
Source Reference
Ch. III - 77

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New File: Harrison & Abramovitz

5 August 1955

Mr. Wallace K. Harrison
Harrison & Abramovitz
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Harrison:

In accordance with Mr. Dulles' request, I am forwarding herewith pertinent information summarizing developments to date in connection with the construction of a new headquarters building for the Central Intelligence Agency.

The security problems, inefficiency, and excessive costs inherent in our present situation have long indicated the high desirability of providing space for the Central Intelligence Agency in one permanent building. In 1951, through Public Law No. 155, the Congress authorized \$38,000,000 for the construction of such a building. However, funds were not appropriated to carry out the construction. Since that time we have engaged in several studies to determine whether it might not be possible to relocate the Agency in an existing structure and thereby avoid the necessity of a new building. We finally concluded that this would not be feasible and beginning last Fall we decided to make an all-out effort to obtain an authorization, together with the necessary funds, to construct the new building.

In our discussions with the Public Buildings Service they suggested several federally-owned properties which might provide a suitable location. One of our first problems to consider was whether we should comply with current dispersion standards as prescribed by the Office of Defense Mobilization. After careful consideration we concluded that we could not effectively accomplish our mission and comply with these standards. We believe it is essential that the Director be immediately available to the President and the National Security Council. There are also an estimated fifty to one hundred of CIA's senior staff who must be in close daily contact with personnel of other agencies, particularly the Departments of

State and Defense, and who must also be immediately available to the Director as well as to those components of the Agency under their supervision and upon which they are dependant for support. In our judgment, the necessity for such close and expeditious coordination within the Central Intelligence Agency and the Intelligence Community dictated that the entire Agency be at one location not more than a few miles distant from the White House.

The federally-owned properties suggested by the Public Buildings Service were all within five to ten miles of the White House. Accordingly, on 16 November 1954 we requested that the Office of Defense Mobilization concur in an exception to these dispersion standards for our proposed new building. The Director, Office of Defense Mobilization, on 31 December 1954 concurred in our request. Correspondence with regard to this matter is attached as TAB A.

Of the several sites then under consideration, we concluded that the property at the Bureau of Public Roads Research Station near Langley in Fairfax County, Virginia, would satisfactorily meet our needs. However, there appeared to be certain problems in connection with the use of this site involving water, sewerage, roads, and possible civic objection. One of the principal factors to be considered was the necessity to extend the George Washington Memorial Parkway from its present terminus at Spout Run to the site if it was to be considered seriously. This distance is about seven miles and the extension is estimated to cost \$8.5 million.

Since we desired to ascertain as a matter of principle whether use of the Langley site was feasible before requesting legislation for construction of this Parkway, we consulted with the National Capital Planning Commission beginning in February of this year, and on 11 March I appeared before the National Capital Regional Planning Council to discuss this location. This resulted in the appointment of a special committee of the Regional Planning Council to study and make recommendations concerning the desirability of the proposed location. The committee recommended that the application of the Central Intelligence Agency to locate in Fairfax County near Langley, Virginia, be approved subject to the stipulation which at that time had been made by the Fairfax County Planning Commission that the initial cost of development of appurtenant public facilities be borne by the Federal Government. One member of the committee dissented. However, due to subsequent developments the report of the committee has never been formally acted upon. The resolution and committee reports are attached as TAB B.

In early April it was necessary to request our legislation in order to insure that it would be acted upon during this session of Congress. In view of the uncertainty which still existed in connection with the Langley property we decided to omit from the proposed legislation any language which would provide for the extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway

without which we do not believe use of this property would be feasible.

On 4 April 1955 I advised the Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission to this effect and requested that the Commission furnish its views concerning the several sites we had discussed or others which it might be appropriate to consider. This resulted in a resolution by the Planning Commission suggesting that consideration be given to certain very general locations, and again this matter was referred to a new joint committee of the Commission and the Council to work with us in a further study of the problem. Copies of this correspondence are attached as TAB C.

After considering more than thirty sites, most of which are indicated on the map enclosed with TAB D, the committee concluded that six of these met our criteria and warranted serious consideration. This report was approved at a joint meeting of the Regional Council and the Planning Commission and the committee was asked to study the matter further in order to come up with a more specific recommendation. A copy of this study and related correspondence is attached as TAB D.

In our subsequent discussions with responsible officials in the Administration as well as with the committees in the Congress before which we appeared, it became apparent that it would be preferable to locate our headquarters on the fringe of metropolitan Washington, D. C. At about this same time, Fairfax County officials indicated that they could overcome satisfactorily the obstacles involving water and sewerage facilities which had been previously anticipated in connection with the Langley site. In addition, the County Board of Supervisors extended an invitation to us to occupy this site. The Planning Commission of Fairfax County formally expressed to the County Board of Supervisors the desirability of our locating at Langley and their Chairman stated that in this expression the Commission felt that they had correctly expressed the sentiment of the overwhelming majority of Fairfax County residents. Similar invitations were received from the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 450 members without dissent, the McLean Business Association, and the Great Falls Grange No. 738 with a membership of 242, and many others. We are aware of the fact and naturally understand the feelings of some of the residents of the Langley area who feel that the comparative seclusion of their community might be impaired by our locating there. However, there seems to be no question but that with the exception of this very small minority Fairfax County would wholeheartedly welcome the Central Intelligence Agency. For these reasons we requested the Congress to amend our original proposal so as to provide for the extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway if the Langley site should be finally selected. Correspondence with the Fairfax County Board and others with respect to this matter is attached as TAB E.

Title IV of Public Law No. 161, as well as the hearings and reports

which led to our authorization, are attached as TAB F. You will note that our authorization for construction was limited to \$46,000,000 in lieu of the \$50,000,000 requested.

The necessary funds to begin this project are provided for in the Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1956, Public Law No. 219, which reads in part as follows:

***CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

Construction

For the preparation of detail plans and specifications of a Central Intelligence Agency headquarters installation and for other purposes as authorized by Title IV of the Act of July 15, 1955 (Public Law 161), to remain available until expended, \$5,500,000."

The hearings and reports which led to this appropriation are attached as TAB G.

After further careful study and examination of these seven sites we believe that Langley, Virginia, and Alexandria, Virginia, are the two areas which deserve most serious consideration. While we have tentatively concluded that the Langley property would be preferable for our use, we desire to study this matter further.

We have an understanding with the Bureau of Public Roads that they will release 100 acres of the Langley property for our use if that site is finally selected and we have an informal offer of 100 acres at a total cost of \$350,000 in the Alexandria area. This would comprise 85 acres of the Winkler tract and 15 acres held by an adjacent owner.

I have advised the Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission of the status of this matter in a letter dated 1 August 1955, a copy of which is attached as TAB H. Hence, the immediate problems before us are the final selection of a site and the development of detailed plans and specifications.

Sincerely,

/s/

L. K. White
Deputy Director

Encls.

Tab A thru H

DD/S:LKW:lq

Distribution:

0 - Addressee by hand of Mr. Dulles on his way to N. Y. - 8/5/55

1 - D/Logistics

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