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Future of city building

Council whittles down its list of architects

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The future of the Portsmouth Municipal Building could be in the hands of one of three Columbus architectural firms.

The firms are in the final running to evaluate the building to determine whether it should be torn down or renovated.

The Portsmouth City Council eliminated the only local architectural firm, Tanner Stone & Co., that was interested in taking on the project.

Those still under consideration are Poggemeyer Design Group, Maddox Nbd Inc., and

Dodson-Stilson Inc.

Glasier Associates of Cincinnati, which designed Portsmouth's riverfront project, and Woolpert Inc. of Dayton had also shown interest in the project, but they, too, were given thumbs down by city council.

Mayor Franklin T. Gerlach said the municipal building and the adjacent Griffin Hall will each be evaluated by the selected firm.

Gerlach said Griffin Hall appears to be in such poor condition that it will have to be razed.

A former elementary school, has been home to the former Ohio State University - Portsmouth campus and currently houses the Portsmouth

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uncertain

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Board of Health and the Portsmouth Income Tax Department.

The building isn't accessible to the handicapped, and is in poor condition.

"It's outlived its usefulness," he said.

But for the municipal building, the mayor said the architects will be asked to look at constructing an addition and renovating the main structure or building a new one in another location.

If major construction is deemed

necessary, Gerlach said the city could sell bonds to pay for the project.

"We have plenty of bonding capacity to do that," he said.

Some city planners have suggested that the best use of the property where the city buildings are now located would be for a hotel and conference center.

If city council agrees with that, then local government could be moving into new quarters.

Council members interviewed all six of the architectural firms that made proposals for the project. A decision is expected Feb. 10.