

VISION+VOICE

DESIGN EXCELLENCE IN FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE: BUILDING A LEGACY

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THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS ASPIRED TO CREATE ARCHITECTURE REPRESENTATIVE OF OUR NATION'S DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES SINCE THE EARLY DAYS OF THE REPUBLIC.

In recent years, the U.S. General Services Administration established the Design Excellence Program to give contemporary meaning to this enduring vision. By engaging the finest architects and designers working in America today, the Program seeks to reinvigorate Federal architecture with building commissions across the country that will become treasured landmarks for generations to come.

This publication documents the voices of some of the leading public officials, architects, and design professionals who have worked to inspire and nurture excellence in Federal architecture over the past four decades. Based on oral histories recorded during the summer and fall of 2002, the conversation begins with the recollections and insights of former U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. In 1962, Moynihan wrote the “Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture,” a one-page document buried inside a report on Federal office space. The Guiding Principles captured the imagination of important decision-makers and ultimately became the rationale for a new approach to the design of government buildings and public spaces.

Other voices chronicle a range of Federal design initiatives, from early efforts in the 1960s to preserve historic landmarks to more recent attempts to diversify and improve public architecture. One group of renowned architects comments on newly completed Federal projects, while another shares thoughts on buildings whose silhouettes will rise in years to come. Overall, the discussion offers a rich history about some of the people who have contributed to making design excellence a reality and their tireless efforts to create architecture that represents our American democracy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE

In the course of its consideration of the general subject of Federal office space, the committee has given some thought to the need for a set of principles which will guide the Government in the choice of design for Federal buildings. The committee takes it to be a matter of general understanding that the economy and suitability of Federal office space derive directly from the architectural design. The belief that good design is optional or in some way separate from the question of the provision of office space itself does not bear scrutiny, and in fact invites the least efficient use of public money.

The design of Federal office buildings, particularly those to be located in the nation's capital, must meet a two-fold requirement. First, it must provide efficient and economical facilities for the use of Government agencies. Second, it must provide visual testimony to the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the American Government.

It should be our object to meet the test of Pericles' evocation to the Athenians, which the President commended to the Massachusetts legislature in his address of January 9, 1961: "We do not imitate—for we are a model to others."

The committee is also of the opinion that the Federal Government, no less than other public and private organizations concerned with the construction of new buildings, should take advantage of the increasingly fruitful collaboration between architecture and the fine arts.

With these objects in view, the committee recommends a three point architectural policy for the Federal Government.

1. The policy shall be to provide requisite and adequate facilities in an architectural style and form which is distinguished and which will reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the American National Government. Major emphasis should be placed on the choice of designs that embody the finest contemporary American architectural thought. Specific attention should be paid to the possibilities of incorporating into such designs qualities which reflect the regional architectural traditions of that part of the Nation in which buildings are located. Where appropriate, fine art should be incorporated in the designs with emphasis on the work of living American artists. Designs shall adhere to sound construction practice and utilize materials, methods, and equipment of proven dependability. Buildings shall be economical to build, operate, and maintain, and should be accessible to the handicapped.

2. The development of an official style must be avoided. Design must flow from the architectural profession to the Government and not vice versa. The Government should be willing to pay some additional cost to avoid excessive uniformity in design of Federal buildings. Competitions for the design of Federal buildings may be held where appropriate. The advice of distinguished architects ought to, as a rule, be sought prior to the award of important design contracts.

3. The choice and development of the building site should be considered the first step of the design process. This choice should be made in cooperation with local agencies. Special attention should be paid to the general ensemble of streets and public places of which Federal buildings will form a part. Where possible, buildings should be located so as to permit a generous development of landscape.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE LIKE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. YOU CAN'T REVISE THEM.
THEY ARE SO BASIC AND SO RIGHT IN EVERYTHING.

– *Charles H. Atherton, Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts*

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DANIEL PATRICK **MOYNIHAN**

CHARLES H. **ATHERTON**

DAVID M. **CHILDS**

ROBERT A. **PECK**

SUSAN **HENSHAW JONES**

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DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN

THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS IS PART OF THE STRUCTURE OF A DEMOCRACY. THOMAS JEFFERSON LAID THIS OUT WHEN HE SAID ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND POLITICAL THOUGHT ARE INDIVISIBLE. THIS WAS PRESENT IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL FROM THE BEGINNING. WE BEGAN WITH A GREAT BURST OF ENERGY IN THE WHITE HOUSE, THE FIRST BUILDING TO BE FINISHED, THE CAPITOL, THE TREASURY BUILDING, AND THE PATENT OFFICE, ALL WITHIN THAT BASIC PLAN THAT PIERRE CHARLES L'ENFANT LAID OUT. THEN WE FORGOT ABOUT THOSE THINGS. IT TOOK ANOTHER CENTURY, AND THEN JOHN F. KENNEDY CAME ALONG AND REMEMBERED THE IMPORTANCE OF ARCHITECTURE. WE NOW HAVE A LOT TO SHOW FOR IT.



The Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture have been in place now for 40 years, which is a fair chunk of the history of the republic itself. There's a little story how they came about. In the spring of 1961, the discussion of foreign policy in a Cabinet meeting paused for a moment, whereupon the next most important subject in government came up—office space. Indeed, we hadn't built any office space here in Washington since the Federal Triangle buildings of the 1920s and 1930s.

The Labor Department, where I served as assistant to Secretary Arthur Goldberg, was scattered in 17 buildings around the city. Every agency was in this situation. Then and there, President Kennedy set up something called the Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Office Space. Luther Hodges, Secretary of Commerce, was the co-chair with Arthur Goldberg.

When we started, our report had a very detailed inventory—how much office space we needed for this department, that department, and so forth. As we set about this

new building boom, we thought we'd put some guidelines in there about what these buildings should look like. So I wrote a little one-page guidelines for Federal architecture. One of the rules was that we should avoid an official style. We should seek to do what was the contemporary architecture of the time. There are great moments in architecture, there are lesser moments. But we wouldn't miss any.

The Seagram Building [designed by Mies van der Rohe] had just opened on Park Avenue in New York City. We would say, at any given moment, build whatever the Whiskey Trust is building. Over the years, you won't miss the best.

You want Federal buildings that are not only monumental but open, welcoming and accessible. That's something you've got to watch. At the time we were working on this, illustrator Saul Steinberg, that wonderful man, was spending a year at the Smithsonian, and he said, "You know, all these government buildings seem determined to impress upon citizens how unimportant they are." Well, that needn't happen and it didn't in the 1990s when we began to build some very important buildings, such as the Ronald Reagan Building.

You'd be surprised by the number of different Presidents who get this. I was looking just the other day at the report of our Ad Hoc Committee on Federal Office Space. President Kennedy had a three-paragraph memorandum that said to the departments, all right, this is our program.

Get with it. In his last sentence, he said that we will particularly attend to the proposal on Pennsylvania Avenue.

The last word from John F. Kennedy before he left for that trip to Dallas was that he wanted to have a coffee hour when he got back to show the plans for Pennsylvania Avenue to Congressional leaders. A group of us were meeting to talk about this when the phone rang to say the President had been shot.

When Mrs. Kennedy left the White House in a week or so, she met with President Johnson in the Oval Office. He asked her if there was anything he could do. She had two things that she thought President Kennedy would have wanted done. One was Pennsylvania Avenue [the other was the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington]. She followed this faithfully to the day she died. I remember writing her to say that we had just gotten the legislation authorizing the Ronald Reagan Building and the Woodrow Wilson Center. I got back the most beautiful three-page letter saying 25 years is a long time not to give up on something. She never did.

That was a very exciting time in Washington. You didn't have to have an Executive Order to start up a committee on Pennsylvania Avenue. You just did it. Of course, it was waiting to happen. We can exaggerate about the Kennedy years. But you wouldn't be wrong that art and architecture were certainly on the national agenda in a way they hadn't been before.

DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN HAS BEEN A LIFE-LONG ADVOCATE FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE. AS A CITIZEN, ADVISOR TO U.S. PRESIDENTS, AND FOUR-TERM U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW YORK, MOYNIHAN HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SUPPORTING THE BEST IN FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE AND PRESERVING SOME OF OUR NATION'S MOST SIGNIFICANT LANDMARKS. IN 1992, HE RECEIVED THE THOMAS JEFFERSON AWARD FOR PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE FROM THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS. MOYNIHAN IS NOW UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY AND A SENIOR SCHOLAR AT THE WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER IN WASHINGTON, DC.

OUT ON PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE AND 13TH IS SOMETHING CALLED MOYNIHAN PLACE.
THAT LITTLE PYLON HAS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE ON IT.
IT MAKES ME FEEL KIND OF NICE WHEN I GO BY IT.

– *Daniel Patrick Moynihan*





View of Lafayette Park and the New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC

THE NEW FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDINGS FLANKING LAFAYETTE PARK WERE ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE BECAUSE THEY WERE REALLY THE FIRST LARGE SCALE PROJECT IN WHICH A MAJOR PIECE OF ARCHITECTURAL FABRIC WAS SAVED AND USED AS THE GENERATOR FOR THE NEW BUILDINGS.

– *Charles H. Atherton, Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts*

CHARLES H. **ATHERTON**

The Commission of Fine Arts acts as a cheerleader for good design, to encourage good public architecture. The commission dates back to 1910. It was an outgrowth of the McMillan Commission study that developed a great plan for the monumental core of Washington. After the plan had been developed, everybody realized that unless there was somebody around that was there to enforce it, it wasn't going to happen.

The thing that stimulated this whole notion of creating a permanent commission was the Agriculture Department, which was going to build its new headquarters in the same line as the Smithsonian Castle [the turreted 1855 building designed by architect James Renwick on the southern edge of the National Mall]. If that had happened, the chances of ever having any kind of unity on the Mall would probably have been lost forever.



So, Charles McKim simply went to Theodore Roosevelt and said, “Look, we know you love good design, Mr. President, and you will do us a great favor if you will tell the Agriculture Department to stop digging, fill in their hole and move back 60 feet.” And he did. That’s remarkable. It probably wouldn’t happen today. But it was really that building, more than anything, that brought about the creation of the Commission of Fine Arts.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan was very closely in tune with the Commission of Fine Arts. A very close friend of his was Bill Walton [Chairman of the Commission from 1963-1971], who was a friend of President Kennedy and seemed to befriend all administrations. They were in this whole business of drawing up plans for Pennsylvania Avenue. It was something that President Kennedy had a great deal of personal interest in. Moynihan felt that it would be important to cast this effort in a larger framework, that the Federal government had an obligation to improve public architecture throughout the entire country. That’s what brought about the Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture.

August Heckscher picked up on these. He was an advisor to President Kennedy on a whole range of cultural affairs. He made Moynihan’s Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture part of his report to the President and said, “These ought to be enforced, they ought to be broadcast widely.” He recognized the importance of public buildings and art in public buildings.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE LIKE THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. YOU CAN'T REVISE THEM. THEY ARE SO BASIC AND SO RIGHT IN EVERYTHING. THEY TALK ABOUT EMBODYING THE BEST OF AMERICAN CULTURE. YOU CAN'T DO MUCH BETTER THAN THAT.

I think by themselves they probably would have had limited success. But the fact that you had an Administration that was interested in the American culture at large, like the Kennedy Administration, made a huge difference. The ideas that were spawned in the initial Heckscher report began to take hold.

The turning point of the Commission as an advocate for modern architecture clearly was the appointment of Bill Walton as the Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts. At that time, there were six other members. Hideo Sasaki had already been appointed by President Kennedy to fill a vacancy for a landscape architect. The remaining positions were filled with people like architect John Carl Warneke, Aileen Saarinen [wife of noted architect Eero Saarinen] and Theodore Roszak, who was one of the outspoken and well known sculptors in the modern movement. You had Burnham Kelly from Cornell who was an urban designer.

That really was the first public manifestation that things were going to be different in the city. You could see movement toward that, certainly, because the Kennedy Administration took every opportunity it could to talk about the new architecture.

A lot of people feared at the time that the assassination of President Kennedy would just throw this whole thing off track. In fact, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Daniel Patrick Moynihan were at the White House having lunch, planning to take the plan of Pennsylvania Avenue and show it to members of Congress and get their support. And then they learned about the assassination of the President. It was their determination that it wasn't going to die, that they were going to keep this thing alive.

SECRETARY OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS **CHARLES H. ATHERTON** IS AN ARCHITECT AND FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT OF FEDERAL BUILDINGS, PROJECTS, AND MEMORIALS IN WASHINGTON, DC, SINCE 1960. THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL, VARIOUS SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS, AND THE RESTORATION OF THE PENTAGON ARE AMONG THE EFFORTS BENEFITING FROM ATHERTON'S EXPERTISE AND INSIGHT. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL MEMORIAL COMMISSION AND SERVES ON THE BOARD OF THE HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY FOUNDATION.

DAVID M. CHILDS

Recently out of Yale Architecture School and back from a traveling fellowship abroad, I received a telephone call saying that I had been recommended to help the commission on the design of Pennsylvania Avenue. It was not only my introduction to large-scale architecture but to Pat Moynihan and his guiding philosophies.

I was extraordinarily lucky not only in getting that job but in finding that Pat was appointed by the newly elected President Nixon to be urban affairs advisor.

FOR NIXON TO BRING IN THIS AVOWED LIBERAL-THINKING DEMOCRAT, OF COURSE, WAS NOT ONLY WONDERFUL FOR THE BIG, BROADER ISSUES, BUT IT WAS PERFECT FOR PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. BECAUSE EVERY DAY HE COULD GO AND TAKE OUR PLANS FROM THE BOTTOM OF GEORGE SCHULTZ'S [DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET UNDER NIXON] DESK AND PUT THEM ON THE TOP WHICH, OF COURSE, WAS THE KEY TO GETTING THINGS DONE IN ANY ADMINISTRATION.



I came in 1968 and the Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture, already then six years old, were still very much quoted. They'd gotten to the point that they were beginning to be understood, and they've only become more so as time has gone on.

The inspiring words that Pat wrote in that report, sent on by the Secretaries and so forth to the President, really elevated the guidelines to an important position. His call to greatness resounded throughout a much larger community with such compelling conviction that those reverberations have lasted to today. In the overall picture, they have gotten continuously stronger, but there have been these ups and downs that reflect the priorities of the nation or of a particular administration.

It was a tremendous good fortune to see Moynihan often, to be there in the White House talking to him in the evenings after things had quieted down. We talked constantly about Federal architecture matters and in particular, of course, about Pennsylvania Avenue. We were going through a tough time in architecture. It was a period of super block designs, as we know from the World Trade Center, and some fairly boring architecture too. It was a moment that people hadn't yet really woken up to the complexities of the past as well as a new modernism. But the call to produce great architecture was clearly there, and Pat thought that this laboratory of Pennsylvania Avenue was the place to show it. He was concerned about the spaces between the buildings, and that's in my mind where Pennsylvania Avenue had its greatest successes.

At the time of the proposal for Pennsylvania Avenue, we had really gotten the plans to the point where they were approved, they were ready to go, and they needed an act of Congress. The idea had to be funded. So Pat thought it was important that the President announce this plan and take a tour of the avenue. As we got close to that date, it was important that there be a document that would be written describing the President's plan and Pat asked everybody to have a go at it. Pat's great ability was to attract the best and the brightest to work around him, and he had them all. Everybody took a shot at this piece and Pat would read them all, and he would look more and more depressed.

At a certain moment two days before this event was to happen, Pat walked over to his typewriter and, having read all of this stuff and having it in the back of his mind, he sat

down and produced this piece from beginning to end. I've never known anybody to type as fast as he could or with so many errors per line. He typed at the same speed that he was thinking. (All of the typographical stuff would be taken care of by a secretary.) Then out it came, and I'm just sure, having watched that happen on Pennsylvania Avenue, that's how the Guiding Principles were done.

Pat attached himself to others that he admired greatly. For some reason, although they were extremely different people, he attached himself to Nat Owings [founder of the architectural firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill] and there was a magic between these two men. They would spark ideas off each other. Pat was a person who could go out and articulate them in a way that Nat never could.

One of them had to do with the mix of uses on Pennsylvania Avenue. There had been some talk about cultural uses and housing, which the economics of the time ridiculed. The common wisdom was that if you were anybody of any note you lived in the suburbs or in Georgetown. And I remember those conversations where the idea was about the 24-hour life of the city. Nat insisted on housing and Pat completely endorsed that, which has so nicely come full circle with Pat now living on Pennsylvania Avenue in Market Square, one of those places that didn't have housing in the original plan but evolved to have it.

In fact, it's wonderfully ironic that today people are claiming that there isn't enough land left to do the housing, which is in fact now the most economic of all of the programs that can be put in the northern part of the Pennsylvania Avenue plan.

ARCHITECT **DAVID M. CHILDS** SERVED AS DESIGN DIRECTOR OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE COMMISSION IN THE LATE 1960S BEFORE JOINING THE WASHINGTON, DC, OFFICE OF SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL IN 1971. PRESIDENT NIXON APPOINTED CHILDS CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION IN 1971, A POSITION HE HELD FOR TEN YEARS. CHILDS IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND IS CURRENTLY CONSULTING DESIGN PARTNER AT SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL, NEW YORK CITY. HE SERVES ON THE BOARDS OF SEVERAL MUSEUMS AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS.

It's interesting that Pat has continued this discussion. We had a major issue at that time for which he fought hard, the Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act of 1976. The bill called for a mix of uses in Federal buildings. At the Federal Triangle, for example, the bill called for private enterprise uses in the lower levels of government buildings. They were permitted and added tremendous viability to the projects and to the satisfaction of people working in those buildings. But now that has turned backwards somewhat because of the concern for security.

It was important to let the seed of Moynihan's idea germinate and grow. More recently, the flowering of the experiences of doing that has come out. Plans or guidelines can only be as good as the choice of the person to implement them, and I've learned this on design commissions. You can't legislate good design. You can legislate the goals and articulate proper procedures to facilitate them, but at the end of the day, you need to get the right person at the right time with the right plan.

One of the things in the principles is about selecting architects through the advice of a distinguished panel of architects. That was not carried out in the beginning as well as GSA is trying to do today. The selection of well known, established and revered people was there, but the risk-taking of younger people with extraordinarily different ideas and so forth wasn't possible. That's part of the maturing process of an idea. These things can't happen overnight. But it shows the effectiveness of the call to greatness and the people who then took on those charges and worked relentlessly over the last 40 years to get Federal architecture to this point.

Where is the next Pat Moynihan? They are few and far between. Although there are many people in Congress that do feel strongly about this, it's relatively few who really choose architecture as a high priority. It's not something that you get re-elected on. And it's demoralizing for the people within these organizations, GSA or Interior, not to have that pat on the back and recognition in the State of the Union message or money put into programs independent of the political process. That reinforcement needs to happen continuously.



Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE CONSTANTLY FIND WAYS TO BRING NEW AND CONTEMPORARY THINKING TO PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE AND THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THIS IS FUNDAMENTAL. BUT WITHOUT THE SPARK OF LEADERSHIP FROM THE TOP, IT'S A HERCULEAN TASK.



U.S. Custom House on Bowling Green, New York, NY

[MOYNIHAN] WAS ALSO WORKING HARD TO GET THE MONEY TO FIX UP THE BOWLING GREEN CUSTOM HOUSE IN LOWER MANHATTAN. ONE REASON I WENT TO WORK FOR MOYNIHAN IS THAT HE KNEW WHO THE ARCHITECT WAS. HE SAID, “HANDLE THIS BUILDING BY CASS GILBERT. IT’S GOT TO BE FIXED.”

– Robert A. Peck, *Former Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan*

ROBERT A. PECK

I DISCOVERED EARLY ON THAT WHEN PAT MOYNIHAN HAD BEEN WORKING FOR PRESIDENTS KENNEDY AND NIXON, HE HAD HAD A LOT TO DO WITH FEDERAL DESIGN AS NO OTHER PUBLIC FIGURE SINCE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT, IF NOT THOMAS JEFFERSON AND GEORGE WASHINGTON.

When I was in law school and I was looking at government architecture, I ran across the Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture and felt that they were pretty clever stuff. It's 1962, right around the time that Jane Jacobs wrote her book *Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Moynihan writes that Pennsylvania Avenue should be inviting as well, which was pretty surprising at that time. So I decided, well, I like this guy.

In 1969, Moynihan, a Democrat, was considered a turn-coat because he had gone to work for Nixon. Moynihan worked for Nixon because he was a big expert on the problems of the cities. He was a social demographer and sociologist, and he worked at the joint Harvard and MIT Center for Urban Studies, which was all about education, crime, and redevelopment. Moynihan once said, "You know, the kids on the street are rioting, the social order is totally falling apart, and what are you doing? You're creating these totally alienating environments, these streets that nobody wants to be on anymore,

no place for people to gather in a positive way, and public buildings that are an embarrassment, and so you're helping to tear down the social order."

When I started working for Moynihan, he had already gotten himself on the Finance Committee in the Senate and everybody would be ticked off because they'd say, "Damn, he doesn't want to talk about the tax bill which is what we think is really important. He'd much rather talk about architecture and design." So architecture is an important thing to him. He believes it's important. I remember him once saying, "We're sitting here today debating food stamps and goodness knows that's important, but a hundred years from now what people will know about our civilization is not that, but rather what we've built."

During my job interview with Moynihan, he told me that the job was going to be to fix up Union Station in Washington, DC. At that point, the station was a disaster in every sense of the word. The Federal government had decided to turn it into a visitors center and dug a pit. At a hearing, Moynihan asked the Interior Secretary about taking a count to make sure that the number of people who exited the pit was the same as the number of people who entered.

At one point the National Guard Armory in Buffalo, called the Connecticut Street Armory, burned to the ground. It was one of those great 1880s or 1890s Neo-Romanesque buildings. Moynihan loved the building and



had decided we were going to get it rebuilt. So, I went to check out what we could do to get it rebuilt. It turns out that the Pentagon had this formula for building national guard armories and it didn't take account of historic buildings. The Pentagon said they would rebuild a Quonset hut structure for the vehicles and the rest of the building they couldn't deal with. They were probably going to tear it down. Moynihan went to Buffalo, announced that the building was going to be rebuilt to the way it had been. That was kind of outrageous because there was all this gorgeous woodwork inside. We got it restored. We just beat up on the Pentagon until they changed their mind.

During the dedication of the New York Federal building, Moynihan said, "It's so fitting that we name a building in New York for Jake Javits." And he apparently turned around, craned his neck, looked up, and said, "Just a pity that we named the ugliest building in the city for Jake Javits."

When the Democrats lost the Senate in the 1980 election and got it back in 1986, they asked Moynihan what sub-committee he wanted and he said, "Oh, you know, I just want that little sub-committee on highways and public works," and nobody challenged him.

In 1960, Moynihan wrote an article called "New Roads and Urban Chaos." With the interstate program only four years underway, he wrote that this program was going to destroy our cities and that it was in the process of emptying them out. He had done some research and could tell you the history of the interstate highway program from the time

it was first proposed in about 1915. As he put it, "the more they studied it, the less it seemed necessary and the greater the mileage assigned to the program."

In 1990, when it came time to reauthorize what had always been called the Federal Highway Act, he proposed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which leveled the playing field between highways and transit. Moynihan gave a speech to a bunch of road builders and told them that we had poured enough concrete, that we weren't going to pave our way out of the transportation problem, and we had to start thinking in a more intelligent way about the issues.

At one of the first ISTEA hearings, Moynihan said that he would give \$100 to anybody in the room who could find a city in America that hadn't had its waterfront first destroyed by the railroad and then by a freeway. This was 1990 when it wasn't quite as much the conventional wisdom as it is today that you could reclaim the waterfront.

Moynihan also took on the Army Corps of Engineers. He and Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming succeeded in changing the formula under which cities and states had to contribute to harbor dredging projects. Once they changed the formula so that cities had to pay to dredge their harbors, it's amazing the number of cities that decided they no longer needed to be a deep water port. Moynihan was not a financial whiz but knew that funding formulas mean a lot. He realized that how you pay for things and how you vote determine changes in the government.

FROM 1995 TO 2001, **ROBERT A. PECK** SERVED AS COMMISSIONER OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE OF THE U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION. EARLY IN HIS CAREER, PECK WAS CHIEF OF STAFF TO U.S. SENATOR DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN AND LATER BECAME VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS. HE ALSO WORKED AT THE U.S. OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET, THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, THE CARTER WHITE HOUSE, AND THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION. PECK IS CURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE GREATER WASHINGTON BOARD OF TRADE.

SUSAN HENSHAW JONES

I first got to know Pat Moynihan in the mid-1970s when I was the Executive Director of the New York Landmarks Conservancy, a new organization just a couple of years old. Brendan Gill was the chairman and he reached out to his Irish buddy, Pat Moynihan, who shared Brendan's enthusiasm for architecture, and Pat Moynihan joined the board.

IT WAS AN ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT THING TO HAVE MOYNIHAN ON THE BOARD OF THE LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. ONE, OUR VERY FIRST PROJECT WAS THE U.S. CUSTOM HOUSE ON BOWLING GREEN. PAT PLAYED AN ENORMOUS ROLE IN THE PRESERVATION AND REUSE OF THAT BUILDING BECAUSE IT TURNED OUT TO BE A MORE DIFFICULT ROAD IN TERMS OF THE PRESERVATION AND REUSE THAN ANYBODY ANTICIPATED.



The Custom House was endangered. It was a Cass Gilbert building and it had those four wonderful statues by Daniel Chester French that line the facade. And incredibly, the Customs Service had left the building to move to the World Trade Center. We had this vacant landmark. There was no further Federal use.

Pat said it needed to have a private reuse that also had a public component so people could go inside. You know he's always been interested in the fine arts. The Custom House included a set of murals by Reginald Marsh that were within the building and had been hidden from public view for decades. Pat thought that the public should be able to see those murals. Well, it was very hard at that time, in the early 1970s, to find a private reuse in Lower Manhattan. Pat Moynihan helped the Conservancy find a Federal user, but that took years and years. The building, as you know, is now preserved and reused [part of it houses the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian].

The Federal Archive was another Federal surplus building. This was a landmark, an 1891 Romanesque Revival building. We came up with an idea that Pat backed, calling for the transfer of this vacant landmark's market value to a public local entity for a lease to a private developer selected by the Landmarks Conservancy. Then we could use the proceeds to create a revolving fund for historic preservation in the five boroughs of New York City. And this fund exists today. It's called the Historic Properties Fund. It makes loans and, occasionally, outright grants to owners who have no other access for funding to repair their landmark properties. This is a Pat Moynihan achievement that is too little known. It's such an important mechanism in New York City.

The Tweed Courthouse is another one in which Pat wasn't directly involved, but he was on the board at the Landmarks Conservancy. That building was about to go down. We were able to get Federal funding, if the Landmarks Conservancy paid for the working drawings, to replace the roof because there was so much leakage. Now it's a fully restored building right next to City Hall. And of course, Pat's now enormously interested in the preservation and reuse of Governors Island. I could go on and on about all the buildings that I know Pat Moynihan had a hand in. There are so many.

Frequently, he did things quietly. He would make a call. He wouldn't make a big deal about it publicly. He would make a call, and the thing about Pat is that the people on the other end, whether they were City Council people in New York City, the head of the Department of Parks, people

listened to Pat. His calls made a difference. One call from him reversed fortunes.

The great thing about Pat Moynihan having to do with preservation and design excellence in new architecture is that he never turns you down. If you are part of a cause that he believes in, and believes in passionately, you will never get a "no." He'll always do what he can to help you.

Recently, we had a symposium at the National Building Museum that looked at the impact of September 11—on the future of architecture, engineering, and urbanism. It was a symposium called "Freedom Without Fortresses." I wanted Pat to be on the podium speaking because I knew that his point of view would be utterly different. I knew that it was important for people to hear because he is very much a proponent of doing nothing that changes our public spaces and the way we live. He thinks that we should go after the terrorists where they come from. Don't alter our open society.

Pat understands the role of architecture as the most public art, the art that speaks so much about our culture, about our national aspirations and values. Just as he is for the best of the past, he has been adamantly for the best for the future. He always felt that the best designers of the day—landscape architects, architects—and their views should be sought out in advance.

We all know his Guiding Principles have been so utterly influential since 1962. Pat has always said that government is not for the short-winded. So it's appropriate that he wrote his design guidelines in 1962 and that we are really seeing their effects now.

SUSAN HENSHAW JONES IS PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM IN WASHINGTON, DC, AMERICA'S LEADING INSTITUTION DEVOTED TO TRACING AND INTERPRETING THIS COUNTRY'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN ARCHITECTURE, CONSTRUCTION, ENGINEERING, AND DESIGN. PRIOR TO JOINING THE MUSEUM, JONES SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY. SHE HAS WORKED FOR THE BOSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY, THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF LOWER MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK, AND CITIBANK.

BILL LACY

I was recruited to work for the National Endowment for the Arts by Nancy Hanks, the legendary chairman of the NEA. We met in a lounge in Fort Worth, Texas. She was wearing a fur coat, which I thought was a little odd because it was July. She was coming from Alaska, so that accounted for the fur coat. She was a very persuasive lady, as anyone who ever met her will attest. She said come to Washington and run this program called Architecture and Environmental Arts. We'll get you some money so that you can award fellowships and grants and all those things. It sounded like a lot of fun. So I moved to Washington and enjoyed seven wonderful years with Ms. Hanks and a group of very fine colleagues who were running similar programs.

I GOT INVOLVED WITH SOMETHING THAT WE CREATED CALLED THE FEDERAL DESIGN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, WHICH WAS A VERY AUDACIOUS AND HIGHLY NAIVE EFFORT ON OUR PART. WE THOUGHT WE COULD TRANSFORM HOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VIEWED DESIGN AND HOW SERIOUSLY THEY REGARDED IT. WE WERE TRYING TO CONVINCE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT THEY WERE SURROUNDED AND TO GIVE UP.



THEY DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE ONLY 20 OF US.

Our effort had component parts. One of those parts was the revision and the expansion of the Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture. Other parts were to just make the Federal government aware of the importance of design in their postage stamps, in their prisons, in their publications—all those things. We tackled the whole works.

We had a tiny special forces group that was headed by Lois Craig and Robert Peck. That group, four in all, was advised by noted designer Charles Eames, who was one of my advisors for the architecture and design part of the Endowment. And out of that came the book *The Federal Presence*. Lois and Bob put together a thoroughly

researched book and I think that it's one of the lasting benefits of that entire program.

We also had a program to start giving awards for the best Federal architecture. It was really pretty tough in the beginning because many of the buildings did not measure up. We had to search really diligently to find something that would not start out with a lesser quality than other design awards programs. So we ended up honoring the Grand Coulee Power Plant by architect Marcel Breuer, who also designed the Department of Housing and Urban Development headquarters in Washington, DC.

If we were going to improve Federal architecture, we also had to make people aware that graphic design, landscape design, furniture, and all those things went to make up architecture in the broader sense. For example, we got furniture manufacturer Herman Miller to set up a model office in Senator Mark Hatfield's office to show how efficient you could make an office.

One of our programs was called the Federal Graphics Improvement Program. Our motto was that the government shouldn't be any different than the corporate world as far as their graphic design quality. We brought in the top graphic designers like Ivan Chermayeff and Massimo Vignelli. They were the people who got enormous fees to put the red "o" in Mobil. They came down and did this pro-bono because they thought it was such a great idea. That led us to revise the way people were hired in government to do graphic design. We started doing portfolio

reviews and gradually improved the quality of the people doing Federal graphic design. And that spun off a publication called "Federal Design Matters" that circulated throughout the government and kept this whole initiative and momentum going.

Moynihan was a stalwart figure in promoting architecture in the Federal government at that time. One building that resulted from that was the saving of the Old Post Office on Pennsylvania Avenue. The Old Post Office served as an example that you could make government buildings lively if you changed the rules a little.

We also got a bill passed to convert all the railroad stations that were abandoned by Amtrak and to use them as cultural facilities. We gave a grant to study the conversion of the Pension Building into a museum of architecture, which ended up being the National Building Museum. People don't realize that it was a big sea change in public attitude to save old buildings instead of dismissing them so readily.

We decided that one way to improve new Federal architecture might be to conduct more design competitions. We polled Federal agencies as to whether anyone would like to volunteer to do a design competition for their next building and said the Endowment would pay the fees for the competition, and organize and manage it. We were taken up on that offer by the Immigration and Naturalization Service at a border station between Canada and the U.S. We set up a very unusual, unorthodox way of selecting the

DIRECTOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN AT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS FROM 1971 TO 1977, **BILL LACY** CREATED THE FEDERAL DESIGN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM. LATER, LACY HEADED THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME AND WAS PRESIDENT OF PURCHASE COLLEGE, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK. HE HAS BEEN A PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR FOR SIGNIFICANT CIVIC PROJECTS, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, DC. LACY IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PRITZKER ARCHITECTURE PRIZE, REGARDED AS THE NOBEL PRIZE OF THE FIELD.

architect. We went to them instead of having them come to Washington. We set up in a hotel, and we had five architectural teams come in. They couldn't do any advance design preparation because it was kind of a one-day test, which in architectural language is called a charrette. We gave them the program in the morning. They went to an assigned suite of rooms, worked the rest of the day, and came back at 5pm. We interviewed each of them and selected the architect. Then, we paid them on the spot, the honoraria, which is unheard of. It turned out very well. The border station is quite a nice little building as well.

YOU HAVE TO KEEP EXCELLENCE OUT IN THE FOREFRONT OF THESE PROGRAMS AND HOPE THAT YOU CAN INFLUENCE THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF ARCHITECTURE. GSA HAS EXCELLED IN DOING THAT OVER THE LAST FIVE TO TEN YEARS BY BRINGING IN PEOPLE FROM THE OUTSIDE. THAT'S WHAT WE ALWAYS FOUGHT FOR AT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS—TO BE GUIDED BY PEOPLE THAT WERE NOT OF THE BUREAUCRACY. IT CHANGES THE OUTCOME IF YOU CAN BRING IN PEOPLE THAT HAVE NO VESTED INTEREST IN AWARDING A GRANT OR COMMISSION TO ANYONE BUT FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS.



Old Post Office, Washington, DC

The Federal government should take the lead. It has the best chance to set an example because a private developer is not interested in art or aesthetics or anything but the bottom line. The Federal government should rise above that and set some standard of excellence.

THE BIG IDEA IN BOSTON IS THAT EVERY COURTROOM SHOULD BE VISIBLE FROM THE OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING AND FROM THE MAIN SPACE ON THE INSIDE. THE SENSE OF ACCESSIBILITY, OF TRANSPARENCY OF THE SYSTEM OF JUSTICE, THAT'S WHAT THE COURTHOUSE IS ABOUT.

– Henry N. Cobb, Architect, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners

VISION+VOICE

DOUGLAS P. **WOODLOCK**

HENRY N. **COBB**

ANDREA **LEERS**

HUGH **HARDY**

JOAN **GOODY**

DOUGLAS P. WOODLOCK



The Boston Federal courthouse project is the link between the GSA Design Excellence Program and prior Federal design undertakings. My involvement in the courthouse started almost immediately upon being appointed to the court in 1986. I got actively involved partly because I was the youngest judge. The rest of my colleagues, who had been there for quite some time, thought that it was improbable that something would happen in the redesign and reconstruction of facilities for our courthouse. At the same time, Judge Stephen Breyer, now Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, was the youngest member of his court and felt the same way I did.

AFTER HE GRADUATED FROM HARVARD LAW SCHOOL, BREYER CLERKED FOR [SUPREME COURT JUSTICE] ARTHUR GOLDBERG. ARTHUR GOLDBERG HAD BEEN THE SECRETARY OF LABOR WHEN THE GUIDING

PRINCIPLES FOR FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE WERE DEVELOPED BY SENATOR MOYNIHAN, WHO, AT THAT POINT, WAS ONE OF GOLDBERG'S ASSISTANTS. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES WERE KIND OF AN UNDERGROUND CLASSIC. SO WE EXHUMED THE PRINCIPLES AND USED THEM AS A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT WHAT WE WANTED TO DO. MOYNIHAN WAS THE GUIDING PRESENCE IN THE WAY IN WHICH WE APPROACHED OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE DESIGN OF THE BOSTON COURTHOUSE AND THE SELECTION OF THE PERSON WHO WOULD DO IT.

The selection was a week-long process that involved three-hour interviews apiece with the seven finalists. We sent them a series of letters ahead of time and asked them to address the larger aspirations and principles that were going to be shaping the design of this building. We also wanted to have their project manager—the person who

was going to have hands-on responsibility on a daily basis—talk to us. So we made a series of demands about focusing on design at the very beginning of the process.

We also understood that we needed someone who would be familiar with contemporary architects and architecture, and would be able to lead us in a program of background reading and preparation. Somebody who would sit by our side and say, “You ought to read this, you ought to look at this, you ought to think about this, you ought to talk to these people.”

I was aware of Bill Lacy [first Director of NEA’s Architecture and Environmental Arts Program and Executive Director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize] through his work at the Israel Supreme Court and so was Judge Breyer. So I called Lacy up and said, “Here’s our project.”

AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION, I SAID, “THIS IS A PROJECT OF IMMENSE IMPORTANCE TO BOSTON AND TO DESIGN GENERALLY. AND WHAT WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO DO IS TRAIN US AND SET THE TOM-TOM DRUMS BEATING IN THE ARCHITECTURAL COMMUNITY THAT SOMETHING DIFFERENT IS GOING TO BE DONE.” WE WANTED TO MAKE THIS SELECTION PROCESS MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR ARCHITECTS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE NOT THINK ABOUT GOVERNMENT WORK. WE WERE TRYING TO GET THE BUZZ GOING.

Lacy was our eyes and ears, and to some degree our mouth, during the initial stage. He accompanied us on a kind of a magical mystery tour of the finalists’ buildings. We went to buildings that had recently been done—they were not necessarily on the list that the architects wanted us to look at.

We were interested in the work-a-day aspects of the buildings as well. The person that we would interview would be the building manager who would tell us how the building actually worked. We did not want the architects’ representatives to be there. This was an architect selection process. It was not an architecture selection process.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WAS LEAST IMPORTANT WAS THAT THE ARCHITECT HAD DONE A COURTHOUSE BEFORE. WHAT WE WANTED WAS A PERSON WHO WAS CONCERNED WITH DESIGN IN THE BROADEST SENSE TO BRING THAT PERSPECTIVE TO BEAR ON A NEW PROJECT. WE WEREN'T LOOKING FOR SOME PARTICULAR ARCHITECTURAL STYLE. OUR VIEW WAS THAT THE DESIGN OF THE BUILDING WOULD GROW OUT OF OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ARCHITECT. WE WANTED SOMEONE WHO WAS GOING TO BE PREPARED TO GIVE US ALL THE TIME IN WHAT WE WANTED TO UNDERTAKE.

We came to the conclusion that Harry Cobb [principal of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners] would be the architect. I'm of the view that we would have had wonderful courthouses with every one of the other architects as well.

Our process helped shape the GSA's Design Excellence process, which took lessons learned from Boston to a higher level. They applied them in a meaningful way to achieve a selection process that really does encourage the very best



John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse, Boston, MA

PHOTO: STEVE ROSENTHAL

of American architecture, just as Moynihan's Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture suggested our government should do.

We had a strong view that the courtroom is a democratic institution. Each one of the people involved has an important role to play in the courtroom. The spectators are there to make sure that things are conducted in a fashion that is acceptable to the community. The jurors are there to decide the facts of the case. The witness is there to tell the truth. The judge is there to provide some degree of supervision but should be unobtrusive. And then counsel and the parties are right there at the center of the courtroom.

We came up with a series of principles to identify and ennoble the various roles within the courtroom and to make the significance of the courtroom known through the architecture of the building. That was done without ever taking a position about what the building was going to look like.

The second issue was focused on the barren site around us. There were suggestions by a number of interests, including the Boston Redevelopment Authority, that we ought to create a kind of celebratory tower. But we chose a different approach. We said we want to set the tone for this urban area. We made a very strong street wall. There was a lengthy discussion about the urban planning dimensions of the courthouse. It was an ongoing conversation that lasted about two years.

The selected site on Fan Pier was an important place to locate an anchor like the Federal courthouse to encourage the development of the south Boston seaport district. Our selection of the site was followed by Congressional appropriation for a subway in the area. And now the area's on the cusp of further development. After 10 or 15 years, it will be clear what kind of imagination and vision went into the selection of the courthouse site when other urban functions grow up around it.

I've always thought that the best architecture is a marriage of memory and invention. This describes the law as well. The law is a process of taking precedents, past experiences, and applying them to new problems in an adaptive way. That's what architecture is all about. The process of remaining open to understanding both the memories and the possibilities of invention is critically important to what judges and architects ought to be doing together.

I would feel very uncomfortable if GSA's Design Excellence Program was reduced to a series of paragraphs in the Code of Federal Regulations. It seems to me that it ought to be a living document, something that is infused with the personalities and the aspirations of those who are involved in it. That means that all the constituents have to be actively engaged and open to suggestion and criticism. Finding ways to encourage that is the real challenge of the Design Excellence Program.

DOUGLAS P. WOODLOCK, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, WAS A KEY PARTICIPANT IN THE TEN-YEAR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARCHITECTURALLY ACCLAIMED JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY U.S. COURTHOUSE IN BOSTON. FROM 1987 TO 1995, WOODLOCK WAS A CHARTER MEMBER OF THE SECURITY, SPACE AND FACILITIES COMMITTEE OF THE U.S. JUDICIAL CONFERENCE, AND HELPED TO CREATE THE FEDERAL COURTS' NATIONAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM. RECOGNIZING HIS COMMITMENT TO DESIGN EXCELLENCE, HE RECEIVED THE THOMAS JEFFERSON AWARD FOR PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE FROM THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS IN 1996.

HENRY N. COBB

The architect selection for the United States Courthouse in Boston took place prior to the establishment of GSA's Design Excellence Program. It became a model for the Design Excellence process. During the selection process, it was clear that the two judges were in control of the process, which is unusual. There have been judges who exercise significant influence in the selection process for other Federal courthouses, but I doubt if that influence was as strong as it was in Boston.

Judge Woodlock was appointed by President Ronald Reagan. Judge Breyer was appointed by President Jimmy Carter. From subsequent conversations with those judges, I think I was selected because they recognized my passionate commitment to the project. And they sensed my understanding of the role that architecture should play in a courthouse.



WHEN JUDGE BREYER WAS GOING THROUGH HIS CONFIRMATION HEARINGS FOR THE SUPREME COURT, HE TOLD THE COMMITTEE THAT I HAD SHOWN AN IMAGE OF A COURTHOUSE BUILT IN 1735 IN VIRGINIA, THE HANOVER COUNTY COURTHOUSE. I FELT THIS COURTHOUSE EMBODIED TO THE HIGHEST DEGREE THE QUALITIES THAT SHOULD BE IN A CONTEMPORARY COURTHOUSE. BREYER TOLD THE SENATORS THAT I PINNED THE PICTURE OF THAT COURTHOUSE ON MY MIRROR AND LOOKED AT IT EVERY MORNING.

That's a bit of exaggeration. But it is true that I explained the reason why the earliest courthouses were so effective in communicating. I told my story of how architects had dealt over time with the progressive enlargement of the judicial system, requiring more and more courtrooms and more and more elaborate bureaucratic space around them. I showed images of how architects through the 18th, 19th and 20th

centuries had dealt with this problem, and how finally this problem had expanded to the point where architects were no longer able to deal with the scale. I used the Federal courthouse in New York City by Cass Gilbert as an example of a highly-skilled architect struggling to deal with the problem of scale. And then I showed the subsequent conversion of courthouses to mere office buildings that you couldn't tell from anything else. I said that my primary goal, were I to be awarded this commission, would be to create the contemporary analog to that little courthouse in Virginia. That's what grabbed Stephen Breyer. And that's essentially why I was awarded that commission.

The Virginia courthouse had one courtroom. The Boston courthouse has 27 courtrooms. We had to overcome the very simple problem that as soon as you multiply anything, you devalue it. The one-room courthouse, by definition, is a destination. That's the space in which the entire community recognizes that justice is being done. But when you have 27 courtrooms, each courtroom has been devalued just because of the accretion. And the courthouse in Boston not only has 27 courtrooms, but it has 725,000 square feet of office space surrounding them. The courtrooms occupy only six percent of the total floor area.

The big idea in Boston is that every courtroom should be visible from the outside of the building and from the main space on the inside of the building. Therefore, we wanted to place the courtrooms on as few floors as possible.

There are only three floors with nine courtrooms each. And there is a space from which the public can see all the courtrooms. And from the park outside of course, they can also see all the courtrooms.

The sense of accessibility, of transparency of the system of justice, that's what the courthouse is about. The other thing that it's about is being a good citizen in the urban fabric. Unfortunately, there is no urban fabric around it. So the courthouse became a model for what should happen around it in terms of scale and density.

The building is L-shaped and two sides face the street. The street walls are intended to be compatible with the scale of the warehouse district nearby. The building tries to set a standard for that area in the future, suggesting that it should be made up of well-defined streets, squares, and so on.

What the two judges understood is that the architect needs to be informed about the aspirations of the institution being housed and the mechanism by which the institution lives. Judge Breyer, for example, invited me into his chambers to spend an afternoon explaining to me what judges do, what the system of justice is, how it works. I got a short course in the Constitution of the United States. Breyer was so engaged. He was passionately committed to the idea that this courthouse belonged to the public.

That's why you encounter a granite curb at the Harborpark entrance to the courthouse on which are inscribed the words spoken by Judge Breyer at a Harvard

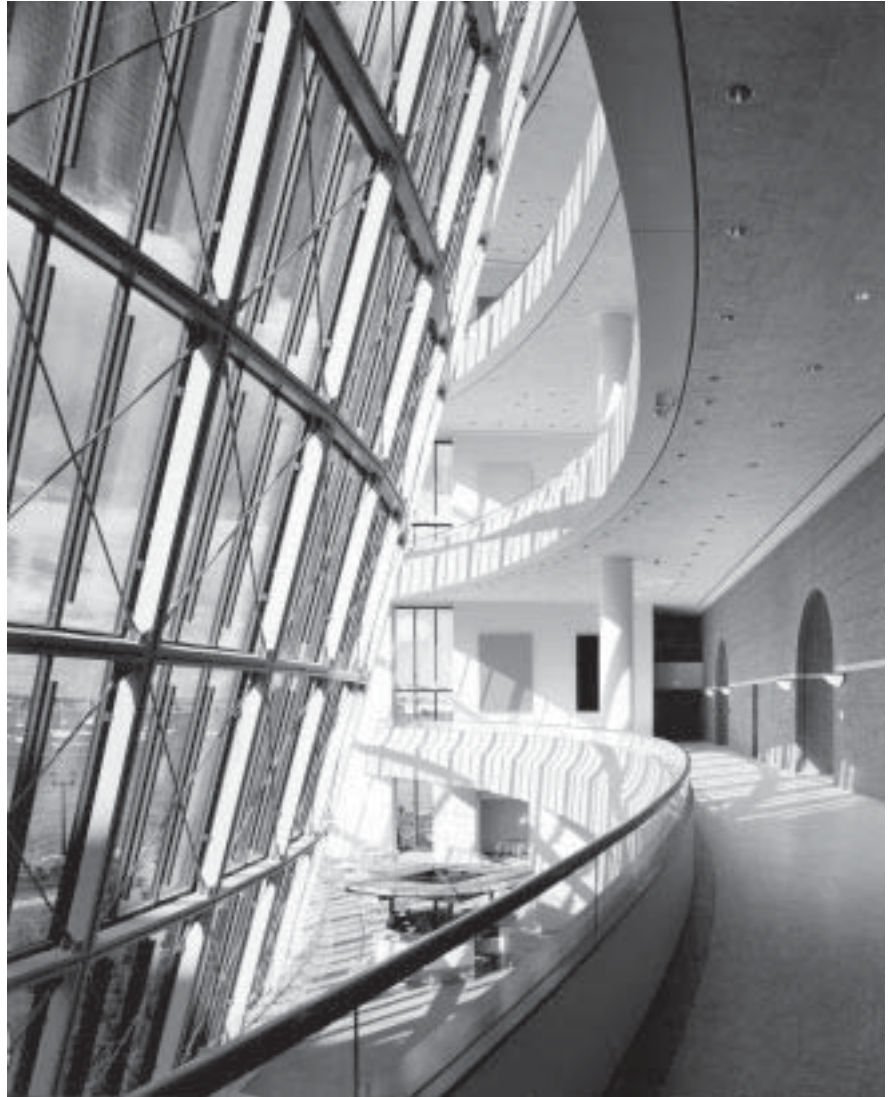


PHOTO: STEVE ROSENTHAL

John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse, Boston, MA

colloquium: “This magnificent site does not belong to the judges, does not belong to the lawyers, does not belong to the litigants; it belongs to the public.” He was absolutely determined that this courthouse could become a public place. That was his passion.

For me, that was like a dream come true. I was being asked to do a building into which everyone would be invited. I recognized from the moment the project was announced, that this would be my opportunity to make a building that would speak. The principal obligation of a courthouse is to speak articulately about the intentions that lie behind the system of justice that is housed in that building. With such prominence on Boston harbor and such a splendid view, the burden is on architecture to speak about the idea that every citizen shall have equal access to the administration of justice.

Again, all this was before the Design Excellence Program was established. There was no peer review for the Boston courthouse. But we had the two judges. And their commitment was so extraordinary. I can’t tell you how many hours the judges spent with me. That’s what made it such a valuable experience. No architect could possibly ask more in the way of patience, support, and instruction from a client.

Among all the Federal judges in the country, Judge Woodlock is the one most passionately committed to establishing a procedural structure that would assure quality in courthouses, and not just in his courthouse, but courthouses across the country. He worked very hard on the design guidelines. He was intimately involved in everything. Of course, he had a degree of self-interest to make his courthouse a model. But he was also working on a national basis. He became almost a preacher about architecture, passionately committed, and lectured all over the country—to judges, to bureaucrats, to architects. As I mentioned, the two judges organized several conferences at Harvard and public events in Boston related to the design of this courthouse because they wanted to draw attention to the process, even before there was anything much to show.

A very important decision made on my part and endorsed by the judges was that this building should look to the future and respect the past. The idea of respecting the traditions of its place resulted in the choice of brick. Toward the water, the building presents an emblematic glass wall. That brings together the idea of memory and invention in this building.

ARCHITECT **HENRY N. COBB** DESIGNED THE JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY U.S. COURTHOUSE IN BOSTON, WHICH WAS COMPLETED IN 1998. COBB ALSO DESIGNED THE U.S. COURTHOUSE IN HAMMOND, INDIANA. HE IS A FOUNDING PRINCIPAL OF PEI COBB FREED & PARTNERS IN NEW YORK CITY, A FIRM ESTABLISHED IN 1955 AND RENOWNED FOR ITS OUTSTANDING PUBLIC AND CORPORATE PROJECTS. COBB IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND HAS RECEIVED THE ARNOLD W. BRUNNER PRIZE IN ARCHITECTURE AND THE MEDAL OF HONOR FROM THE NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AIA.

ANDREA LEERS

In 1991, we held a symposium at Harvard on the subject of the Boston Federal courthouse. We talked about what the courthouse meant for the city, what it meant for architecture, what it meant for courthouse design. The symposium was organized by the Graduate School of Design and the Law School and held in the Ames Courtroom at the Law School. There were architects, lawyers, urban designers and architectural critics, and we all talked about what was important to us about the design of courthouses, urbanism and design in the public realm. It was really a substantial conference and out of that grew a course at Harvard in the Professional Development seminar series.

It was Mack Scogin, then chairman of Harvard's architecture department, who came to me and said why don't you give a course in the summer of 1992 on the subject of courthouse design. By then, I had designed the Worcester courthouse and two state courthouses. We started out that year and the course took hold as a series of lectures to talk about the evolution of courthouse design, about some of the planning principles, and about the relationship of urban design and the courthouse.



WE WENT TO SEE A COURT IN SESSION BECAUSE I WAS CONVINCED THAT UNTIL DESIGNERS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATORS ACTUALLY WENT AND SAT THERE IN THE COURTROOM, THEY REALLY HAD A VERY ABSTRACT PICTURE OF WHAT WENT ON. THEN WE HAD A COURTHOUSE CASE STUDY OR TWO EACH YEAR THAT WAS IN EARLY DESIGN—NO FINISHED SLIDES, NO CAREFULLY COMPOSED PICTURES, JUST RAW WORK UNDERWAY. THAT FORMAT BECAME VERY USEFUL.

Judge Woodlock [U.S. District Judge for the District of Massachusetts] continues year after year to give an absolutely stirring speech not only about the Boston courthouse and his participation, which was enormous, but why the design of courthouses is important.

Ed Feiner [GSA's Chief Architect] has been a major contributor each year bringing more and more examples from the Federal courts program. I try to bring in an overview of the Federal program, state courts, and international examples. The attendees are architects, GSA people, judges, their clerks—quite a wide range. We have about 25 to 35 people each year.

Interest has remained high. Each year there are more and more good examples to show. It is a very different course now because a lot of courthouses have been built.

There are a couple of things that have become very clear in the ten years of the course. In the beginning, there were very few examples that were completed, very few good examples at all, frankly. I found myself having to reach far back to bring forth ideas. So my emphasis was more on the basic design strategies for developing a courthouse plan that could be adapted in many ways to different sites, understanding how you moved from the one-courtroom courthouse to a big courthouse with many courtrooms. How do you put it together in a way that works and that has some symbolic significance and so forth? As the examples have grown, we have learned a great deal more about the workings of courthouses and so that part of it needs less and less explanation.

What's become very clear is that the most important factors are the site considerations—what the courthouse is doing in its urban setting, how it's responding to other buildings around it, whether it will spur redevelopment. So this year, for example, I talked a great deal about the ways that courthouses relate to other buildings in the city or how they deal with a difficult adjacent condition, such as a highway, an elevated train, or a very impoverished residential area. There's a lot to be learned about ways of responding to context.

I have often said that all the best sites are already built on. They were built on at the turn of the century. They are where the county courthouse is. They are where the city hall is. So they are gone. What's left are the marginal sites, the Superfund sites, those that are too small, next to the railroad tracks, in the abandoned parts of the city. They present some interesting challenges in themselves and they are critical in the determination of a courthouse.

The involvement of designers in site evaluation and site selection can be very helpful. But whether we participate or not, the site and how it relates to the city fabric, the redevelopment of things around it, is a huge determinant of the form that the courthouse takes.

One of the great things about the Federal program right now is that it is actually changing the face of development. The courthouse is almost always the biggest building going up in any city, except for a convention center or something like that. So it has a huge impact and it brings a lot of activity with it. Not to squander that is the real priority.

ANDREA LEERS OF BOSTON-BASED LEERS WEINZAPFEL ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS AND FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS IS A NATIONAL LEADER IN COURTHOUSE DESIGN. IN ADDITION TO BEING THE ARCHITECT OF SEVERAL STATE COURTHOUSES IN MASSACHUSETTS, LEERS HAS RENOVATED AND EXPANDED THE U.S. COURTHOUSES IN WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, AND PORTLAND, MAINE, AND IS DESIGNING THE NEW U.S. COURTHOUSE IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA. SHE TEACHES A SEMINAR ON COURTHOUSE DESIGN AT THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND HAS BEEN AN INSTRUCTOR IN AN EDUCATION PROGRAM SPONSORED BY THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER.

HUGH HARDY

THE EARLY DISCOVERIES ABOUT FEDERAL BUILDING COMMISSIONS WERE QUITE DISTRESSING BECAUSE OF THE AMOUNT OF EFFORT IT TOOK FOR A YOUNG PRACTITIONER TO APPLY, THE AMOUNT OF DOCUMENTATION THAT YOU HAD TO PREPARE, THE TEAMING THAT ONE HAD TO PUT TOGETHER. UNDER THE RULES AT THAT TIME, YOU HAD TO THINK THROUGH EVERY LAST POSSIBLE CONSTITUENT THAT YOU WOULD NEED IN ORDER

TO COMPLETE THE BUILDING, WITHOUT NECESSARILY KNOWING THAT MUCH ABOUT THE PROGRAM ITSELF. THE EFFORT THAT IT TOOK WAS DAUNTING.

SO WHEN I WAS CALLED TO A MEETING TO DISCUSS DESIGN EXCELLENCE, IT SEEMED POSSIBLE TO REVERSE THAT PROCESS IF YOU BELIEVED THAT THE ARCHITECT WAS THE KEY PERSON IN EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED WITH THE TEAM.



The engineer and his credentials might be crucial, but the engineer wasn't going to drive the project. It was the architect who was going to be the band leader orchestrating this great pool of talent. So one could actually address the architect's selection up front. If design was important, then establish the credentials, the point of view, and the approach to the problem of the designer. And that, of course, eventually did take place. And I couldn't have been more surprised. It actually worked.

It was at the end of the meeting when all this came together. We had spent the day thinking about things and testing one another to see if anything could really change. A group of architects is always a prickly business because

they're inherently competitive. And this could have been a rather dreary session where people just showed off and didn't address the problem at all. But there was a genuine exchange of opinions about subjects of consummate importance. And we all found each other saying, well, why not. Why couldn't Federal architecture have the high standards it once did? The older government buildings were some of the most important and best of buildings. Why have we lost the ability to do that? What's gone wrong here? It's not a lack of funding, and it's not a lack of great sites. So why are the results so painful?

The GSA awards program in 1990 was interesting because it was almost impossible to talk about high design standards with the crop of stuff that was there. One of the failures, it seemed to me, had been the lack of understanding that these buildings were part of the community, the place in which they were built. It was very hard to take any of the examples and be positive about that. None of them were worthy of holding up as models.

We deliberately gave awards for preservation, hoping that would make it clear that there once was a time when there could be Federal buildings of distinction and worthy of restoration. We were trying to raise a big question mark.

Why aren't we giving any attention to new buildings? And, I think, we were successful in raising that question.

Is it the role of the Federal government to be on the cutting edge? It doesn't seem to me that is what we expect to have happen. On the other hand, if you say Federal architecture should represent the lowest common denominator, that's clearly wrong as well. The Federal government certainly needs to produce an architecture that's informed. We need leadership about how to make community, a consensus of what's an appropriate solution in each case.

It's been interesting to see some of the more recent designs for Federal buildings. They're aware of the context in which they take place. But they, by no means, are clones of their neighbors. They recognize, in many cases, the fact that they have to speak in a vocabulary that's clearly and distinctively their own, in materials and forms that are right up there with the most progressive contemporary architecture.

The hardest thing for the Federal government is not to relax and say, oh, we've got this architecture program figured out now. The basic ideas have to be kept alive by each succeeding generation. And challenged again.

HUGH HARDY, ARCHITECT AND FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, CHAIRED THE FIRST GSA DESIGN AWARDS JURY IN 1990 AND WAS A KEY PRIVATE-SECTOR ADVOCATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM. HARDY HAS BEEN A DESIGN EXCELLENCE PEER SINCE 1996. THESE CONTRIBUTIONS EARNED HIM THE FIRST GSA PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE COMMISSIONER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE IN 2000. HARDY IS A FOUNDING PARTNER OF NEW YORK CITY-BASED HARDY HOLZMAN PFEIFFER ASSOCIATES. IN 1992, PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH APPOINTED HARDY TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE ARTS.

JOAN GOODY

The first GSA Design Awards had a landmark jury and Hugh Hardy played a major role in guiding us all. Reviewing those projects led to some discussion about whether there was a better way to hire designers for the GSA.

Before the Moakley courthouse in Boston went out for qualifications from architects, I remember Justice Breyer saying to me, “Well, how are we going to attract good architects? I’m really worried we won’t get anybody.”

I don’t think anybody would ask that question today. The GSA has made it so prestigious to be part of the Design Excellence Program that any architect feels honored to be in the running and inspired to compete.

ONE OF THE REALLY IMPORTANT THINGS THAT THE GSA HAS DONE HAS BEEN TO PRESS FOR BUILDINGS THAT WILL REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN. IT HAS MADE A PRIORITY OUT OF WHAT THE BUILDING DOES TO ITS CONTEXT, WHAT KIND OF A CATALYST IT WILL BE, AND THE ROLE OF THE BUILDING IN ITS URBAN CONTEXT, SO THAT MAKES IT RICHER. WE ARE NO LONGER JUST DOING OBJECTS. WE ARE DOING BUILDINGS THAT ARE PART OF CITY BUILDING.



Cities like Wheeling, West Virginia, really appreciate the Federal presence. They see these buildings as contributors to the dignity and the economy of their towns. They need them and they want them. With better civic buildings, people understand the difference between a spec office building and a building that represents their government.

I don’t think Federal design is the place for the kind of chance you would take on your mother-in-law’s country

house. But there is certainly no reason why Federal design should reject any aesthetic because it's too far out.

The most important thing is that everybody thinks, "That's my building." I did a district courthouse in Boston. It was a major addition to a rather undistinguished 1920s Neoclassical building with a portico and a grand stair. The city councilor from that district told me that, as a girl, she would walk by with her friends and they would sit on the steps and pretend it was their house. I said when this building is finished your children are going to want to sit on the grand stair in the new portico and feel proud of it.

THAT'S WHAT OUR BUILDINGS SHOULD BE, THAT PEOPLE WHO PASS BY WANT TO CLAIM OWNERSHIP. I THINK WE CAN DO THAT—MAKING THEM SPEAK TO THE CITIZENS WHO SURROUND THEM. STRIVING FOR A SPIRIT OF OPENNESS AND DIGNITY IS ENORMOUSLY IMPORTANT. IT'S WHAT REALLY GIVES US PRIDE AND MAKES LANDMARKS.

BOSTON ARCHITECT AND PLANNER **JOAN GOODY** IS DESIGNING THE U.S. COURTHOUSE IN WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA. SHE HAS BEEN A GSA PEER SINCE 1996. A PRINCIPAL OF GOODY, CLANCY & ASSOCIATES, SHE HAS HAD A LEAD ROLE IN PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, MIXED-USED, PRESERVATION, COURTHOUSE, AND HOUSING PROJECTS. GOODY HAS A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND, AS CHAIR OF THE BOSTON CIVIC DESIGN COMMISSION, REVIEWS MAJOR PROJECTS IN THAT CITY FOR THEIR IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC REALM. SHE IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.



Design concept for the U.S. Courthouse, Wheeling, WV

WITH BETTER CIVIC BUILDINGS, PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SPEC OFFICE BUILDING AND A BUILDING THAT REPRESENTS THEIR GOVERNMENT.

– Joan Goody, Architect, Goody, Clancy & Associates

WHAT INTERESTED ME IN DOING THESE PROJECTS WAS THE RECOGNITION THAT THE GSA PROGRAM CLEARLY LOOKED TO ARCHITECTS TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN. I HAD NO TRACK RECORD IN FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE WHEN I WAS CHOSEN.

– Richard Meier, Architect, Richard Meier & Partners

VISION+VOICE

RICHARD **MEIER**

ROBERT A.M. **STERN**

ARTHUR **GENSLER**

ROBERT **IVY**

WILLIAM **PEDERSEN**

RICHARD MEIER

THE DESIGN OF OUR COURTHOUSES WAS INFLUENCED BY LOCATION AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF WHAT'S NEW TO WHAT'S THERE. OUR FEDERAL COURTHOUSE IN CENTRAL ISLIP IS SITUATED ON AN ISOLATED SITE NEAR THE SOUTHERN STATE PARKWAY, ADJACENT TO THE NEW YORK STATE COUNTY COURTHOUSE. OUR FEDERAL COURTHOUSE IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA, IS LOCATED IN A DOWNTOWN AREA THAT IS CHANGING AND GROWING AND WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT TEN YEARS FROM NOW. SO THE SITUATIONS COULDN'T BE MORE

DIFFERENT. ONE IS MORE OR LESS IN SUBURBIA. AND THE OTHER IS AS CLOSE TO THE DOWNTOWN AREA AS WAS FEASIBLE.

So it seemed appropriate in Phoenix to respect the scale of the downtown area and the street grid, as well as the views of the mountains in the distance that one could capture from offices.

I remember the first time that I went to Phoenix and walked around the downtown area with Judge Broomfield and others. It was a nice summer day. The temperature was about 110 degrees. There weren't a lot of people out on the street, I can tell you. As we were walking around, we passed a number of hot dog stands. I saw a mist coming from these stands and I inquired what that was. They said one way of cooling the area around the stand where someone could sit down and have a hot dog was to create a misting system that evaporated and cooled the surrounding area. In a 110 degree space, it might have cooled down to 90 degrees, if you were lucky.

So when we were thinking about the public areas of the courthouse in the intense Phoenix heat, we thought about using a misting system that was much more sophisticated than the one we saw at the hot dog stand. We could cool that open space so that the public could use it year round.



So the public space is a great, glazed atrium in a cooled environment. An open plaza would not have been appropriate.

In Islip, the most efficient way to build was to create a tall building. It's 12 stories, which, out in a three-story suburban area, seems quite high. And, in fact, the 12 stories are really double stories because of the height of the courtrooms. So in effect, it's about a 22-story or 23-story building. The public atriums are top-lit and open to the corridors outside the courtrooms. They have views out to the Atlantic Ocean and the Long Island Sound.

Before designing the building, I'd spent time looking at recently built courthouses around the country. One of the things that struck me was the amount of time the public spends outside the courtroom milling around, waiting for something to happen, and how crowded the corridors were.

When these corridors were in spaces that had no sunlight, it was dismal to have to sit there and wait. So it seemed to me that an important part of thinking about the courthouse organization is to think about how the public uses it, not just in the courtroom but outside the courtroom as well. So the corridors become wide open glazed spaces that welcome sunlight and have views of the ocean.

One of the things that Judge Wexler and I discussed early on in the design is how this modern architecture signifies that it is a courthouse and not an office building. How does it say that this is really the home of the judiciary, an equal branch of government to the legislative branch and executive branch? How does the public recognize this building?

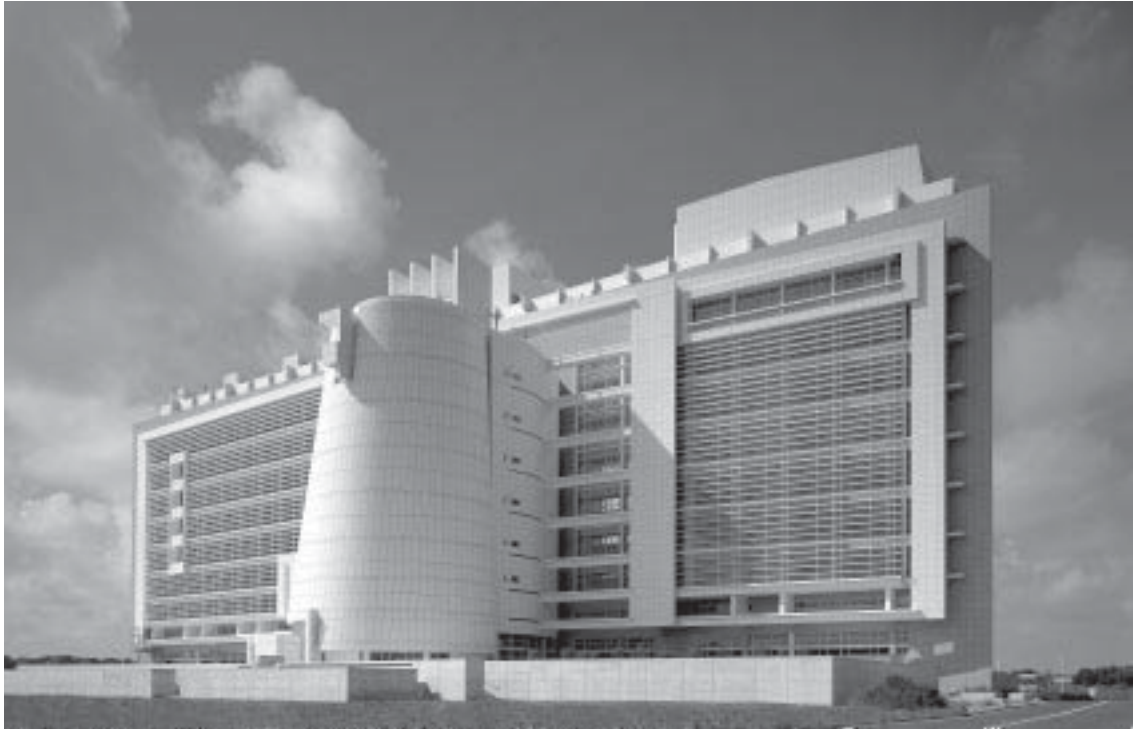
It seemed that coming into the rotunda, an open, top-lit lobby that was different from the main body of the building, might be analogous to the way in which a domed entry might have signified a courthouse 100 years ago. You walk into that space and you know that this is a major public building.

I remember when I took my daughter there as the building was nearly completed. We happened to go on a Sunday afternoon and no one was around. We walked up a few steps onto the plaza, my daughter turned to me and said, "Wow, Dad, this must be an important building." And I said, "Sweetheart, that's exactly what we had hoped people would feel, because it is an important building."

What interested me in doing these projects was the recognition that the GSA program clearly looked to architects to achieve excellence in design. I had no track record in Federal architecture when I was chosen. So I don't think a track record is terribly important in the choosing of an architect. I think what is important is a respect for the quality of design and the interaction that takes place throughout the project.

All public architecture should reach out and should embrace the public at large and go beyond its particular function. In the atrium at Islip, the judge is now encouraging high school art students to have displays of their work, to have graduation ceremonies, to use it in a public way that brings the public into the courthouse. He wants people not just to witness a trial but to take part in the life of the building.

NEW YORK ARCHITECT **RICHARD MEIER** HAS DESIGNED CIVIC BUILDINGS AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING TWO ACCLAIMED GSA PROJECTS: THE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR U.S. COURTHOUSE IN PHOENIX, ARIZONA, AND THE U.S. COURTHOUSE AND FEDERAL BUILDING IN CENTRAL ISLIP, NEW YORK. MEIER IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND HAS EARNED THE HIGHEST HONORS IN THE PROFESSION: THE PRITZKER PRIZE FOR ARCHITECTURE, THE GOLD MEDALS OF THE AIA AND THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS, AND THE PRAEMIUM IMPERIALE FROM THE JAPAN ART ASSOCIATION.



U.S. Courthouse, Central Islip, NY

PHOTO: SCOTT FRANCES/ESTO



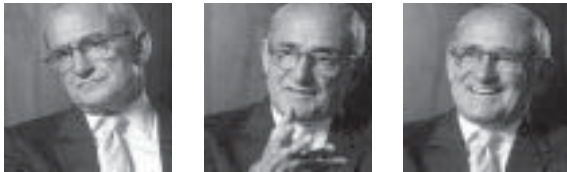
PHOTO: PETER AARON/ESTO

Federal Building U.S. Courthouse, Youngstown, OH

ROBERT A.M. STERN

IN A DEMOCRACY, PUBLIC BUILDINGS ARE VERY IMPORTANT. THOMAS JEFFERSON SAID THERE SHOULD BE A FEDERAL STYLE. HE SAID THE CLASSICAL LANGUAGE WAS THE LANGUAGE OF AMERICA BY VIRTUE OF ITS CONNECTIONS, REAL AND MYTHIC, TO GREECE AND ROME. IT WAS A WAY TO CREATE A NATIONAL CONSENSUS BECAUSE IT WAS A KNOWN LANGUAGE OF ARCHITECTURE THAT PEOPLE COULD STUDY.

TO A GREAT MANY AMERICANS, THAT'S A VERY SATISFYING THING. WHEN THEY LOOK AT THE CAPITOL, THE SUPREME COURT BUILDING, THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AND THE POST OFFICE IN THEIR TOWN, THEY OFTEN HAVE A VERY GOOD FEELING THAT THE FEDERAL COURTHOUSE DISPENSING JUSTICE IN THEIR DISTRICT IS CONNECTED TO THE BIGGER STORY IN WASHINGTON.



The public has an expectation that a courthouse should be distinct from a museum or a commercial building. Certainly up until the Second World War, with a few exceptions in the Victorian era, courthouses were very identifiable as such. After the Second World War, courthouses became rather bland. Now we're in a period when every courthouse is so different from every other one, at a time when the functions of the courts are the same. I'm famously pluralistic, but I think some of the recent GSA designs have been more difficult for the public to understand as courthouses. Once in a while, they have taken on the characteristics of art projects.

I like the courthouse as a building type because it is all about tradition and continuity. The shape of a courtroom, the arrangement of the ancillary spaces, all grew up side-by-side with the Constitution and with the judgments and rulings that have been made over time.

On the other hand, there are new conditions in courts that make them very challenging, from security to

introducing cameras and other electronic devices into the courtroom and so on. So all of that makes it very, very interesting to take on court buildings.

Each of our courthouses grows out of very distinct site, cultural and, perhaps, political situations. In the case of Savannah, the courthouse was built there in 1890 or so and then added onto around 1930 in exactly the same vocabulary as the original building. Our design, which has been taken through the process of approvals, clearly reflects the artistic ideas of the original building.

Our courthouse in Beckley, West Virginia, presented a totally different problem. Beckley is a city, like many American cities, in which life has moved to the periphery where two interstates intersect. Our new building sits right on Main Street and tries to fit into a small town, a town that time has passed by. The actual courthouse is only part of a larger complex. GSA also built a building for the Internal Revenue Service on the site. But the courthouse is the icon, the jewel, and it's a separate building right at the head of Main Street. Slowly, little things are beginning to happen in downtown Beckley that people attribute to the Federal government, which brought the IRS and courthouse there and made a strong and sympathetic statement.

Youngstown is another town that has been dealt a fatal blow downtown. It wasn't just because people moved to the suburbs but that the steel industry died. Other cities in

the Rust Belt, like Cleveland, seem to have rebounded brilliantly with new industries. But in Youngstown, it's not so obvious where the new infusions of jobs and money are coming from.

The site of the courthouse in Youngstown is very interesting. It's very big and the courthouse is a small, one-courtroom building. We tried to make a strong civic statement to sweep around the corner to face right into the edge of downtown and then create a public space in front of the building. In the design, we suggested exposing metal in the architecture to connect with the great history of that part of Ohio and the steel business.

Richmond presents us with a much bigger building, more courtrooms. It's at the edge of the Capitol District, which has Jefferson's State House right in the center. There are many buildings for the Commonwealth of Virginia as well as the Federal government's Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Courthouse. They are all extremely dignified, imposing buildings. On the other side of our site is the very rundown Broad Street shopping district, which is now about to come back to life as a theater district for the city. Our design tries to be about the classical tradition of the Capitol District. We also have a big glass atrium, which is on the side facing the theater district. In the evening, the atrium will be lit and can be used for public events. So our building is modern and classical at the same time.

ROBERT A.M. STERN HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE DESIGN EXCELLENCE PROGRAM AS THE ARCHITECT OF FEDERAL COURTHOUSES IN BECKLEY, WEST VIRGINIA; YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO; SAVANNAH, GEORGIA; AND RICHMOND, VIRGINIA. STERN IS ALSO DEAN OF THE YALE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE. PREVIOUSLY, HE WAS DIRECTOR OF THE GRADUATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AND DIRECTOR OF COLUMBIA'S TEMPLE HOYNE BUELL CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE.. STERN, A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, HAS WRITTEN SEVERAL BOOKS ON THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE INCLUDING A SERIES ABOUT THE BUILDINGS AND URBAN DESIGN OF NEW YORK CITY.

ARTHUR GENSLER

A FEW YEARS AGO, BOB PECK [GSA'S COMMISSIONER OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE] AND I STARTED TALKING ABOUT WHY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MADE SUCH A BAD FIRST IMPRESSION, AND WAYS THAT OUR GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS COULD BE MORE INVITING. WHY COULDN'T WE HAVE A WELCOMING GREETING RATHER THAN A GUARD SITTING AT A BROKEN DESK OR FLAGS AND PICTURES DISPLAYED ON THE WALLS

INSTEAD OF NOTICES OF CAKE SALES, AUCTIONS, AND WEEKEND TRIPS? IN SOME CASES, PUBLIC ART WAS POORLY DISPLAYED AND POORLY LIT. A LOT OF SECURITY HAD BEEN THROWN INTO BUILDINGS AFTER THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING.



So we dreamed up the First Impressions Program to look at how you can really make a good first impression on the public. One of the things that came out of it was graphic standards for GSA buildings, rather than just whatever was found at a sign shop. We took that from the front door literally through the elevator lobbies and up to the typical floors. The last part of it was to integrate ADA accessibility. We developed a manual and standards so that the program could be rolled out across the country. And then, we did two or three tests to see how they would work out. We have since gone on to do projects in Denver, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Washington, and other places.

The public recognizes that quality environments enhance our communities. Therefore, we shouldn't expect less for our Federal employees and for our Federal buildings than we do in the private sector. They should even be better. In many cases, GSA and the Federal government are prepared to look at things in a much more exciting way than the risk-adverse private sector is trying to do.

One of the things that GSA is asking the design community to provide is sustainable design in government buildings. We've talked a lot about it in the private sector, and it's beginning to take hold a little bit. But clearly, here again, the Federal government is becoming a leader by requiring it in their projects. That's healthy for America.

Security is being similarly addressed in government buildings. Certainly, September 11 has had a lot to do with that, as well as the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

GSA IS TRYING TO STRIKE AN APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN OPENNESS AND SECURITY. THAT'S WHAT SENATOR MOYNIHAN STRONGLY URGED US TO DO IN A SPEECH THAT HE GAVE AT A CONFERENCE A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO. HE SAID DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY WITH SECURITY, BECAUSE IF YOU LISTEN TO THE SECURITY PEOPLE, THEY WANT TO LOCK UP EVERYTHING. THAT ISN'T THE WAY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SHOULD LIVE, HE SAID. WE ARE AN OPEN SOCIETY, AND WE CANNOT ABANDON THE OPENNESS OF OUR SOCIETY.

I agree with that. I do believe that you can make a secure building where the average worker does not feel so inconvenienced and yet knows that there's a level of security and comfort when they occupy that building. That's what we're trying to accomplish in the First Impressions Program.

ARCHITECT **ARTHUR GENSLER** HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT LEADER IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GSA'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS PROGRAM, AN INITIATIVE TO REDESIGN THE ENTRANCES AND PUBLIC SPACES OF FEDERAL BUILDINGS TO MAKE THEM WELCOMING, ACCESSIBLE, AND SAFE. HE IS FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN OF GENSLER, AN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE KNOWN FOR ITS INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FACILITY AND OFFICE DESIGN AS WELL AS ARCHITECTURE, PRESERVATION, AND TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS. A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, GENSLER HAS BEEN A GSA PEER SINCE 1996.

ROBERT IVY

DESIGN COMPETITIONS FOR PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE ARE AN EXCELLENT WAY TO SOLICIT RISK-TAKING IDEAS AND DESIGNS. THAT DOES NOT OCCUR BY PLAYING IT CAREFULLY BUT BY PUSHING THINGS AND MOVING BEYOND WHAT ONE WOULD EXPECT. THAT WAS THE CASE IN THE COMPETITION FOR THE FEDERAL COURT-HOUSE IN EUGENE, OREGON. THERE WERE DESIGN SCHEMES THAT FILLED EVERY REQUIREMENT; HOWEVER,

THE WINNING SCHEME BY MORPHOSIS DID SOMETHING ELSE. IT RESPONDED TO THE PLACE IN A WAY WHERE FORM AND FUNCTION LITERALLY MESHED. IT PROMISED AN IMAGINATIVE, CREATIVE DESIGN.



In Europe, younger architects frequently get commissions for major projects that they never would have gotten in this country under any circumstances. Competitions are a way that young talent is brought into the system. There is a value in that. There's a risk in that too. We're headed in the right direction in awarding projects to what we call "young" architects like Thom Mayne, although he's in his late-50s at this point.

You don't need a competition for every building. Not every building needs to advance the art or be risk-taking. In fact, the results of a competition can be superficial and may not represent the evolving needs of the client. They may represent an initial response that needs to evolve throughout the life of a project. In the courts, for example, security requirements may force a new organization of the building. Community input may come into the picture and bring to light issues that had not been recognized. So, the design needs to be able to shift.

The Federal government ought to be in the forefront of good design, however we define that term. Different buildings demand different sorts of answers. There may be buildings where we would hope to see new, leading-edge ideas embodied in the physical fabric and occasions where a more conservative response is appropriate. There should be an entire range across the Federal spectrum.

The Design Excellence Program is a valid and a worthwhile effort. It requires extra effort; it requires coordination; it requires some cost. However, it is my strong belief that its worth far exceeds any of those factors. The Program reiterates Senator Moynihan's principles that when we build collectively as a people, our buildings should rise to a level of quality that represents cultural hope. They represent our own view of ourselves as a people. They're saying let's aim at a certain level of quality that respects the dignity of the public buildings that we hope to make.

Design, engineering, and planning professionals can grasp those ideals very quickly because they already agree with them. But it takes a leader of a certain ability to communicate those values to a larger body and the political will to accept them. It's not enough merely to state them, which Senator Moynihan did so eloquently and consistently throughout his career. It also demands an enlightened individual like President John Kennedy who grasped those principles and took them to Pennsylvania Avenue, and said let's make that happen here.

It still demands political will to implement Moynihan's set of principles and ideas. His Guiding Principles will always be at peril because there is always a second or third point of view or interest group that would willingly change the ground rules to conform to a different vision.

The Federal courthouse in Boston embodies his principles in a rather magnificent way. It takes a part of the city that had been neglected and turns it into a focal point. Its broad and sweeping glass atrium facing the harbor says to the city of Boston that there is an important Federal presence here. The transparency and openness of the courthouse is directly a result of Moynihan's ideas that Federal buildings need not be fortresses but can welcome the people that they serve. That's a very important message and it's embodied in the physical form of that building.

Moynihan has also been an advocate over a long period of time for the new Pennsylvania Station in New York. It will transform what had been a Federal postal facility into the new Pennsylvania Station, providing a new focus and terminus for visitors to the city. Repeatedly, the project has been near failure or extinction, and Moynihan has been the individual who managed to revive it.

There are very few opportunities in our present culture that allow this excellence to take place. The Design Excellence Program should not only continue but extend beyond what has been done thus far. It's a very worthwhile thing to do.

ROBERT IVY IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *ARCHITECTURAL RECORD* MAGAZINE WHERE HE HAS EXPANDED READERSHIP, CREATED A COMPELLING WEB SITE, AND TAKEN A SPECIAL INTEREST IN HIGHLIGHTING INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS AND THE WORK OF YOUNGER DESIGNERS. RECENTLY, HIS PUBLICATION WAS HONORED WITH THE JESSE H. NEAL AWARD FOR EDITORIAL EXCELLENCE FROM THE AMERICAN BUSINESS PRESS. IVY IS AN ARCHITECT AND FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS. HE HAS SERVED AS A GSA PEER SINCE 1998. IN 2002, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE APPOINTED IVY AS U.S. COMMISSIONER TO THE VENICE BIENNALE IN ARCHITECTURE.

WILLIAM PEDERSEN



The modern courthouse presents a somewhat different problem than it did in the 1800s or 1900s. Back then, the courthouse was to stand for the solidity, the substance and the dignity of the place, and one could introduce heroic architectural motifs to inflate the scale of the building and give it a greater sense of grandeur. The problem now is how to achieve a building that fits comfortably into the context in a way that doesn't overwhelm it. A context in New York City is very different from a context in Portland, Oregon. It's very different than the context in Chicago. So every building needs to respond to that aspect. We've tried in our designs to develop devices that enable the scale to be broken down into smaller pieces, each of which can be linked to aspects of context.

ARCHITECTURE IS ALWAYS MOST REWARDING WHEN YOU CAN BE IMMEDIATELY CONNECTED TO THE USE.

WE FIND THAT THE DIALOGUE WITH OUR CLIENT IS SUCH AN EXTRAORDINARILY IMPORTANT PART OF THE AESTHETIC THAT I CONSIDER IT TO BE ONE OF THE FORCES THAT BRINGS ABOUT MEANINGFUL ARCHITECTURE. IN THE MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, AND PORTLAND, OREGON, COURTHOUSES THAT WE'VE DESIGNED, OUR DIALOGUE DIRECTLY WITH THE CHIEF JUDGES MADE FOR EXTRAORDINARILY STRONG BONDS. THAT INEVITABLY TRANSLATED INTO STRONGER PIECES OF ARCHITECTURE. THE CHIEF JUDGES REPRESENTING BOTH OF THESE ENTITIES WERE REALLY IMPORTANT GUIDING FORCES.

One of the most important things for public structures, particularly structures representing the Federal government, is that the pieces forming the program are legible. In other words, by looking at the building, one should understand what the parts of the building really are. They shouldn't be draped in an enclosure that disguises their internal activities, but they should celebrate those activities.

In both the Minneapolis and Portland courthouses, the judges' chambers are very clearly layered on one side of the building, while on the other side, the whole public foyer system is developed. In between the two, is a rather solid block representing the courtrooms themselves. As a result, those three physical parts become very important to the expression of the building.

The sense of entering a courthouse also plays an extremely important role in the design. When one enters this space, immediately one has to sense a place of solemnity and great gravity. Traditionally, courthouses were placed higher than the surrounding streets and one ascended steps.

A judge once said to me that if there was concern for detail in the architecture, there would also be concern for the judicial process. The two play off of each other. To me, that is one of the most inspiring directives that I've ever received.

Historically, stone has always represented dignity and permanence in the Federal process. In a sense, the history of architecture can be seen as a progression from the weightiest possible structures, if one thinks of the pyramids, all the way to the present time where it's the lightest structures that represent architecture today.

This issue of weight versus lightness is a very interesting one and one that has played big role in our aesthetic. In the case of Portland, the courts themselves were involved in

a volume of great weight, but superimposed upon those were extremely light, delicate pieces. So the opposition between lightness and heaviness was fundamental to the aesthetic.

Modern materials don't hold up as well to the ravages of time as do traditional materials. But frankly, modern materials have to be used. This is where the craft of architecture, the knowledge of how one puts materials together in a way that really lasts, is important. A building can look wonderful on day one and ten years later can be quite a different thing. So that's another aspect of architecture to consider.

Having artists who are involved early in the process and sympathetic to the architecture is important. So is a close dialogue between the artist and the architect, a genuine dialogue that allows the artist to do his or her best work. We've been pretty lucky in that regard. In case of both Minneapolis and Portland, New York artist Tom Otterness was involved and did some very inventive pieces that are humorous in countering the sobriety of the building and offer a level of humanity that is very much appreciated. Eric Orr, an artist from Venice, California, did a beautiful water piece in Portland that flows down the stone surface. It has been referred to by many judges as creating a level of tranquility in the lobby. It's very soothing. The judicial process offers such a tremendously tense environment, so to be able to find ways of countering that tension is very

NEW YORK ARCHITECT **WILLIAM PEDERSEN** DESIGNED THE MARK O. HATFIELD U.S. COURTHOUSE IN PORTLAND, OREGON, AND THE U.S. COURTHOUSE IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA. HIS FIRM, KOHN PEDERSEN FOX ARCHITECTS, ALSO DESIGNED THE DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN U.S. COURTHOUSE AT FOLEY SQUARE IN NEW YORK CITY, THE ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER, AND THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS IN SUBURBAN WASHINGTON, DC. PEDERSEN RECEIVED THE ROME PRIZE FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME, IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, AND HAS SERVED AS A GSA PEER SINCE 1994.

important. Introducing nature into a building, whether it be through natural light or water, is a way of dealing with this.

Many clients come to us and say they want a building that transcends time and will be timeless. But greatness in architecture is not represented by architecture that is stylistically valid through the ages. It's very important for architecture to have a sense of its own time, to represent the period within which it was built. At the same time, you want a building to be revered for being unique within the continuum of time.

THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO IS BUILD BUILDINGS OF QUALITY AND LET THEM MAKE SELF-EVIDENT STATEMENTS. PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ARE LOOKING TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DO THAT NOW, AND WE'RE SEEING THE BENEFITS.



Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse, Portland, OR

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF DESIGN. CUTTING EDGE, HOWEVER, SHOULD HAVE VALUES AND CONCEPTS BEHIND IT THAT WILL WITHSTAND TIME. IT SHOULD NOT BE A VISUAL GIMMICK THAT IS THE FASHION OF THE MOMENT.

– Moshe Safdie, Architect, Moshe Safdie & Associates

VISION+VOICE

MOSHE **SAFDIE**

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THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE CIVIC BUILDINGS THE APPROPRIATE PLACE IN THE URBAN FABRIC IS VERY EXCITING. THE BOSTON FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS THE BEGINNING OF A WHOLE EVOLUTION OF PART OF THE CITY. SO GSA'S CONVICTION IN QUALITY ALSO MEANS TAKING THE SITE SELECTION VERY SERIOUSLY.



Every time I approach an architectural problem, I try to discover the secrets of a site. What is hidden here? How do I make a building that really draws the most of the potential of that place? Therefore, my designs are very specific. The philosophy and the vocabulary are consistent, but the problems and the locations are very diverse.

In designing the Federal courthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts, I went to look at the site. In the heart of the site were three extraordinary trees—a beech, a walnut and a linden—that were more than 200 years old. They were as old as the country. They were there when George Washington came by on his way to the armory next door. It was inconceivable to me that I would cut those trees down to put up a building. I felt they were sacred. So the presence of those trees became the spinning-off point for an architectural idea. That immediately made our competition submission unique because the other four submissions put a building where the trees are.

Our headquarters for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms [ATF] in Washington, DC, couldn't be more different in the sense that the site is a no man's land. There's a hamburger stand and warehouses at the intersection of two grand boulevards, but you hardly know

because there's no landscaping. Here, the Federal government hopes this major new building will be a catalyst for the renewal of the whole area. So the building needs to spin off an environment around it.

At the same time, there's a requirement that the building be set back 100 feet from the property line. The question for me was how to animate the street edge and still give the agency its secure space. So we invented an element that is a great garden wall, three stories high, nicknamed the aqueduct. It surrounds the structure and creates an inner garden serving the people working in the building, and outer gardens, which are open to the public. It conceals the fences and the barriers for vehicles and so on. All the structures like the booth for checking cars and the truck docks, which have to be 100 feet away, become integrated into this landscape. They make the building inviting and make the streets habitable. They contribute to security without looking like security elements.

The Springfield courthouse was decided through a design competition. There is something refreshing about a competition because it transmits what you can do, what you believe in. What I like about competitions is the energy that comes out of them. There's the adrenaline of competition that brings the best out of you because the juices are flowing. Sometimes when you are awarded a commission by interview, you can be more complacent.

But there is something negative about an anonymous competition where you get a program, work on your own,

and then send it in. You have no contact with the client or the agencies that are going to have something to say about the scheme. This denies the richness of the dialogue with the client. You can overcome that when you have the will to put what you've done away and open the process up to that dialogue. After we won the Springfield courthouse competition, we put the scheme away and started the process afresh. The scheme that's emerged is very different from the winning one.

The Federal government should be at the cutting edge of design. Cutting edge, however, should have values and concepts behind it that will withstand time. It should not be a visual gimmick that is the fashion of the moment. That means creating mechanisms for critically assessing what really cutting edge is. It takes a great deal of thinking in terms of the way you select architects, evaluate projects, and act as client.



Design concept for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Headquarters, Washington, DC

RENOWNED FOR HIS AWARD-WINNING CIVIC AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BOSTON-BASED ARCHITECT **MOSHE SAFDIE** IS DESIGNING FEDERAL COURTHOUSES IN SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, AND MOBILE, ALABAMA, AS WELL AS THE NEW HEADQUARTERS OF THE BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND FIREARMS IN WASHINGTON, DC. ARCHITECT OF THE INNOVATIVE HABITAT '67 IN MONTREAL, SAFDIE HAS WRITTEN SEVERAL BOOKS ON URBAN DESIGN AND PLANNING STRATEGIES. HE TEACHES AT THE HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DESIGN, IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, AND HAS RECEIVED THE GOLD MEDAL OF THE ROYAL ARCHITECTURAL INSTITUTE OF CANADA.

CHARLES GWATHMEY

THE UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY BECAUSE SYMBOLICALLY IT IS THE ONLY UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES. IT IS SITUATED ACROSS THE STREET FROM A MAJOR WORLD ORGANIZATION THAT HAS HAD A HUGE IMPACT BOTH ARCHITECTURALLY AND ALSO PHILOSOPHICALLY. IT PROVIDES A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO INVENT A BUILDING THAT IS SCULPTURAL, ICONIC, AND HAS A SILHOUETTE THAT LOOKS LIKE NO OTHER BUILDING IN NEW YORK CITY.

All of the new security requirements that we had to deal with provoked us to ask, “what really is an office building?” We came up with a composition that solves the security issue and also has a unique construction technology that we had never investigated before for a vertical building.

This is a building that had to withstand a potential major impact. It’s a reinforced concrete vertical shaft without any extensions or recesses because you don’t want to have any crevices or possibilities of debris. It is pretty abstract from that point of view.

As we got higher in the building, we incrementally increased the size of the openings to create a very dynamic perspective, even though the facades are straight and parallel.

At the top, we designed a reception space, a 75-foot-high cylindrical room, with a view of the United Nations. Its architecture represents the aspirations and the ideals of the mission. We have a model in the office that has 53 variations of the tower and the top. Each of those was a different exploration of how to reconcile suggestions from



the peer reviewers. It's very interesting to see the models as a sequence of discovery, marking the moments when the design got tweaked in a good direction. Having that kind of collaboration with the peer reviewers is incredibly important. It pushes both the architect and the client way beyond what could have been and I think that's great.

THE NEW SECURITY CONSTRAINTS ON FEDERAL BUILDING ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENRICHING ARCHITECTURE. ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND THE LIMITATIONS, THEY SHOULD BE A CAUSE FOR INVENTION AND ANALYSIS THAT ALLOWS YOU TO PUSH BEYOND YOUR PRECONCEPTIONS. THE SECURITY ISSUES SHOULD ALLOW YOU TO INVENT A VOCABULARY THAT NOT ONLY SOLVES THE PROBLEM BUT ALSO CREATES AN APPROPRIATE ARCHITECTURAL IMAGE.



Design concept for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, New York, NY

CHARLES GWATHMEY IS THE ARCHITECT OF THE NEW UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY AND WAS APPOINTED A GSA PEER IN 2000. PRINCIPAL OF GWATHMEY SIEGEL AND ASSOCIATES IN NEW YORK CITY, HE IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND WAS GIVEN A LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FROM THE NEW YORK STATE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS. IN ADDITION TO PRACTICING ARCHITECTURE, GWATHMEY HAS TAUGHT AT MANY INSTITUTIONS INCLUDING PRINCETON, HARVARD, AND YALE, AS WELL AS COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART.

THOMAS PHIFER

We have gone through the first tier of GSA Design Excellence projects and a wide variety of expressions have been built. When we look back on this process in 100 years, these buildings will represent an expression of our time and our Federal justice system.

I grew up in the South during the 1950s and 60s when there was civil unrest and distrust of government. Now there is a renewed sense of democracy and its connection to people. Federal architecture can change the way people see their government and how they're being represented.

NOW WE NEED TO BROADEN OUR TALENT SEARCH AND OUR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT WHAT PUBLIC BUILDINGS ARE. THERE ARE A LOT OF PLACES WHERE BUILDINGS STILL BORROW FROM THE PAST. MY HOPE IS THAT WE BEGIN TO FORGE A NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD BUILDINGS FOR THE FUTURE. PARTICIPATION BY YOUNGER ARCHITECTS AS WELL AS BY SENIOR STATESMEN IN FEDERAL ARCHITECTURE IS IMPORTANT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE 70 YEARS OLD TO MAKE A COURTHOUSE, TO MAKE A POST OFFICE, TO MAKE A FEDERAL BUILDING.



Bringing in the younger generation is slowly happening. In Salt Lake City, we were asked to put the next Federal courthouse next to an historic building of national importance. Our idea was to join the two buildings with natural light, with what we affectionately called a “light joint,” to create a place where the two buildings can come together. This new space balances the old and new buildings in the way justice is balanced. It becomes the new heart and soul of the building.

When I was working for Richard Meier on the Federal courthouse in Central Islip, New York, we really had to think about what a courthouse should be for our generation. We had been working in Europe for a long time and the

courthouse was our first American public building. We talked a lot about the building as a machine because there were three paths of circulation that had to cross and connect. We left that imagery behind for a moment and figured out how the building worked. Once we had that, we looked at what the courthouse wanted to be, its symbolic nature. The building is in a suburban location, so we felt like we had to make our own place. Even though the words “openness” and “accessibility” weren’t used a lot then, we thought about seeing people move within the building rather than having imposing steps and columns. That sense of classical solidity was a borrowed expression. Thomas Jefferson brought it to this country in places like the University of Virginia and Monticello. We felt that we didn’t have to borrow anymore, that it was our turn to express what we thought justice was. By having the building more open, justice would be something that we could see as part of our society. The courthouse would be transparent and filled with light to express justice as enlightenment.

We created a rotunda to give the building a new heart. This element was affectionately called the “teepee” by Judge Wexler’s wife because of its Long Island heritage and connection to Native Americans. We also looked at the rotundas of classical buildings, such as the U.S. Capitol, and pulled that expression outside the building and made it a very abstract space. We wanted that space to be inspiring and have one simple source of light from the top so that

you could track the movement of the sun. The building was designed before September 11 and the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City so we were able to keep the magnetometers away from the rotunda. You are able to experience a procession from the parking lot, onto a plinth, into the rotunda, and then pass through security checkpoints.

Security will shape our architecture, perhaps more than anything else, from now on. But are we going to cower and not allow the buildings to be penetrated by the public? Or are we going to be inventive about how to deal with security and make it the threshold that pushes buildings ahead?

The GSA should lead in developing new ways to secure buildings, to express both a sense of security and openness. These should be public buildings in the truest sense. They are opportunities for the Federal government to express our technology, the values that we hold. They are buildings that are in the centers of our cities and can set an example about what architecture means.

The GSA should also lead the private sector to demonstrate the value of green architecture. It can make us look at how a building is naturally ventilated, shades a facade, the way it’s organized, and how clearly it works. The best art in public architecture has been a collaboration between the architect and the artist. The same collaboration can take place with architects, structural engineers and mechanical engineers working together to make a green building.

THE GSA CAN SERVE AS MISSIONARY FOR BETTER BUILDINGS AROUND THE COUNTRY. IT CAN SET THE STANDARD, RAISE THE BAR, AND MAKE SURE THAT PUBLIC BUILDINGS ARE THE BEST BUILDINGS OF OUR TIME.

THOMAS PHIFER, PRINCIPAL OF THE NEW YORK FIRM THOMAS PHIFER AND PARTNERS, IS DESIGNING THE U.S. COURTHOUSE IN SALT LAKE CITY. OTHER COMMISSIONS INCLUDE THE NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART IN RALEIGH AND THE REVITALIZATION OF CASTLE CLINTON IN LOWER MANHATTAN. EARLIER IN HIS CAREER, PHIFER WAS A DESIGN PARTNER OF RICHARD MEIER & PARTNERS AND PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEDERAL COURTHOUSES IN CENTRAL ISLIP, NEW YORK, AND PHOENIX, ARIZONA. HE IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME AND HAS BEEN A GSA PEER SINCE 1998.

MICHAEL R. HOGAN

When someone complies with a ruling by a judge, it is not because the judge has an army or a checkbook. Instead we have made a commitment as a people to live under a rule of law and we've done it under a document, the United States Constitution. So we need to remember this bedrock foundation because it allows people to voluntarily do what the court says.

ONE OF THE MIRACLES ABOUT THE FEDERAL COURTHOUSE IN EUGENE, OREGON, IS ARCHITECT THOM MAYNE'S WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO THESE BEDROCK VALUES AND CREATE A VALUE-DRIVEN BUILDING THAT ADDS INTEGRITY TO THE HISTORY OF THE COURTS. THE DESIGN IS FORWARD-LOOKING, YET ACKNOWLEDGES THE MEANING OF THE PAST AND THE TRADITION THAT ALLOWS OUR SYSTEM TO WORK.



GSA was kind enough to let me be on the committee that selected five architects for the courthouse design competition. Then there was an independent group of private-sector peers that made the final recommendation to GSA. I looked at Thom Mayne's work on the Internet and I didn't see a courthouse. Eventually, he was selected as the architect and I wondered what kind of experience this project was going to be. The courthouse was very important to me, and still is. I have a dozen years in this project so far and I'll have even more before we're finished.

After the competition, the first thing I did was asked Thom to teach us about architecture. We rented a nice place at Sun River in Oregon and he brought 1,500 slides. I brought two cases of red wine. We spent the weekend together in a crash course on modern architecture. I thought we could meet the traditional needs of a courthouse and still do it within the context of modern architecture. But I needed a lot of understanding. I'm an amateur, of course,

but in less than two years, I've become the chief defender of Thom's work. My life has been enriched by having been part of this process.

Architects and judges approach the problem of a courthouse differently. A judge analyzes, researches, and comes up with an answer. Architects are in a swirl of changing ideas. We would be at one place in the project and I'd come to peace with that, then next week, it would be entirely different. To see a stream of ideas is a challenge to a judge and requires accepting a new way of approaching a problem. Through this communication process, you learn something about the other's work. I could see how Thom's buildings tend to have a connection to the land.

After the competition, I'd started to gather architecture materials. I had a new area to study and it was very enriching for me. One day I said to Thom, I'm going to France to see some new courthouses and he said, "Not without me." So Thom and I visited a courthouse designed by British architect Richard Rogers in Bordeaux and one by French architect Jean Nouvel in Nantes. Those buildings are very powerful. We talked about bringing the right kind of meaning to our building and I could see Thom was willing to do that. So I started communicating aspects of our Federal judicial system by giving him a copy of the Constitution. That's a good place to start because our government is based on that document. I wasn't so presumptuous as to try to talk him into putting a column into the building. Instead, I talked about the meaning of columns to a judge, to lawyers, to the public, at least from my

perspective. They are one of those signals that allow the public to go ahead and comply with what a court says.

We also looked at other kinds of buildings in France, whether they were courthouses or not. The Cartier building in Paris by Jean Nouvel has provided an aspect for our building that connects transparency to nature. The idea is to have a living entrance that relates to the outside and feels open. That's very important to me. We need to fight to maintain our freedom and our openness. It's a difficult fight in this day and age with some of the tragedies that we've had, but it's a fight worth engaging in.

Public buildings are important and one reason people want to come to Washington, D.C. In Portland, Oregon, we have the Pioneer Courthouse that was approved by Abraham Lincoln. It's the kind of building that would be very difficult to build today with our small-mindedness about courthouses and public buildings. We need to think more of ourselves and our culture. We need to give people the tools to go out and build something powerful.

Collaboration is really important. Judges have a lot to learn about buildings and unless they spend enough time with GSA and their architects, there is not a chance of this happening. Judges need to be willing to allow others to educate them, not necessarily to agree on everything, so we can come together with solutions. Judges need to develop a sense of humility, which doesn't always come naturally. But it's necessary if you really want to collaborate. Otherwise, you're just a noisy annoyance. We need to do more to build an understanding between the architect and the client.

MICHAEL R. HOGAN IS CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON. FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, HE IS THE CLIENT FOR THE NEW U.S. COURTHOUSE IN EUGENE, OREGON. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, HE HAS BECOME A PARTNER IN THE DESIGN PROCESS, EXPLORING AND SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE, AS GSA, DESIGNER THOM MAYNE, AND THE COURTS HAVE BECOME COLLABORATORS TO CREATE A LANDMARK PUBLIC BUILDING FOR THIS COMMUNITY. THE FEDERAL COURTHOUSE PROJECT HAS DRAWN ON JUDGE HOGAN'S EXPERTISE IN NEGOTIATIONS AND CONSENSUS BUILDING.

THOM MAYNE

Courthouses are projects that architects spend their whole lives working for. They are complicated, serious buildings that require a lot of experience on the part of the architect. It's asking a lot of the client to take you on without having designed another courthouse. This is not a building for someone with a learner's permit. At the same time, you have to broaden the playing field to encourage younger talent to compete for public building projects.

A DESIGN COMPETITION LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD TO SOME DEGREE BECAUSE THE JURY IS NOT LOOKING AT THE PERSONALITY OR THE FIRM. THEY ARE LOOKING AT THE PIECE OF WORK AND HOW THAT WORK ADDRESSES THE PROBLEM. THERE IS A HUGE AMOUNT AT STAKE WHEN YOU'RE PRODUCING THE DESIGN FOR A COMPETITION. YOU HAVE TO LOCATE ISSUES BEYOND STYLE THAT YOU HOPE RESONATE WITH YOUR POTENTIAL CLIENT. THAT MEANS YOU'RE PRODUCING SOMETHING YOU THINK HAS VALUE AND LOOKING AT IT STRATEGICALLY. YOU HAVE TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF BROADER POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL ISSUES.



I knew the town of Eugene, Oregon, having lectured there a few times at the [University of Oregon's] School of Architecture. But I'm not a person who sleeps at the site where my architecture is to be located. I don't think that's really what architecture is about today. It requires a very delicate balance of connecting local issues with broader architectural and global issues.

When you're working for the private sector, you're never asked to expand yourself in terms of the relationship of architecture to society. So in the beginning of the courthouse project, I completely sympathized with Judge Hogan because he is trained in law and law is based on precedents.

Change happens somewhat slowly in the logic of the law. I work as an artist and the premise is you break the law immediately, as quickly as possible. As an architecture student, you're evaluated in terms of making your own history. Then you add to that our culture where architecture is as esoteric as poetry. Not very many people know a lot about architecture.

So it became clear to me how difficult it was for Judge Hogan to accept my design. It took a huge leap of faith on his part in the beginning. Michael is a team player and he insisted in making a connection. The exchange between an architect and a judge is a very difficult process because you're literally putting the two most extreme forms of logic in the same room together and expecting them magically to understand what they're both talking about. Judges aren't guys that give away all the control and architects are not that different. You have to be flexible in your positions. Trying to go some place that's different requires creativity, it requires resistance. If you're all agreeing, you're not going anywhere. There have to be different positions in the room to create an energy of useful tension that produces ideas.

The problem with most of the public is that traditional images are fixed in the mind. The Supreme Court still resonates in a lot of people's minds because it's an image that is connected to the idea of court. That design is not realistic,

however. Courthouses are much larger now. They are office buildings, more or less.

During our trip to France, Judge Hogan and I met on neutral ground. We weren't looking at my buildings or his courthouse. France has a culture that we both care for and know in different ways. In looking at the Bordeaux courthouse, I realized that there was no art. The French couldn't even conceive of that. Architecture is art. You don't have to add art. Architecture is one of the art forms, like music, like painting, like sculpture. Art shouldn't exist as an isolated thing. It should be ingrained in the building. That took place in classical buildings in layers of sculpture and reliefs inscribed with words. Our courthouse is made up of seven folds or planes and they parallel the seven articles of the Constitution. I'm now discussing whether to write the words of the Constitution on the building, and whether that constitutes art.

Because my work represents an interpretation of the law, it definitely gets modified through a series of checks or tests, reinterpreting classical or traditional elements. As a building that we rely on to deal with our differences and disagreements, the courthouse requires a place of dignity. It represents the long reach of history. Your building has to live up to that.

THOM MAYNE IS THE ARCHITECT OF THREE MAJOR FEDERAL PROJECTS: A U.S. COURTHOUSE IN EUGENE, OREGON; THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON, DC; AND A NEW FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING IN SAN FRANCISCO. THIS LAST COMMISSION IS BEING HAILED AS A MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE DESIGN. HEAD OF THE SANTA MONICA FIRM MORPHOSIS, MAYNE IS A FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS AND A GSA PEER SINCE 1996. WITH OTHERS, HE HELPED ESTABLISH THE INNOVATIVE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE AND CURRENTLY TEACHES AT UCLA.

TRYING TO GO SOME PLACE THAT'S DIFFERENT REQUIRES CREATIVITY. IT REQUIRES RESISTANCE. IF YOU'RE ALL AGREEING, YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE. THERE HAVE TO BE DIFFERENT POSITIONS IN THE ROOM TO CREATE AN ENERGY OF USEFUL TENSION THAT PRODUCES IDEAS.



Design concept for the U.S. Courthouse, Eugene, OR

PRIVATE SECTOR PEERS ARE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE. THEY ARE LIKE TEACHERS AND MENTORS TO SOME OF OUR YOUNGER PEOPLE. AS THEY LOOK AT THESE PROJECTS AND GIVE THEIR ADVICE OR THEIR CRITIQUES, IT MAKES THE WHOLE PROCESS BETTER. IT SENDS A SIGNAL, THAT, AS AN AGENCY, WE WON'T ACCEPT MEDIOCRITY OR SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE BEST.

– Paul Chistolini, Deputy Commissioner, Public Buildings Service, U.S. General Services Administration

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. 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.

DESIGN EXCELLENCE IS A HOLISTIC PROCESS THAT TRIES TO MELD EVERY FACET OF A PROJECT FROM THE SELECTION OF THE BEST LEAD DESIGNER AND CONTRACTOR FOR THE PARTICULAR PROJECT TO ENSURING THAT THE DESIGN IS BOTH INSPIRING AND EFFICIENT, AND CAN BE DELIVERED WITHIN BUDGET.

– Edward Feiner, Chief Architect, U.S. General Services Administration



U.S. General Services Administration

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