

Bunnell [Coquina] City Hall

The Bunnell City Hall (also known as the Bunnell Civic Center and the Bunnell Coquina City Hall) is a unique one-story public building constructed of locally quarried coquina¹ stone.



Its architectural styling, masonry vernacular, reflects the availability of local construction materials coupled with local building traditions and public needs. It was built in 1936-1937 with grant funding from the Work Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA Proposal requested \$24,604 of federal funding for the project. It stated that no other WPA projects were active in Flagler County and it was required to keep men working, eliminate a mosquito breeding swamp in the center of Bunnell and establish much needed community and recreational facilities. The proposal estimated that 693 men over a nine-month period were required to complete the project. The proposal was signed and authorized on July 18, 1935.

The Bunnell City Hall has served the community as a center of activity throughout the years in various functions as host to many special occasions including social and club gatherings, business conferences, banquets, school dances, weddings and has provided accommodations as a public

meeting hall. In 1938, the Colony Club sponsored the Flagler County Public Library which was housed in the building for many years. In addition to being a Civic Center it housed various offices for the City of Bunnell (from the 1990s to 2006) and the City of Bunnell Police Department occupied sections of the building from 2011 to 2014. Currently, it is used for special city meetings and community gatherings and is rented out for public social and business events.

In front of the Bunnell City Hall building is Lake Lucille. It was once a cypress mud hole that was systematically shoveled out by hand by WPA workers in 1936-1937. The mud that was extracted was moved by wheelbarrows and used to level the four blocks of land behind the City Hall building. Water was then pumped in to create the circular shaped man-made lake. Fishing tournaments for children were once hosted in Lake Lucille. In the 1960s, a fountain was installed in the middle of Lake Lucille which provides a showering show of jetting water and is a key element of the property's landscape.

The Bunnell City Hall building is an important part of Bunnell's local history as its construction, using coquina stone for its exterior fabric and decorative archways, provided a community meeting and recreation facility to the area during intense economic turmoil which could not have been possible without New Deal funding. Furthermore, it was instrumental in providing employment for unemployed locals during the Great Depression which assisted the local economy. The City of Bunnell's logo includes the Bunnell City Hall building and Lake Lucille confirming they are a significant landmarks that are historically and currently important to the community.



City of Bunnell's Logo.

History of the Bunnell City Hall Building

Construction on the one-story Bunnell City Hall building ([Figure 1](#)) started in 1936 and was completed in 1937. Zachary Dean Holland, a well-known local contractor was elected superintendent of the project. Holland hired another local construction worker, John Swain, as foremen to assist with the challenging project. They hired any man in need of a job, regardless of construction experience or skill level. As the project progressed the pace became slower than originally scheduled. Most workers did not have experience working with coquina stone which complicated the construction process. On October 10, 1936, M.J. Castro, construction superintendent for the WPA in the district that included Bunnell, authorized Holland to hire an additional 40 workers in an attempt to expedite the project towards its January 1, 1937 scheduled completion date. On August 19, 1937, Z.W. Nowicki, recreational director for Flagler County, announced in the *Flagler Tribune* that the federal aid provided to construct the building did not include furnishing it. He stated that the people of the county that will use the facility will have to continue to make voluntary donations to decorate, furnish and equip the building.

The building stands on a concrete foundation with 13 inch thick exterior walls made from coquina stone that was quarried locally between Bunnell and Flagler Beach. WPA workers hand shaped and smoothed the coquina stone into irregular configurations using axes. Tool marks are still visible on many of the coquina stones. The transverse gable roof is covered with standing seam metal. Two stone chimney stacks (one in the front and one in the back of the building) extend upwards beyond the roof at the ridge line ([Figure 2](#)).

The west facing front façade of the building features a three bay arched colonnade at the main entrance to the building ([Figure 3](#)), and coquina stone compass arches with extended half walls that extend beyond the sides of the front of the building. Sidewalks pass under the arches and the south side leads to the rear of the building ([Figures 4 & 5](#)) while the north side leads to a side entrance loading and handicap ramp ([Figure 6](#)). Concrete steps with knee walls and a metal hand railing lead to the recessed porch entryway. A set of double glass doors allow access into the auditorium section of the building. Two single modern metal exterior doors (at the north and south sides of the porch) lead into side rooms. The top canopy of the porch is finished with paneled wood. All three entrance ways are topped with coquina stone lintels. Affixed signage in black lettering that reads “Bunnell City Hall” is centrally located above the three bay arched colonnades.

A shield-shaped date stone plaque is recessed into the coquina stone that reads “WPA 1937” (Figure 7). The address of the building “200 S. Church” is displayed in affixed signage in black lettering and located at northern section of the front of the building. The fenestration of the windows are modern vinyl sliding sash windows that have replaced the original wood framed, and all the window apertures are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels.

The south facing side of the building (Figure 8) features three shouldered coquina buttresses. The entranceway includes a poured concrete porch and steps with coquina stone knee walls. A non-original wood door leads into the auditorium of the building. A wood framed gable roof with standing seam metal over the entrance was added in 1995. The fenestration of the windows are modern vinyl replacements with the exception of a set of original wood casement windows near the rear of the building. All the window apertures on the south facing side of the building are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels. Below the original wood casement windows is an aperture of lattice-work concrete blocks that are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels.

The east facing back of the building (Figures 9 & 10) features coquina stone compass arches with extended half walls that extend beyond the north and south side of the back of the building. A 231 square foot one-story extension was built in 1995 to add a modern kitchen and bathrooms to the building. This extension includes a flat roof covered with standing seam metal. A wood porch with wood steps and hand railings provide access to the interior kitchen through a modern metal door. The fenestration of the windows are modern awning type. The entire facade of this extension has been faced with irregularly shaped coquina stone to match the originality of the building.

The north facing side of the building (Figure 11) features three shouldered coquina buttresses. A one-story extension was built in the 1980s to add a modern vault and additional office space to the building. This extension includes a flat roof covered with standing seam metal. A 176 square foot poured concrete loading and handicap access ramp with metal hand railings was added in 1990. A modern metal door provides access into the interior auditorium section. A wood framed gable roof with standing seam metal over the entrance was added in 1995. The fenestration of the windows are modern vinyl replacements with the exception of a set of original wood casement windows near the rear of the building. Below the original wood casement windows is an aperture of lattice-work concrete blocks that are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels. All the window apertures on the north facing side of the building are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels.

The facade of this extension has been faced with irregularly shaped coquina stone to match the originality of the building.

The interior of the building features a large centrally located primary room, the auditorium (**Figures 12 & 13**), with secondary rooms flanking it and adjacent to the rear of the building (**Figures 14 & 15**). There are right and left side closets at the main entrance from the porch. The auditorium's walls are irregularly shaped coquina stone and the window apertures are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels. WPA workers created two interesting sculptured coquina stones as one is a heart and the other a dog shape (**Figures 16 & 17**). The flooring is original pine wood that has been refinished. A raised stage once stood on the east end of the auditorium, but it was removed sometime in the 1950s to add more open space. Wood paneling was affixed to the walls and linoleum flooring installed on the floor where the stage once stood (**Figure 18**). A window aperture on the north side of the auditorium has been converted into a doorway to provide access to a small storage space located within the concrete block addition. A dropped tile acoustic ceiling was installed in the 1980s to conceal ductwork and electrical cables of a central air conditioning system (**Figure 19**). The original wood ceiling and beams are now concealed.

The southwest office room has a plain wood door entrance from the auditorium. The room is currently undergoing remodeling (**Figure 20**). Two wood framed walls with drywall currently separate the room. Modern vinyl and wood doors are hung in the entranceways. This room's original walls are irregularly shaped coquina stone and the three window apertures are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels. A dropped tile acoustic ceiling was installed in the 1980s to conceal ductwork and electrical cables of a central air conditioning system. The original wood ceiling and beams are now concealed. An open doorway leads to the southwest office reception room that is between the southwest office room and the porch. This southwest office reception room has irregularly shaped coquina stone and one window aperture that is topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels which faces towards Lake Lucille. A doorway leads onto the front porch.

The northwest office room has a plain wood door entrance from the auditorium. The room is currently undergoing remodeling (**Figure 21**). Three wood framed walls with drywall currently separate the room. Modern vinyl and wood doors are hung in the entranceways. This room's original walls are irregularly shaped coquina stone and the two window apertures are topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels. A dropped tile acoustic ceiling was installed in the 1980s to

conceal ductwork and electrical cables of a central air conditioning system. The original wood ceiling and beams are now concealed. An open doorway leads to the northwest office reception room that is between the northwest office room and the porch. This northwest office reception room has irregularly shaped coquina stone and one window aperture that is topped with coquina stone jack arched lintels which faces towards Lake Lucille. A doorway leads onto the front porch.

The vault room features a large metal bank-style vault door with Corinthian pilasters and dentil molding ([Figure 22](#)). The vault was at one time used to store evidence for the Bunnell Police Department. The room is currently undergoing remodeling.

The rear of the auditorium includes two closets, the kitchen, women's and men's bathrooms. Metal swinging doors lead to both the women's and men's bathrooms. A centrally located modern wood paneled door leads into the kitchen. Wood cabinets, an exhaust hood, stove and a refrigerator have been installed in the kitchen as well as linoleum flooring.

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places

The initial nomination was approved by the Florida National Register Review Board on November 8, 2018 and was then sent to the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service for final approval by the Keeper of the National Register. On February 4, 2019, the Bunnell Coquina City Hall was officially listed under a multiple nomination (Florida's New Deal Resources MPS) on the National Register of Historic Places.

Notes

¹ Coquina means "tiny shell" in Spanish. Coquina rock is native to Florida's Atlantic shore. It consists of sedimentary mixtures of shell fragments and quartz grains that are held together by calcium carbonate and was formed when higher sea levels covered the present-day coastline. Coquina is soft and easy to cut in the ground, but hardens after being exposed to the open air, so it is a suitable stone for the construction of buildings and walls and been used Florida for more than four hundred years.

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Figure 1 - Distant Full Front View with Lake Lucille & Fountain - (photograph by Author - August 2018).



Figure 2 - Full North Side showing both chimneys – (photograph by Author - August 2018).



Figure 3 - Front Porch – (photograph by Author - August 2018).



Figure 4 - SW Front with Arches and Sidewalk – (photograph by Author - August 2018).



Figure 5 - NW Front with Arches and sidewalk - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 6 - North Side with ramp – (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 7 - WPA 1937 Shield Shaped Plaque - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 8 - Full South Side - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 9 - SE Side - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 10 - NE Side - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 11 - North Side - with Handicap Railings - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 12 - Auditorium - East Side View - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 13 - Auditorium - West Side View - (photograph by Author – August 2018).

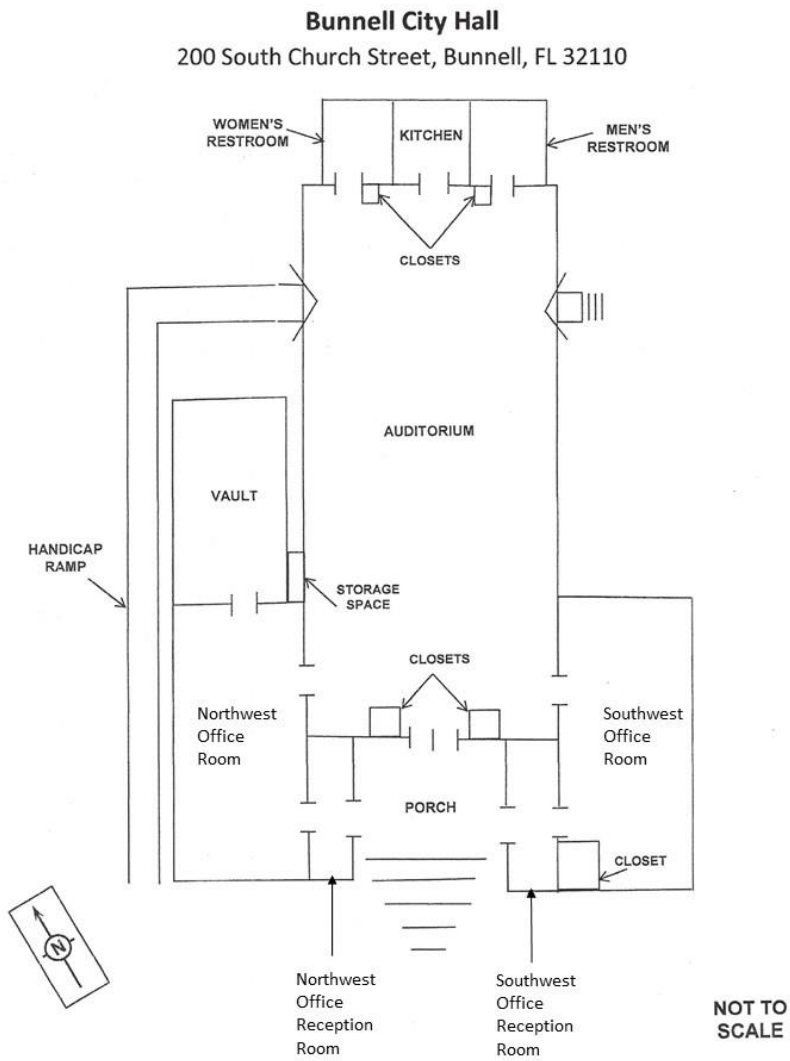
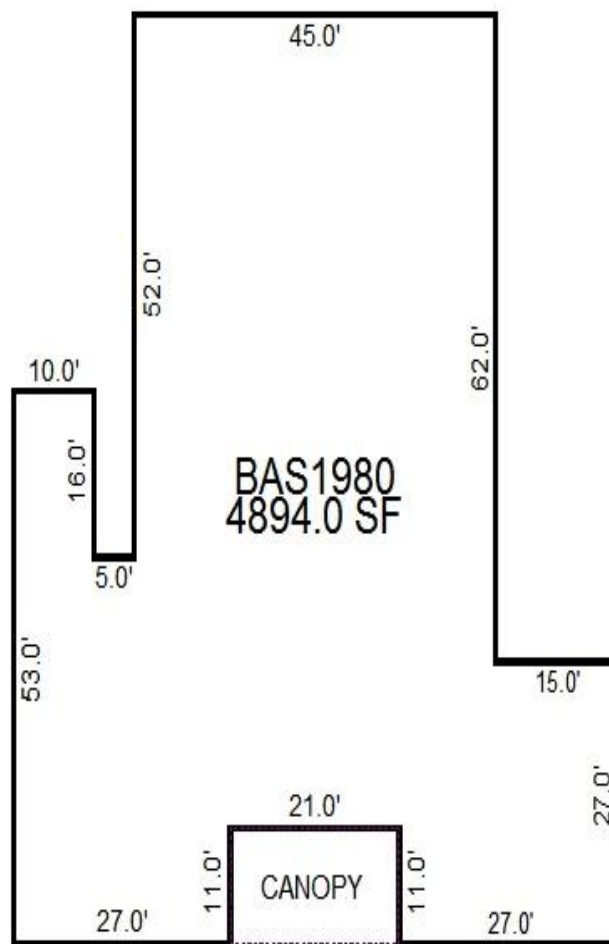


Figure 14 – Bunnell City Hall Floor Plan – not to scale.



Sketch by Apex IV™

Figure 15 - 200 South Church Street - Building Square Footage Diagram – Source: Flagler County Property Appraiser.



Figure 16 - Heart Shaped Coquina Stone - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 17 - Dog Head Shaped Coquina Stone - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 18 - Auditorium - SE View - Wood Paneling and Linoleum Flooring - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 19 - Dropped Ceiling in Auditorium - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 20 - SW Front Office - Undergoing Remodeling - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 21 - NW Office Front View - Undergoing Remodeling - (photograph by Author – August 2018).



Figure 22 - Vault door - open view - (photograph by Author – August 2018).