

Program Summary:

Transformation of a midcentury civic building to strengthen security, improve functionality, and introduce flexibility, creating a safer, more efficient, and adaptable court environment.

Program Statement:

Originally constructed in the 1960s, this midcentury civic building no longer met the functional, environmental, or security demands of a modern judicial facility. The renovation addresses these deficiencies through a comprehensive approach grounded in three core principles: security, functionality, and flexibility.

Security was enhanced through controlled access, separation of public and secure zones, missile-impact glazing, and improved circulation strategies. A new monumental stair establishes a clear and intuitive path of travel, while access-controlled zones and dedicated inmate transport improve safety for all users. Functionality was significantly improved through spatial reorganization and the activation of previously underutilized areas. The completion of the second-floor increased courtroom capacity from four to seven, while improved layouts and access to light create a more efficient and user-friendly environment.

Flexibility was integrated through a modular wall system, allowing administrative and support spaces to be reconfigured quickly and efficiently as operational needs evolve, minimizing disruption and reducing long term costs. Material and design interventions further enhance the user experience. A cohesive palette and integrated artistic elements contribute to a clearer and more attractive environment, while targeted moments of light and reflection transform previously dark interior spaces. The result is a safer, more efficient, and adaptable civic building that better serves its users and restores dignity to the public experience.

RR145.01

Building Area: (sf)
104,000 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$433

Construction Cost
\$45,066,346

Date of Completion:
May 2025

RR145.02

INTRODUCTION

This renovation focused the approach on three distinct pillars to redefine the building for modern use:

1. Security
2. Flexibility
3. Functionality / Circulation



RR145.03

HISTORIC CONTEXT (MIDCENTURY ORIGINS)

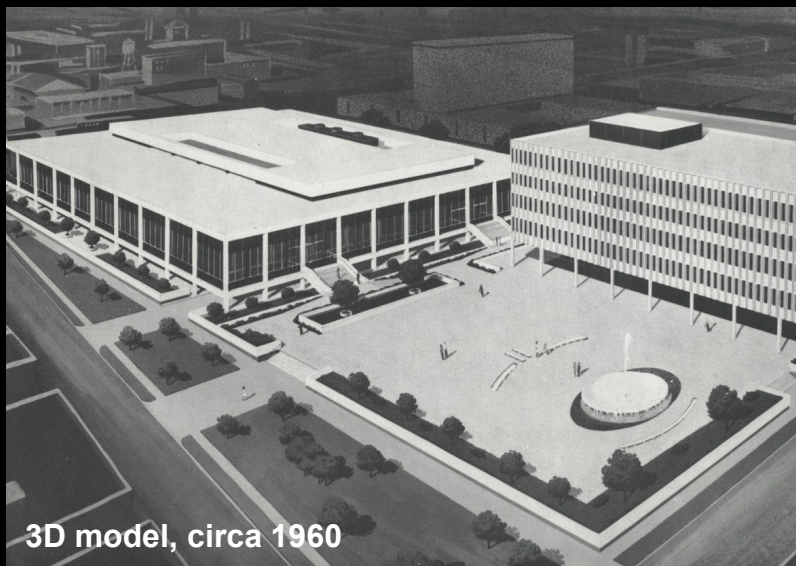
Constructed in the mid-1960s, this civic building embodies a Mid-Century Modern design ethos characterized by clean lines, uninterrupted perimeter glazing, durable material expression, and a dignified civic presence. It emerged as part of a broader urban redevelopment initiative within a historic industrial district once defined by breweries, steel fabrication, warehouses, and supported by the City's rail infrastructure.

Over time, however, the building's performance and functionality fell out of alignment with the evolving demands of a 21st-century judicial facility and its changing urban context.

Civic dignity was lost.



Under construction, 1960



3D model, circa 1960

RR145.04

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Over the years, the integrity of the original design eroded, resulting in dark, inefficient, and increasingly unsafe spaces. Unsecured circulation paths, poorly aligned program elements, and deteriorating building systems undermined occupant comfort and security, diminishing operational effectiveness and degrading the public experience.

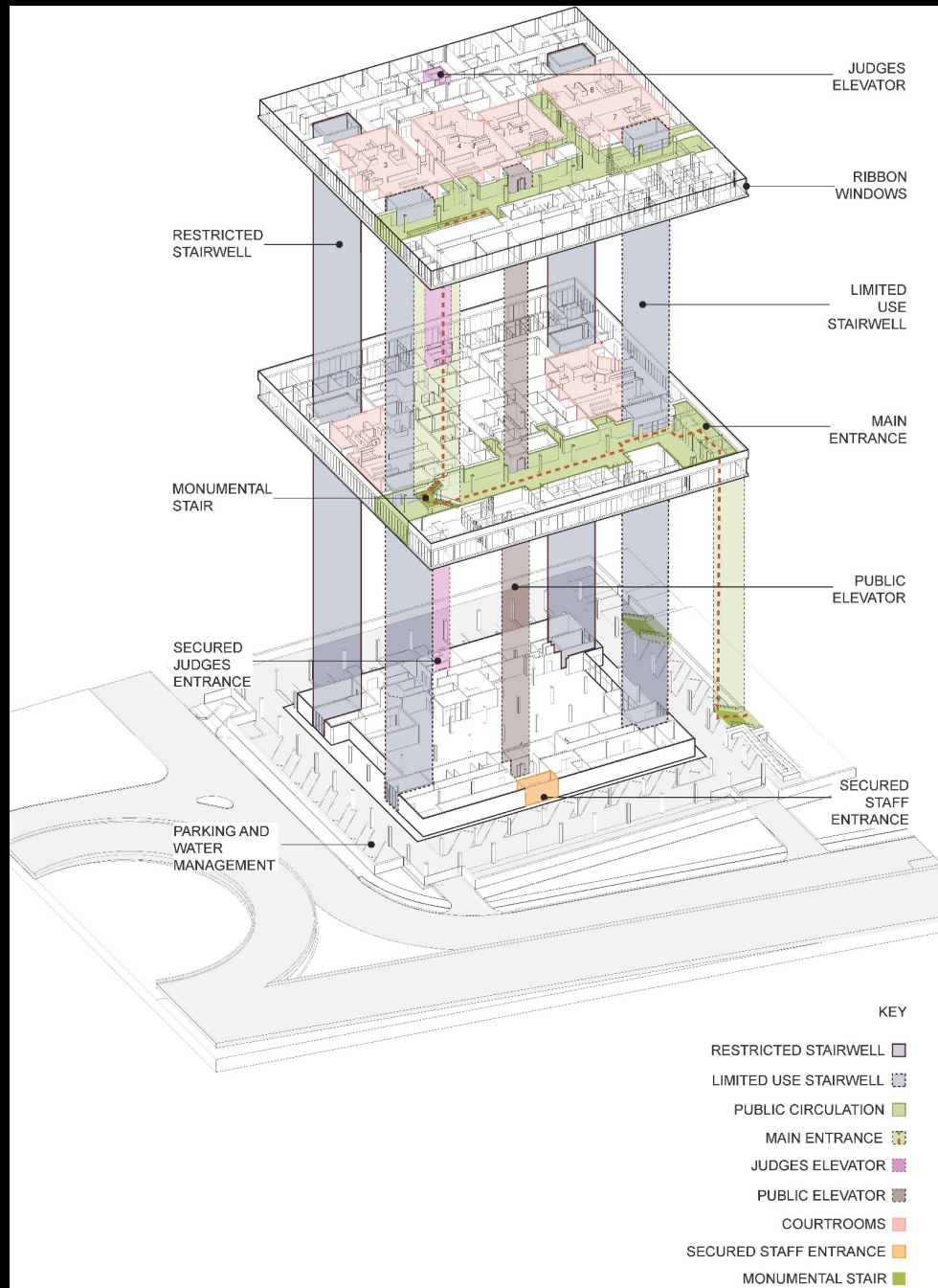


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DESIGN VISION

The design is grounded in three interrelated principles: security, flexibility, and circulation which operate as an architectural framework for intervention.

Together, they reorder the building's spatial logic, establish clear and secure movement paths, and enable programmatic adaptability to support long-term institutional resilience.





BEFORE

RR145.06

ENVELOPE & GLAZING

The building envelope was re-envisioned to improve thermal performance and resiliency while preserving the original architectural intent. The existing glazing, compromised by significant solar heat gain despite the addition of dark film in the 1980s, was replaced with a high-performance, impact-resistant system that enhances energy efficiency, increases transparency, and provides hurricane-rated protection.

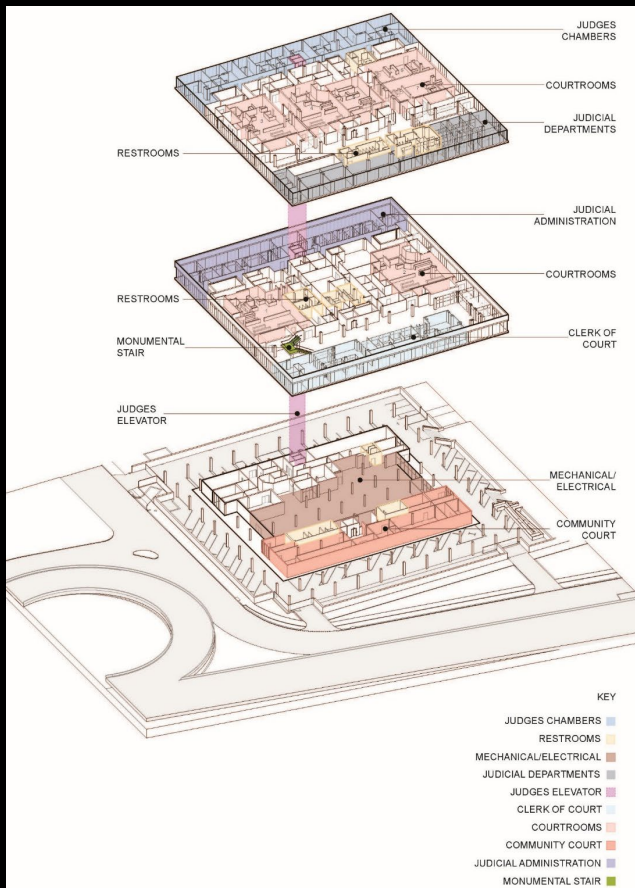
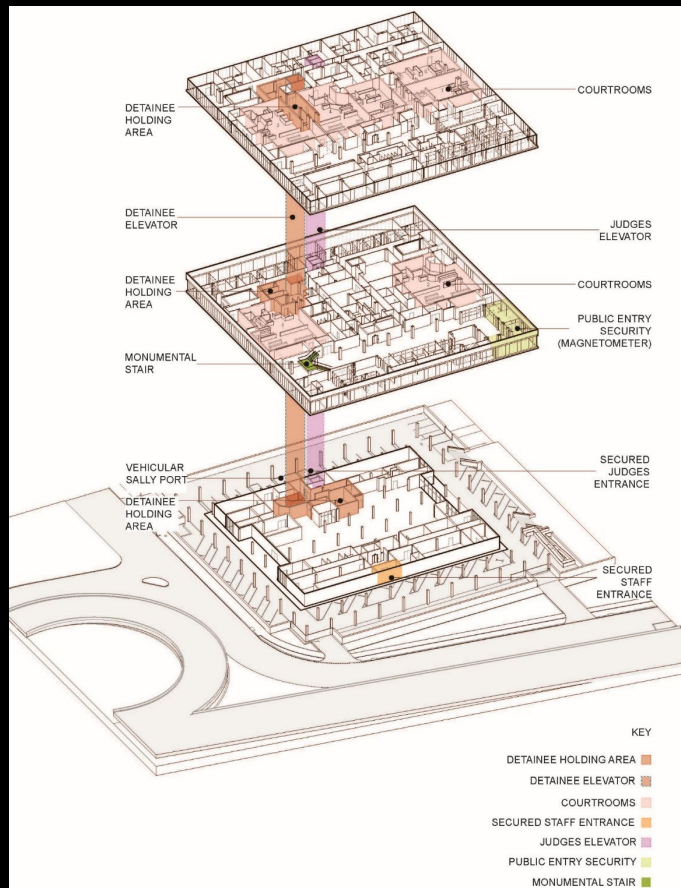
The result: a brighter, more comfortable interior environment for occupants. Existing crushed marble-reinforced concrete panels were carefully restored, preserving the building's original identity while elevating its civic presence.



AFTER



AFTER

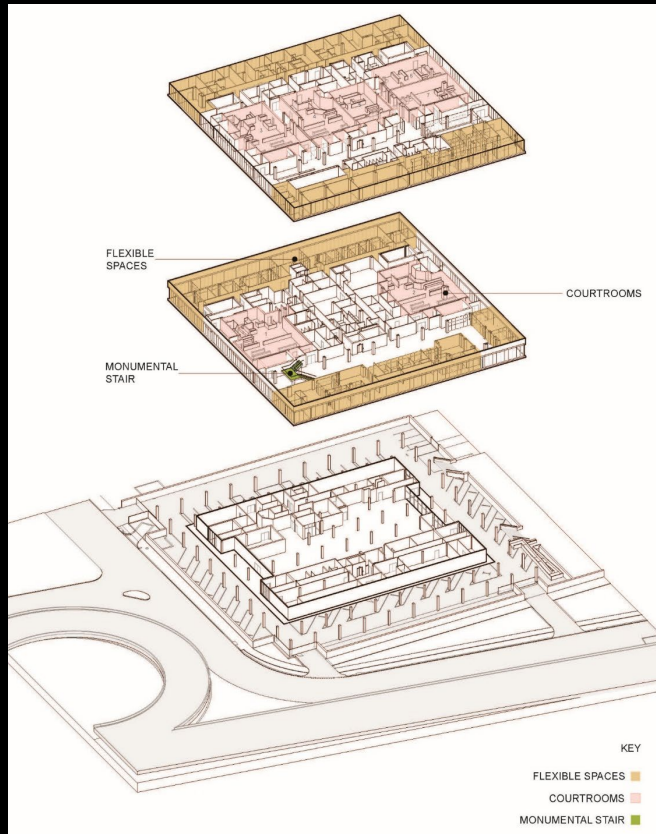


RR145.07

SECURITY STRATEGY

A comprehensive security strategy redefines the building through controlled access, clear separation of public and secure zones, and reinforced envelope systems.

Previously, unsecured stairwells, shared public and inmate entry points, and corridor-based detainee staging created significant vulnerabilities and unclear circulation paths. The redesign introduces a layered sequence of entry, with dedicated secure entrances, enclosed holding areas, and a controlled vehicular sally port. Clear separation between public, judicial, and detainee circulation enhances safety, dignity, and operational efficiency within a high-risk context adjacent to a correctional complex.



RR145.08

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility was a key driver of the design. Recognizing that judicial support functions evolve over time, the project incorporates a modular wall system with integrated power and IT infrastructure, enabling rapid reconfiguration of space. This approach allows operations to adapt efficiently while minimizing the cost and disruption associated with traditional construction

COURTROOMS 3-7



RR145.09

CIRCULATION & MONUMENTAL STAIR

Circulation was restructured to improve safety and legibility. Previously, multiple unsecured stairwells created confusion and security vulnerabilities, offering no clear public path to the courtrooms and associated services.

A new monumental stair anchors the lobby and establishes an intuitive, visible route of travel—encouraging public use and reinforcing orientation within the building. Access-controlled zones further organize movement and enhance security. Integrated with the stair, a connecting catwalk introduces additional connectivity and frames new spatial perspectives into the interior.





BEFORE



BEFORE



AFTER

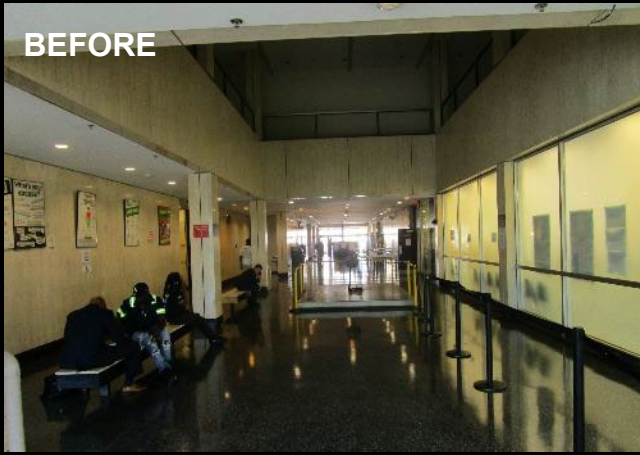
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COURTROOM DESIGN

Courtrooms are unified through a consistent material palette, with walnut integrated across millwork, doors, and acoustic panels to create a warm and cohesive environment.

Careful coordination ensured continuity across multiple manufacturers, maintaining a high level of precision throughout. Enhanced acoustics and integrated audiovisual systems support the functional demands of modern court proceedings.

BEFORE



BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER

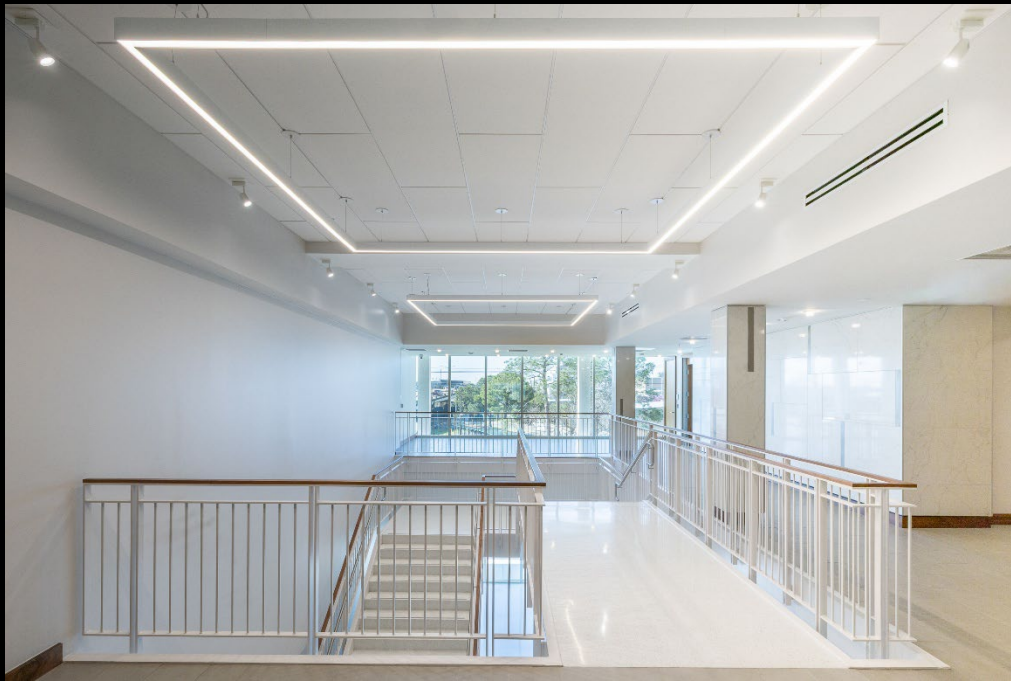


RR145.11

SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION /
LIGHT & TERRAZZO FEATURES

A new terrazzo installation transforms the once-dark central floor into a dynamic focal point. Inspired by Theo van Doesburg and the De Stijl movement, its geometric art pattern incorporates crushed mirror to reflect light, animating the space and creating a vibrant, engaging environment.

Strategic interventions transform the building from underutilized and inefficient into a clear, highly functional civic space. A previously unfinished second floor was fully built out, increasing the number of courtrooms from four to seven and significantly enhancing operational capacity.



RR145.12

STAGED FOR PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES

Artistic expression is embedded directly into the architecture, with material patterns, textures, and acoustic elements serving both functional and visual roles.

This integrated approach creates a cohesive interior setting while allowing the building to accommodate future public art installations.



RR145.13

CONCLUSION

Through strategic interventions in security, functionality, and flexibility, the building now supports a safer, more legible, and adaptable civic experience. Improved comfort and operational efficiency enhance daily use, while a more approachable interior setting strengthens public perception and trust.

Civic dignity has been restored.