



Review 10224: Town Hall

By lluisgib

Set: Town Hall
Set number: 10224
Number of parts: 2766
Minifigs: 8
Recommended retail price in Spain: 189,99€

It had been almost a year since I last took a stroll through the main street of the town where you can find the most iconic buildings and I was surprised to find a new building that was constructed in only a few months. It's the new town hall, the building where municipal business takes place as well as some especially relevant events.

The town hall has been built next to the Pet Shop and I walked over to it on my way from the Grand Emporium where I had just done some shopping before the end of the sales.

Walking along the pavement I came across this fabulous brand-new building. The first thing that draws my attention was its size. It is bigger than any of the buildings on the block. It is tall, imposing and majestic. It has a familiar air about it... looking to the right I see the Fire Brigade... The lines look similar. It looks like the design of the façade was carried out by the same team of architects. They are really not the same, but there are some similarities.

I cross the street and stand in front of it. I observe the new design closely and I like what I see. The first thing to stand out is the main door. It is big and solid. It is one of those doors that require two people to push it open. The mix between dark green and windows give it an "official" air. On either side of the door there are a total of 4 columns which are topped off with a pediment in the style of the Greek Parthenon. The columns are ionic with circular elements at the top part. The triangular pediment is designed to highlight the coat of arms of the town, which is in the centre of the building. All this exterior decoration make the building a bit ostentatious, though in view of the fact that it is an official building that is hardly surprising.

On either side, near the corner of the building, there are large windows giving the rooms inside the town hall natural light. Under each window there are pots with flowers to give the building a touch of colour.





When I lift my eyes I see the building has two more floors which are rather more sober in medium orange. On the first floor there is a balcony from which the mayor can present his speeches and proclamations. The balcony is semi circular and is protected with a railing. There are 4 windows symmetrically places (2 on either side) with flower pots under each of them. Each of the windows is crowned by a small arch.

The top floor is similar to the 1st, but the windows are smaller. In this case, in stead of a balcony there is a central window with a large flower pot and 4 smaller windows in the style of the Grand Emporium a few buildings down the block.

The roof of the building is something that doesn't go unadmired. I start by looking at the cornice. It is decorated with a mix of round shapes and straight lines that are visually very attractive. In the centre there is a number that must refer to some event. 1891. The year reminds me of an important date in the history of the plastic brick, none other than the birth year the greatest architect of plastic bricks in history: Mr. Ole Kirk Kristiansen.

Right above this tribute to Mr Kristiansen there is a clock and bell tower. The face of the clock is black, grey and golden, a serious looking combination, corresponding to the purpose of the building I am admiring. It is framed in white bricks which contrast with the medium orange of the bulk of the building, centring your eyes on the clock. The bell tower, white with a black roof, is the culmination of the building and the highest point in our town.

After admiring the external beauty of the building I cross the street and enter the town hall to have a look inside. But before I do so I stop a moment to see what is happening around the building. In the main door there is a wedding, the bride and groom are coming out of the town all and a photographer is immortalizing every detail of the event. To my left there are two children next to one of the flower post. The boy is eating an ice-cream and the girl looking at the flowers through a magnifying glass. Did she maybe spot an insect? Or is she just admiring the beauty of a flower? Maybe I should ask...

After crossing the main door I am in the hall that gives access to the different parts of the ton hall. The floor is chequered with black and white tiles. To my right there is a door. I enter and find myself in the municipal tax office. There is a counter with a computer, a file and a drawer for the money that has been collected. There is a chair for the civil servant in charge of this task. I also see one of the windows that look out on the street.

I walk out and turn right. There is a large arch that provides access to the assembly room. This is an open room with lots of natural light. In the centre a lectern for the mayor with the coat of arms of the city, which looks suspiciously like that of the city of Billund, and a U-shaped stand for those in attendance. To the right of the lectern there is a door which opens on the patio.

On either side of the lectern and at some considerable height there are two forged spotlights to illuminate the room.

I go back to the hall and into the last room on this floor. It is a waiting room with a sofa. the room is decorated with a marble bust. At the back there is a door; getting closer I see it has a button which I press. Suddenly I hear a noise and see the lift has arrived to take me up a floor. I did not expect a building of this type to have a lift. But I appreciate the comfort.





I get in and decide to go to the first floor. Getting out of the lift I see the ayor's secretary. She has an office table with a lamp. And at this moment she is opening a letter. I walk to the office at the end of the hall. To my left there is a railing. When I get closer I see the assembly room which is quite tall as looking up I can also see the railing of the top floor. On my way to the office I step on a carpet. It is an attractive mix of dark green, dark blue and tan. I knock on the door, twice, and hear a voice telling me to enter. The mayor is working in his office has granted me a couple of minutes to see it. There is a large table in the centre with a golden table lamp. The mayor is seated on an office chair that appears to be very comfortable. My chair is a little less comfortable... Behind him there is a picture of a shp sailing in the moonlight. A big arch in the wall allows me to look into the assembly room.

I thank the mayor for his attention and go back to the lift to visit the top floor. When I get there I see a large room that takes up the whole width of the building. On either side there is a flower pot with a rubber plant. In the centre there is a long table. There are six chairs, three on each side. There is a kind of throne presiding the table and I suppose that's where the mayor sits when the council meets. At the back there is a globe to decorate the room. Again the railing looking down into the assemble room.

I am surprised to see a ladder on one side of the wall of the lift. I suppose this will take me to the roof. So I "disobey" common sense, which tells me not to go up, and climb the ladder to see where it will lead me. I open the hatchway and get on the roof of the building. The first thing I see are two large skylights that allow sunlight into the assembly room. These skylights are very beautiful, concave constructions, made with glass shutters like the ones used in garages. What an original idea! Turning

around I see I am not alone. The maintenance guy is repairing the clock. It turns out it didn't chime the hours correctly. I see he takes the ladder that was hidden behind the clock and goes up the bell tower. That's it! One of the pins connecting the mechanism of the bell was loose. He leaves the ladder in its place and together we go back into the building. The lift takes us to the ground floor and I have a look in the only place I haven't visited yet. The interior patio. I open the door and find... just a patio, nothing else. The door has a small light to illuminate it at night. A creeper climbs the wall that is full of windows.



I'm ready to leave the town hall, but before I do I sit down for a few minutes in the waiting room and mentally go over everything I have seen. I could sum it up saying this is a majestic building, with a classic entry and a sober unpretentious design. The interior is marvellous. It is full of details in each of the rooms as could be expected in an official building. The lift is a convenience only a building of this type could contain. The furniture is classical and matches the style of the building. The bell tower and clock are the culmination of a building that, in my opinion, has it all and lacks nothing. I think that more elements inside would have made the building over elaborate. But that's a matter of taste.

When I walk out of the building I have some doubts I want to ask the main designer of the building, Astrid Graabæk. Below you will find her answers to my questions.

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Astrid Graabæk:
Senior Designer
Creator

Born in Denmark

Education: BA in Architecture and MA in Product Design

I applied for a design job at LEGO® in 2008 and got hired through a recruitment workshop. I've been in the Creator team for 3,5 years and the Town Hall is my first Exclusive set.

HBM: Could you give us some details about where did you get the inspiration of the Building?

AG: I have an architecture background and whenever I travel I enjoy studying buildings for inspiration. I always take many photos of buildings, streets and interesting façade details, because you never know when it will be useful. When I started the design of this Town Hall model I wanted it to be very classic and iconic so that it could fit in well with the rest of the modular buildings. I wanted to capture the iconic look of a tall municipal building with great pillars in the front and a clock on the top. To get inspiration for this building I searched on the internet for Town Hall buildings from all over the world. It was very interesting to discover that so many of the old municipal buildings in different countries all had parts of the iconic look that I was thinking of.

HBM: How did you decide the colour scheme?

AG: During my research I found that many Town Hall buildings have a reddish stone work and uses white details on the facade. It was also important to consider colors that are rare and hadn't been used in the other modular buildings. I'm very happy with the result: the color combination of dark orange, light and dark grey and with white pillars and windows to brighten the façade.

HBM: Why did you have the chance to have some special printed parts like the clock?

AG: We usually avoid labels or printing in the modular buildings because we enjoy the challenge of brick-building everything. However, the scale of the clock proved to be quite tricky to build. That's why we decided to make a print instead. The bride torso was also printed because it added so much to the story we wanted to create for the box photo.



HBM: While building the Town Hall, I have noted that there are a lot of small details in the inside decoration. Do you think that the decoration of this building has a "woman touch" compared with the previous ones?

AG: A model of this size offers great opportunities for interior details and I enjoyed creating them, but I don't think it has a more female touch than any of the other modular buildings. We are a mixed group of designers at LEGO and it's always about what is best for the model. For instance, LEGO friends has a great mix of male and female designers.

HBM: I love especially the skylight on the roof. Can you explain us the design process of this part? How many attempts did you do to arrive to this solution?

AG: I tried many different versions and discussed it with my design lead. In the end we decided to use a sky light creation that he came up with. I think it looks fantastic on the roof top of this model and it's an amazing and challenging building experience.

HBM: Why did you decide to add a lift instead of stairs? Once you decided to design a lift, Did you think to put a car instead of only a platform?

AG: I liked the idea of a surprise. People would probably expect a staircase, so an elevator offered something new instead. I also thought it would be an interesting detail to the building. Whenever I design a model I try to balance authenticity with play value. Sometimes I have to make sacrifices to some of the details, such as car lift, in order to create a really fun experience.

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