

U.S. POST OFFICE & COURTHOUSE  
300 Northeast First Avenue  
Miami  
Dade County  
Florida

HABS FL-523  
FL-523

HABS  
FL-523

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
100 Alabama St. NW  
Atlanta, GA 30303**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. POST OFFICE & COURTHOUSE

HABS No. FL-523

LOCATION: 300 Northeast 1st Avenue, Miami, Dade County, Florida

PRESENT OWNER: United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Washington, D.C.

PRESENT USE: Courthouse

SIGNIFICANCE: The U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is significant as an example of Depression-style federal construction designed by local architects and built by local contractors using locally available materials. As a result, features, such as the recurring marine motif in the decorative details and the use of coquina limestone and key stone, give the government edifice a distinctly Miamian character.

I. PHYSICAL CONTEXT OF SITE AND ENVIRONS

The three-story Spanish and Mediterranean Revival U.S. Post Office and Courthouse occupies the east-half of Block 83 in the northeast side of NE 1st Avenue and is bounded north and south by NE 4th and NE 3rd streets. The western half of the block is occupied by a modern, concrete courthouse addition.

The area around the Post Office and Courthouse is dominated by one, two and three-story commercial buildings built during the first third of the twentieth century. These buildings were constructed in the local masonry vernacular style, sparsely ornamented, if at all, with Spanish and Mediterranean Revival features. Many buildings have arcades, and those without generally have awnings to shade the sidewalk in front. The continuity of the blocks is typically broken up by later construction, often larger in scale and constructed of different materials than the original. Many of the buildings have been altered, their original appearance masked by the addition of siding and other modern features.

Open air parking lots are also quite numerous in the vicinity of the Post Office and Courthouse, located mostly to the north and west of the building. The high proportion of parking lots adds a dimension of openness to the environment that feels unnatural in an urban area. The elevated track of the Metro Mover, running down NE 5th Street, one block to the north, has the opposite effect, however, creating a visual boundary between the area north of 5th Street and the area to the south.

Also prominent in the surrounding landscape is the New World Campus of the Miami Dade Community College, occupying the blocks between NE 5th and NE 3rd streets on the east side of NE 1st Avenue, directly opposite the Post Office and Courthouse. The modern, concrete campus is built in a style similar to that of the courthouse addition. The buildings are set back from the edge of the street, and the paved plaza in front is landscaped with trees which minimize the impact of the buildings on the surrounding environment.

Several blocks to the south of the Post Office and Courthouse is Miami's central business district, focused around the intersection of Miami Avenue and Flagler Street. Low one- and two-story buildings are common here but are more often interspersed by high

rise structures from the 1920s and 30s featuring Art Deco, Streamline and Depression Moderne details. Parking lots are also less frequent in the core of the city, resulting in a denser, more urban streetscape.

## II. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The first recorded land grant in the area which is now Dade County was made in 1808 by the government of Spain, then proprietors of Florida, to John Egan for 100 acres of land on the Miami River (Blackman 1921:11). Four other grants were awarded by Spain to settlers in the area, but the climate, isolation of South Florida, and difficult relations with local Indian groups proved too inhibitive, and none of these early residents was able to establish a permanent settlement (Metropolitan Dade County Office of Community and Economic Development [hereinafter cited as OCED] 1982:4).

The territory was awarded to the United States in 1821 under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Richard Fitzpatrick, one of the first successful landowners in South Florida, was instrumental in the establishment of Dade County, voting with the Florida Legislative Council in 1836 to create Dade County from the existing Monroe County and to name the new jurisdiction for Major Francis Langhorn Dade, who had recently been killed in a Seminole Indian attack. During the 1830s Fitzpatrick, who had purchased John Egan's tract of land, sought to develop South Florida in the tradition of the Southern plantation system. To this end, he wished to attract other southern aristocrats to the area. However, the start of the Second Seminole War and the ensuing Indian attacks on American settlements, preempted the fulfillment of his vision (OCED 1982:4).

The Second Seminole War lasted from 1835 to 1842. During this time, the American military attempted to secure the area for civilians. Construction of Fort Dallas commenced in 1838 on the north bank of the Miami River (OCED 1982:5).

After hostilities had declined sufficiently for civilian settlers to return to the area, Fitzpatrick sold the remains of his plantation to his nephew, William English. English platted the "Town of Miami" and sold a few lots, but the venture was, on the whole, unsuccessful. English left South Florida in 1849, heading for the Gold Rush in California, where he was accidentally shot and killed (OCED 1982:5,6).

At this time a small pioneer community began to develop in the vicinity of Miami. The county seat of Dade County had been moved from Indian Key to Miami in 1844, making it the political focus of the area. The majority of residents at this time were involved in the manufacture of starch from the root of the coontie plant. The product was popular in Key West but had limited accessibility to the larger markets in the north (OCED 1982:6).

When the Third Seminole War erupted in the 1850s Fort Dallas was reopened. The protection offered by the fort and the prospect of employment at the starch mills brought settlers from outlying areas to the mouth of the Miami River. When Fort Dallas closed in 1858, at the end of the war, the settlers finally began to establish peaceful relations with the neighboring Indians (OCED 1982:6). However, growth remained slow through the 1860s and the Civil War.

In 1870, two influential families with visions of a great city settled in Miami. Mrs. Julia Tuttle purchased the title to the 640 acres of land owned by the Biscayne Bay Company north of the mouth of the Miami River, and William Brickell settled his family on a large parcel on the opposite shore (Blackman 1921:18; OCED 1982:7). Both Mrs. Tuttle and the Brickells harbored great dreams of what the City of Miami could be. However, they had very little luck enticing others to join them.

It was Henry Flagler who provided the necessary impetus for the town to grow. After retiring from a partnership in the Standard Oil Company of Ohio, Flagler established himself as a railroad tycoon. Flagler purchased several railroads in northern Florida, consolidating and renaming them the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) (OCED 1982:23). The arrival of the railroad alone stimulated the growth of many previously small, if not non-existent, communities by facilitating transportation of goods and communication with more developed states to the north. Flagler also planned the development of a chain of resort hotels along the Florida coast that would stimulate a tourist trade on which he would capitalize. His first hotel was the Ponce De Leon Hotel in Saint Augustine followed shortly by the Alcazar Hotel (Sessa 1950:9). By 1894, Henry Flagler had extended the FEC from St. Augustine as far south as Palm Beach, a town of his own creation (Sessa 1950:8-9).

Julia Tuttle realized that the railroad would be the key to development of Miami as a major city. Flagler, however, showed no interest in her offers of gifts of land until the "Great Freeze" of 1894-1895 destroyed the citrus crop of northern Florida but left the groves around Miami unscathed (Sessa 1950:8-9). As the popular legend relates, an agent of Mr. Flagler, James Ingraham, in Miami

at the time of the freeze, arranged with Mrs. Tuttle to bring back to Flagler a bouquet of citrus blossoms and foliage as proof of the hospitable, productive climate of Miami (Blackman 1921:19; OCED 1982:21; Sessa 1950:9). Swayed, the story continues, Flagler hurried to Miami to finalize an agreement with Mrs. Tuttle, and a city was born.

By the time the first train arrived in April, construction on Flagler's new hotel, the Royal Palm, was well under way on 100 acres at the mouth of the Miami River (Montague 1979:6). According to his agreement with Mrs. Tuttle, Flagler agreed to lay out a town, at his own expense, in exchange for the remainder of Mrs. Tuttle's tract of land less her ten acre homestead. Surveyor A.L. Knowlton of the Fort Dallas Land Company (an organization directed by Flagler, Mrs. Tuttle and the Brickells) platted the new town (OCED 1982:22). Streets were numbered from the northern town line south, while avenues, designated letters of the alphabet, started one block from the present Biscayne Boulevard and moved west (Montague 1979:6). The business district focused on Avenue D, now Miami Avenue.

As E.V. Blackman wrote in his history of Miami in 1921, "[Miami had] the distinction of never having been a village or town, but was born a full fledged city" (Blackman 1921:19). When the new city was incorporated in July, 1896, only a year and a half after the great freeze, many of the merchants and civic leaders were former Flagler employees who had first arrived in Miami with the FEC. A newspaper, The Miami Metropolis, had been founded (by Flagler) in May, and downtown, Avenue D was a bustling commercial center lined with a variety of stores to serve the new population, the majority of whom were Flagler's employees (Kleinberg 1985:38).

From two families in 1894, the town grew to an official population of 1,681 in 1900. By 1910, 5,471 people resided in Miami, and in 1920 the census counted 29,571 residents, a population increase of over 400 percent, not including an additional estimated 50,000 to 100,000 seasonal visitors (Sessa 1950:11). From the outset Miami was a resort community, relying on tourist dollars until it could establish itself as a trade hub for imports from Central and South America and the Caribbean. The rapid growth of the city and the accompanying influx of dollars resulted in the creation of a modern, up-to-date community. In 1921, Blackman praised the "progressive citizenship" served by "the most complete and modern school system and the best buildings of any county in the United States," as well as the numerous banks, the quality of the merchandise available in the city stores, the high quality of

public utility service, and the streetcar line that connected Miami with Miami Beach via the Causeway (Blackman 1921:23-24).

As early as 1913, it was clear that the physical plan of Miami was being stretched to its limit. Small communities outside of the Miami city limits were in danger of being absorbed into the city (as many later were), and new streets and avenues were being developed without regard to the existing street system, which due to its numbering starting from the northern city boundary, was not equipped to handle growth (Montague 1979:7). By 1921 the situation had deteriorated to the point that the postal authorities threatened to stop delivering mail (Parks 1981:106).

A young councilman named Josiah Chaille developed a plan for renumbering the streets ("the Chaille Plan") which was adopted in 1921 and remains in use today. Borrowing the system of Washington, D.C., Chaille divided the city into quadrants NE, NW, SE, and SW (Kleinberg 1985:107). The new grid, centered on the intersection of Flagler Street and Miami Avenue (formerly 12th Street and Avenue D), the commercial focus of downtown, did not alter the City's original plat, but simply renumbered the streets in a manner allowing for continued growth (Montague 1979:8). North-south corridors were called avenues while east-west thoroughfares were designated streets. Short streets east and west were called courts or places, while those north and south were designated terraces and lanes (Kleinberg 1985:107).

Not all local merchants were eager for the renumbering of streets to occur. One opponent of the plan argued that the cost to Miami businesses for new letterheads would be outrageous and that it would negate existing advertising listing the old addresses. A period of confusion did follow the adoption of the Chaille Plan. Many advertisers listed old addresses, while others used the new. Some businesses used combinations of the two, for instance, the old street number with the new street designation. However, in spite of initial problems, the plan has proven effective. As of 1979 the numbering extended from SW 432nd Street to NE/NW 215th Street (the Broward County line) and westward to 237th Avenue (Montague 1979:8-9).

During the 1920s development in Miami continued at an unprecedented rate. Shady developers with slick advertising schemes transformed tourists into part-time, if not full-time, residents. Commercial lots changed hands frequently, and at a great profit to the sellers, as new commercial buildings were erected to house the growing number of businesses in downtown. Record prices were being paid for lots in prime downtown locations. John M. Burdine, who had purchased the land at 124 and 126 East Flagler Street in 1918

for \$55,000, signed the Louis K. Liggett Drug Company to a fifteen year lease in 1923 at a rate of \$5,000 a front foot. A nearby lot on Northeast 2nd Avenue measuring 75 feet by 100 feet was leased that same year for \$10,000 a year for 99 year (Sessa 1950:94). That same year the Miami Herald published an example of the rate of property value appreciation.

Lot 10, Block 121, a corner lot at Flagler Street and Northeast First Avenue was sold, in 1896, by the Fort Dallas Land Company to William Vandoe for \$900, who in turn sold it to C.F. Sulzener for \$100 profit in the same year. Sulzener soon leased it to C.A. Cookes, of Cleveland, Ohio, at an annual rental of \$3,600 (equal to 6 per cent interest on \$60,000). Cookes transferred his lease to Hill Brothers for a bonus of \$5,000. The Tatum Brothers, in 1914, took over the lease by paying a bonus of \$15,000 and erected a \$35,000, two story structure. In 1920, the property was leased to the Foster-Reynolds Company at an annual rental of \$22,500 (8 per cent return on \$275,000). If the land were now vacant, it would be worth about \$300,000. (Miami Herald in Sessa 1950:96).

However, the prosperity did not last long. The Miami real estate market collapsed in 1926. Investors had become disenchanted by false deals struck by unscrupulous developers and overinflated prices. As if to seal the fate of the slumping market, a hurricane struck the Miami coast in September of that year killing 396 and shearing the top floors off of buildings under construction (OCED 1982:83).

Miami was still recovering from the 1926 collapse when the stock market crash of 1929 devastated the national economy. As a result of Miami's 1926 bust, the effects of the crash seemed less severe here than in other areas of the country (OCED 1982:125). Land development continued in the area around Miami, however, at a much slower rate than at the start of the decade. Over twenty plat books in the County Land Division office were filled between 1923 and 1926, but between 1928 and 1939 less than ten books were filled (OCED 1982:126).

Until the turn of the century, Miami's streets were typically lined with two-story vernacular frame buildings with little or no ornamental trim, hastily erected by entrepreneurs seeking to capitalize on the continually growing demand for goods, services and lodging (Anonymous n.d.). The first edition of the Miami Metropolis, on May 15, 1896, described the variety of merchants already established. Among the businesses were a pool room and cold drink stand, a jeweler and watch repair, a saloon, a shoe

store, a drugstore, a tailor, a grocery and a clothing store (Kleinberg 1985:39). Fires were common, but none were as devastating as the fire that spread through the commercial district on Christmas morning 1896 (Blackman 1921:23; OCED 1982:29). Although the fire leveled most of downtown, the community was not discouraged. The business district was rebuilt, and Miami's retail center thrived.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the first architects began arriving in Miami. Many of the first designed hotels and residences were larger and more ornate than previous buildings and featured elements of the Victorian and Queen Anne architectural styles popular in the established communities of the states to the north (OCED 1982:31). The architects also introduced the use masonry construction to the streetscape of Miami. Concrete block covered with stucco was a popular construction technique due to the local abundance of sand and other necessary building materials (Chase 1987:5). Architectural styles were adapted to the hot, humid climate of subtropical Miami. An open, ground floor arcade covering the sidewalk was a practical feature to protect shoppers from the sun and rain (OCED 1982:30).

Victorian architecture, and the Queen Anne in particular, was characterized by free-flowing floor plans highlighted by asymmetrical facades, full-width or wrap-around porches, flowing rooflines, as well as random towers, dormers, and bay windows. When stiff, Neo-Classical designs dominated national styles in the 1910-1930s, Spanish, Mission and Mediterranean motifs were more common in Miami. Characterized by tile roofs, arched or curved parapets, sparse ornamentation and stuccoed walls, these styles were more playful and flamboyant than the restrained Neo-Classical architecture and seemed to better suit the free-spirited atmosphere of Miami (OCED 1982:85). Many civic buildings, as well as some residential and commercial buildings, were faced with oolitic limestone, Key Largo limestone (also known as keystone) and coquina, local coastal limestone varieties, often quarried on or near building sites. Many buildings, if not sheathed with the stone, would be highlighted with details of carved keystone or coquina. These types of limestone, often dyed pink, green or yellow for added highlight, are composed of whole or broken shells and quartz sand grains and are characterized by the fossilized remains of coral and other sea life (Bishop and Dee 1961:8-9; Lampert 1988:17).

When the 1914 edition of the Sanborn Map Company's Insurance Map of Miami was published, the central business district was expanding north to NE 4th and 5th streets (then known as 7th and 8th streets). The Central Grammar School, a concrete block structure built on land donated to the city by Henry Flagler in 1897, was

standing on the site presently occupied by the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse (Freeman 1987:3). The surrounding blocks were filled predominantly with frame commercial and residential structures. The commercial growth was primarily along North Miami Avenue where arcaded, concrete block structures were being erected. The businesses they housed were representative of the needs and services demanded by the rapidly growing community. Tenants included a music store, a grocery, a drug store, a sewing machine store, and a tinsmith.

Little had changed in the area by 1925, although more infill had occurred. The Central Grammar School remained standing, and two frame structures had been built in the yard, perhaps to house classes for a growing school population. Both sides of Miami Avenue were lined with masonry buildings housing commercial and residential tenants, and buildings along NE 1st Avenue were mostly hotels. The blocks between North Miami and NE 1st Avenues were still dominated by frame dwellings, although a few more hotels and apartment buildings had been constructed (Hopkins 1925).

The most dramatic change between the 1925 map and that from 1936 was the replacement of the Central Grammar School with the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse. North Miami Avenue between 4th and 5th streets was lined with stores and apartments. The next block south, however, was now dominated by "hotels" and the Capitol Theatre. Frame dwellings dominated the northern side streets between North Miami Avenue and NE 1st Avenue while the southern streets (3rd Street and south) were typically lined with commercial properties and hotels (Hopkins 1936). Through 1947 very few changes were visible in the physical make up or character of the streets surrounding the Courthouse (Sanborn 1921/40; Hopkins 1947).

### III. U.S. POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE: GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND SITE HISTORY

The first federal building constructed in Miami was the Old U.S. Post Office and Courthouse (now the AmeriFirst building) built between 1912 and 1914 (Junior League 1985:11). The Neo-Classical structure housed the post office and federal courts as well as other government agencies, including customs, the weather bureau and the immigration inspector. It was the first wave of the development boom in the 1910s that necessitated the construction of a first level post office facility at this time. By the time the boom had reached maturity in the 1920s, the volume of services required by the Miami population were overwhelming the facility,

and before the first building was twenty years old, a second U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was constructed (Eaton and Welcher 1988:1-2).

The U.S. Post Office and Courthouse at 300 NE 1st Avenue was commissioned in 1926 as part of a construction effort initiated by the Hoover Administration (Ittelson 1983; Freeman 1987:3). The guidelines established by the administration encouraged the use of local architects, labor and materials in the construction of federal buildings in order to stimulate local economies, as well as to cultivate regional distinctions and individuality in the buildings (Miami Herald, 1 July 1933). To that end, the construction of the courthouse was highly successful. While classical in form and features, the building was faced with coquina limestone quarried on Winden Island 90 miles south of Miami in the Florida Keys which, along with the hipped, red tile roof and ornate details, features of Spanish and Mediterranean Revival architecture, gives the building a distinctly Miami flavor (Miami Herald 1 July 1933).

The three architects and one artist who contributed to the design of the courthouse were all very active in the local community as well. Coral Gables architects Phineas Paist and Harold Steward, assisted by their associate L. Murray Dixon, were selected to design the building, and Denman Fink was chosen to paint the mural behind the judges' bench in the main courtroom. Paist, a native of Pennsylvania, worked in Philadelphia until the 1916 when his work caught the attention of Paul Chalfin, a New York architect selected by James Deering to be the artistic supervisor of his new Miami estate, Vizcaya (Whitey 19:452-3; Freeman 1987:4). Chalfin selected Paist to be his personal representative supervising work on the estate. While at work on Vizcaya, Paist met Denman Fink, the uncle of Coral Gables designer George Merrick. Fink and Paist next joined forces with Merrick in the development of Coral Gables. Paist was made supervising architect of the Coral Gables Corporation and within four months was issued over fifty building permits. Fink served as art director of the Coral Gables Corporation, consulting with all architects working on Coral Gables and himself designing, from an abandoned quarry, the Venetian Pool (Freeman 1987:4).

Assisting Paist in his work on Coral Gables was the young architect, Harold D. Steward who joined the Coral Gables enterprise in 1926. Subsequent to the construction of the courthouse, the design team of Paist and Steward collaborated on projects including many private homes in the Miami area, the Coral Gables Women's Club and Library and the Liberty Square Housing Project (Freeman 1987:4-5).

Fink's mural, "Law Guides Florida Progress," was installed in the courtroom on February 28, 1941. As was common, Fink included a few familiar faces in the scene. Phineas Paist is depicted in the lower right corner at work over an architect's drafting table and George Merrick, who reportedly shipped the first box of grapefruit from Dade County to New York, is the face of the dock worker at the center of the mural (Freeman 1987:5).

L. Murray Dixon arrived to Miami from New York in 1928 working first with George Fink, nephew of Denman Fink and cousin of George Merrick (Capitman 1988:29). It is likely that through these associations Dixon met and joined forces with Paist and Steward in designing the Post Office and Courthouse before going on to be one of the primary Art Deco architects of Miami Beach.

#### IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE U.S. POST OFFICE AND COURTHOUSE

The U.S. Post Office and Courthouse is a three-story structure with a low, hip roof occupying the northern half of the block between Northeast 3rd and 4th streets fronting Northeast 1st Avenue. The red-barrel tile roof and locally quarried coquina limestone facing with dyed, yellow keystone details convey the features of the Spanish and Mediterranean Revival styles to the otherwise classically derived building. Sea-life motifs used throughout the decorative details make the building uniquely Miamian.

The symmetrical, seventeen-bay facade is dominated by a projecting pavilion featuring thirteen, multi-paned arched casement windows, two stories in height separated by engaged composite columns resting on keystone bases. The capitals feature a variety of sea life including octopuses, jelly fish, snails, sea anemone and star fish. At the level of the second-story floor, the arched tops of the windows are separated from the lower portions by carved keystone panels celebrating Progress in America. The soffits of the recessed window bays are decorated with flowers and Keystone consoles, the ends carved with faces. Above these is a wide cornice that encircles three sides of the building. Centered in the fascia is a metal plaque reading "U.S. Post Office and Courthouse." Windows of the third story, recessed in the stone walls, are situated between the cornice and the narrow eave of the roof. Centered above the cornice, in line with the four columns below, are four Ionic pilasters supporting a carved keystone parapet featuring an eagle standing on a crest flanked by pairs of pelicans.

Two-bays, projecting slightly further, flank the central pavilion. Each bay has a rectangular, multi-pane window at each story flanked by pairs of composite pilasters below the cornice and pairs of Ionic pilasters below the eave. Above each of the Ionic pilasters is a carving of a man's face. Centered in the wall of each bay below the cornice is a medallion with a carved profile of a woman.

Recessed entrances are located at the north and south ends of the facade. The entrances are enclosed in yellow keystone surrounds, every other soffit carved with marine themes. A decorative grill behind each entry limits access to the foyer. Above the entrances are keystone panels carved with torches. One window is located at the second-story level and two are located at the third story.

Although less ornate, the north and south sides of the building continue both the classical and nautical motifs of the facade. Windows in the first-story side-walls of the foyer are decorated with a Venetian motif of plain columns topped by bands with flower medallions and imposts forming ogee arches. Behind the columns is more grillwork similar to that behind the main entrances. Two windows are located in each level above the first story, and the projecting cornice of the facade is continued around the corner.

Projecting slightly, the central portion of the north and south walls contains two-story bands of rectangular, multi-pane casement windows separated by composite pilasters resting on keystone bases. A plain fascia runs above the capitals below the projecting cornice. Flanking the columns of windows are bays set off by pairs of composite pilasters. The bays closest to the facade on both the north and south sides contain side entrances enclosed in plain keystone surrounds. While the original doors have been replaced with modern steel doors with wire mesh glass, the transom above each retains the original aluminum seal flanked by sea horses and a wave-like geometric design. A similar bay is present at the rear of each side wall, however, this "entrance" is not a door but a window of the same size as the doorway encased in the same keystone surround.

The only variation between the north and south walls is an oriel located in the fourth of the eight bays of windows in the south wall. The oriel has scalloped edges and supports a metal balcony at the second-story level. The doors leading to the balcony resemble the surrounding multi-paned casement windows with an arched top. The keystone in the surround is carved with the likeness of a man's face. Below the oriel is a rectangular window three-fourths the size of the surrounding windows.

At the rear of the building is a plain, flat roofed two story block, finished with coquina on the side walls and yellow brick across the rear. The windows, two at each story, are the same multi-paned casements as in the rest of the building but are set in unadorned, recessed surrounds. The ornate cornice that encircles the rest of the building does not continue here although a slightly lower cornice molding, even with the molding at the bottom of the fascia, does continue. The rear of the building originally served the loading docks for the post office's mail trucks, but has been altered as the building's function has changed.

In late 1980s, a large modern addition was built behind the loading dock on the western half of the block. The addition is faced with smooth, precast concrete panels with fine aggregate, cool-gray in color. The C-shaped plan, symmetrical along a diagonal, northwest-southeast axis, is organized around a landscaped courtyard facing the former post office loading docks. The design features a twelve-story tower in the northwest quadrant with blank walled, semi-circular masses facing the north and west. Between the towers are horizontal bands of metal windows deeply recessed between concrete slabs separating the stories. A nine bay, two-story collonnade of brise soleil panels shades the window wall forming the southwest wall of the "C."

The portions of the addition nearest the old courthouse are three stories in height, nearly duplicating the eave line and the story breaks of the earlier building. Each story is divided into bands of windows separated horizontally by brise soleil panels, which mimic the verticality of the post office/courthouse's columns and pilasters. The new construction attaches to the old courthouse by means of two, blank walled, raised walkways at the second- and third-story levels.

The halls of the 1931 post office and courthouse are arranged around an open, square courtyard. The Mediterranean inspired, central atrium is arcaded on three sides at the first- and second-story level with plain Tuscan columns supporting the arcade. The first-floor walls are of long, red-bricks laid in a running bond with coquina details. The second-story walls are faced with yellow bricks laid in a common bond. The three bays of the courtyard's east wall are filled with Palladian windows at the second story and arched doors at the first.

The post office windows were originally located along the main corridor at the front of the building and the post office boxes were located along the east wall of the courtyard. The walls of the hallways are lined with marble wainscoating and are divided

into sections by marble pilasters which support the imposts of the vaulted ceiling. Although the post office windows have been filled with marble and the area behind them converted into offices, large, green marble writing desks, placed down the center of the corridor, and wooden benches along the west wall still suggest the building's former use as a post office.

The second-story hallways are also sheathed with marble wainscoting. The walls of the main court room, occupying the western portion of the second story, are lined with dark mahogany paneling. Mahogany was also used for the coffered ceiling. Three heavy iron chandeliers with electric "candles" hang over each of the chamber's two aisles. Some modern, track lighting has been installed as well. Flanked by pairs of Ionic columns, the Denman Fink mural occupies the west wall of the courtroom behind the judges' bench.

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