

# Charity Hospital

## Issues with the Existing Facility

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The following summarizes the challenges faced by New Orleans to renovate the Charity Hospital for use as a state-of-the-art Courthouse.

### OBSTACLES

#### Structure:

A modern courthouse requires approximately 30-35' wide x 30' deep clear dimension inside the litigation area (Well) of the Courtroom. The current column spacing (22' wide x 20' deep) provides a clear dimension between columns of approximately 20'x 18'. Courtrooms will have a minimum of 2 columns and up to 4 columns in every courtroom.

Dimensions between floors are significantly less than 16 feet which is minimum recommended and required for contemporary courtrooms.

Removing structural columns to avoid visual blind spots would be prohibitively expensive and unrealistic. All remaining columns would have to be increased in diameter to carry the 50% - 100% increased loading, also creating serious impact in the foundation/footings at the base of the building. Transfer beams would be required making critical areas within the building difficult to use.

#### Circulation

Courthouses require 3 distinct and separate circulation systems:

1. Public corridors,
2. Restricted access corridors for Judges, jury, and staff members, and
3. In-custody circulation.

Because of the current building design it will not be possible to develop a floor plan layout to meet this criteria. A Civil Courthouse is potentially the most dangerous court due to the nature of proceedings. The renovated building is incapable to meeting this criteria.

#### Elevators and Exit Stairways

Existing elevators will be undersized , inadequate in quantity, and in the wrong locations for a new courthouse. Three new (3) separate and distinct elevator systems will be required. It will be necessary to cut openings in the existing floor structure for new elevator systems. Cutting new openings in the existing floor structure will further compromise the existing floor structural system.

Emergency exit stairways will be required to meet modern building life safety codes.

#### Hazardous Materials Mitigation

The age of the existing building indicates the very high probability that mitigation will be required for asbestos, led paint, etc.

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### **Mechanical, HVAC Systems**

Obviously all existing systems will be replaced. However, the size and location of floor penetrations will further negatively impact the existing structural system.

### **Security**

Two areas of concern: Internal and External.

Internally the potential lack of three (3) separate internal circulation systems cannot be acceptable under any circumstances.

Externally, the potential of threat of terrorism should not be discounted. Due to the hospital's close proximity to the street the building structure is at risk of progressive collapse.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

Having spent more than 30-years as a student of Justice architecture and the past 20-years focusing on courthouse planning and design I can state with total comfort that the Charity Courthouse is totally incapable of being converted to function as a courthouse. I could not with good conscience recommend that New Orleans consider investing and renovating the Charity Hospital for use as a Courthouse.

Even with unlimited source of funds and time it will still be a bad option.