

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Buffalo, New York



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

March 2012

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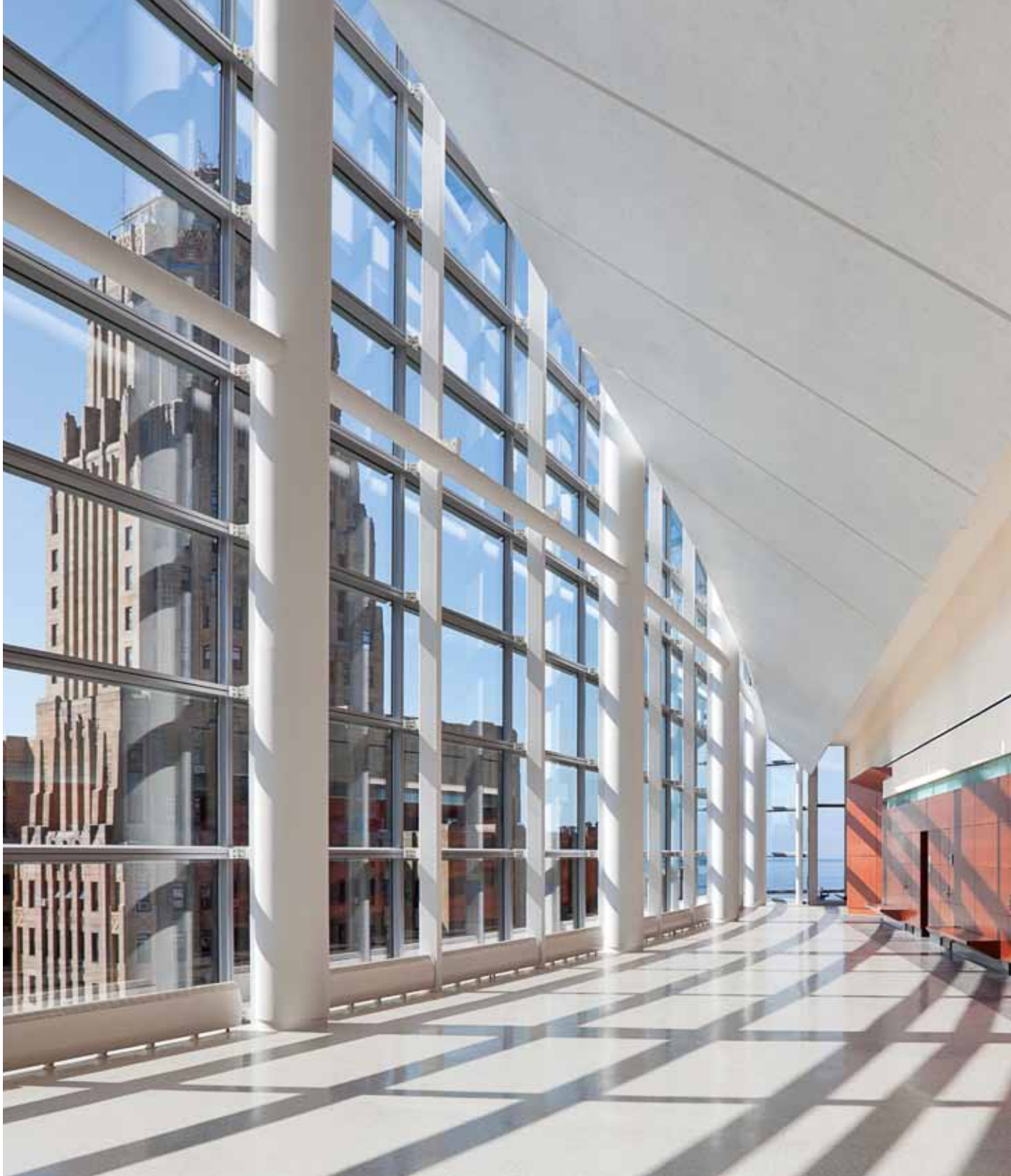
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William Pedersen
Architect





ONE BUILDING, MANY DEMANDS

William Skretny, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the New York Western District, characterizes the new United States Courthouse in Buffalo, New York, in a series of dissimilar terms. “Our courthouse includes an elliptical main building located on a pie-shaped lot. It is of contemporary design in a historic district. And it fronts Niagara Square, which is really a circle.”

New York-based architecture firm Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates began designing the federal courthouse in 2002. In recounting that process, key team members—KPF cofounder and design principal William Pedersen, design team leader Jerri Smith, and job captain Kevin Wegner—cite several other unlike outcomes the project team hoped to achieve.

For example, Smith recalls that Skretny and his colleague Judge Richard Arcara wanted the building to show the transparency of the judicial process. “Yet they also wanted a building that felt weighty enough for important decisions and life-changing situations to play out.” Pedersen explains

that lobbies and individual courtrooms had to fulfill an analogous set of requirements. “A big issue for the interior was to make the judicial process less intimidating. Though obviously the courtroom has to be a dignified environment, too,” he says.

Smith points out, “The judges felt it was important to take care of jurors. They want them to feel valued for performing their civic duty.” Wegner notes that the wider community needed to be taken into account: “Judges certainly see the courthouse leading or participating in the renewal of downtown Buffalo.”

Historically, America’s federal buildings have employed architecture to represent the aspirations of the nation. For the Buffalo courthouse KPF had to convey democratic values through architecture, and much more. On creating transparency, expressing historic legacy, demonstrating welcome, and stimulating economic redevelopment and bolstering community pride, Skretny says, “The many demands on this project did not seem reconcilable; there could be no ordinary solutions. You couldn’t have done better than our team.”

FUNCTIONAL NECESSITY

While the Judiciary values long-range impacts like public symbolism and ease of use in its properties developed and maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration's Public Buildings Service, its highest priorities are safety and productivity. In Buffalo, U.S. District Court facilities required both security upgrades and a significant expansion of workspace. GSA had previously housed the courts in the Michael J. Dillon U.S. Courthouse, which the U.S. Treasury Department completed in 1936. Also located on Niagara Square and taking up an entire city block, the Art Moderne-style building reflected Buffalo's increasingly important role in America's industrial economy. For some federal tenants of the courthouse, this was the first time they had a presence in Buffalo.

Over time the Dillon courthouse did not offer enough capacity for the courts' work; Judge Skretny's courtroom was retrofitted from original office space. Technology improvements were not altogether successful, either. "There was no reasonable way to upgrade the courtrooms without having masses of wires all over the floor," he says. Among other things, lack of infrastructure prevented open Internet usage, because

it could not operate separately from the court family's secure Internet system.

In today's Judiciary facilities, judges, prisoners, and members of the public move through the courthouse independently of one another. The existing courthouse did not offer three kinds of circulation. On the fifth floor of the Dillon courthouse, the Chief Judge's chambers occupied the same hallway as a jury assembly room, jury deliberation rooms, and an upper lobby, as well as a staff training facility and holding cells. Moreover, prisoner transfer often took place on the exterior parking pad rather than within the building's interior sally port; protective parking was not available to judges or staff; and "absolutely and unquestionably there were many times when judges and staff found themselves riding the elevators with defendants, families of defendants, and hostile civil litigants," Skretny says.

He concludes, "In many respects it was a wonderful building, and GSA did put a lot of effort into maintaining it. Yet at some point it makes more sense to redirect resources away from upkeep."



CHANGING COURSE

GSA and the Judiciary initially explored constructing an addition to the Dillon courthouse. Planned as a 142,000-square-foot annex, this addition would have stood on a three-quarter-acre lot, connecting to the seven-story historic landmark by pedestrian bridge. Alan Berman, GSA's supervisory general engineer for its Northeast and Caribbean Region, notes that that project site was located approximately 20 feet from a 10-story public garage.

Skretny and Judge Arcara approached the architect selection process enthusiastically. "We committed to the process, because if you're not hands-on, you're not going to get a building you're happy with," Skretny says. The clients reviewed architects' qualifications submitted through GSA's Design Excellence Program; in doing so they relied on the knowledge of the private-sector professional tapped from the National Registry of Peer Professionals, who provided the selection panel with independent technical expertise. In subsequent phases, "We spoke not only to the architects' representatives, but also to maintenance and management

teams," Skretny remembers, "We wanted to find out construction quality, how the buildings functioned, and the architects' personalities." Indeed, during this process the judges began gaining a sense that Pedersen was receptive to others' input and able to change creative direction.

One such change took place even before design got under way. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, GSA tightened building security standards dramatically. Notably, the guidelines recommended 50-foot setbacks for new buildings. Due to its immediate proximity to the parking structure, the Dillon courthouse's expansion site "no longer met the newly established criteria and seriously compromised the safety of the U.S. Courts and the general public," Berman says. To meet the more stringent requirements, the project would have to escalate to a completely freestanding structure as a replacement for the older courthouse.

To accommodate 261,000 square feet of new construction, officials at multiple levels of government deliberated over many alternative sites. They ultimately settled

on a 1.75-acre, wedge-shaped lot on the northern edge of Niagara Square.

Niagara Square is the heart of downtown Buffalo. Originally designed by surveyor Joseph Ellicott in 1803 and then revised in 1874 by the preeminent landscape architecture firm Olmsted & Vaux, today the public space includes a circular park that hosts the annual Taste of Buffalo food festival, Gus Macker basketball tournament, and other events ranging from celebrations to protests. From the center of Niagara Square rises the McKinley Monument, the Carrère & Hastings–designed obelisk memorializing the 1901 assassination of President McKinley. Vehicular traffic rings the park, and several impressive buildings frame the concentric circles.

In addition to the Dillon courthouse, Niagara Square includes City Hall and the Statler Hotel. The new Buffalo courthouse site is positioned between these two high-rises. Topping out at almost 400 feet and completed in 1931, the municipal building was designed by John C. Wade. Its Art Deco style features many local inflections, such as friezes

depicting Buffalo history and industry, as well as a ventilation system designed to capitalize on predominant breezes off Lake Erie. Predating City Hall by eight years, the brick-clad Statler Hotel was no less innovative. It ranked among the tallest buildings in New York State outside New York City, and it was the first-ever hotel to include a bathtub, radio, and light switch in every guestroom.

“The judges were acutely aware of Buffalo’s role in American architecture and of the glory of Buffalo’s past,” Pedersen says, referring not only to Niagara Square, but also to significant nearby buildings designed by greats like Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. “They were very desirous to reinstate it and to encourage the future life of the city.”

The completed United States Courthouse in Buffalo represents the design team’s respect for this historic context. At the center of the courthouse, a curving volume peaks at 10 stories with a gently canted roofline. It contains five district courtrooms and four magistrate courts. Floors in this tower each contain a pair of courtrooms,

judges' chambers, and jury suites. The courtroom volume appears as a truncated ellipse in plan.

The three public elevators servicing courtrooms are visible from outdoors as a unified, slender element accenting the east side of the elliptical component. This gridded concrete tower rises slightly higher than the ellipse and tapers to an internally illuminated crown. "We reach just up to its shoulders," Smith says of the relationship between the new federal courthouse and City Hall. "We're smaller, but I think our building really holds the composition." On the Buffalo skyline the two buildings seem to almost lean toward one another.

Like the elevator bank, other courthouse functions are expressed on the building exterior. From the northeast corner of the site, the ellipse appears to emerge above a podium structure that contains supporting office space and a roof terrace. A two-story-tall glass screen blocks views of the new courthouse's loading area and extends the east elevation of the podium. Public lobbies run the height of the courtroom volume

and face Niagara Square. This elevation of the building is finished in a curved glass curtain wall that truncates the ellipse. Arcara and Skretny had seen a similar architectural gesture during a trip to New York City, and then asked KPF whether it could adapt the feature to the Buffalo project. Pedersen explains that the resulting transparent crescent wall acknowledges the shape of Niagara Square explicitly, and reveals to observers the activity taking place inside the courthouse.

Jurors, visitors, and other members of the public enter the building through a 51-foot-tall pavilion. Unlike the setback courtroom tower, the small glazed pavilion approaches Niagara Square, and the two parts connect by a low-slung corridor that contains security screening equipment; by linking up in this manner, the volumes create a semi-protected courtyard facing west. The pavilion and courtroom tower complement one another geometrically, too. The pavilion is largely triangular, its two long sides merging at a prow-like point. The pavilion's roof plane also includes an angled skylight along the Niagara Square streetfront.







URBAN FORMS

The Buffalo courthouse's unique combination of short and tall volumes and curved and angular shapes came about after many rounds of revisions.

One earlier version of the courtroom tower comprised two parallelogram-shaped towers folded northward. The configuration of shapes did meet the 50-foot security setback, but would have required building 1.4 times more exterior surface area than a curvilinear volume. KPF determined to use the more efficient ellipse.

In addition to increasing the distance between a building and a potential vehicular attack, GSA's post-9/11 security requirements included new standards for blast resistance. Achieving this strength would have been prohibitively expensive had the building been clad entirely in a glass curtain wall. Whereas the courtroom volume's crescent-shaped southern elevation is glass-clad, the elliptical surface facing away from Niagara Square is completed in a series of two-story-tall precast concrete panels featuring vertical projections every five feet. These ribs

structurally reinforce the affordable panels and add a visually appealing, regular texture to the overall concrete surface.

KPF decided to append a "veil" of glass to that surface, to make it appear less monolithic. Three-quarter-inch-thick laminated glass panels, silkscreened in various patterns, mechanically fasten to the concrete ribs with barely visible brackets. The panels seem to hover in front of the courtroom tower, and reflect variations of weather and light across days and seasons. Pedersen explains that the panels were specified at the largest dimension possible to reflect these conditions in a seamless manner. Meanwhile the panels' mounting distances were determined precisely for practical maintenance. "The veil's extension past the building and the width between members was very much about being able to clean the backsides of the glass," he says.

Even with the supplemental panels, KPF's scheme yielded significant savings over an all-glass solution. If you look at any all-glass wall today, our numbers are simply unheard of," Pedersen says of reducing costs via the veil design.

The design team based its decision to give the courtroom tower its elliptical shape on urban design principles, as well as affordability. Although a cylindrical volume would have produced an equally cost-effective amount of surface area, “the ellipse seemed to be more successful as an urban form, because it generates a long and a short axis,” Pedersen explains. That short axis allows the building to pull away from the sidewalk, creating opportunities for pedestrian use and landscaping. The move works particularly well, because the triangular entry pavilion stands close enough to the sidewalk to divide the open space into outdoor rooms that are clearly defined and approachable in scale. That might not have happened as successfully with a cylindrical pavilion: A drum shape was another proposal that did not make it past early iterations of the design process.

By substituting the ellipse for parallel-ograms, KPF started to develop a money-saving approach to the courthouse’s curtain wall. And by swapping a cylinder with an angular wedge, it created an entry pavilion whose surrounding street-level public spaces improve the quality of life for

pedestrians in downtown Buffalo. The team linked the tower and pavilion in an equally compelling way. In addition to creating a semi-protected courtyard to the west, the connective corridor includes a shade canopy integrated into its east elevation that encourages people to gather and linger. (The canopy extends to the podium and pavilion volumes.) Its vibrantly colored stone cladding further draws people to the building’s east side; the stone walls also flank the pavilion doors to make arrival feel less auspicious and more human-scale.

According to Thomas King, the project manager assigned by GSA’s Northeast and Caribbean Region to oversee the Buffalo courthouse through construction completion, local residents responded to the exterior public spaces just as the design team intended. Erection of the United States Courthouse in Buffalo began in 2007, and when construction fences were taken down on September 27, 2011, “businesspeople and students started walking right up to the building. The sidewalks, plantings, and stairs just work, and people immediately embraced them. They were hungry for this public space.”





WELCOMING THE PUBLIC

“We want our building to invite the public,” says Judge Skretny, and the instantaneous popularity of the courthouse’s outdoor spaces validates that aspiration. Public artwork enhances this attractiveness; Skretny adds, “People should want to come and see the pavilion and the courtyard, because they’re so majestic.” For those members of the public performing service inside the courthouse, they will find that interior features also feel welcoming, even inspirational.

At the judges’ request, all 4,543 words of the original U.S. Constitution appear on the south face of the entry pavilion, applied to the glass by ceramic fritting. The pavilion’s north-facing glass includes the stained-glass installation *Three Columns*, created by the renowned artist Robert Mangold, commissioned by GSA’s Art in Architecture Program.

Mangold is best known as a minimalist painter of geometric forms. Of his paintings, he says, “These are portable works that have no specific destination or site in mind. Confronting an actual architectural situation is very different.”

Calling the Buffalo courthouse’s entry pavilion “a transition between the city, the street, and the courthouse,” Mangold says this commission presented a particularly interesting challenge. And the artist responded in kind: *Three Columns* is only his second work in stained glass, after completing a window for a chapel at Oberlin College in 1992.

For the Buffalo pavilion, Mangold inscribed a series of gentle curves directly into the curtain walls, in blue, green, and red panes fabricated by the architectural glass and mosaic studio Franz Mayer. The artist’s hand-drawn lines, carefully enlarged and transferred by the glass fabricators, appear as parallel and intersecting wavelengths. Each one traverses the horizontal lines of the curtain wall, and Mangold engages these necessary structural members as graphic elements in his installation. Like the interplay of straight and curved lines within the architectural composition, *Three Columns* seeks equilibrium with its setting. GSA Chief Architect Les Shepherd observes, “Formally, Mangold has brought art into balance with architecture. Observers may

interpret that dialogue as a metaphor for the judicial process itself.”

“I hope in the end the work creates a discourse with the viewer and adds beauty to the pavilion and the courthouse,” Mangold says. The 16 stained-glass panels that make up the artwork change in hue and character, as natural illumination from the south reaches and interacts with them over the course of the day.

Daylight also casts the panels’ colors into the adjacent west-facing courtyard. KPF designed that space, treating it as an artwork of its own: A series of asymmetrical stainless-steel mounds outlined in gravel dot the courtyard. This sculptural counterpoint to the project’s other shapes is not intended for active everyday use, but the sight of it “is a great release from the courtroom and the tensions of the courtroom itself,” Pedersen concludes.

Pedersen also refers to the interior sky lobbies as releases, noting that their large dimensions and access to daylight and views of City Hall provide an antidote to courtroom stress. The architect explains

that many other aspects of the courthouse’s interior design are supposed to improve the juror experience in this manner.

Consider how jurors and other members of the public easily find their way to various destinations. From the lobby, a staircase clearly shows the route to the office of the court clerk and to the jury assembly room, both located on the second floor. Similarly, door frames flange inward, as if pointing to the elevators and courtrooms that visitors can enter. Navigating the United States Courthouse is intuitive in this respect, and explicit signage only reinforces the wayfinding.

“Jurors will be accommodated like we’ve always wanted them to be,” Skretny adds, pointing to the spacious jury assembly room as another example of the careful attention paid to jurors’ needs; it figuratively thanks citizens for doing their civic duty. Skretny thinks so highly of the jury assembly room that he says it may be a venue for occasional social gatherings.

In the courtrooms themselves, daylight filters through side clerestories and

combines with luminaires—such as the electric lighting carefully hidden within the district and special proceedings courtrooms’ aluminum-leaf cove ceilings—to maximize productivity. Other notable features include secure accommodations for witnesses and attorney–client conference rooms located next to courtrooms. “It’s going to make the administering of justice so much different and so much more efficient,” Skretny says of these strategies’ effect.

Yet one amenity absent from the federal courthouse is a cafe, about which Skretny says, “We do not have a snack bar; Judge Arcara and I made the decision out of respect for surrounding businesses.” Indeed, GSA and the Judiciary intended for their new building to stimulate the local economy.

Already Buffalo is undergoing positive transformation. Recent highlights of an renaissance include the opening of the Greatbatch Visitor Pavilion at the Frank Lloyd Wright–designed Darwin D. Martin House, New Era Cap Company’s rehabilitation of a former Federal Reserve

Building into its headquarters and Buffalo flagship, and the conversion of the former Dulski Federal Building into a 16-story tower combining condominium, hotel, and office uses. The United States Courthouse project directly participated in this revitalization even prior to its completion, by sparking the multimillion-dollar restoration of the neighboring Statler Hotel.

“As a Rust Belt city we’ve come pretty close to dying at times, but frankly we’re doing very well now,” Skretny says. “With this project we wanted to respect tradition and to bridge to a bright future—to represent our willingness as a community to go forward.” This aspiration for the Buffalo courthouse was both economic and cultural, he points out. “The courthouse was intended to be a source of pride, and already it has stimulated growth in a very critical area of our city. Yet in a community with as rich an architectural legacy as ours, a building must be a boon artistically as well as economically. We think we have that building in our courthouse.”







BIOGRAPHIES:

THE ARCHITECT AND THE ARTIST

William Pedersen is the founding design partner of Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF), which he established in 1976 with A. Eugene Kohn and Sheldon Fox. For his contributions to the built environment, Pedersen has personally received seven AIA National Honor Awards, specifically for 333 Wacker Drive, Procter & Gamble General Offices Complex, DZ Bank Headquarters, World Bank Headquarters, New Academic Complex at Baruch College, Gannett/USA Today Corporate Headquarters, and One Jackson Square. Also of note, the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat honored the Shanghai World Financial Center as the Best Tall Building Worldwide in 2008, and MIPIM Asia honored the International Commerce Centre as the Best Business Centre in 2011.

Pedersen has earned the Lynn S. Beedle Lifetime Achievement Award from the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat; the Gold Medal for lifetime achievement in architecture from Tau Sigma Delta, the National Honor Society for Architecture and the Allied Arts; and

the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture for Contributions in Architecture as an Art, awarded by the American Academy and the Institute of Arts and Letters. Additional honors include the Rome Prize in Architecture awarded by the American Academy in Rome, the Prix d'Excellence from L'Ordre des Architectes de Québec, and the U.S. General Services Administration's Building Design Excellence and Honor Awards.

Pedersen lectures internationally and has served on academic and professional juries and symposia throughout the world. He has been a visiting professor at the Rhode Island School of Design, Columbia University, and Harvard University. He has held the Eero Saarinen Chair at Yale University and has been the Otis Lecturer in Japan, and he was honored as the Herbert S. Greenward Distinguished Professor in Architecture by the University of Illinois at Chicago. Currently Pedersen is a member of the University of Minnesota Foundation's Board of Trustees and a recipient of the University's Alumni Achievement Award.

Robert Mangold is a key figure among the artists who developed Minimalism and Conceptual Art in the early 1960s. Using a spare, yet personal visual vocabulary, his large body of paintings, drawings, and other artworks explores subtle relationships among form, line, color, and surface texture.

Mangold was born in North Tonawanda, New York, in 1937 and spent his youth in and around Buffalo. He graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1959, and then earned his bachelor (1961) and master (1963) of fine arts degrees from Yale University. His first solo exhibition was held in 1964 at Thibaut Gallery in New York. Mangold's work has since been the subject of more than 150 exhibitions, including those organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (1971), the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego (1974), the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1982), the Akron Art Museum (1984–1985), Hallen für Neue Kunst in Schaffhausen, Switzerland (1993), the Musée d'Orsay in Paris (2006), and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in

Buffalo (2009), which included concept images for the windows commissioned for the United States Courthouse in Buffalo. His most recent solo exhibition was held at the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2011.

In 1967, at the start of his career, Mangold received a National Endowment for the Visual Arts Fellowship. He was awarded the Skowhegan Medal for Painting from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 1993. Mangold became a trustee of Yale University Art Gallery in 1999, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2001, and a member of the National Academy in 2005.

Mangold's first GSA commission, an enameled steel artwork titled *Correlation: Two White Line Diagonals and Two Arcs With a 16-foot Radius*, was installed at the John W. Bricker Federal Building in Columbus, Ohio, in 1978. He was inspired to accept the more recent commission to create *Three Columns* for the United States Courthouse in Buffalo because he grew up in the area and has an emotional connection to the city.





THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Owner

U.S. General Services Administration
Public Buildings Service
Northeast and Caribbean Region

John Scorgia, Joanna Rosato, regional commissioners
Arnold Feinsilber, Thomas King, project managers
Jo Ann Petrilo, Gregory Russell,
David Monahan, contracting officers

Alan Berman, Kevin Bunker, Mimi Chi, Jeffery Cisney,
Charlotte Cohen, Jordana Covrigaru, Antonio Donato,
Veneta Dontcheva, Ralph Januale, Mark Johnson,
John Marcic, Jaime Quinones, Eunice Regis-Samuel,
William Rozumalski, Adam Schaffer, Donn Schubert,
Les Shepherd, Kathy Simpson, Claire Watkins

Architect

Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates
New York, New York

William Pedersen, design principal
Robert Cioppa, managing principal
Eugene Kohn, partner-in-charge
Laurie Butler, project manager
Jerri Smith, Trent Tesch, senior designers
Devin Ratliff, Kevin Wegner, job captains
David Ottavio, interiors and technology
Theodore Carpinelli, Angela Davis, Bruce Fisher,
David Goldschmidt, David Jaffe, Ryan Hullinger,
Afshin Rafaat, Rebecca Seamans

Artist

Robert Mangold

General Contractor

Mascaro Construction Company
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
John Mascaro, Jr., president
Andy Beamon, vice president
Micheal Cain, senior project manager
Micheal Renna, project manager
Joe Steubenbort, superintendent
Dan Auchey, Billy Charles, David Kimmel,
Ronald Nestico, John Yericco

Construction Manager

Cannon Design
Grand Island, New York
Eric Sweet, director of construction management
Jim Zubler, senior project manager
Eric Lindstrom, commissioning project manager
Mike Drozdowski, Kelly Maloney,
Dan Scirri, Brad Tober

Lighting Design

Thompson + Sears
Lighting Design
New York, New York

Civil Engineer

Watts Engineering
Buffalo, New York

Structural/Blast Engineer

Weidinger Associates
New York, New York

Mechanical, Plumbing

John W. Danforth
Company
Tonawanda, New York

MEP/Fire Protection

Arthur Metzler Associates
New York, New York

Electrical Engineering

Frey Electric Construction
Tonawanda, New York

Geotechnical Engineering

Langan Engineering &
Environmental Services
New York, New York

Scheduling

Contract Solutions
Pawleys Island,
South Carolina
Mark Doran

Commissioning Agent

Erdman Anthony
& Associates
Rochester, New York
Michael St. John

Sustainable Design

Natural Logic
Berkley, California

Energy Analysis

Steven Winter Associates
Norwalk, Connecticut

Security

Kroll Schiff & Associates
Bastrop, Texas

Audiovisual/Acoustics

Polysonics
Washington, DC

Telecommunications

TM Technology Partners
New York, New York

Code Consultants

Code Consultants PE
New York, New York

Curtain Wall

CBO Glass
Alden, New York

Curtain Wall Consultant

Gordon H. Smith
Corporation
New York, New York

Glass Veil Consultant

Dewhurst Macfarlane
and Partners
New York, New York

Precast Concrete

Modern Mosaic
Niagara Falls, Ontario

Wind Engineering

Cermak Peterka Patersen
Fort Collins, Colorado

Elevator Consulting

Persohn/Hahn Associates
Houston, Texas

Specifications

Heller & Metzger
Washington, DC

Design Excellence**National Peers**

Shalom Baranes
Shalom Baranes Architects
Washington, DC

Toshiko Mori
Toshiko Mori Architect
New York, New York

Robert Rogers
Rogers Marvel Architects
New York, New York

Art in Architecture**National Peers**

Molly Donovan
National Gallery of Art
Washington, DC

Douglas Dreishpoon
Albright-Knox Art Gallery
Buffalo, New York

Construction Excellence**National Peers**

Gregory Druga
Grunley Construction
Rockville, Maryland

Neel White
White Construction
Austin, Texas

**With this project we wanted to respect
tradition and to bridge to a bright future.**

William Skretny
Chief Judge of the United States District Court
for the New York Western District





**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.

Since its establishment in 1949, the U.S. General Services Administration has been responsible for creating federal workplaces, and for providing all the products and services necessary to make these environments healthy and productive for federal employees and cost-effective for American taxpayers. As builder for the federal civilian government and steward of many of our nation's most valued architectural treasures, GSA is committed to preserving and adding to America's architectural and artistic legacy.

GSA established the Design Excellence Program in 1994 to better achieve these mandates of public architecture. 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: producing facilities that reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the federal government, emphasizing designs that embody the finest contemporary and architectural thought; avoiding an official style; and 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 of the 2004 Keystone Award from the American Architectural Foundation.



U.S. General Services Administration

Public Buildings Service

Office of the Chief Architect

Design Excellence

1800 F Street NW

Washington, DC 20405

202-501-1888



U.S. General Services Administration