

Courts Division - Historic Courthouse

The Historic Courthouse, located on the triangle at Newark's West Market Street, Springfield Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, originally opened in 1907. After years of neglect and disrepair, the building was re-dedicated on December 29, 2004, following a \$50 million restoration and renovation project.

The original architect for the Historic Courthouse was Cass Gilbert who also designed the world's first skyscraper, New York City's Woolworth Building, and the United States Supreme Court Building in our nation's capital.

When the Historic Courthouse first opened, it was described as "the finest public building in New Jersey." Today, critics agree that the Historic Courthouse is still "the most beautiful public building in New Jersey." In 2005, the National Trust for Historic Preservation bestowed its "National Preservation Honor Award" on the Historic Courthouse.

The marble-clad, Renaissance-style structure houses the Superior Court Civil Division and contains museum-quality murals, glorious marble sculptures and soaring Louis Comfort Tiffany-designed skylights. The Rotunda, one of the Historic Courthouse's most spectacular and breathtaking spaces, features massive stone piers ringed by staircases and stately corridors.

Many American and foreign artists and artisans worked on the Historic Courthouse's recent massive restoration under the direction of Ford, Farewell, Mills and Gatsch, architects of Princeton, Cobra Construction Company and Hall Construction Company of Wall, New Jersey.

The murals by American masters Edwin Howland Blashfield, Frank Millet, Howard Pyle, Will Low, Charles Yardley Turner, Kenyon Cox, Henry Oliver Walker and George Willoughby Maynard were painstakingly restored by restoration artists from Japan. Italian stonemasons renovated the Historic Courthouse's marble facing.

At the eastern end of the triangle, world-class sculptor Gutzon Borglund, who later carved four American presidents into Mount Rushmore, created a statue of Abraham Lincoln sitting on a bench on the steps of the Historic Courthouse.

Our mandate is to ensure a safe environment for the business of the Superior Court. However, we are also most cognizant of our responsibilities in preserving this unique work of art and in protecting our taxpayers' investment in the restoration project. To meet this objective, the Essex County Sheriff's Office has installed an extensive, state-of-the-art security and surveillance system at the Historic Courthouse.

In addition to X-ray machines and magnetometers at all entry points, officers at the Historic Courthouse's Command Center monitor activity via 56 surveillance cameras, positioned inside and outside the building. The Historic Courthouse is also equipped with electronic locks, motion detectors and trip alarm sensors.

The Essex County Historic Courthouse is a truly remarkable public building, fully restored to its former splendor. It is accessible to all who wish to gaze upon Essex County's glorious past or ponder our dynamic future.