



Administration

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MEMO

TO: County Commission

FROM: Robert W. Wilson

Date: December 22, 2023

Subject: IT Office Location Options & Secure Courtroom Construction Plans

At the Commission meeting on November 20th there was a Board discussion about planning for future county facility growth. One option that was presented and discussed includes the following elements:

1. Identify one or more suitable replacement locations within the Courthouse or Annex Building for the Cass County Information Technology Department. This will include identifying the most appropriate space, updates or remodel needed to meet the department's needs, and an estimated cost. The County will engage TL Stroh for this effort, as this firm has the most detailed understanding of the Courthouse and Annex Buildings.
2. Once step #1 is underway, County will engage Foss Architects to develop construction plans for a secure courtroom in the current Information Technology office location. Foss Architects has previously completed a courtroom conceptual design in this location.

This plan has been discussed and was recommended by the Cass County Building Committee. At the Commission meeting on January 2nd the Commission will consider proceeding with this option.

SUGGESTED MOTION: To engage TL Stroh to identify relocation options for the County Information Technology Department within the Courthouse or Annex Building to include needed updates/remodel and provide a cost estimate. Further, upon identification of an alternative IT Department location, to engage Foss Architects to develop construction plans for a secure courtroom in the existing IT office location.

September 28, 2023

Mr. Robert Wilson
Cass County Administrator
211 9th Street S
Fargo, ND 58103

Re: Cass County Courthouse Courtroom
Proof of Concept Study
Fargo, ND

Dear Mr. Wilson,

We have been requested to provide a proof of concept to remodel the existing IT office suite into a courtroom space.

Below is our understanding of the primary objectives

- Provide as large a courtroom space as possible.
- Provide separate secure connection to courtroom from judicial staff.
- Review limitations for ceiling heights within courtroom.
- Provide concept images.
- Review required egress.

In reviewing the existing conditions, we have come up with the following concept. (See attached plans and images)

1. Courtroom size is approx. 1,750 square feet (51'-0" x 33'-6")
 - a. Include vestibule and additional attorney/client spaces.
 - b. Judge bench platform only at 12" above main floor to minimize accessibility considerations.
2. Egress corridor to wrap west side of courtroom along exterior wall.
3. Secure hallway placed along north side of mechanical room.
4. Accessibility provided to all areas.

Design considerations (see also attached photos of existing spaces)

- A. Courtroom.
 - a. The courtroom is an assembly occupancy and would have a calculated occupancy of approx. 100
 - i. Assembly occupancies required two means of egress with 50 or more occupants.
 - ii. Assembly occupancies required door swing to be in the direction of travel with 50 or more occupants and have panic devices.
 - b. Exit access
 - i. Corridor/hallways are part of the exit access and should lead an occupant directly to an exit.
 1. Intervening spaces – Occupants shall not pass through a space or area unless it is accessory to one another and provide a discernable path.
 - a. The courtroom is not part of the exit access and should not be used as such since doors need to swing in direction of travel and this type of room is typically a secured space restricting entry.
 - c. Accessibility
 - i. Per ADAAG section 206.4 exception 1 and courtroom planning (ncsc.org), judges benches and other work areas do not need to be accessible initially, but must be readily adaptable in the future without major reconfiguration.
 - d. Room height
 - i. There appears to be adequate space to raise ceiling for the well space/bench area to be similar to existing courtroom on the level.

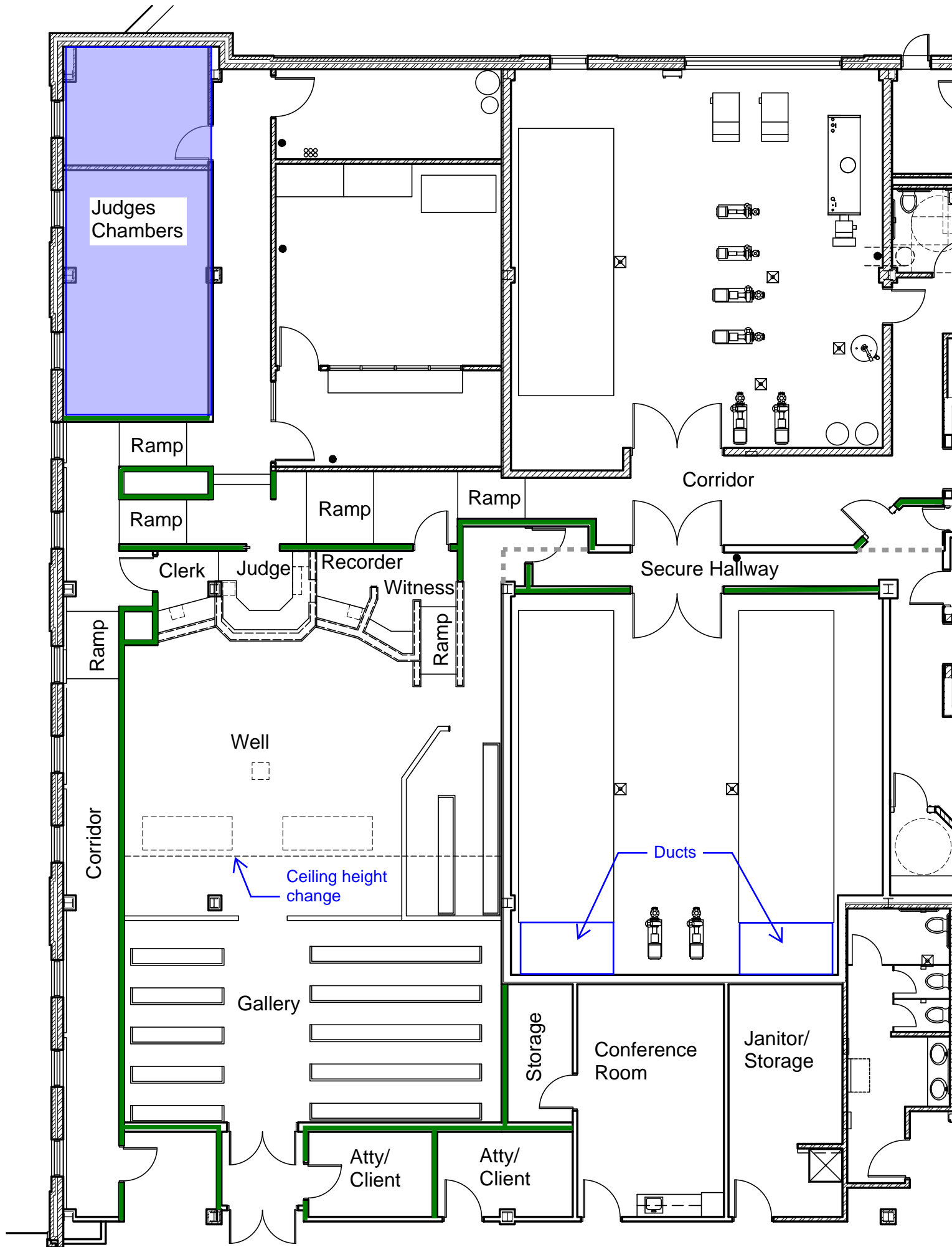
- ii. Larger ducts and piping are more difficult to modify and would restrict heights along the west and south sides of the courtroom.
- B. Mechanical room/Secure hallway
- a. Secure hallway restricts access to mechanical space.
 - i. Free egress (unsecured) from mechanical room must be considered
 - ii. Ducts and pumps along the south wall impedes adding egress without major reconfiguration and would impact existing conference room.
 - iii. Masonry walls around mechanical room need to be reconfigured which will be more challenging as these are currently constructed to the floor deck above (approx. 15' tall) and new ones would need to work around existing infrastructure.

Sincerely,

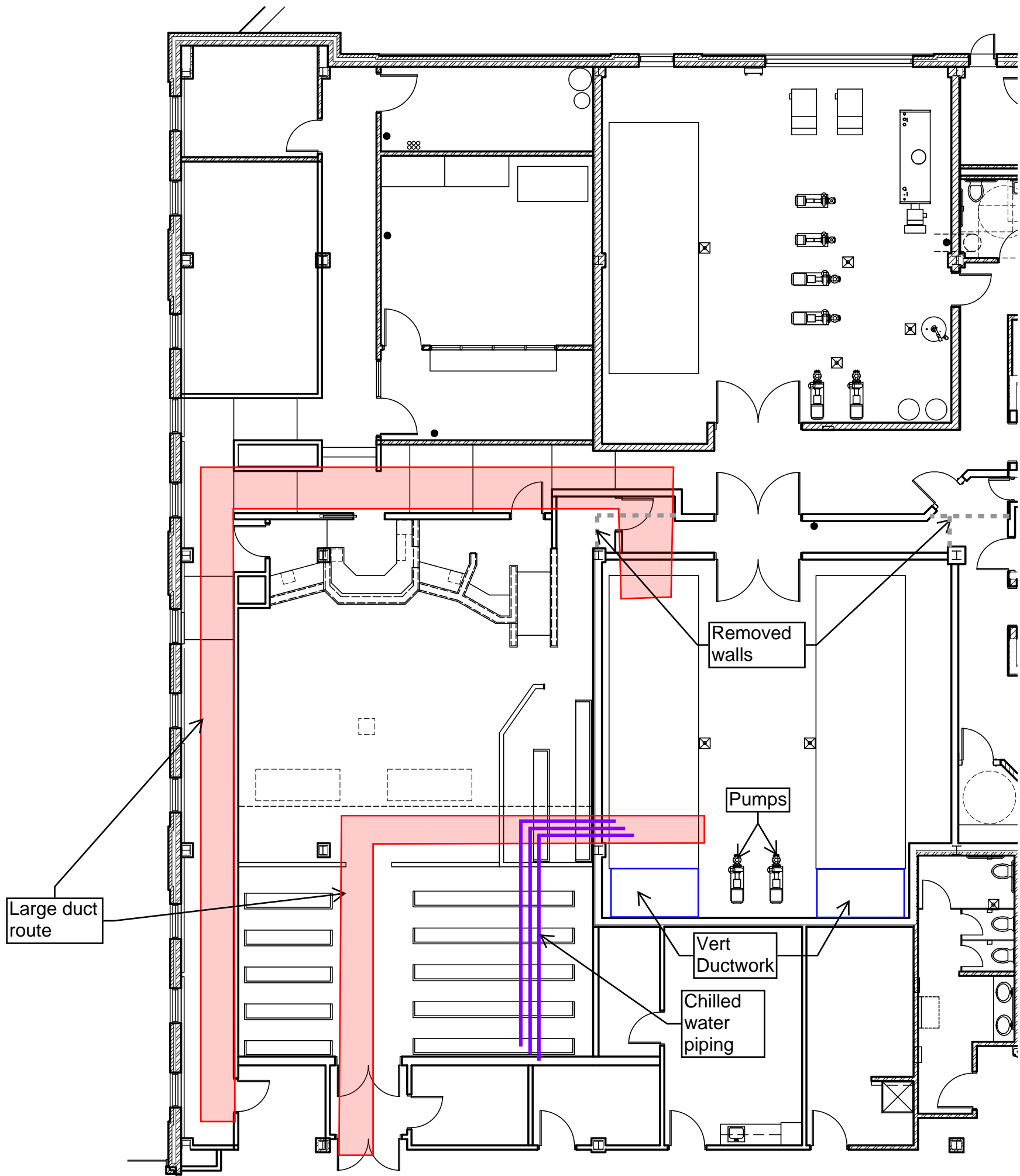


Steve Skoblik, AIA
Principal/Project Manager
Foss Architecture & Interiors

cc: File



Concept plan



Ceiling height restrictions



View from Judges bench



View from near witness stand



View from NW corner



View from entry door



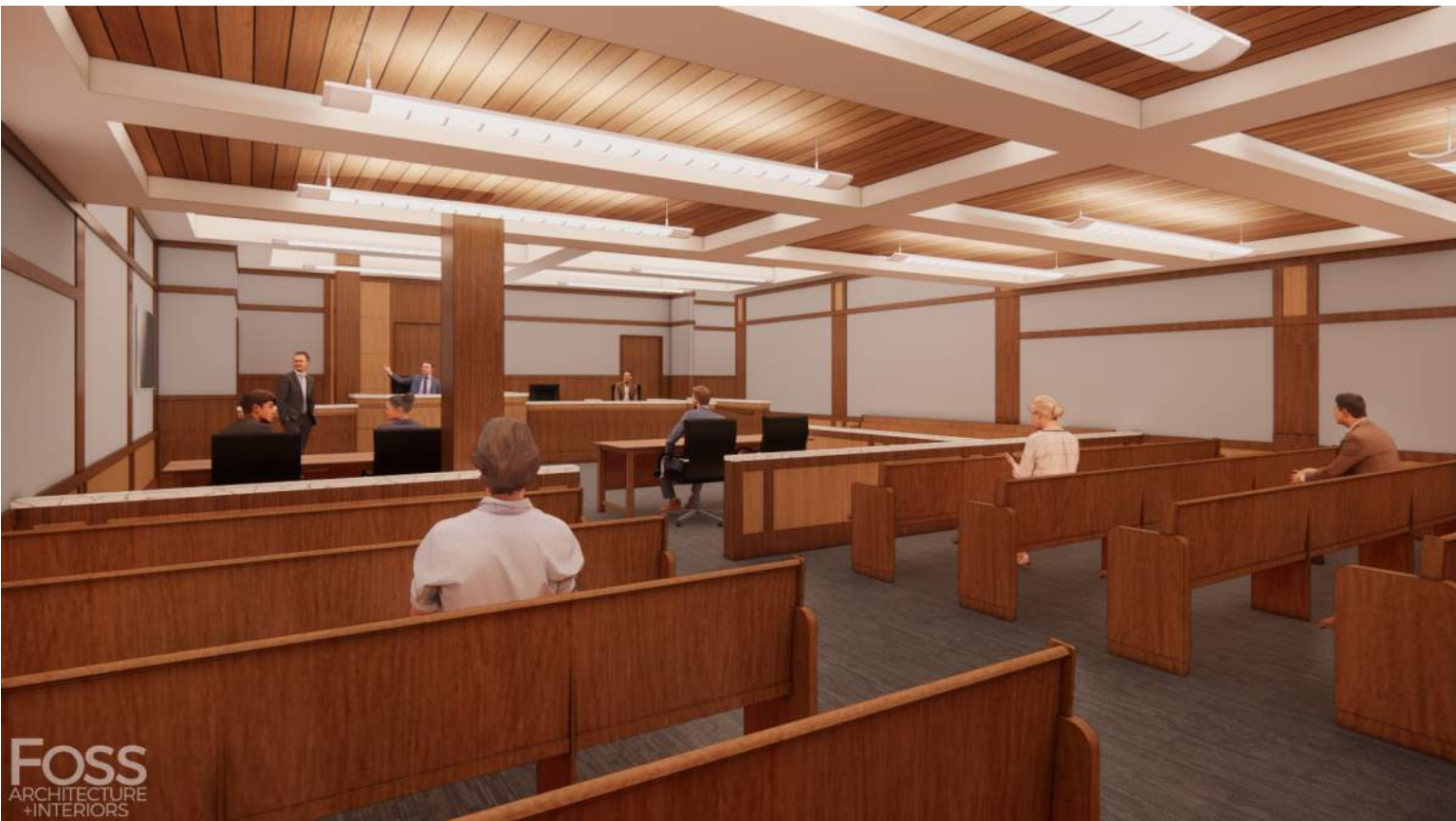
View from near tables in Well area



View from east gallery seating



View from west table



View from Gallery seating west side



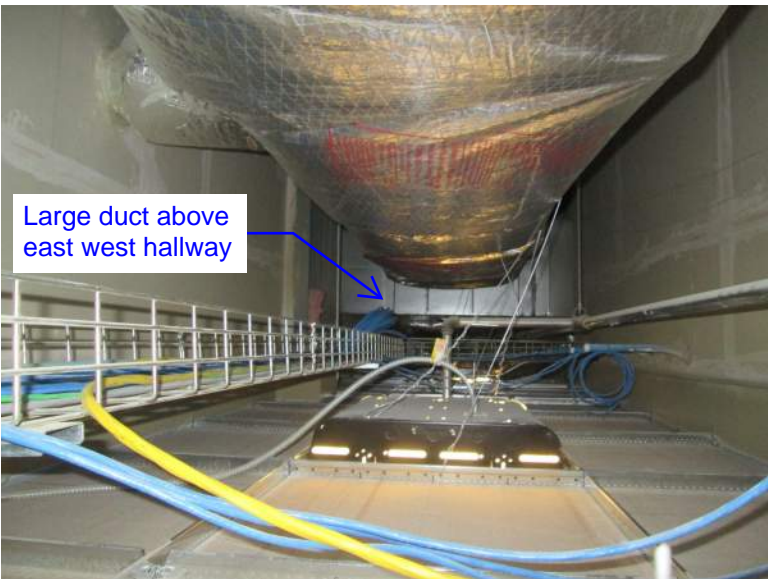
View from group seating



Ceiling space above IT workspace



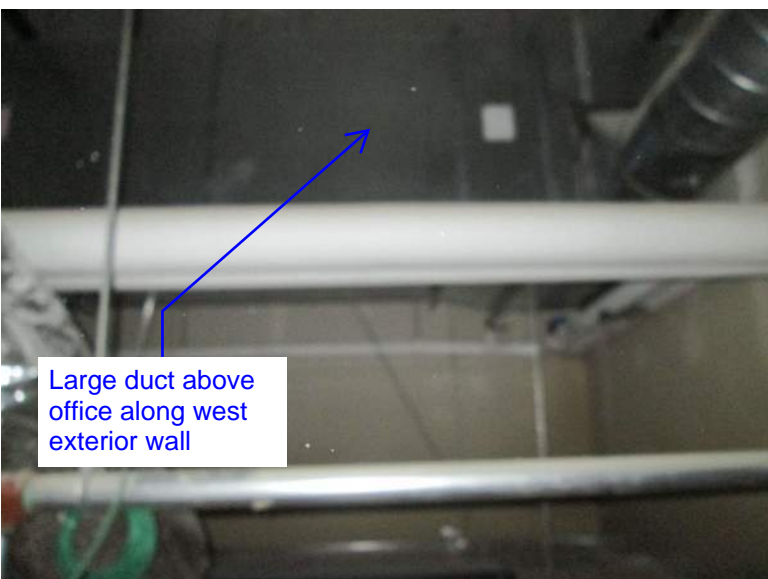
Ceiling space above IT workspace



Ceiling space above IT Hallway (N-S)



Ceiling space above IT Hallway (N-S)



Ceiling space above IT Offices



Chiller piping above IT cubicles



Ceiling space above IT cubicles



South wall mechanical room



South wall mechanical room @ pumps



South wall mechanical room



Chiller piping and large ducts through west wall mechanical room



North wall mechanical room @ proposed secure hallway



North wall mechanical room @ proposed secure hallway



Hallway looking west outside mechanical room



Hallway looking east outside mechanical room