UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Hammond, Indiana

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The most important thing about a courthouse is that it must speak… speak about the meaning of the system of justice and the idea of accessibility, the idea that every citizen will have equal access to the administration of justice.

Henry N. Cobb
Architect, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners

A SYMBOL OF JUSTICE IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

The United States Courthouse for the Northern District of Indiana is impressively situated on a generous 6.9-acre site in downtown Hammond. In a city whose roots lie in the bustle of the meatpacking industry and whose streets are still crossed by on-grade railroad tracks, this building presents an image of dignity and stability. Its expansive limestone walls, horizontal silhouette, boldly cut openings, and monumental entrance contrast with the heterogeneity of the red brick and terra cotta details found in the surrounding early-20th century retail, commercial, and warehouse buildings. If Hammond has a gritty, boom-to-bust character, the courthouse presents itself as a haven, a place away from the noise and randomness of life where the pursuit of truth becomes the cornerstone of rigorous yet accessible justice.

While the courthouse is a special and uplifting place, it is engaged in the specifics of its site. Facing east across the trees and open landscape of Indiana to the many communities served by the court, the entrance is distinct and inviting. The horizontal emphasis of the attic story reverberates with the flat midwest prairie. Incised in this volume, a broad masonry arch connects two lower, symmetrical solid building volumes. A glass wall fills the space beneath the arch drawing people to the light-filled room at the heart of courthouse and projecting a sense of justice available to all. Visitors, upon arriving at the site, walk up a gently sloping incline, passing under the boughs of oak and beech trees, to a plaza placed at the convergence of the paths just in front of the central entrance. Here, a beam of architectural concrete and a glass canopy shelter a welcoming threshold into the great hall. Arrayed to either side of this public space are galleries and courtrooms.

The hall's architectural details are contemporary in spirit. At the same time, it is a place designed in the tradition of great public spaces. In its dispassionate yet uplifting mood, its unprogrammed yet useful plan, it is, indeed, a hall of justice. Measuring 43 feet wide and 138 feet long, its vaulted ceiling rises to 64 feet in a graceful arc that transcends the stony interior. On the main level, eight tablets are inscribed with quotes recalling important

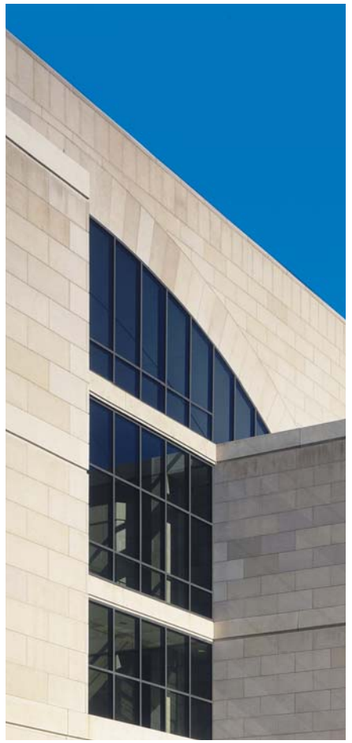
judicial principles. Marking the cross-axis of the imposing hall, artist Dale Chihuly has created four clusters of intertwined clear, white, and blue glass sculptures held aloft by steel posts and lit from below. Highlighting all of this, buff-colored native Indiana limestone blocks impart a soft radiance to the enclosed space while on the exterior they crisply render the building's volume in light and shade.

The cross-axis delineated by the Chihuly installations leads to elevator banks on either side of the great hall providing vertical circulation to all levels of the building. On the floor below are facilities for the U.S. Attorney, U.S. Marshals, Probation Services, and grand jury. The clerks' offices, jury assembly room, and a cafeteria are on the main level. Two Magistrate and two Bankruptcy courts occupy the floor above, and on the highest level, there are four District courtrooms. The galleries leading to the courtrooms also look back over the great hall providing a continuity of spatial experiences from the main to higher building levels. Judges' chambers and jury deliberation suites flank the courtrooms. The chambers look into private courtyards carved into the volume of the building and enjoy framed views of the city and surrounding communities.

At the west end of the great hall, the expansive glazed wall faces downtown Hammond, capturing the setting sun and opening onto an outdoor terrace. A simple limestone pergola defines the far edge of this exterior space, a relaxed counterpoint to the dramatic vaulting and galleries of the hall. With casual views of the surrounding buildings, the terrace provides an opportunity to sit with a cup of coffee, have a quiet conversation, or take a contemplative walk.

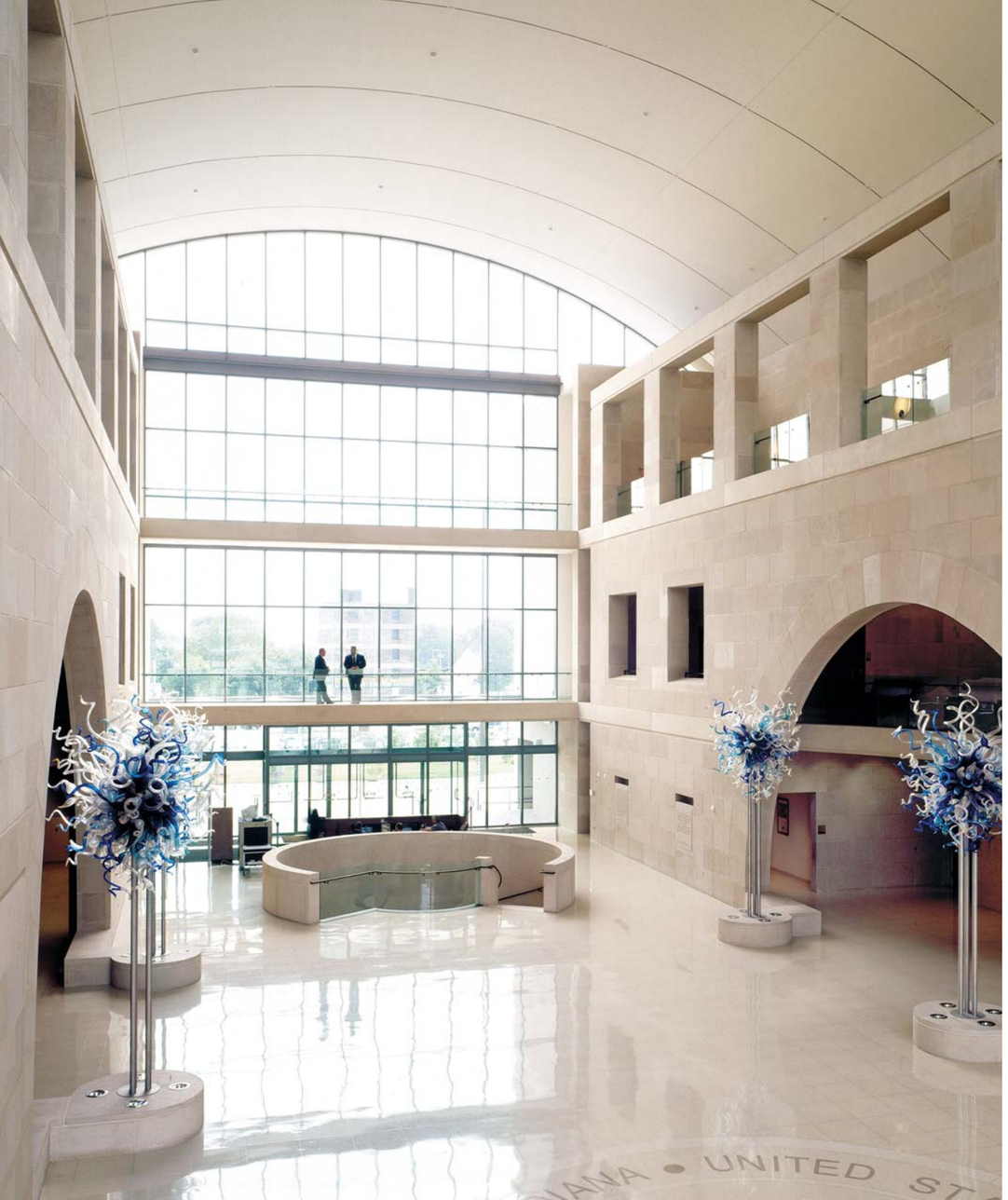
As seen from Hohman Avenue—the main street in Hammond—the courthouse manifests itself as a distinctive precinct. A broad, two-story limestone wall flanks the street, defining the limits of the outdoor terrace and presaging the strength of the courthouse that rises behind it. Cut into the volume of the main building itself, the arch of the great hall opens this impressive public space to the city, which illuminated at night, stands out on the skyline as a beacon of justice, affirming the dignity and vitality of American democracy.

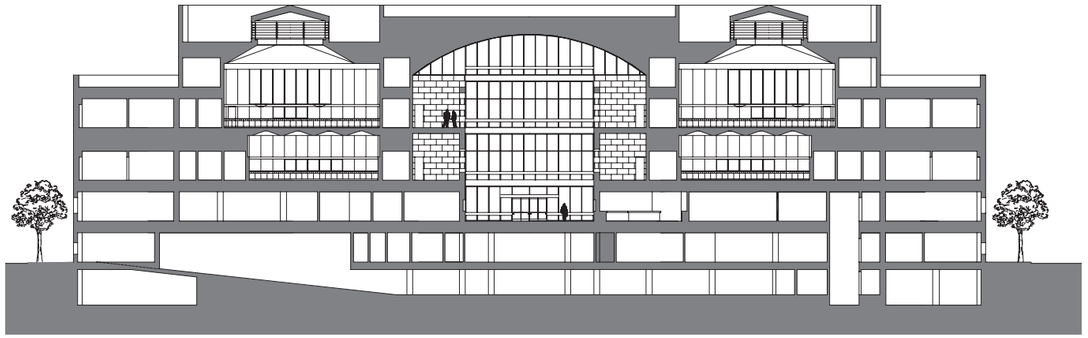
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE



Our courthouse provides the community with a location to conduct important business complemented by beauty, warmth, strength, security, openness, and congeniality. It provides judges with a fabulous structure to dispense justice and the public with a place of distinction for gatherings.

Rudy Lozano
Judge, U.S. District Court
Northern District of Indiana





Section

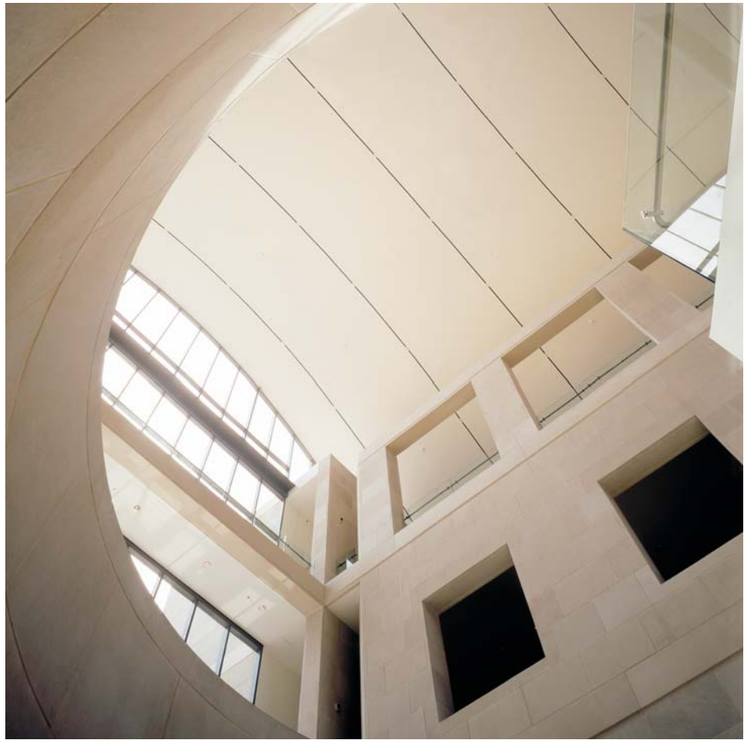
GEOMETRY AND LIGHT

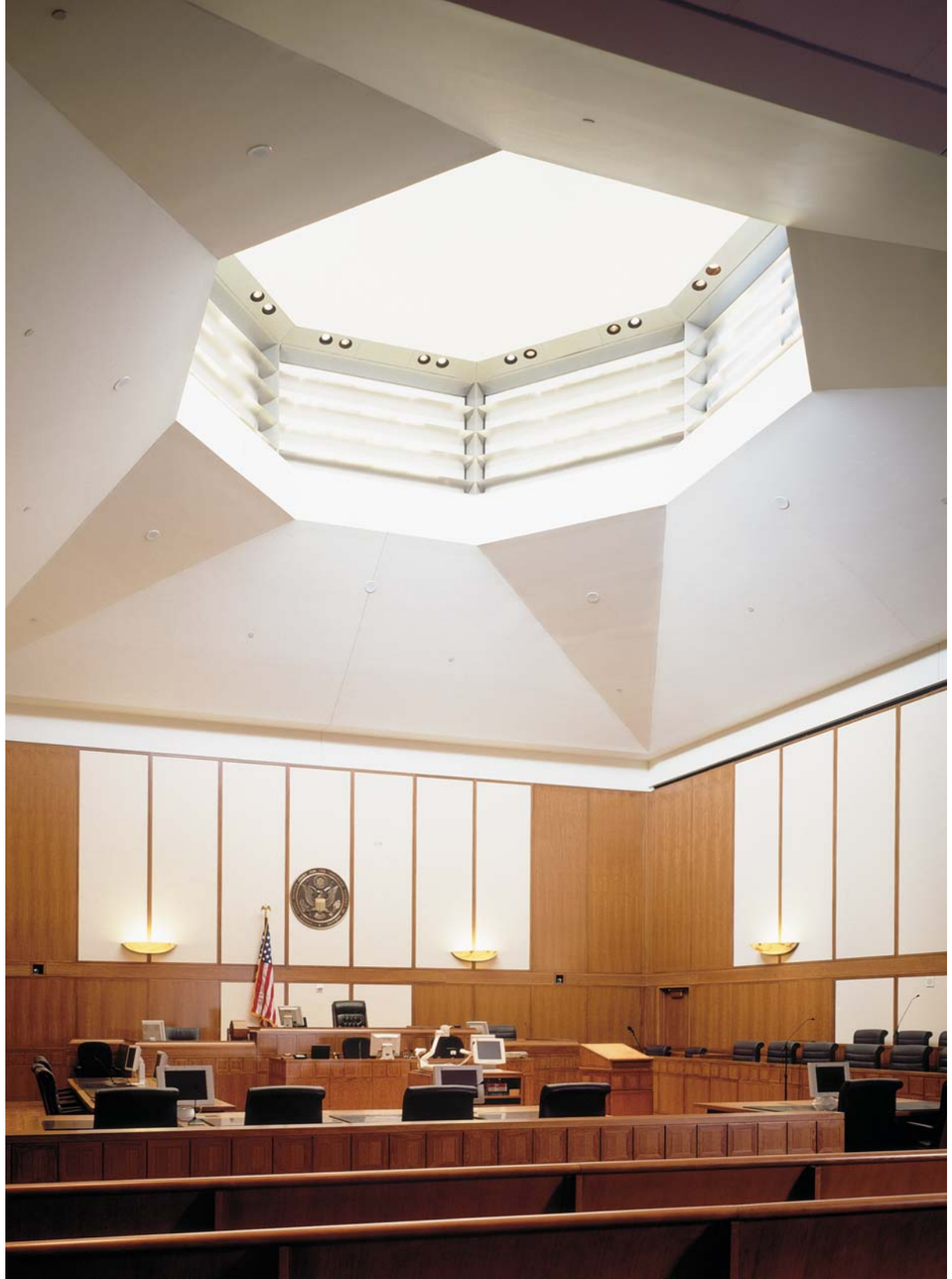
The design of the Hammond courthouse is characterized by a deliberate and considered disposition of well-proportioned geometric volumes. As justice is concerned with uncovering order in the facts of a case, in this building, the architect has orchestrated the component parts into an orderly and uplifting whole. On the exterior, concrete bands delineate floor levels and modulate the scale of the building. An array of square windows punctuates its subtly battered base, a rhythm of shaded openings incised into the body of the buff-colored limestone. Above this line, along Hohman Avenue, a second row of squares is imprinted into the limestone surface revealing the depth of the material and celebrating the frontage of the building on this important street.

Emphasizing the importance of the great public hall, as the façade on Hohman Avenue steps back, it is also pulled apart, revealing a broad expanse of glass and the vaulted space within. Using the principle of subtraction, tall rectangular niches in the upper floors of the wall—in this case, on both the east and west sides of the building—hint at the flanking volumes bracketing the opening to the central space. In another refinement, at each building corner, diagonal cutouts add tension to the planes of the north and south facades and reveal the forms devoted to courtrooms.

An attention to mathematical rigor is also evident on the interior. The limestone screen walls marking the sides of the great hall are punctured by a sequence of square openings that grow progressively larger from the main to the uppermost courtroom floor. On the entry level, the openings are in-filled with inscribed limestone tablets. On the next level, they are “unglazed windows” into the great hall from gathering spaces outside the Magistrate and Bankruptcy courtrooms. On the top level, dedicated to the District courtrooms, they are squares that frame vistas across the great hall through the glass walls at either end of that space into the surrounding landscape.

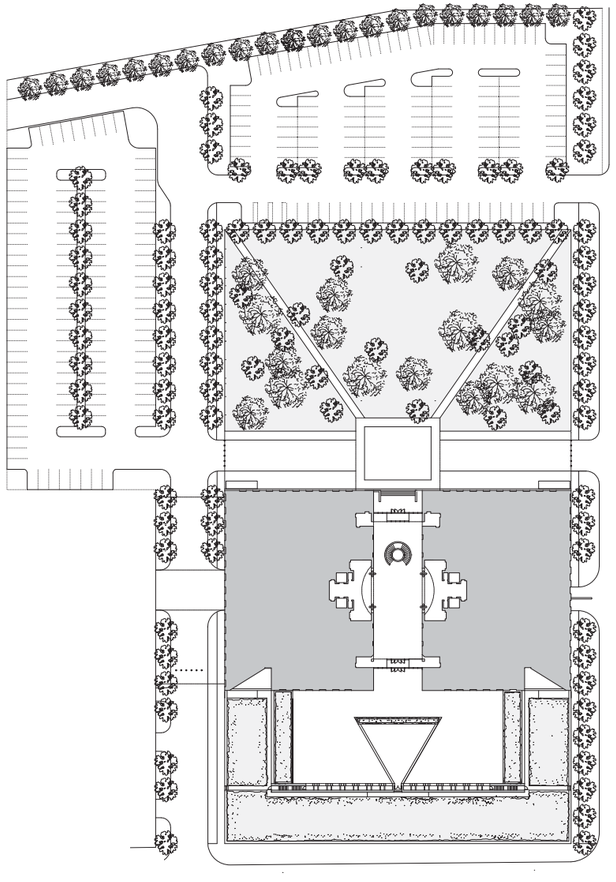
Several arced gestures boldly enrich the orthogonal geometry of the design. Beyond the main entrance, a circular opening and helical stone staircase provide access to offices on the lower level. At the center of the great hall, 22-foot



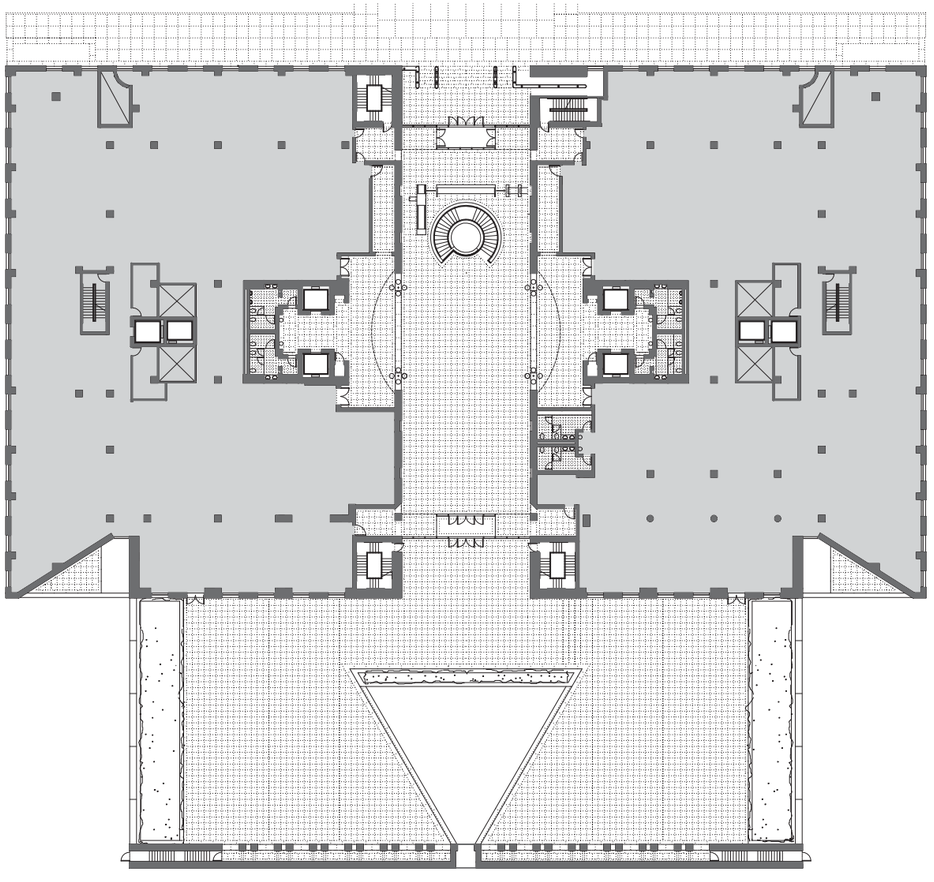


high masonry arches make generous openings in the limestone walls, inviting people to enter the courtroom wings. In these wings, but one level above the entry, concentric concave balconies reinforce the cross-axis through the building. The courtroom furniture is also arranged in an arc, fostering the exchange of facts essential to the American judicial system. The judge, witness, and jury are able to see each other comfortably, minimizing hierarchy and emphasizing the contributions of each to the process of justice. Reflecting their distinctive roles, the judge's bench is elevated, the witness stand is on axis, and the enclosure for jurors is tiered. An inner ring of tables defines the well where litigants and their attorneys are seated. Significant details extend the thematic use of the circle. On either side of the courtroom entrances, sconces are hemispherical indentations in the limestone walls with light elegantly and simply emerging through onyx discs.

Finally, natural light is carefully used to delineate the geometry and forms of the Hammond courthouse. It is used by the architect to establish the spirit of spaces as unique "rooms" in the city and as symbols of justice. On clear days, the great hall, which faces east and west, reverberates with light, glowing amber at sunrise and sunset. It is animated by the ever-changing luminosity of the midwest sky. The vaulted plaster ceiling reflects light from adjacent surfaces, and illuminated at night, becomes a great arc of light. Together with the commanding limestone walls, it defines a powerful and uplifting public space. As visitors ascend from the entrance level to the upper gallery, hallways and lobbies grow progressively more attenuated and filled with light. On the top floor, District courtrooms have gracious, 22-foot ceilings with octagonal clerestory monitors allowing the judicial proceedings to take place in the light of day. In the judges' chambers, floor-to-ceiling corner windows make lively city vistas part of the offices, and triangular cutouts are introduced so spaces deep inside the floorplate have light and protected views.



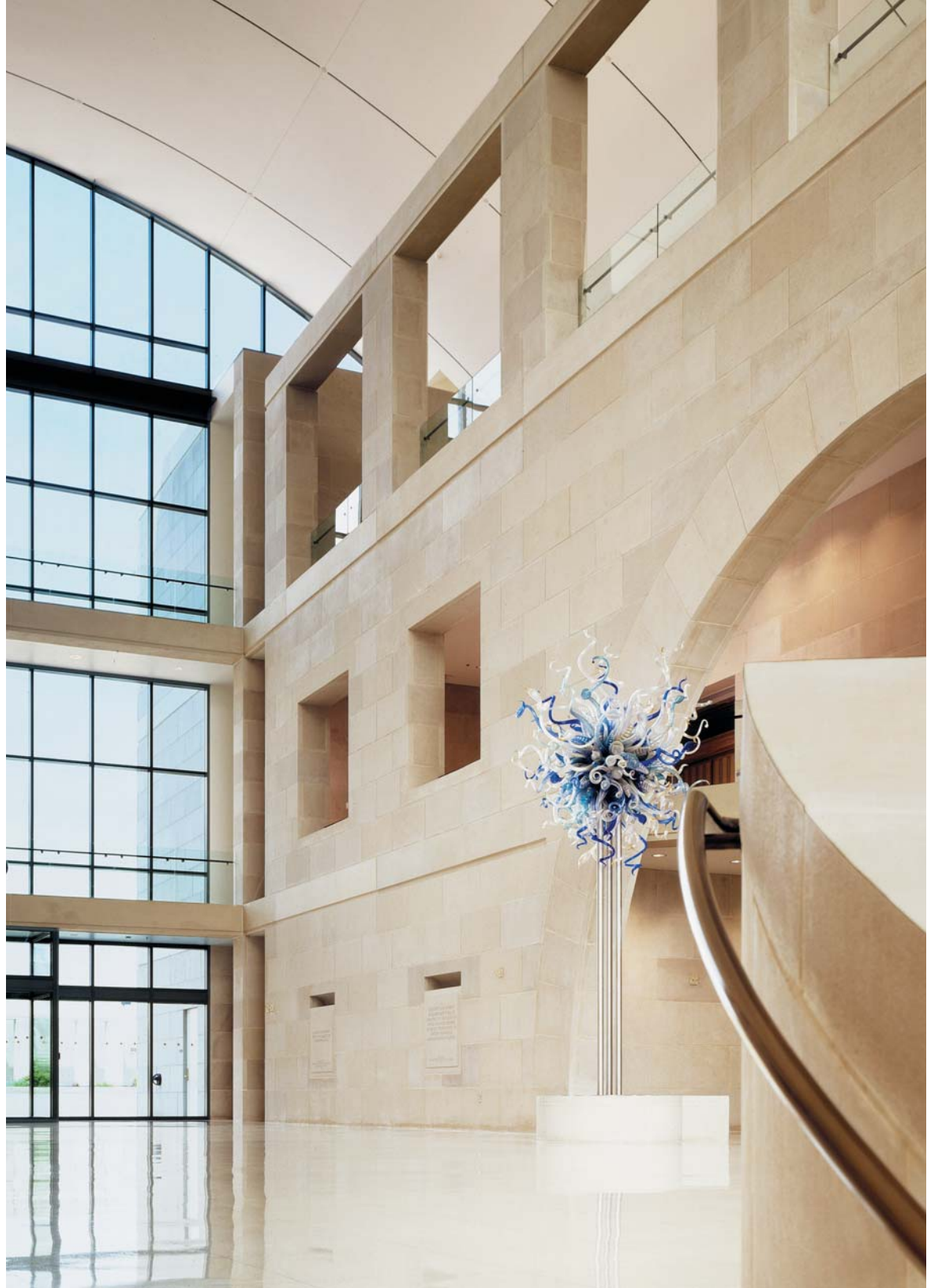
Site Plan

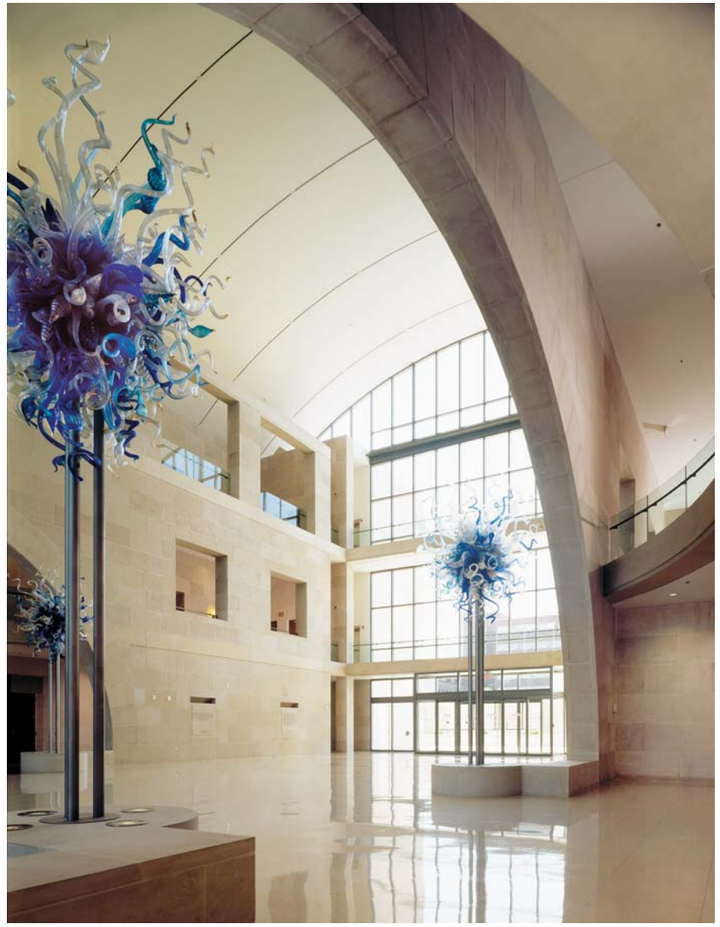


Entry Level Plan

My favorite place to have an installation is a public spot where people other than arts lovers are apt to see it. The atrium in the Hammond Courthouse is filled with light, and working in that space was a great opportunity.

Dale Chihuly
Artist





Art has always been an important feature of great architecture. For the United States Courthouse in Hammond, Indiana, artist Dale Chihuly and his studio team have created four large-scale glass sculptures.

Glass Forms
An Installation that Defines the Center of the Great Hall
Dale Chihuly

Dale Chihuly's glass installations bring together light, color, and volume to amplify the spirit of, or provide an engaging visual counterpoint to, their particular location. For the United States Courthouse in Hammond, he created four exuberant clusters of blown glass tentacles. Some are clear, some are clear with golden highlights, and others are in shades of blue and purple. Each cluster is held aloft by four slender steel rods, and the four sculptures are illuminated from below with lights built into stone bases that project slightly into the great hall. The clusters are located to mark the center of the great hall and to accentuate the cross-axis that guides visitors to the courtrooms above. They are an exuberant contrast to the chaste materials, geometry, proportions, and formal spaces of the building, and provide a visual foil to the architecture. They help denote the great hall as a special room in the courthouse and an important civic space in the city of Hammond.

Art in Architecture Program
GSA's Art in Architecture Program commissions artists, working in close consultation with project design teams, to create artwork that is appropriate to the diverse uses and architectural vocabularies of new 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 composed of 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 Hammond, Indiana, is located on a 6.9-acre block bound by Lyman Avenue on the east, Clinton Street on the north, East Douglas Street on the south, and Hohman Avenue, the city's historic main street, on the west. The entry is from the east up a sloped landscaped park. From an urban design perspective, the horizontal profile of the courthouse is punctuated by the great hall that runs from east to west—a monumental public room 138 feet long, 44 feet wide, and 64 feet high distinguished by an expansive vaulted ceiling that is illuminated at night.

Clad in limestone, the exterior façades and interior walls of the great hall are detailed as a series of carefully proportioned planes and a play of rectilinear and curved geometric forms. Natural light fills many key spaces. The east and west walls of the great hall are glazed. District courtrooms have dramatic clerestory light monitors. Judges' chambers have vistas into the city, and a large triangular cutout in the main level roof terrace brings light to lower-level offices.

The building is 308 feet long, 178 feet wide and 87 feet high. It has 275,000 square-feet of space. It graciously accommodates eight courtrooms—four District, two Magistrate, and two Bankruptcy—in addition to offices for several Federal agencies, court-related functions, and a cafeteria. There are chambers for eight judges.

The courtrooms, all finished in English brown oak, are equipped with the latest audio-visual and digital technologies, and have an innovative circular layout that places the witness stand at the center of the space next to the judge on one side and a curved, free-standing jury box on the other. The Magistrate and Bankruptcy courtrooms have coffered ceilings. The District courtrooms have grand, octagonal clerestory light monitors.

The major building materials are limestone, glass, and precast architectural concrete. Limestone is used on the interior walls of the great hall, courtroom entrances, and lobby areas. Floors are terrazzo. The inclined entry park is landscaped with an informal arrangement of pin oaks, ginkgoes, weeping European beeches and crab apple trees.

The building has 32 enclosed parking spaces reserved exclusively for the use of tenants. There are additional outdoor spaces to the east of the landscaped park. Separate banks of elevators serve each of the courthouse's primary users—the public, judges and staff, and prisoners. At both courtroom levels, bridges cross the great hall along the windows to connect the north and south wings of the building.

Location
A 6.9-acre parcel in Hammond's historic downtown bounded by Hohman, Douglas, Lyman, and Clinton Streets.

Size
275,000 Gross Square Feet
87 Feet High
4 Floors plus Below-Grade Parking

Time Frame
Concept Design Initiated: August 1994
Construction Starts: September 1997
Occupancy: June 2002

Major Building Components

Total Rentable Space	230,500 Square Feet
U.S. Courts	130,400 Square Feet

Parking

Interior	32 Spaces
Exterior	275 Spaces
Service	2 Loading Docks

Structure
Steel frame on a monumental concrete floating slab foundation.

Mechanical
Gas-fired boilers, electric chillers with a variable air volume ducted distribution system.

Exterior Walls
Limestone and precast cladding over concrete block and metal stud back-up, with aluminum windows.

Public Area Interior Finishes
Entrance and Atrium: Chelmsford granite entry steps with a glass canopy overhead; bronze railings; terrazzo floor; Indiana limestone walls; plaster vaulted ceiling.
Galleries: Indiana limestone walls; terrazzo floors; plaster ceilings; English brown oak courtroom entrances; onyx sconces; glass balustrades; bronze rails and hardware; American oak benches.
Courtrooms: English brown oak paneling and millwork; fabric-wrapped acoustical wall panels; custom broadloom carpeting; glass and aluminum light monitors; plaster coffered ceilings.

BIOGRAPHIES:
THE ARCHITECT AND THE ARTIST

Henry N. Cobb, FAIA, is a founding principal of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners in New York City and has contributed actively and continuously to the work of the firm since its formation in 1955. In 1968, the firm received the American Institute of Architects Architectural Firm Award, and in 1992 received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York Society of Architects. Cobb's work includes the John Hancock Tower, Boston, Massachusetts; Johnson & Johnson World Headquarters, New Brunswick, New Jersey; ARCO Tower, Dallas, Texas; Library Tower, Los Angeles, California; World Trade Center, Barcelona, Spain; Tour EDF at la Defense, Paris, France; the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse in Boston, Massachusetts; and a new headquarters building for the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC. Throughout his career, Cobb has coupled professional activity with teaching. He has held the Davenport and Bishop visiting professorships at Yale University. From 1980 to 1985, he served as Studio Professor and Chairman of the Department of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. In 1992, he was Architect in Residence at the American Academy in Rome. Cobb has received numerous awards as both an architect and an educator, including the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture, the Poses Creative Arts Award Medal for Architecture, the Medal of Honor from the New York Chapter of the AIA, and the Topaz Medallion for Excellence in Architectural Education. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard College and a Master of Architecture degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Dale Chihuly is a pioneer in the field of sculptural blown glass. His influence in this technically demanding field has spanned more than three decades. Together with a team of skilled glass workers at his studio in Seattle, Chihuly has created complex installations for diverse contexts around the world, ranging from Jerusalem's ancient Citadel to the grand lobby of the Bellagio hotel in Las Vegas. Whether created for a hushed museum, dynamic leisure area, or solemn civic space, Chihuly's glittering constructions of light, color, and volume are designed to either magnify the tenor of their locations or provide a vibrant visual counterpoint. Chihuly's work has been featured in hundreds of exhibitions, both in the United States and abroad, and is included in the collections of many leading museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, the Yokohama Museum of Art in Japan, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. In 1969, Chihuly established the Glass Department at the Rhode Island School of Design and shortly after co-founded the Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington. He received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Washington in 1965, a Master of Science in Sculpture from the University of Wisconsin in 1967, and a Master of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1968. In 1968, he also recieved a Fulbright Fellowship to study the art of glass blowing in Venice.

THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Owner
U.S. General Services Administration
Regional Office: Chicago, IL

Design Architects
Pei Cobb Freed & Partners Architects, LLP
New York, NY

Architect of Record
Browning Day Mullins Dierdorf Architects
Indianapolis, IN

Artist
Dale Chihuly Studios
Seattle, WA

Contractor
Hunt Construction Group
Indianapolis, IN

Construction Manager
Jacobs Facilities, Inc.
St. Louis, MO

Structural and Civil Engineer
Fink, Roberts & Petrie
Indianapolis, IN

Mechanical and Electrical Engineer
Cosentini Associates, Inc.
Chicago, IL

Court Consultant
Gruzen Samton
New York, NY

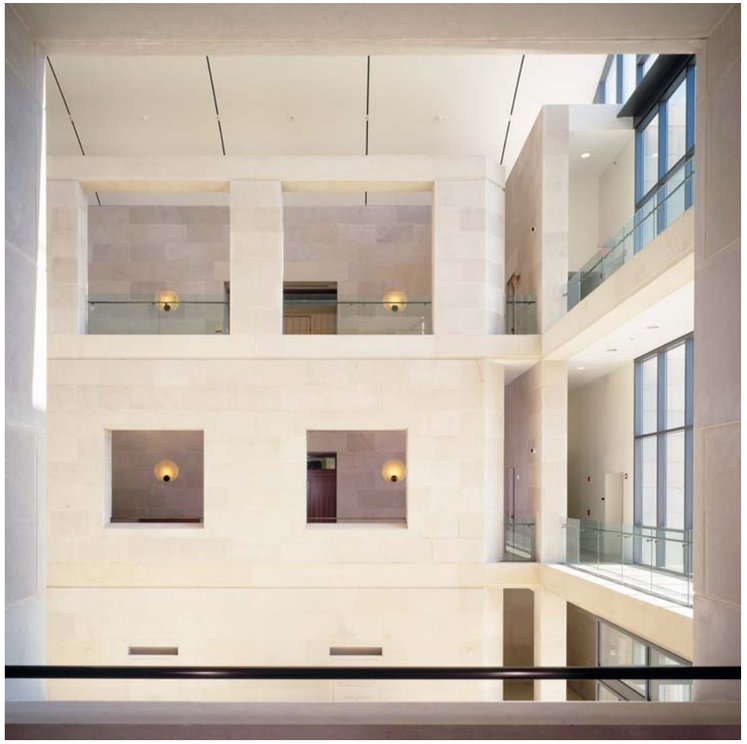
Fire Protection/Life Safety
RTM Consultants, Inc.
Indianapolis, IN

Vertical Transportation
Lerch Bates North America, Inc.
Chicago, IL

Acoustics
Shen, Milson & Wilke, Inc.
Chicago, IL

Landscape Architect
Clair Bennett Associates, Inc.
Indianapolis, IN

Food Facility Consultant
Sherman Robinson, Inc.
Indianapolis, IN



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 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 United States Courthouse in Hammond, Indiana, was designed and constructed under the GSA Design Excellence Program.

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