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City of Plainfield

Press Release

Fresh Perspective for City Hall

Plainfield City Hall to get makeover

Plainfield, NJ June 10th, 2008:

Keeping in step to reflect its architectural heritage while making some necessary repairs, Plainfield is embarking on a restoration project of its City Hall. This neoclassical building, built with Greek, Roman and Renaissance principles will have repairs made while preserving its architectural heritage and character.

Plainfield's City Hall, along with many other buildings throughout the community, is a symbol of the city's rich history which dates back to 1684 when the Quakers began to settle in the Queen City. Incorporated as a City in 1869, Plainfield has several buildings still standing that were built in the 18th century. Structures such as the Friends' Meetinghouse, the Martine House and the Nathaniel Drake House which is known as George Washington's headquarters, were all built before 1788. Over the years many structures of historical significance have been restored to preserve original aesthetics while at the same time repairing pieces which need to be fixed.

As you look around Plainfield you will find several Historic Districts throughout the City which consist of homes built in the 1800's, these homes reflect an early example of suburban life in Plainfield. Plainfield's City Hall, was built in the early 1900's during the American Renaissance. This municipal building was

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constructed in a New-Georgian style indicative of the times where the United States was building many neo-classical style buildings during the “City Beautiful” time period which took place from 1876-1917.

Because the City Hall building is such an important part of Plainfield history, it was with careful consideration, that the City has obtained the services of the architectural firm of Page Ayres Cowley of New York for the project. In choosing this firm, the City wanted to focus on maintaining the character and appearance of the structure while not compromising its design as a result of the restoration. This architectural firm specializes in the design, adaptive re-use and restoration of historic buildings. Because much of the firm’s work involves rehabilitation and preservation of cultural heritage structures they have developed a special expertise in architectural conservation both on the interior of landmark structures as well as on the outside. Recognized by private and public preservation agencies, Page Ayres Cowley is emerging as a leader among New York City firms who specialize in architectural preservation.

This project would never have been realized were it not for the determination of the City's administration to restore what is for Plainfield an emblem of their democracy and serves as a symbol for their municipal seal. Mayor Robinson-Briggs indicated that this was an important restoration project for Plainfield which is renowned for its beautifully preserved historic districts. “This type of architecture has disappeared in many areas of our country, it gives one a real sense of history and pride when you enter City Hall, we want to preserve that so our children and their children can also see and feel a sense of pride in their Plainfield heritage.”

The restoration project is slated to begin at City Hall in June of 2008. Seventy five percent of the job is expected to be complete by the end of 2008 and the remaining twenty five percent will be completed in 2009. None of the services offered by departments housed at City Hall will be disrupted during the restoration period.