770 Vernon Avenue: Municipal Hall

Following the Second World War, the old Saanich Municipal Hall was unable to accommodate the growth of municipal administration. In 1947 Hubert Savage was commissioned to design an addition and alterations to the old hall. In 1957 an additional 9,000 square feet of space was again required. A Municipal Hall Reserve Fund By-law was passed in 1959 which set aside funds for a future new hall. It was decided that a more central location for the hall would be better. In 1961-62 the new Police-Fire Hall building was constructed on Vernon Avenue. The following year, the Health and Welfare building was built on an adjacent site on Vernon, to designs by architect Clive Campbell.

Finally, in 1963 Wade Stockdill Armour & Partners were appointed as architects for the new Municipal Hall, with John W. Armour in charge of Administration and Peter Blewett responsible for design. The firm was also hired to design the furniture and special fixtures in the building. Lone V. Nielsen did the interior design. In July, 1964, George H. Wheaton Limited (with a bid of $611,616) was hired as the construction firm. Philip Tattersfield and Associates were the landscape architects. The new hall was officially opened on December 1, 1965 by Lieutenant-Governor George R. Pearkes. Final cost, including furnishings, was about $800,000. It now accommodates about one hundred and fifty municipal inside employees.

The flat-roofed building, constructed of reinforced concrete, has bands of windows the full length of the front and rear walls. Stairwells on the centre front and the south end are placed inside towers which exploit the sculptural properties of poured concrete. The front tower is a part of the ceremonial entranceway to the centre of civic government. This entranceway to the centre of civic government. This entranceway has a sweeping stairway up to a cantilevered deck which is used as a speakers' podium for civic ceremonies. Mature landscaping beautifully complements the facade. The interior concrete is given colour and warmth by the use of teak for paneling in the council chambers, and for balustrades and walls in public areas.