

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER DESIGN: THE IMPACT OF INTERIOR DESIGN UPON THE MEETING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

This is an empirical study of the interrelationship between the interior design of city council chambers and human behavior patterns in the meeting process. The study describes the impact of the interior design of nine different city council chambers upon the meeting process; and makes recommendations regarding design, behavior patterns, and the use of audio-visual technology in city council chambers.

INTRODUCTION

“We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.” Thus spoke Winston Churchill during the debate regarding the reconstruction of the House of Commons destroyed by enemy bombs [1]. Not only Winston Churchill, but other political observers of House of Commons behavior have recognized certain features of political debate which seem to be directly related to its rectangular and diminutive size.

The House of Commons is not large enough to hold all of its members at one time without creating a crowded condition. There are no reserved seats for individual members.¹ It is claimed that the reason for this overcrowding and impromptu seating is to avoid the depressing atmosphere of an empty or half-empty chamber.² In Churchill's words:

¹ With the exceptions of the leadership of the Cabinet and the opposition leadership.

² This condition evolved out of historical accident; and was not an original design concept. The House today provides seating for just a little more than half of its 624 members.

The essence of good House of Commons speaking is the conversational style, the facility for quick, informal interruptions and interchanges. Harrangues from a rostrum would be a bad substitute for the conversational style in which so much of our business is done. But the conversational style requires a fairly small space, and there should be on great occasions a sense of crowd and urgency [1].

Historically, most societies provide some form of physical structure for their political activities. These can be as primitive as the folkmoths, the assemblies of barbarian peoples, where decisions were reached by acclamation or by the clanging of weapons, or as complex as air conditioned legislatures where votes are electronically recorded.³

Moreover, unlike the procedures of national and state legislative bodies, citizens have and do exercise the right to address the city council in the council chambers. Therefore, city council chambers and the interrelationship between interior design and human behavior is the focus of this exploratory and descriptive study. Council chambers in nine suburban cities in the San Gabriel Valley east of Los Angeles, California were selected for this study. These council chambers were selected because of their specific design features and relative proximity.

The primary theoretical assumptions of this study are:

1. there is an interactive relationship between architectural forms and political behavior; and
2. that given the human being's propensity towards territoriality, a person tends to infer a certain status or image upon a particular type of location, place, structure, etc.

Also, of significance to the investigation are three conceptual views of the relativity of space and their integrative implications:

1. space contained within a space: this relationship of spatial segments can generate both hierarchical and integrative implications; and
2. overlapping of space: this relationship of spatial segments can generate hierarchical and integrative implications.
3. space excluded from other space: this relationship of spatial segments can generate structural fragmentation and hierarchical implications.⁴

Two basic structural types of legislative chambers are found among city council chambers and specifically the nine studied. First, the rectilinear type, which usually separates the representatives and staff from the public by utilizing an elevational differential and/or permanent fixtures to serve as a divider. Secondly, the semicircular (hemicyclical) structure; this structure is sometimes called the theater or forum type. Within these two basic structural types there

³ For a review of legislative assemblies see [2].

⁴ For discussions regarding this interdependence see [3-6].

can be found two general designated areas, the area allocated to public use and that area allocated to officials use (council members and staff).

Two tools were devised to record behavioral patterns in the nine council chambers selected for this study; and the affects of the physical environment upon the meeting process. First, an interaction chart was constructed to record the frequency of communicative interaction between the staff, council members, and citizens.⁵ Secondly, a structural chart was prepared which records and classifies the physical environment of the council chambers. Then the interaction patterns of the various council chambers are compared using as distinguishing criteria the differences in physical structure.

The interaction chart (see Figure 1) is comprised of three sections. Section one lists the possible communicative interactions in the chamber, viz.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Council member to council member; | 5. staff to council member; |
| 2. council member to staff; | 6. staff to citizen; |
| 3. council member to citizen; | 7. citizen to council member; or |
| 4. staff to staff; | 8. citizen to staff. |

On the interaction chart, verbal communicative acts were recorded during ten minute segments. Several ten minute segments were recorded during two meetings each month at each council chamber for a year; then, an "interaction average" was computed for each of the eight possible verbal communicative acts for each council chamber.

The second section of the chart records the number of informal interaction communications for each chamber. In other words, these communicative acts take place at times other than when the rules governing that particular legislative body provide for such a communicative act. For example, such informal acts occur when a council member asks a citizen sitting in the audience to comment on a particular matter at times other than when the meeting is formally open to the public.

The three communicative acts falling into the informal category are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. council recognition of public; | 3. introjection of public to council or |
| 2. staff recognition of public; and | staff and let proceed. |

These informal communicative acts are also recorded in section one under the appropriate category.

The third section of the interaction chart is intended to indicate the qualitative aspect of council recognition and instructions to citizens during public hearings as judged by the investigator. More specifically, it is noted in this section of the chart whether or not the council's recognition and instruction towards the citizens — in general or individually — is positive, negative, or neutral. Such factors as tone and level of voice, and posture (as

⁵ A communicate interaction is when one individual talks to another; thus, one communicative act is equivalent to the verbal communication act of one individual.

SECTION I	COUNCIL COUNCIL
	COUNCIL STAFF
	COUNCIL PUBLIC
	STAFF STAFF
	STAFF COUNCIL
	STAFF PUBLIC
	PUBLIC COUNCIL
	PUBLIC STAFF
SECTION II	COUNCIL RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC – INFORMAL
	STAFF RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC – INFORMAL
	PUBLIC INTROJECTION TO (COUNCIL OR STAFF) AND LET PROCEED
	COUNCIL INSTRUCTIONS TO PUBLIC, GENERAL
	NEUTRAL
	NEGATIVE
SECTION III	POSITIVE
	COUNCIL INSTRUCTIONS TO SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS
	NEUTRAL
	NEGATIVE
	POSITIVE

Figure 1. Communicative Interaction Chart I.

these features may indicate interest or disinterest) were used to judge (along with what was said, as well as how it was said) whether or not a council member's recognition of and instruction to the citizens appeared to be negative, positive, or neutral.

The structural chart covers fourteen aspects of the council chamber's interior. Inclusive in this chart are such general factors as the overall shape of the interior (square, circular, rectangular, and hexagon); plus more specific factors as the length, width, and height of the council chamber. Also, included in the structural chart are the concepts of location, shape, and permanency (see Figure 2).

The grid system was incorporated into the chart so that each council chamber observed could be given a "grid designation." This approach was utilized to assist in a comparative analysis of the various council chambers.

While categories F, I, J, K, L, M, and N, are self explanatory the other aspects of the structural chart may need some explanation. From left to right in the order they appear on the chart:

- A. General shape of the council chamber (square, rectangular, circular, hexagon). These four alternative configurations are used as the reasonable possibilities that may apply to council chambers.
- B. Physical division of council members, staff, and citizens (council separated from staff and citizens, council and staff separated from citizens, council and citizens separated from staff, no physical division exist). These separations can be achieved via many design applications. One popular approach includes the use of a permanent fixture to serve as a divider, e.g., a railing or panel, etc., or the altering of floor elevations with the council occupying a higher elevation than the other persons in the chamber.
- C. Floor elevations (single, double, multiple, converging – incline). As indicated above, this design technique is often used to separate various functions or categories of people in the council chamber.
- D. Fixtures-furniture (totally fixed; partially fixed, council, or staff, or citizen). This category is used to denote whether a sense of permanency, etc., prevails in the council chamber.
- E. Location of public rostrum in relation to the council table (center or side). The intent here is to note the relative position of the citizen when he addresses the council. This is done because most councils require that citizens address them from a specific point.
- G. Entry into chamber by council members (public, private). Some council chambers are designed in such a way as to allow ingress and egress by council members through a private entrance; such an entrance may also function so as to limit or obstruct citizen access to the representative. Thus, the intent of this category is to denote this structural feature.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
General Shape of Chamber	Physical Division of Council Staff and Public	Floor Levels	Fixtures (Furniture)	Location of Rostrum in Relation to Council	Shape of Council Table	Entry to Chamber by Council	Public Rostrum Position	Length of Chamber	Width of Chamber	Square Footage of Chamber	Height of Chamber	Distance of Council from Public	Division of Council from Public Rostrum
1 Square	Council/Staff/ Public	Single	Totally Fixed	Center	U-Shape	Private	Standing	25'-50'	10'-15'	Under 500'	10'-15'	5'	5'
2 Rectangular	Council/ Staff-Public	Double	Partially Fixed	Side	Square	Public	Sitting	50'-75'	15'-20'	500'-1,000'	15'-20'	5'-10'	5'-10'
3 Circular	Council- Public/Staff	Multiple	Council Fixtures Fixed		Rectangle			75'-100'	20'-15'	1,000'-1,500'	20'-Over	10'-15'	10'-15'
4 Hexagon	No Division	Converging	Staff Fixtures Fixed		Circle			100'-125'	25'-30'	1,500'-2,000'		15'-20'	15'-20'
5			Public Fixture Fixed					125'-150'	30'-35'	2,000-2,500'			
6									35'-40'	Over 25,000'			

Figure 2. Structural Chart II.

H. Public rostrum position (standing, sitting). This category denotes the position of the citizen while speaking to the council.

At the start of this study it was tentatively expected that:

1. council chambers resembling the semicircular or forum type structure to have a higher citizen interaction rate with council members and staff than a rectilinear structure;
2. council chambers built similar to the rectilinear approach which incorporate aspects of fragmented features will have a relatively lower citizen interaction rate with council and staff; and
3. lastly, where spatial features or physical fixtures are employed to create specific allocated locations, and thus act as dividers, the interaction rate between citizens, and the council and staff will diminish in relation to the extent these devices are used regardless of the form of the council chamber.

The field of proxemics and its related aspects are by no means a precise discipline; and, included in the process of human behavior within any given physical structure are a multiplicity of factors not directly considered in this study.⁶ For example, in addition to determining the frequency of interactions between the citizens, staff and council members in a given time segment, determination could also be made regarding the following (given the proper amount of resources — observers, etc.):

1. the length of various categories of interaction;
2. the length of each person's participation in a particular interaction segment;
3. the course of the interaction process among the participants of the meeting; and
4. whether a citizens' comments were challenging or supporting a staff or council statement.

Also, considerations could be given to such factors as the nature and texture of the materials used in the interior design and decor, plus the color and tone scheme utilized. Moreover, the variety of personalities, group dynamics, and agenda items in any given council meeting seem to prevent any absolute comparative analysis.

Therefore, this venture is exploratory in nature. It is primarily concerned with exploring the approaches discussed herein with a view toward their utility in the development of local legislative chambers.

⁶ Hall defines proxemics as: "the term I have coined for the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture." [6, p. 1]

A LOOK AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

This section will be comprised of a description of the nine council chambers observed in this study: the structural grid formula, and a floor diagram of each council chamber. The communicative interaction average for each council chamber can be found in Table 1.

ARCADIA

The Arcadia Council Chamber is rectangular in form with a length of sixty feet, width of twenty-four feet, 1440 square feet, and a ceiling height of thirteen and one-half feet (see Figure 3). A physical separation of the council and staff from the public is achieved by a fixed wooden railing bisecting the chamber, and a six inch elevation of the floor level of the dias on which the council and part of the staff are located. The council is located at a distance approximately fifteen feet from the first row of public seating. All the fixtures in the chamber are of a fixed nature.

The public rostrum is a standing type and is ten feet away from the council and to the council's left. The council table is U-shaped, and there is a private entry into the council and staff section.

The grid pattern for the Arcadia Chamber is as follows:

2A – 1B – 2C – 1D – 2E – 1F – 1G
1H – 2I – 3J – 3K – 1L – 3M – 2N

COVINA

The Covina Council Chamber is rectangular in shape with the following dimensions: length forty-nine and one-half feet, width of chamber twenty-four feet, square footage 1188 feet, ceiling height eleven and one-half feet (see Figure 4). While physical fixtures are not used to create a division between the council and staff and the public, spatial allocations are achieved through labeled designation of various furnishings for specific use by staff and council. In addition, the council and part of the staff are on an elevated dias six inches above the general floor level.

That portion of the furniture in the chamber used by the council and staff are fixed fixtures while the public seating is of the fold-a-way type. The public rostrum is centrally located relative to the council table and requires that the person sit to use it; the rostrum is approximately twelve feet from the council table.

The council table is semi-circular in shape and is approximately eighteen feet from the first row of public seating. There is a private entry into the chamber for council and staff.

The grid pattern for the Covina Council Chamber is as follows:

2A – 4B – 2C – 2D – 1E – 1F – 1G
2H – 1I – 3J – 3K – 1L – 4M – 3N

Table 1. Composite Communicative Interaction

	Covina			Monrovia			Arcadia			Temple			So.			West		
	Covina	Monrovia	Walnut	Monrovia	Arcadia	City	Arcadia	City	El Monte	El Monte	Rosemead	Covina	Walnut	El Monte	Rosemead	Covina	Walnut	
1. Council to Council	3.0	22.3	7.2	7.2	8.2	8.2	5.6	5.9	13.5	8.6	7.1	7.1	7.1	5.9	13.5	8.6	7.1	
2. Council to Staff	4.9	2.5	7.0	7.0	4.2	4.2	5.2	2.4	5.7	4.5	7.1	7.1	7.1	2.4	5.7	4.5	7.1	
3. Council to Public	4.0	3.5	.3	.3	1.4	1.4	.6	.8	.9	.5	2.2	2.2	2.2	.8	.9	.5	2.2	
4. Staff to Staff	.5	1.1	1.4	1.4	.5	.5	1.8	1.5	2.3	.4	0	0	0	1.5	2.3	.4	0	
5. Staff to Council	5.8	4.1	8.6	8.6	7.4	7.4	8.6	4.5	9.0	6.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	4.5	9.0	6.0	9.1	
6. Staff to Public	1.8	.2	0	0	.8	.8	.6	.4	.3	0	.3	.3	.3	.4	.3	0	.3	
7. Public to Council	3.7	2.4	4.2	4.2	1.3	1.3	1.0	.2	1.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	.2	1.0	4.0	2.0	
8. Public to Staff	1.5	.2	0	0	.09	.09	.2	.2	0	0	3	3	3	.2	0	0	3	
9. Council recognition of Public extra-legal.	5	12	3	3	0	0	8	0	2	2	3	3	3	0	2	2	3	
10. Staff recognition of Public extra-legal.	4	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
11. Public introjection and let proceed.	14	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	
12. Council instruction to public general:																		
a. Neutral	6	3	5	5	6	6	3	3	5	5	2	2	2	3	5	5	2	
b. Negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
c. Positive	0	0	6	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
13. Council instructions to individuals:																		
a. Neutral	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	
b. Negative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	
c. Positive	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

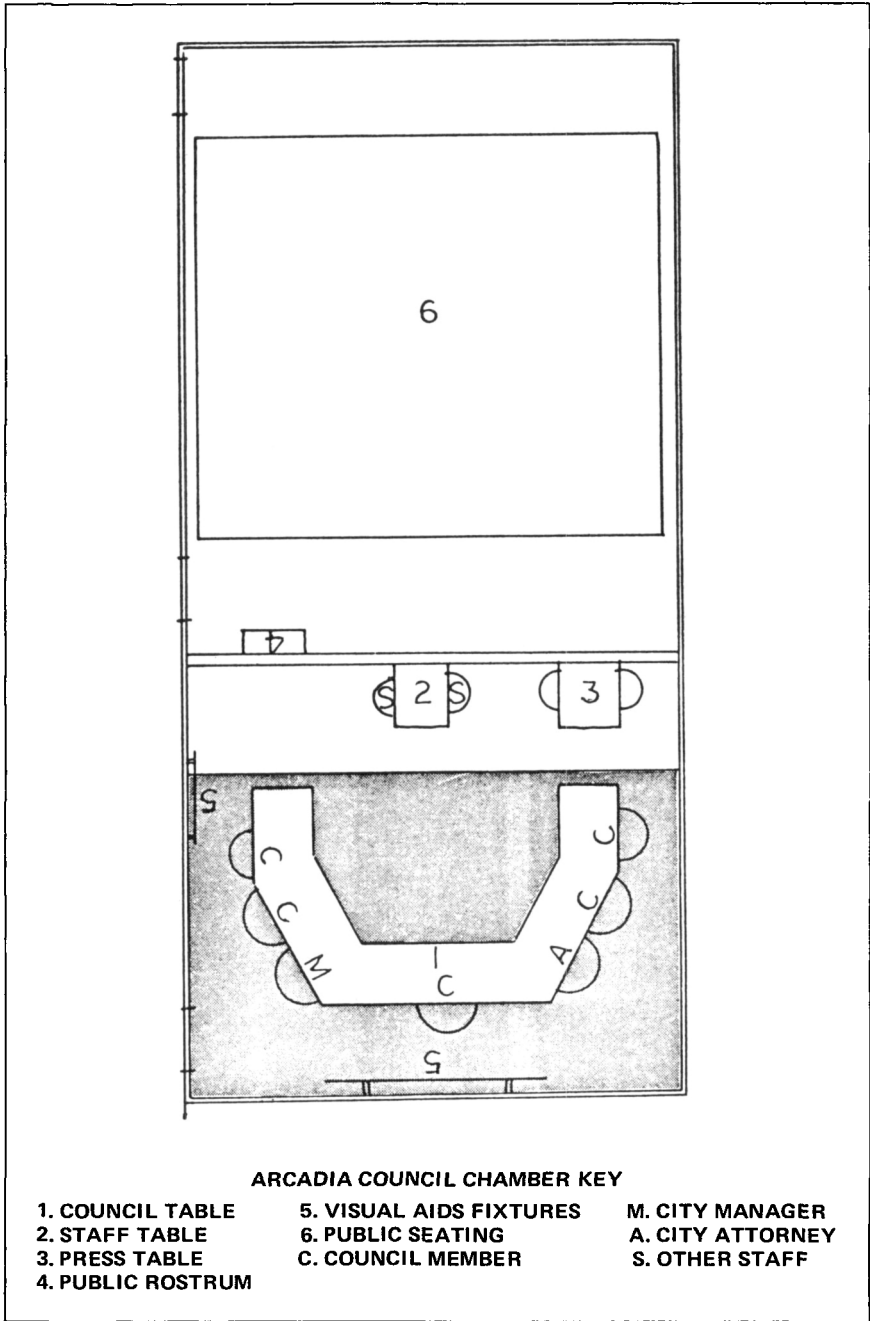


Figure 3. Arcadia Council Chamber.

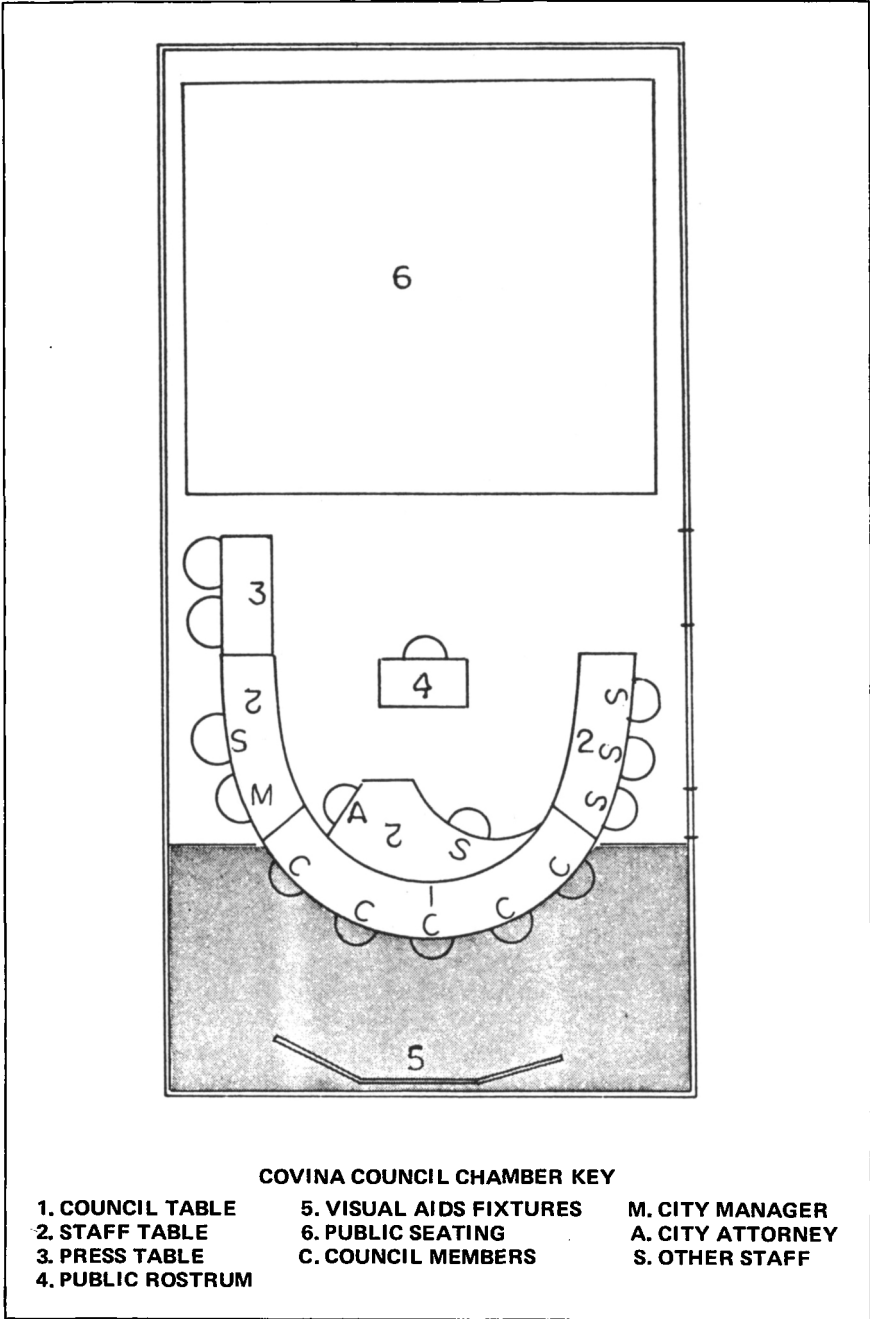


Figure 4. Covina Council Chamber.

EL MONTE

The El Monte Council Chamber is rectangular in shape with the following dimensions: length fifty-eight feet, width twenty-six feet, square footage 1508, and ceiling height ten feet (see Figure 5). However, unlike the Arcadia Chamber, the El Monte Chamber has no physical fixture serving as a partition between the council and staff and the public. More specifically, the allocation of space is achieved by fixed fixtures and designation as to who is to occupy the various spatial allocations. For example, seating for the public, is so indicated, and the tables and desks for council and staff are labeled. Augmenting this technique is the elevation of the floor level of the dias for council and part of the staff to a level one foot higher than the general floor level. The council is approximately sixteen feet from the first row of public seating.

All the fixtures in the council chamber are permanently fixed. The public rostrum is located to the council's right and approximately twelve feet away from the council table. The rostrum is the standing type.

The council table is more U-shaped than semi-circular; and while a private entry is provided for council and staff, at no time during this writer's observation was it used.

The grid pattern for the El Monte Chamber is as follows:

2A – 4B – 2C – 1D – 2E – 1F – 1G
1H – 2I – 4J – 4K – 1L – 4M – 3N

MONROVIA

The Monrovia Council Chamber is rectangular in shape with the following dimensions: length forty-eight feet, width twenty-six feet, square footage 1248, ceiling height approximately twelve feet (see Figure 6). While fixtures are not utilized to divide space, spatial allocation is achieved through labeled designation of furnishings, a contiguous abutment of staff and council tables, and the elevation of the council dias six inches above the general floor level. The council table is approximately ten feet from the first row of public seating. All fixtures in the chamber are of a permanent nature.

The public rostrum is centrally located relative to the council table and is a standing type; it is approximately seven feet from the council table. The council table is a modified semi-circular shape, and there is a private entry into the chamber for council and staff.

The grid pattern for the Monrovia Council Chamber is as follows:

2A – 4B – 2C – 1D – 1E – 1F – 1G
1H – 1I – 3J – 3K – 1L – 2M – 2N

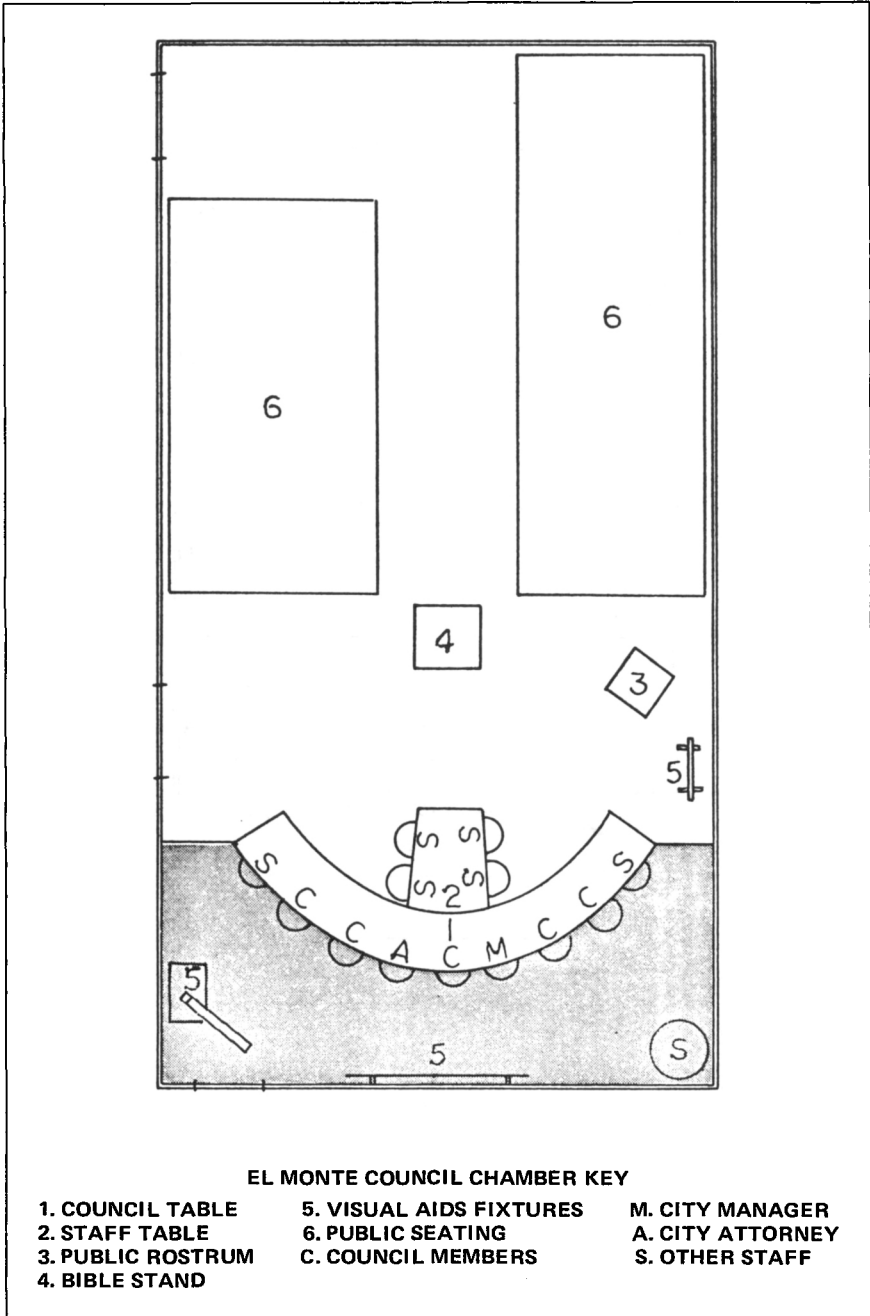


Figure 5. El Monte Council Chamber.

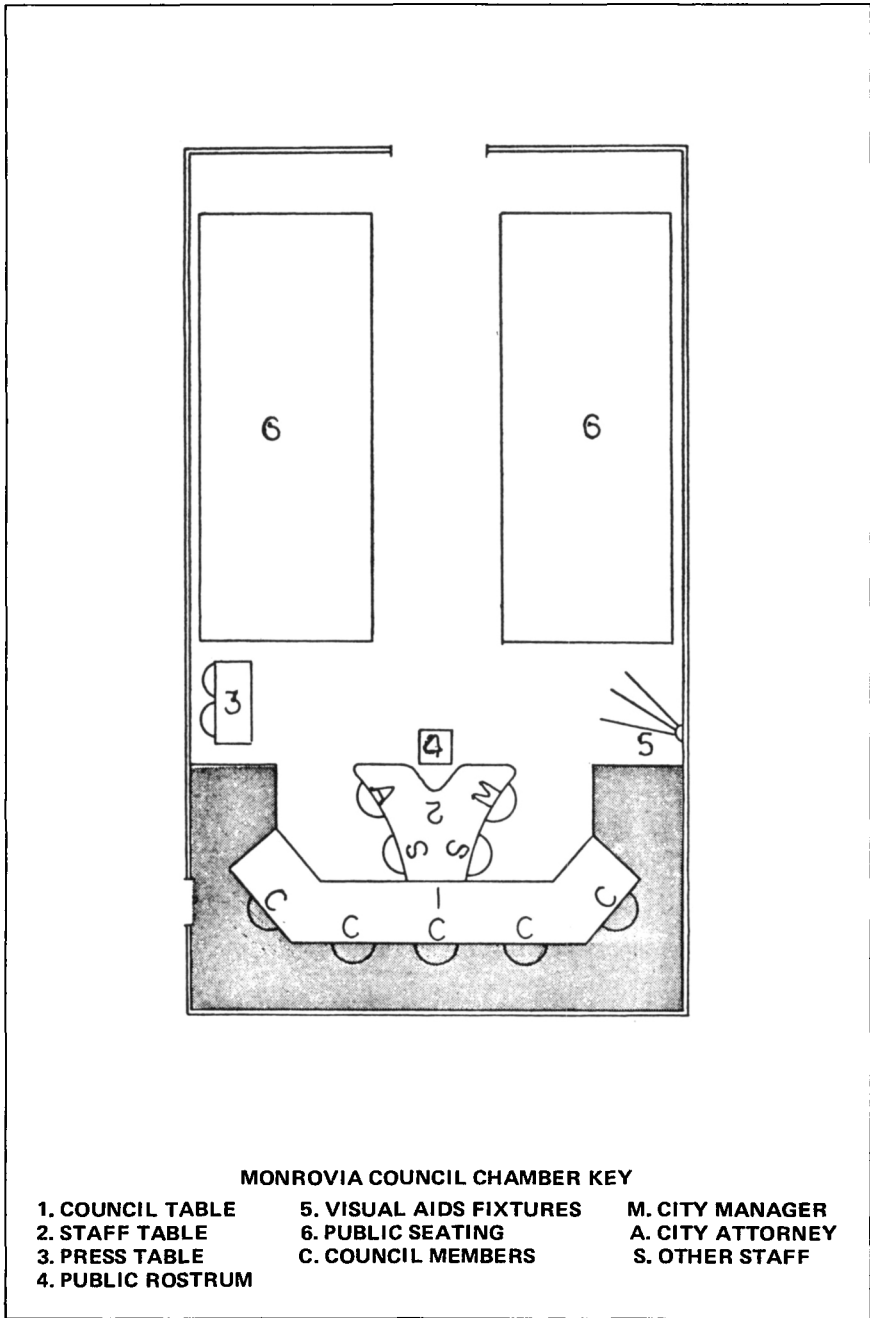


Figure 6. Monrovia Council Chamber.

ROSEMEAD

The Rosemead Council Chamber is generally square in shape with the following dimensions: length forty-two feet, width forty-eight feet, square footage 2016, ceiling height fourteen feet. The council is located at a distance of approximately fifteen feet from the public (see Figure 7). Separation is emphasized by the use of a paneled divider and an elevation on a dias of the council and partial staff a foot above the general chamber floor level. However, while all the fixtures are permanently fixed in their location, it should be noted that the floor upon which the seating for the public rests is inclined so that the floor converges towards the council and staff area.

The council table is rectangular and there is a private entry into the chamber for the council and staff. Furthermore, the public rostrum is a standing type situated in a central location relative to the council table; and it is approximately ten feet from that table. Generally speaking, it can be said that this particular chamber emulates a small theater or modified forum.

The grid pattern for the Rosemead Chamber is as follows:

1A – 1B – 2C – (4C) – 1D – 1E – 3F – 1G
1H – 1I – 6J – 5K – 1L – 3M – 3N

SOUTH EL MONTE

The South El Monte Council Chamber is generally square in shape with the following dimensions: length forty-four feet, width forty feet, square footage 1760, and ceiling height fourteen feet (see Figure 8). Separation of council and staff from the public is achieved via the utilization of a permanent wooden paneled divider. The allocation of space is further emphasized by a divided floor level which places the council and part of the staff on a dias at a one foot elevation above the general floor level. The first row of public seating is approximately fifteen feet from the council table.

The public rostrum is centrally located relative to the council table and a ten foot distance from that table; it is a standing type rostrum. The council table is modified U-shaped and there is no private entry into the chamber for council and staff.

The grid pattern for the South El Monte Chamber is as follows:

1A – 1B – 2C – 1D – 1E – 1F – 2G
1H – 1I – 6J – 4K – 1L – 3M – 3N

TEMPLE CITY

The Temple City Council Chamber is generally square in shape with the following dimensions: length forty-one feet, width thirty-one and one-half feet, square footage 1291.5 feet, ceiling height ten feet (see Figure 9). Physical

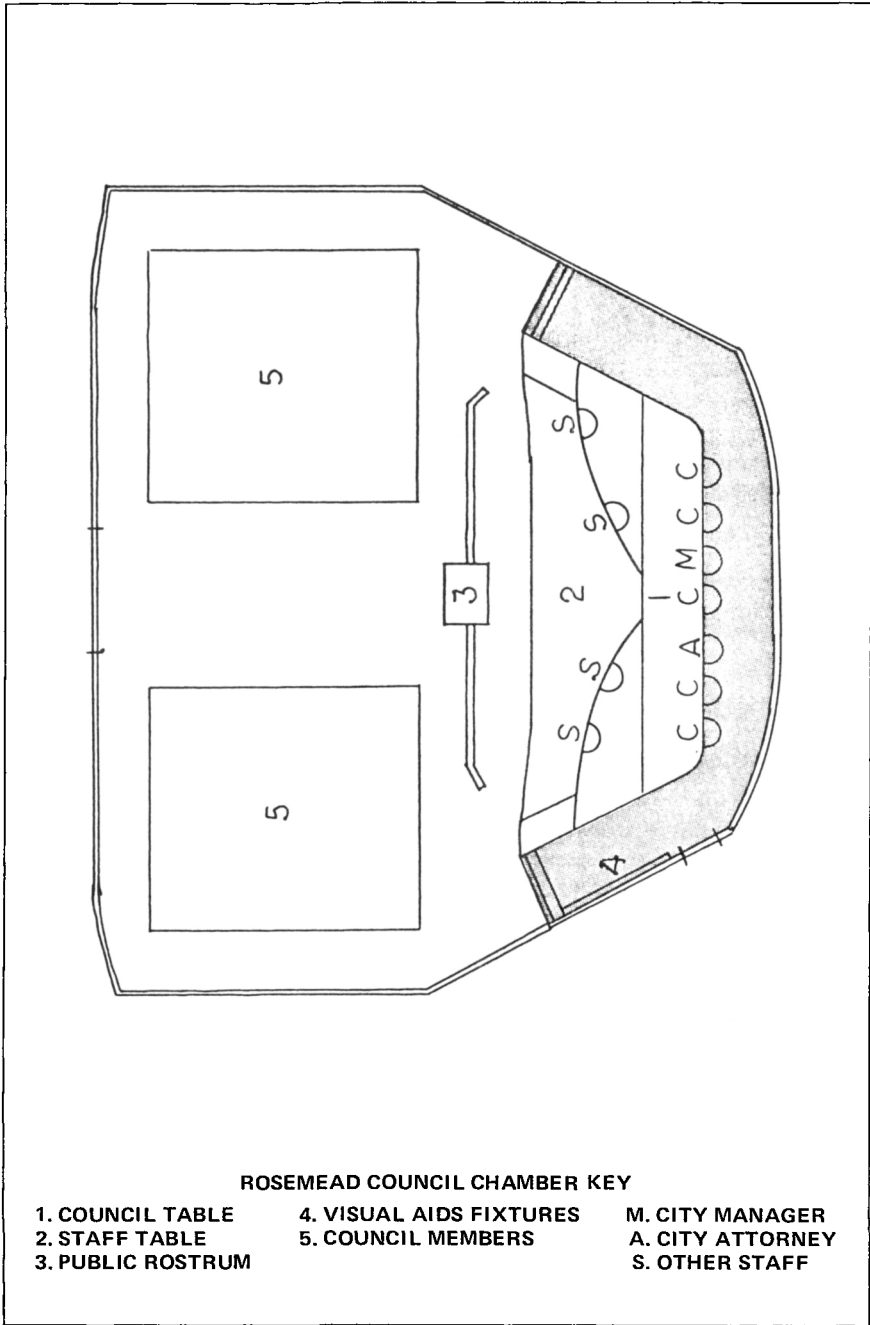


Figure 7. Rosemead Council Chamber.

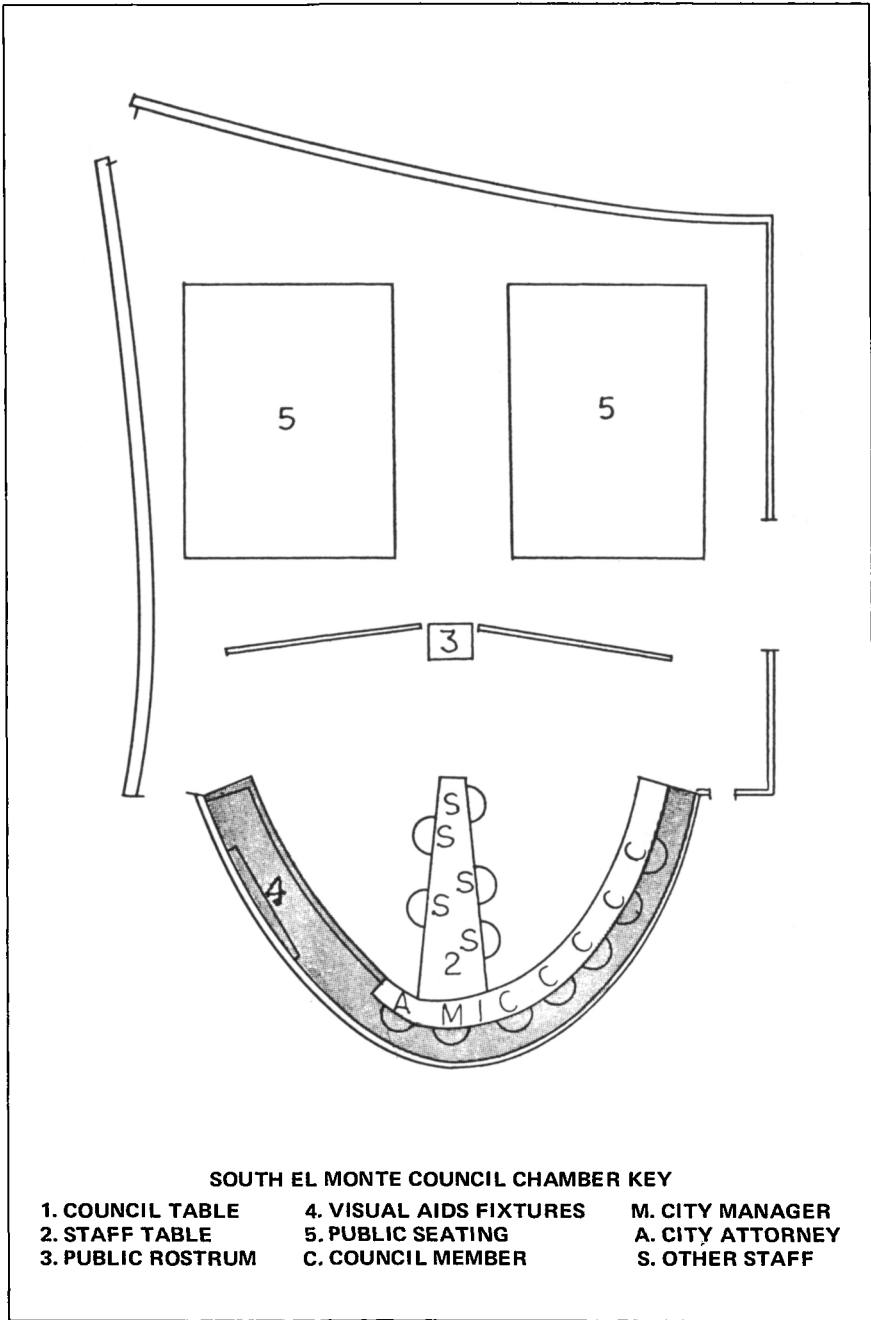


Figure 8. South El Monte Council Chamber.

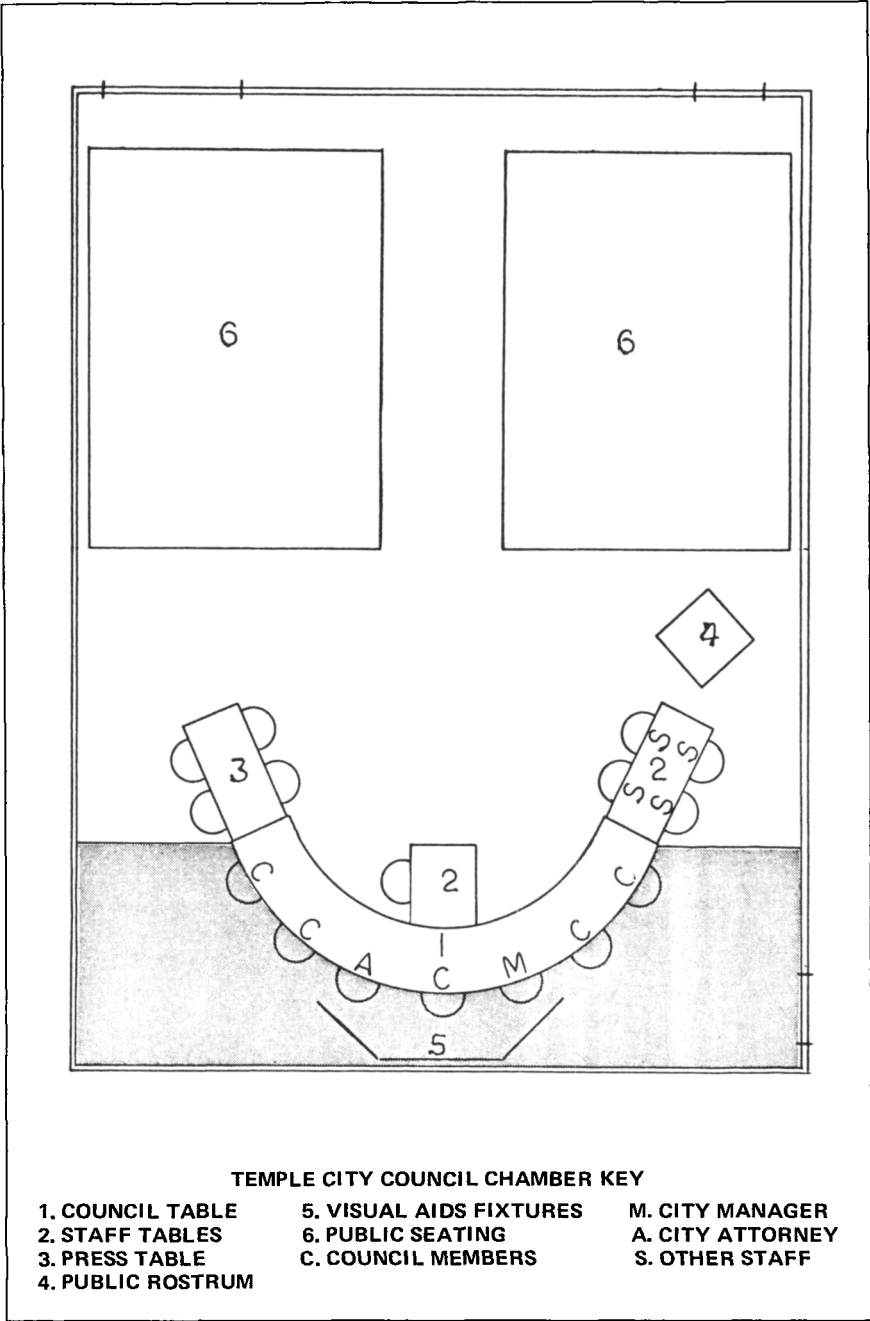


Figure 9. Temple City Council Chamber.

fixtures are not used to create a division between the council and staff and the public; however, spatial allocations are achieved through labeled designation of various furnishings for specific use by staff, council and citizens. In addition, the council and part of the staff are on an elevated platform six inches above the general floor level. There is approximately a ten foot distance from the council table and the first row of public seating. All fixtures in the chamber are permanently fixed.

The public rostrum is located to the council's right and twelve feet away from the council table; it is a standing type rostrum. The council table is a semi-circle structure; and there is a private entry for council and staff into the chamber. This chamber emulates a small forum type structure.

The grid pattern for the Temple City Council Chamber is as follows:

1A – 4B – 2C – 1D – 2E – 1F – 1G
1H – 1I – 5J – 3K – 1L – 2M – 3N

WALNUT

The Walnut Council Chamber is rectangular in shape with the following dimensions: length thirty-one feet, width nine feet, square footage 279, ceiling height ten feet (see Figure 10). A physical separation of the council and staff from the public is achieved through a fixed wooden railing bisection the chamber and a six inch elevation of the floor level of the council and staff dias above the public section of the chamber. The council is located at a distance approximately twelve feet from the first row of public seating.

There is no public rostrum. A person in the audience stands up next to his seat to make his comments. The furniture and fixtures for staff and council are of a fixed nature, and public seating are movable wooden arm chairs. The council table is semi-circular in shape, and there is a private entry for council and staff into the council chamber.

The grid pattern for the Walnut Chamber are as follows:

2A – 1B – 2C – 3 & 4D – 0E – 1F – 1G
0H – 1I – 1J – 1K – 1L – 3M – 0N

WEST COVINA

The West Covina Council Chamber is rectangular in shape; however, because of the chamber's design and utilization of space its functional width (fifty-four feet) is greater than its length (thirty-nine feet). There is 2106 square feet of floor space in the chamber and an average ceiling height of fourteen feet (see Figure 11). Thus, this chamber emulates a small forum and will fall in the forum classification in this study. A physical separation of the council and staff from the public is achieved by a fixed wooden paneled divider bisecting the chamber

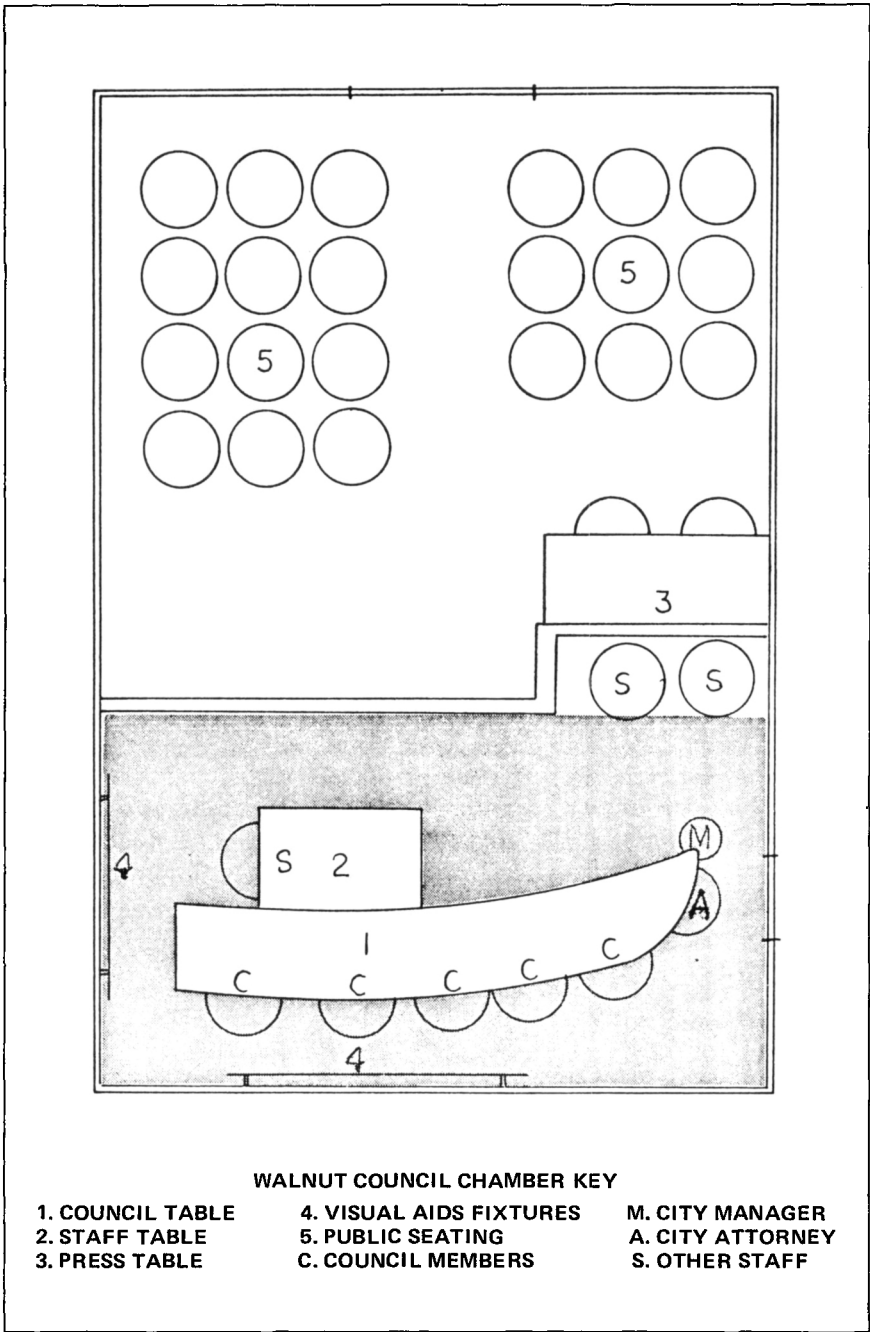


Figure 10. Walnut Council Chamber.

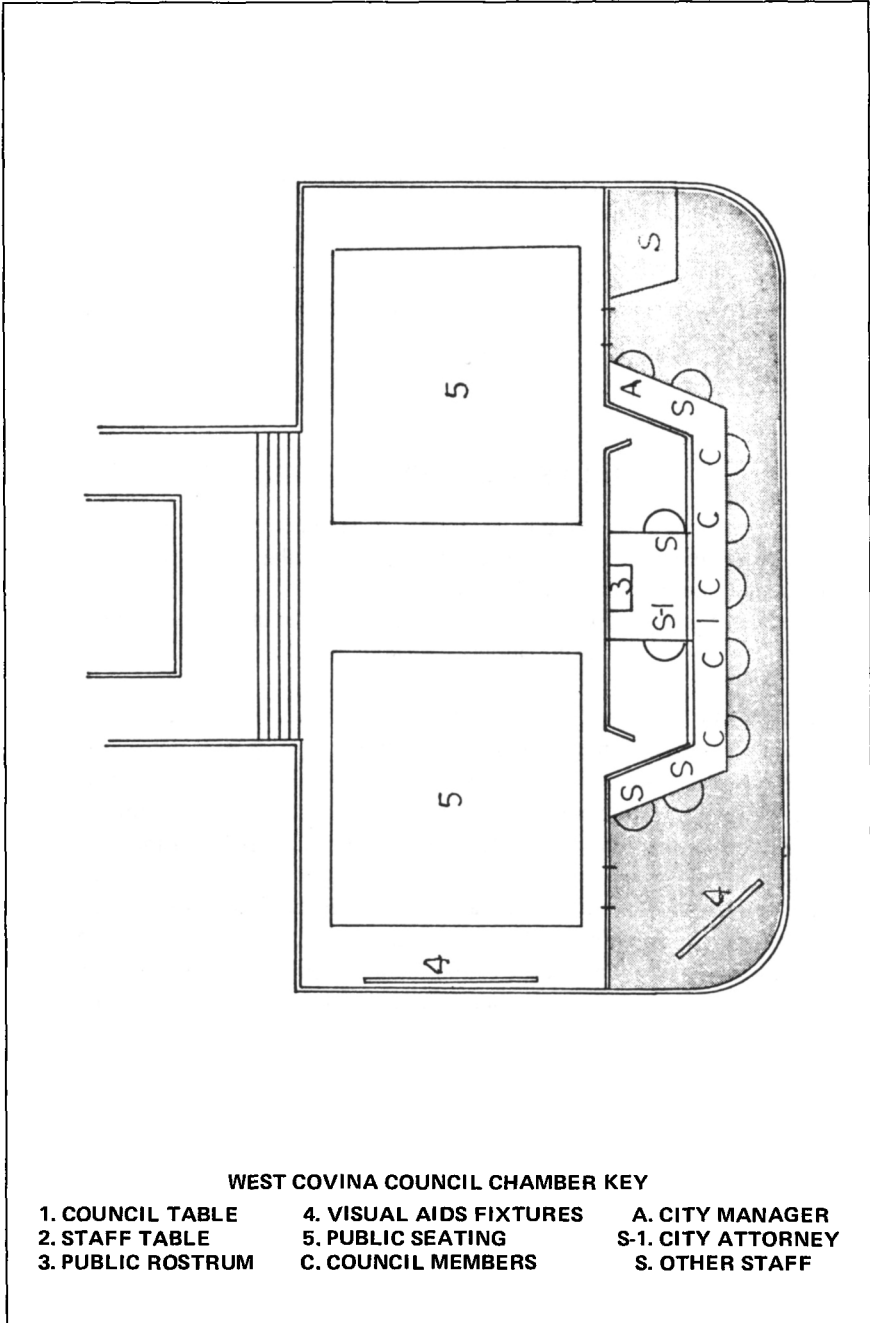


Figure 11. West Covina Council Chamber.

and a multiple series of floor elevations for staff and council with the council and partial staff being on the highest elevation of the dias. The floor of the public section inclines towards the council and staff section, and all fixtures are of a permanent nature.

The public rostrum is a standing type centrally located relative to the council table and is seven feet from the council table. The council table is rectangular or straight in shape and there is no private entry into the council chamber for the council and staff. The council table is twelve feet away from the first row of public seating.

The grid pattern for the West Covina Council Chamber is as follows:

1A – 1B – 3 & 4C – 1D – 1E – 3F – 1G
1H – 1I – 6J – 5K – 1L – 3M – 1N

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The analysis will be fourfold in approach. First, a comparison will be made between those chambers of general forum and rectangular structure, based upon the frequency of communicative interactions. Secondly, a comparison will be made between those chambers utilizing physical fragmentation to separate the council and staff areas from the public section of the chamber, and those that do not.

The third and fourth approaches will involve comparisons made of the rectangular-forum division and the fragmentation-non-fragmentation spatial concepts; however, these two examinations shall be based upon the indicators of public participation in the council meeting process included in the composite communicative interaction data table for the nine chambers (see Table 1).

Turning to the forum type chamber, and looking at Table 1, the following communicative interactions are generally characteristic of the four forum type council chambers. Those council chambers are in the cities of Rosemead, South El Monte, Temple City, and West Covina. First, communications among the council members prevail over all other types of communicative interactions. Secondly, communicative interaction between the staff and council members appear greater than communicative interaction between the public and council members. Moreover, staff communications directed to the council members are greater than council member communications directed to the staff. Thirdly, frequency of communicative interaction between the public and staff are less than the other communicative categories; with the minor exception of the staff to staff category in Temple City.

Looking next at the communicative interaction averages in Table 1 for those council chambers in the rectangular category (Arcadia, Covina, El Monte, Monrovia, and Walnut), three distinct communicative interaction patterns exist. First, in the council chambers of Arcadia, El Monte, and Walnut, communications between the staff and council were greater than communicative interactions

between the council members themselves, the public and the staff, or the public and the council. Furthermore, the degree of communicative interaction participated in by the public with the council are generally much less than staff interaction with the council members and the communications of the council among themselves. Therefore, when compared to the communication patterns of the forum type council chamber, it is apparent that insofar as communicative interaction is concerned, the staff as opposed to the public, significantly prevailed over the meeting process.

Turning next to the Monrovia council chamber we see that while communicative interactions between the staff and council and the public and council are generally equal, the communicative interactions between the council members substantially prevails. This condition could presumably indicate that both public and staff had equal opportunity to present opposing or supporting views, etc., and that the council then spent considerable time deliberating on the issues before reaching a decision.

The pattern of communicative interactions of the Covina council chamber is similar to the Arcadia, El Monte, and Walnut interaction patterns, in that the staff prevailed in communicative interaction over the public or council member to council member communicative interactions. But, it is different in that communicative interaction between council members was less (over the two meetings observed) than public or staff communicative interactions with council members. The data indicate that both staff and public had relatively equal opportunity to present and have their views solicited, and that communicative interactions regarding council deliberation, though not great, perhaps was sufficient enough for the council to make the necessary decisions.

In sum, while the Arcadia, El Monte, and Walnut council chambers appear to frustrate citizen access, the Covina and Monrovia chambers appear, if not to encourage citizen access, at least does not seem to frustrate the operation of citizen access. Though Covina and Monrovia are, along with Arcadia, El Monte, and Walnut classified in the rectangular group, their differences in communicative interaction behavior patterns may be related to differing structural features which shall be discussed later.

The council chambers of Arcadia, Rosemead, South El Monte, West Covina, and Walnut utilize a physical fixture in the form of a paneled divider or wooden railing to achieve separation of the council and staff from the public. In the council chambers of Covina, El Monte, Monrovia, and Temple City, physical fixtures are not used to achieve a fragmentation or separation concept. In looking at the communicative interaction patterns for the two groups (fragmentation and non-fragmentation) separately, it appears that no generalizations can be made regarding each group.

However, when comparing the two groups the following tendencies appear:

1. There appears to be more communicative interaction between the staff and public in the non-fragmented chambers than in the fragmented chambers as a whole.

2. There appears to be more council to public communicative interaction in the non-fragmented as opposed to the fragmented chambers. Furthermore, an overall review of the data tend to indicate that there is greater public to council communicative interaction among the fragmented as opposed to the non-fragmented chambers. However, it should be noted that the increased public to council communicative interaction in the fragmented chambers can in large part be attributed to the Arcadia and West Covina chambers. In addition, it is interesting to note that among both the fragmented and non-fragmented chambers, the Arcadia and West Covina chambers have the lowest averages on the council to public category. This seems to suggest that the high public to council scores may be a reaction to the lack of council solicitation of the publics' views during the meeting.
3. There appears to be greater communicative interaction between staff and council in the fragmented than non-fragmented chambers.

Though the data are not significantly conclusive, there does appear to be a trend evident which indicates the apparent fragmenting influence upon communicative interaction in council chambers by the utilization of fragmented architectural design in council chambers.

Those factors in the Composite Communicative Interaction Table which will be considered as public participation indicators are numbers:

3. Council to Public;
4. Staff to Public;
7. Public to Council;
8. Public to Staff;
9. Council recognition of public extra-legal;
10. Staff recognition of public extra-legal; and
11. Public introjection and let proceed.

When comparing the data of these indicators from the forum and rectangular chambers, there appears to be greater public participation in the rectangular chambers. Likewise, when these data are compared on a fragmented-non-fragmented division of the chambers, the overall trends suggest greater public participation in the non-fragmented chambers.

However, it should be pointed out that those rectangular chambers that are not fragmented have greater public participation than those chambers that are fragmented. Moreover, there does appear to be some degree of increased public participation in the forum type chambers of this study over the two fragmented rectangular type chambers included in the study.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the data indicate the following: That while the classification into forum and rectangular type chambers suggests only minor differences in the communicative interaction patterns taking place in these council chambers, the fragmented-non-fragmented division appears to show greater differentiation in communicative interaction patterns. Secondly, the

data tend to suggest that increased citizen access during the council meeting appear to be a greater possibility in forum and/or non-fragmented type council chambers.

The Monrovia and Covina council chambers appear to come closer to the ideal situation than the other chambers included in this study. They seem to allow equal opportunity for both staff and public communicative interaction. Therefore it seems prudent to comment on what appears to be the significant overall similarities of these two council chambers and the differences existing between them and the other chambers in the study.

Both the Monrovia and Covina chambers are rectangular structures that do not utilize physical dividers to separate the council and staff from the public. Moreover, both have public rostrums that are structurally different from each other; and, more importantly, both public rostrums differ from those of the seven other chambers in the study. While the Covina public rostrum is centrally located (as are four others in the study), it requires the speaker to be seated while addressing the council. The public rostrum (a standing type) in the Monrovia chamber abuts the staff table which abuts the council table making one contiguous unit of the three fixtures. The seated position of the Covina rostrum and the close proximity of the Monrovia rostrum to the council, in addition to the non-fragmented chamber, appear to assist in producing a more "equal" atmosphere among the participants in the council meeting. This characteristic may permit the public greater opportunity of participation in the council meeting and access to the council.

The Monrovia and Covina Chambers differ from the other rectangular chambers (Arcadia, El Monte, and Walnut). The Arcadia and Walnut Chambers are fragmented chambers, while the El Monte Chamber, though being a non-fragmented chamber has a dias with twice the elevation of those in the other rectangular chambers. This higher elevated dias, it is felt emanates a greater hierarchical atmosphere within the chamber than is present in the Monrovia or Covina Chambers.

Furthermore, the Monrovia and Covina Chambers additionally differ from three of the forum chambers (South El Monte, Rosemead, and West Covina) in that these three chambers are fragmented chambers rather than non-fragmented chambers. However, the Temple City Chamber – with the exception of being in the forum classification due to its width and length dimensions, and the location of its public rostrum to the right of the council table – is very similar to the Covina and Monrovia Chambers. Therefore, it would seem that the communicative interaction patterns of the Temple City Chamber would be similar to those of Covina and Monrovia. There is no explanation for this difference other than to attribute it to other factors such as those discussed earlier in this paper which are not included in this analysis.

In summary, the findings appear to suggest that (among those chambers included in the study) while the forum-rectangular differentiation appeared to

have little influence upon communicative interaction patterns, the fragmented-non-fragmented spatial treatments of space within the council chambers did. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that the physically fragmented chamber tends to intensify the territoriality and the hierarchically implied arrangements of space within the council chamber. These in turn, may diminish citizen interchange with their council members; however, as noted earlier, this study is simply exploratory in nature and it is not intended to infer from these findings a singular strict cause and effect relationship between these specific architectural features and designs and communicative interaction patterns within council chambers; again, to do so would be to ignore the complexity of the problem under consideration.

On the other hand, if the objective is to develop an environment which enhances the quality of citizen and public official interchange; then another observation is appropriate. All of the council chambers in this study could have made much greater use of the state of the art of audio-visual technology. Properly utilized audio-visual equipment can serve two purposes. First, in addition to sound equipment at the public rostrum, additional microphones can be installed at various locations in the aisles of the audience section of the chamber (yet controlled from the council table), in the manner utilized at the National Republican and Democratic Presidential Conventions. Such equipment might encourage those citizens to express their concerns who would otherwise be reluctant to do so, if to do so, they had to walk down to the public rostrum in front of their peers.

Secondly, audio-visual equipment can assist the council and staff in putting across their views and proposals to the citizens. Often public officials look upon inquiring citizens with hostility. These city officials might consider (if they question the use of effective audio-visual equipment) that the more informative a presentation and the greater the clarity with which it is received, the less questions may tend to arise. On the other hand, the better informed the citizen is the greater should be his ability to comment intelligently on the proposal or opinions being presented.

One example of where adequate visual equipment can be utilized is during discussions or presentations on land use matters. Often the visual aids used in these matters are a plat map pinned on a tack board which is difficult to see if seen at all by many of those in the council chamber. Sometimes overhead slide projectors and a portable screen are used. However, these are usually make shift arrangements with limited visibility.

The interior of the chamber could be designed so that one entire wall (or large section of that wall) could be used for visual aids, and not spoil the interior decor, etc., of the chamber.⁷ For example, a large portion of the wall could be

⁷ For an excellent discussion on the utilization of audio-visual technology in the land use area see [7].

allocated to a reverse projection screen. This technique would alleviate the problem of equipment restricting peoples' view and do away with potential noise disturbance created by the equipment. Secondly, other portions of the wall could be used to support other forms of display material, etc.

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