



John J. Moakley Courthouse

Contemporary
Architecture

1 Courthouse Way, Boston

**Pei Cobb Freed
& Partners**

United States
Federal Courthouse

Steel/Brick/Granite

10 Floors
675,000 sq. ft

1999

Greg McDonnell



The Architecture

The Courthouse was designed by Henry Cobb of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners and was completed in 1999. Named after the late John Joseph Moakley, a former U.S. Congressman and longtime Boston resident.

The Moakley Courthouse is comprised of eleven stories, ten above grade and one below, with a total floor area of 675,000 square feet. The primary cladding is water-struck brick with granite trim, as well as a large glass curtain wall on the eastern façade.

The building has won numerous design awards, including the Award of Merit from the American Institute of Architects in 1999 and the Federal Design Achievement Award from the National Endowment for the Arts.



Program

The John Joseph Moakley U. S. Courthouse serves as headquarters for the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts. Twenty-seven courtrooms are located here, two for the Court of Appeals and the remaining twenty-five belonging to the District Court. The interior courtrooms are distinguishable by frequent usage of large wooden arches, which are adorned with stenciled ornamentation. Other spaces include historical galleries and a daycare facility.



Public Art

The Boston Panels – A series of 21 color field paintings on aluminum by internationally renowned abstract artist, Ellsworth Kelly, serve as visual beacons at key locations in the courthouse building. Irregularly shaped, the angular forms accentuate architectural vistas. They are located at either end of the signature curved glass curtain wall and inside the central domed skylight.



Inscriptions – More than 30 carved inscriptions by John Benson, a noted stone carver, calligrapher and typographer, quote excerpts from important documents of U.S. legal history. The granite carvings are mounted along the exterior brick walls and inside the Moakley Courthouse. They are intended to “articulate the hopes—and the commitments—of our society.”



Public Park – The eastern façade of the Courthouse features an 88-foot tall, 372-foot long glass curtain wall that overlooks Boston Harbor and a 2.25-acre public park. HarborPark, also known as Fan Pier Park, offers a variety of spaces, such as the front lawn, hedges and trees, along with benches that provide scenic views of Boston Harbor and the skyline. Primarily a brick and cobblestone walkway, the promenade of the park extends from Northern Avenue, along the entire waterfront façade of the building, and onto Courthouse Way.