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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

^{*}Milwaukee's Federal Building is a five-story structure, sturdy and picturesque, solidly built, handsomely detailed, and admirably maintained. Its granite walls--dark gray on the basement story, light gray above--rise to steeply pitched, intersecting hipped and gabled roofs of varying heights, and a massive tower crowns the facade (north elevation). In style the building is Richardsonian Romanesque, its design strongly reminiscent of H. H. Richardson's renowned Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh.

Interior spaces on first through fifth floors are arranged about a vast central arcade, surrounded by broad corridors and surmounted by an iron and glass skylight. The arcade is substantially as it was at the turn of the century, and so are adjacent public areas--corridors, stairhalls, and lobbies--having many-hued terrazzo and tile files, multi-colored marble panelling, wainscot, and door frames, panelled wood doors, and mosaic, wood-panelled, and plaster ceilings. Many of the 125 offices that the building originally contained have been remodelled as their uses have changed (alteration of the first floor area long occupied by the U.S. Post Office is under way at this writing). But, fortunately, one of the most impressive rooms remains essentially intact. This is Room 390, a judicial chamber two stories in height, with oak-panelled walls and ceiling and intricately carved oak trim. According to the local press, visiting attorneys have called it "the most distinctive courtroom in the United States."

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With the addition constructed on the south end of the original fabric during the 1930's, the Federal Building now fills the city block bounded by East Wisconsin Avenue and East Michigan, North Jackson, and North Jefferson Streets. Less ornamental in style, the eight-story addition is faced with granite matching the original and, in general, harmonizes with the 19th century edifice.



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Federal Building's chief area of significance is its architecture. A handsome and imposing building, it is quite likely the finest example of Richardsonian Romanesque design in the Milwaukee area. Perrinstates that "The architect...may have been James Knox Taylor, who designed and supervised the construction of many buildings for the Treasury Department during this period [1892-1899]."

Size, location, and function have made the Federal Building one of Milwaukee's most familiar landmarks. The massive granite edifice occupies a block-square site on the east side of the central business district. It was erected as the U. S. Post Office, Court House, and Custom House, and while the Main Post Office and Customs now have separate quarters, it still contains a postal sub-station and the Federal courts, together with the offices of Wisconsin's U. S. Senators; the Internal Revenue Service; F.B.I.; Secret Service; Bureaus of Indian Affairs, Labor and Statistics, and Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs; Selective Service; Immigration; Naturalization; and other agencies of the Federal Government.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES								
"Lifein CourtCan Be Beautif Picture Journal, 10-11.	ul," M	[i]	lwaukee	Journ	<u>al</u> , Ju	ly 23,	1967,	Sunday
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Perrin, Richard W. E., The Arch	itectu	re	e of Wi	sconsi	n, Mad	ison, 1	967, 9	96, 97.
Perrin, Richard W. E., Milwauke	e Land	ma	irks, M	ilwauk	ee, 19	68, 38-	39.	
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Milwaukee Landmarks Commission			<u></u>	<u></u>			u <u>ly 19</u>	72
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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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COUNTY
Milwaukee
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(Number all entries)

FEDERAL BUILDING

11. Donald N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historic Sites & Markers Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin July 17, 1972

816 State Street

Madison

Wisconsin

Code: 55

