

= Hudson County Courthouse =

The Hudson County Courthouse or Justice William J. Brennan Jr . Courthouse is located in Jersey City , Hudson County , New Jersey , United States . The six @-@ story structure was originally built between 1906 and 1910 at a cost of \$ 3 @,@ 328 @,@ 016 @.@ 56 . It is considered to be an outstanding example of the Beaux @-@ Arts architectural style in the United States .

The courthouse was used as the primary seat of government for Hudson County from its opening on September 20 , 1910 until the construction of the Hudson County Administration Building in 1966 . The courthouse was vacant for many years and was scheduled for demolition . The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places on August 25 , 1970 . Restoration began in the mid @-@ 1970s , and the building was reopened in 1985 . In 1984 , the Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders renamed the building in honor of Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan Jr . The restoration of the courthouse was acknowledged by a Victorian Society in America Preservation Award in 1988 .

As of 2013 the courthouse has seven working courtrooms and also houses the offices of the County Executive , the Hudson County Surrogate and the Hudson County Bar Association ; in the past it has been used in a number of television programs and movies , including scenes in the television series Law & Order , and for commercials .

= = Construction = =

The Courthouse was designed by Jersey City native Hugh Roberts , twice a president of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Institute of Architects . Roberts , brother @-@ in @-@ law of future United States Senator and New Jersey Governor Edward I. Edwards , received a direct appointment as architect . No competition or bidding for designs was held , causing controversy among local architects . The property on which the courthouse stands was obtained from fourteen separate property owners between 1905 and 1914 . The groundbreaking took place on March 21 , 1906 and the cornerstone was laid on December 12 , 1906 . Construction of the building was done by Wells Brothers of New York City and construction of the interiors and finishes were by John Gill & Son of Cleveland , Ohio .

The courthouse is constructed of granite quarried in Hallowell , Maine . The front of the building is visually dominated by four Corinthian columns and a frieze above the main entrance bearing the inscription " Precedent Makes Law ; If You Stand Well , Stand Still . "

= = Interiors = =

Roberts delegated the assignment of artwork to the muralist Francis David Millet , noted for his work as decorations director for the 1893 World 's Columbian Exposition in Chicago ; Millet assigned himself two lunettes on the third floor and a dozen small panels in the second floor corridors . Also on the third floor , Millet assigned two lunettes to Charles Yardley Turner , as well as eight more to Kenyon Cox . Cox also provided the groined ceilings . Edwin Blashfield painted the glass dome and the four pendentives between its supporting arches . The Tudor @-@ style legislative chamber of the Board of Freeholders on the second floor was adorned with murals by Howard Pyle depicting early life of the Dutch and English in New Jersey . This room has been called " one of the handsomest legislative chambers in the United States . "

David G. Lowe , writing in American Heritage magazine , described the interior of the building :
" The courthouse interior is a rush of color ? pearl gray and green @-@ veined marbles , golden light fixtures , yellow , green , and blue paint . Standing in the great central court , one looks up the three stories of the magnificent rotunda to a dome whose outer rim is painted with the signs of the zodiac and whose center is an eye of stained glass worthy of Tiffany . One feels ? as one does in the rotunda at the heart of the Capitol in Washington ? the dignity of government and the permanence of law . "

= = Restoration = =

Plans for restoring the courthouse had been proposed even before it fell into disuse . In 1961 , the architectural modelist Theodore Conrad proposed converting the building into a new city hall for Jersey City . The plan would have created a mall in front of the building and surrounded it with additional city buildings and a museum . Another proposal would house a branch of the New Jersey State Museum in the building . Conrad led a citizens group that lobbied for the preservation of the building , and got it listed on the National Register of Historic Places . The award @-@ winning restoration project resulted in the courthouse being reopened in 1985 for the use of the civil courts and other county offices .

= = Renaming = =

The Hudson County Board of Chosen Freeholders renamed the courthouse in 1984 in honor of Associate Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan , who had served in the building as Hudson County Assignment Judge from 1947 through 1951 . Following the 1989 Supreme Court decision in Texas v. Johnson , which Brennan authored , veterans groups petitioned unsuccessfully to have the name removed , but the Freeholders unanimously voted to retain the name .