

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Brooklyn, New York



The United States Courthouse in Brooklyn, NY, was designed and constructed under the U.S. General Services Administration's Design Excellence Program, an initiative to create and preserve a legacy of outstanding public buildings that will be used and enjoyed now and by future generations of Americans.

Special thanks to the Honorable Raymond J. Dearie, Judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, for his commitment and dedication to a building of outstanding quality that is a tribute to the role of the judiciary in our democratic society and worthy of the American people.

February 2006

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The new courthouse redefines the Brooklyn skyline. Its design is sympathetic to the original courthouse which it adjoins. It also provides a new landmark for the Civic Center of downtown Brooklyn.

Cesar Pelli, architect





ELEVATING URBAN TRADITION

Brooklyn, the largest of New York City's five boroughs, has witnessed more than four centuries of growth and change spurred by successive waves of immigrants. One out of every seven Americans can trace their family roots through its streets.

First populated in the 1600s by the Dutch, who called it *Breuckelen*, the area remained sparsely inhabited until 1814, when Robert Fulton's new steam ferry began to offer an easy commute to and from Manhattan. Brooklyn Heights became Manhattan's first suburb and downtown Brooklyn soon grew to become a center of commerce. The Brooklyn Bridge, which opened in 1883, brought a new wave of immigrants into the expanding metropolis, which was eventually annexed by New York City in 1898. If Brooklyn were still independent, it would be the fourth most populous city in the United States.

Today, downtown Brooklyn is home to state and federal courts serving the most populated county in New York State. The new U.S. Courthouse strengthens the borough's civic center by offering state-of-the-art courtrooms and judicial facilities in a contemporary

building. Designed to complement nearby historic government buildings, its new tower serves as a beacon of civic pride that is visible within Brooklyn as well as from lower Manhattan.

Like other structures in the borough's civic core, the new courthouse fronts an avenue and pedestrian promenade called Cadman Plaza, named for Brooklyn Congregational minister and famed orator Samuel Parkes Cadman, that was created in the 1950s and 60s on land once occupied by elevated train tracks. The plaza and adjacent avenue stretch several blocks northward from Brooklyn's oldest building, Borough Hall, which opened in 1848 as a city hall. From this historic landmark, they connect state and federal buildings to Cadman Plaza Park, which focuses on a 1952 World War II memorial, at the northern end of the civic center.

The courthouse responds to this setting in renovating and expanding an outdated 1963 courthouse with a tower addition that serves as a strong architectural symbol that visually distinguishes the federal presence within downtown Brooklyn. The new

building adds 16 U.S. District and 9 Magistrate courtrooms, and 28 judges' chambers to the older structure, which incorporates a ceremonial courtroom for swearing in new American citizens. The new and existing courthouses are now integrated into a cohesive complex that conveys a strong civic identity both contemporary and respectful of the past.

Simply organized, the new courts complex now comprises a trio of clearly articulated elements expressive of their function. The six-story existing courthouse at the northern end is connected to a six-story connecting entry hall in the center of the block and a new 15-story courthouse to the south. Bordering the site are Walt Whitman Park to the north, Cadman Plaza and adjacent Cadman Plaza Park to the west, Adams Street on the east, and Tillary Street to the south. On the neighboring block across Tillary Street stands an 1892 Romanesque Revival post office and courthouse, which was recently renovated to provide additional courtrooms for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

The building takes advantage of an east-west slope to provide a partially above-

grade floor for the U.S. Marshals Service and the entrance to the two-level underground parking garage, which is positioned on the lower side of the site on Adams Street.

Exterior materials were chosen to meld the old and new courthouses into a unified complex and be in sympathy with the other structures in Brooklyn's civic center. Warm-toned, French chamesson limestone on the new courthouse harmonizes with the grayer, Indiana limestone and granite of the existing courthouse as well as the light-colored stone facades of the nearby post office and marble-clad Borough Hall. On the base of the new tower, limestone panels are combined with tall, rectangular windows to complement the modernist architecture of the existing courthouse. Abstracted pilasters, rounded moldings, and horizontal window mullions on the lower stories add a level of richness appreciated from the street.

New security guidelines for federal buildings led to the design of windows with laminated glass and structural frames to withstand explosions.

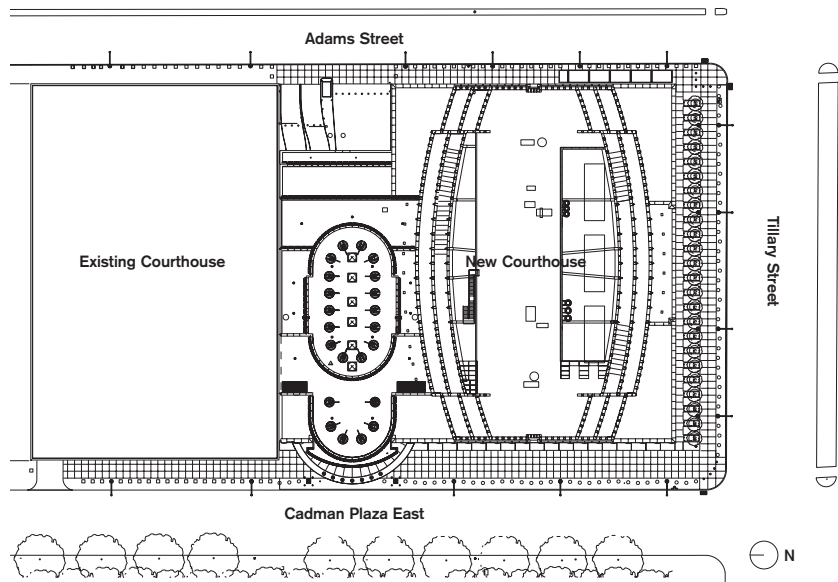
Above the base, the tower is designed with setbacks and gently curved tiers along the north and south faces to create a distinctive profile on the skyline. The stepped-back shaft also helps to preserve views to Manhattan from nearby residential buildings. Tall, narrow limestone panels, alternated with fritted glass, are arranged to emphasize a rhythmic verticality that further breaks down the scale. Streamlined aluminum finials rising from the upper tiers are reminiscent of New York's older skyscrapers.

In contrast to the tradition-minded masonry tower, the connector between the new and old sections of the courthouse is a more modern, glassy cylinder banded in painted aluminum. This light-filled hall announces its purpose with lettering integrated into the entrance canopy and a bronze Great Seal of the United States, relocated from the 1963 courthouse, mounted near the top. Limestone-clad walls flanking the cylinder form a visual transition from the new tower to the existing courthouse.

Set to either side of the entrance hall, twin cast-bronze sculptures by Washington, DC-based artist Lisa Scheer clearly mark

the front door and direct visitors to the courthouse. Though identical, they are rotated 180 degrees from each other so they never look the same from a single viewpoint. Their sculpted bronze tops suggest flaming torches meant to symbolize enlightenment and freedom. Set on top of granite pedestals, they also recall the Statue of Liberty, an emblem both representative of New York and all Americans.

Granite and steel bollards protect the perimeter of the site.



Site Plan











**It is a noble structure that conveys the majesty
and openness of the American judicial system.
Its design is timeless.**

Cesar Pelli, architect

CAPTURING THE LIGHT

The theme of light recurs as an organizing element inside the new building. The main lobby inside the rounded, glass-and-metal connector sets the tone with an elegant, light-filled space that almost feels like a theater lobby. Sunlight enters through its curving, glassy walls onto travertine-clad walls and terrazzo floors. Circular skylights in the 75-foot-high ceiling and round lights mounted under the balconies augment the daylight. Wrapping around the open space, travertine-faced staircases and balconies provide separate circulation for visitors and judges between the new and old courthouses. This activity enlivens the lobby, which serves as a central orientation point within the complex, and distinguishes it from the monumental vestibules in other courthouses.

Once past security under the rear balcony, visitors climb a staircase at the back of the lobby to reach the jury assembly room, Pretrial Services, and an arraignment complex on the second floor, and the ceremonial courtroom in the existing building. On the third floor, a double-height, maple-paneled cafeteria with pendant lighting fixtures is visible through glass walls in the public

hallway that also filter daylight into the space. Also housed on this floor is a spacious Court of Appeals law library.

In the tower, courtrooms and judges' chambers are arranged into a compact footprint to create a tapered building profile and allow daylight to penetrate the interiors. Larger District courtrooms occupy the lower floors while smaller Magistrate courtrooms are positioned in the upper stories. Judges' chambers are arranged in a collegial layout on a single floor located between two court floors, rather than dispersed in spaces next to the courtrooms. Each of the eight chamber sets on the four collegial floors includes a reception area, library, and offices.

The efficiency of this organization is bolstered by a clear circulation pattern on the courtroom levels. Each of these floors houses four courtrooms. Behind the courtrooms along the east and west perimeters are daylit rooms for jury deliberation and judges' preparations.

Visitors reach the courtrooms from a central elevator lobby, finished in Rosa Verona

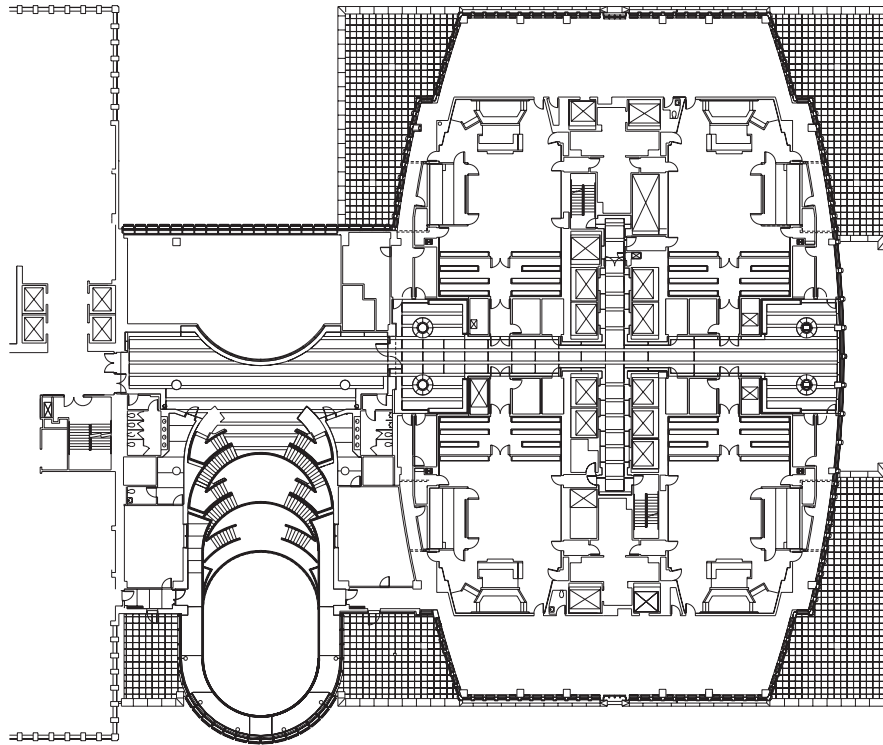
marble wall panels, that leads to a travertine-clad hallway extending through the middle of the building to lobbies at the north and south ends of the floor. Furnished with wooden benches, these perimeter courtroom lobbies offer wonderful views of the East River, lower Manhattan, New York City harbor, and Brooklyn through floor-to-ceiling windows. Both the stone-sheathed walls and benches recall similar finishes and furnishings in the public corridors of the existing courthouse.

Courtrooms are also designed to complement the interiors of the older courthouse with maple, cherry and anigre wainscoting, wooden benches, and simple panels of different colored, veined marbles set into the walls above the judge's benches. Matched to the colors of the marble panels, broadloom carpet further distinguishes each courtroom. Coffered ceilings and rear walls are fitted with acoustical panels for sound absorption. Clerestories above the jury box emit daylight. Each courtroom is designed with the latest audio-visual and computer technology, such as flat screens in specially designed housings that allow jurors to view evidence from their chairs in the jury box.

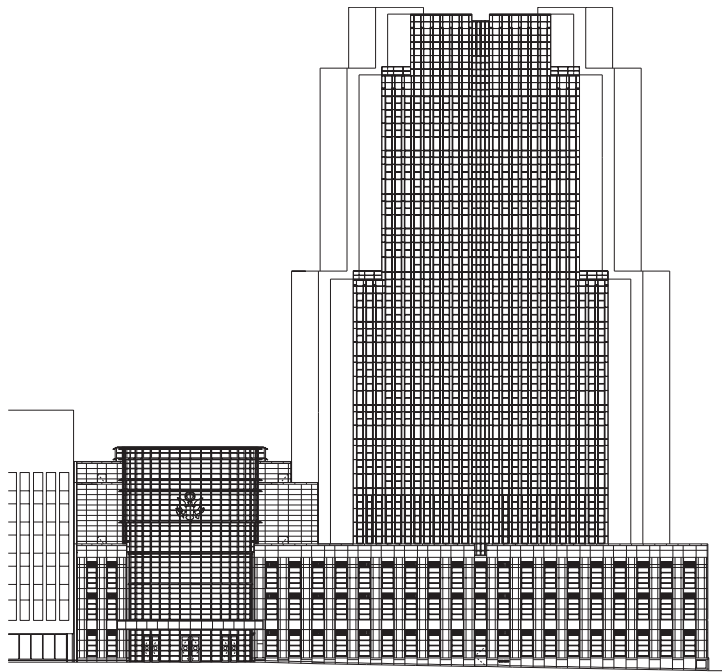




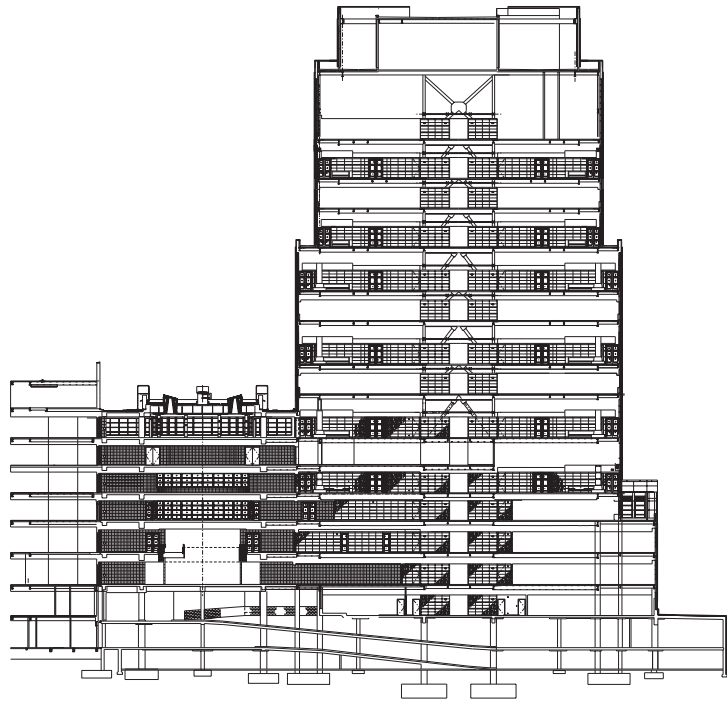




Courtroom Floor Plan



West Elevation



Section

ART IN ARCHITECTURE

Art has always been an important feature of great architecture. For the new United States Courthouse in Brooklyn, New York, bronze sculptures were commissioned to mark the main entrance.

Beacon

Main Entrance on Cadman Plaza East

Lisa Scheer

Standing twenty-four feet tall, Lisa Scheer's twin sculptures have been carefully crafted to physically and symbolically mark the entrance to the courthouse. The cast bronze sculptures, fourteen feet high and sitting on ten-foot granite pylons, are identical but have been rotated 180 degrees from each other so they never look the same from a particular view. Scheer has also designed lighting so that the works will be dramatically illuminated at night.

Scheer's works of art are often large in scale and abstract, yet infused with suggestions of imagery and narrative. Here, at the courthouse in Brooklyn, the abstract works invoke flames floating upward—a torch to illuminate, enlighten, or guide visitors to the courthouse. The sculptures also bring

to mind the symbolism of the torch of the Statue of Liberty, an emblem for both the state of New York and for American ideals. Through this symbolism, the artist envisioned a beacon of freedom and an awakening of the spirit, an ideal signifier for the courthouse.

Art in Architecture Program

GSA's Art in Architecture Program commissions American artists, working in close consultation with the lead design architect, to create artwork that is appropriate to the diverse uses and architectural vocabularies of federal buildings. These permanent installations of contemporary art for the nation's civic buildings afford unique opportunities for promoting the integration of art and architecture and facilitate a meaningful cultural dialogue between the American people and their government. A panel comprising an art professional from GSA's National Register of Peer Professionals, an art professional from the city or region, the project's lead design architect, and individuals representing the federal client, the community, and GSA provides guidance in selecting the best artist for each project.



GENERAL FACTS ABOUT THE COURTHOUSE

The United States Courthouse in Brooklyn, which serves the Eastern District of New York, occupies an 8,973-square-meter parcel bounded by Tillary and Adams Streets, Cadman Plaza East and Walt Whitman Park. The 750,000-square-foot courthouse expands an existing, six-story courthouse built in 1963 on the northernmost portion of the site.

At the southern end, the building rises 250 feet to encompass a slightly curved, tiered tower set atop a four-story structure, which extends to the edge of the sidewalk planted with ginkgo trees. This 15-story wing replaces a four-story federal office building that previously stood on the site. It is connected to the existing courthouse by a curved entrance hall and public lobby in the center of the block that is entered from Cadman Plaza East. Also accessible on this level is the District Court Clerk.

Vehicles drive from Adams Street into a two-level, 252-space underground parking garage that takes advantage of the sloping site with the entrance tucked into the lower, east-facing side of the building.

The new building houses 16 U.S. District courtrooms, 9 Magistrate courtrooms, and

28 judges' chambers. Courtrooms and chambers are arranged in a collegial layout in the tower, rather than being grouped together on the same level, to reduce the size of the floor plates and create a tapered building profile. Eight judges' suites occupy a single floor located between two court floors.

Each courtroom level contains four courtrooms arranged into quadrants on the floor. Surrounding the courtrooms are attorney conference rooms, holding cells, jury deliberation rooms, and other functions. At the center of each courtroom floor, a cross-shaped public circulation spine connects the elevator lobby to a north-south corridor leading to the courtrooms and spacious waiting areas at the perimeter. On the courtroom floors, daylight is provided in the hallways, lobbies overlooking city views, jury deliberation rooms, and judges' robing rooms.

Juries assemble on the second level. Also located on this level are a Magistrate courtroom, designated for arraignments, and Pretrial Services. A public cafeteria and Court of Appeals library are located on the third level.



Location

An 8,973-square-meter parcel in downtown Brooklyn bounded by Cadman Plaza East, Tillary and Adams Streets, and Walt Whitman Park.

Size

632,377 Gross Square Feet
250 Feet to Top of Tower
15 Stories Above Tillary Street
2 Parking Levels Below Grade

Time Frame

Design Awarded: January 1995
Construction Started: December 1999
Occupancy: January 2006

Major Building Components

District courtrooms: 46,000 Square Feet
Magistrate courtrooms: 20,250 Square Feet
Judges' Chambers: 64,280 Square Feet
Jury Rooms: 22,110 Square Feet
U.S. District and Magistrate Clerk Offices:
3,410 Square Feet
U.S. Marshals Service: 70,150 Square Feet
Main Public Lobby: 56,200 Square Feet
Public Cafeteria: 9,550 Square Feet

Parking

252 Spaces Below Grade

Foundation

Spread concrete footings with slab on grade and cast walls.
Composite steel-encased concrete with concrete slab to the ground floor.

Structure

Tower: Steel frame with composite decking and spray-on fireproofing.
Connecting Entrance Hall: Cast-in-place concrete.

Mechanical

Heat: perimeter hot water
Air-conditioning: absorption chillers
Central air distribution with local recirculating system
13 traction elevators
1 freight elevator
1 parking elevator

Exterior walls

French chameson limestone; barre gray granite base; ceramic frit glass; exterior aluminum curtain wall; precast concrete backing at base.

Public Area Interior Finishes

Entrance hall and lobby: Travertine tile on walls and balcony fronts; terrazzo floors; stainless-steel-trimmed glass doors and windows; plaster-coated, painted drywall ceilings.

Elevator lobbies: Rosa Verona marble wall panels; terrazzo floors; drywall ceilings.

Courtroom lobbies: Travertine-clad walls, terrazzo floors; drywall ceilings.

Courtrooms: Anigre, cherry, and maple wall paneling and furniture; marble paneling behind judges' bench; cast gypsum and GFRC ceilings; broadloom carpet.

BIOGRAPHIES: THE ARCHITECT AND THE ARTIST

Cesar Pelli was born in Argentina, where he earned an architecture degree from the University of Tucuman. He arrived in the United States in 1952 to attend graduate school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Pelli started his career by working for architect Eero Saarinen on projects such as the TWA Terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. In 1964, he became an American citizen.

That same year, he became director of design at Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall (DMJM) and, four years later, became partner for design at Gruen Associates, both Los Angeles firms. Among his most noted projects from this phase of his career are the Commons and Courthouse Center in Columbus, Indiana; the Pacific Design Center in Los Angeles; and the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, Japan.

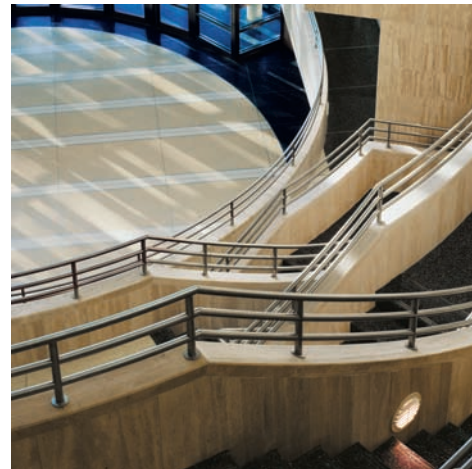
In 1977, Pelli was appointed dean of Yale University's School of Architecture and also founded his own firm, Cesar Pelli & Associates Architects. Over the past three decades, he has changed the skylines of cities from Houston to Hong Kong with his urban-sensitive towers. Among his most

striking buildings are the World Financial Center in New York; the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Osaka, Japan.

Pelli's work has been widely published and exhibited. Over his career, the architect has received 10 honorary degrees and more than 150 awards for design excellence. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Academy of Design, the International Academy of Architecture and the Architecture Academy of France. In 1995, Pelli was awarded the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects in recognition of his outstanding achievements. In 1996, he was appointed to GSA's National Register of Peer Professionals.

Lisa Scheer is a Washington, DC-based sculptor who has worked for more than two decades as both an artist and an educator. She received a Bachelor of Art degree from Bennington College and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Yale University's school of art. Since 1981, Scheer has taught fine art and art theory at St. Mary's College in St. Mary's City, Maryland, where she is a professor of art.

Influenced by architecture from Baroque churches to Chinese temples, Scheer has created site-specific sculptures for prominent public buildings, including Washington's Ronald Reagan National Airport, the Palmer Museum of Art at Penn State University, and the DuBurns Arena in Baltimore, Maryland. Her artwork has been exhibited in a variety of venues, including solo shows at the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Phillips Collection, and the American Institute of Architects' national headquarters in Washington, DC. Scheer has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation in recognition of her creative achievements.



THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Owner

U.S. General Services Administration
Regional Office: New York, NY

Design Architect

Cesar Pelli & Associates
New Haven, CT

Architect of Record

HLW International LLP
New York, NY

Artist

Lisa Scheer
Washington, DC

GSA Project Team

Myron Goldstein (Project Executive)
Linda J. Peters (Project Manager)
Robert J. Collegio (Construction Engineer)
Clement E. Migliano (Project Architect)
Francis Cashman (Contracting Officer)

Design Excellence National Peers

Fred Koetter
Koetter Kim & Associates
Boston, MA

Graham Gund
Gund Partnership
Cambridge, MA

Tom Finkelppearl
Showhegan School of Painting
New York, NY

Construction Excellence National Peers

Eddie Stewart
Caddell Construction Company
Montgomery, AL

Kenneth Grunley
Grunley Construction Company
Rockville, MD

Larry Hopp
Kiewit Construction Company
Omaha, NE

Structural Engineer

Narov Associates
New York, NY

Mechanical and Electrical Engineer

HLW International LLP
New York, NY

General Contractor

Fireman's Fund Insurance Company/
JA Jones Construction Group
Bovis Lend Lease
New York, NY

Cost Estimating

Accu-Cost Construction Consultants
New York, NY

Programming

Archivolt
Arlington, VA

Security

Schiff & Associates
Bastrop, TX

Geotechnical

Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers
New York, NY

Exterior Façade

Gordon H. Smith Corporation Inc.
New York, NY

Lighting Design

Cline Bettridge Bernstein
New York, NY

**Acoustics, Telecommunications,
and Audio-Visual**

Shen Milsom & Wilke, Inc.
New York, NY

Environmental Hazard Abatement

The Earth Technology Corporation
Cherry Hill, NJ

Vertical Transportation

Calvin L. Kort Associates
Glen Rock, NJ

Food Service

Giampietro Associates, Inc.
Melville, NY

Graphic Design

HLW International LLP
New York, NY



**U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
AND THE DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**

Public buildings are part of a nation's legacy. They are symbolic of what Government is about, not just places where public business is conducted.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is responsible for providing work environments and all the products and services necessary to make these environments healthy and productive for federal employees and cost-effective for the American taxpayers. As builder for the federal civilian government and steward of many of our nation's most valued architectural treasures that house federal employees, GSA is committed to preserving and adding to America's architectural and artistic legacy.

GSA established the Design Excellence Program in 1994 to change the course of public architecture in the federal government. Under this program, administered by the Office of the Chief Architect, GSA has engaged many of the finest architects, designers, engineers, and artists working in America today to design the future landmarks of our nation. Through collaborative partnerships, GSA is implementing the goals of the 1962 *Guiding Principles for Federal*

Architecture: (1) producing facilities that reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the federal government, emphasizing designs that embody the finest contemporary and architectural thought; (2) avoiding an official style; and (3) incorporating the work of living American artists in public buildings. In this effort, each building is to be both an individual expression of design excellence and part of a larger body of work representing the best that America's designers and artists can leave to later generations.

To find the best, most creative talent, the Design Excellence Program has simplified the way GSA selects architects and engineers for construction and major renovation projects and opened up opportunities for emerging talent, small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned businesses. The program recognizes and celebrates the creativity and diversity of the American people.

The Design Excellence Program is the recipient of a 2003 National Design Award from the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, and the 2004 Keystone Award from the American Architectural Foundation.



U.S. General Services Administration

Public Buildings Service

Office of the Chief Architect

Design Excellence and the Arts

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U.S. General Services Administration