

Durham Historic Association
Post Office Box 305
Durham, New Hampshire 03824

June 8, 1999

Durham Town Council
Town of Durham
Newmarket Rd
Durham, NH 03824

Dear Councilors,

As you may recall, this Spring the Durham Historical Association (DHA), seeking to relieve its pressing space needs, appealed to the Council for permission to move into the first floor of the old town hall when the District Court vacates the building in July, 2000.

The DHA's proposal requests moving its significant historical documents and library to the first floor offices for use by members, researchers and the public in a handicapped-accessible space -- as they do in Portsmouth at the Athenæum and in Dover at the Woodman Institute. Also, on the first floor is desirable handicapped-accessible meeting space of which the DHA is in great need; and, of course, is more than willing to share with other town committees when not holding its regularly scheduled monthly meetings and quarterly evening meetings.

To demonstrate the overcrowded situation the DHA invited Council members to an "Open House" to view both floors of this architecturally rare building. Questions raised by several councilors regarding renovations have prompted the DHA to provide you with some factual information so that you may better decide how to handle the Council's space needs as well as ours.

First, the DHA wants to assure the Council that the first floor space meets our needs fully, without any need for renovations. The renovations which were made to the building to meet the needs of the Court; i.e., the two small

conference rooms, the raised dais, and the Court bar, are not needed by the DHA. However, those modifications do not prevent us from utilizing the space. Should the Council desire to maximize the meeting room potential of the space for its own purposes, it might consider the following:

1. Removal of the bar
2. Removal of the two small conference rooms
3. Removal of the raised dais
4. Installation of new carpeting

This modest renovation would provide an air-conditioned meeting room with a seating capacity for 108 persons, 9' 5" ceiling height, six good-sized windows, and three means of access\egress as well as handicapped accessibility. Fire Chief, Ron O'Keefe calculates the public seating capacity at 97 using the pews that are in place plus several more. To this number he adds the Council, Town Administrator and Minute taker of 11, for a total of 108. If the Council chooses to use chairs requiring 7 sq. ft. per person, then the room could accommodate 85 members of the public for a total capacity of 96 including the Council, Town Administrator and Minute-taker. Both arrangements require 3 ft. aisles.

Attached you will find the current first floor plan showing the renovations that were made for the Court. Its current seating capacity is 49 persons. The second attachment shows a comfortable meeting space with the two conference rooms removed allowing for a seating capacity of 108 with pews, and 96 with chairs respectively.

The Durham Historic Association hopes this information proves useful in your deliberations. We look forward to working together with the Council to preserve and enjoy the Old Town Hall as a splendid historic resource of the town.

Sincerely,



Marion James, President

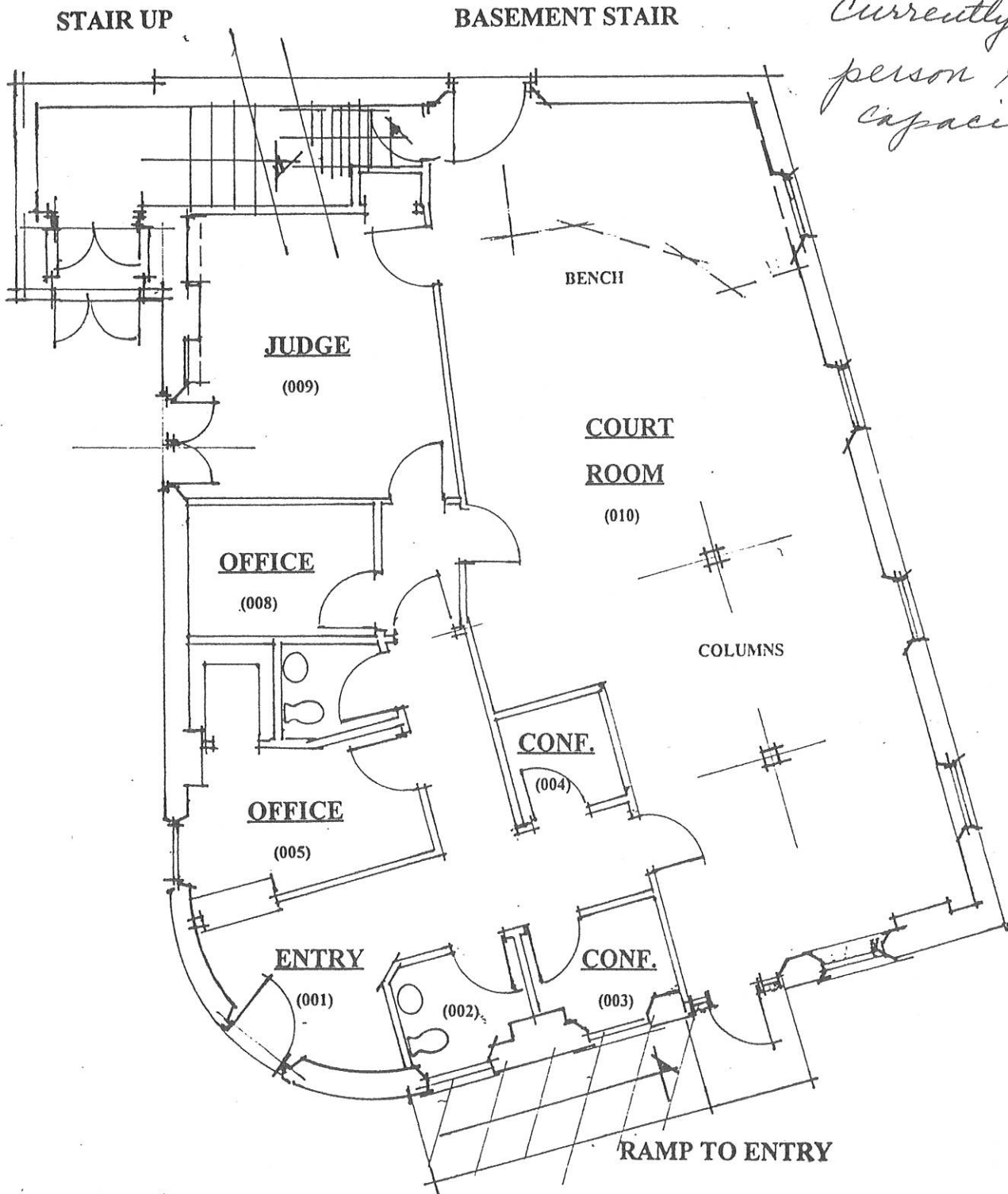
Nancy P. Sandberg

Dale R. Valena

For the Durham Historic Association

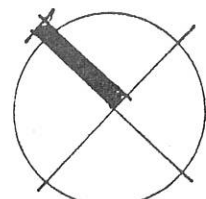
DURHAM TOWN HALL
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Currently 49 ~~of~~
person seating
capacity*



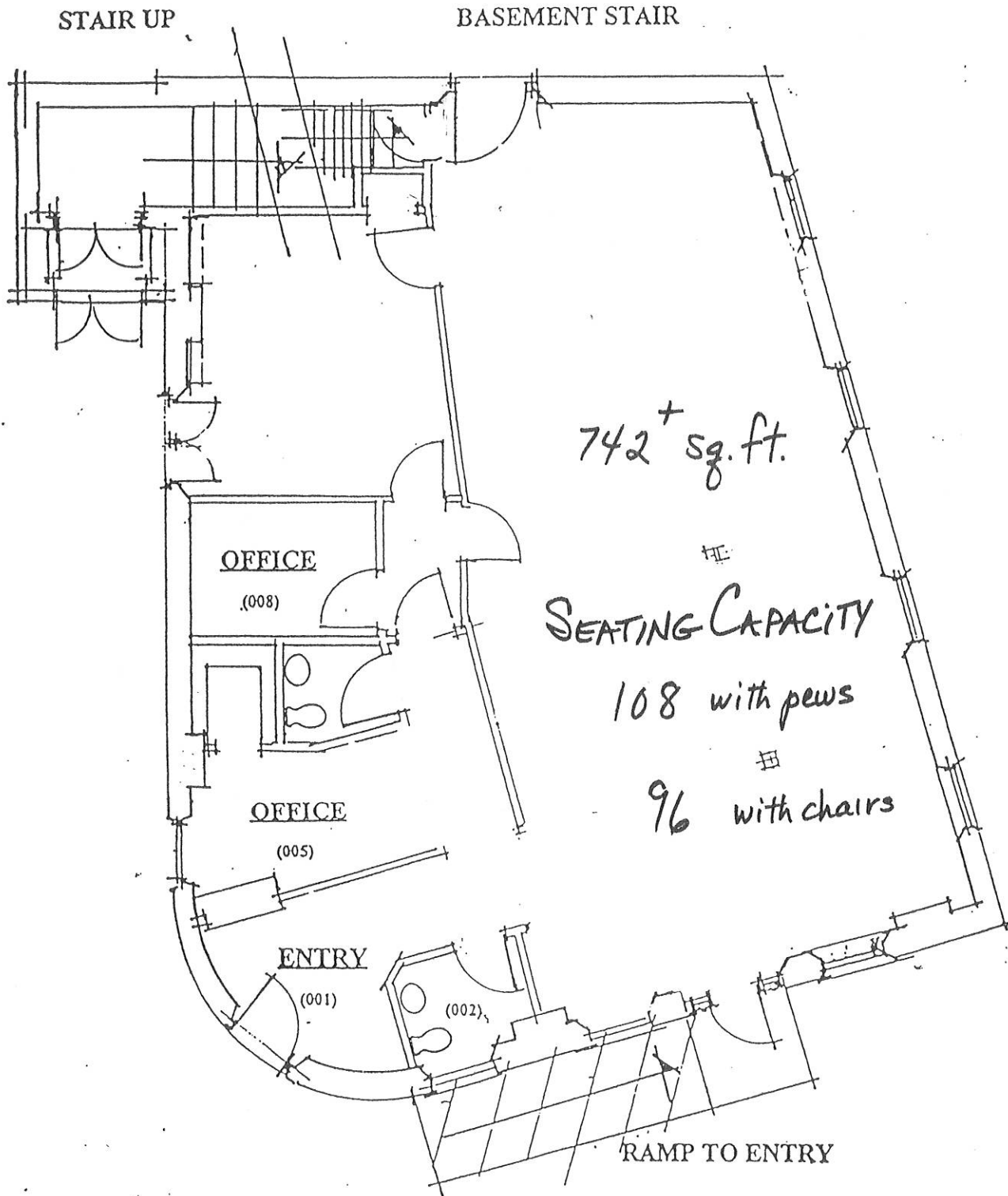
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GROUND FLOOR PLAN



Lease thru July 2000

DURHAM TOWN HALL
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE



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GROUND FLOOR PLAN

