

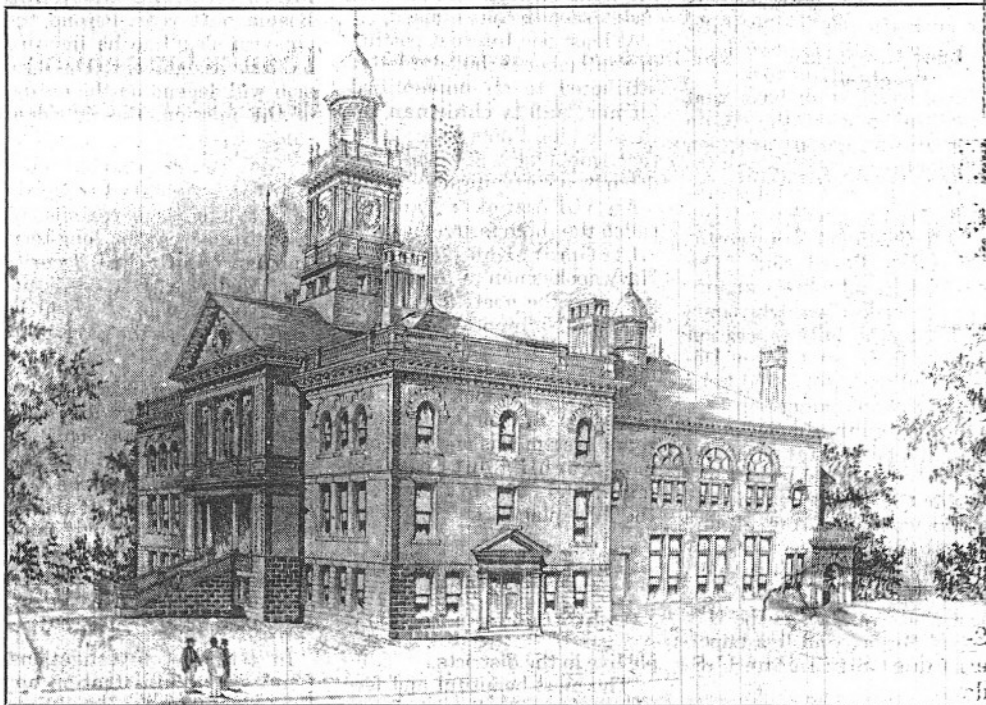
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Town hall architect was skilled water-colorist



Tom Beardsley



This rendering helped clinch the deal for Warren Richard Briggs to design town hall.

Tomorrow afternoon at 1 p.m. at the town hall, the town of Windham will be conducting two ceremonies: one to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the town hall and the other to mark the 90th anniversary of the footbridge.

For the next several weeks this column will investigate the two structures' fascinating histories. Beginning next week is the first of a four-part series about the building of the town hall.

As an introduction to the series, here is a biography of Warren Richard Briggs, the town hall's notable architect.

Warren Richard Briggs was born in "comfortable circumstances" on June 6, 1850, in Malden, Mass. Beyond his social advantages, Briggs was born with wide artistic talents. He studied at Harvard and worked in the offices of various Boston architects. In 1872, his talent won him a two-year scholarship at the prestigious Ecole Des Beaux Artes in Paris, a training ground for many of America's leading architects and artists of the late 19th century.

Briggs returned to Boston

and taught drawing and painting at evening schools. His popular courses consisted of instruction in "mechanical, architectural, ornamental, free-hand and crayon drawing." Beyond art, Briggs was highly accomplished at baseball, boxing, rowing and football.

In February 1874, along with A.G. Spaulding, he organized the first game of baseball ever to be played in England, at London's famous cricket ground, the Kennington Oval.

Briggs was also one of those responsible for helping to introduce the catcher's protective mask to professional baseball.

In 1876 Briggs became a partner in a leading Bridgeport architectural firm. But his ability at water color painting won him many exhibits, particularly one sponsored by the prestigious New York Academy of Design — and he continued to teach art classes at night school in his new home town of Bridgeport.

In 1877, Briggs designed his first famous public and civic building, the Indiana State House at Indianapolis. The pursuit of architectural design consumed Briggs and he became a leading national expert in school building. His 1899 book, *Modern American School Buildings*, became a standard text book. Among the hundreds of famous buildings he designed were the Bridgeport high school, Connecticut Normal School at New Britain

(Central Connecticut State University), the Connecticut state building at the 1893 Columbian Exposition at Chicago and the Fairfield County Court House and New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad station in Bridgeport.

W.R. Briggs died in Stratford on May 30, 1933, aged 82, having built up a reputation as one of the nation's leading civic architects. The drawing reproduced here is the architect's 1895 rendering of Windham's town hall. Although not actually signed by Briggs, it is most likely drawn by him. This was the drawing that convinced the Windham town hall building committee that Briggs was their man.

Willimantic wanted the best, and got it.

Tom Beardsley, a free-lance public historian, is a former scholar-in-residence and co-director of the Windham Textile and History Museum.

New plan to cut noise at Bradley

WINDSOR LOCKS (AP) — In response to numerous complaints from nearby residents about noisy takeoffs and landings, Bradley International Airport is implementing new regulations designed to cut down on noise.

The measures — scheduled to go into effect Dec. 1 — include restrictions on the use of auxiliary power units, which power for light, heat,

Carriers have been requested to use ground power units or other power supplies whenever possible. If APUs must be used, the airplanes must be located so the exhaust noise is shielded from residential areas, if possible.

The procedures were reviewed at a commission meeting Wednesday.