



*Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*

## REPORT

relating to the proposed

# CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CHANCERY, GENEVA.

(Twentieth Report of 1995)

**The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia**  
**Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works**

Report relating

to the proposed

**Construction of new chancery, Geneva**

(Twentieth Report of 1995)

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**MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC WORKS**

(Thirty-First Committee)

Mr Colin Hollis MP (Chair)  
Senator Paul Henry Calvert (Vice-Chair)

**Senate**

**House of Representatives**

Senator Bryant Robert Burns	Mr John Neil Andrew MP
Senator Shayne Michael Murphy*	Mr Raymond Allen Braithwaite MP
	Mr Russell Neville Gorman MP
	Mr Robert George Halverson OBE MP
	Hon. Benjamin Charles Humphreys MP

\*Replaced Senator John Devereux on 10 February 1995

**SECTIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF NEW  
CHANCERY, GENEVA**

Mr Colin Hollis MP (Chair)  
Senator Paul Calvert (Vice-Chair)  
The Hon. Benjamin Charles Humphreys MP  
Senator Bryant Burns

Committee Secretary:	Peter Roberts
Inquiry Secretary:	Michael Fetter
Secretarial Support:	Belynda Zolotto Suzanne Stanfield

EXTRACT FROM THE  
VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

No. 152 dated Thursday, 29 June 1995

17 **PUBLIC WORKS – PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE –  
REFERENCE OF WORK – CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CHANCERY,  
GENEVA**

Mr Walker (Minister for Administrative Services), pursuant to notice, moved – That, in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Construction of new chancery, Geneva.

Question – put and passed.

## **PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS**

### **CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CHANCERY, GENEVA**

On 29 June 1995 the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report to Parliament the proposed construction of a new chancery at Geneva, Switzerland.

#### **THE REFERENCE**

1. The reference comprises the construction of office accommodation to replace inadequate office accommodation of the Australian Mission in Geneva which includes representation for the UN, GATT, World Trade Organisation (WTO), disarmament and the environment. The Australian permanent mission is required to vacate its current leased premises by March 1999.

#### **THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION**

2. A Sectional Committee comprising Mr C Hollis MP (Chair), Senator P Calvert (Vice-Chair), the Hon. B Humphreys MP and Senator B Burns was appointed to undertake the inquiry.

3. The Sectional Committee received a submission and drawings from the Overseas Property Group (OPG) and took evidence from representatives of the OPG at a public hearing held at Parliament House, Canberra, on 13 September 1995.

4. The Sectional Committee also received written submissions and took evidence from the following:

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- His Excellency Mr Graham Fortune, High Commissioner for New Zealand
- Community and Public Sector Union.



5. Written submissions about the proposed work were also received from:

- Commonwealth Fire Board
- Integrated Lighting Controls
- Energy Conservation Systems.

6. On 27 July 1995, as part of a private visit to Geneva, the Chair inspected the existing chancery and the site proposed for the new chancery. Prior to the public hearing the Sectional Committee viewed a video of the site on which the proposed new chancery is to be constructed. However, the Committee again draws attention to its inability to travel overseas to inspect existing premises, proposed sites and to have discussions with planners, designers and staff. The Committee regards this as a completely unsatisfactory situation.

7. A list of witnesses who appeared before the Sectional Committee at the public hearing is at Appendix A. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence.

## BACKGROUND

### Geneva -- a meeting place

8. Switzerland is a small landlocked country of 41 293km<sup>2</sup> (about two-thirds the size of Tasmania) surrounded by France, Germany, Austria and Italy. It lies within an area bounded by the Jura Mountains, the Rhine and the Alps. The capital of Switzerland is Berne. Geneva, which is located in southwestern Switzerland, at the western end of Lake Geneva where the Rhone River leaves the lake, is the capital of the Canton of Geneva. The Canton of Geneva is surrounded on three sides by France.

9. Swiss neutrality prevents participation in political and military alliances and because of its location and accessibility, Geneva has for many decades provided a neutral meeting place for other nations. With its metropolitan population of nearly 377 000, it is the centre of more inter-governmental activity than any other city in the world. The diplomatic community exceeds 22 000. More than 100 international governmental and non-government agencies have their headquarters or major offices in Geneva. The same number of nations maintain permanent missions in the city.

10. The main focus of international activity is the Palace of Nations, where the United Nations European Office is housed. Geneva is the home of five specialised agencies which are part of the UN:

- International Labour Organisation
- World Health Organisation
- International Telecommunications Union
- World Meteorological Organisation
- World Intellectual Property Organisation.

11. Several major UN bodies also have their headquarters in Geneva:

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- Conference on Disarmament
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

12. The GATT/WTO, which are not part of the UN, are also located in Geneva.

13. Geneva is also the international headquarters of a number of major non-government organisations, the main ones being:

- International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- World Council of Churches
- International Organisation for Migration
- World Scout Bureau
- Inter-Parliamentary Union.

### **Australian representation**

14. Australia is represented by four separate missions in Geneva:

- United Nations
- Environment
- GATT/WTO
- Disarmament.

15. The four missions are represented by three ambassadors – the Ambassador for the Permanent Mission to the Office of the United Nations is also the Ambassador for the Environment.

### **United Nations**

16. Australia's Ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva manages Australia's participation in the work of the UN and its specialised agencies. The principal functions of the Ambassador include:

- advancing Australia's international interests by participating in international meetings, in particular those relating to human rights, humanitarian relief and refugees
- providing policy advice to the Government on Australia's multilateral interests
- representing the Government in multilateral and bilateral meetings on UN matters
- responsibility for Australia's relations with the following UN specialised agencies:
  - ▶ International Labour Organisation
  - ▶ International Telecommunications Union
  - ▶ World Health Organisation

- ▶ World Intellectual Property Organisation
- ▶ World Meteorological Organisation

- responsibility for managing Australia's involvement in UN economic and social fields.

### **Ambassador for the Environment**

17. Australia's permanent representative to the UN also fulfils the role of Ambassador for the Environment, the principal functions of which are:

- lead Australian delegations and represent Australia at bilateral and multilateral conferences and negotiations
- keep the Australian government informed and offer advice on international environmental developments and policy
- promote the government's policies on matters affecting the global environment
- maintain liaison with non-government organisations in Australia and overseas.

18. The Australian Ambassador is supported by one Australia-based officer employed full time on environmental issues. The office draws on the support and other resources of the UN Mission.

### **Permanent Mission to GATT/WTO**

19. The Geneva GATT mission is the focal point of Australian multilateral trade policy representation. The recently concluded Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, which lasted for more than six years, were undertaken by the mission with support from Canberra. DFAT advised the Committee that the post-Uruguay Round multilateral trading system will be more complex and the mission will be involved in arrangements being implemented for the establishment and operation of the WTO. The mission's work program, which has undergone substantial expansion since the end of the Uruguay Round negotiations, will include:

- ensuring that Australia's interests are identified and effectively pursued in the residual activities of the GATT
  - furthering specific Australian GATT/WTO interests such as the effectiveness of the dispute settlement system, compliance with the provision of the WTO agreements and implementation of Uruguay Round commitments
  - closely monitoring accessions in relation to the strengthening of multilateral rules and in seeking improved market access for Australia
  - participation in debate on new multilateral trade issues such as regionalism, trade and environment, labour, culture, competition policy and investment.
20. In addition to GATT/WTO responsibilities, the mission's responsibilities will also focus on:
- maintaining and strengthening the commitment of the Cairns Group of countries of agricultural traders to ongoing reform
  - encouraging the development in UNCTAD and the United Nations Economic and Social Council, including building up their analytical capacities.

#### **Disarmament**

21. The Geneva disarmament mission focuses primarily on multilateral activity relevant to Australia's security interests, particularly in limiting proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and on underpinning cooperative security approaches in our region.
22. The mission represents and advises the government on the range of security issues involving arms control and disarmament. This involves pursuing Australia's interests in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, the foremost international forum for the negotiation of legally-binding multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements. DFAT believes the Australian delegation, despite comparatively modest resources, has achieved an impressive profile as an influential player in the sphere of multilateral arms control and disarmament.

#### **Staffing**

23. Existing staff currently comprises 27 Australia-based and 20 locally engaged staff. The distribution amongst the four missions is as follows:
- United Nations - Ambassador and 12 A-based, 20 locally engaged
  - Environment - One A-based
  - GATT/WTO - Ambassador and seven A-based
  - Disarmament - Ambassador and three A-based staff.

24. The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs has two officers and the Department of Industrial Relations has one officer permanently based in Geneva.

#### **THE NEED**

##### **Existing facilities**

25. The existing chancery services the requirements of the Australian Government presence in Geneva – UN, GATT (WTO), Disarmament and Environment, in addition to normal consular functions. The chancery is housed in leased premises constructed in 1963 as an apartment block which has been occupied by Australia since 1966. In 1990 the landlord refused to renew the lease beyond 1992. A conciliatory court decision was reached in late 1991 which provided the Commonwealth with a once only lease extension until March 1999.

26. The needs of the Australian mission to Switzerland have changed substantially since 1966, and while modifications have been made, access, services, layout, facilities and space are deficient. The configuration of the current building does not allow effective security solutions. Conference and secretariat functions are difficult due to poor office and carparking arrangements. The needs of short term team visits are difficult to meet. In summary, the existing chancery was not planned to cater for the present staffing levels and the current functions of the various Australian missions.

## Alternatives considered

27. The existing chancery lease terminates in March 1999 and OPG investigated the practicalities and cost of refurbishment, or relocation to available space in the existing building. OPG believes this alternative would not overcome deficiencies in office accommodation.

28. Another alternative, involving relocating to leased premises was considered not to be cost effective; the cost of leasing suitable premises would be very high. OPG advised the Committee that an economic and life cycle analysis of options clearly indicated that constructing a new chancery on a new site, is the most advantageous and economic course of action. For these reasons, the construction of a purpose designed building is considered to be the only acceptable solution and it was on that basis that OPG acquired freehold title to a property on which it is now proposed to construct a new Australian chancery.

## Committee's Conclusions

29. The Australian chancery in Geneva comprises leased premises which are deficient in access, services, layout and space. The lease will expire in March 1999 and will not be renewed. There is a need for a new chancery building to be constructed for Australia's permanent missions in Geneva.

## THE PROPOSAL

### Scope

30. The proposed works comprises:

- construction of a three storey purpose designed chancery, and a two storey annex for lease to the New Zealand Permanent Mission
- the construction of a conference centre
- staff and visitor carparking
- associated site works and services, and landscaping.

## Location and site description

31. The proposed new chancery is to be sited on Commonwealth owned land at the intersection of Chemin des Fins and Chemin Moise-Duboule in the Le Petit Saconnex area, is approximately 500 metres from the existing chancery. The new site, which cost the Commonwealth 2.45m Swiss francs, was purchased in December 1994, and is close to several other foreign missions. It is almost rectangular in shape, having an 86 metre frontage to Chemin des Fins to the west and a 29 metre return frontage to Chemin Moise-DuBoule to the south. The north and east boundaries abut other properties. The area of the site is 2 919m<sup>2</sup>.

32. The area is only moderately developed and the site has not been previously developed for administrative or commercial use. The site is vacant and is currently covered with grass and several isolated trees. The Committee was advised that a geotechnical survey had been carried out which revealed no contamination. The site slopes gently towards the south with a fall of approximately 2.5 metres.

33. Vehicular access to the site is only available from Chemin Des Fins. A bus stop is located within three minutes walking distance and a significant number of Australia-based staff are accommodated within walking distance of the site.

## Zoning and approvals

34. The general surrounding area is predominantly residential land use. The local cantonal authority has approved the change of use of the Commonwealth site from residential to administrative land use. Planning and zoning regulations do not impose any major design restrictions and the site is zoned "Public Buildings - Embassies".

## Planning and design

35. The architectural treatment attempts to project Australia as a progressive, modern and dynamic nation – a low scale building with the two chanceries separated by an impressive landscaped courtyard. This, the design team believes, will be symbolic of Australia; rather than being a monolithic structure, the chancery complex will evince space and greenery.

36. The chancery has been designed to accommodate existing staff numbers. The design caters for future expansion, and will be able to meet the short-term requirements of large numbers of official visitors attending meetings and conferences at the mission or elsewhere in Geneva.

37. The chancery is located centrally on the site with office carparking below the building and additional ground level parking at the front of the site for visitors. Vehicular access is available to all service areas associated with the building. There will be 41 carparking spaces, 30 in the basement and 11 above ground for visitors. The basement carpark will have capacity to be expanded by 25 spaces through the provision of mechanical stacking devices. OPG advised that the construction cost for the provision of parking bays is \$930 000, which allows for the construction of 30 vehicle bays at a unit cost of \$31 000.

38. The chancery building design will cater for the multilateral activities of the post. In addition, appropriate areas are available for support functions, secure communication, service areas, meeting/conference facilities, storage, plant and carparking.

39. The office design is based on the concept of clear separation between public and office areas and between secure and less secure areas.

40. The building will house a conference/business centre which, while part of the main structure, will be a discrete facility with separate access. The centre will comprise a large conference room, a caucus room, a small business centre and kitchen/w.c. facilities. Provision of the conference centre is an integral part of the design and its inclusion has been discussed with local authorities which have raised no objections. The conference centre will be available for use by Australian-based organisations, for example, Austrade.

41. The building design includes an entry road and a porte-cochere to provide a drop-off facility protected from the weather.

42. Attention has been given to ensuring the building, both in general form and detail, provides a pleasant environment in which to work and conduct business.

43. The staff amenities area comprises a common room, kitchen, servery and storage space.

44. The site will be fully landscaped with trees and shrubs and will have suitable surface treatment for access and recreation.

45. Building height, plot ratios and building setback requirements of the local planning authorities have been incorporated in the proposal and all known conditions have been met.

#### Adequacy

46. The Committee questioned DFAT they plan to increase staffing levels, and about the possibility of further Australian missions being opened in Geneva. DFAT advised the Committee that there are currently no plans to provide additional staff. In relation to additional Australian missions being established, a representative of DFAT advised the Committee in the following terms:

I would not foresee any need for a further mission. The situation at the moment is that, because of the substance and importance of work on international trade, we have an Ambassador covering that issue; similarly for disarmament. The Ambassador to the UN, however, picks up anything else, whatever may come up. At the moment that includes human rights, humanitarian assistance, specialised agencies, the environment, and so on. If other issues did arise—and they do from time to time—they would be catered for by the Ambassador to the UN and her staff.<sup>1</sup>

47. The Committee was also advised that there are no plans to increase the number of Australia-based staff.

#### New Zealand involvement

48. The design provides a separate annex to house the New Zealand mission to Geneva. The current New Zealand chancery, also located in converted apartments, no longer meets New Zealand's requirements. In-principle agreement concerning leasing arrangements have been reached. The initial lease will be for five years with five year extensions. The leasing

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<sup>1</sup>Transcript, p. 59

of suitable alternative premises on a long term basis is in accordance with New Zealand's current capital management strategy.

49. Mr Graham Fortune, the New Zealand High Commissioner, advised the Committee that his Government welcomed the concept of sharing diplomatic premises with Australia. Sharing of diplomatic premises is being adopted by a number of countries – by France, Germany, and new states of the former Soviet Union. New Zealand already has a diplomat working out of the Australian permanent mission in Vienna. The sharing of premises is a practical and efficient way of like-minded countries to reduce the cost of diplomatic representation.

50. The proposed building will have separate entrances to the Australian and New Zealand missions, although there will be a common courtyard. Mr Fortune, a former New Zealand Ambassador to Geneva, advised that Committee that a degree of closeness and cooperation exists already between the missions of the two countries in Geneva; both have common policies in areas such as the WTO, disarmament, human rights and the environment.

51. The plans involving space for the New Zealand Permanent Mission were developed after consultation between OPG, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Wellington and the New Zealand Mission in Geneva.

52. The High Commissioner indicated the size of the proposed annex will be adequate for the requirements of the New Zealand Mission. The accommodation will be larger than the existing chancery premises, a converted apartment building shared with a number of middle eastern countries. It is not envisaged that there will be any expansion of staff, although there will need to be accommodation sufficient for delegates attending conferences.

#### **Structure and seismic conditions**

53. The planned structure will be designed for local seismic conditions and consists of a system of floors and beams supported by walls and columns.

54. The chancery building will be a reinforced concrete and steel framed structure with external light weight prefinished cladding in compliance with the requirements and advice of the local canton planning authority and Geneva building practice.

55. The foundations will be pad footings under columns and strip footings under walls. A metal facade is being considered in line with the wishes of local authorities.

56. Following the Committee's request for more information concerning local seismic conditions, advice was received from the Geneva Cantonal Geologist that the risk of seismic activity in Geneva has been evaluated as "extremely minor". Two seismic "incidents" were recorded in Geneva in the past year. This compares favourably with Japan where a seismic incident is recorded every four minutes. The Committee was also advised that there are no special building requirements associated with seismic activity in Geneva.

#### **Finishes and materials**

57. Generally the design of the building will be based, where appropriate, on Australian Standards making the maximum use possible of local building techniques and materials.

58. External finishes to the building will be lightweight cladding.

59. Windows will be double glazed using secure glazing to the outer face. Both features will provide the required security whilst considerably enhancing the thermal performance of the building.

60. Non-load bearing internal walls will be light weight steel stud framed partitions and painted plasterboard.

61. Wet areas will be finished with ceramic tiles to walls and floor.

62. Ceiling finishes will be painted plasterboard to the public areas, and wet areas, and acoustic tiles to the office areas.

63. Floor finishes will be natural stone, carpet, vinyl, granolithic concrete and ceramic tiles as appropriate to the area.

#### **Codes and Standards**

64. Design and construction of the works will conform with the local requirements and standards.

65. Australian or other internationally recognised Codes of Practice will be used if local codes are unavailable or their requirements are for lesser standards, especially in the areas of health and safety.

#### **Access**

66. The access road to the basement will be constructed in concrete and graded suitably to permit access in European winter conditions.

67. Carparking areas and main driveways will utilise a flexible paving system to accommodate ground movement and facilitate easy repair.

68. Minor roads and pedestrian paving will utilise concrete paving blocks.

#### **Acoustics**

69. Particular consideration has been given to the materials throughout to minimise reverberation.

70. No hard floored surfaces are above office spaces.

71. Control of sound transmission between special areas such as conference rooms and nominated offices is to be incorporated.

72. Building services will be designed to minimise noise transmission to the working environment.

#### **Landscaping**

73. The landscaping will be designed to provide an attractive setting for the building complex and provide screening between the chancery, the adjacent streets and adjacent properties.

74. Landscaping species will be selected for their suitability to the local climate, to maximise shade especially to carpark areas and to provide visual privacy and a pleasant micro-environment for staff and visitors. The Committee was assured that the landscaping will aim to include species which will provide some Australian character, although the climate may preclude this. The Committee believes every attempt should be made to include in the landscaping Australian native species and suggests that with

a project of this nature there may be scope for the involvement of staff from the National Botanical Gardens in Canberra.

75. The existing trees on the site will be retained where possible to form part of the overall landscape concept.

#### **Building services, plans and elevations**

76. Details of building services to be provided are at Appendix B. Plans and elevations of the proposed chancery are at Appendix C.

#### **Committee's Conclusion**

77. The location and design of the new chancery are suitable.

#### **Committee's Recommendation**

78. The concept of shared facilities, with nations such as New Zealand, could be extended to other projects when opportunities arise.

#### **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

79. The climatic conditions, utilities availability and commercial conditions in Geneva have been considered in the design of the building to minimise ongoing energy costs.

80. Passive energy conservation provisions incorporated into the building design include:

- tinted and double glazed windows
- thermal insulation in exterior walls.

81. Active energy conservation provisions incorporated into the building design comprise:

- individual control of airconditioning units within each building zone to minimise energy consumption and to permit out of hours operation of selected areas;
- time scheduled control of common area airconditioning systems

- full fresh air economy cycles in all air handling plant to optimise the cooling effect of outside air when appropriate
- installation of energy efficient lighting
- use of lower cost and/or off-peak electricity supply tariffs as well as peak lopping using the stand-by generator.

### PROVISIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

82. Access for people with disabilities will be provided to all levels of the chancery and to the staff amenities area by means of ramped entry points and lifts. Toilets for the disabled will be provided in the lower level conference area of the chancery and at the ground level common area.

### HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

83. There are no known heritage issues associated with the proposal.

84. An environmental impact assessment is not required by local authorities. The land has been designated for "Public Buildings - Embassies" use and the proposal is consistent with that type of use.

85. The building is low rise, set centrally within the site enabling good landscape separation, and will not overshadow neighbouring properties. The additional traffic generated will be limited, will have no significant impact on local traffic, and has been accepted by the local authorities.

### FIRE PROTECTION AND SECURITY

#### Fire Protection

86. The building will be constructed and equipped to meet local requirements and to conform to Australian fire safety standards and shall include the following:

- a standard wet pipe sprinkler system in accordance with Australian Standard 2118 adjusted and/or lagged where necessary to meet the climatic conditions of Geneva

- fire detection and alarm system in the airconditioning system. This detection system will also incorporate manual call points connected to local emergency services and connected to the audible alarm system throughout the building
- an early warning smoke sampling system will be provided in the communications/speech rooms
- fire hydrants and hose reels on each floor and around the site
- hand held fire extinguishers will be provided internally and to service areas
- an elementary evacuation warning and control system will be installed throughout the building to facilitate the safe emergency egress of staff and the large numbers of official and public visitors to the building
- emergency lighting to Australian Standards and local requirements, with international Pictogram exit signs.

87. The fire detection and alarm systems will be monitored by a Main Fire Indicator Panel installed in the Ground Floor entrance foyer. Sub-Fire Indicator Panels, subordinate to the main panel, will be provided in the New Zealand Permanent Mission and in the secure facility.

#### Commonwealth Fire Board

88. The Commonwealth Fire Board advised (CFB) the Committee that design conformity with local and Australian Standards is a reasonable approach to be adopted.

89. The CFB questioned if the provision of smoke detectors will be restricted to the airconditioning system for smoke control. OPG advised the Committee that manual call points and the fire alarm system will be provided throughout the building in accordance with relevant Australian Standards.

90. The CFB also submitted that it is important to ensure that there is no conflict between security provisions and fire protection which could be detrimental to fire safety. OPG advised the Committee that there is, and will



continue to be, close liaison between DFAT Security, OPG and local authorities throughout the project delivery process.

91. Local fire authorities will be closely consulted during the design development stage to ensure that design and construction meet local requirements. OPG construction procedures provide for the certification of design, construction supervision, testing and commissioning of all major and minor systems. This will apply to the certification of the design and fitness for occupancy. Where local experts are not available, OPG will arrange for suitably qualified experts to visit the project site as often as required.

### Security

92. The site will be surrounded by a perimeter fence.

93. Within the chancery building, all staff will work behind forced entry/bullet resistant barriers. Access to the chancery office areas will be monitored at all times and all visitors will be escorted by authorised Embassy staff.

94. Originally it was intended that a closed circuit television system would be installed for building and site surveillance. At the public hearing DFAT advised that this had been deleted following a threat assessment of crime politically motivated violence for Switzerland. Wiring and conduits for a closed circuit television surveillance system will be provided however. DFAT assured the Committee that the security provisions suit their requirements.

### RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

95. The Committee questioned OPG about the cost of providing staff accommodation for each of the missions in Geneva. With the exception of the official residence of the Ambassador for Disarmament, all Australian residential accommodation in Geneva is leased. The annual rental bill is significant, amounting to almost \$2m. At the time of the public hearing it was understood that under Swiss law, foreign government property holdings are restricted to official residences and a chancery. More recent advice is that subject to the approval of cantonal authorities, residences for other A-based diplomatic staff posted to Geneva may be acquired.

96. The cost of leasing residential accommodation in neighbouring France is considerably less than in Geneva and the Committee sought to establish

if there were any impediments to diplomatic staff being housed there. DFAT advised the Committee that diplomatic representatives and their diplomatic and administrative and technical staff assigned to permanent missions are required to live in Switzerland. In March 1958 the Swiss Federal Parliament decided to accord, by analogy, each mission the same diplomatic status applying to missions in Berne. As a consequence the articles of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations are applied by analogy to permanent missions and members of those missions. The Committee was advised that it follows that to be afforded the protection of the Vienna Convention, members of a permanent mission, including the administrative and technical staff, must live in Switzerland.

97. The Committee believes that a review of existing residential accommodation is required aimed at reducing, or eliminating, the financially burdensome recurrent expenditure associated with leasing two official residences (costing \$446 000 per annum), and staff accommodation (costing more than \$1.4m per annum).

### Committee's Recommendation

98. **There is an urgent need for a review of residential accommodation in Geneva. The review should examine ways in which the high recurrent expenditure for leased residential accommodation could be reduced. The review should include an assessment of the costs and benefits associated with the acquisition or new construction of official residences and Australia-based staff accommodation.**

### CONSULTATIONS

#### Organisations consulted

99. OPG consulted the following organisations during the development of the proposal:

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- AusAID
- Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
- Austrade

- Department of Industrial Relations
- Foreign Affairs and Trade Association
- Community and Public Sector Union
- Family Liaison Officer - Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
- Foreign Services Family Association
- Department of Finance
- Local authorities and utility services.

100. The Committee was advised by OPG that as part of the approval process, the cantonal authorities sought the views of the public and adjacent property owners about the proposal and no objections were raised.

#### Community and Public Sector Union

101. The CPSU indicated strong support for the concept of an Australian-owned chancery in Geneva. It is financially prudent and will provide better working conditions and amenities for Australian and local staff. The CPSU sought assurances that a number of matters of detail will be resolved in consultation with OPG and DFAT during the detailed design of the project. These relate to the following.

- health and safety issues - the CPSU believes there is a need to establish lines of responsibility for OH&S matters at all overseas posts, especially in relation to air quality. OPG assured the Committee that any toxic fumes generated within the building by various processes will be removed by purpose-built exhaust ventilation systems. All exhaust systems will be designed in accordance with current Australian Standards
- protective security arrangements - detailed design of layouts have not been finalised, and the CPSU believes any weaknesses in protective security measures cannot therefore be identified. OPG indicated that the CPSU will be involved during the preparation of office layouts

- information technology - the need to standardise wiring arrangements, power points for the operation of office equipment, and expected changes in the operation of secure communications. OPG advised that office layouts will be prepared which cater for the latest technological developments and the needs of classified communications
- child care facilities - child care facilities are not included in the proposal. OPG indicated that the chancery will be located in a residential area and believes appropriate and reliable commercial child care facilities are readily available
- officers' welfare and amenities - it is not possible to determine without detailed designs if Commonwealth amenities guidelines will be complied with. OPG assured the Committee that the CPSU will be consulted about the design of the proposed amenities.

102. The CPSU also raised the question of Australian materials and content in the project and carparking for locally engaged staff. OPG advised the Committee that all furniture and fittings will be supplied from Australia. OPG also acknowledged the concerns about carparking and indicated that parking around the new building is expected to be difficult or may require parking some distance away.

#### Committee's Recommendation

103. Consultations with the Community and Public Sector Union should continue during the detailed design of the proposed development.

#### PROJECT DELIVERY, PROGRAM AND COST

##### Project delivery and contractors

104. It is proposed to call select tenders based on full working drawing documentation. A single contract will be let for the construction of the building and the fitting out works.

105. The Committee was advised that prior to engagement, OPG will determine that the major contractors have sufficient financial backing to minimise the risk of them going into liquidation during the project. OPG

expect the major contractors to be underwritten by a major financial or banking institution.

106. OPG also assured the Committee that where possible, a clause will be added to all contracts which will require evidence that all sub-contractual financial obligations have been met, prior to subsequent payments being made by the Commonwealth to the contractor.

107. OPG believes a very strong construction industry exists in Geneva and that it is expected there will be strong competition for the project contract. Most large Swiss construction companies operate out of Geneva. The proposal has already excited interest from the local industry.

#### Program

108. Subject to a favourable report by the Committee as well as Parliamentary approval, tenders for the construction of the facility could be invited in August 1996, with all project works being completed by January 1999.

#### Cost

109. The outturn preliminary estimate of the proposed works is \$A22.446m based on December 1994 prices, at an exchange rate of (\$A 1.00 = Sfr 1.00). This includes construction and other related costs such as consultants' fees, project administration, supervision and site office expenses. The estimate does not include furniture, white goods, interest charges or escalation to date of tender.

110. The Committee questioned OPG about the relatively large proportion of the project budget allocated for consultants' fees. OPG advised that an Australian-based officer will be the project director and Australian and local consultants will be used for various facets of design, construction and approval. The use of local consultants is considered necessary because of their familiarity with Swiss regulations, building codes and landscaping requirements.

111. The Committee also questioned OPG about the terms of the proposed contract price. OPG advised that the contract will be let in Swiss francs; exchange rate volatility and interest rate movements suggest this would be the best course to follow. In response to a suggestion from the

Committee that there may be scope for ascribing cost blowouts to currency fluctuations the Committee was assured as follows:

The nature of the proposal we have, in terms of financing it, would minimise those risks because we would be expecting the construction firm to carry those risks as part of the arrangement. In terms of the funding, we are looking to achieve a total fixed project cost in advance and have the construction contractor bear the risk of any construction cost escalation, interest rate movements and currency fluctuations during construction. The contract arrangements will be that there will be no payment by OPG until the construction is completed.<sup>2</sup>

#### Committee's Recommendation

112. The Committee recommends the construction of a new Australian chancery in Geneva at an estimated cost of \$A22.446 million at December 1994 prices.

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<sup>2</sup>Transcript, pp. 44-45

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

113. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee and the paragraphs in the report to which they refer are set out below:

- |   | Paragraph |
|---|-----------|
| 1. The Australian chancery in Geneva comprises leased premises which are deficient in access, services, layout and space. The lease will expire in March 1999 and will not be renewed. There is a need for a new chancery building to be constructed for Australia's permanent missions in Geneva.  | 29        |
| 2. The location and design of the new chancery are suitable.  | 77        |
| 3. The concept of shared facilities, with nations such as New Zealand, could be extended to other projects when opportunities arise.  | 78        |
| 4. There is an urgent need for a review of residential accommodation in Geneva. The review should examine ways in which the high recurrent expenditure for leased residential accommodation could be reduced. The review should include an assessment of the costs and benefits associated with the acquisition or new construction of official residences and Australia-based staff accommodation. | 98        |
| 5. Consultations with the Community and Public Sector Union should continue during the detailed design of the proposed development.   | 103       |

6. The Committee recommends the construction of a new Australian chancery in Geneva at an estimated cost of \$A22.446 million at December 1994 prices.

  
Colin Hollis MP  
Chair

19 October 1995

## APPENDIX A

### WITNESSES

- BARKER**, Mr William, Director, Human Rights and Indigenous Issues Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Parkes, ACT
- FORTUNE**, His Excellency Mr Graham Charles, High Commissioner for New Zealand, New Zealand High Commission, Commonwealth Avenue, Canberra, ACT
- HANCOCK**, Mr Brian Richard, Director, Construction Management, Overseas Property Group, Department of Administrative Services, 111 Alinga Street, Canberra, ACT
- HYAM**, Mr Michael John, Executive Officer, Security Operations Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Parkes, ACT
- LEADER**, Dr Malcolm Ashley, Assistant Secretary, Resources Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Parkes, ACT
- LEONG**, Mr Harry, Chief Design Architect, Australian Construction Services, Department of Administrative Services, 2 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Vic
- MEFFERT**, Mr Wolfgang Klaus, Chief Engineer, Overseas Property Group, Department of Administrative Services, 111 Alinga Street, Canberra, ACT
- PALYWODA**, Mr Stephen Joseph, General Manager, Overseas Property Group, Department of Administrative Services, 111 Alinga Street, Canberra, ACT
- SELLECK**, Mr Gordon William, Executive Officer, Overseas Resources Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Parkes, ACT
- SOLIN**, Mr Ian, Secretary, Community and Public Sector Union Overseas Committee, Community and Public Sector Union, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Parkes, ACT

## APPENDIX B

### BUILDING SERVICES

#### Mechanical

1. All offices, conference rooms and common staff amenities will be fully air conditioned.
2. Air conditioning will be provided by fan coil units located in plant rooms on each floor. Fan coil units will be provided with heating water from natural gas fired boilers, and chilled water from air cooled water chillers.
3. The air conditioning system will include a smoke extraction mode under fire conditions.
4. All air conditioning will be provided with full fresh air economy cycles to optimise the cooling effect of fresh air when temperature conditions are appropriate.
5. A Building Automation System will control and monitor the air conditioning and standby power system.
6. Exhaust systems will be provided for the following:
  - toilets
  - canteen and kitchen facilities
  - lift motor room, store rooms
  - tea rooms
  - nuclear shelter
  - basement car park.
7. An Australian contract packaged diesel standby generator with self-contained fuel storage, will provide a back-up power supply for the total electrical power requirements of the building. A separate smaller generator

with self-contained fuel storage will be provided to the nuclear shelter as required by local legislation.

8. Hot water will be provided to showers, basins and sinks, sourced from gas fired hot water storage units located in the plant rooms. Electric instantaneous boiling water units will be provided in each of the tea rooms and the staff amenities area.

9. Provision will be made for parking 30 cars in the basement. Allowance will be made in the building structure for the later installation of a commercially available mechanical double stack car parking arrangement which will increase the car parking capacity in the basement to about 60 cars.

#### Hydraulic

10. Sewerage will be collected and discharged to the local sewerage system.

11. Town water is suitable for domestic use.

12. Water from the supply mains is suitable for fire fighting purposes.

13. The entire building will be provided with sprinkler fire protection.

14. Hydrants and hose reels will be provided throughout the building.

#### Electrical

15. The public utility electricity supply is reliable 240/380 volts. The cost effectiveness of peak lopping of the electrical load dictates that it is desirable to have on site reserve generation capability to supply the full demand of the building on a continuous basis.

16. It is proposed to provide one packaged self-contained main diesel generator to provide reserve power generation. A second smaller self-contained unit will be provided in the building nuclear shelter to comply with Swiss legislation.

17. It is proposed that a high voltage substation be provided by the local supply authority and installed on the site, to provide low voltage power to the building electrical services.

18. A main switchboard will provide supply to the following distribution boards:

- distribution boards located on each level supplying the Australian Permanent Mission
- distribution boards located on each level supplying the New Zealand Permanent Mission
- distribution board supplying common facilities
- distribution boards supplying the communications/speech rooms
- distribution board supplying the conference facility.

19. The main switchboard will also provide supply to the mechanical and hydraulic services throughout the building, via suitably located services plant switchboards.

20. The Supply Authority will meter the combined power consumption of the Australian and New Zealand Permanent Missions and their common facilities. However, separate in-house power consumption metering will be provided for the Australian Mission, the New Zealand Mission and the common facilities.

21. General lighting and power will be provided throughout the building. Sub-circuits feeding general power outlets, except those supplying permanently connected appliances, will be fitted with residual current devices (earth leakage) to ensure personal safety.

22. External amenity lighting will be provided throughout the site such that all pedestrian and vehicular thoroughfares and all building entrances are well illuminated to ensure safe passage. Security and general lighting will be provided around the site.

23. A lightning protection system will be provided, if required.

- 24. A multiple antenna television system (MATV) will be provided.
- 25. An integrated telephone and data communications backbone and horizontal cabling system will be provided throughout the building.
- 26. Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) units will be supplied by user departments to meet individual needs.
- 27. Mains powered/battery backup emergency lighting will be provided to indicate egress points from the building in the event of total power failure.

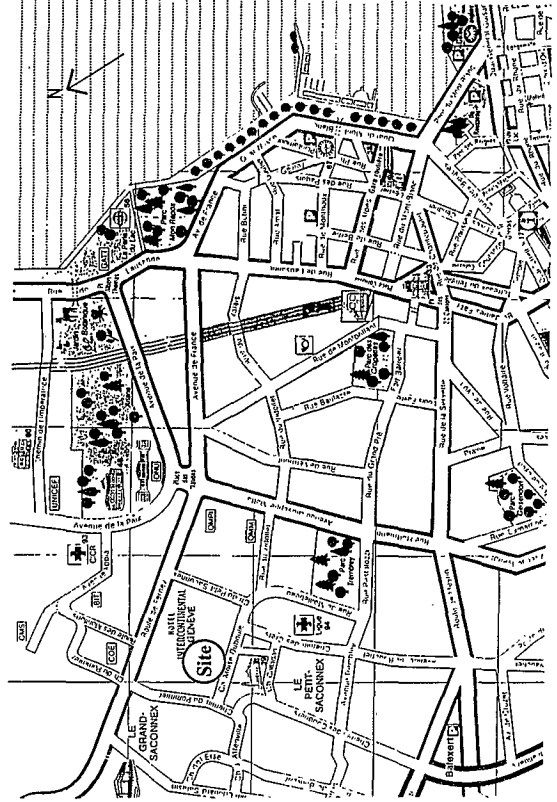
**Lifts**

- 28. A single hydraulic lift for general and disabled use will be provided to serve all floors, including the basement. A separate lift, also for general and disabled use, will be provided in the NZ Permanent Mission.
- 29. One of the lifts will be sized to serve as a goods lift and stretcher lift for emergencies.

**APPENDIX C**

**PLANS AND ELEVATIONS**

	Page
Location .....	C - 1
Site .....	C - 2
Perspective from Chemin des Fins .....	C - 3
Upper basement .....	C - 4
Lower basement .....	C - 5
Ground floor .....	C - 6
First floor .....	C - 7
Second floor .....	C - 8
Roof .....	C - 9
North and west elevations .....	C - 10
East and south elevations .....	C - 11
Cross sections .....	C - 12

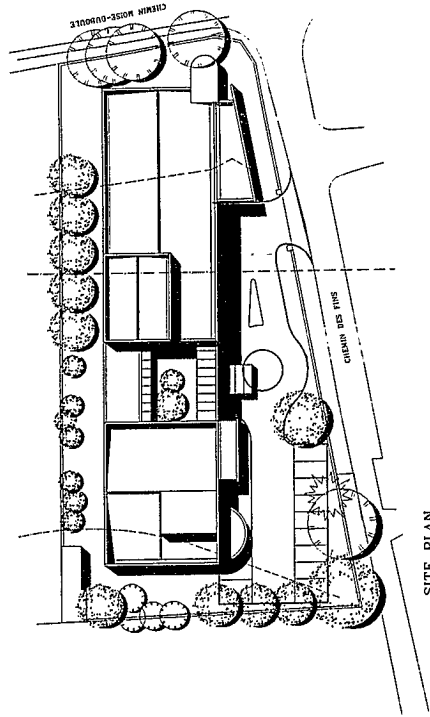


LOCATION PLAN

AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT MISSION  
GENEVA

FOR OVERSEAS PROPERTY GROUP BY AUSTRALIAN CONSULTING SERVICES





SITE PLAN

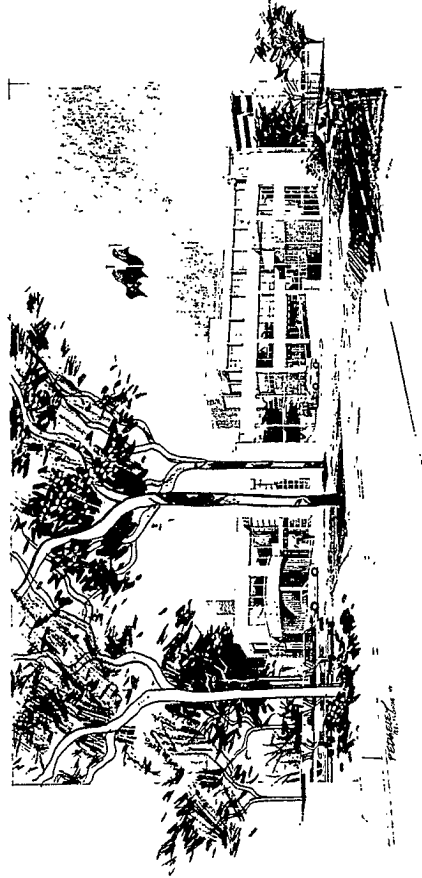
C - 2

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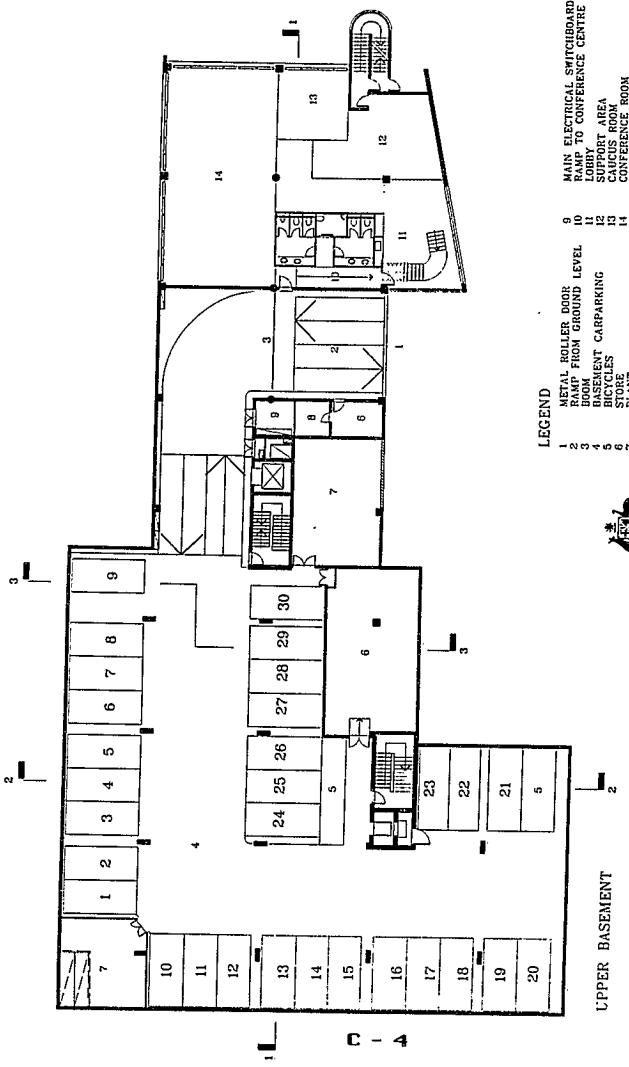
PERSPECTIVE VIEW FROM CHEMIN DES FINS

C - 3



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UPPER BASEMENT

LEGEND

- 1 MECH. ROLLER DOOR
- 2 ROOM FURN. GROUND LEVEL
- 3 BASEMENT CARPARKING
- 4 STAIRS
- 5 STORE
- 6 PLANT
- 7 DESTROYER
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14

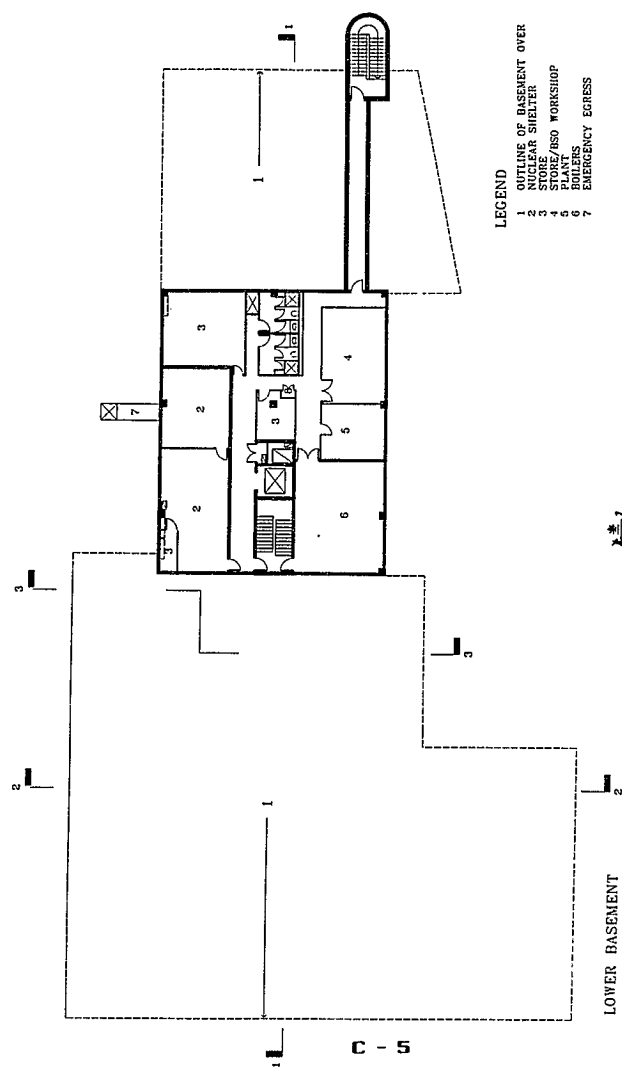
- MAIN ELECTRICAL SWITCHBOARD
- LOBBY TO CONFERENCE CENTRE
- SUPPORT AREA
- CONFERENCE ROOM
- CONFERENCE ROOM

0 10 20 30  
M  
1 CM 25 50  
1 CM 25 50



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LOWER BASEMENT

LEGEND

- 1 OUTLINE OF BASEMENT OVER
- 2 OUTLINE OF SHED
- 3 STORE/ISO WORKSHOP
- 4 PLANT
- 5 STAIRS
- 6 PLANT
- 7 EMERGENCY EGRESS

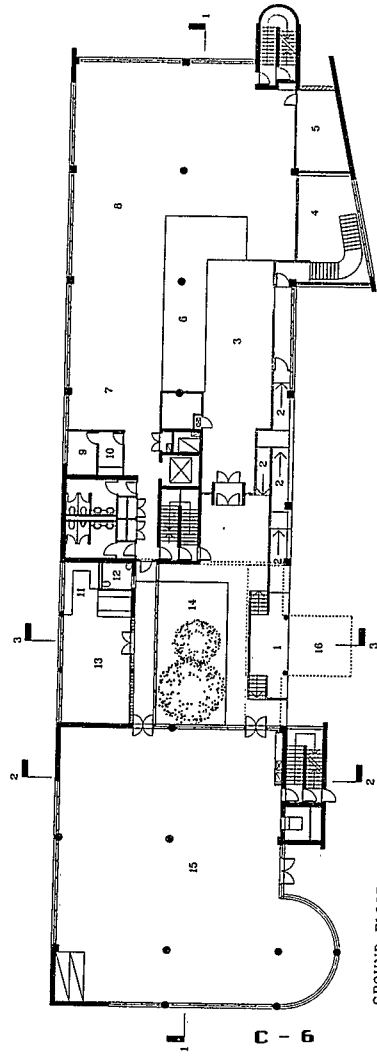
0 10 20 30  
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1 CM 25 50  
1 CM 25 50



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GROUND FLOOR

LEGEND

- 1 MAIN ENTRY
- 2 HALL
- 3 WAITING/DISPLAY
- 4 FOOD
- 5 KITCHEN
- 6 RECEPTION AREA
- 7 DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
- 8 DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

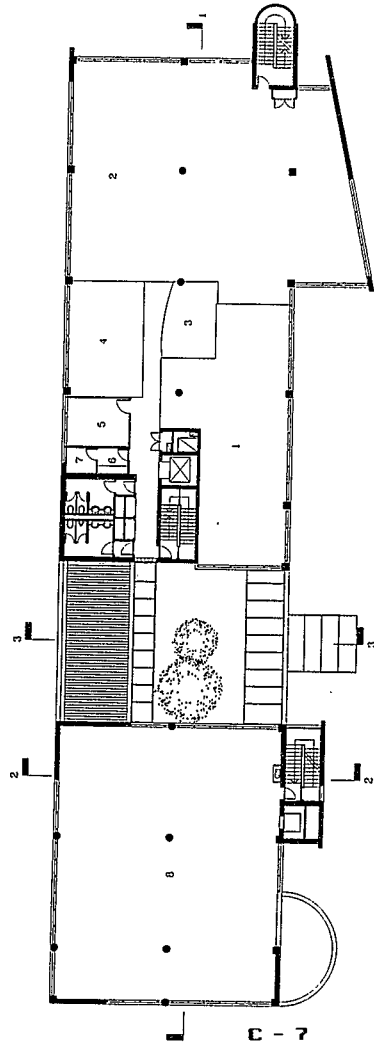
- 9 FIRST AID
- 10 TEA
- 11 KITCHEN
- 12 DISABLED WC
- 13 COMMON STAFF AMENITIES
- 14 COURTYARD
- 15 COMMONS
- 16 PORTIERE MISSION
- 17 PORTIERE COCHIERE



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FOR OVERSEAS PROPERTY GROUP BY AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

1:250  
1:100  
1:50  
1:25  
1:12.5  
1:6.25  
1:3.125  
1:1.5625



FIRST FLOOR

LEGEND

- 1 DEPT DISARMAMENT
- 2 WAITING AREA
- 3 MEETING AREA
- 4 VISITING OFFICERS/RESOURCES

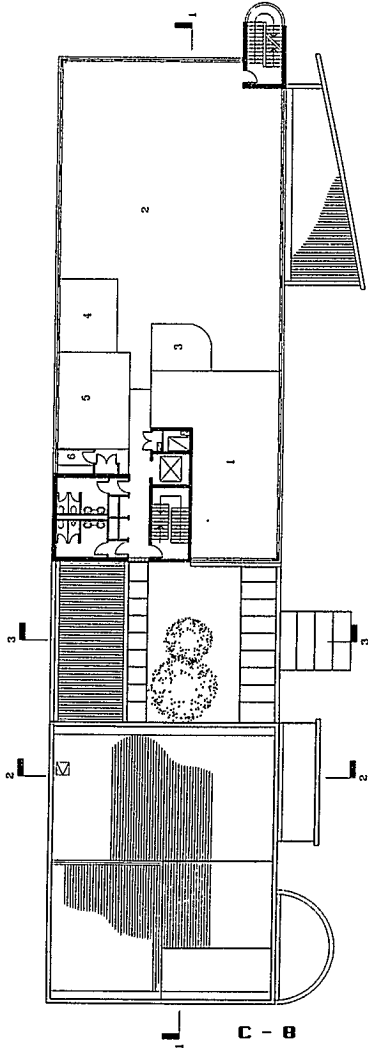
- 5 PLANT
- 6 TEA
- 7 CLEANER
- 8 NZ ASSISON



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FOR OVERSEAS PROPERTY GROUP BY AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

1:250  
1:100  
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SECOND FLOOR

LEGEND

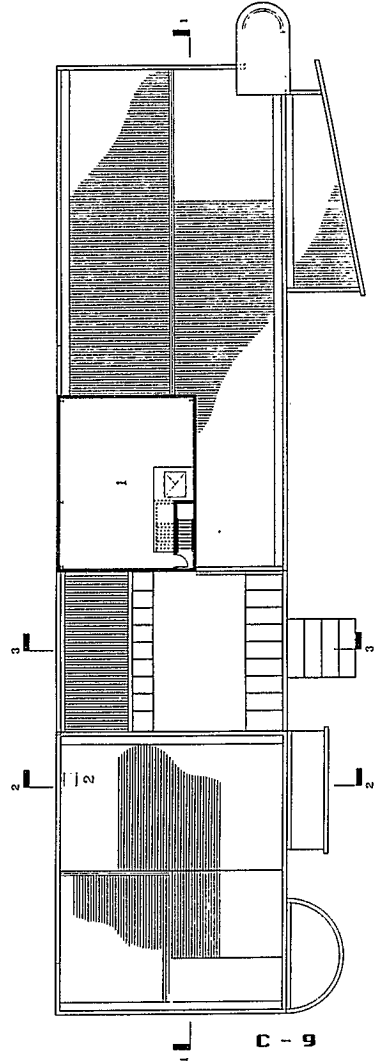
- 1 DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS AND AUSAID
- 2 OFFICE OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL
- 3 MEETING ROOM
- 4 TECHNICAL OFFICER
- 5 VISITING OFFICERS
- 6 TCA



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SCALE  
1:100  
1/8" = 1'-0"



ROOF PLAN

- LEGEND
- 1 PLANTROOM
  - 2 ROOF ACCESS HATCH

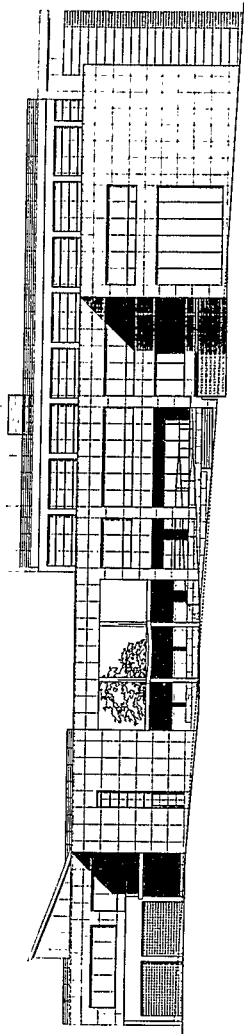


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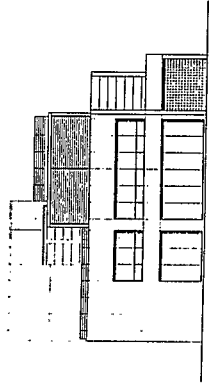
SCALE  
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1/8" = 1'-0"





WEST ELEVATION

C - 10



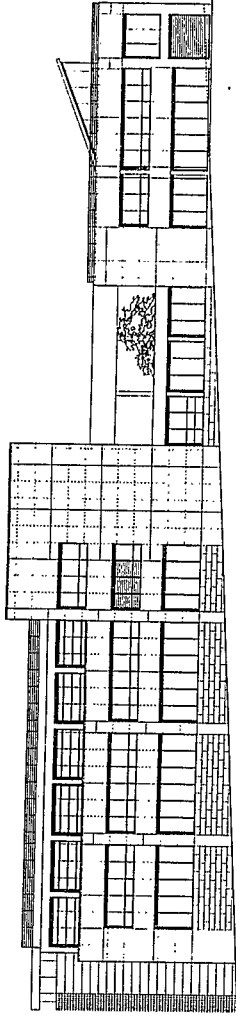
NORTH ELEVATION



AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT MISSION  
GENEVA

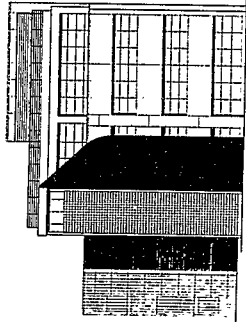
FOR OVERSEAS PROPERTY GROUP BY AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

1:50  
A.S.P.



EAST ELEVATION

C - 11



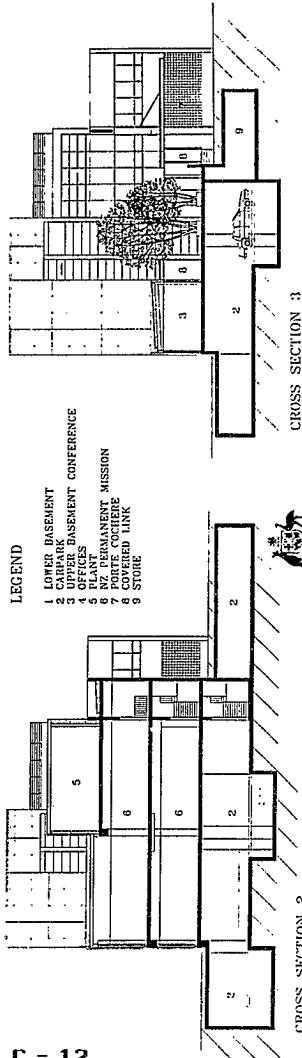
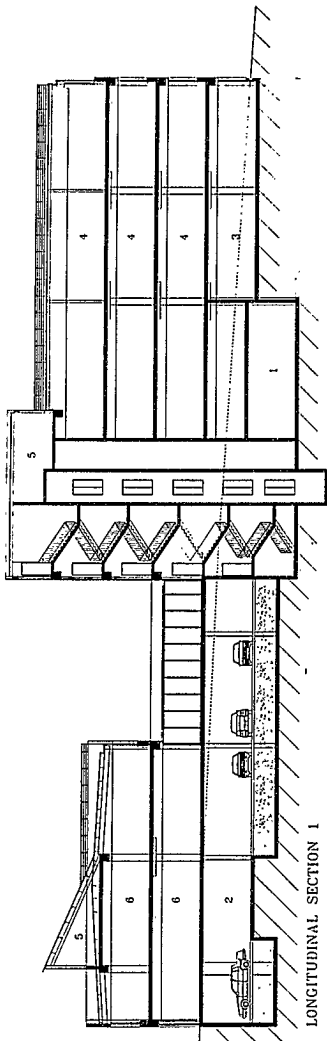
SOUTH ELEVATION



AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT MISSION  
GENEVA

FOR OVERSEAS PROPERTY GROUP BY AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

1:50  
A.S.P.



LEGEND

- 1 LOWER BASEMENT
- 2 CARPARK
- 3 UPPER BASEMENT CONFERENCE
- 4 OFFICES
- 5 PLANT
- 6 NZ PERMANENT MISSION
- 7 PORTE COCHERE
- 8 COVERED LINK
- 9 STORE



AUSTRALIAN PERMANENT MISSION  
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FOR OVERSEAS PROPERTY GROUP BY UNIVERSALLY PROFESSION SERVICES