

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Friday, March 27, 2026**

I. Special Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Graham and Councilors Sherrell, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen.

Via Zoom: Dahle.

Staff Present:

Jordan Rooklyn	Deputy City Manager
Carmel Zahran	Assistant City Attorney
Cobi Glick	Administrative Analyst

Graham called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

a. Land Acknowledgement**

Graham read the land acknowledgement.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Graham led the pledge of allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

IV. NEW BUSINESS

a. *Update on City Hall Repair Requirements*

Rooklyn presented an update on repair recommendations for City Hall. A summary was provided (see agenda packet) that organized recommended repairs into: immediate concerns, primary concerns (life safety but not precluding occupancy), and secondary concerns (non-life-safety items).

Immediate concerns included: a cracked roof rafter identified in a recent inspection, significant roof leaks, a non-functioning water heater, exposed electrical wiring, HVAC replacement, and pest control. Cost estimates derived from the inspection reports and adjusted for inflation were included as report-based estimates rather than actual contractor bids.

Councilors discussed whether some repairs, such as electrical concerns, could be handled in-house by City staff and sought clarification around repairs classified as life cycle issues. Completion of the rafter repair was expected for some time in May after bids close on April 6, while other safety issues still need to be addressed before full reoccupation. Rooklyn explained the order from the Fire Marshall may be lifted after the rafter repair, but high-wind or snow events were identified as ongoing concerns in the structural engineer report. Repair of the rafter would likely be covered by the facilities fund, and a suggestion was made to prioritize the City Manager's report in council meetings to enhance operational communication.

Public Comment Open

Several community members spoke on the history and importance of City Hall, highlighting its historic and symbolic significance. Concerns were expressed about past attempts to renovate the building and the need for the Council to honor it as an integral part of Ashland's heritage. Suggestions included

utilizing vacant downtown spaces temporarily, and there was a strong sentiment that City Hall should remain downtown and continue to house government services.

Public Comment Closed

b. Discussion on Use of Community Center

Rooklyn provided context: the Ashland Community Center had been closed since 2019 and recently underwent substantial renovation. Following the February 17, 2026 discovery of a cracked rafter at City Hall, the Community Center was identified as the most suitable location to co-locate displaced staff. Three legal department staff relocated to the finance building near the YMCA, and the remaining administrative staff were moved into the community center around mid-March.

Councilors discussed historic and recent Council policy decisions regarding the Community Center, including the decision to close it due to safety concerns seven years prior, to invest over \$2 million in renovations, rejecting demolition recommendations, initiating community input through a Management Advisory Committee, lowering rental fees to enhance accessibility, and the decision to reopen. Repurposing the building for administrative use was discussed as a Council policy matter, and it was suggested that the Council clarify its intended use. Broader questions were raised about the city's long-term facility strategy, revenue challenges, and community engagement in discussions to inform decisions was emphasized.

It was noted that the City Manager had the responsibility and operational authority at the time of her decision to relocate, and that there was not a policy in place that restricted administrative use of the Community Center. Remote work or partnerships with local institutions for office space were suggested as interim solutions, ongoing capital maintenance challenges were discussed, and support was expressed for clear policy guidance on Community Center use to align with community priorities.

Public Comment Open

Six members of the public addressed the Council. Some supported the decision as a necessary safety measure but emphasized the need for a long-term solution for City Hall and to eventually reopen the Community Center for public use. Remote work for administrative staff was suggested and concerns were expressed that the relocation felt like a "takeover," with inadequate communication and signage that did not reflect Ashland's values. The Council was urged to prioritize public access due to its significance in the community, and it was suggested that rental revenue from public use of the facility would help offset the costs of obtaining alternative office space for administrative staff.

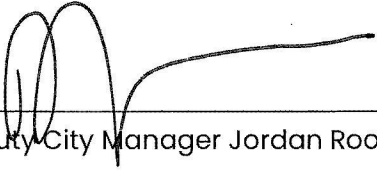
Public Comment Closed

Bloom moved that the Ashland City Council declare that the Ashland Community Center and Pioneer Hall are to be reserved for public, civic, recreational, cultural, meeting, and other community-serving uses, and shall not be used for general administrative office occupancy by city staff except in the event of a declared emergency; and further moved that staff return to Council with a resolution reflecting this policy by the May 5 business meeting. The motion was seconded by DuQuenne.

Roll Call Vote: Kaplan, DuQuenne, Bloom, Dahle, Sherrell — Yes; Hansen — No. Motion passed.

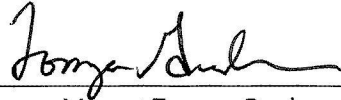
V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of two large loops followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Deputy City Manager Jordan Rooklyn



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tonya Graham' in a cursive style.

Mayor Tonya Graham



SPEAKER REQUEST FORM

Submit this form to the meeting Secretary
prior to the discussion item.

- 1) You will be called forward when it is your turn to speak
- 2) State your name and speak clearly into the microphone
- 3) Limit your comments to the time allotted
- 4) Provide any written materials to the meeting Secretary
- 5) Speakers are solely responsible for the content of their statement

Date:

3/27/26

Name: (Please Print)

Bryan Holley

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

1

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Please respect the order of proceedings and strictly follow the directions of the presiding officer. Behavior or actions which are loud or disruptive are disrespectful and offenders will be requested to leave.

Disclaimer: By submitting this request to address the Public Body, I agree that I will refrain from the use of any obscene, vulgar, or profane language. I understand that if I do not follow procedure my speaking time may be terminated, and I may be requested to sit down or leave the building.



Better Together

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Date: 3/27/26

Name: (Please Print)
DRENT THOMPSON

Ashland Resident:
 YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:
CITY HALL'S LOCATION

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

3/27/26

Name: (Please Print)

GAIL PATTON

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

CITY HALL

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date: 9/27/2026

Name: (Please Print) Linda Adams

Ashland Resident: YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number: IV Ab Cityhall -> confy. center

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

03/27/26

Name: (Please Print)

CORI FRANK

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

6. Discussion of Community Centers

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Better Together

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Date:

3-27-26

Name: (Please Print)

Julie Atkins

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Com Center

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

3/27/20

Name: (Please Print)

GAIL PATTON

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

COMMUNITY CENTER

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

3/27/26

Name: (Please Print)

BRENT THOMPSON

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

COMMUNITY CENTER

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

3/27/26

Name: (Please Print)

SHARON BRYSON

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Community Center

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

March 27, 2026

Name: (Please Print)

Pat Turner

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Community Center

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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22



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Date:

1 3-27-26

Name: (Please Print)

Nancy Boyer

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Community Center

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Date:

3/27/20

Name: (Please Print)

RICK VEZIE

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

CITY HALL

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Report to the Ad Hoc City Hall Space Needs Study Committee

March 16, 1994

Subject: Existing City Hall building

By: Rick & Gayle Vezie
RICHARD VEZIE & ASSOCIATES
94 Third Street, Ashland 488-1453

THE FOUR PRIMARY ISSUES:

1. Space requirements for City Offices currently housed in or near City Hall.
2. Addressing ADA and UBC chapter 31 accessibility requirements.
3. Seismic concerns.
4. The money.

SPACE:

The Committee seems to agree that the City Departments at City Hall need additional space. Most of us agree that it makes sense for Public Works to move out to the East Main location. This however, doesn't free up much space and we still have Engineering across the street paying \$1500 a month for a less than ideal location. In the mean time, the Department of Community Development (DCD) is crammed in like sardines at City Hall. The rest of the people in the building seem to have at least a tolerable situation, as far as space is concerned. Clearly, DCD has it the worst.

How a space is utilized can be every bit as important as how much there is of it. As with the saying "a penny saved is a penny earned", using space efficiently is like acquiring additional space for free.

The existing Main and Second Floors of City Hall don't allow for the efficient use of space because they are so badly broken up. Essentially, the building is divided into two long tubes on each floor because of the two story brick wall that runs the length of the building. The tubes are further divided by various offices and compartments that were apparently fit into or added to the existing structure over time in an effort to deal with changes in use or other needs as they arose (see Fig. 1).

ACCESSIBILITY:

According to the ADA report by Darrel Ackerman, the City has a measure of "exposure" under the ADA. The final paragraph of Sheet 011 of his Facility Evaluation reads:

NOTE: This second floor houses the primary activities of the city government and is not accessible. This is discrimination under ADA Title II and is therefore **your highest exposure risk of litigation under the ADA**. These executive offices must be located in an accessible

location.

No matter what we do to the City Hall building, we will incur some cost to make the building accessible. The question is, how much? This will cause us to address some interesting questions. Do we want to do just enough to pass the law? Do we want to make the building truly accessible? Do we want to arrive at some area in between? The only clear way around the Accessibility issue is to sell the building. Maybe we could get around the Helman Agreement with some legal slight of hand, but there is also the moral issue involved of honoring the intent of an agreement.

If we decide to hold to our agreement, keep the building, and start upgrading at some level to comply with the ADA, the trail leads to the next issue, where not to be when the big one hits.

SEISMIC CONCERNS:

Unreinforced masonry buildings are a seismic nightmare. We have additional problems with the City Hall because of the additions. While some upgrading took place during the last remodel, it didn't involve all of the building. Major areas are still just old non-seismically retrofitted unreinforced masonry. A lot of it up pretty high. If you played with blocks as a child, you know what that means. This brings to the table additional questions. What should we do to try to protect the people who work in the building? What are the "reasonable" expenditures? This leads to the next issue, there's never enough money.

THE MONEY:

Now that we're looking at spending some big money, we need to address both the cost of our decisions, and what we might expect to get for our investments.

THE BEST ANSWERS:

If only we could open up the spaces in the building to allow flexibility in their uses. If there was some way to remove a bunch of the interior walls, especially the big brick wall (see Fig. 2).

The City Administrator has said on several occasions "the existing City Hall building can't support a third floor". This may be true. This led to the thinking that to try to impose a third floor on the building is all wrong. A better and simpler solution is to construct a third floor that would be mostly structurally independent of the existing building, but, along with it's support structure, would actually help support and reinforce the existing building's two floors and walls (see Fig. 3, Fig. 4, and Fig. 5). This could be done by using a system of steel columns and beams. A large beam would replace the interior two story brick wall. We would also want to get rid of the two vaults which occupy and waste valuable space in the center of the building. This work could be done with much of the existing floors in place. We would have to install shear walls between some of the columns for bracing, but we would have some flexibility in their placement. Some portions of the main floor would have to be opened

up to pour footings.

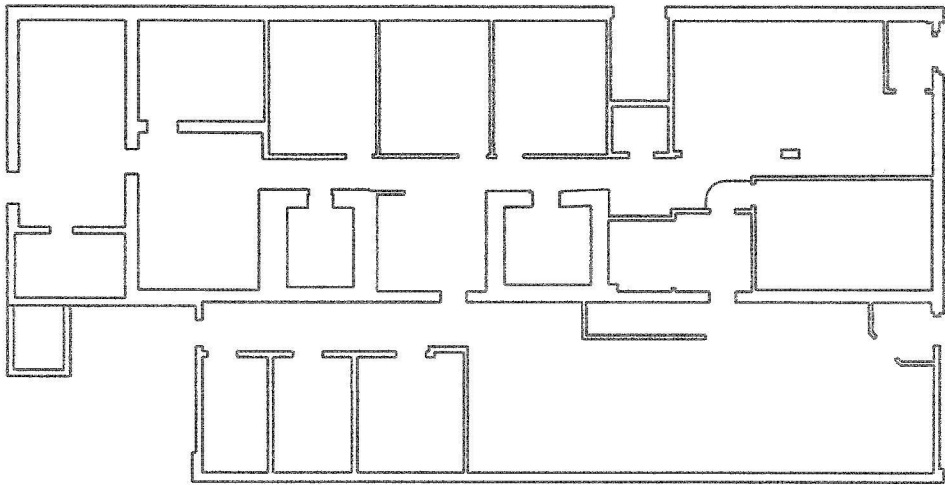
The best configuration for a third floor is to incorporate it into the roof itself as suggested by Brent Thompson, Marilyn Briggs, and others (see Fig. 5). This also provides a third floor that causes minimal visual impact on the character of the building (see Fig. 6 and Fig. 7). The elevator and stairs to the third floor pose no additional space penalty on the lower two floors as they are needed for the second floor anyway. The third floor should be of light weight construction (see Fig. 5). The roof trusses would help stabilize the existing exterior walls without imposing any additional loading on them (as with the third floor cantilevered floor trusses). We also pick up over 500 sq. ft. of storage space on the third floor at very little additional cost. We should save what we can of the last remodel on the Finance side.

What will it all cost? unfortunately, the only way to find out is to have working plans drawn up and put it out to bid. Keep in mind that we save the \$1500 a month that Engineering spends on rent, and we would have expenditures for seismic and ADA upgrades to the building anyway (before we would pick up an inch of extra space). This plan provides the space the city needs right in the bulls eye of the most valuable space we own and should solve all of the issues. Of course additional time would be needed to work out the specific Space Plans and professional engineering would be required to work out the specific design.

Maybe the best news is that this project could provide us with an unique opportunity. If we were able to turn this into a "CAMPAIGN TO SAVE CITY HALL", we might be able to pull in contributions from citizens and corporations. It could provide an opportunity for our local government and it's citizens to work together. The real issue here has to do with ownership. I think Ron Roth said it best ("who is the City of Ashland?"). If we provide a chance for people to help City Hall, maybe they'll think of it as theirs.

Existing Main Floor	4272 sq. ft.	
Existing Second Floor	3169 sq. ft.	
Total Existing		7441 sq. ft.
Proposed Second Floor Addition	863 sq. ft.	
Proposed Third Floor Addition	2287 sq. ft.	
Total Additions		3150 sq. ft.
<u>Total Floor Area</u>		<u>10591 sq. ft.</u>
Additional Internal Storage	529 sq. ft.	

EXISTING MAIN FLOOR



EXISTING SECOND FLOOR

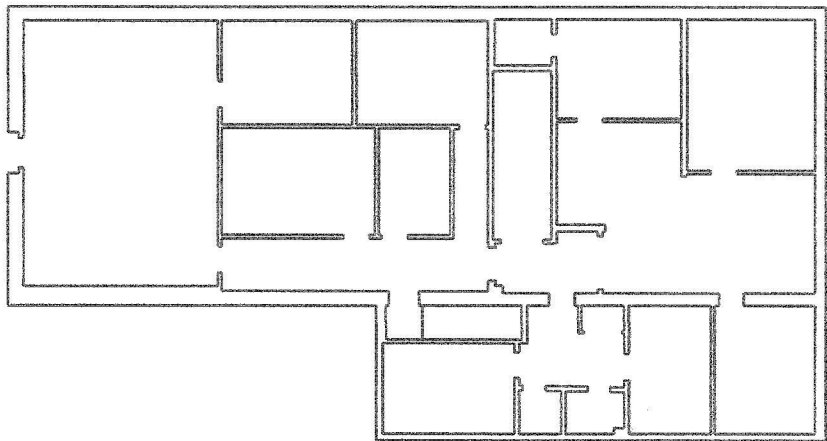


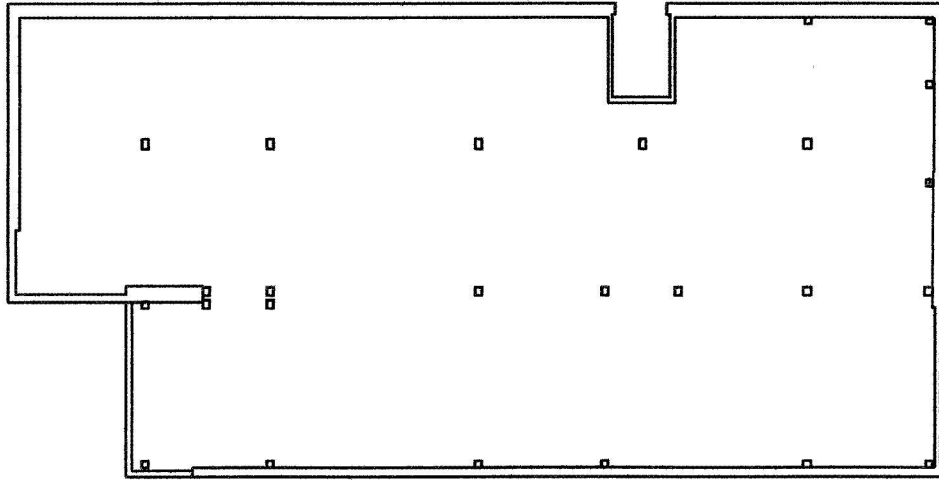
FIG. 1

DATE	
BY	
JOB	
FILE	
REVISION	
SHEET	

CITY HALL

RICHARD VEZIE & ASSOCIATES
94 THIRD STREET
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520
541 488-1453

PROPOSED MAIN FLOOR



PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR

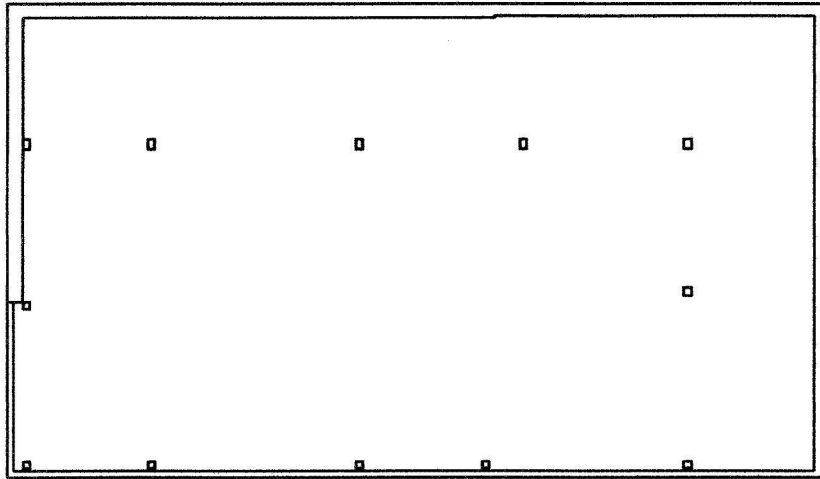
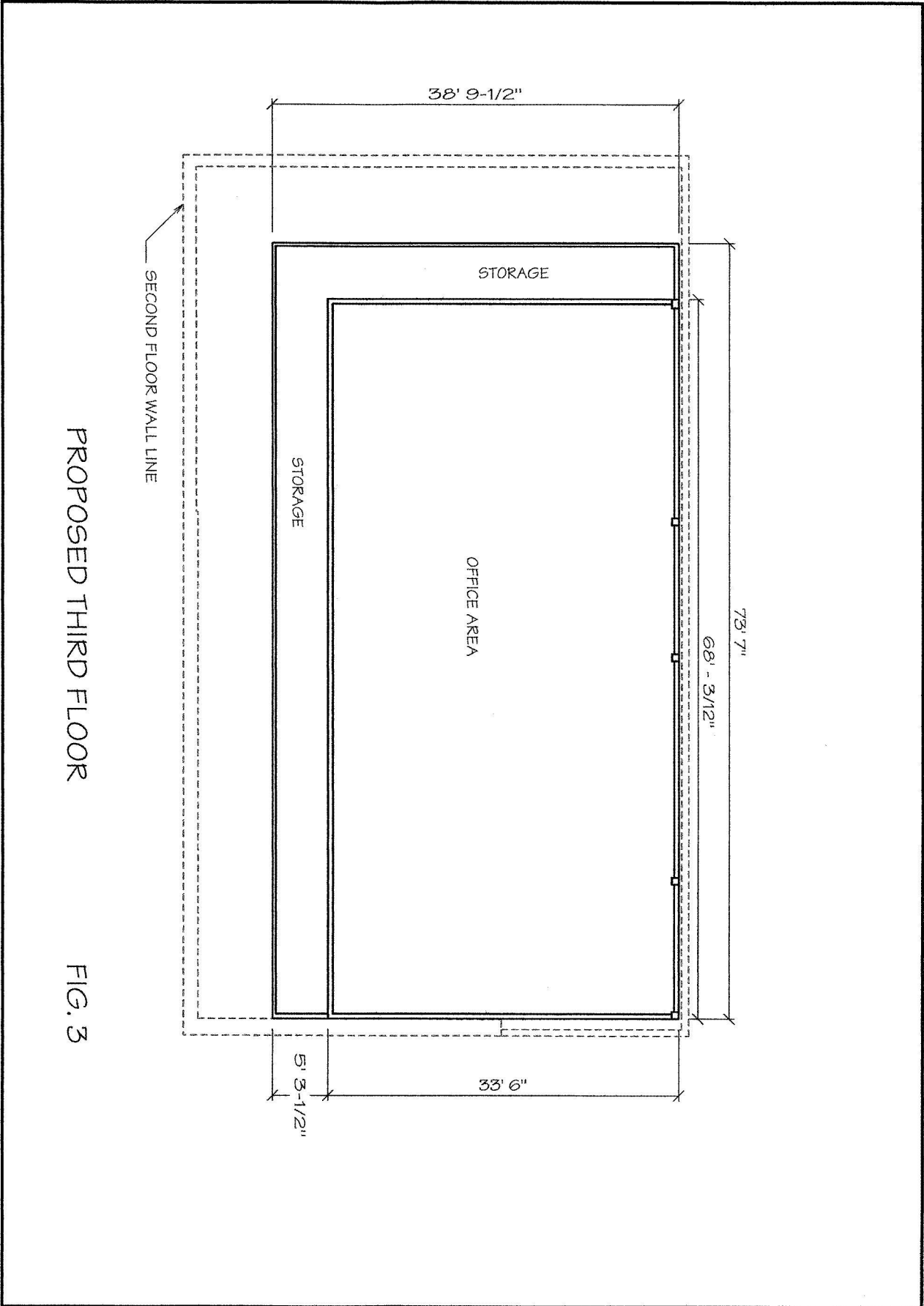


FIG. 2

DATE	
DESIGN	
REV.	
REVISION	
SHEET	

CITY HALL

RICHARD VEZIE & ASSOCIATES
94 THIRD STREET
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520
541 488-1453



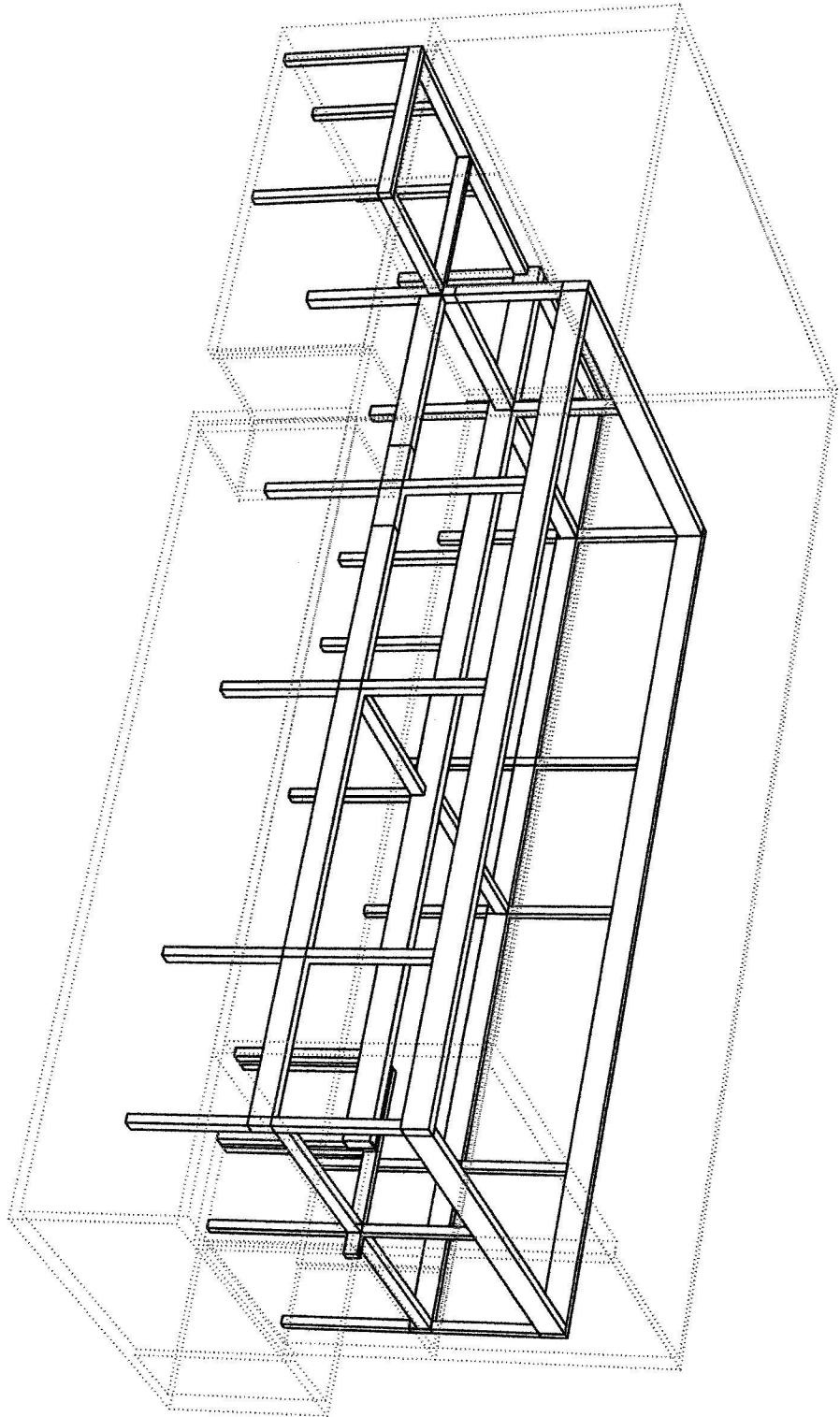
PROPOSED THIRD FLOOR

FIG. 3

DATE	
BY	
CHKD	
FILE	
REVISION	
SHEET	

CITY HALL

RICHARD VEZIE & ASSOCIATES
 94 THIRD STREET
 ASHLAND, OREGON 97520
 541 488-1453



MAIN & SECOND FLOOR BEAMS & COLUMNS

FIG. 4

DATE	
BY	
CHECKED	
SCALE	
REVISION	
SHEET	

CITY HALL

RICHARD VEZIE & ASSOCIATES
 94 THIRD STREET
 ASHLAND, OREGON 97520
 541 488-1453

TYPICAL SECTION

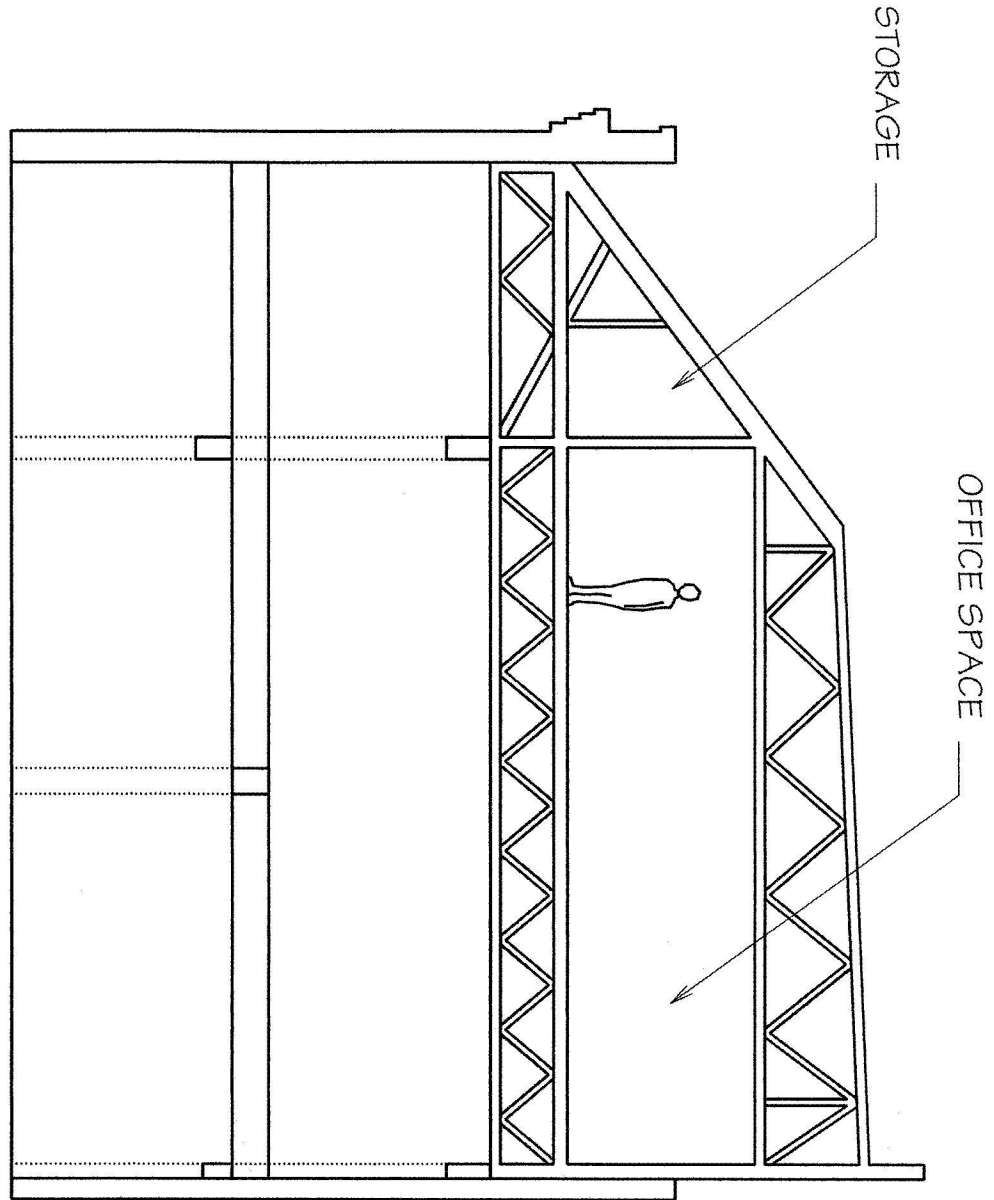
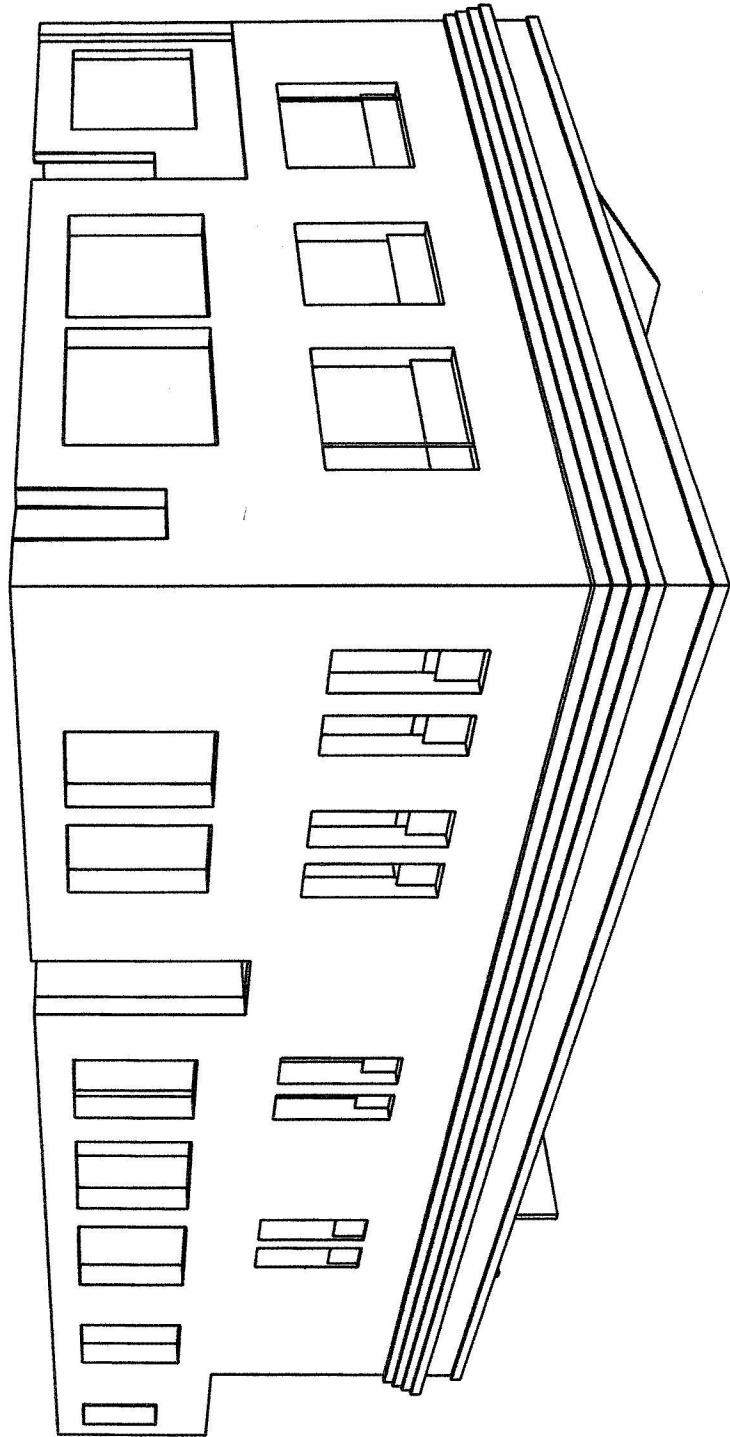


FIG. 5

DATE	
BY	
SCALE	
PROJECT	
SHEET	

CITY HALL

RICHARD VEZIE & ASSOCIATES
94 THIRD STREET
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520
541 488-1453



CORNER PERSPECTIVE
WITH THIRD FLOOR ADDITION

FIG. 6

DATE	
SCALE	
BY	
CHECKED	
APPROVED	
PROJECT	

CITY HALL

RICHARD VEZIE & ASSOCIATES
94 THIRD STREET
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520
541 488-1453

