

Civic

United States Courthouse

Location: Austin, Texas
Area: 252,000 sf
Architect: Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects



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The new United States Courthouse in Austin was designed under the General Service Administration's Design Excellence Program with rigorous security and blast resistance requirements. The building includes a special proceedings courtroom, three magistrate courtrooms, four district courtrooms, judges' chambers, U.S. Marshals Service offices and facilities, and supporting public spaces.

Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects devised an ingenious arrangement in which courtrooms are located in double-height spaces on alternate levels that interlock with adjacent, single-height floors. The scheme reduced floor area and resulted in an efficient cubic form, with the pattern of courtrooms expressed on the building exterior as zinc-clad boxes delineated by vertical slots in the limestone facade.

Renowned American artist Clifford Ross used a high-resolution photograph of the Texas Hill Country to design a 28' X 28' stained glass wall that is the focal point of the lobby.

"Surprises in the public areas - such as the stunning installation by Clifford Ross and peek-a-boo openings in the atrium - provide welcome relief to the stress associated with a day in court."

—Lawrence Connolly, AIA

Texas Architect

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