

UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

2016 AIA AAJ Justice Facilities Review Awards



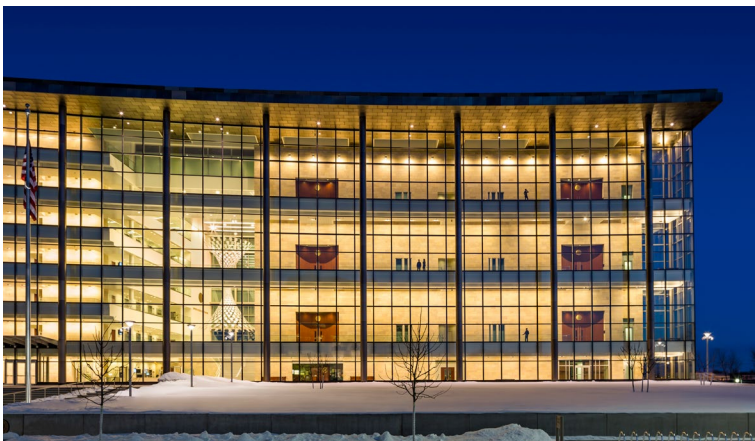
EXPRESSING A DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT OF OPENNESS AND APPROACHABILITY: TWO ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

This Courthouse's design arises from a deep belief in two fundamental tenets of our judicial process: that the Constitution's guarantee of a public trial should be expressed in the architecture of a courthouse, and that the concept of innocent until proven guilty should be reflected in courtrooms that project a simple, humane atmosphere.

1. JUSTICE ON DISPLAY

This is one of the only recently constructed Federal Courthouse where the entrances to all courtrooms are visible to the public at street level.

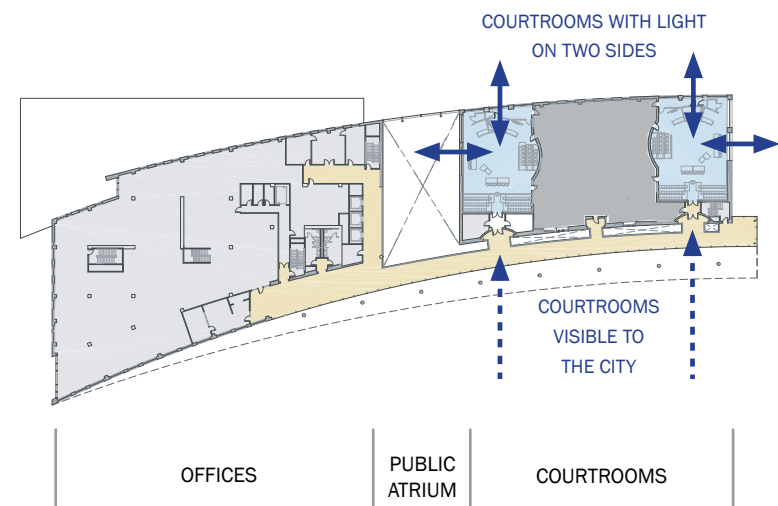
A 300' long x 100' tall glass gallery creates openness and transparency. Along the gallery, each courtroom entrance is clearly visible, celebrating a citizen's right to a public trial. This visibility helps make a necessarily large building approachable and understandable. This focus emerged from careful study of the strong tradition of Iowa country courthouses, buildings which were deeply accessible and central to their towns.



2. PROVIDING WINDOWS IN EVERY COURTROOM

This is the first recently constructed Federal Courthouse with windows on two sides of every District, Magistrate and Bankruptcy Courtroom.

Not simply in recognition of the long hours spent in courtrooms, but also out of a strong belief that a just court respects the dignity of all parties, judges here insisted on the importance of windows in courtrooms. Given the necessary segregation of circulation systems of a modern courthouse, organizing the plan to allow windows had to be a central focus from the outset.





Courtroom entrances visible from exterior



To overcome darkness of glass during the day and ensure the goal of visible courtroom entrances was met at all times, a combination of low-iron glass, skylights above and the light color of the stone wall inside are all used to increase transparency.



Courtroom entrances visible even during the day





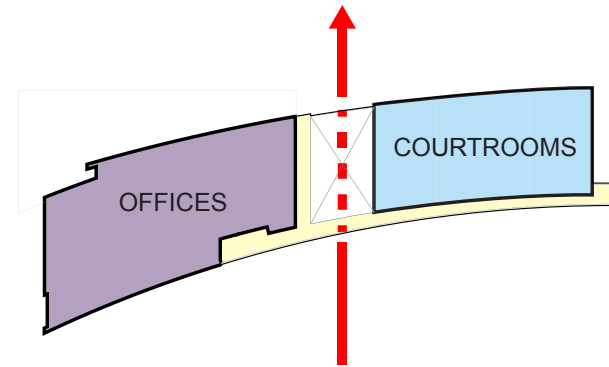
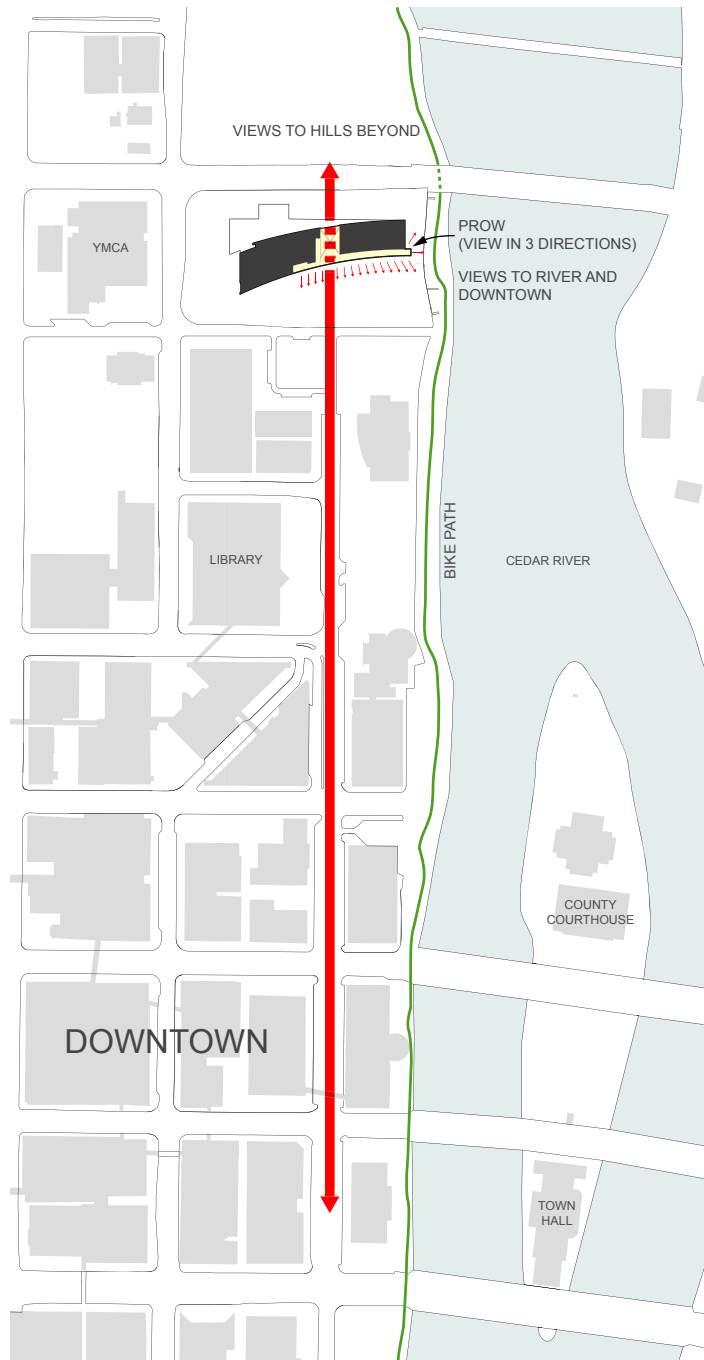


Local Iowa limestone for the wall of the courtrooms



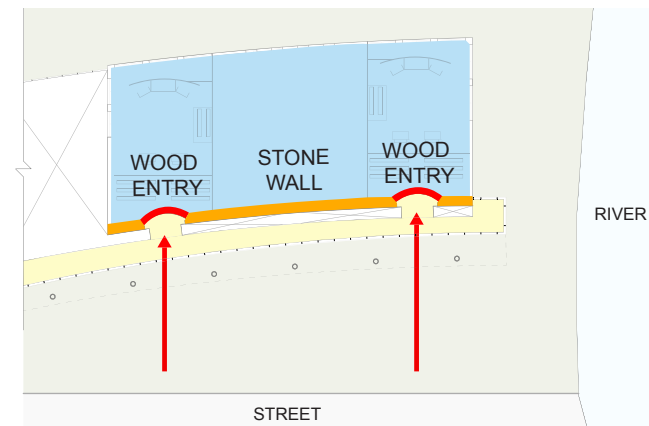


ESTABLISHING A STRONG CIVIC PRESENCE



SIMPLE, UNDERSTANDABLE ORGANIZATION

- EASY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO FIND THEIR WAY, EVEN IN VERY LARGE BUILDING
- ORGANIZATION IS CLEAR EVEN FROM EXTERIOR



MAKING PURPOSE OF THE BUILDING EVIDENT

- COURTROOM ENTRANCES HIGHLY VISIBLE FROM EXTERIOR
- RESPONDING DIRECTLY TO PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT LARGE GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS WHOSE IDENTITY AS A COURTHOUSE IS UNCLEAR

INTEGRATING SITE SECURITY AND ACCESS IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Commitment to Downtown Location

BUILDING RESILIENCY

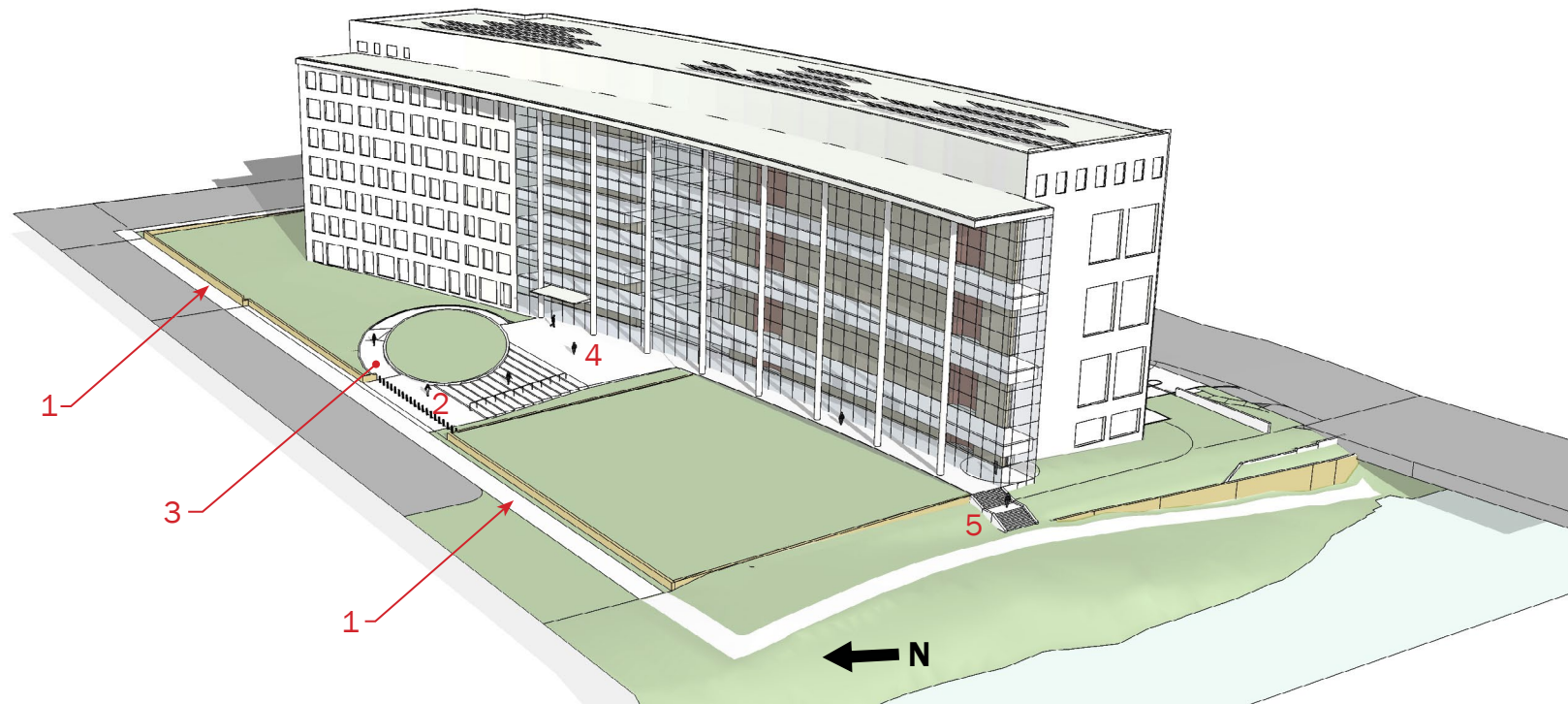
- In the face of devastating floods affecting Cedar Rapids and the site, project leaders from the GSA were faced with a challenge: abandon the commitment to building GSA buildings in downtown locations or build greater resilience.
- The team pursued resilience. Raising the ground floor nearly 9 feet (along with placing equipment at upper levels) provides heightened flood protection.

SEAMLESS SECURITY IN KEEPING WITH GOAL OF OPENNESS

- Out of this challenge came a new opportunity – necessary site security could now be nearly invisible and integrated into the landscape: the retaining walls that help raise the site are able to serve double duty as site security barriers, as well as seat walls for public use. Use of bollards is significantly reduced, avoiding a fortress-like presence.
- The significant building setback required for security also allows the remaining grade change from top of retaining wall to entry (nearly 6') to be nearly imperceptible at a 1:20 slope.

INTEGRATING ACCESSIBILITY

- The team was dedicated to making the new grade change as seamless as possible in pursuit of universal access.
- Avoiding traditional ramps with railings was imperative. The oval landscape feature allows a 1:20 ramp sloping along its perimeter to merge into the landscape



1 RETAINING WALL/SECURITY BARRIER

2 ARRIVAL

3 1:20 ACCESS

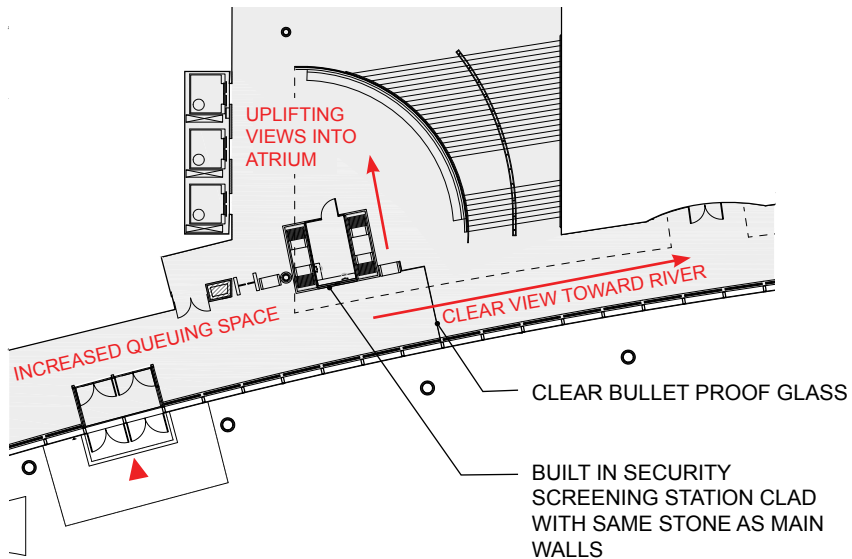
4 ENTRY PLAZA

5 ACCESS TO RIVERWALK

INCORPORATING SECURITY WITHOUT SACRIFICING OPENNESS

RETHINKING ENTRY SEQUENCE

- CLEAR VIEWS UPON ENTRY
(SCREENING EQUIPMENT NOT FIRST THING VISITORS SEE)
- ADEQUATE SPACE FOR QUEUING
- WELL INTEGRATED EQUIPMENT



View West Past Security Station

HIGHLY TRANSPARENT FACADE

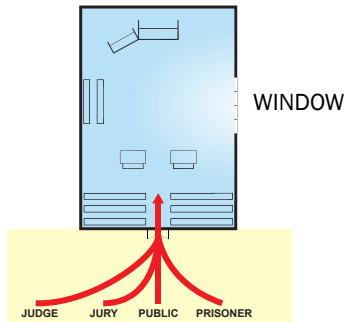
- SIGNIFICANT ENGINEERING TO CREATE 300' X 100' TALL BLAST RESISTANT CURTAINWALL
- WELCOMING FIRST IMPRESSION



Blast Resistant Curtain Wall

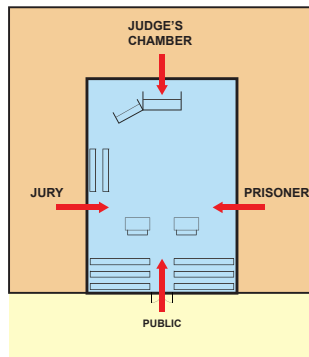
EVOLVING COURTHOUSE ORGANIZATION

- REINTRODUCING NATURAL LIGHT WHILE ADDRESSING SECURITY IMPERATIVES
- RE-ESTABLISHING CONNECTIONS AMONG JUDGES

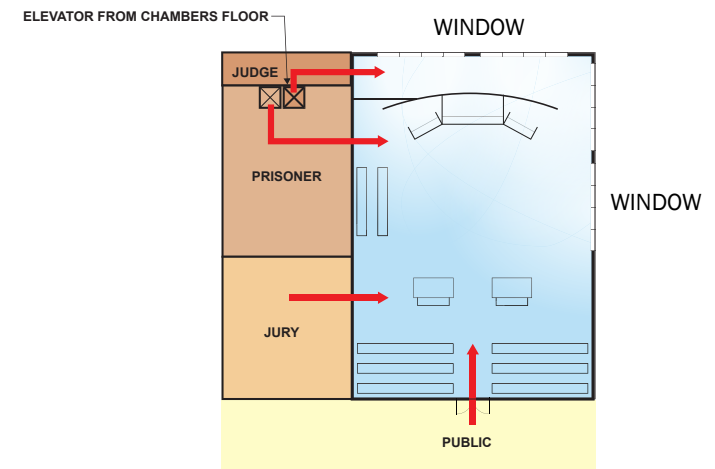


HISTORICAL MODEL

- SINGLE ENTRY POINT FOR ALL PARTIES ALLOWS FOR WINDOWS IN COURTROOMS
- JUDGE'S CHAMBERS WERE OFTEN TOGETHER ON A SEPARATE FLOOR, CREATING COLLEGIALLY
- RESULTED IN SERIOUS SECURITY CONCERNS DUE TO CO-MINGLING OF PARTIES OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM ENTRY



Courtroom



RECENT COURTHOUSES: COURTROOM SURROUNDED

- SECURITY CONCERNS ADDRESSED BY CREATING FOUR SEPARATE PATHS OF ENTRY
- RESULTS IN COURT ROOM WITHOUT NATURAL LIGHT OR VIEWS
- JUDGE'S CHAMBER CLOSE TO COURTROOM BUT USUALLY VERY REMOTE FROM COLLEAGUES, CREATING ISOLATION

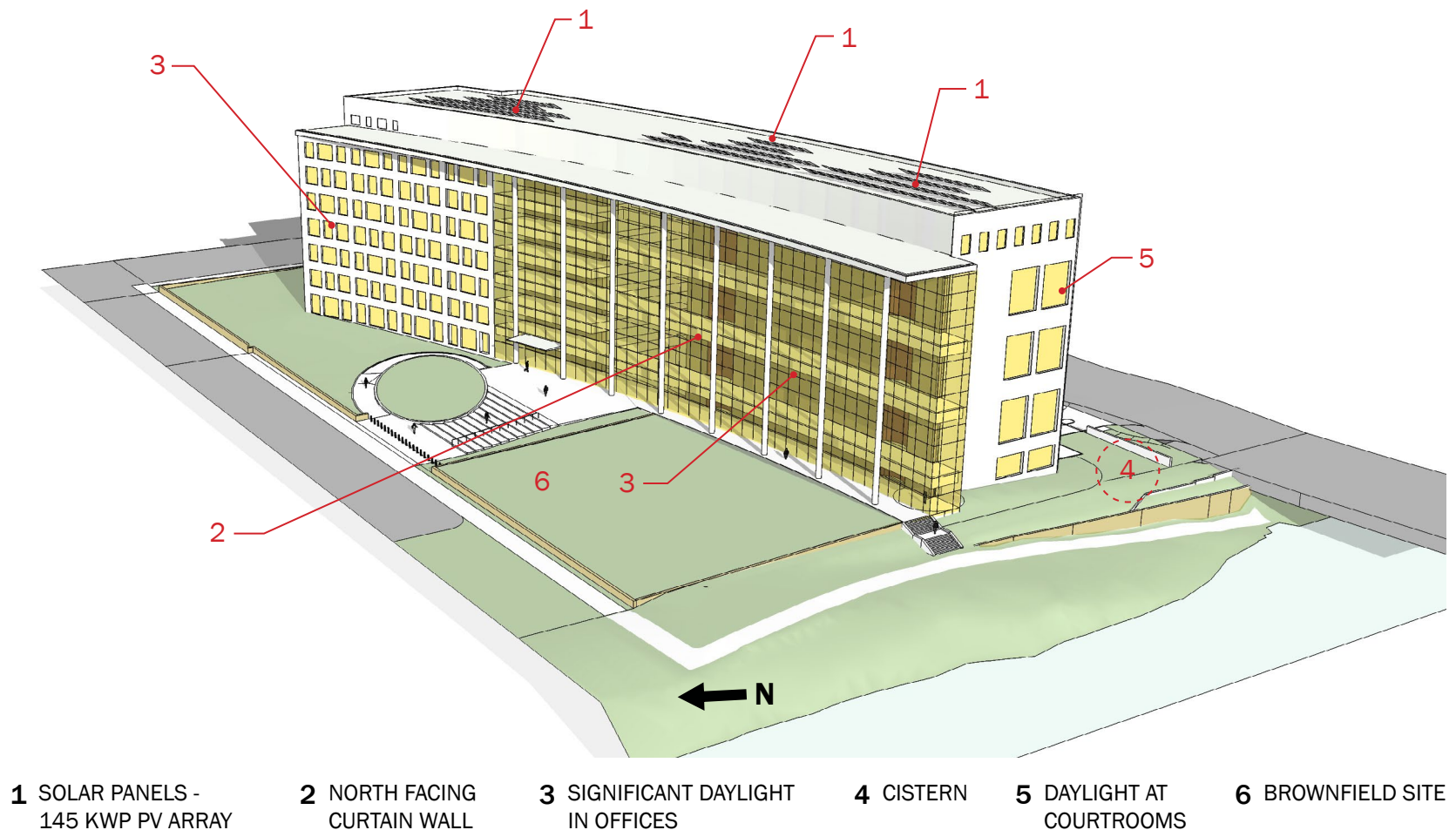
CEDAR RAPIDS COURTHOUSE MODEL

- SEPARATE, SECURE PATHS MAINTAINED BUT REORGANIZED TO ONE SIDE
- ALLOWS RE-INTRODUCTION OF WINDOWS ON NOT JUST ONE, BUT TWO SIDES
- BRINGS JUDGES TOGETHER AGAIN ON COLLEGIALLY CHAMBERS FLOOR

SUSTAINABILITY EVOLUTION IN STEP WITH GSA COMMITMENTS

Typically, many years pass from the outset of design to congressional funding to completion in a courthouse project. In Cedar Rapids, this typical duration actually created an opportunity to let the project's sustainability goals evolve in parallel with the GSA's increasing commitment to these issues.

- Brownfield Site
- Initial LEED Silver target expanded to LEED Gold as project progressed.
- Building ordered to allow significant glazing on main facade without adding heat gain.
- The devastating 2008 flood created an early opportunity to alter the design before construction had begun and make the project an early example of resiliency.
- Achieved 20% locally manufactured materials.
- The project was among the early adopters of the GSA's increased energy performance goals and it has exceeded the benchmarks in each year of operation.
- PV panels were able to be added later in the process, along with green roofs at the low roof area to the south.
- Rainwater retention cistern and water quality tank integrated into landscape. Project achieved 30% water-use reduction.



FITTING INTO AN IOWA TRADITION

The Iowa Courthouse Square

Nearly all of Iowa's 99 county courthouses sit in or adjacent to a downtown Courthouse Square – creating a focal point for surrounding business and civic life. Over time, many courthouses also came to include a significant atrium – an interior public space to match the outdoor public space of the Square. In designing the building, architects, judges and GSA staff visited many Iowa courthouses to understand this tradition. The resultant building is set in a simple, expansive landscaped green centered on the six-story atrium.



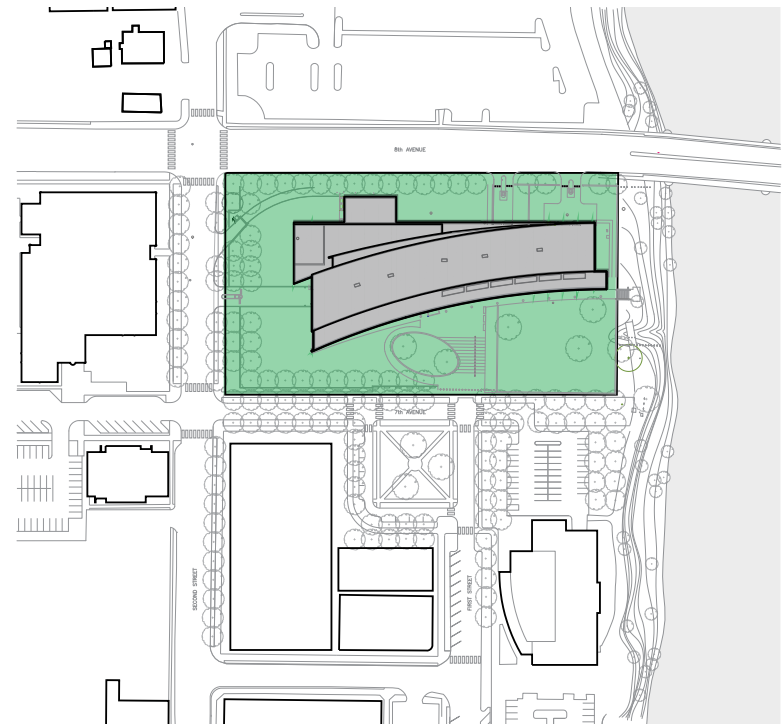
Hardin County
Eldora, Iowa



Franklin County
Hampton, Iowa



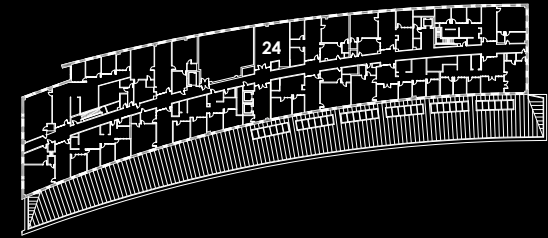
Grundy County
Grundy Center, Iowa



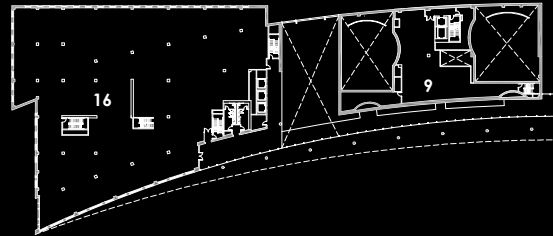
**New United States Courthouse
Cedar Rapids, Iowa**



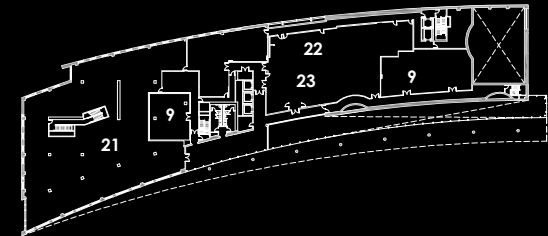
4TH FLOOR



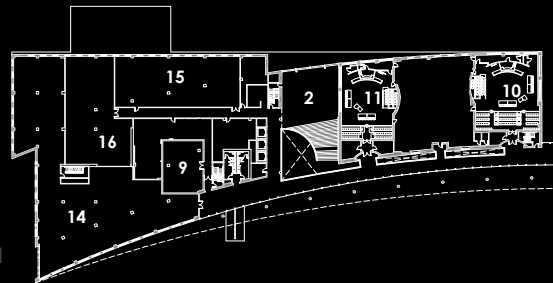
8TH FLOOR



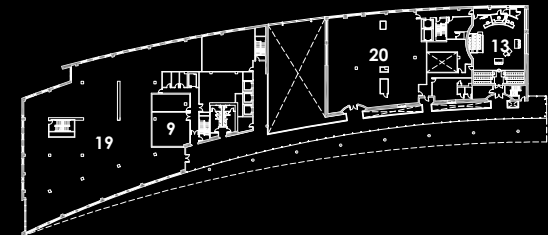
3RD FLOOR



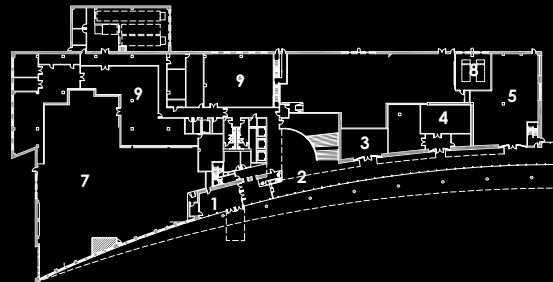
7TH FLOOR



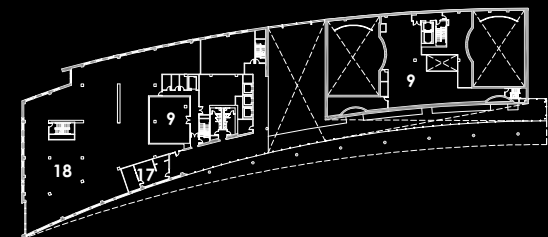
2ND FLOOR



6TH FLOOR



1ST FLOOR



5TH FLOOR

- 1 Entry Vestibule and Security
- 2 Atrium
- 3 Clerk Intake
- 4 341 Hearing Room
- 5 Jury Assembly
- 6 Parking
- 7 Parking
- 8 Sally Port
- 9 Mechanical
- 10 Special Proceedings Courtroom
- 11 District Courtroom
- 12 Magistrate Courtroom
- 13 Bankruptcy Courtroom
- 14 U.S. Probation
- 15 U.S. Trustee
- 16 U.S. Attorney
- 17 Congressional Office
- 18 District Clerk
- 19 Bankruptcy Clerk
- 20 Circuit Library/ Future Courtroom
- 21 U.S. Marshals
- 22 Court Support Space
- 23 Court Support Space
- 24 Chambers Floor

*Secure areas in plans have been redacted

