

For Immediate Release

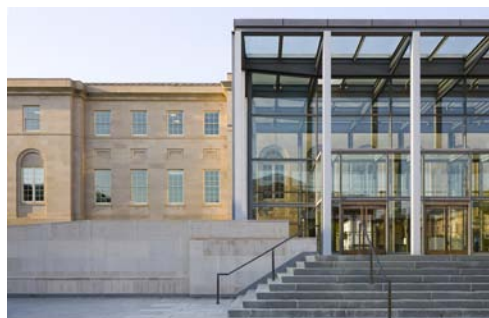
RESTORED HISTORIC D.C. COURTHOUSE TO BE RE-DEDICATED Reopening Represents Milestone in Revitalization of Judiciary Square

WASHINGTON, DC, June 2009 – Following a four-year restoration, the Historic Courthouse on Judiciary Square will be rededicated on June 17, 2009 as the new home for the District’s highest court, the D.C. Court of Appeals. In addition to providing much-needed space for the courts, the project brings new life to one of the most significant historic buildings and public green spaces in the nation’s capital.



Originally designed by George Hadfield in 1820 to serve as the City Hall for the District of Columbia, the Historic Courthouse is a National Historic Landmark and one of the oldest public buildings in the District of Columbia. Located between the White House and the U.S. Capitol, Judiciary Square was designed by Pierre L’Enfant to be one of the most important green spaces in Washington, second in importance only to the National Mall. Prominently located at the heart of Judiciary Square, the courthouse has been the setting for many notable events in our nation’s history. Daniel Webster and Francis Scott Key practiced law in the building, and John Surratt’s trial for his part in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln took place there.

The courthouse had been vacant since 1999 and was in need of a comprehensive overhaul. Noted preservation and design firm Beyer Blinder Belle developed the restoration and renovation program with the goal of restoring the architectural landmark to its original grandeur, while at the same time, transforming it into a fully-functioning modern courthouse.



A new plaza and entrance pavilion on the north side were designed to re-orient the courthouse to address Judiciary Square, as originally intended, and to engage with the surrounding ensemble of court buildings. Designed as a contemporary interpretation of the original north side portico, the new pavilion harmonizes with the proportions and character of the historic structure while being unmistakably modern. Constructed of steel and glass, it spans the center bay of the north

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facade at a height of two stories, leaving the third-story windows unobstructed. The structure's transparency allows visibility to the existing buildings beyond and provides a new aesthetic presence on Judiciary Square, while also giving the courthouse a scale and dignity comparable to the adjacent civic buildings. The pavilion represents a fundamental design concept: a juxtaposition of the contemporary addition and new ceremonial courtroom on the north-south axis with the original restored, traditional core of the building on the east-west axis.



The south façade and previous entrance, with its grand steps leading to a colonnaded portico, has been preserved and the Lincoln statue which has stood at the base of those steps since 1868, has been renovated and restored to its place.

The transformation of a nearly 200 year old municipal building into a 21st-century courthouse required the integration of expanded facilities and modern systems with minimal disruption to the historic structure. This integration presented a variety of complex structural, mechanical, and engineering challenges, the most significant of which was the excavation of the new ceremonial courtroom beneath the courthouse's grand, south-side portico. In order to allow this, the original stone and brick support structure below needed to be removed in its entirety – with the portico in place – and replaced with a complex, steel structural framework. Once the weight of the portico had been temporarily transferred over to the new steel system, all of the original masonry support below could be demolished one column at a time.

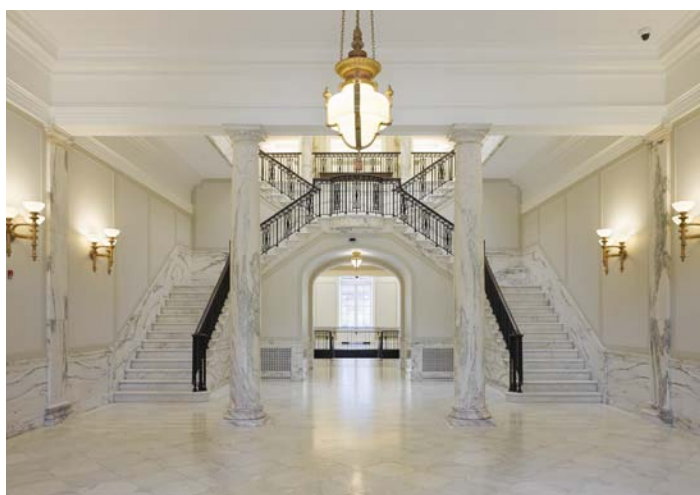
At the same time that carefully-integrated new elements were incorporated into the building's core, the renovation program was also designed to preserve as much of the historic fabric as possible. The new facilities – including a grand ceremonial courtroom, reception and exhibit space, and administrative facilities – were built below grade on the south side of the building, thereby maintaining the integrity of the historic facade. This configuration also allowed for mechanical equipment to be located in the residual space between the existing foundation wall and the foundation of the new parking garage, further minimizing impact on the historic structure.

Throughout the building historic elements were restored as much as possible, including marble and terrazzo flooring, wainscot, historic plaster ceilings that had been hidden beneath drop ceilings, plaster moldings, lay lights and light fixtures. New finishes were incorporated to complement the historic details and a new lay light designed as a reinterpretation of the historic lay lights.

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Outside, environmentally sustainable site improvements have been incorporated. The numerous asphalt parking spaces and driveways that surrounded the building in recent years have been removed, and parking is now available in the new, adjacent underground parking garage. The garage, as well as the other structures housing the underground additions, was constructed from concrete containing significant amounts of post-industrial waste. In place of the asphalt is grass, trees, plants and fountains. The sprinkler system used to maintain the new green spaces is highly efficient and therefore requires less potable water. Storm water run-off is also better managed by this new pervious landscape. In addition, storm water detention tanks located below ground also collect and temporarily store rainwater so that the municipal storm systems are not inundated with water from the site during a bad storm.

After years of disrepair, Judiciary Square has now been re-greened and revitalized through the return of architectural and sculptural elements to proper use, and new landscaping. As the centerpiece of Judiciary Square, the restored Historic Courthouse plays a powerful architectural role in its rejuvenation.



“We look forward to D.C. residents visiting the courthouse and seeing it as a centerpiece of our city and, more specifically, the heart of the Judiciary Square neighborhood. The renovations will allow the courthouse to once again serve its historic role as a symbol of the proud history of our city and our commitment to equal justice under the law,” commented D.C. Court of Appeals Chief Judge Eric T. Washington.

“The renovation of the Historic Courthouse provided a unique opportunity to restore a national architectural treasure and return it to its original glory,” said Hany Hassan, Partner and Director of Beyer Blinder Belle’s Washington D.C. office. “The D.C. Court of Appeals will be able to function within a fully modern facility, created within a glorious and venerable landmark that is suited to its dignity.”

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Working with Beyer Blinder Belle, the project design and construction team included: Wiles Mensch Corporation, civil engineers; Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated, landscape architect; Robert Silman Associates PLLC, structural engineers; Joseph R. Loring & Associates, Inc, MEP engineers; Domingo Gonzalez Associates, lighting design; Charron Consulting, construction managers; and Hensel Phelps Construction Co., general contractors.

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The D.C. Courts of Appeals was established in 1970 by Congress as the highest court of the District of Columbia. The court consists of a chief judge and eight associate judges. The court is the equivalent of a state supreme court. As the highest court for the District of Columbia, the Court of Appeals is authorized to review all final orders, judgments and specified interlocutory orders of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. The Court also has jurisdiction to review decisions of administrative agencies, boards, and commissions of the District of Columbia government, as well as to answer questions of law certified by federal and state appellate courts.

Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners is a highly collaborative international practice of 160 professionals in New York and Washington, DC, with recognized expertise in diverse areas of architecture, historic preservation, urban design, and planning. Established in 1968, the firm's work has been honored with numerous awards for design and planning, including three Presidential Design Awards and the national AIA Firm Award. Notable projects include Grand Central Terminal, Ellis Island Museum of Immigration, Rosslyn Central Place in Arlington, VA, and the Red Star Line Museum of Migration in Antwerp, Belgium.

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