

50 Years in Langley:

Recollections of the
Construction of CIA's
Original Headquarters Building



1961–2011

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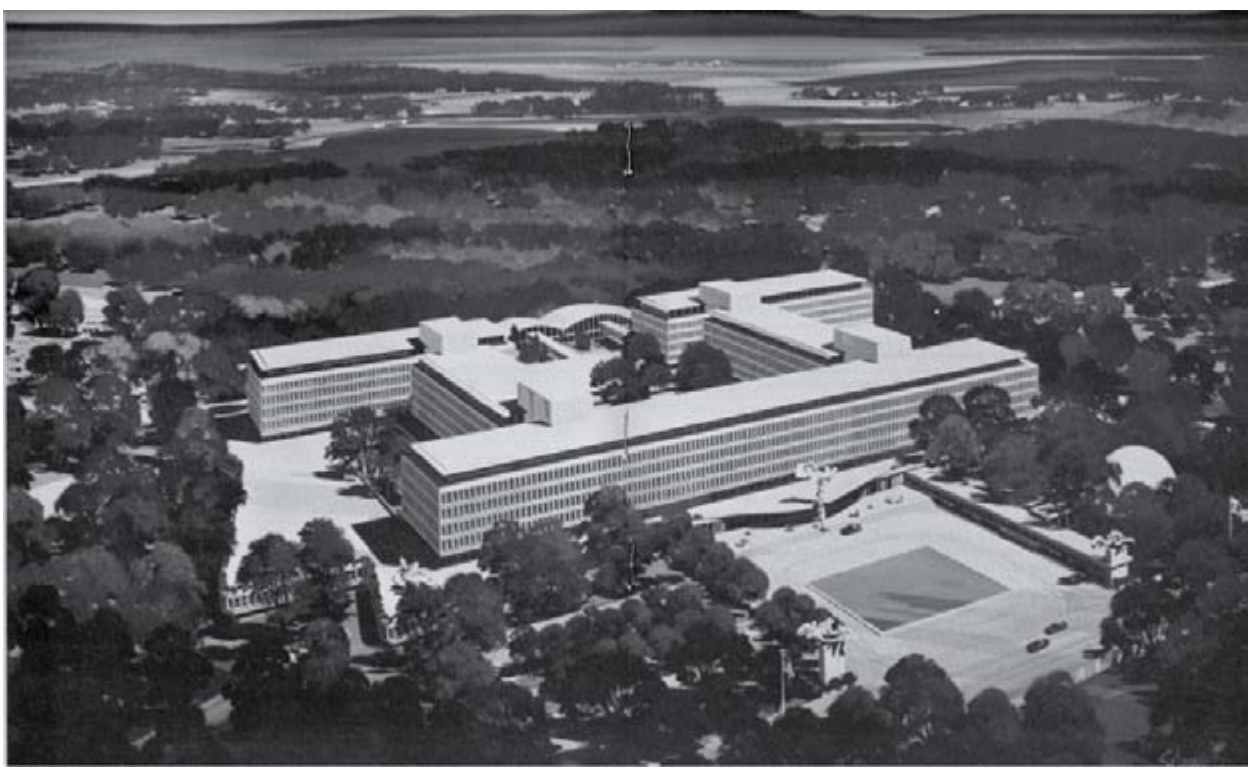
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50 Years in Langley: Recollections of the Construction of CIA's Original Headquarters Building

In late 1961, CIA employees began relocating from a disparate collection of buildings in Washington, DC, to a newly constructed headquarters complex in Langley, Virginia. The Original Headquarters Building (OHB) was the first home designed specifically for Agency officers, and it still serves today as an iconic symbol of CIA and its mission. As part of the commemoration of OHB's 50 years of service, the Center for the Study of Intelligence has compiled this collection of declassified articles and images that illustrate the making of a key piece of CIA's heritage.

Director, Center for the Study of Intelligence

50 Years in Langley



Artist's preconstruction rendering of CIA Headquarters.

Excerpts from an Interview with Former CIA Executive Director Lawrence K. "Red" White

From *Studies in Intelligence*

Before becoming executive director, "Red" White had served as assistant to the deputy director for administration (1952–54) and deputy director for administration (1954–65). As DDA, he played a key role in the construction of CIA's new headquarters complex.

The following excerpts concerning the construction of the new headquarters are from an interview of Colonel White at his home in Vero Beach, Florida, on 7 January 1998.

Picking a Headquarters Site

Allen Dulles and I had decided to build a building where it is now. The landed gentry out there didn't want us out there. They picked on [Lyman] Kirkpatrick, who was our inspector general. One day at the DCI's morning meeting, Kirkpatrick made a speech about how they didn't want us out there. Of course, he lived out there, too. He told Allen that he thought we were going to get in a lot of trouble, and we ought not to do it. Allen looked at me and said, "Red, find another site." He and I talked a little bit, and we were considering tearing down the old Heurich Brewery, and it was right where the Kennedy Center is now. We were thinking of taking that over and building the building right here.

One Friday night Allen called me and said he'd had a call from President Eisenhower, who wanted to see him at 10 the next morning to talk about the building. Allen asked me to go with him. I said, "What do you want me to bring?" He said, "I don't know what he wants to talk about, so let's don't bring anything." Before I left home, I put a little map of Washington, DC, in my coat pocket, and we go over to the White House.

Eisenhower was getting ready to go play golf and [Colonel] Andy Goodpaster [Eisenhower's military aide] was the only person there. We sat down, and the President said, "Allen, I want to talk to you about this new building. Where are you going to build it?"



Allen said, "Mr. President, we're looking at a number of sites. We're thinking about tearing down that old brewery and building it right there." Eisenhower went through the roof. He said, "You are not going to build that building in the District of Columbia. This town is so cluttered up now you can't get from one end to the other, and you are going to get out of town." I thought, "My goodness, we're going to end up in Texas or someplace."

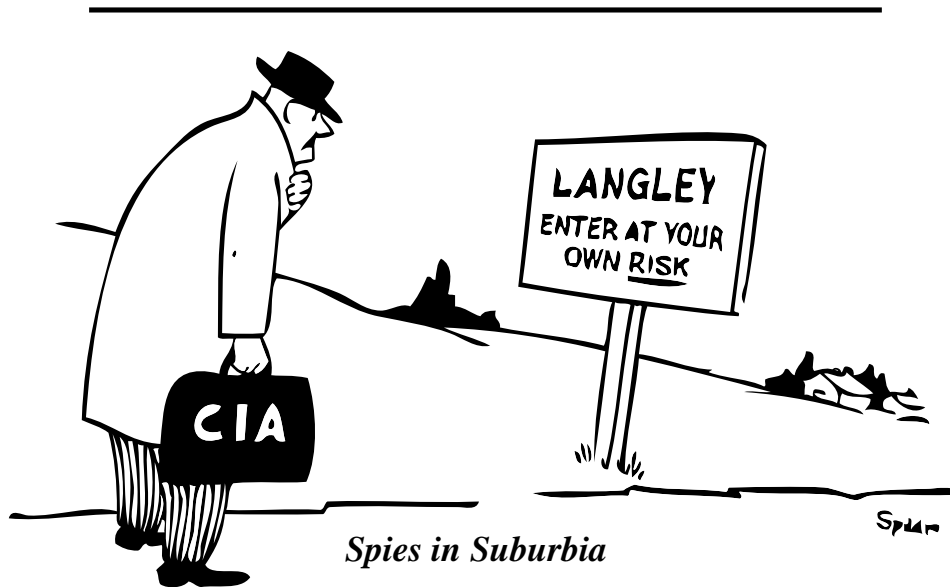
Allen kept appealing that he had to be near the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department. Eisenhower would have none of it. Finally, I screwed up my courage and said, "Mr. Dulles, since the President feels so strongly about this, maybe we ought to reconsider that old Leiter Estate." Allen took off on that, about what a nice place that was and what not. The President said, "I never heard of the old Leiter Estate, where's that?" I pulled out my map and put it on the President's desk and said, "It's right there, Mr. President." He said, "How far is that from the zero milestone?" I said, "It is 7.1 miles as the crow flies." He said, "That's okay."

Signs of Trouble

Placing the Headquarters building in Langley meant that the George Washington Memorial Parkway had to be extended up the Potomac. Road signs along the parkway identifying the location of the CIA caused a problem with the Kennedy administration.

I don't think you've ever heard the story about the signs out there [at the Headquarters building]. You see, the National Park Service built that road out there [the George Washington Memorial Parkway]. The authorization for the road had been on the books for 20 years, but they didn't have any money. So we got the money, it was \$8.5 million, I think, to build the parkway out there. Before the building was ever finished, they put up these signs, "Central Intelligence Agency." Bobby

Kennedy didn't like those signs, and so the President spoke to Allen that he didn't like the signs. Allen didn't pay much attention to it. One day, during the DCI's morning meeting, the President [Kennedy] called and he said, "Allen, if you don't get those signs down, I'm going to come out there and take them down myself." Allen turned to me and said, "Red, get the signs down." I called up the director of the National Parks, and I said, "The President says get those signs down." And I said, "Take them down quick, but take them down quietly; we don't need any publicity." They were down for a month or so before anybody noticed, and then all the newspapers came out with some headline; the *Washington Post*, I think, said, "Oh, CIA Can You See?"



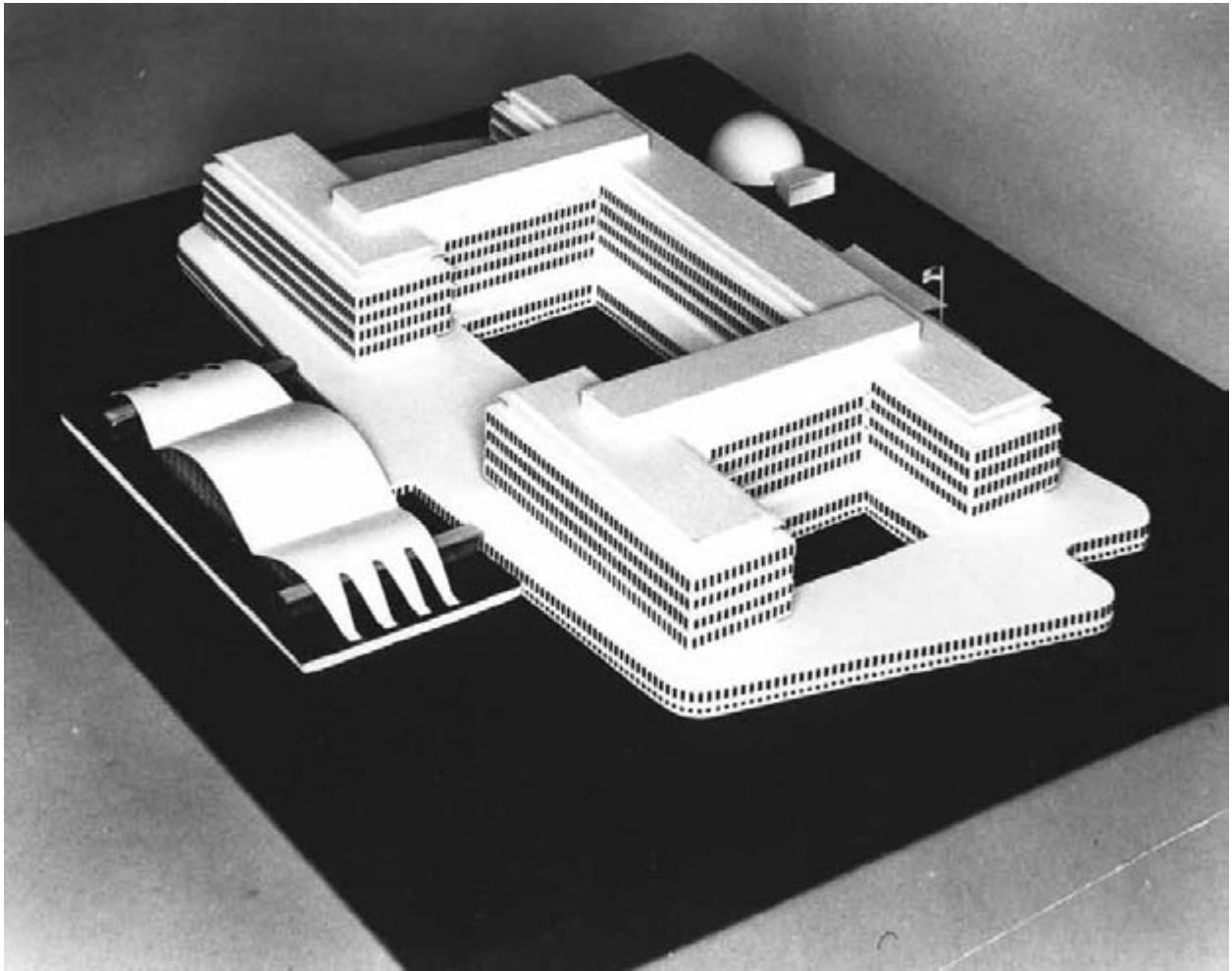
Spies in Suburbia

The peace-loving people of beautiful Langley
Are speaking in voices all tensed up and strangely
Spurning in aggregate
All cloak-and-daggregate
Eyes on their homes.

They chant incantations, they deal in invective,
They rant imprecations at each new directive.
Struggle is protean
No one is dote-y on
Spies in their homes.

'Tho CIA's secret, we know it won't blow to
Where Langley so sharply tells Dulles to got to.

-Ellen Wise



An original model of the new Headquarters complex.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Cornerstone Laying

of the

Central Intelligence Agency

Building

by the

President of the United States



November 3, 1959



President Dwight Eisenhower addressing construction workers and CIA employees at the cornerstone-laying ceremony.



The state of construction in October 1959.

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The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building

Jack B. Pfeiffer

The Central Intelligence Agency inherited its original quarters from its wartime predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services. The effort to provide CIA with a headquarters building—acquisition, planning, construction, and occupancy—stretched over a period of about 15 years (1947-62), during which Agency components in the Washington area were stuffed, crammed, or otherwise deployed in a variety of structures that never quite became “home.” Congress appropriated money in 1951 for a headquarters facility, but it still took four more years to pick a site. By then the funds appropriated earlier were insufficient. In the Summer of 1955 Congress authorized \$51.5 million for the purchase of land in Langley, Virginia, for the extension of the George Washington Parkway, and the planning and construction of the new building. Once the architectural and engineering contractor was selected in July 1956, responsibility for the Agency’s new headquarters fell to the Real Estate and Construction Division (RECD) of the Office of Logistics in the Directorate of Support (now the Directorate of Administration). For much of the construction phase, RECD was succeeded in this task by the Building Planning Staff (BPS), an ad hoc group operating directly under James A. Garrison, Director of the Office of Logistics.¹ The entire planning, construction, and moving effort also benefited from the close attention of Deputy Director for Support Lawrence K. White.

Construction Begins

The first significant construction contract was for the clearing and grubbing of the site. This meant the removal of trees and brush from about half of the acreage and the clearing or removal of dead trees and underbrush from the rest of the tract. The contract bid opening date was 12 September 1957. Morrison and Johnson, Inc., of Bethesda,

¹ BPS—to which RECD contributed several key personnel—was subsumed back into RECD in July 1960.

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Maryland, had the low bid: \$31,450.⁷ Work was started in October 1957 and completed in March 1958. By this time another contract had been let for grading the site to bring it to the proper elevations determined by the site planners and for the installation of site drainage structures to carry off the accumulation of surface water. Under this contract, preliminary roads, site parking, and storage areas were being graded and given a gravel-surface treatment to accommodate the building contractor's supplies and equipment. [REDACTED]

The summer and fall of 1957 were marked by long dry spells for construction work, but almost as soon as the clearing and grubbing operations started, heavy rains began to fall. The weather continued to be unfavorable through most of the winter of 1957-58, although perhaps not unfavorable enough to block completely the public relations ploy that the Deputy Director for Support Lawrence K. White had in mind:

I also told him [REDACTED] that I wanted to make every possible effort not only to let the grading contract as soon as possible, but to have some grading actually done before Congress returns to town on the first of January. [REDACTED]

Although snowstorms were the worst for the Washington area in many years and the spring and summer rainfall in 1958 was well above normal, the grading and drainage contract was substantially finished by October 1958. The excavation and foundation contract, with a base bid of \$2,289,000, was opened on 9 October 1958; and on 21 October 1958, the notice to proceed was issued to the Roscoe Engineering Corporation and the Ajax Construction Co., Inc. of Washington, D.C., as a joint venture. [REDACTED]

Up to this point the contracting work had been performed on the site as a whole. Now the job of excavating and pouring the massive concrete foundations for the Headquarters Building itself was split into three separate contracts, saving perhaps nine months to a year. While the work was in progress, the chief architects and engineers at Harrison and Abramovitz (H&A) in New York worked with BPS to prepare the complex and detailed plans required for the main building. [REDACTED]

⁷ The high bid was \$102,000! Col. Lawrence K. "Red" White, Deputy Director for Support, for many years kept a detailed log of his activities, which the authors relied on extensively in the preparation of this analysis. The relevant extracts from White's log, hereafter cited as *Diary Notes*, reside in History Staff Source Collection, HS/HC-349, History Staff Job 84-00499R, Box 1. The citation above is at *Diary Notes*, 12 September 57. [REDACTED]

⁸ The low and high bids for grading and drainage were \$460,000 and \$1,113,000, respectively. The low figure was less than half the amount (\$1,030,000) that had been allocated. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1957. [REDACTED]

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Even as the plans and work proceeded, Agency representatives were frequently harassed by Defense Department and civil defense officials about the need to incorporate expensive features intended to enhance protection from atomic blast and fallout. The Deputy Director of Support personally endured considerable badgering for his reluctance to take drastic steps to "harden" the facility against nuclear attack—such as the idea that the Agency should mine a deep shelter in the basalt bedrock beneath the foundation—but Colonel White held firm in his refusal to complicate the project any further.

Additional work began at about the same time in the area of the Langley compound. The new four-lane George Washington Memorial Parkway leading to the site's north gatehouse entrance had been completely graded. Piers for the several bridges on this parkway were completed. The entire parkway project was paved and ready for use early in 1960, well in advance of CIA's actual moving date; and as early as July 1958 construction work had been started to widen Virginia Route 123 leading to the south gatehouse entrance.

The negotiations related to the access roadway situation—particularly the problems of the George Washington Parkway and the Cabin John bridge—were complex. The Agency was involved with the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Public Roads, the National Park Service, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the highway commissions and engineers of the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and Fairfax County. Some of the difficulties were ironed out by the "old school tie": Colonel White did not hesitate to draw on his broad net of military acquaintances to influence the various engineering contingents, many of which were headed by former Army officers. At other times he found opportunities for some *quid pro quo*. In March of 1961, for example, he noted:

General Clarke, the District Engineer, and Mr. Aitken, his Highway Supervisor, were over for lunch; however, General Clarke and Mr. Aitken are very much concerned about the traffic problem in connection with getting to and from our new building. They feel that the selection of Chantilly particularly is going to jam up the roads very much and that we may have some congestion. They are looking for some support to get the Chain Bridge double-decked and to get another bridge built at the Three Sisters Island

* Ibid., 19 December 1961.

† Ibid., 17, 24 January 1955; 7-8 February 1955; 19, 21-25 November 1955; 23-26 July 1956; 2 February 1959.

location. I told them that we would certainly give them full support and that this was in our interest, but they should not put us in the position of not having made an adequate transportation study at the time we selected this site. Gen. Clarke and Mr. Airken said they both fully appreciated this and that their emphasis would all be on developments since the site was selected.⁶

Fairfax County officials were proceeding with the plans for extending water and sewer lines, and the pumping stations required for these facilities were under construction. Plans for the electric power substation to supply the Headquarters Building were well along by the spring of 1959.

The problems of physical security during the construction of the new building were complex. A contract had been let for the erection of the security fence in August 1958, and by the middle of November the site was under security patrol and badges had been issued to the contractors. Between the fall of 1958 and February 1961, *bona fides* were obtained for about 15,000 construction workers—this in addition to the requirements to plan building security, badging, guard force, and the host of other security projects with which the Office of Security was charged.

The main building contract—that is, the superstructure contract—had been advertised on 18 December 1958, and bids were opened on 25 February 1959. Thirteen bids were received, and on 25 March the contract was awarded to the Charles H. Tompkins Co. and the J. A. Jones

⁶ In the fall of 1961 Clarke requested—and received—a letter from the Agency in support of his position on the need for a bridge at Three Sisters Island. *Ibid.*, 16 November 1961.

⁷ In addition to the supply of electric power from the Virginia Electric and Power Co., Agency planners also modified the plans to include a diesel emergency generator. White authorized a change order in August 1960, noting that it would cost about \$50,000. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1960.

⁸ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 1 August 1958. It was not possible to locate all of the authors' sources for this article. Several, including this one, were apparently held in files of the Building Planning Staff, Office of Logistics, and are hereafter sourced as "BPS/OL."

⁹ It was not until after the building was occupied, however, that serious attention was paid to the potential security risk posed by the four privately owned tracts of land adjacent to the new building area. Shortly after he became DCI, John A. McCone ordered that a study of the feasibility of purchase be undertaken: *Diary Notes*, 15, 19 November, and 14, 21 December 1962. Consequently, White appointed a committee to review this matter; and their findings disclosed that the building was vulnerable to penetration by surveillance. Photographs taken in the wooded area adjacent to the front of the building indicated the feasibility of identifying personnel, with the possibility of identifying documents. After considerable coordination by the DDS and the DCI—with Congressional committees, the Fairfax County Executive, and the Bureau of the Budget—acquisition of the perimeter property was accomplished by the mid-1960s at a cost of approximately half a million dollars.

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Construction Co. The low bid was \$33,287,600, somewhat less than had been expected. [REDACTED]

The contract had gone on the construction market at an opportune time, in the midst of a nationwide economic recession. Business conditions were favorable to the Government and to the Agency. Indeed, the money saved was soon put to good use. Of the \$54,500,000 appropriated, \$8.5 million was transferred to the National Park Service for the extension of the George Washington Parkway to the site. The superstructure and site work contract (\$33,287,600), the contract with the Otis Elevator Co. (\$1,122,669), plus other fees and contingency requirements, approximated \$43 million, leaving an unobligated balance of approximately \$3 million. This amount was considered "no year funds," and used to purchase properties adjoining the site and to construct the new printing plant." [REDACTED]

Superstructure work started in May 1959. The contractor's first efforts were directed toward organizing his work forces and executing the numerous subcontracts required for the project. Shop drawings—completely detailed plans based on the contract drawings and used for fabricating and installing structural steel, duct work, plumbing, and electrical and mechanical facilities—were being prepared. The forms for the ground-floor concrete walls and for the first-floor slab of the north half of the building were nearly completed by midsummer. Government and H&A representatives were on the site every working day and checked each step in the construction. They also reviewed all shop drawings, along with samples of the materials to be used." [REDACTED]

President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited the site in November 1959 for the ceremonial laying of the building's cornerstone. A US Air Force band and the Chaplain of the US Senate also graced the occasion, and DCI Allen Dulles made certain beforehand that a large contingent of the Agency's female employees had reserved seats "in order to highlight the vital role which women play in the Agency." Accompanied by Dulles and a host of Washington dignitaries, the President briefly wielded an engraved silver trowel to set the stone in place.¹² Inside the

¹⁰ Walter Pforzheimer, Curator, Historical Intelligence Collection, to Jack B. Pfeiffer, Support Services Historical Officer, 10 February 1971, HS/HC-849. [REDACTED]

¹¹ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 7 August 1959, BPS/OL file [REDACTED]

¹² Before the event DCI Dulles had let Col. White know that he wanted to see "some of the women employees of the Agency in attendance [in the ceremony's reserved seating area]." See White to Executive Officer, Office of the DCI, "Reserved Seats for Cornerstone Ceremony," 27 October 1959, HS/HC-849. [REDACTED]

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cornerstone went a box containing various acts and executive orders authorizing the Agency and the new facility, along with speeches, microfilmed newspapers, a CIA seal, and an aerial photograph of the site—but no classified documents.¹⁰

Steady Progress

The contract called for completion of the building by the middle of 1961, but a reasonable amount of delay—frequently caused by conditions beyond the contractor's control—was expected on a project such as this. For example, there was a strike in the steel industry in August 1959. Had this strike lasted much longer, it would have delayed construction. There was every reason to believe, however, that the building would be completed some time during the last half of 1961. Meanwhile, BPS was reviewing space layout plans for the purpose of adjusting them to fit changes in the Agency's requirements.

As of 31 March 1960 the contractor was slightly behind schedule, even though the winter weather had been reasonably favorable. There had been a considerable number of relatively small change orders, and it did not appear that completion of the contract would be extended materially. In fact, such excellent progress was being made that a portion of the concrete roof of the north penthouse had been poured. As was customary when the highest point on the construction project was reached, the workmen held an impromptu flag-raising ceremony, and for a day or two a flag flew from this rooftop.

In May, progress was marred by the only serious accident that occurred during the entire course of the construction. In the words of Colonel White:

There was an accident today at Langley; apparently a cable broke allowing the scaffolding at the power building to fall. Ten people were hurt, seven of them very seriously. At this point one of the ten has died and another remains on the critical list.

Workers had been removing wooden forms from the power plant's concrete ceiling when one of three cables suspending the scaffolding snapped, tumbling the men and the forms to the boiler room floor

¹⁰ The cornerstone and its "time capsule" were finally placed in their permanent locations on 2 November 1960; Diary Notes, 9 November 1960.

¹¹ C/BPS to C/PS/OL, 6 October 1959, sub: Killian Committee Report, BPS/OL files.

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Original Headquarters Building under construction, 1950-60

25 feet below. Joseph A. Wood, 56, of Northeast Washington was dead on arrival at Arlington Hospital, but fortunately he was the only fatality.¹⁵

By spring, work had been started on the excavation for the auditorium building, which was a separate hemispheric structure near the front of the main building but connected to it by a tunnel. Structural steel had also been delivered to the site for the curved roof of the cafeteria building.¹⁶ Plantings for the three large and two small court areas enclosed by the building had been completed. This landscape and planting contract was undertaken early in the project so that all trees and shrubs requiring

¹⁵ *Diary Notes*, 4 May 1960, (S). "1 Killed, 8 Hurt as Staging Falls," *The Washington Post*, 5 May 1960

¹⁶ Walter Pforzheimer recalled:

The curved roof of the cafeteria...brings to mind an interesting highlight arising out of the *Washington Evening Star* sending periodic flights over the building to photograph the progress in its construction as a newsworthy item. In their issue of 13 June 1960, they printed one of these early views and caused us some laughing embarrassment by their caption, which noted, "The crescent-shaped objects at left are decorative waterfalls." Actually they were the curved steel girders, not yet installed, which hold up the roof of the cafeteria!

Pforzheimer to Pfeiffer, 10 February 1971

large balls of dirt would be set in place before the courts were entirely enclosed.¹⁷ Throughout the construction Agency officers sought to preserve the campus-like feel of the grounds—to the point where in one instance it added \$60,000 to the bill.¹⁸

By the end of September 1960 the superstructure contractor had completed 54 percent of his work. The contractor was slightly behind schedule, but this was mainly a continuance of the earlier delays. The north half of the building was expected to be ready for occupancy by September 1961. It was almost completely enclosed, and plastering of the interior walls was progressing on the lower floors. Except for the seventh-floor roof of wings 1 and 2, and the penthouse roof, all of the structural slabs had been poured for the south half of the building, and precast concrete window panels had been installed up to the fourth-floor level. The structural steel covering for the cafeteria roof had been erected and installed.

Plans were being developed with the telephone company to begin installing equipment for the north half of the building. Space layouts were being used by Agency components to plan requirements for unitized furniture, location of floor outlets, and determination of the necessary types of telephone service.¹⁹ Normal telephone installation was complicated by the additional requirements for a secure internal system and an intercom among the offices of the Director, the Deputy Directors, and the Office/Division Chiefs.²⁰

The superstructure contract was 78 percent complete as of 31 March 1961. The work had been delayed because of bad weather, but occupancy of the north half of the building would not be delayed appreciably. The entire building was now enclosed, and plastering had been completed in the north half. The dome for the auditorium had been

¹⁷ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 25 May 1960, BPS/OL files.

¹⁸ White recorded in his *Diary Notes*:

Met with Jim Garrison and [redacted] to discuss landscaping changes at the new building. There are three large areas in which trees are growing in a considerable depression. Water collects to such an extent that drains are plugged up; consequently, the areas are not only unsightly but in all probability the trees are going to die before we move into the building. . . . It is now estimated that it will cost some \$60,000 to rectify it, especially in view of the fact that there is not sufficient dirt available to fill in all three of the holes. I authorized [redacted] to go ahead and negotiate to fill in one of them—for which we do have ample dirt—and to contemplate, at least for the moment, on filling in the other two if and when we construct an auxiliary building, at which time we will again have plenty of "fill" available without buying it.

Diary Notes, 3 May 1960.

¹⁹ C/BPS to C/PS/OL, 3 October 1960, sub: Killian Committee Report, BPS/OL files.

²⁰ *Diary Notes*, 20 October, 2 and 15 November, 14 and 20 December 1960; 4 January 1961.

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erected, and the floor slab had been poured. BPS had revised contract drawings involving partition revisions, medical, X-ray, and projection equipment, and the instantaneous generator for the signal centers. The floorplans were retemplated from standard to unitized furniture. Telephone service orders and wiring diagrams were completed for 50 percent of the north half of the building.²¹ The building was ready for its first occupants. [REDACTED]

Moving Days [REDACTED]

The Headquarters Building was originally scheduled to be completed by the spring of 1962, but sufficient progress had been made on the north half of the building to permit the first phase of the move—that of some DDI elements—to begin on 19 September 1961. This permitted all components housed in Washington in the vicinity of the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge to be moved by 21 October. Three separate Federal Works Agency contracts were let to accommodate the move of CIA furnishings and equipment to the new headquarters. Merchants Transfer and Storage Co. was awarded two, and the Roy M. Hamilton Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, won the third. [REDACTED]

The planners must have breathed a collective sigh of relief once the DDI elements began to move into the new building. Beginning in 1957 and continuing even after the completion of the move, the Deputy Director for Intelligence Robert Amory engaged the planners in a series of disputes over the space allocations and floorplans for the DDI area. Amory had legitimate grounds for objecting to the location and the layout of the library, but he was less justified in his vacillating over decisions to include or exclude various other DDI components in the new building. Amory's indecision disrupted Colonel White's equanimity. White noted at one point:

Had a discussion both on the squawk box and later in the day with Bob Amory about the new building. Bob is, in my judgment, somewhat irrational about his desires to close up the library deal, put the Office of Basic Intelligence back into the building, etc. At his suggestion that we thrash the whole thing out with [DCI Dulles] I readily agreed, at which point he backed water considerably. I told him that I was fed up with his threatening to

²¹ Memo, AC/BPS for C/PS/OL, 4 April 1961, sub: Killian Report on FI Activities 1 October 1960-31 Mar 1961, 4S, BPS/OL files, [REDACTED]

go to the Director at any time he didn't get what he wanted in connection with the new building and that I wanted him to understand fully that I was prepared to meet with him and the Director at any hour of the day or night, without any advance notice, on his or any aspect of the building. I also told him that the DDI area was slower than any other component in supplying the information that we needed to pass on to the architect and that unless we got his information very soon it would be necessary to stop work on the building again."

Amory also complained to White—and in some cases even to DCI Dulles—about plans for ground floor windows, about the use of asphalt tile rather than more expensive flooring in the library, about the morning rush hour traffic pattern over Key Bridge, about the temperature in the new building, about the empty vending machines, and about the hours of the credit union.²¹

Other directorates had their own complaints at the time of the planned move to the new building. The question of adequate space for the Directorate of Plans (DDP—now the Directorate of Operations) contingent was the subject of serious discussion from 1959 until the actual move. The basic problem was to determine the actual number of bodies that were to be accommodated and whether or not the entire DDP should be moved into the new building, even at the expense of space for the DDI or DDS.²² DCI Dulles and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board decided in June 1961 that the Directorate of Plans would not, in fact, be moved in its entirety to the new building.

As components moved into their new quarters, they found that new unitized furniture had replaced all Class C furniture, and had been pre-positioned with telephones in place ready to be cut over to the new numbers.²³ For mechanical and security reasons, certain facilities (principally the pneumatic tube and conveyor systems) were not available until the entire building was occupied. Although incinerator

²² *Diary Notes*, 15 April 1957.

²³ *Ibid.*, 29 October 1957; 9, 21 November 1960, 6, 30 Mar, 3, 6, 20, 27 November 1961.

²⁴ Perhaps because Colonel White was in charge of the overall planning for the Headquarters construction activity, space and other problems of the DDS components appear infrequently in the *Diary Notes*. In January of 1961 a request from the Director of the Office of Communications, for additional space was rejected. *Ibid.*, 8 January 1961.

²⁵ As a result of year-end savings during 1960 and 1961, these funds (totaling \$1,298,900) were applied along with \$340,000 obtained from the Director's Special Projects Fund (subject to DDS recommendation and DCI approval) for procurement of unitized furnishings.

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chutes were being made available for depositing classified trash during the period of interim occupancy, the material could not be burned in the building until later.²⁸

Concurrent with the start of the move—on the night of 18 September 1961—the new headquarters telephone switchboard facility was put into service. The operators were instructed to answer incoming calls with “Central Intelligence Agency” instead of “Executive 3-6115.” This change in procedure attracted attention; extensive publicity was already being given by the news media to the CIA relocation, and this departure from secrecy was grist for the journalistic mills. The previous method of answering calls was resumed after a few weeks.²⁹

By 13 November 1961 the move into the north half of the building was completed, and by 15 May 1962 the entire move had been accomplished. Problems of winter weather, security escorts, communications, transportation, supplies and supply operations, had largely been overcome.³⁰ Decorating and decor, including the planned sculptures for the main entrance area, and office and hallway colors, hangings, and the like, were a continuing problem.³¹ Heating, ventilating, and air conditioning also presented problems.³²

Mail and courier deliveries posed special difficulties because of widespread confusion over the address of the new Agency building. “Langley” was and is the local name for a part of Fairfax County and has no political or corporate identity. Some mail addressed to Langley, particularly when posted in the Washington Metropolitan area, would be sent by the Postal Service to McLean, Virginia—the nearest post office. The McLean postmaster reported, however, that most “Langley Mail” went first to Langley Air Force Base at Hampton Roads, Virginia, and was then forwarded to McLean. Relocation Bulletin No. 33 corrected the problem.

The cafeteria was not completed until 28 February 1962, but in October 1961 necessary kitchen facilities, operated by Guest Services, Inc., were available to permit a limited operation in the table-service area. Vending machine rooms were put into operation on the floors being occupied, and the Virginia Society for the Blind was granted permission to operate two snack bars. The combination of ongoing

²⁸ Draft Outline, DDS Support Services Bulletin, 2 October 1961, BPS/OL files.

²⁹ Authors' conversation with the Chief, Telephone Facility Branch, 20 October 1970.

³⁰ Project Officer to Deputy Chief, BPS/OL, 13 November 1961 to 15 May 1962, sub: Hq Move, BPS/OL files.

³¹ *Diary Notes*, 7 October, 4 November 1959; 22 January, 21 March, 8 June 1960; 9 January, 15 March, 5 April, 9 October 1961; 29 November 1962.

³² White to Garrison, 12 June 1962, sub: Hq Bldg. Heating, Ventilating, and A/C Systems.



Aerial view, Main Entrance, circa 1963

construction and ad hoc dining arrangements soon fathered an unforeseen problem. Walter Pforzheimer recalled:

At the time of the first move, I think the far end of the DDP part of the building was still partially open so that heavy equipment could be brought in.... As cold weather approached...the building became infested with the cutest collection of field mice you [will] ever see. In the course of serious dictation, soberminded DDI'ers would be interrupted by piercing shrieks [sic] from their secretaries which would herald the fact that another mouse had just appeared. In the Historical Intelligence Collection we were continually setting mousetraps with devastating effect, including the fact that the Curator's extremely squeamish secretaries would not empty them, and that task fell on the Curator himself. Not only was the building open at the far end, but the cafeteria was not yet open, and everyone was eating out of the vending machines or "brown bagging it." Thus the mice had a never-ending supply of food. The mice also had the habit of chewing through telephone

The Construction

wires and once chewed their way through the special gray [secure] phone wires, creating a security problem which resulted in having to have the mice cleared!"

When the move was in its initial stages, the presence of the DCI-designate John A. McCone—who was not noted as a particularly patient or tactful individual—provided an added fillip for the planners and movers. Reportedly “very well pleased with the building” on his first visit to the site, he began to throw his weight around even before his swearing in and taking over as DCI on 29 November 1961.⁴³ Furniture had to be switched; he wanted a closed circuit television link with the White House; he asked for comparative construction costs with the new Atomic Energy Commission and Department of State headquarters buildings; and he complained that the movers were defacing the walls.⁴⁴ The new DCI and his staff moved to the new building on the day he was sworn in. He occupied temporary quarters on the third floor until his seventh-floor suite was ready in the first week of March 1962.⁴⁵

The H&A office at the building site was closed on 2 February 1962; the auditorium roof tile installation was finally completed during May 1963; and the final payment for architectural and engineering services was made to H&A on 24 October 1963. The total construction time for the project, including change orders, corrections, and omissions, was six years and one month, from October 1957 to November 1963. At a total cost of about \$43.7 million, the Agency had acquired a new, modern building with just over 1.3 million gross square feet of space, including some 837,000 net square feet of “office-type” space. In the spring of 1963, the new building housed nearly personnel, and at least more remained quartered in 13 other buildings in the Washington area.⁴⁶

⁴³ Pforzheimer to Pfeiffer, 10 February 1971.

⁴⁴ *Diary Notes*, 26 September 1961.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 18, 21, 28, 29 November 1961. (S)

⁴⁶ Project Officer Report, February 1962, BPS/OL files.

⁴⁷ These figures were included in data provided to the authors by the Office of Logistics on 10 November 1972; the data are contained in ILS/HC-849.



The emergent "Bubble" and main entrance courtyard.





The cafeteria taking shape.



Completing the Move to Langley

Excerpted from *John McCone As Director of Central Intelligence, 1961–1965*, Chapter 2, by David Robarge¹

By McCone's tenure, CIA had long occupied a scattering of accommodations around the city, including its complex at 2430 E Street NW, an abandoned roller rink nearby, and deteriorating temporary buildings on the Mall left over from World War I. Those quarters were crowded, uncomfortable, and expensive to secure, and created serious communications problems in an era when secure telephones did not exist and classified documents had to be hand-carried between offices. Allen Dulles's solution was to build a single Headquarters building for CIA at a remote and easily protected site in Langley, Virginia. Design work on the campus-like compound began in mid-1956, the first ground was broken in late 1957, the cornerstone was laid in November 1959, and the first occupants (from the DI) began moving in during September 1961.²

McCone regarded the geographical consolidation of CIA as an important part of his effort to centralize control over it. He wanted the Headquarters building filled up as quickly as possible and made a point of occupying an office there immediately to symbolize his own presence and authority. Moreover, he was sensitive about the perquisites and comforts of high position and insisted on working in surroundings that suited his tastes. Right after his appointment, he began complaining to DDS White about construction and logistical delays, and once he moved into temporary workspace at Headquarters after his swearing-in, he expressed dissatisfaction with the pace of work on his own suite. He was disappointed that only [] employees were in the new building when he took over but reluctantly accepted that no more would relocate until the whole DDP wing was ready in early



1962. He had his personal secretary, Terry Lee, check the progress on the executive offices every day. White wrote at the time that "Mr. McCone is going to be champing at the bit until he is installed in his seventh floor offices, and we should do everything we can to expedite their completion." They were finally ready in March 1962. The DCI was not pleased with the parking arrangements or the heating system, either, and sometimes called White to have the temperature in his office adjusted. By September 1962, the new Headquarters was almost 93 percent occupied, with over [] employees working there. After security concerns were raised about the four parcels of privately owned land ad-

1. Originally classified SECRET; Approved for release date: 29-Nov-2011. Portions redacted.

2. "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," passim.

50 Years in Langley

adjacent to the compound, McCone ordered a study of the feasibility of buying them.³

CIA's new environs affected organizational relationships and cultures in ways that reinforced McCone's plans for change. One of his goals was to begin breaching the wall of compartmentation between the DI and the DDP. Now that the overt and covert parts of CIA were sharing quarters for the first time, meetings and casual contacts eroded some of the suspicion and tension that had hindered cooperation between analysts and operators. The relocation also improved communication throughout the Agency—an essential part of McCone's effort to put its sprawling activities under his and his deputies' control. Before the move, strict management was hindered by components' physical separation and the lack of secure telephones and a rapid courier service. Afterward, distances between offices shrank from, in some cases, many city blocks to at most a few floors or corridors. Executives could schedule short-notice meetings conveniently and drop by each other's offices for informal discussions, while secure telephones and pneumatic tubes enabled officers to exchange information and documents quickly. In addition, the collocation of the Office of Central Reference and the DI gave analysts ready access

3. Knapp, 235; White diary notes for 29 and 30 November and 4 December 1961, HS Files, Job 84-00499R, box 1, folder 9; Kirkpatrick Diary, vol. 5, entry for 20 September 1962; "The Construction of the Original Headquarters Building," 136 n. 9; "Chronology of DCI Office Space," 6 May 1971, HS Files, HS/HC-429, Job 84T00286R, box 3, folder 1. As a civil defense precaution, McCone wanted an emergency relocation center for CIA constructed outside the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. As AEC chairman, he had learned details about the inept evacuation exercise the US government had conducted in 1956, and, especially after the Cuban missile crisis, he wanted to ensure that a small-scale CIA survived a nuclear strike against the capital,

to full library facilities and specialized repositories of information, helping them produce the high quality, timely assessments the DCI demanded. Working conditions at Langley were far superior to those across the river, and the climate controls, availability of food and banking services, new furniture, larger workspaces, and woodland setting improved the morale and, more importantly to McCone, the efficiency and productivity of most employees.⁴

The trek to suburbia took CIA geographically out of the close-knit downtown policymaking community, causing a marked dropoff in day-to-day contacts with the executive branch. Although this isolation forced most Agency employees to turn inward professionally and socially, it forced senior management to work harder at reaching out to administration officials, community counterparts, and allies in Congress and the press. This demand suited McCone perfectly well, given the priority he placed on his responsibilities as DCI and on the "political" roles he assumed as a presidential policy adviser and the White House's intelligence liaison to Capitol Hill and the Republican Party.

4. Some older hands, however, found the new building coldly modernistic, gray, and sterile despite its semirural surroundings. As with an old baseball glove, they preferred the Mall and E Street offices for their well-worn "feel," and for the memories they harbored and the sense of shared triumphs and adversities they evoked. "The real trouble with this new building," an Agency officer was quoted as saying in 1964, "is that it tends to make an honest woman of the old madam—you know, no spittoons, keep the antimacassars clean, and no champagne in the morning. We ought to be lurking in scabby old hide-outs, with the plaster peeling and stopped-up toilets. There's something about the atmosphere of this building that leads to too many memos, too many meetings, and not enough dirty work." Alsop and Braden, 263

