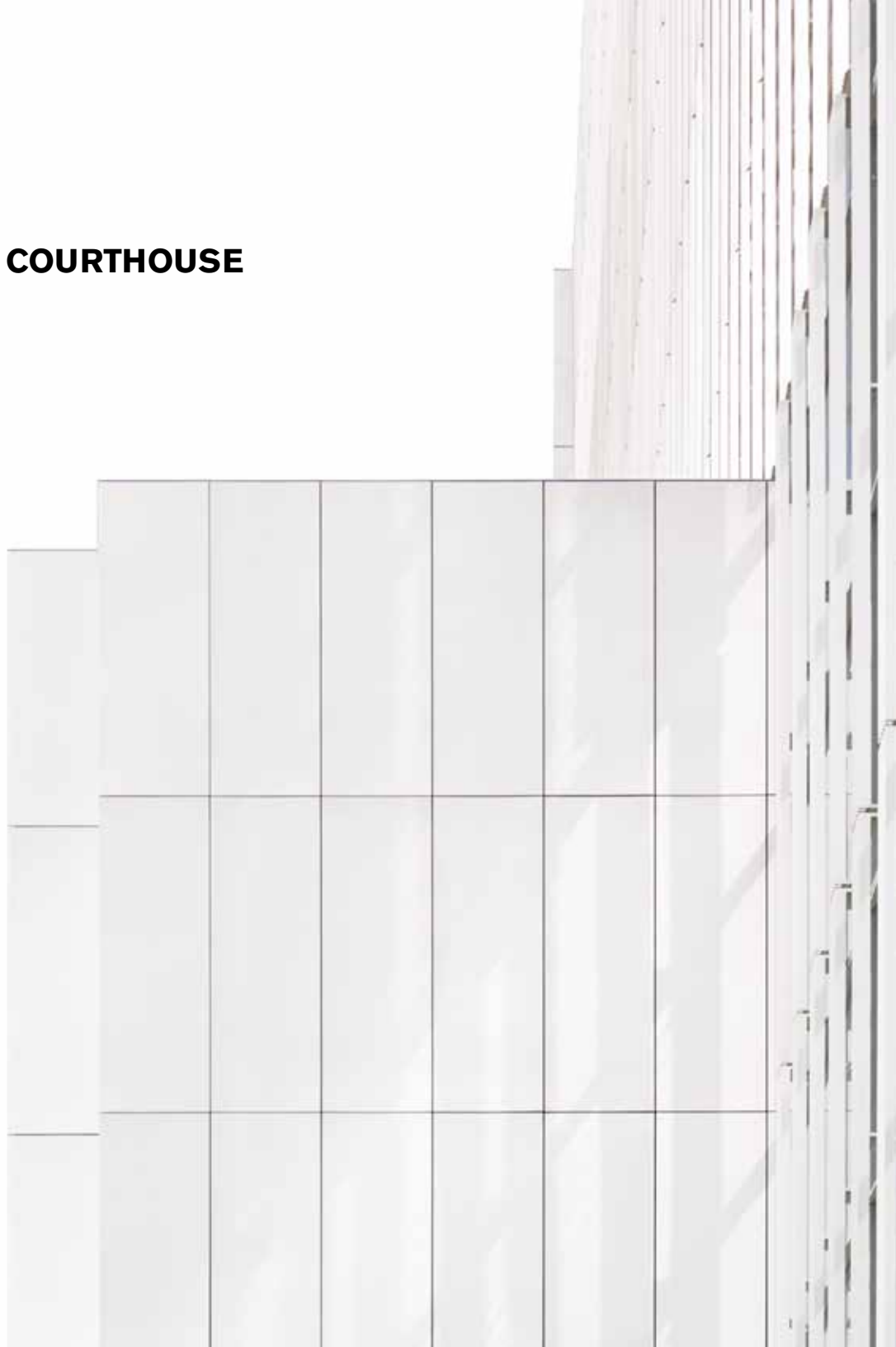


**SALT LAKE CITY
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
ANNEX**

Salt Lake City, Utah



The United States Courthouse Annex in Salt Lake City, Utah, was realized through the U.S. General Services Administration's Design Excellence Program, an initiative to create and preserve outstanding public buildings for generations of use and enjoyment.

June 2016

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- 6** An Evolving Federal Presence
- 12** Demand for an Annex
- 16** The Freestanding Courthouse
- 24** Construction and an Unfolding Future
- 30** The Design and Construction Team
- 34** U.S. General Services Administration
and the Design Excellence Program









We believe that, rather than use the classical elements that Jefferson brought to America from Europe, people should experience a contemporary justice that is open, transparent, and light-filled.

Thomas Phifer
Architect

AN EVOLVING FEDERAL PRESENCE

In the history of the American West, construction of a federal building contributed to a community's maturation—functionally as well as socially. A custom-house or post office represented the permanent expansion of federal services to a Western outpost. That facility equally communicated to settlers that they were now taking part in the aspirations, privileges, and responsibilities of American citizenship.

The designers of federal buildings have long understood architecture's ability to educate local users in the nation's democratic values. Public buildings that were "models for study and imitation," as Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison in 1785, aimed "to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile them to the rest of the world, and procure them its praise." Through the turn of the 20th century, these architects largely relied on Neoclassicism to translate national identity into bricks and mortar: The style linked the far-flung West to Washington, DC, where renowned architects like Benjamin Henry Latrobe and Charles Bulfinch had crafted federal buildings in the image of ancient

Greece and Rome, grounding the entire American experiment within a millennia-old legacy of democracy.

Neoclassical architecture's conveyance of gravity and steadfastness could not have been better suited to Salt Lake City in 1896, when Utah was admitted to the Union. Utah's statehood concluded decades of antagonism between the nation and local pioneers, and its new capital city required a symbol that civil democracy had become *lex terrae*. As the city's ninth mayor Robert N. Baskin said of a similar municipal building, "as it towers above its environment, so will the majesty and dignity of the law, so represented in the municipal, state, and national governments." Propelled by national trend and cemented by local political will, Neoclassicism informed the design of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse, whose planning in 1897 established the federal presence in Salt Lake City. Two years later the U.S. Department of Treasury acquired a downtown site south of Temple Square to construct the building, and the colonnaded scheme overseen by the Treasury Department's supervisory

architect with assistance from local architect Walter J. Cooper was constructed between 1902 and 1905.

Federal architects were not immune to sea changes in their discipline. For a brief period after the Civil War, for instance, many federal buildings drew inspiration from the work of American architect Henry Hobson Richardson. Tastes would fluctuate again with the arrival of the Great Depression, which came to bear on Salt Lake City in 1932. When a major expansion of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse revealed extensive cracking in the sandstone facades, the discovery prompted the Treasury Department to remake the entire exterior. The result is a highly restrained version of Neoclassicism that prevailed among that era's public building, and today this streamlined Classical Revivalism still identifies the building, which was listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and renamed the Frank E. Moss U.S. Courthouse in 1990.

By these final decades of the 20th century, federal architecture underwent an even

larger shift, with the national government effectively reversing its stylistic approach to public buildings.

The Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture, written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan and signed by President Kennedy in 1962, led a movement toward more pluralistic expression. "The development of an official style must be avoided. Design must flow from the architectural profession to the Government," it stated. "Instead of employing a Richardsonian Romanesque or Neoclassical vocabulary to embody American identity, as federal buildings had done in the past, Moynihan envisioned a public realm vitalized by individual creativity," explains Les Shepherd, chief architect of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which assumed the Treasury Department's real estate duties upon its inception in 1949. "The Guiding Principles positioned talent and innovation as the new emblems of American unity."

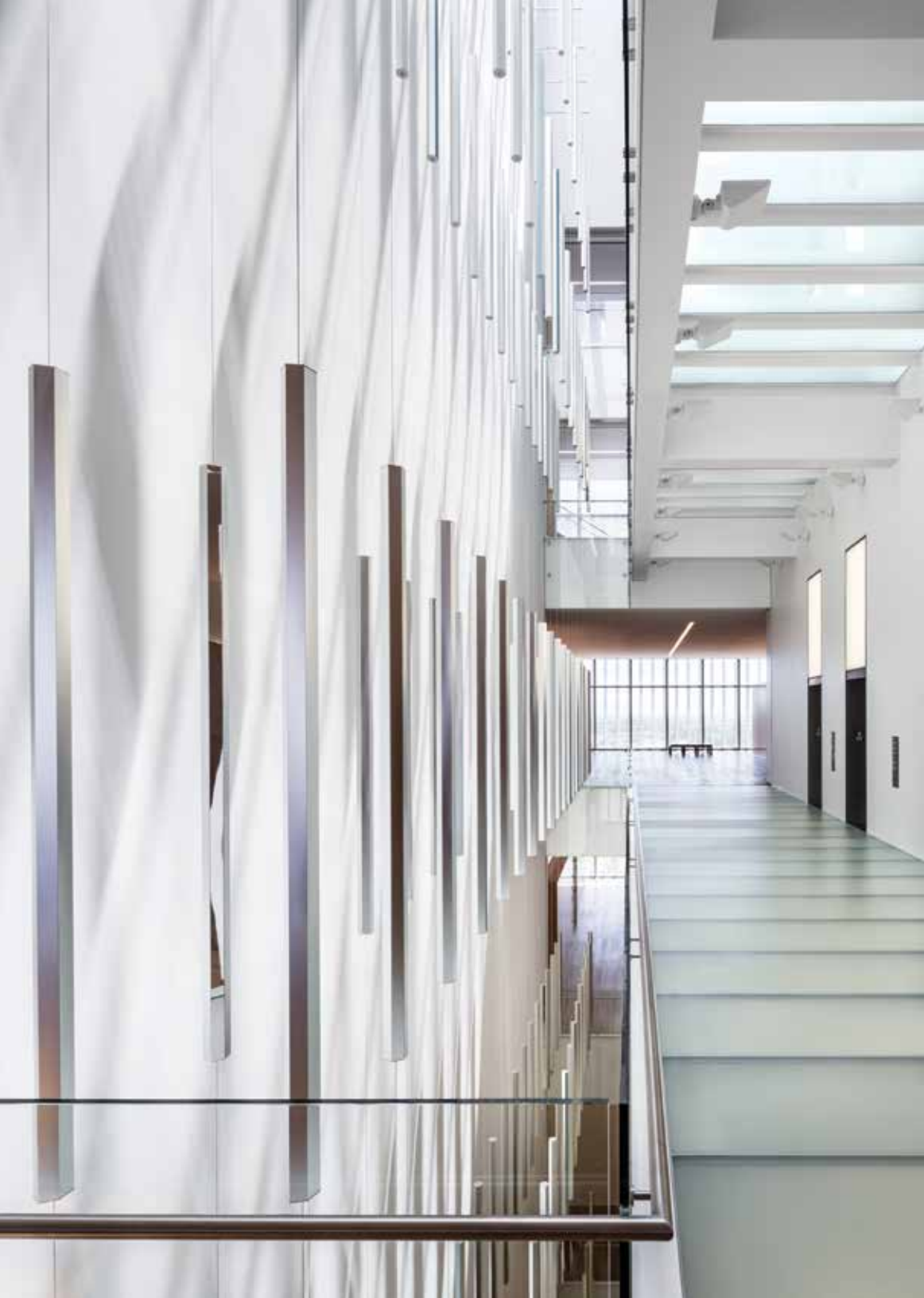
While it empowers architects to imagine new and unique physical forms for national identity, the Guiding Principles

also lays out that challenge in detail. The document charges them to “reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability” of the federal government, as well as contemporary thought and regional tradition. Yet the creative community relished the complex mandate. “We grasped that we didn’t have to borrow from precedent anymore—that it was our generation’s responsibility to express our understanding of justice,” architect Thomas Phifer recalls of practitioners’ response to the Guiding Principles.

GSA embraced Moynihan’s vision as its own in particular in the 1990s, and it cemented this commitment to diverse, contemporary interpretations of the federal presence in 1994 with its launch of the Design Excellence Program. The initiative facilitates access to federal building commissions for America’s best architects and designers, and ensures that all project teams rigorously uphold the multidimensional standards of the Guiding Principles. From its inception, Design Excellence helped forge multiple iconic, highly functional courthouses, and while these early successes were taking shape,

in 1997 the program supported GSA in selecting Phifer’s eponymous firm to lead design of an annex to the Moss courthouse. “We believe that, rather than use the classical elements that Jefferson brought to America from Europe, people should experience a contemporary justice that is open, transparent, and light-filled,” Phifer says of this new era of courthouses, adding that success with the Moss annex relied on equal respect for Salt Lake City’s rich past, the democratic vision of historical federal architecture, and progressive ingenuity.







DEMAND FOR AN ANNEX

The foremost concern of GSA and its Design Excellence Program is producing federal civilian buildings that optimize GSA's partner agencies' work. By 1997, the Frank E. Moss U.S. Courthouse suffered from longstanding shortfalls in this service.

Gregg Miller is a facilities program manager at the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, which represents the Judiciary on GSA's courthouse construction projects. According to the architect, updates to the courthouse ostensibly stopped with its 1932 expansion. "Some renovations were done over the intervening years, but it's not a modern courthouse in terms of its circulation. There's only so much you can do with a historic building."

Circulation indeed distinguishes vintage from contemporary courthouses. Since GSA began publishing design guidelines for the Judiciary in the 1980s, the agency has required standalone interior routes for judges, prisoners, and the public, as separation minimizes threats to personal safety, breach of confidential information, or a personal interaction that might compromise the objectivity of jurors.

The absence of independent pathways within the Moss courthouse was palpable. "Prisoners were transported into the building through the judges' garage, and it would have been relatively easy for an escapee to attack a judge there," recalls Tena Campbell, who served as a United States District Court Judge in the historic building since 1995. "And although the marshals did their very best to keep us separated, at times judges would ride the elevators with people in custody." Because of limited circulation, as well, Salt Lake City's *Deseret News* reported that in late 2010, "During the high-profile trial of Brian David Mitchell, U.S. marshals had to be careful not to let [abductee] Elizabeth Smart and the jury cross paths in the hallways."

Overcrowding compounded the circulation problem. Toward the end of the U.S. District Court's occupancy of the Moss courthouse, Judge Campbell presided over a case using a colleague's courtroom to ensure capacity; it also was the only courtroom in the building that included holding cells. "We weren't equipped for the 21st century at all," she says. In addition,

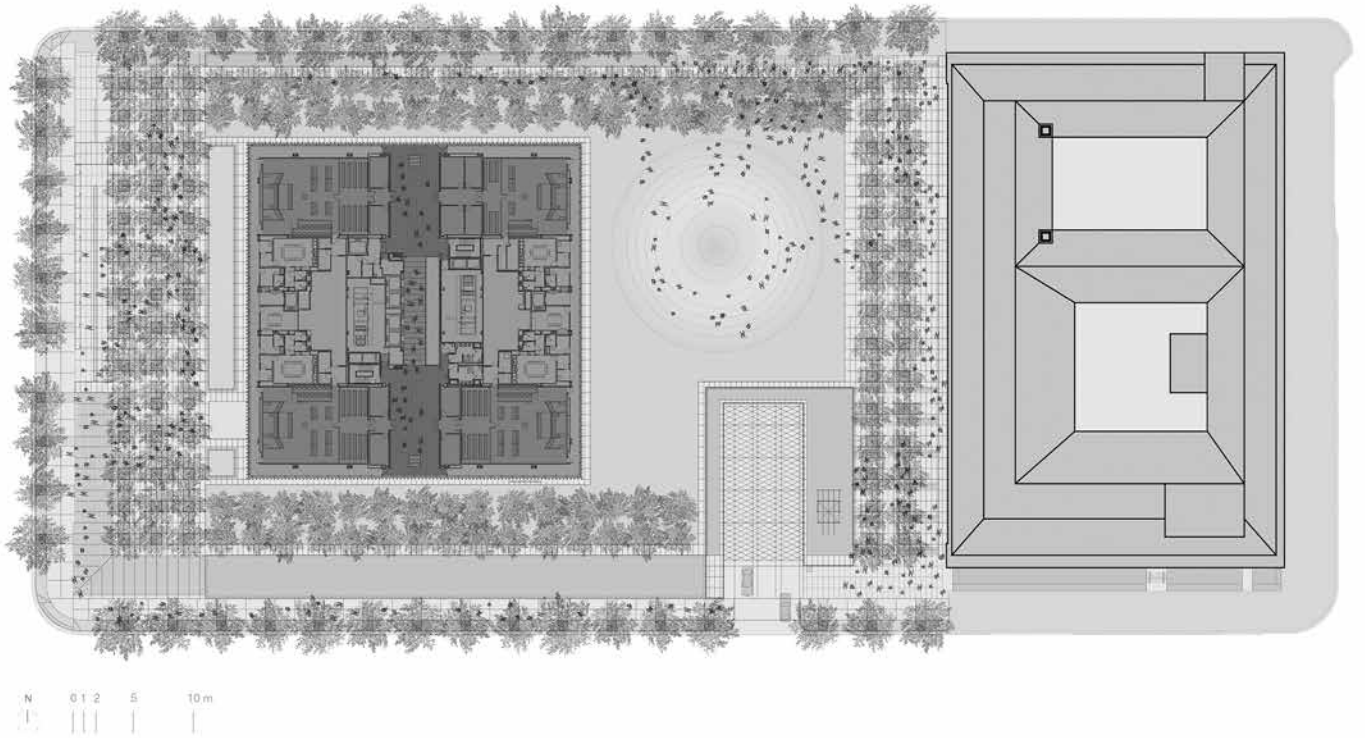
as caseloads and staffing were increasing, some groups that would naturally occupy the Moss courthouse, such as the U.S. probation office and the office of the United States Attorney for Utah, had already moved out of the building into leased space. Construction of a new annex would allow for separate circulation routes and much-needed space.

GSA originally planned for this building to stand immediately adjacent to the Moss courthouse, and Phifer remembers feeling drawn to the task. Inspired by the Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture and the Design Excellence Program's support for new symbols of democracy, the architect explains, "The idea was to embody a sense of enlightenment, by connecting the old courthouse and the new annex with what we all affectionately called a 'light joint.' The idea was balanced in the way justice is balanced, with each building expressing its own time, united by natural light."

Alan Camp, a Denver-based GSA project manager who served on the evaluation board to select a design team for the Salt Lake City annex, recalls the selection

committee's attraction to Phifer's proposed solution. The scheme directly linked the annex to the Moss courthouse via the glass atrium, or light joint, and it created a dialogue across architectural eras by visually connecting the spandrels and other features of the 1932 facades to the lines of the annex. Camp also notes how the winning proposal simultaneously differed from the Moss courthouse. Its sleek geometry offered a counterpoint to the more elaborate stylings of prewar federal architecture, and because "the historic building had typical small windows and dark wood interiors, everybody gravitated toward Tom's daylighting strategies and to the overall lightness of the annex and atrium."

By awarding the annex to the team led by Thomas Phifer and Partners, GSA and the Judiciary were assured that the new building would include three separate circulation paths. Yet concern for safety also caused further delay. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, GSA tightened building security standards to include 50-foot setbacks for new buildings, among other more stringent recommendations.



Site Plan

In turn, the site of Phifer’s proposed annex no longer complied with need. The Judiciary and GSA subsequently collaborated on gathering adjacent land parcels, so the project site could encompass the entire city block. The following years also saw the entities working with Senators Orrin Hatch and Robert Bennett to obtain additional funding for a freestanding structure.

In response to the new realities of the Salt Lake City commission, GSA also went to admirable lengths to ensure its cultural stewardship of the public realm. Instead of demolishing the historic International Order of Odd Fellows Hall that encroached on an enlarged annex property, the agency salvaged that Richardsonian Romanesque-style building by moving it to another plot altogether—a triumph for historic preservationists and a feat of structural engineering. In another example of its commitment to excellence, GSA recognized that Phifer should be permitted to evaluate the initial strategy for the annex in light of the new surrounding conditions. As Shepherd puts it, “We couldn’t just double the size of the site and not redesign the

building,” with Judge Campbell adding, “We were convinced that hewing to the original design would not meet our needs, nor the idea of a great public building.”

THE FREESTANDING COURTHOUSE

The design of the United States Courthouse Annex was finalized in 2009. Today the 10-story building overlooks the west side of the Moss courthouse. Its public entrance is located on the southwest corner, and opens to a soaring oak-clad lobby punctuated by a spiral staircase. Jurors and other visitors reach this threshold and monumental interior by crossing an artfully crafted landscape, which ascends gradually from the sidewalk and culminates in allées of trees interspersed with lawns, reflecting pools, and public furniture.

Measuring 400,000 square feet in total, the new courthouse interior comprises 10 courtrooms, 14 judges' chambers, and facilities for the Clerk of the Court and United States Marshals Service, among other federal uses. Two levels of secure parking are located directly beneath the building.

Phifer observes that the additional time required to assemble a square-block site benefited the design team. While thorough comprehension of three-part circulation and other complex needs helped him

secure the commission for the annex, all of those intricacies “are not immediately understandable, and as an architect, we had to bring clarity to the organization of the new building. We were curious to discover the detailed needs of the people who use the courthouse.” Additionally, the project brief had undergone a dramatic shift in the extended interim. Whereas the connected annex would have housed bankruptcy courts, the freestanding facility was programmed for district and magistrate court proceedings. (Bankruptcy court facilities today remain in the Moss courthouse, where vacated space is now occupied by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Program Support Center.) “Design is a very thoughtful process, in which there are times to learn and times to lead.”

Phifer continues that a pair of fundamental strategies for the all-new courthouse reflects the obligations of learning and leading. Devising efficient three-part circulation required guidance from stakeholders, and he credits participating judges, clerks, and marshals, as well as GSA's experts and peer reviewers, for helping devise those



Section Elevation looking North

pathways. In an example of setting the terms of dialogue, on the other hand, the architect advocated for anchoring courtrooms in the building's corners, so that each would enjoy access to daylight from at least two directions. From those dual concepts, "the building expanded up and down to place its other functions in a logical, efficient sequence," he explains, imparting the 10-story volume with a cubic shape.

This give-and-take process also established that the cube would have a predominantly glass skin. "I think daylight has guided us, and all of this project's constituents, throughout the design process. It was our collective ethos," Phifer says. "The whole building is a study in capturing daylight for a sense of enlightenment in the courts, and if any building needs to have a strong symbolic presence in an American city, it is a federal courthouse."

Besides evoking the transparency of the nation's courts or the forethought of adjudication, daylighting promised to increase the courthouse's utility, by boosting worker productivity among

other effects. Yet because daylighting also faces very practical challenges—namely solar thermal gain—the design team iterated shading devices that would filter light through the building's glass-and-aluminum curtain wall while barring heat. It ultimately landed upon a custom system of extruded and perforated anodized-aluminum sunscreen louvers that runs vertically along all four elevations.

This veil is more nuanced than an initial glance may suggest, as slight differences in fabrication and installation produce functional benefits beyond shading. Louvers are widest where jury deliberation, judges' circulation, and prisoner holding and movement take place, to provide these activities with the greatest sense of privacy. In addition, the louvers on each facade are mounted at different angles, according to orientation, to minimize the glare of low-angle sunrise and sunset or to make the hottest midday rays glance off the building.

Approximately 15 inches separates the louvers from the building envelope for optimal performance and to accommodate window washing. The system also includes

long rectangular voids framed in polished steel. The most notable of these openings is the public lobby entrance, which emerges from the veil like a portal to the building, and whose mirrored underside embodies the self-reflection that members of the public often exercise when they participate in the judicial process.

As a result of these varying moves, the louvers shield the courthouse from 70 percent of direct sunlight. They have an equally big impact on the exterior's expression, as their various interactions with the sun make the courthouse appear to change in color and transparency according to a viewer's perspective and time of day. The combination of cubic form and dynamic aluminum veil, Judge Campbell says, balances a statement of enduring stability with "the modernity of light and glass."

The shade system offers a counterpoint to the columns and pediments of the Moss courthouse, as well, and Phifer believes it proposes a 21st-century vocabulary for courthouse architecture generally. The building possesses a "presence through

light, and a spirit of using nothing more than what's needed," he told *Architect* magazine.

The emphasis on daylight continues within. A central skylight illuminates the public elevator lobbies over the full height of the courthouse, and the lobbies extend north and south to the building perimeter to form an atrium. The atrium also features an art installation in which James Carpenter Design Associates has manipulated incoming sunshine from the skylight. Called *Suspended Light Pillars*, the piece comprises 380 suspended hexagonal tubes arranged in a grid to evoke the clouds of ice crystals that often take shape above Salt Lake City; nine nearby mirrors direct natural illumination toward the tubes, so they may refract light in the same manner as that natural cloud formation. *Suspended Light Pillars* was made possible by GSA's Art in Architecture program, which oversees the commissioning of artworks for new federal buildings.





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Les Shepherd
Chief Architect, GSA

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Thomas Phifer
Architect





CONSTRUCTION AND AN UNFOLDING FUTURE

Just as lengthy preparation aided the design of the United States Courthouse Annex in Salt Lake City, so it benefited construction.

While GSA was assembling land parcels and reviewing plans for a newly freestanding annex volume, a major redevelopment within Salt Lake City's central business district had begun. That project included the erection of a two-story shopping mall and more than 500 units of housing.

Alan Camp, the GSA project manager, says that if the original annex had moved forward too quickly in the wake of the 1997 team selection, GSA would have solicited for construction services during a time of short supply. Instead, the agency advertised for bids when multiple contractors were concluding work on the privately sponsored downtown revitalization, and also as the economy showed signs of faltering, so expenses that were once artificially inflated had become highly competitive. Camp also credits general contractor Okland Construction, which joined the project team in 2008 officially as the construction

manager as constructor, for optimizing the constructability of Phifer's design. As a result, Congress approved \$185 million in funding for the courthouse, or \$26 million less than an amount GSA had previously estimated for the project. Ground broke in 2011, and the building opened three years later.

The United States Courthouse Annex today operates with similar cost efficiency. Take the daylighting that proved integral to the building's form, function, and symbolic meaning. Because the louver system deflects almost all of the sun's heat while allowing its light to spread through lobbies, corridors, courtrooms, and workspaces, the air-conditioning and electric lighting systems experience much less strain. Combined with the energy-efficiency gains from advanced mechanical equipment, a well-insulated curtain wall, and other environmentally and fiscally responsible strategies, the courthouse consumes 36 percent less power than comparable buildings.

The project's sustainability performance gains range from initial environmental

savings to annual operations reductions, such as one-fifth recycled content and 150,000-gallon-per-year water savings, respectively. And should an increased caseload someday require adding courtrooms, these extra spaces may be easily refashioned from existing interiors, thereby minimizing future expenditure of taxpayer and natural resources. In recognition of current accomplishments and built-in foresight, the U.S. Green Building Council certified the United States Courthouse with a LEED Gold rating in 2015.

In addition to sustainability, according to Gregg Miller, the finished project represents the leading edge of judicial workspace design. “There has been a revolution in sound and video-presentation technology over the last 20 years, and the judges feel wonderful about conducting business at this new level of functionality,” he specifies.

Miller adds that judges’ chambers are collegial. Whereas a traditional courthouse design would have appended a chamber to each courtroom, bloating the building

footprint and exposing more curtain wall to the elements, here the shared chambers are consolidated upstairs. “The arrangement is quite efficient in terms of space—there can be a shared collection of references, rather than multiple individual libraries, for example—and it limits the need for multiple circulation routes on every floor of the building.” The project manager also observes that spatial collegiality can translate to day-to-day interaction. “Compared to a ‘This is my courtroom’ culture of some courthouses, in collegial chambers judges see their colleagues and interact with them more.”

Benefits are not reserved for the Judiciary. Phifer says that the sizable security setback, transformed into a protected, park-like environment, celebrates Salt Lake City’s remarkable valley setting, and that the ongoing revitalization of downtown promises even more usage of this public amenity and enjoyment of the natural scenery. In a similar vein, for people using the courthouse interior, polished steel-framed openings in the upper stories of the building envelope’s veil frame vistas of the Wasatch Range and Salt Lake City skyline.



“New visitors approach a federal courthouse with some anxiety,” Phifer observes of the public’s overall experience of the United States Courthouse Annex.

“I hope this project’s spatial procession—of approaching the courthouse and following daylight to the elevators and finally arriving in the warmly illuminated courtroom—brings citizens calm.”

Judge Campbell meanwhile underscores the sense of safety that attends her daily work in the new building.

Finally, the project has had positive repercussions well beyond Salt Lake City. For Phifer personally, selection to lead the design team followed very closely on the heels of opening Thomas Phifer and Partners. “I think GSA has been extraordinarily important in my development,” he says of the opportunity to design the annex at a formative moment in his company’s life. “I certainly would not approach architecture the way that I do had it not been for the years during which I collaborated with GSA and the judges on the design of the courthouse. And GSA has shown an extraordinary number of architects, engineers, artists,

public figures, and civil servants that we can impact the way people think about government.”

Phifer’s own effort has encouraged that community of professionals to seek work in the public realm, and to do so with the ambitious vision first described in the Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture. Echoing his thoughts about updating the vocabulary for courthouses, the American Institute of Architects stated, “The design of the new Salt Lake City courthouse resulted from a search for a physical symbol to express the American system of justice—the form had to be strong, iconic, transparent, and egalitarian.” The esteemed organization described the United States Courthouse Annex in these pacesetting terms in bestowing a 2015 AIA Institute Honor Award for Architecture upon the building. It is only the third such accolade in GSA’s history.





THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Owner

U.S. General Services Administration
Public Buildings Service
Rocky Mountain Region

Timothy O. Home, regional commissioner

Dan Nikolich, Amy Hesse, Al Camp,
project managers

Dannie Crowder, Steve Eckelberg, Kip
Shepherd, Robert Collins, Jessica Williams,
contracting officers

Caroline Alderson, Robert Andrukonis,
Alan Antonio, Kim Bailey, Curtis Berg,
Sherry Blaize, Brenda Bronson, Leigh Ann
Bunetta, Steve Burke, Mike Bystrom,
William Caine, Joe Carruth, Angel Cohen,
Andrea Collins, Sue Damour, Jeffery Domber,
Ryan Everly, Marilyn Farley, Robert Fay,
Ed Feiner, Elaine Gallagher-Adams, Jennifer
Gibson, William Guerin, Vijay Gupta,
Susan Harrison, Lisa Haskins, Jessica Higgins,
Dave Hopkins, David Insinga, Jeff Jafarzadeh,
Mike Lowell, Robin Luning, Jeet Mahal,
Sharon Malloy, Mike Owens, Janet Paladino,
Rolando Rivas-Camp, Robert Schlattman,
Greg Sebesta, Les Shepherd, Gus Sorentan,
Scott Walton, Lisa Wild, Tom Williams

Tenant

U.S. District Court for the District of Utah
U.S. Marshals Service
U.S. Courts Probation and Pretrial Services
Tenth Circuit Branch Library

Design Architect

Thomas Phifer and Partners
New York, New York

Thomas Phifer, managing partner
Stephen Dayton, project partner

Jon Benner, Katie Bennett, Robert Chan,
Mitch Crowder, Rebecca Garnett,
Chien Ho Hsu, Ina Ko, Andrew Mazor

Artist

James Carpenter Design Associates
New York, New York

General Contractor

Okland Construction
Salt Lake City, Utah

Nelson Atagi, Jeremy Blanck, Audra Bodily,
Arthur Fryxell, Cameron Hughes, Jeremy Inskeep,
Ron Keller, Steven Kimball, John McEntire,
Amy Mills, Russell Mumford, Robert Naffziger,
Brett Okland, Randy Okland, Brian Peatross,
Tami Petersen, Steven Powell, Ralph Spencer,
Fredrick Strasser, James Thomas, Steven Thurgood

Architect of Record

Naylor Wentworth Lund Architects
Salt Lake City, Utah

Ross Wentworth, principal

Sergey Akhpatelov, project architect

Barbara Fowler, Julio Garcia, Richard Judkins,
Scott Smith, Steve Squires, Tyler Young,
Erin Youngberg

Landscape Architect

E. A. Lyman
Landscape Architects
Sandy, Utah

Lighting Design

Fisher Marantz Stone
New York, New York

Civil Engineer

McNeil Engineering
Sandy, Utah

Structural Engineer

Reaveley Engineers +
Associates
Salt Lake City, Utah

Blast Engineer

Weidlinger Associates
New York, New York

Mechanical Engineer

Van Boerum & Frank
Associates
Salt Lake City, Utah

Electrical Engineer

BNA Consulting Engineers
Salt Lake City, Utah

Building Enclosure

James Carpenter
Design Associates
New York, New York

Acoustics

Arup
Los Angeles, California,
and New York, New York

Graphics

Piscatello Design Centre
New York, New York

LEED Consultant

CRSA Architecture
Salt Lake City, Utah

Elevators

Lerch Bates Associates
Lakewood, Colorado

Pool Design

Water Design
Salt Lake City, Utah

Cost Estimating

Parametrix Inc.
Salt Lake City, Utah

**Design Excellence
National Peers**

Thomas Balsley
Thomas Balsley Associates
New York, New York

John Belle
Beyer Blinder Belle
New York, New York

Steven M. Davis
Davis Brody Bond
New York, New York

Steven Ehrlich
Ehrlich Architects
Culver City, California

William C. Miller
College of Architecture +
Planning, University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah

Garth Rockcastle
MSR
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Peter Schaudt
Hoerr Schaudt
Chicago, Illinois

Mark Tortorich
Stanford University
Medical Center
Stanford, California

Andrew Zago
Zago Architecture
Detroit, Michigan

**Art in Architecture
National Peers**

Adam Lerner
Museum of Contemporary Art
Denver
Denver, Colorado

Karen Mueller
Minnesota State Arts Board
St. Paul, Minnesota

**Construction Excellence
National Peers**

Paul Chistolini
Washington, DC

Joe Lawton
Valerio Dewalt Train
Chicago, Illinois

Neel White
White Construction
Austin, Texas

The design of the new courthouse resulted from a search for a physical symbol to express the American system of justice—the form had to be strong, iconic, transparent, and egalitarian.

American Institute of Architects



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