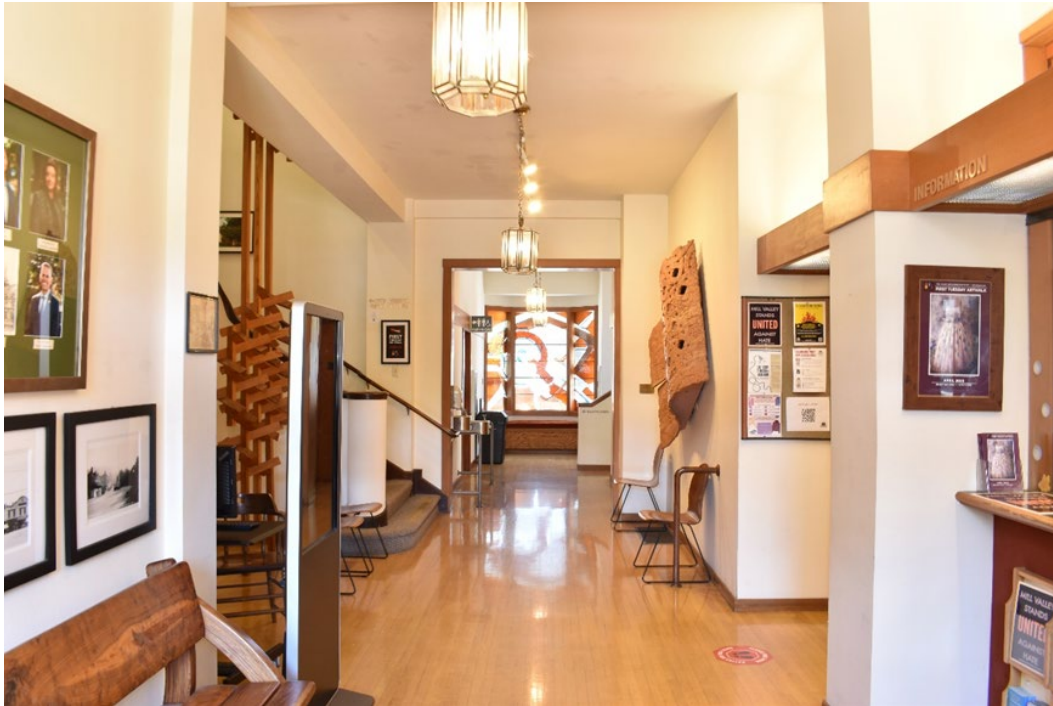
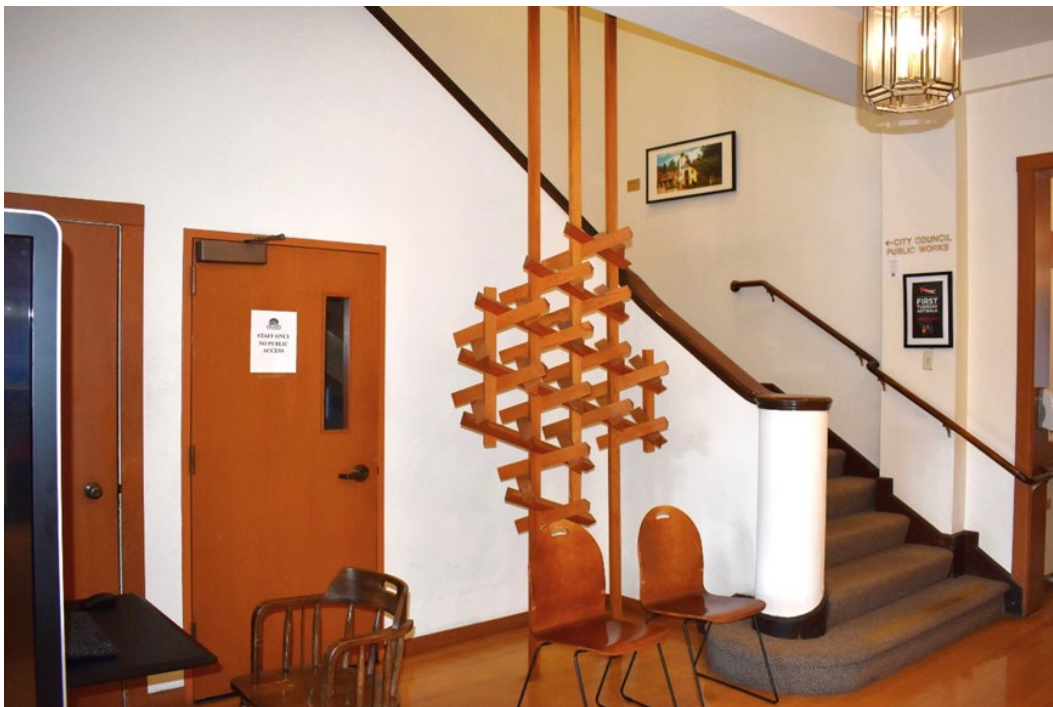


Photo 18 Main staircase within City Hall lobby



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Photo 19 Oblique view of service counter, interior lobby, looking south towards main entrance



Photo 20 Second-story council chambers, looking south towards front of chambers



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Photo 21 Second-story council chambers, looking northwest towards rear of chambers

