1979

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

The Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House

Fifth Report

19 August 1980

Membership of the Committee

(31st Parliament)

Joint Chairmen

Senator the Hon. Sir Condor Laucke, KCMG,
President of the Senate
Rt Hon. Sir Billy Snedden, KCMG, QC, MP,
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Members

The Hon. R.J. Ellicott, QC, MP
Minister for Home Affairs and
Minister for the Capital Territory

Senator G.J. Evans (1)

Senator C.R. Maunsell (2)
Chairman of Committees in the Senate

Senator J.I. Melzer

Senator A.J. Missen

Senator the Hon. Justin O'Byrne

Senator R.W. Young

Mr J.W. Haslem, MP

Mr U.E. Innes, MP

Mr L.K. Johnson, MP

The Hon. P.J. Keating, MP

Mr B. Lloyd, MP

Mr B.D. Simon, MP

Clerk to the Committee
Mr D.M. Piper

(1) Senator Evans was appointed to the Committee on 22 August 1978 in place of Senator McIntosh.

(2) Senator Maunsell was appointed to the Committee on 31 May 1978 in place of Senator the Hon. T.C. Drake-Brockman, DFC.

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COMMITTEE REPORT

In its Fourth Report, presented to Parliament on 5 April 1979, the Joint Standing Committee reported on the preparation of the brief to be issued to competitors in the first stage of the competition to select a designer for the new and permanent Parliament House.

2. The Committee now submits this report on the competition and on the design submitted by the winning architect.

Design Competition - First Stage

3. The invitation for architects to register in the design competition was issued by the Parliament House Construction Authority on 7 April 1979. Architects registered in Australia, or who had applied for registration on or before 31 May 1979, were eligible to enter. When the registration period closed on 31 May 1979 a total of 961 architects had registered. Each registrant was issued with a Stage 1 *Competition Brief.*

4. The first stage submission period closed on 31 August 1979 with 329 entries being received. From these the Assessors chose 10 prize winners, 5 of whom were selected as finalists to proceed to the second stage of the competition.

Competition Brief

5. These finalists were issued with a Stage 2 Competition Brief which was essentially an elaboration of the information contained in the First Stage documents. The brief dealt with

- Competition Conditions
- Instructions to Competitors
- Design Issues
- Elements

6. The Design Issues section reiterated the important information contained in the Stage 1 documents and expanded on some facets in greater detail. The information in the Elements section was supplied or reviewed by many different user groups including the Parliamentary departments, representatives of the Executive Government, media representatives and Government departments.

7. The Stage 2 Brief was approved by the Committee on 22 August 1979 as an accurate statement of Parliament's accommodation requirements in respect to area allocations and functional arrangements.

Design Competition - Second Stage

8. The Competition Conditions provided for appointment of a Competition Steering Committee to discuss functional aspects of the Brief with the finalists and to advise the Assessors on the functional efficiency of the designs finally submitted. The Steering Committee consisted of 4 members of the Joint Standing Committee, 2 members of the Parliament House Construction Authority and 2 Ministers. Membership was as follows :

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Senator the Hon. Sir Condor Laucke, KCMG
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Rt Hon. Sir Billy Snedden, KCMG, QC, MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Members

Sir Bernard Callinan, CBE, DSO, MC
Chairman, Parliament House Construction Authority
Senator the Honourable J.L. Carrick
Minister for National Development and Energy
(to 2 June 1980)
Senator the Hon. F.M. Chaney
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
(from 3 June 1980)
Mr L.K. Johnson, MP
Mr N.H. Macphillamy
Member, Parliament House Construction Authority
Hon. R.I. Viner, MP
Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs
Senator H.W. Young

9. During November 1979 the finalists were brought to Canberra for briefings by the Parliament House Construction Authority, National Capital Development Commission and Competition Steering Committee. The Steering Committee clarified functional aspects of the Parliament building with the finalists as a group and then with each finalist separately. Finalists were also able to discuss accommodation requirements with senior officers of the Parliament.

10. Your Committee is satisfied that, through the competition documents, written answers to specific questions submitted by competitors, and the oral briefings, the finalists were given accurate and comprehensive information about Parliament, its accommodation requirements and those of the Executive Government, the media and the public in the new building.

Second Stage Assessment

11. The Second Stage submission period closed on 23 May 1980. Following receipt of submissions and prior to adjudication by the Assessors, the Competition Steering Committee carried out a detailed assessment of the functional efficiency of each design. The Steering Committee made its assessment on that part of the submission material specified in the Competition Conditions.

12. In carrying out this functional check the Steering Committee was assisted by advisers drawn from the Parliamentary departments, Government departments and the *Parliamentary Press Gallery*. On 11 June 1980 the Steering Committee agreed to a written report to be submitted to the Assessors. The report dealt separately with each scheme. It provided a summary statement on functional efficiency and detailed comments arranged under a standard set of headings.

13. The Steering Committee report related only to the functional aspects of each design. Responsibility for selecting the winning design remained with the Assessors.

14. Your Committee believes that the two stage architectural design competition was the most appropriate method by which to select a designer for the new Parliament House. The Committee also believes that the provision for discussion between the finalists and the client, represented by the Competition Steering Committee, and the carrying out of a functional check as part of the assessment process were correct and adequate steps to ensure that Parliament's accommodation needs were properly identified and explained during the competition process.

The Winner's Design

15. The Committee has examined the design submitted by the winning architect. Our consideration has embraced the model, floor plans, perspective drawings, the architect's explanatory report, the Assessor's final report and the report by the Construction Authority on the scheme.

16. The Committee notes that the plan is clearly and simply organised into three zones across the site. The two outer zones contain Senate Chamber and Senators on one side, House of Representatives Chamber and Members on the other. The central zone accommodates public facilities, refreshment rooms and Hansard above the main entry, and Library, committees, and Executive Government on the other side of the Member's Hall.

17. Accommodation is on three levels resulting in long horizontal travel. However, with the exception of housekeeping facilities, vertical travel never exceeds two floors. The scheme makes satisfactory provision for the various elements specified in the brief with the main elements - Chambers, Senators' and Members' suites, committee rooms, Executive Government, Opposition executive and the media - rationally arranged in clearly defined areas. The Committee believes that the critical functional requirements of the building have been resolved in the design.

18. The Committee is pleased that the scheme encourages public access and involvement in the building. We note that the design also provides a clear separation of public and general circulation systems.

19. The requirement for flexibility and expansion has been satisfactorily allowed for in the design. It should be possible for the building to cater for demands created by future growth and change.

20. The Committee believes that the winner has been able to identify and handle in a sensible way the complex design issues involved. The scheme is simple yet sound. Its functional arrangement will allow all users to operate efficiently.

21. The Committee has noted and agrees with the comments on functional efficiency contained in the reports of the Assessors and the Construction Authority. We also note that the Competition Steering Committee reported that this scheme "stands out in functional efficiency". They judged it to be superior in this respect to the schemes of the other finalists. We are satisfied that, in developing the final sketch plans, the architect will be able to resolve the problems identified in the reports without detracting from the strengths of the scheme. As the representative of the client, in this case the Parliament, the Joint Standing Committee will have a continuing and important role during development of the design.

22. Your Committee strongly supports the decision of the Assessors. We believe that the scheme will provide Australia with a fine Parliament House which will serve for centuries - a building which all Australians should be able to share with national pride.

Estimated cost

23. The Committee notes that, following announcement of the competition winner, the Parliament House Construction Authority held detailed discussions with its project and cost consultants, the winning architect and his quantity surveyor in order to prepare a realistic estimate of the cost of building the winner's design concept.

24. When the Government announced in November 1978 that the new Parliament House project would proceed, the estimate at May 1978 prices was $151 million for a notional building with a usable floor area of 58 000 m^2. In the second stage design brief the usable floor area was increased after further examination of user requirements to 60 294 m^2 The estimate now submitted for the winner's design concept which has 69 000 m^2 of usable floor area is $220 million at May 1978 prices.

25. The Committee has examined the basis on which the revised estimate was prepared. We were concerned to establish the reasons for the difference between the winner's cost estimate and the revised estimate as well as the factors which led to the increase in cost above the original budget.

26. As part of their deliberations, the Assessors obtained an independent check on the cost estimate of each of the designs submitted in the second stage. Because of time constraints imposed by the competition, the Assessors asked for only a comparative analysis of the five designs to be undertaken. This analysis showed that all entries appeared to be under-estimated but the design ultimately selected was cheaper than the other four finalists and markedly cheaper than most.

27. In their Final Report the Assessors stressed that many of the elements of the winner's estimate -

> are subject to detailed confirmation, and it may be that on further investigation and analysis, in consultation with the architect, there will prove to have been some areas of under-estimation. Balanced against this it must be noted that several significant 'optional' features of the design - for example its location of most parking spaces underground - represent excellent value for money.

28. The Assessors reported that it was -

> impossible to be more precise in costing at this stage of the evolution of the design of the building. It will now be necessary for the Parliament House Construction Authority to be sure that the winning architect and the Authority cost consultant confer as soon as possible on the cost elements.

29. As a result of the detailed investigation subsequently carried out by the Construction Authority in consultation with the architect and his quantity surveyor it emerged that the winner's estimate of $156.4 million was substantially lower than the probable final cost of $220 million. The main reason for the variation appears to have been the lack of time for the architect's design team - a problem shared in common by all finalists - to fully and accurately quantify all materials involved and determine the building rates applicable. This problem was compounded for architects based overseas.

30. In respect to the difference between the original estimate of $151 million for a notional building and the revised figure of $220 million a major factor is the increase in usable floor area above that set out in the stage two brief.

31. The brief was interpreted by the competitors as a statement of the minimum requirements of Parliament and it would be difficult for any design to provide the exact area requirements and satisfy all the desired functional relationships within an acceptable architectural concept. None of the finalists was able to restrict the usable floor area of his design to 60 294 m^2 as finally briefed. The winner's design provides approximately 8 700 m^2 above the brief, which was the mean of the five finalists.

32. We note that the significant area increases are devoted to public spaces and common facilities. The personal facilities of Senators, Members and the Executive Government have not been increased in area.

33. The winner did not apply a general increase to all areas but arranged the design so that the increases in area will permit future expansion without major changes in design concept. An additional 800 m^2 has been provided for public and other refreshment and dining facilities in the central spine. Because of the location of the refreshment areas, the architect considers that the increases are unavoidable if future expansion is to be accommodated. This has been confirmed by a separate study commissioned by the Authority since the completion of the second stage brief.

34. Additional area of 2 700 m^2 has been provided in the central circulation spaces at the Chamber and Gallery levels. The winning architect used the central area as a major feature of the design requiring larger and more balanced volumes of space at both public and non-public levels.

35. An additional 2 500 m^2 has been provided for future expansion in areas in the basement such as loading docks. These would be very difficult to expand when the building is completed.

36. The other significant increase in area is to provide internal circulation spaces within the various components of the building. The areas shown in the second stage competition document provided inadequate space for circulation and the architect considers that it is necessary to include aditional space if the design is to be viable in this respect. This represents approximately 2 500 m^2 of increased area.

37. Therefore, while the briefed area of 60 294 m^2 represents the basic needs of the Parliament, the Committee believes that the area increases proposed by the architect are desirable, form an intrinsic element of his concept and should be accepted. Acceptance of the area changes involves a cost increase of $29 million.

38. As indicated by the Assessors almost all of the parking requirements of the building together with plant rooms and access corridors are now contained in underground structures. This leads to an increase in cost of $18 million.

39. Since most of the increased usable area occurs in spaces provided for public areas and ceremonial purposes, a larger proportion of the building requires a higher standard of finish commensurate with its national function. As a result, an additional $5 million is estimated to be necessary.

40. The whole concept of the winner's design, and indeed one of the most universally acclaimed features, is the integration of the building with Capital Hill rather than its monumental dominance of it. This concept requires far more substantial excavation and reinstatement of the site than was envisaged in the original design brief. It is estimated that this will lead to an increase in cost of $13 million and we regard this as largely unavoidable if the integrity of the design is to be preserved.

41. The Committee notes that energy saving devices have been incorporated in the scheme and agrees that this is a desirable feature. We recognise that whilst this will lead to a saving in annual operating costs for the building such provision leads to an increased initial capital expenditure of $4 million.

42. A crucial factor in determining the gross or total area of a building is the efficiency factor which is the ratio of usable to gross area in the design. The original estimate of $151 million assumed a notional building with an efficiency factor of 72.5% The winner's design has an efficiency factor of 53.50% (discounting the allowance for underground car parking). Although considerably below the original estimate of efficiency, this compares very favourably with major institutional buildings such as the Gallery, Library and High Court, and is not out of scale with economic standard hospitals such as Westmead Hospital, which has an efficiency factor of 56%. We have been advised that it is also better than the schemes of the other four finalists.

43. The winner's design is a brilliant concept, is functionally very efficient, has a simple but commanding symbolism, and is in harmony with Burley Griffin's design philosophy for Canberra. Each of the cost increases which we have referred to contributes to the overall concept and individually can be fully justified.

44. The Committee believes that the increased area does not represent inefficient design but has been included to enhance the public and ceremonial spaces. In other cases area increases are a recognition that adequate arrangements should be made for future expansion of those parts of the building where additions cannot be made without destroying the basic concept. The Committee considers that it is vitally important that the basic design concept be maintained and therefore recommends that the area increases be accepted at this stage.

45. The Committee agrees with the Assessors and the Authority that the location of most car parking underground represents excellent value for money. The landscape concept could not be adequately achieved if there were large areas of surface parking.

46. Much of the public support which has been expressed for this design has resulted from the landscape solution which has been selected. In order to fully realise the potential of this concept it will be necessary to landscape the whole of the area within the inner ring road. The Committee accepts that the additional expenditure on site works and landscaping is justified in order to properly achieve the architect's design concept.

47. Your Committee recognises the difficulties involved in formulating an accurate final building cost estimate for a design concept submitted as part of an architectural competition. We have noted the Assessors' comments on the estimate for the winner's design and have considered the information prepared by the Authority following detailed examination of the design.

48. The Committee accepts the estimate of $220 million submitted by the Authority as a realistic cost for construction of the winner's concept. The factors involved in the cost increase over the original estimate are understandable and reasonable. They should be accepted as part of the total project.

49. One of the central characteristics of the winning design is the entirely conventional character of the building materials and techniques proposed to be employed. No fundamental design or construction problems remain to be resolved.

Recommendation

50. Your Committee recommends that Parliament accepts the design concept selected by the Assessors and gives the necessary authority to proceed under the terms of the Parliament House Construction Authority Act 1979 and the Parliament Act 1974.

(CONDOR L. LAUCKE)
President of the Senate

(B.M. SNEDDEN)
Speaker of the House of Representatives

JOINT CHAIRMEN

19 August 1980