

MEDIA ADVISORY

May 9, 2005

For information contact: Leah Gurowitz
202/ 879-1700

D.C. Courts Break Ground for the Expansion and Renovation of One of the Oldest Public Buildings in the District

- WHAT** Groundbreaking for expansion and renovation of Old D.C. Courthouse
- WHERE** 451 Indiana Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.
- WHEN** **Tuesday, May 10, 2005, at 2:30**
- WHO** **Chief Judge Annice M. Wagner**, D.C. Court of Appeals
Chief Judge Rufus G. King, III, Superior Court of the District of Columbia
Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton
- WHY** The Old D.C. Courthouse, which dates from 1821, is one of the oldest buildings in the District of Columbia. It is the centerpiece of Judiciary Square, one of the original, historic green spaces identified in Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the Nation's Capital. Daniel Webster and Francis Scott Key practiced law in the building, and John Surratt was tried there for his part in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The Old D.C. Courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is an official project of Save America's Treasures.
- The expansion and renovation of the Old D.C. Courthouse for the highest court of the District of Columbia will provide much-needed space for the D.C. Courts while imparting new life to one of the most significant historic buildings and green spaces in Washington, D.C. Designed by Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, the restored and expanded building will meet the needs of the Courts, restore the glory of a historic landmark, and stimulate neighborhood economic activity.

###

**FACT SHEET:
RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF OLD D.C. COURTHOUSE**

Project	<p>Modernization and expansion of the Old D.C. Courthouse (a National Historic Landmark) to accommodate its new use for the highest court in the District of Columbia, the D.C. Court of Appeals.</p> <p>Goals include reorganization of interior spaces and circulation; preservation and restoration of the building's historic fabric; provision of new facilities for access, security and parking; and creation of a new entrance pavilion and plaza, re-orienting the building toward Judiciary Square and significantly improving public space in Washington, D.C.</p>
Architect	Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP
Significant Dates	May 10, 2005: groundbreaking for addition and renovation December 31, 2007: renovation will be completed
Project Size	134,770 square feet
Location	Judiciary Square, Washington, D.C. The square is located north of the National Gallery of Art and south of the National Building Museum, between Indiana Avenue and E Street, east of 6th Street. Other major structures on the square are three other D.C. Courts buildings and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.
Architectural History	<p>A site for Judiciary Square was set aside for public use by Pierre L'Enfant in his 1791 plan for the city of Washington. In 1820, architect George Hadfield won a competition to design the District of Columbia's first City Hall in Judiciary Square, to house both the local government and also federal courtrooms. A reduced version of Hadfield's Neoclassical design was completed by 1849. A north wing, including an Ionic portico facing Judiciary Square, was designed by Architect of the Capitol Edward Clark and constructed in 1881-1883, by which time the building had been given over entirely to federal judicial functions. Congress appropriated funds for a major renovation in 1916, and Elliott Woods, Superintendent of the Capitol Buildings and Grounds, supervised the work, virtually reconstructing the building by 1919. This renovation stripped away the north Ionic portico and recladded the building in limestone.</p>
Building History	<p>Daniel Webster and Francis Scott Key were among the eminent Americans who practiced law in the Old D.C. Courthouse. John Surratt was tried in this building as a conspirator in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The statue of Lincoln in Judiciary Square—the first public monument to the fallen President—was erected with funds contributed immediately after the assassination through popular subscription.</p>

Project History

A feasibility study was prepared in 1999 by Karn Charuhas Chapman & Twohey for the proposed relocation of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals to the Old D.C. Courthouse building. A master plan for Judiciary Square was initiated in 2002, carried out by Gruzen Samton in association with Karn Charuhas Chapman & Twohey. In 2003, Beyer Blinder Belle was selected to design the renovation and expansion of the Old D.C. Courthouse in conformance with the Judiciary Square Master Plan.

Principal Design Features

New plaza and entrance pavilion: The design reorients the Old D.C. Courthouse to the north (E Street) side by creating a new plaza and entrance pavilion, which harmonizes with the proportions and character of the historic structure while being unmistakably modern. Because the portico on the north side of the building was stripped off in the 1916-19 renovation, the existing north facade is far less articulated than the south side. Moreover, the existing south entrance (off Indiana Avenue) cannot easily be made to meet ADA standards for accessibility. The new pavilion, built of steel and glass, spans the center bay of the north facade at the height of two stories, leaving the third-story windows unobstructed. Because of its transparency, the pavilion allows visibility to the existing building beyond. While maintaining the main axis of the Old D.C. Courthouse, the pavilion affords the building a new aesthetic presence on Judiciary Square, giving it a scale comparable to nearby civic buildings.

Underground expansion: A new ceremonial courtroom, along with attorney and public workrooms are accommodated in an addition built below grade on the south side of the building. While preserving the integrity of the south facade, this approach is also cost-effective. It avoids substantial digging inside the foundation by expanding the building beneath the south portico and grand staircase between the east and west wings. Moreover, this configuration permits mechanical equipment to be located in the residual space between the existing foundation wall and the foundation of the new parking garage.

Restoration of historic rooms: The design fully restores one courtroom off the historic main entry hall and preserves one historic courtroom in the southeast wing of the existing building. A third historic room will be restored for use as a library. The existing lobby on the south side of the building, a two-story, skylit space in white marble, will be retained and restored.

Circulation and security: The design organizes the building's spaces so that public functions are grouped on the lower levels, and the more private and secure functions are located on the upper floors. The judges' circulation is completely secure. Their paths feed from two private elevators that extend from the basement level and parking to the third floor.

Upgraded infrastructure: While respecting and preserving the historic fabric of the Old D.C. Courthouse, the design accomplishes the complete replacement of lighting; windows; and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and installs new telecommunications and audiovisual systems.

Service corridor: A new loading dock and utility tunnel create a secure connection between the building and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, helping to unify the facilities around Judiciary Square while minimizing disruption of the landscape.

**Project Team,
Beyer Blinder Belle**

Hany Hassan, Partner in Charge

John Belle, Lead Designer

Larry Gutterman, Project Manager

James Shepherd, Project Architect

Project Team: Anita Ayerbe, Jeremy Derstine, Simone Elliot, Verónica

Estremadoyro, Chloe Hiyu, Steve Hopkins, Patrick Koby, Jennifer

Magathan, Lars Moestue, Stace Moye, Jorge Rodriguez, Spencer Sear,

Yolanda Somerville, Chris Wiley

###