



Case Study 06

United States Courthouse

Boston MA

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brick and paver manufacturers**

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United States

Courthouse

The new Courthouse and Harborpark overlooking Boston Harbor is a uniquely American undertaking. The privileged location and striking design speaks volumes of the might of the legal system. By contrast, the accessibility and attraction of the 1.8 ha site – not forgetting the adjoining Harborpark's recreational facilities – reinforce that the law is of the people.

The L-shaped brick Courthouse envelops and contrasts with a conical steel and glass structure overlooking the waterfront. The 11 levels (ten above ground) of the 71,000 m² building enclose 27 courts, 40 judges' chambers, a law library and other legal services, a Congressman's office and a day care centre for employees' children. The Courthouse is constructed in loadbearing brickwork laid in American bond – better known in Australia as colonial bond or English garden wall bond – with six courses of stretcher bond followed by a header course tying the two leaves. The weathered face of the external brickwork is caused by water striking, a manufacturing process not used in Australia. Granite trims are employed in string-courses, lintels, sills and bases.

On the street side, the richly fenestrated facade respects and reinforces the historic character of the surrounding district. The arched entrance leads to the capacious top-lit Entrance Hall and thence to the Rotunda and Great Hall. Galleries on three double-height levels each service nine courtrooms arrayed along the arms of the building.

Durable and attractive face brickwork features throughout public circulation areas. The arched, half-domed courtroom entrances were instrumental in the project being one of the winners in the 1999 Brick in Architecture Awards.



and Harborpark

Face brickwork is used throughout the public circulation areas. According to Pei Cobb Freed “the choice of brick was motivated by several factors; durability, economy, contextual appropriateness, and finally, the capacity of fine brickwork to bespeak the same respect for tradition and craft that characterizes the operations of the federal judiciary.”

The complex covers almost half the site, the remainder being devoted to the public open space of the Harborpark. An arcaded loggia houses a café, information centre and excursion boat ticket office leading to a brick-paved promenade extending 260 m along the curved waterfront and providing panoramic views of downtown Boston.

The green space of the Harborpark comprises two interconnected areas, one formal, the other more casual. Extensive use is made of brick paving complemented by other durable materials such as granite and teak.

The Boston Courthouse and Harborpark was one of the winners in the 1999 Brick in Architecture Awards. The Awards Jury commended its “clear respect for America’s masonry tradition and craft” and commented that the “large building’s solidity and expression of mid-scale monumental forms such as true arches, arcaded walls, and half-domed entry spaces are enhanced by their composition of humanly scaled individual bricks.”

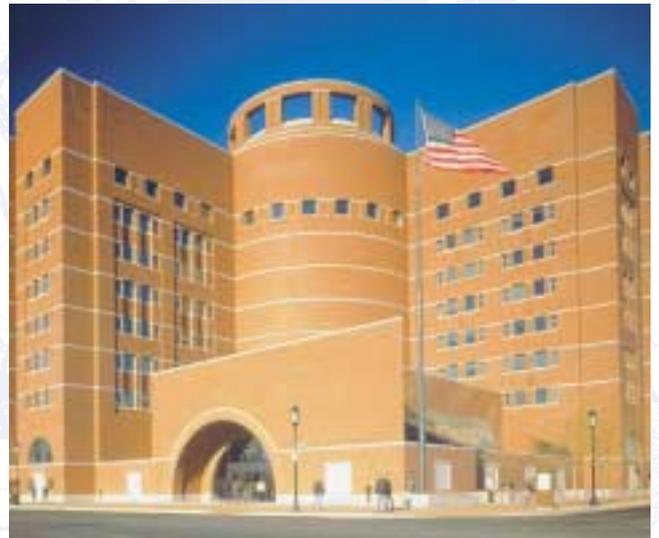
The United States Courthouse and Harborpark was dedicated in September 1998.



(Above) The massive arched loggia entrance draws visitors to tourism facilities and through to the brick-paved promenade.

(Right) A brick-paved footpath leads to the Courthouse’s arched main entrance. The eleven storey building houses 27 Federal courts serving the District of Massachusetts.

(Below) The 71,000 m² Courthouse shares the 1.8 ha site on Fan Pier with the Harborpark, a recreational facility. A brick-paved promenade traces the waterfront, offering breathtaking views of the Boston city skyline.



CLIENT:	US General Services Administration
ARCHITECT:	Pei Cobb Freed & Partners in association with Jung/Brannen Associates
BUILDER:	Clark Construction Group
BRICKLAYER:	Franco Inc
PROJECT COST:	US\$163 million
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Steve Rosenthal