Poster Text:

Designed in the French Second Empire style, City Hall is a thick masonry construction with walls up to 22ft thick. In addition to the William Penn statue at the top, there are up to 250 relief and free-standing sculptures that convey moral allegories about the U.S. Each of the four facades carries a continental theme. The north face represents Europe, south face carries African figures, east face holds Asia, and west face supports Native Americans. Philadelphia City Hall was planned to be the tallest building in the world, but by the time it was completed in 1901, it had already been surpassed. There was a gentlemen’s agreement that no other building in Philadelphia would be taller than City Hall, which was maintained until 1986. As soon as it was complete, it was already out of fashion. City government even considered demolishing it in the 1950’s. However, the cost of demolition was equal to the cost of construction and would have bankrupted the city, so fortunately the city decided to suspend any plans for demolition.

Personality:

Poet

Old english aristocrat

Old guy speaking in riddles

The OG Boomer

Book Text:

Philadelphia City Hall is the elderly story-telling grandfather of the city. Although it was once considered antiquated enough to demolish, it is now one of the most beloved structures in the U.S. With no stone uncarved, this building continues to tell stories with its ornamentation for generations to come.

Prior to the current City Hall, all municipal offices resided in a two-story building on Fifth and Chestnut Street. Plans to build a new City Hall started in 1838, when the city’s population doubled to 565,000 people. The architecture was intended to be a representation of the city’s aspirations. Designed in the French Second Empire style, City hall is a thick masonry construction with walls up to 22ft thick. The stonemason William Struthers and sculptor Alexander Milne Calder were responsible for casting 250 relief and free-standing sculptures that convey moral allegories about the nation and the city. Each of the four facades carries a continental theme. The north face represents Europe, south face carries African figures, east face holds Asia, and west face supports Native Americans. The statue of William Penn atop the clock tower is 37 feet tall and weighs 27 tons, and is required to be cleaned every 10 years. Philadelphia City Hall was planned to be the tallest building in the world, with the top of William Penn’s hat reaching 548 feet, but by the time it was completed in 1901, it had been surpassed by the Washington Monument and the Eiffel Tower. There was a gentlemen’s agreement that no other building in Philadelphia would be taller than City Hall, which was maintained until 1986. Nevertheless, it is still to this day the world’s largest free-standing masonry building. Because it took 30 years to build, by the time it was completed it was already out of fashion. City government even considered demolishing it in the 1950’s. However, the cost of demolition was equal to the cost of construction, nearly $25 million, and would have bankrupted the city, so fortunately the city decided to suspend any plans for demolition. Today, this building is included among the 150 most important buildings in the United States. This legend is not going anywhere anytime soon.

<https://billypenn.com/2021/06/14/philadelphia-city-hall-sculptures-calder-macarthur-building-history-masonry-carving/>