

TOWN OF WATERTOWN MASSACHUSETTS



THE OFFICE OF R. CLIPSTON STURGIS
ARCHITECT

PROPOSED NEW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Report of Committee on Administration Building

As Instructed by Vote of Town Meeting Held on October 22, 1930,
Under Article 5, as follows:—

“Voted: That the Committee on Administration Building be instructed to investigate the advisability of using the present Town Hall site for a new administration building, the best kind of building to be erected thereon, and the probable cost of such building including any expenses incidental to such use of this site, and report to the next Town Meeting thereon with a similar report as to any other site or sites the Committee desires to present, and that any expense incurred shall be charged to the appropriation for plans for an administration building ”

To the Town of Watertown:—

Pursuant to vote of the Town, October 22, 1930, your Committee on Administration Building has studied the advisability of using the present Town Hall site and also the easterly portion of Saltonstall Park for a new Administration Building. From the Committee's previous investigations we believe the cost of any other suitable site prohibitive.

For a thorough consideration of these two sites, we employed the Office of R. Clipston Sturgis to prepare sketches and preliminary plans for such buildings as they deem best for each of these locations.

Their report indicates a building of sufficient size to cover our needs for some time to come could be built upon the present Town Hall site, but we wish to point out certain features restricting the most satisfactory use of this site for a large building of municipal type.

In order to provide adequate space and to harmonize with present or future nearby buildings in an appropriate manner, the building would be three stories high and could only be set back a very short distance from the easterly lot line. There would be a continuing hazard as to future development on the building's east side which might result in shutting off daylight from the lower portion of that side of the building.

We believe further if this site be used Church Street should be widened to relieve present and increasing traffic congestion. For this purpose the line of the new building should be ten or twelve feet from the present easterly street line of Church Street. The Town Engineer estimates that the cost of such widening would be about Twenty-five hundred (\$2,500) dollars. A corresponding widening on the opposite side of Church Street with necessary land taking would probably involve an expense of from Fifteen thousand (\$15,000) to Twenty-five thousand (\$25,000) dollars.

From the architect's studies it also appears an adequate building could be erected on the easterly portion of Saltonstall Park, leave ample room in the Park for playground accommodations and at the same time allow a sufficient set back both from Main Street and Thaxter Street (the dead-end street or driveway immediately west of the Public Library) to give the proposed building an attractive setting. The contour of the land makes possible a building two stories high in front and three in the rear.

The estimated cost of suitable buildings with approximately equal floor area would be about Two hundred thousand (\$200,000) dollars on either of these sites.

Comparing the two locations, it seems to us a building on the easterly end of Saltonstall Park would have the following advantages:—

1. Excellent light on all sides of the building in future as well as at present.
2. Less noise from street traffic.
3. More dignified appearance and greater publicity value.
4. Convenience — every office at present contemplated could be reached from entrance floor without going up more than one flight of stairs.
5. Economy — saving the sale price of the whole or part of the present site and the future taxes to be derived therefrom; also saving the cost of temporary quarters during construction.

6. More convenient and more adequate parking facilities.
7. Control by the Town of development of adjacent property.

On the other hand, the present Town Hall site appears to have only one definite advantage and another possible one:—

1. Proximity to Watertown Square.
2. No change of location.

In view of the very generally recognized need of many years' standing for a new Administration Building (as set forth in our previous report), the very favorable building costs at this particular time, and the employment it would provide, your Committee recommends the construction of the proposed Administration Building on the easterly end of Saltonstall Park as soon as all necessary formalities can be completed. We believe with national and state authorities that immediate activity on necessary improvements by governmental bodies will help restore confidence in the building industry, one on which all communities depend to a substantial extent for revenue.

To this end we unanimously recommend the Town now:—

1. Instruct the Selectmen to petition the legislature for permission to use Saltonstall Park for this purpose.
2. Appropriate and raise by borrowing the sum of Two hundred and five thousand (\$205,000) dollars to cover the cost of the erection of the building.
3. Authorize the Selectmen to sell the whole or any part of the present Town Hall site at not less than Six (\$6.00) dollars per square foot, including the buildings thereon.

Respectfully submitted,

EDWARD P. FURBER
W. W. NORCROSS, JR.
WILLIAM H. ILIFFE
ARTURO DE FILIPPO
JOHN F. TUPTS
DANIEL J. SULLIVAN
WM. P. MCGUIRE

Committee on Administration Building.

December 15, 1930.